Learning Theories in My Teaching Philosophy

Throughout my experience from high school to college, education has been viewed as the transfer of knowledge. It seems like there would be a clear idea of how educators could transfer that knowledge, but it seems like no matter how hard we try to reinvent it, or try to change the course, it will always be about that. Throughout the years, teachers dictated, and students learned, and that's how it has been. Educators have put tremendous amounts of time developing theories and inventing solutions needed for education. I intend to discuss some of those learning theories now.

1. Behaviorism: This learning theory assumes that the learner is passive. Who only responds to their environmental stimuli? So, behaviorists believe that the student or the learner begins their academic year with a clean slate, and throughout that year their behavior is shaped through positive and negative reinforcements. Different positive and negative reinforcements both increase and decrease the chance from the behavior occurring again. Punishments and rewards decrease or increase the likelihood of a behavior happening again. Therefore, learning is best defined as change in the behavior of the learner. According to Kaya Yilmaz, "behaviorism as a teacher-centered instructional framework for a long time dominated educational settings, shaping every aspect of curriculum and instruction" ("The Cognitive Perspective on Learning" 33). One of the big ways I could incorporate behaviorism in my classroom is to establish rules and procedures of the behavior that I expect the first day and keep rehearsing it until it becomes second nature.

2. Constructivism: This considers that learning is to be active, it is a process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. Knowledge is grown out of

construction of personal experiences and assumptions from the environment. Through these assumptions testing is continuous through different social interactions. Each person has a way of interpreting different amounts of content and knowledge. I think one the main misconceptions about the constructivism is that educators should not teach anything directly, but instead a teacher should always allow the students to bring in their own ideas in and construct different ideas for themselves. "Constructivism is a theory about the relationship between the knower and the known. It proposes that knowledge is constructed through experiences with materials and people" (McCourt, 1970). I believe that one of the key ways to promote constructivism in your classroom is to always have positive criticism and develop deep relationships with your students. That way the student will be comfortable to come to you.

3. Student Centered Learning: Also known as the learner-centered approach, is a example in education as a successful alternative to traditional approaches that educators have found successful in the past. SCI is an effective instructional approach in which students have a say in the content or the activity that the educator has for the day. This model of learning places the students at the direct center of the learning process. The instructor is the one who provides the best opportunities to learn independently and from each other. This trains the students into skills they will later develop. Having properly implementing this theory will lead to students being motivated in learning, greater retention of the knowledge the educator plans on teaching, deeper understanding, and better attitudes all around. According to Alex Fung, "As more faculty members utilize student-centered methods, we should also

expect to see an increase in graduate teaching assistants who are asked to co-teach

these classes" ("The Role of Teaching Assistants in Student-Centered Learning",

148). I think when we start to bring it towards the students then both the student and

the teacher have a say in the way they approach the activity or the lesson.

Through all of these learning theories, though there are many different approaches to

learning, the three that I selected are at the core of what my teaching philosophy is going to be. I

think at the core of the teaching philosophy is to bring students to the center of the learning.

Also, to build relationships with your students is at the center of what my philosophy will be

based upon, because then as educators they are able to sympathize with students who come from

different backgrounds. Students will appreciate an educator taking time out of their busy

schedules to take an interest to how a student can become more successful.

Works Cited

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