Psychology 352I: Evaluating Developmental Interventions

Spring 2007
Wednesdays: 4pm – 7pm
ACB 211

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Course Description
The main objective for this course is to discuss how developmental psychology and program evaluation work together to inform effective intervention programs serving children and families. In the first half of the course, we will use an ecological approach to explore how concepts of risk and resiliency at the child, family, and community level positively (or negatively) impact child developmental outcomes. Examining this research will stimulate a conversation around effective practices in the development, implementation, and evaluation of intervention programs. The latter half of the course will be organized around in-depth case studies of intervention programs that target different age ranges (i.e., early childhood, school age, and adolescence). These case studies will give us the opportunity to critically examine how each intervention has been evaluated, including the type of evaluation design employed, the quality of the measurement instruments used, and whether the selection of outcome measures were developmentally appropriate. In our discussions, we will also investigate the political landscape surrounding the development and evaluation of each intervention.

Textbook

Course Requirements

Participation and Attendance (10%): To pass this course, students need to attend and participate. It is expected that all articles will be read prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned, and that students will come to class ready to discuss and challenge the content covered. To facilitate discussions, please generate two discussion questions each week. The purpose of these questions is to help students develop connections and explore the intricacies among development theory, intervention research, and evaluation. Each article we read will have direct implications for one or more domains, so at least one question each week should be geared toward that theme.

Integrative Paper (40%): Using the logic model framework we will discuss in class, students will be required to design an intervention to promote one or more optimal developmental outcomes in vulnerable children. A sound justification for each component of the logic model must be included in your paper. Evidence for each justification should come from class readings and/or from relevant peer-reviewed journal articles. This integrative paper will be due in class on 03/21/07, should be about 12-15 pages long (excluding references), double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

Evaluation Proposal (30%): It is important that students know how to design an evaluation of a childhood intervention program that meets the needs of the various stakeholder groups as well as answer the questions it is intended to answer. Students will be given a description of an intervention program on
04/11/07, along with other pertinent information (e.g., budget, timeframe, etc.), and then students will be required to write a plan to evaluate the intervention program. More specific guidelines about this project will be distributed to the class on 04/11/07. This assignment will be due in my box by 5pm on Wednesday, May 9. It should be about 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced with one-inch margins.

**Case Study Presentation (20%)**: Students will present a PowerPoint presentation of a case study of a topic (or program) of their choosing. Your topic must be approved by me in advance (by 3/28/07 at the latest). Your presentation should be organized around five main content areas: (1) Overview of topic (or program); (2) State and federal policies dealing with your topic; (3) Organizations conducting evaluation research on your topic (or disseminating research on your topic); (4) Organizations implementing programs related to your topic (and the type of activities they are implementing); and (5) Overall synthesis of the effectiveness of the evaluation research on your topic (including strengths and weaknesses of research). This presentation should be professional quality, and last approximately 20-30 minutes. On the day you present, please print out PowerPoint handouts of your presentation for your classmates. You may pair up with another student if you both have similar interests, however, your presentation will have to be twice as long and twice as in depth. *Note: This project provides an excellent opportunity to investigate potential field placement and internship opportunities.*
Course Schedule: Evaluating Developmental Interventions

01/17/07: Introduction to Evaluating Developmental Interventions


01/24/07: Overview of Early Childhood Interventions and Ecological Systems as a Guiding Theoretical Framework


01/31/07: Precipitating Causes of Childhood Interventions: Risk Factors at the Child Level


02/07/07: Precipitating Causes of Childhood Interventions: Risk Factors at the Family and Community Levels


02/14/05: Developmental Issues in Early Childhood Interventions: Resiliency and Protective Factors


02/21/07: Developing Effective Interventions


02/28/07: The Effectiveness of Early Childhood Interventions


03/07/07: Issues in the Evaluation of Childhood Intervention Programs, Topics for Student Presentations due today


03/14/07: No Class – Spring Break!
03/21/07: Case Study #1: Early Intervention Programs, Guest Speaker #1 – Dr. Katherine Bono, California State University, Fullerton, Integrative paper due

TBA

03/28/07: Case Study #2: Even Start Family Literacy Programs, Guest Speaker #2 – Dr. Eloise Appel, Appel Associates


TBA

04/04/07: Case Study #3: Los Angeles Better Educated Students for Tomorrow (LA’s BEST), Guest Speaker #3 – Dr. Jim Sass, Senior Research Analyst, LA’s BEST


Megan Beckett – Commentary: Don't Make After-School Care the Next Big Myth

4/11/07: Case Study Presentations (first group of students)

04/18/07: Case Study #4: After School Programs, Guest Speaker #4 – Dr. Denise Huang, Researcher, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA


04/25/07: Case Study #5: Preventing Deviance


Preventing Deviance Evaluation, TBA

05/02/07: Case Study Presentations (second group of students)
05/9/07: Evaluation Proposal Due