**An Introduction to Educational Psychology**

**Introduction**

Educational psychology has developed through several periods of time which differ

from each other. The roots of educational psychology emerged from the era of ancient

Greek philosophers and developed through times to become a more interesting field in

Education. Through the changes of educational psychology, several theories and

approaches emerged and studied different issues that have relationships with education as

well as psychology. Each one of these approaches and theories have a different point of

view on the teaching-learning process.

**1. Historical background of Educational Psychology**

The field of educational psychology has a long and prestigious history; it started

with the ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. Now, educational psychology

has developed to discuss the best methods and strategies of teaching and other issues

concerning the learning process such as the relationship between a student and a teacher,

and the nature of learning.

In the Sixteenth-century, the Spanish philosopher Juan Luis Vives emphasized the

need of adapting teaching methods according to the students’ levels and needs. Additionally, He also believed that the use of self-comparison assessment methods is better than competition, to evaluate the students’ work.

In the1600s, the Czech theologian and educator Johan Amos Comenius, was the first to

introduce visual aids in the classroom. He claimed that understanding is the goal of

teaching not memorization. The 1700s is distinguished with several European philosophers

such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Friedrich Herbart, and Friedrich Wilhelm August

Froebel. They focused on the value of activity, prior experience of students, and interest.

All these ideas are consistent with current work in educational psychology.

In the 1890s, the philosopher William James wrote the textbook principles of

psychology then he provided American education psychology with a series of lectures for

educators given around the country called “Talks to Teachers about Psychology” which

was about the application of psychology in education. He supported the idea that stress on

the importance of observing teaching and learning in classroom for improving education.

His methods seem to have taken effect: James’ student, G. Stanley Hall, founded the

American Psychological Association. Hall wrote prolifically about children and

adolescents, encouraging teachers to keep careful records of the academic development of

their students.

John Dewey, the student of Hall, is considered to be the father of the progressive

education movement. Edward Lee Thorndike was also one of Jame’s students and went on

to start the Journal of Educational Psychology in 1910(Reynolds and Miller 3).Thorndike

wrote the first textbook on educational psychology at the turn of the twentieth century. For

the first half of the century, educational development and psychology remained closely

tied, as evidenced by the contributions to education supplied by renowned psychologists:

Jean Piaget, Alfred Binet, and Benjamin Bloom. In the 1960s, modern educational psychology was distinguished with the contributions of Jerome Bruner and David Ausubel. Jerome Bruner emphasized on the research into inductive reasoning and discovery learning, but Ausubel disagreed because he emphasized that the learning process must occur deductively.

**2. Educational psychology**

Educational psychology is one of the most exciting fast growing and dynamic field in

psychology today. As Marcia defined “It is the branch of psychology focused on the

development of effective teaching techniques and assessment of learners’ aptitudes and

progress”.

Educational psychology is also defined by Kaplan (1990) “as the application of

psychology to education by focusing on the development, evaluation and application of

theories and principles of learning and instruction that can enhance lifelong learning.” (qtd

in Williams and Burden 6). It is the application of the principles and concepts of

psychology in the different issues of education such as the development of teaching ,

learning , motivation , instruction , assessment , and others topics which are concerned

with the teaching and learning process.