Overviewing Learning Theories

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I hope to become an educator that acts as a provider to develop key abilities by proposing professional characteristics, develops educating plans that suit the diverse magnitude of students, and accommodates to every individual’s needs within my own classroom. To ensure students gain something out of teaching and instructing, I hope to have a complete grasp on a diverse amount of learning theories. As an educator, I know that the learning theories I may use might change and evolve throughout my years, but learning theories such as constructivism, cognitivist, and humanism are great theories to build a teaching philosophy upon and form the framework of teaching to use throughout a majority of classroom settings.

**Constructivism**

The learning theory constructivism, offers a unique approach in which the students are often being educated through building an internal illustration of knowledge (Kumari). Constructivism gives students an opportunity to engage in their own interpretation of learning content and provides hands on, active, and goal-directed experiences. With constructivism, the students have to form and construct their own body of knowledge through developing individual and collective forms of meaningful content (Kumari). The teacher’s role with the constructivist theory is far from direct instruction. The teachers act as the provider of the learning setting that promotes an influential learning environment, poses the challenges and questions of the given topic, and provides the aid of expertise in the field or simply support for cognitive construction (Kumari). Educators of all forms can use open-ended questions to help guide and promote higher order thinking skill amongst their class through this learning theory. Lastly, constructivism offers students a way to guide their own learning by piquing the interest areas of each individual student and promoting deeper thinking to arrive at a general consensus of the content.

**Cognitivism**

Cognitive learning theory consists of effectively teaching instructional content that can align with a learner’s cognitive architecture (Khalil). This means that an educator’s course content should be effectively implemented to move through a learner’s sensory memory, working memory, and lastly, their long-term memory. According to Khalil, the author *of Applying Learning Theories and Instructional Design Models for Effective Instruction,* learning occurs through a very slight and limited working memory and the goal is to push that information into an unlimited long-term memory. The methods used to place content within the long-term memory is vast and numerous in their own respectful categories. Each educator may have their own methods that they find favorable amongst others (Khalil). However, through implementation of human modeling and reinforcement with feedback, educators can increase their student’s ability to achieve academic success through the Cognitive Learning Theory (Khalil). If student’s feel an importance on going to class and learning the content, they will have an easier time moving that content into long-term memory.

**Humanism**

Li Zhou, the author of *Supporting Humanistic Learning Experiences through Learning with Technology* stated, “Humanism is the only learning theory that emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between learning and the learner and the reciprocal relationship between individual actualization and social transformation that make learning a unique human experience.” This means that within humanism, the value of education belongs to the student’s self-idealization of content. In humanism, the student’s learning is guided by their ability to make concrete determinations and personal decisions. The main goal for humanism is to promote self-direction and ultimate self-learning for all students engaged with this learning theory (Zhou). In similar terms, humanistic learning is a journey of a personal growth experience throughout a student’s educational process. There are four areas of the humanistic learning theory that deal with personal growth, according to Li Zhou. The four areas include 1) learner’s self-direction, that includes their awareness of learning practices, 2) learner’s self-reflection, that involves troubleshooting during learning problems as well as issues, 3) learner’s inner motivation, that explains their effort and recognition of learning importance, and 4) learner’s personal growth achieved from the learning process (Zhou). By incorporation those four areas of the Humanistic Learning Theory, educators can promote an intrinsic value system amongst their students in regards to their education.

**Teaching Philosophy**

I believe that teachers are completely responsible for a student’s education plan and directly related to a student’s success in the classroom. Every student is different, but the teacher’s ability to educate all students of different backgrounds, ethnicity, home life, and gender correlate to the assessment of the student’s knowledge. Multiple factors can be taken into account when thinking of how to successfully educate students, including classroom setting, correct lesson planning with the curriculum given, and effective implementation of learning theories that will help aid student learning as well as academic success. I believe time and experience help make a teacher better through trial and error and I cannot theorize an influential hallmark to teaching without first trying it with students in an actual classroom setting. However, I believe implementation of the learning theories of constructivism, cognitivism, and humanism will certainly aid my teaching practices and support my teaching philosophy.

Constructivism successfully fits into my teaching philosophy because constructivism offers a hands-on, active, and progressive way of learning. Constructivism will certainly reach out to the most diverse learning settings and offer an alternative way to engage and promote student learning. Because constructivism engages students to create their own interpretation of the content, it allows the content to be assessable to all types of student diversity. Incorporating Project-Based Learning is another way constructivism can influence learners. By allowing students to take grasp of their own education, I feel they will be able to create a formal idea of the given content knowledge.

The way the Cognitive Learning Theory fits into my teaching philosophy is not with individualizing teaching methods and assessment strategies to each student, but creating teaching practices that promote successful learning. These practices again are numerous and diverse but offering students teaching practices that benefit their learning may help their ability to move sensory information into long-term memory. Several aspects may be included in successful cognitive learning theory practices, but I have developed some key areas that may promote cognitive learning. The most important is offering an attractive and peaceful learning environment with natural light to aid in learning. I also believe that deciphering and offering meaningful and appropriate curriculum to help raise interest with students will help aid cognitive learning. Additionally, I think incorporating collaboration amongst peers will aid in the effort. I also want to provide ample wait time for questioning and projects so even the slower processing students can be engaged and participate. Lastly, I want to offer slight procedural and ritual schemes to help ease the minds of learners to promote a working memory friendly environment.

The learning theory I am most eager to incorporate into my classroom is the Humanistic Learning Theory. I found the quote given by Li Zhou to be very appealing in the regards to the Humanistic Learning Theory, “Most learning theories treat learners as the instruments of their learning: as the receivers (behaviorism), the processors (cognitivism), or the builders of knowledge (constructivism). I believe this fits in my teaching philosophy because of its diverse usage and incorporating the student’s self-direction for ultimate self-learning. I put great importance in my teaching philosophy on the effort to academically challenge the diverse students I will have in my classroom. I want humanistic learning to be in the form of collaboration within my classroom as well as reciprocal teaching. This is accomplished by developing thoughtful lesson plans that incorporate student-directed learning. Through doing so; students will have a humanistic grasp on the content being given and their education as a whole.

Since every student will learn differently, there is need for a different adaptation to his or her individual learning. Not every student is at the same educational level within the grades of the students, so I believe teachers must be very flexible and accommodate for those different learning levels for all students. Teachers must do this to engage every student in each class period and do this in a way where everybody’s needs are met in his or her own learning level. I believe a way to do this effectively is implementing different methods of teaching throughout a school year or semester with students. Finally, I believe that taking the material taught and turning it into an easier demonstration to make the students focus more on why this is taught, instead of getting through the class with a grade is essential. I believe that by doing so, the student will engaged more, but they will also be able to take the information and put it from their working memory, into his or her long-term memory. I hope to use several learning theories to help aid in making the content beneficial to students is a necessity and I know that will be one of my main priorities.

References

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