

Learning Theories

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A learning theory describes how students best process, absorb, and learn information. Learning theories influence a teacher's philosophy and are incorporated throughout their curriculum. A teacher's philosophy is specific to their style of teaching and their beliefs of how students best learn. It is the same for learning theories; different teachers believe in applying different theories and what works for one teacher may not work for another. As for my future classroom, I will strive to incorporate behaviorism, humanism, and 21st Century skills.

Behaviorism

Behaviorism was inspired by four learning theorists: Pavlov, Skinner, Thorndike, and Watson. (Belanger, 2011, p.51). The theory focuses on rewards and consequences by stimulating a desired behavior with extrinsic motivation. An example in education would be, "If you do not complete your homework, you will receive a zero in the grade book." In this example, the student(s) are motivated to complete their homework because they do not want to receive a zero in the grade book (the consequence). Schools and teachers use this theory to produce a desired behavior. Behaviorism is common in classrooms and most teachers use a form of it each day.

Humanism

Humanism was inspired by three learning theorists: Maslow, Rogers, and Knowles (Belanger, 2011, p.51). This theory views learning as "a personal act to fulfill potential" (Belanger, 2011, p.51). Teachers are to facilitate the learning and development of the whole person in a positive environment. A humanistic classroom helps learners build self-confidence and allows them to think creatively. The teacher's role in a humanistic classroom is to facilitate learning as a self-directed process and help students develop self-awareness and self-actualization. According to Rogers, this type of learning can only take place when the content is relevant to the learner.

21st Century Skills

With technology and the ever changing world, there was a need for skills that could be used in the workplace. The International Society for Technology in Education saw the need and called for improvement in the following areas: 1) Creativity and Innovation; 2) Communication and Collaboration; 3) Research and Information Fluency; 4) Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making; 5) Digital Citizenship; and 6) Technology Operations and Concepts (Larson & Miller, 2011). A 21st Century classroom promotes these skills and allows for students to experience learning in authentic ways that can be applied in their future. The role of the teacher in a 21st Century classroom is to incorporate the 21st Century skills into the curriculum and help students prepare for society and the workplace.

Personal Reflection

As a future educator, my goal is to incorporate humanism, behaviorism, and 21st Century skills in my classroom. I believe it is important to bring humanism into the classroom because I want my students to reach their full potential. It is critical in this world to know your whole self and to have confidence in your abilities. I want to inspire students to be confident in their learning and the skills they have to offer. In a humanistic classroom, students' learning is to be self-directed, and I believe that I can implement this by allowing choices for my students. Giving students choices and allowing them to pick their activity or assignment will increase their motivation. Students will be more active in their learning and want to continue to dig deeper into their learning. Understanding students' interests will also increase their motivation level and as a teacher, I need to build relationships with my students to know their interests and what motives them.

I want to incorporate a form of behaviorism into my classroom. I believe it is important for students to understand that there are consequences for their actions. As students enter into

society and the workplace, they will notice that our government and most workplaces practice behaviorism. An example is, if you commit a crime, there is a punishment, or if you do not complete a task at work, you are not going to be asked to do it again. In my classroom, I do not believe in implementing harsh consequences but rather consequences that are stated in the school's policy regarding a specific action. I want students to know that I follow the school's policy for being late to class, turning in late work, or for participating in disruptive behavior. It is important as a teacher to stand united with your school and their policies because it creates standards and expectations that the students should follow.

It is critical for some students' motivation level to understand why they are learning specific content. These students want to see a "real world" connection or how they can use the content in the future. I want my students to understand why the content I am teaching to them is important and how they can apply it in the "real world." I want to promote 21st Century skills in my classroom. I want my students to be able to make connections between the content and their future. Students will be collaborating with each other, thinking critically and creatively about the content, and communicating their ideas appropriately. This is critical for the next step in their life as they enter into the workforce or to continue their education. I will strive for my students to leave the classroom feeling more prepared and equipped for their future than they did when they entered the room.

Overall, humanism, behaviorism, and 21st Century skills are the learning theories that I will strive to promote and implement in my classroom. I believe that a combination of the theories will allow my students the best opportunity to learn and be prepared for their future. The theories have influenced not only my teaching philosophy but my classroom management environment and plan. Humanism and Behaviorism will help me as the teacher handle disruptive

students, behaviors, late work, tardiness, etc. There are many different learning theories, but humanism, behaviorism, and 21st Century skills are the ones that resonate with me the most.

References:

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