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Learning Theories

Every child is a unique individual who should learn specific knowledge and skills in order to become effective citizens of the world. Therefore, learning theories are strategies to help students learn and develop a deeper understanding of the material. There are many different approaches to learning, but I intend to cover constructivism, behaviorism, and social learning theory. Ultimately, educators have to understand all learning theories and accommodate or modify their strategies in order to become an effective teacher.

First, constructivism is a strategy that promotes active learning and hands-on activities. Sigmund Tobias (2010) noted that “constructivism was stimulated by a number of scholars including Dewey (1929), Piaget (1952), Bruner (1966), [and] Von Glasersfeld (1989)” (p.51). Furthermore, John Dewey viewed children as an active learner and argued that children learn best by doing. In addition, Dewey emphasized that education should focus on the whole child and how children adapt to their environment. Ultimately, constructivism learning theory is widely accepted and has provided educators useful insight on how children learn best.

Moreover, educators who use the constructivism approach will engage students in active learning to help them understand and apply information. Therefore, teachers can use numerous teaching practices or strategies involving experiments, real-world problem solving, and project-based learning activities. In the end, students construct their own understanding through the use of hands-on activities and will eventually become expert learners through the constructivist approach.

Secondly, behaviorism is the view that behavior and learning are caused by external stimulus. Therefore, educators work to alter student behavior with stimuli. Teachers should document student behavior at the beginning of the year and continuously watch for change or development over an extended period of time. Furthermore, Phillip Strain, notes “behaviorism offers an organized and complete model for understanding the ways individuals survive, grow, and become instrumental in their interactions with the physical and social environment” (p.121). Ultimately, this learning approach is explained by observable experiences and how students change or respond to environmental stimuli.

Lastly, social learning theory emphasizes the importance of learning with and from others. In addition, this theory promotes social modeling to help shift the views and behaviors of students. Furthermore, Shanna Kattari (2015) states that “social learning theory is a psychological theory explaining how social influences impact the beliefs and actions of individual members of society” (379). Therefore, students should surround themselves with positive classmate’s since a person’s social peers may impact their attitudes, emotions, and their willingness to achieve. Ultimately, Kattari writes, “social learning theory is now widely accepted in the fields of psychology, counseling, social work, and higher education” (380). In the end, social learning theory helps students learn by collaborating with others and from observing human behavior through modeling.

Moreover, learning theories are essential to help students learn and apply information. Constructivism, behaviorism, and social learning theory are all unique approaches that optimize learning in a different way for students. Therefore, I am devoted and willing to learn how each student learns best inside the classroom in order for me to develop student’s skills, knowledge and values.

Constructivism is a great learning approach for students who have prior knowledge of a subject and enjoy active learning. In addition, constructivism is a perfect fit into my teaching philosophy. I believe having an active classroom will help students discover knowledge on their own, develop critical thinking skills, and promote communication and collaboration. Constructivism is a student-centered learning approach that emphasizes interaction and avoids too many “boring” teacher lectures. As a result, I will help facilitate activities and projects that promote active learning. Therefore, I would implement constructivism in my classroom by having experiments, research projects, class discussions, field-related experiences/trips, problem and project-based learning. In the end, constructivism is an effective approach for students who enjoy active learning. Ultimately, this learning theory is an appropriate fit into my philosophy do to the skills and knowledge students learn.

Furthermore, behaviorism helps emphasize the importance of children making connections between experiences and behavior. This theory aligns with my philosophy in two areas. First, behaviorism will help me teach students multiple skills including active listening, appropriate behavior, and positive attitudes that are all necessary to have in school and the workforce. Secondly, if I can alter student’s behavior then I should be able to effectively communicate the importance of values. Values are student’s principles or standards of behavior that they should follow each day of their life. In the end, this learning theory is a great way to help students learn specific skills and values that are important in school and for the real-world.

Lastly, social learning theory is an excellent approach that uses collaboration with others to produce knowledge. This learning theory fits my philosophy in two categories. First, social learning theory is an effective approach to optimize learning and student knowledge through activities. I will incorporate group work by using role playing scenarios, debating a topic, project-based learning, and in-class assignments. Secondly, students will develop communication and collaboration skills from group work. I will differentiate by grouping students homogenously and heterogeneously to help all students learn from other individuals. Ultimately, social learning theory is an excellent approach to help students learn specific knowledge and develop important life skills.

Overall, there are numerous approaches to help students learn specific knowledge, skills, and values. Educators have to realize the importance of how their students learn in order to optimize learning. The three learning theories I explained are great ways to get students actively engaged in material, to promote learning with and from others, and to develop student behavior with stimuli. Ultimately, students are unique individuals who have different learning preferences; however, every student should learn specific knowledge and skills in order to become competent adults.

References

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