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Learning Theories

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Learning Theories

Learning theories are approaches that evaluate how learners receive, internalize, and retain instructors' information. The methods are useful, especially in education, because good performance is only attained if the students understand and have an excellent memory to write the examinations and apply them in the outside world. Different scholars have developed approaches such as behaviorism, social, cognitivism, situational, motivational, constructivism and humanism. The literature compares and constructs these learning theories, describing their strengths and weaknesses and how each approach affects the planning process and supports interdisciplinary instruction.

BF Skinner developed the behaviorism approach, and it is based on operant conditioning. The theory claims that knowledge exists separately from the people because they are blank and therefore need learning (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). In their view, learning occurs where new behaviors are introduced by creating a connection between stimuli and response. For instance, if classroom rules are put, learners learn to concentrate and therefore perform well. Cognitivism, developed by Jean Piaget, claims that learning depends on the learners' thought process rather than behavior. The scholar insists that human beings internalize the information acquired other than just responding to anything presented (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). Similarly, to behaviorists, the cognitive theory says that when the thought process is altered by learning, the behaviors change, but with the mental approach, the changes occur due to the processes taking place in the learners' heads.

The social learning theory by Albert Bandura insists that observing and imitating the behaviors and attitudes of other people determines the outcomes. The approach borrows ideas from the environmental and cognitive concepts, saying that humans process the information in the environment, selecting the type of learning. For example, suppose a younger learner observes that the parents are keen on matters of education. In that case, they become

motivated in it as their thoughts connect learning with positive outcomes like securing a job. As Lave and Wenger said, the situational approach claims that all ideas and human actions are based on generalization since they adjust according to the environment (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). It is based on the notion that their tasks in the community situate the things people learn and see. The other learning theory is constructivism claiming that people learn based on personal experiences and internal information.

The approach insists that learning happens when one person develops a meaning of their experiences. Learning is a driver by the learner, making it unique in everyone as people have different perceptions. The motivational theory says that learning becomes successful when the people involved understand and appreciate the process. When this is the case, they become motivated to gain the knowledge and skills delivered. The theory is similar to cognitivism because the learners have to process the elements to understand their importance. Notably, the humanism learning theory is identical to constructivism. It says that learners are guided by the urge to be self-actualized, based on the hierarchy of human needs (Wang, 2012). Learners need to understand their path and what to attain to engage in the expected roles. Moreover, the environment plays a role because when the learners are guided, they become more evident than when proper guidance lacks.

The above learning theories have strengths and weaknesses. Behaviorism is reliable because it helps teachers observe the learners and judge their actions towards learning. However, the idea is limiting because it is one one-dimensional. Relying on it would make teachers not consider the internal factors like the mood that would affect the learning process. Cognitivism has a strength, as teachers would use it to motivate the learners. Specifically, it would be used in changing their thoughts towards a better attitude towards learning. However, the approach is limiting because it can only be applied to the behaviorism approach. The social and situated theories have strength because a particular behavior would

be passed from one generation to another. The adults-only need to be positive role models to the young. However, the approach assumes that the things that worked for older people would work for the rest, which is false. Constructivism and motivation theory is reliable because learners get the chance to determine their path. Each learner needs to understand their destiny and work on it with the help of factors like the environment (Wang, 2012). However, the approaches would make the learners end up in paths that harm the society because the inner drive is prioritized over the externals. Similarly, humanism allows the students to define their ways but would easily break the societal expectations in search of their destiny. Thus, the learning theories have strengths and weaknesses, which would be considered before application.

Each of the above theories affects the planning process and supports interdisciplinary instruction. For example, in behaviorism, teachers and other parties observed behaviors to determine the association. For example, the teacher would introduce rules that every learner should not have phones in class and other distractions to perform well. The cognitivism insists on an internal process of information, in that teachers use direct and straightforward information so that the learners process the data. The theory says that teachers need to mind what gets to the learners' heads as it determines the process. The learning process in constructivism insists on personal knowledge and experiences.

Like the motivational and humanism approaches, when learners understand concepts, they become motivated to learn. It implies that teachers need to enhance the learners' thinking, for example, by teaching on problem-solving. When a student encounters an issue, they should consult teachers and other learners instead of giving up. Based on the above description, the learning theories are interdisciplinary. It means they need to be combined for the right learning to occur despite their differing notions (Schunk, 2012). For instance, teachers can apply the cognitive theory to behaviorism. Here, learners become efficient in

their behaviors by controlling their thoughts. For that reason, instructors need to combine the ideas to eliminate the weaknesses and maximize the benefits.

In summation, the learning theories have similarities and differences that result in varying learning processes. However, they are dependent because one approach needs assistance from the other to access maximum learning benefits. For that reason, instructors must make use of both for the better of the learners. With this taken into consideration, learning will not only be enjoyable but also easier hence having a successful process.

References

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