



Katedralskolan Skara IB Diploma Programme



Psychology

General course description

Psychology is the systematic study of human behavior and mental processes. Since the subject has roots both from natural science and social sciences, psychology has a unique approach to understand the influences on human behavior. The IB course in psychology integrates biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors and by doing so encourages the students to have a holistic view when it comes to explaining human behavior. All topics are based on research, i.e. research studies and theories, and the students are encouraged to use the research and compare and contrast the findings to their own experience. That gives the students an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of themselves and others. They also increase their understanding for the diversity of human behavior and that in turn fosters intercultural understanding and respect. Throughout the course, the students are encouraged to use critical thinking, e.g. to evaluate and challenge the research studies and theories that are presented. Ethical issues are always discussed during the course, both in human and non-human research. Cultural, gender and methodological considerations are other examples of issues that are used to assess psychological research.

After following the Psychology course, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge about, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate psychological concepts, research methods, theories and research studies. They will also acquire skills for making an experiment and present the results in an academic way.

Core and options

IB Psychology examines human behavior on three approaches – the biological, the cognitive and the sociocultural approach. These three approaches is dealt with in Part 1, the Core. (both standard and higher level) Each level is studied during approximately 40 hours for higher level and 30 hours for standard level. This part is covering a range of human behaviors, e.g. emotions, memory, conformity. Incorporated in these approaches the student will also study approaches to researching behavior. This section of the course is focused on the understanding of psychological research and its current possibilities and limitations in studying behavior.

Part 2 has two options, *Health Psychology* (both standard and higher level) and *Psychology of human relationships* (only higher level). Both options are studied during approximately 20 hours each.

Health Psychology is using the three perspectives (biological, cognitive and sociocultural) to explain health-related behavior. The option includes:



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- Health psychology - biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors' influence on health-related behavior
- Stress - stressors, strategies for coping with stress, evaluating coping strategies - causes, prevention strategies and treatments
- Health promotion - models and theories of health promotion, effectiveness of health promotion strategy

The option Psychology of Human relationships is using the three perspectives (biological, cognitive and sociocultural) to explain different topics that are linked to human relations. The option includes:

- Human relationships - biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors' influence on human relationships
- Personal relationships - attraction and its origins - relationships – the role of communication and culture, change and ending of relationships
- Social responsibility - prosocial behaviour and its promotion- bystanderism

In part 3 the students make a simple experimental study by making a replication or a modification of a published experimental study. The results are presented in a written report following an academic format.

Part 4 is for higher level and consists of understanding approaches of research and focuses on both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative research approaches as interviews, naturalistic observations and case studies will be investigated as well as the approaches experiments and correlational research for quantitative research.

Methods

The methods used are lectures, individual studies and group discussions. An emphasis throughout the course is discussions about critical thinking linked to the research. A variety of creative methods are used, e.g. letting students' present research by making presentations using digital technology and debates.



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Assessment Internal

A written report of a simple experimental study. The internal assessment components contribute to 20% (=HL) and 25% (=SL) to the final mark.

The students are required to do a simple experiment by undertaking a replication or a modification of a published experimental study in a written report of 1800-2200 words.

External

Three written examination papers for the Higher Level course (the core, two options and approaches to research) and two papers for the Standard Level course (the core and one option). The external assessment components contribute to 80% (=HL) and 75% (=SL) to the final mark.

Standard level:

Paper 1: The core - three levels of analysis: biological, cognitive and sociocultural.

Paper 2: Health psychology.

Higher level:

Paper 1: The core - three levels of analysis: biological, cognitive and sociocultural.

Paper 2: The two options: Health psychology and Psychology of human relationships.

Paper 3: Approaches to researching behavior.



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Links to TOK

Since Psychology is a mix of natural and social sciences, there are always an opportunity to connect to different knowledge questions from both human sciences and natural sciences. In general a critical approach is encouraged when it comes to evaluating the research. The evaluation is made from different angles – methodological, ethical, gender and cultural. During the core and the options possible linking questions to TOK are how our perception is affected by our values (the cognitive perspective, methodological issues and ethics), what biology tells us about emotions (the biological approach), and the overall question - can human behavior be studied scientifically? During paper 3 the course is linking to TOK by discussing inductive versus deductive approach, nomothetic versus idiographic approach and the difference between quantitative and qualitative research.

Links to IB Learner Profile

The biological level approach of understanding behaviour will help to demonstrate the foundation for all human beings. The cognitive and sociocultural approach of understanding human behaviour will instead reveal the immense diversity of influences that produce human behavior and mental processes. By doing so, the students are developing their ability to be both ‘Thinkers’ and ‘Reflective’. Another important perspective that is ever present is the cultural dimension. All research is critically investigated from a cultural perspective. Under the sociocultural approach of understanding behaviour two cultural dimensions are studied. That will help the students to develop their ability to be ‘Open-minded’.

Course material/Textbook

Textbooks

Crane, John and Hannibal, Jette: *Psychology Course companion*, 2009. Oxford University Press.

Hill, Grahame: *A- Level Psychology Through Diagrams*, 2009. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Law, Alan; Halkiopoulos, Christos and Bryan-Zaykov Christian: *Psychology developed specifically for the IB Diploma*, 2010. Pearson Education Limited.

Digital textbook

Inthinking- Psychology

<https://www.thinkib.net/psychology>

Besides textbooks, and various digital resources a wide range of psychological research from different academic databases are used.



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