*CORRESPONDENCE*
*Toolika Wadhwa*
✉ *toolikawadhwa@spm.du.ac.in*
✉ *Department of Education, Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women University of Delhi, India.*

*AUTHOR DETAILS*
*Additional information about the authors is available at the end of the article.*

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Deconstructing What Teachers Can Learn From Studying Psychology

**Toolika Wadhwa** [ID]

ABSTRACT

**Background/purpose** – Courses on psychology form a constituent part of teacher education programs, both at the preservice and inservice levels. With certain variations, these courses tend to focus on the theories of learning, development, and diversity. As teacher education programs in India prepare to undergo changes in accordance with the 2020 National Education Policy, this paper explores the rationale of including the subject of psychology in the education of teachers.

**Materials/methods** – This study is a review article; presenting a literature review on the rationale of including the topic of psychology in the education of teachers.

**Results** – The paper is presented in four sections. The first section discusses the recommendation of the curriculum framework on teacher education in order to establish an outline for psychological studies in teacher education. The second section explores the insights that can be drawn from an understanding of psychology. Today's multicultural student body brings diverse needs, thoughts, and ideas to the classroom, which makes it imperative for teachers to understand learning spaces and processes from a sociocultural perspective. The third section expands the focus of studying psychology from understanding learners to understanding teachers. This shift in focus is required as teachers work under immense stress and existing preservice teacher education programs are inadequate in building the requisite capacities to deal with personal and professional stress. The fourth section explores the role of teachers in today's fast-changing world. It is through an understanding of their self that teachers develop better awareness of their role in relation to their students.

**Conclusion** – The need to reinvent pedagogical strategies to suit the needs of learners and to explore new ways of conceptualizing content in the classroom will be highlighted. The paper concludes with a brief discussion on the need to reconceptualize courses in psychology by understanding theories in psychology in their sociohistorical embeddedness.

**Keywords** – Psychology, learning, teacher preparation, psychology in education.

To link to this article– https://dx.doi.org/10.22521/unibulletin.2022.111.2

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education programs, both worldwide and in India, focus on providing prospective teachers with a grounding in psychology. At the preservice teacher education program level, courses in psychology provide insight into the way that children develop and learn. Other courses, identified with the nomenclature of "perspective" or "foundation" courses, focus on the philosophical and sociological underpinnings in education. They also provide historical contextualization and policy perspectives to education. Inservice teachers have often indicated that while teaching in classrooms, it is courses in psychology and pedagogy that are considered the most relevant, which probably stems from the immediacy of relevance of psychological studies to the classroom setting. While this does not undermine the relevance of other foundation courses, it does highlight the weight that courses in psychology carry in teacher education programs. This brings to the fore the need to revisit courses that deal with psychology in education. Returning students complain about the irrelevance of studying the history of education and the philosophical underpinnings of education to prospective teachers. Courses in psychology need to be considered according to their relevance to and interrelationship with other courses, and not as standalone, autonomous courses.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper begins by analyzing the recommendations of various curriculum frameworks on teacher education for the teaching of psychology in teacher education, and includes reference to previous research studies. This is followed by tracing the evolution of psychology and its implications for education. Expanding upon the scope of teaching psychology in teacher education programs, the paper makes a case for preservice and inservice teachers to study psychology. Finally, a discussion is presented on the need for teachers to focus on building skills in order to adapt to the fast changing world of the 21st century.

*Section I: Psychological Studies in Teacher Education*

The focus in this section is on summarizing the suggestions of various curriculum frameworks on teacher education with respect to courses covering the psychology of education.

The 1983-1985 Report of the National Commission of Teachers (Government of India, 1986) suggested that besides general education that focuses on building content knowledge, teacher preparation programs should emphasize building a strong base in the discipline of education. In doing so, the commission recommended drawing upon the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and philosophy. More recently, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) recommended that teacher education curricula should consist of three areas: foundations of education, curriculum and pedagogy, and school internship. Within these, foundational courses are covered in the areas of learner studies, contemporary studies, and also educational studies.

A gradual shift in focus has taken place over the past 25 years, whilst previously the focus in teacher education was on comprehending disciplines that enrich the understanding of education. Traditionally, these have been seen as separate disciplines of philosophy, sociology, psychology, and history that each contribute to the overall concept of education. However, the disjointed manner in which they were perceived in teacher education courses also permeated in the manner in which their relevance was perceived by teachers.

With developments in the discourse of education, we have come to understand that these disciplines are not compartmentalized, water-tight categories. In order to understand the education systems and learners as a whole, we need to look at the interconnections between the various disciplines. This understanding lies at the core of the recommendation

that foundational courses should address the issues and perspectives that stem from understanding the learner, as well as the pertinent social and educational issues. This also indicates that foundational courses in revised teacher education programs are perspective-centric rather than knowledge-centric. Thus, foundational courses help to develop a perspective to education rather than only focusing purely on certain key concepts in disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, and sociology, and thereby revealing the wider implications for education.

*Section II: Psychology for Learning*

The previous section presented the rationale behind including psychology courses in teacher education programs based on curriculum frameworks and the published research. In this section, the discussion revolves around understanding the implications of the different approaches in psychology as a means to understanding the nature of learners. Teaching psychology in education sometimes presupposes that students or preservice teachers would automatically be able to bring a theoretical understanding of psychology developed in their teacher education to their teaching experiences during internship and subsequently, in the classroom as serving professionals. However, this rests on the assumption that all prospective teachers reflect on their learning whilst preparing their lessons and during teaching. In this section, the discussion attempts to bridge this gap between theory and practice by exploring various schools of psychology in order to understand the nature of learners, the role of teachers in the classroom, and the preparations that teachers need to undertake for effective teaching.

The behavioristic approach to psychology rests predominantly on the works of Pavlov and Skinner. The approach propounds that learning takes place through adequate changes in behavior. By providing stimuli and associating it with responses, the behavior of learners can be conditioned towards desired goals. "Conditioning" is thus the fundamental basis of the learning process. Reinforcement is then used to encourage the repeating of desired behaviors. This process, when repeated, leads to behavioral changes, making it more automatic over a period of time. Behaviorists believe that this change in behavior signifies the act of learning.

This approach presumes that learners are passive in the process of learning. External factors, viz. stimulus and reinforcement, guide the learner's response. The learner is also presumed to be tabula rasa or a blank slate. Since learners' past experiences, emotions, desires, and contexts are not given credence in the process of learning, their behavior can be shaped through appropriate stimulus and reinforcement.

The role of the teacher is central in the teaching and learning process, as both stimuli and reinforcement are controlled by the teacher. External determinism implies that teachers can control the direction of learners' behavior (and learning), by appropriate reward and punishment. In a typical behaviorist classroom, the role of the teacher would be to provide stimuli and cues that direct learner behavior. Good behavior is rewarded through positive reinforcement, whereas bad behavior invites negative reinforcement and/or punishment.

While preparing lessons, besides the content to be delivered, teachers focus on appropriately designed reinforcement schedules in order to ensure that the classroom is well managed and good behavior is repeated. The focus is on drill and practice, rote memorization, and establishing and following a clear set of predefined rules. The goal of the classroom is to elicit desired behavior from learners. Lesson objectives are set using action verbs that ensure the manifestation of learning through behavior modification, and which is evaluated through measurable outcomes. The presumption here is that since there is a

common set of instructions for all students, there will be desired behavioral change seen in all students. Behavioral learning, though, is not just applicable for large class teaching as it can also be used in designing individualized plans for learners with special needs, as well as for instances where a certain behavior modification is sought.

However, behavioral instruction suffers from the limitation of only teaching the ability to repeat information, and does not prepare learners for problem solving or creative thinking. Learners may be able to recall facts, provide ready, automated responses and prefer predefined tasks; however, they may not be able to take the initiative to change or improve themselves. This school of thought also does not provide for individual differences in learning styles and intrinsic motivation in the large class setting.

Unlike behaviorism, where the learner is perceived to be passive, cognitivism gives importance to the thought processes that underpin learner behavior. Humans process information that they receive from their surroundings. This goes beyond learning which only looks at information as stimuli to which humans respond. Whilst learner behavior in cognitivism is seen as an indication of the thought processes that lay behind it, internal processes are seen as the governing factors in learning as against external circumstances.

In the cognitive school of thought, learners play an active role in the process of learning, seeking ways to understand and process information. New information is seen in relation to that already stored in the memory, and learners actively attempt to reorganize information and experiences that aim to bring about a change in knowledge.

The teacher's role in the classroom is to provide access to information that learners can process. The teacher then uses real-life examples that best suit the context of the learners in order to facilitate the processing of information by the learners. Teachers have the role of facilitators whose aim is to aid information processing by learners. In preparing for lessons, teachers try to classify information into chunks that can be used by learners to organize concepts presented in the class. Discussions and analogies are then used to structure new knowledge in the best possible way. Other considerations during lesson preparation include linking new concepts to existing knowledge, and preparing mnemonics, analogies and images or flowcharts to organize content systematically.

Learning objectives in a cognitivist classroom focus on helping learners to structure knowledge, relating it to existing knowledge ,and developing new knowledge. The teaching process also focuses on providing opportunities for students to apply knowledge to new situations. Evaluation in cognitivism goes beyond the reproduction of content, with questions aimed at checking the analytical and problem-solving abilities of students.

Learning in constructivism is based on the notion that knowledge is constructed by individual learner. Learners perceive the world according to their own experiences and their existing knowledge. Individuals develop their own mental models that are used to make sense of new experiences. Key proponents of the school of constructivism were Piaget and Vygotsky. Piaget proposed that children make sense of the world around them through the processes of assimilation and accommodation. He believed that new knowledge creates a sense of disequilibrium and that these cognitive processes help in equilibration through expanding existing schemas or developing new schemas. Vygotsky propounded that this process of knowledge construction is heavily influenced by the social world around us. Social interaction precedes the process of knowledge construction. He believed that the process of knowledge construction involves movement along the zone of proximal development. A more knowledgeable peer or adult can therefore help a learner to move along the continuum of expertise in particular areas.

In comparison to behaviorism and cognitivism, the role of the learner assumes greater prominence in the constructivist learning process. Learners continuously try to engage in learning or meaning-making, and whilst this process can be facilitated through external factors, it is not determined by these factors. Therefore, learners are not only active in the knowledge construction process, but play a key role in it. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learner's process of knowledge construction by creating an environment where learners can come across new information that does not fit into their existing schemas. In making sense of this new information, the learners interact with either their teacher or with more knowledgeable peers. The constructivist classroom environment is therefore said to be supportive of exploration, discussion, and the sharing of ideas.

Learning objectives focus on allowing learners to discover new sources of knowledge, creating opportunities for learning at the interpsychological and intrapsychological level, and engaging in close approximations of real-world settings. Teacher preparations for the constructivist classroom involve formulating and presenting case studies and problem-based situations, and preparation for discovery-based learning, group work, and simulations.

Traditional paper and pencil testing often proves inadequate in attempting to evaluate learning within a constructivist classroom. However, problem-based situational tasks and project work are some of the ways in which learning can be evaluated.

The discussion so far has pointed out that each learning approach varies in its basic assumptions about the nature of learners and learning, and the role of the teacher in preparing to teach. Ertmer and Newby (2008) argued that behaviorism proves "reliable and effective in facilitating learning that involves discriminations (recalling facts), generalizations (defining and illustrating concepts), associations (applying explanations), and chaining (automatically performing a specified procedure)" (p. 56). However, the principles of behaviorism are inadequate to explain higher cognitive functioning such as problem solving. Although cognitivism is the better approach to explaining higher-level thinking, it still focuses on a transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the learner. In order to make cognitivism effective, teachers "should organize information in such a manner that learners are able to connect new information with existing knowledge in some meaningful way" (Ertmer & Newby, 2008, p. 60). As such, the cognitive approach is considered more appropriate when explaining complex forms of learning such as reasoning, problem solving, and information processing.

In constructivism, learning is not seen as independent of the content and context of learning. Constructivism is considered most effective for teaching higher-order cognitive functioning that emerges from challenging misconceptions and modifying them.

*Understanding the Learner as a Whole*

The approaches to psychology discussed here are the most commonly taught in teacher education programs in India. The approaches focus on understanding the learner within the context of the processes of learning, whether in terms of behavioral change or knowledge construction. Even in constructivism, the context of the learner plays a role in contributing to the process of knowledge construction. However, the role of a teacher is not restricted to organizing teaching learning processes and experiences, and forms a strong bond with the learner. This makes the learner's developmental context, and the social, cultural, economic, and familial background relevant to the teacher. Approaches to studying lifespan development, including those focused on moral development, identity development and ecological approaches to development, help teachers to understand the background of their students. This helps to forge stronger bonds between teachers and their students. Teachers

are therefore better able to support their students' social and emotional development along with their cognitive development. As such, it is important to recognize that students' interests, aspirations, and motivation play an important role in their learning experiences.

*Embracing Diversity*

Another key contribution of psychology courses is helping to embrace students from diverse backgrounds. Diversity extends beyond the social and cultural backgrounds of students. As such, it is important to recognize the diverse needs of students stemming from (dis)abilities of a physical or cognitive nature. At the same time, it is important to recognize the hidden or invisible (dis)abilities that often go unnoticed in a classroom. Further, studying psychology also provides insight into the diverse pace and style of learning. Courses in psychology, thus, have the potential to empower teachers to prepare to meet these diversities in the classroom.

As previously mentioned, diversities arising from social and cultural contexts need to be considered. While discussing diversity, teacher educators can address issues of challenging stereotypical notions of normality that stem from gender, sexuality, body image, mental health and the like.

The discussion in this section points towards developing a holistic understanding of students through various approaches to learning, development, and diversity. The student has to be seen as an indivisible whole. The narrow understanding of schools being only a space for learning academic disciplines can, thus, be changed by considering the various dimensions of a person.

## Section III: A Case for Psychology for Teachers

The previous section highlighted the focal areas of theoretical and practicum components of teacher education programs in India. You would notice that the focus in all these has largely been on understanding the nature of learning and learners. Courses on development and diversity also bring to the fore the need to understand learners from a more holistic perspective. Here, again, the emphasis is on improving the whole school experience of learners by adapting school processes to suit the unique contexts of students. Studies have highlighted the need to also focus on teachers' concerns. Teaching is a highly stressful profession, and only the most well-adjusted teachers can provide optimum classroom conditions that support students to become better learners and members of society.

Gorsy et al. (2015) conducted a survey of secondary and higher secondary school teachers working in various state run schools in Haryana state in the north of India. The study found that male school teachers scored higher on the mental health index than their female counterparts. Further, school teachers working in urban settings reported better mental health than teachers working in schools in rural settings.

Some components of teacher education program curricula attempt to provide opportunities for creative pursuits and capacity building. These are generally conducted in a workshop approach and include training in visual and performing arts, physical education, and sometimes, information and communication technology. These courses, more often than not, target developing a basic level of technical expertise, as well as generating interest that helps preservice teachers to become well-rounded teachers. However, barring the rare program that offers courses that explicitly target self-development, these practicum courses lack opportunities for prospective teachers to embark on a journey of self-discovery through exploration and reflection.

As previously mentioned, theoretical courses in psychology emphasize looking more holistically at the learner by discussing ideas of development and diversity in addition to

learning. The other set of courses, offered as elective courses, provide an overview of guidance counselling needs of school-age children and the role of teachers in addressing these needs. In either of these courses, little or no discussion takes place on the needs of the school teachers. This rests on the assumption that teachers are professionally and personally different individuals, and that the two domains neither overlap nor interface with each other. A second assumption is that a teacher's mental health is irrelevant for school functioning. Teachers are deemed capable of addressing their own needs, with the organization having no responsibility towards addressing their emotional needs. This is quite different from the way that the needs of other professionals are seen and addressed. Studies on this have indicated that teachers are at an increased risk of developing mental health issues (Kaur & Singh, 2019; Kidger et al., 2016; Shukla & Trivedi, 2008; Stansfeld et al., 2011). In a study by Titheradge et al. (2019), the levels of psychological distress in primary school teachers were studied in comparison to the general population. The study found increased and sustained levels of psychological distress when compared to a sample of other professionals from the general population. The study excluded teachers who were working in particularly challenging environments, such as those who worked with children with special needs, as their levels of stress were likely to be higher.

Jensen (2018), in a TED Talk on the emotional needs of teachers, discussed the important role of teachers in holding the class together. Teachers act as a strong link, forging ties between students from diverse backgrounds. Particularly when teaching students from personally difficult circumstances, teachers tend to take home the trauma and emotional disturbances of their students. Here, the role of the teacher is not just to present the subject matter in the best possible way to meet diverse learning needs, but also to forge relationships with and between students. On the one hand, this requires teachers to be prepared with basic counselling skills in order to identify when their students are undergoing emotional disturbance at home or at school, and also to be able to address their learners' needs. On the other hand, the accumulated emotion that comes from being connected with and concerned about their students, needs a certain level of attention. Jensen (2018) referred to this as "secondary trauma" or "compassion fatigue." In addition, teachers' personal lives can be as demanding as that of any other professional. Glazzard and Rose (2019) studied the impact of teacher wellbeing and mental health on student progress in the primary school setting. The teachers in the study reported a number of issues, including "crisis in personal lives, specially relationship difficulties, family bereavement or illness, and child care issues" (p. 4), that impact upon their emotional wellbeing. Factors related to the workplace included increased workload during assessment periods, extracurricular activities, and changes in school leadership. Most teachers in the study agreed that teachers' wellbeing affects their work as professionals. Sisask et al. (2014) found that teachers with poor mental health have a lesser belief in their own ability to help support students' wellbeing and mental health.

However, on average, a teacher's regular working day requires greater engagement with their students than with their colleagues. This reality means that there is only a small leap required for school teachers to expect their workplace to provide opportunities to share personal difficulties or a sounding board. In addition, teachers are mostly expected to leave their emotions outside of the classroom, to put on a brave and cheerful face in front of their students, and to carry on their working day without reference to issues experienced in their personal lives. Schoolchildren in Glazzard and Rose's (2019) study reported being aware of their teachers' moods and emotions, and that they were able to perceive when their teachers were feeling stressed "even if they tried to hide it" (p. 5). Students reported that teachers'

stress manifests through their behavior, and that they appeared "unusually short tempered…shouted at the class more than normal,…got upset when pupils did not understand the work that they were given, classroom behavior deteriorated; and less work than usual was completed in their lessons" (p. 31).

All of this points towards the need to first recognize the mental health needs of teachers, and second, to provide mental healthcare services for teachers. The sole responsibility of providing these care services need not rest with the school, however, with community-based services and provisions offering counselling services as part of the available healthcare through which teachers can avail appropriate mental health services. However, a large responsibility rests with teacher education programs to address the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health concerns. While policy changes proposed in the 2020 National Education Policy have ensured that every school in India employs a counsellor, this is inadequate by far to cater to the needs of students in today's large senior secondary schools. Therefore, the needs of teachers are thus often not paid sufficient attention, either by the school authorities or from school counsellors.

*Potential of Teacher Education Programs*

The discussion so far has highlighted the need for addressing the mental health needs of school teachers. The subsequent paragraphs explore the potential of teacher education programs as a means to addressing these concerns.

Almost all teacher education programs teach course(s) on policy perspectives on education. These courses help prospective teachers to see historical developments in education and to develop a macro perspective towards understanding the education system. Such courses hold the potential to encourage students to revisit policies in education to see the possibilities of including dimensions of mental and emotional wellness. While these may not bring about a change in policy, it will help to sensitize prospective teachers towards recognizing the impact of policy recommendations on the emotional needs of school students and teachers. Another possibility is for teacher educators to take the lead in policy formulation, with teacher educators invited as experts in the formulation and revision of education policy. As such, they can take a lead role in paving the way towards the inclusion of mental health concerns of teachers in policy frameworks.

Another possibility is for teacher education programs to strengthen the component of research in education. This can be undertaken by encouraging preservice teachers to engage in research, and in turn affording them the opportunity to understand field realities. Further, research on teachers' role profiles, workloads, psychological wellbeing, and other similar areas can help contribute to a discourse that strengthens the need to address the mental health concerns of teachers. Teacher education programs can then be better informed and responsive to the needs of both schools and teachers through research undertaken in the school setting.

As previously mentioned, courses in psychology in education tend to focus on learners and learning, with few courses providing any insight into teachers having to deal with the stressors of teaching. Glazzard and Rose (2019) suggested that all teacher training courses should include a module on teachers' wellbeing in order to provide trainee teachers with appropriate strategies to manage their mental health and thereby to increase their resilience. Teacher education programs can begin by acknowledging the need to address the concerns of teachers. Furthermore, teacher educators could participate in curriculum revision processes at the university level. Finally, theory and practicum courses that focus on self-development and emotional wellbeing of teachers could be introduced.

*Section IV: Role of Teachers in the 21st Century*

The 21st century has brought about new opportunities and challenges, with a world changing at a tremendous pace. Additionally, technological innovation, changing social structures, and political and global upheaval have led to increases in the pace and magnitude of change. One of the challenges that today's schools face is preparing students to face these changes and those yet unknown. Harari (2018) wrote extensively on the changes expected in the 21st century, pointing out that technological advancements have already made it necessary for people to constantly update their skills in order to meet the continually evolving professional demands. Therefore, learners have to be equipped with the ability to constantly update their knowledge and technical expertise, with it no longer uncommon to see people shifting their specializations and becoming super-specialists within their respective professional domains. Harari (2018) predicted that just as people often no longer work for one single organization for their entire career, by the middle of the 21st century, people would no longer be able to continue in the same profession throughout their working lives. Many professions are likely to become redundant in a world that is becoming ever more digitized and mechanized. Coupled with increases in human lifespan, this translates into the need for people to be able to adapt to major lifestyle changes every few years.

These trends present major implications for education as well as for teacher education, of which some are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

*Teacher as a Learner*

It is commonly said that teacher have to be lifelong learners, and this is only likely to increase. With continually changing expectations from learners, there is a corresponding need for teachers to constantly update their knowledge and skills in order to meet the demands that stem from changing educational goals.

One important aspect of being lifelong learners is being able to develop metacognitive skills. Teachers will have to be more cognizant of their own learning style and pace in order to ensure that they are able to learn independently. Given the pace of change in today's world, teachers will have to work more towards the metacognitive abilities of their students. Teacher education programs therefore also need to focus on developing metacognitive learning rather than only studying learning theories, styles, and paces.

*Adaptability*

Acknowledging the pace of social change would mean that such adaptability would be considered highly valuable. Education would thus move beyond subject-based knowledge which would in any case become outdated in just a few years. Instead, developing an understanding of a world that allows for adaptability and resilience in changing circumstances would serve better based on current trends.

*Emotional Stability*

Frequent changes in technology, information explosion, and professions have the potential to leave individuals baffled and therefore lagging behind their peers. People trained in particular professions may suddenly face knowledge redundancy and a sense of professional uselessness. Harari (2018) argued that people with emotional strength and stability are more likely to survive this change.

Teacher education programs should therefore aim to prepare teachers to have a deeper understanding of themselves, are emotional stable, and able to find a sense of purpose and meaning in life in the hope that they can develop the same abilities in their students.

*Reinventing Pedagogical Strategies*

The previous discussion has pointed towards the need to revisit teacher education program curricula. As mentioned, courses in psychology have mostly focused on learners and learning styles. However, this may not be sufficient to prepare students for the changing lifestyles of the 21st century. Furthermore, teachers' psychological needs also warrant considerable attention, as has been highlighted here. The focus in pedagogical courses should therefore shift from the treatment of subject-based content to the integration of more life-based skills that support adaptability, an understanding of one's self, and emotional stability. This reformation would require a greater infusion of psychological perspectives in the pedagogical preparation of preservice teachers, as they would have to learn to prepare lessons with an active effort towards integrating life skills into their teaching. Pedagogical strategies would need to shift away from content-based learning to the provision of opportunities for decision making, critical thinking, and emotional wellness.

## 3. CONCLUSION

*Concluding Remarks.* Contemporary studies of psychology in education provide perspectives on learning and development. These can be used to establish learning goals, prepare lessons, and engage with learners across the developmental and diversity spectrum. Psychology courses also need to be reoriented in order to shift their emphasis towards addressing the psychological needs of teachers. The previous section briefly discussed the changes expected in the 21st century. With a need for greater adaptability and emotional stability, courses in psychology will have to be reoriented from organizing learning content to better suit learners' needs, towards developing life skills.

Courses in psychology provide an understanding of the learner and insight into preparing to join the teaching profession. At the same time, it is important to recognize that developments in the psychology courses also impact upon the way that learners are understood. The discussion on behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism all point towards the same focus under the psychology of learning. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge that our understanding of psychology has also been shaped by the sociohistorical forces that have evolved over time. There is a current shift from scientific objectivity in psychology towards embracing social issues and their impact upon the lives of individuals. This also changes our understanding of learners as we consider them in terms of their social embeddedness. Both learners and teachers need to be understood within the frame of social contexts of gender, caste, class, etc. A pluralistic understanding of childhood celebrates diversity, accepting each child according to their own uniqueness, paving the way for more inclusive teaching and learning.

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

**Toolika Wadhwa** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Education, Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women, University of Delhi, India. Her recent publications include Guidance and Counselling for Children and Adolescents in Schools (2017), and Negotiating Identity and Religion: Young Adults in Inter-Religious Families (2020). Her research interests are in the area of Commerce Education, Identity, and Mental Health.
Email: toolikawadhwa@spm.du.ac.in
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4112-4950