

Comparing Learning Theories

Behaviorism

Constructivism

Cognitivism

Connectivism

Andragogy

Overview

The learner is a blank table on which the teacher acts through a game of positive or negative stimuli and reinforcements. Error is an element to be severely punished, while virtuous behavior must be rewarded.

Learning occurs through the exchange of knowledge with other students. New knowledge is built as students merge their own prior experiences with new experiences and with peers' experiences.

Knowledge does not simply pass from one person to another in a neutral way, but is always reworked at a cognitive level by each individual learner in a completely autonomous and personal way.

Learning takes place through connections of digital and non-digital nodes. Learners continually find and update their networks to access to up-to-date information.

Theory of learning in adults. Adults are more intrinsically motivated, but only if the new knowledge they acquire is meaningful and can help them with everyday life problems.

Key Researchers

- Ivan Pavlov
- B. F. Skinner
- John Watson

- Jean Piaget
- Lev Vygotsky

- Jerome Bruner
- Albert Bandura

- George Siemens
- Stephen Downes

- Malcom Knowles

Key Terms

- Classical/operant conditioning
- Negative/positive reinforcement

- Zone of proximal development
- Scaffolding
- Cooperation

- Intrinsic interest
- Spiraling curriculum
- Active participation

- Connection of nodes
- Network of learning
- Digital resources

- Adult learning
- Intrinsic motivation
- Real world problem solving

Strenghts

Ideal for teaching skills quickly. Good for memorization and simple tasks.

Exchange knowledges among classmates; useful for transferring skills among peers.

Develop complex skills and stimulate problem solving and critical thinking.

It allows for a quick exchange of expertise and helps to quickly find useful information.

It responds exactly to the needs of adult and intrinsically motivated learners.

Limitations

Not suitable for teaching complex elements or those requiring profound personal revision.

If not carefully constructed, it risks having a lack of guidance and direction for students.

Because of different ways of learning, it is more time and energy consuming to built the lesson.

There is the risk of relying too much on the network and too little on the skills of the individual learner.

Adult learners are not always intrinsically motivated, and it is risky to rely on this element.