HOT Topics

Example Hot Topics in Reading and Early Education
- Role of direct instruction and its influence on literacy skills
- Parenting traits and influence on social competence
- Perception of parental engagement among culturally diverse families
- Perception of evidence-based practices among practitioners
- Teacher-child interactions and its influence on learning outcomes
- Read-alouds and its role in vocabulary development
- Professional development and its influence on literacy learning outcomes
- Impact of continuity of care in early language development
- Leadership styles of center directors and its roe on learning outcomes
- Coping styles of ethnic minority families
- Influence of parental involvement in early language development

Example Hot Topics in Speech Language Pathology
- Diversity training and education
- Dysphasia assessment and treatment
- School / teacher training and proficiency for phonemic awareness
- Program development
- Oral-motor exercises and remediation
- Semantic development of African American toddlers and preschoolers
- Geriatric feeding / training caregivers
- Development of electronic portfolio

Example Hot Topics in Reading
- Effects of a visual-support strategy on shared story book reading
- Increasing recreational reading attitudes of alliterate middle school students
- The effect of interactive writing on literacy acquisition of primary students
- Increasing student achievement through parent involvement
- Creating independence through student-owned strategies : A program evaluation
- The effects of peer tutoring on reading fluency in second grade students.
- Evaluation of brain-based strategies training for reading teachers
- The impact of class size on at-risk students' reading achievement

Example Hot Topics in Educational Leadership
- Literacy leadership
- Improving student achievement
- Intercultural / multicultural leadership competence
- Parental involvement
- The impact of No Child Left Behind initiative on …. Pick your topic!
- Technology leadership

Example Hot Topics in Organizational Leadership
- The Beliefs, Perceptions, Behaviors, and Knowledge of Administrators, Faculty, Students, and Staff as Related to Academic Dishonesty
- Preparing Students for the Workforce: A Study of Career and Technical Education Program Effectiveness
- Evaluation of Recruitment and Retention Practices in a Master of Business Administration Program
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Nonprofit Community Organization
- Teachers' Attitudes toward Educating Students with Special Needs in General Education Classrooms
- An Analysis and Evaluation of an Employee Appraisal Process Used in a Non-Metropolitan City
- Impact of Standardized Tests on Elementary School Teachers' Instructional Selection Methods
- Evaluation of the Reward System on Employee Innovation and Motivation in a Manufacturing Company
- Evaluation of a Training Processes at a Juvenile Correctional Center
- Team-Based Organizational Morale and Motivation Model's Impact on Senior Enlisted Military Personnel
- Reducing Behavior Problems in a Junior High School Through Character Education Classroom Instruction

Example Hot Topics in Higher Education

Student Affairs/Student Services:

- enrollment management,
- retention,
- student success,
- academic support,
- student engagement,
- nontraditional adult learners (commuter, transfer students, etc.),
- the millennials,
- learning communities,
- mentoring programs,
- new post-9/11 GI Bill,
- orientation programs,
- freshmen or first-year seminars,
- debt management,
- academic honesty and student misconduct issues,
- students with disabilities,
- campus safety and security,
- students with mental illness,
- first-generation college students,
- alcohol on campus,
- hazing,
- free speech,
- service learning and civic engagement,
- internships,
- career services,
- outsourcing,
- experiential learning & prior learning assessment,

Academic Affairs:

- faculty development,
- university faculty load
- online instruction,
- licensure & accreditation issues,
- academic freedom,
- tenure and promotion,
- unions,
- multi-year faculty contracts vs. tenure,
- developmental-remedial education,
- teaching vs. research,
- general education,
- corporate education,
- intellectual property rights,
- affirmative action,
- problem-based learning,
- adjunct and part-time faculty,
- plagiarism,
- grade inflation,
- strategic planning,
- institutional effectiveness,
- curriculum renewal,
- outcomes assessment,
- course and faculty evaluations,
- sabbaticals,
- peer review,
- scholarship,
- technology,
- diversity issues,
- for-profit universities.

ITDE Dissertations

- Instructional Systems Design
- Effects of process and tools on teaching and learning

Psychological Dissertations and Hot Topic Areas

1. **Cognitive psychology** investigates the way the human brain represents information. It seeks to explore the underlying processes involved through experiment, computer modeling and neuropsychology. Theories attempt to understand how information is encoded in the brain at macro and micro levels. This is a vast subject and there are many topics to choose from. If you are looking to base your psychology dissertation on the area of cognitive psychology, below are just some titles that could be researched further.

    - The contribution of expectations, attention and emotional states to the perception of pain.
    - The extent to which objective methods of measurement can support theoretical approaches to consciousness.
    - Limitations of the modular view of the brain: The importance of feedback and cross-modulation in information processing.
    - Are indirect and direct theories of perception incompatible or can recent enactive accounts potentially lead to a compromise?
    - Assessing the development of implicit intergroup cognition in relation to in-groups and out-groups: social learning or pre-specified?
    - How studies of bilingualism and trilingualism in infants can indicate the degree of interaction between representational systems encoding for different languages in the brain.
    - The usefulness of the concept of "grandmother cells" for understanding how information processing occurs in the visual cortex.
    - The relationship between impaired social cognition, emotion and anxiety disorders.

- The role of implicit visual processing in the identification of objects: neural mechanisms and pathways.
- Changes in neural processing in response to event segmentation: separating cause and effect in boundary recognition.
- Consciousness is best explained as an output of implicit processes: implications for understanding intentionality.
- Of all the areas of the cortex, the prefrontal area is paramount in demarcating what makes humans human.
- The function of the prefrontal cortex can only be understood properly by considering how it relates to other areas of the brain.
- Rather than being related to specific areas of the brain, language is best explained as a function of multiple overlapping neural circuits existing throughout the cortex.
- Neural network theories might be able to account for some lower order functions of the brain but are unable to explain the representations that occur at higher areas.
- As information flows from earlier sensory-specific areas to higher regions of the brain, representations become more integrated: consequences and implications.
- Contribution of the cerebellum in relation to the higher functions of the cortex.
- Limits to the plasticity of the adult human brain.
- Are MRI studies a reliable indicator of brain function?
- The claim that the right and left brain hemispheres have different processing styles is fundamental to understanding how the brain functions.
- Parallel distributed processing is unable to provide an explanation for the higher functioning aspects of the human brain.
- Baddeley's model of working memory compared to alternative theories.
- Working memory can best be explained as a function of long-term memory.
- Evidence for the role of the hippocampus in memory formation and consolidation.
- The relationship between working memory and attention.
- The role of the prefrontal cortex in short-term memory.
- How emotional memory relates to episodic memory.
- Attention depends on the progressive activation of forward areas of the brain.
- Attention is better interpreted as a multivariate rather than a uni-modal concept.
- View-dependent theories of vision are more successful in accounting for natural perception than view-independent theories.
- Computer models of how perception occurs can lead to a misunderstanding of how the mechanisms of perception actually operate.
- How visual illusions help understand perceptual processes.
- Assessing the validity of Gibson's theory of direct perception compared to constructivist accounts.
- Why the sense of time varies according to circumstances?
- Is memory for past events partially influenced by the situation in which recall takes place?
- Effective cognition is about selecting appropriate information at the right time in the correct order.
- Does subliminal perception exist or is it part of a more complex phenomenon?
- Hierarchical explanations of information flow and parallel distributed processing.

2. **Developmental psychology** investigates how children's behavior changes over time, by studying experience and behavior. Change is, for example, studied in a variety of areas including language, intelligence and motor skills. Theories of development propose a number of models to account for how change occurs, and gives pre-eminence either to experience or more enduring criteria. Some approaches take a mid-way position, however, by proposing an interaction between the two. Developmental psychology is an interesting area and relevant to many people, including doctors, teachers and parents. A psychology dissertation on developmental psychology may indeed be useful and well read.
   - Are abilities unconnected with numeracy of children with dyscalculia affected by the condition or are they relatively independent?
   - The role of face stimuli in assessing the development of the human ventral pathway from infancy to adulthood.
   - The extent and role of plasticity in shaping visual cognitive development.
   - Explaining change during cognitive development: one type of learning mechanism or diverse learning paradigms for different problems?
   - Assessing whether intrinsic factors or the quality of interaction between human caregivers and children lead to successful learning outcomes.
   - The extent to which understanding the mechanisms of neural development can be informative as to how early cognition occurs.
   - Explaining how evidence for increasing integration of systems during the course of development can be assimilated with the increasing dissociation of structures.

- The development of conversational understanding as a domain-general improvement in processing speed and working-memory capacity in cognitive effort.
- The influence of culture on conversational understanding, where children do not normally communicate with adults.
- Scale errors and action planning in children: Assessing the implications of DeLoache's findings for understanding the " what/where " pathways in the human brain.
- Developmental cognitive neuroscience's significance for the early detection and treatment of developmental disorders.
- Is Piaget's theory of cognitive development still a valid theory in the light of modern findings in cognitive neuroscience?

3. **Social psychology** involves studying how individuals in groups interact. This is achieved through investigating how individual behavior is influenced by others. Immediate social interactions comprise the main focus of concern in which such behaviors as social influence, attitudes and non-verbal communication etc., may be studied in controlled situations. Below are just some suggestions for psychology dissertations based on social psychology.
   - Factors modulating automatic priming effects in relation to social behavior: assessing magnitude and duration.
   - The influence of automatic effects of priming on complex behavior in real-life situations.
   - An overlapping neural network representing the concept of self and other: Implications for sustaining self-integrity and understanding interpersonal relations.
   - Behavioral game theory: How players learn from and influence others in relation to strategic thinking.
   - Assessing the contribution of reason and emotion in moral judgment through the social intuitionist model.
   - Early stable development of implicit social cognition and preference for in-groups: assessing how evaluation is assigned.
   - Charting how cognitive neuroscience can inform social psychology.
   - Agent-based computational models of collective behavior: understanding group behavior from the bottom-up.
   - The early onset of non-verbal communication in infants.
   - The Behavioral Stimulus Interaction theory and cognitive conflict in approach/avoidance situations: The duration of the devaluation effect.
   - The enduring legacy of cognitive dissonance.

4. **Evolutionary psychology** seeks to explain psychological attributes through applying evolutionary theory to behavior that is held to derive from natural selection and adaptation. In this regard, humans have inherited psychological mechanisms from their ancestors that helped solve enduring problems throughout evolutionary time. Such mechanisms are assumed to constrain the behavior of modern-day individuals. The study of evolutionary psychology enables you to research into history of man, as well and modern day society. Writing a psychology dissertation in this area may prove enjoyable for the author, as well as the reader.
   - Is evolutionary psychology merely a field of enquiry or a robust paradigm for investigating human behavior?
   - Investigating whether reciprocal altruism is adequate in explaining altruism in different social situations.
   - Why individual traits and cognitive modules fail to explain the complexities of human social behavior.
   - Assessing the relative importance of facial symmetry, averageness and secondary sex characteristics as reliable indicators of mate choice.
   - Investigating whether artificially-induced examples of evolutionary game theory can be a valid means of assessing human behavior in the real world.
   - Discriminating between phobias and anxiety states that are adaptive compared to those that are learned.
   - Further evidence for a dedicated folk psychology module in humans.
   - Human cognitive development as a proxy for understanding the evolution of the human brain.
   - The executive functions of the frontal cortex are what make humans unique.
   - An appraisal of Fodor's modular account of the brain in the light of recent neuroscientific research.
   - A cheater detection module: fact or fantasy?
   - Ethnographic examples as a valid measure of universal human abilities.
   - Sex differences in attitudes to self as a function of evolutionary constraints.