Readington Township Public Schools

Psychology

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Readington Township Public Schools
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I. OVERVIEW

Introduction to Psychology is a course that will provide middle school students with a foundation for the study of psychology. Students will begin by learning an overview and brief history of psychology, followed by some of the popular topics of study, including nature versus nurture, the impact of social media, and popular branches of psychology. Then students will have an opportunity to research a topic of their own choosing and develop an experiment that proves or disproves their hypotheses.

II. STUDENT OUTCOMES (NJSLS Standards)

Social studies instruction takes place in grades K-12, and its standards cover history, economics, geography, and civics. Although there are no New Jersey student learning standards for psychology, students in this psychology course will embrace the mission of the 2020 Social Studies NJSLS:
Social studies education provides learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perspectives needed to become active, informed, and contributing members of local, state, national, and global communities.

The following skills have been identified as foundational for success in social studies and will be central to psychology instruction:
Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry
Gathering and Evaluating Sources
Seeking Diverse Perspectives
Developing Claims and Using Evidence
Presenting Arguments and Explanations
Engaging in Civil Discourse and Critiquing Conclusions

The American Psychological Association developed Student Learning Outcomes and Key Themes for Introductory Psychology, which are the standards addressed in the majority of psychology courses. The following learning outcomes and key themes will be addressed in this course:

Psychology Content Outcomes
1.1. Define and explain basic psychological concepts.
1.3. Apply psychological principles to personal growth and other aspects of everyday life.

Scientific Thinking Outcomes
2.2. Evaluate, design, or conduct psychological research.
2.4. Examine how psychological science can be used to counter unsubstantiated statements, opinions, or beliefs.

Key Themes
A. Psychological science relies on empirical evidence and adapts as new data develop.
B. Psychology explains general principles that govern behavior while recognizing individual differences.
C. Psychological, biological, social, and cultural factors influence behavior and mental processes.
D. Psychology values diversity, promotes equity, and fosters inclusion in pursuit of a more just society.
E. Our perceptions and biases filter our experiences of the world through an imperfect personal lens.
F. Applying psychological principles can change our lives, organizations, and communities in positive ways.
G. Ethical principles guide psychology research and practice.

The following 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills will be addressed in this course:

Global and Cultural Awareness
9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

Information and Media Literacy
9.4.8.IML.10: Examine the consequences of the uses of media (e.g., RI.8.7).
9.4.8.IML.11: Predict the personal and community impact of online and social media activities.

The following [2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education](#) will be addressed in this course:
Personal Growth and Development
2.1.8.PGD.4: Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.

Emotional Health
2.1.8.EH.2: Analyze how personal attributes, resiliency, and protective factors support mental and emotional health.

The following [2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts](#) will be addressed in this course:
Anchor Standards for Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge
W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
W.WR.8.5. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
W.SE.8.6. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES (Content categories and subcategories, outline)
Unit 1: Foundations of Psychology
    Introduction
        Students will be able to explain the purpose of psychology and its historical contributions.
    Brain & Behavior
        Students will be able to label parts of the brain.
        Students will be able to explain the role of the brain in emotions and behavior.
    Human Development
        Students will be able to identify the stages of human development.
        Students will be able to critically assess the nature versus nurture debate.
        Students will be able to evaluate the merits of developmental psychology.
    Learning & Memory
        Students will be able to identify different types of learning.
        Students will be able to contrast the learning theories of behaviorism and cognitivism.
        Students will be able to explain short-term, working, and long-term memory.
    Emotion, Stress, & Motivation
        Students will be able to analyze the role that stress plays in emotional health.
        Students will be able to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
    Social Psychology
        Students will be able to assess the role that various relationships play in our lives.

Students will be able to evaluate the impact that social media has on psychological well-being.

Unit 2: Conducting Research
> Methodology
>> Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the research process.
> Research Project
>> Students will be able to develop and test a hypothesis.
>> Students will be able to carry out research on a self-selected topic.
>> Students will be able to evaluate their research and present their findings.

IV. STRATEGIES

Strategies may include but are not limited to:
- Group discussions
- Teacher presentations
- Student presentations
- Collaborative projects
- Independent projects
- Model-making
- Online practice

V. EVALUATION

Assessments may include but are not limited to:
- Teacher observations
- Class participation
- Class assignments
- Homework assignments
- Multisensory projects
- Quizzes
- Reflections
- Presentations
- Inquiry research project

VI. REQUIRED RESOURCES
- [Free Unit Lesson Plans For High School Teachers of Psychology](#)
- [Psychology Today](#)
- [Promoting Psychological Science: A compendium of laboratory exercises for teachers of high school](#)
- Aamodt, S., & Wang, S. (2012). *Welcome to your child's Brain: How the mind grows from conception to college*. Bloomsbury.
- Benjamin, L. T. (2010). *Favorite activities for the teaching of psychology*. American Psychological Association.
- Hardiman, M. M., & Denckla, M. B. (2012). *The brain-targeted teaching model for 21st-century schools*. Corwin.
- Toner, J. B., & Freeland, C. A. B. (2021). *Psychology for kids: The science of the mind and behavior.* Magination Press, American Psychological Association.

VII. SCOPE AND SEQUENCE
- Unit 1: Foundations of Psychology (30 days)
  - Introduction (2 days)
  - Brain & Behavior (8 days)
  - Human Development (8 days)
  - Learning & Memory (8 days)

- - Emotion, Stress, & Motivation (8 days)
  - Social Psychology (6 days)

- Unit 2: Conducting Research (10 days)
  - Methodology (2 days)
  - Research Project (8 days)