VCE Psychology: Sample teaching plan

Sample Course Outline – VCE Psychology Unit 2: How do external factors influence behaviour and mental processes?

**Note:** This is a sample guide only and indicates one way to present the content from the *VCE Psychology Study Design* over the weeks in each school term. Teachers are advised to consider their own contexts in developing learning activities: Which local fieldwork sites would support learning in the topic area? Which local issues lend themselves to debate and investigation? Which experiments can students complete within the resource limitations of their learning environments?

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| **Week** | **Area** | **Topics** | **Learning activities** |
| 1 | **What influences a person’s perception of the world?** | **Sensation and Perception** (sensation and perception as two complementary but distinct roles; taste and vision as two examples of human sensory systems; influences of biological, psychological and social factors on visual perception; influences of biological, psychological and social factors on gustatory perception) | * undertake an eye dissection, examining the main structures and components of the eye
* participate in activities that demonstrate inattentional blindness/change blindness
* ask students to take photographs of symbols they see in their everyday world (for example, at work, on the way home from school, during weekend activities); in groups, ask students to present the symbols they have found and describe how Gestalt principles are used to create meaningful perception of the images
* create an online reflective blog related to a series of practical activities relating to taste (for example ‘How does sight affect taste?’)
* investigate the evidence supporting a sixth taste receptor – ‘fat’
* compare fMRI images of people with synaesthesia to people without synaesthesia to understand differences in brain activity of people with synaesthesia
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| 5 | **Distortions of perception** (fallibility of visual and gustatory systems; distortions of perception of taste in healthy brains) |
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| 8 | **How are people influenced to behave in particular ways?** | **Social cognition** (role of person perception, attributions, attitudes and stereotypes; applications and limitations of tri-component model of attitudes; attitudes and stereotypes that may lead to prejudice and discrimination) | * analyse an opinion poll published in the media; consider how qualitative and quantitative data has been used to support the purpose of the survey and consider the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data
* select a media article that presents a particular viewpoint on a current issue; construct a graphic organiser that identifies possible components that may have contributed to the attitudes evident in the article
* view episodes of ‘Go back to where you came from’ (SBS television) and consider the roles that person perception, attributions, attitudes and stereotypes may play in the development of prejudice and discrimination
* as a class, develop and administer a 20-item survey to measure attitudes on a class-determined issue; report on the results of the survey, including a summary of how survey items were developed, selected and edited, and a survey conclusion
* take a virtual tour of the Stanford Prison Experiment website ([www.prisonexp.org](http://www.prisonexp.org)), which features an extensive slide show and information about this classic psychology experiment; discuss the ethics of the study
* use a problem-based learning approach to investigate an issue relating to prejudice, discrimination, bullying and negative media influences; students negotiate the production of a media product as an outcome of the investigation
* consider the influence advertising and marketing has on eating behaviours in young children; choose a position on the issue and write a ‘letter to the editor’ arguing for your chosen position
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| 11 | **Social influences on behaviour** (influence of status and power within groups, and obedience and conformity on individual behaviour; influence on helping behaviour; factors that influence bullying; positive and negative influences of media on individual and group behaviour) |
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| 15 | **Student-directed practical investigation**  | **Student-directed practical investigation** (students work independently or in groups to develop a question for investigation; plan a course of action to answer the question and submit plans to the teacher for approval; undertake an investigation to collect the appropriate primary qualitative and/or quantitative data; organise and interpret the data; reach a conclusion in response to the question; and present findings to a selected audience in a negotiated format) |
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| 18 | **Unit** **revision** |
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