Development Disabilities: A Psychological Approach

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Credit Rating 20 credits, SCQF 11

Course Description
This course takes a psychological perspective on understanding cognitive and social development in infants, children, and young people (and in some cases adults) with intellectual/developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Down's syndrome, fragile X syndrome, Williams syndrome and non-specific intellectual disabilities. The course will explore: how knowledge of developmental disabilities can inform, and be informed by, theories of 'typical' development; the key theoretical approaches used to understand developmental disabilities; the developmental trajectories of cognitive and social skills in a range of developmental disabilities and whether these are quantitatively or qualitatively different from typical development; the implications of developmental disabilities for young people's quality of life/socio-emotional well-being, for interventions and education, and for family adjustment. Throughout the course there will be a focus on both classic and recent research findings, and through this, participants will develop an awareness of relevant research methods, of the potential applied value of research findings, and of the ethical issues surrounding research in this field.

Learning Outcomes
On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of research on cognitive and social development in developmental disabilities
- critically evaluate key psychological theories relating to developmental disabilities
- discuss the implications of developmental disabilities for young people's quality of life/socio-emotional well-being, for interventions and education, and for family adjustment
- demonstrate a critical awareness of the methodological and ethical issues surrounding research in this field

Teaching
10 x 2.5 hour weekly sessions in semester 1.

The course combines lectures, group discussion, film clips, guest speakers and student presentations. Core reading will be distributed in advance of each session.
Course Assessment
The assessment is one essay of 4,000 words. There is a choice of essay topics, allowing students the opportunity to follow up their own particular area of interest.

Course Content
- Introduction to developmental disabilities
- Approaches to research in developmental disabilities
- Theories of autism spectrum disorders
- Cognitive development
- Social cognitive development
- Memory development
- Family and quality of life issues
- Interventions
- Educational implications

Indicative Readings
A list of specific chapters and journal articles ('core reading') to be read for each class will be provided to students at the beginning of the course.

The books and journals listed here are generally relevant for this course. There is no expectation that students read all of these. However, they may be useful if you wish to follow up particular topics.

General Developmental Psychology

General Developmental Disabilities Reading
**Autism**


**Down Syndrome**


**Williams Syndrome**


**Fragile X Syndrome**


**Useful Journals**

American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

British Journal of Developmental Psychology

British Journal of Educational Psychology

Child Development

Developmental Review

Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disability

Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders

Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry

Journal of Intellectual Disability Research

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