Educational and Developmental Psychology

As the title suggests, this specialist area of psychology is at the intersection of child, school, educational and developmental psychology and has a strong developmental, behavioural and ecological (or contextual) focus. Educational and developmental psychologists adhere to the scientist-practitioner model and place an emphasis on using valid and reliable assessment procedures, an explicit problem analysis / case conceptualisation process, working collaboratively with teachers, parents and others, and using evidence-based interventions and robust evaluation methodologies.

Although closely linked to special education, practitioners also work in mainstream educational, family and community settings. Their client base is children from birth through to adulthood and often those with developmental disabilities and learning, behaviour and emotional disorders, both in regular and special education settings, along with their families and relevant community agencies. However educational and developmental psychology is equally concerned with normal developmental, learning and teaching processes and with working at the systems level in schools and early childhood facilities. Practitioners are therefore very familiar with the school curriculum (especially literacy, numeracy and language instruction), instructional design and adaptations, inclusive teaching practices and strategies, the assessment of adaptive behaviours and classroom behaviour management strategies. They are often involved in designing interventions for children with behavioural, social and emotional, self-care and daily living skills and in assisting those responsible for them, in enhancing their parenting and teaching skills.

In New Zealand, educational psychologists employed by the Ministry of Education work with preschool children having significant developmental delays and with school-aged children having very high special needs and serious behavioural difficulties. They have recently become more involved with behaviour management systems-level work in schools as well as student behaviour management. They facilitate projects in educational settings, including schools, homes and communities to improve the systems that influence child learning and development. They also provide parenting programmes for at-risk parents. Work with school-aged children having academic and learning problems is undertaken by psychologists in private practice who are either employed or contracted by schools or parents. Educational and developmental psychologists also work in other Government Ministries (e.g. Child, Youth and Family Service), District Health Boards and non-governmental agencies and trusts.

To register as an educational psychologist you need to have a minimum of a Masters degree in psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an accredited Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Psychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for the Educational Psychologist scope of practice requires a Psychologists Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.
A Master's degree in Education may be considered equivalent to a Master's degree in psychology where its content is sufficiently educational psychology in nature.

To find out more about educational psychology internships and study opportunities click below.

Ministry of Education
http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~/media/MinEdu/Files/EducationSectors/SpecialEducation/
CareersProfessionalDevelopment/EducationalPsychologistsBrochureGaryMcClintock.pdf
http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~/media/MinEdu/Files/EducationSectors/SpecialEducation/
CareersProfessionalDevelopment/Newsletters/NewsletterPDFAugust2012.pdf

Massey University
http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course-paper/programme.cfm?prog_id=93112

Victoria University
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/education/schools/educational-psychology-and-pedagogy/
To find out more about registering in the educational psychology scope of practice go to
http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz/scopes-of-practice2