

Final Theory of Learning

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I believe learning to be a personal exchange of what one sees, absorbs, and applies to their daily life and personal experiences. I believe that learning is when a person admits that there is unknown information and expresses a want or a desire to gain further insight into the information. Learning, I believe, can be hindered when the learner has a predetermined perception of what knowledge is possible and what knowledge is impossible to obtain. When learners can accept their learning and understand it may look, sound, and feel different from other learners' experiences, they can fully comprehend and grasp what ideas are being brought to them; their fullest capabilities can be obtained. Learning is an individual experience that cannot be compared, as a parallel, to other people's learning journeys and experiences. I believe that each person's learning path is as unique as the fingerprint and distinct to them.

Just as there are many different approaches to presenting information, there are many styles to learning. No style is right or wrong as a whole, but certain styles may be more effective than others for individual learners. I believe one researcher explored throughout this course does a phenomenal job of breaking down the different approaches to learning. The researcher is Howard Gardner, and through his research, he presents the Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Gardner presents eight different approaches to intelligence. Each of which highlights an individual's strengths with learning. One style of learning is learning by doing, which would be considered Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence. These learners find their most tremendous success when they partake in the learning process. These learners are "said to be good at body movement, performing actions, and physical control" (Cherry, 2019).

I believe another style of learning is by watching specific aspects. I believe these learners find their greatest success when they break down the item being learned into smaller parts. Then, taking time to watch, listen, and observe each aspect until they feel confident. Once confident

proceeding onto the next aspect, repeating this process until all smaller areas have been studied. They are then working slowly to blend all concepts back together to form the complete picture or idea. While Gardner's Theory does not have one specific intelligence that applies to this, I believe that Inter and Intra personal Intelligence could fall into this framework.

While Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences is well known, it is not the only idea that plays into the idea of learning. Another influential idea to keep in mind when exploring what learning is and how it occurs is the idea of behavior and habits. One theorist in this area is Skinner. Skinner devoted time to understanding reinforcement and conditioning. In learning, I believe that there are many reinforcers, both negative and positive, being displayed. Along with reinforcement, Skinner also explored the concept of punishment.

I believe that all three styles of learning are essential in a school. If there were no learning by doing, those who learn best by watching would not have the opportunity to observe. Likewise, those who learn by doing would not have those watching to provide sight and feedback to help them along the way on their discoveries. I also believe that there is no right or wrong way to learn and that the style of learning that works best for an individual may change over time or change based upon what information is being presented.

For example, when I played basketball, and it was time to learn a new offense or defense, I learned best by walking through each step over and over again until it was second nature. When it comes to my learning in the classroom, I learn best by observing the big picture—watching and observing the ideas being discussed and on my own time applying those lessons. This approach to learning could best be described and related to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. I also learned, as an athlete, through positive reinforcement. As I worked harder,

gave my all, and scored more points, I was given more playing time. In return, this made me want to work even harder to continue receiving more playing time.

Learning is a precious gift given to people each day and in a variety of ways and means. I believe the biggest hindrance in one's ability to learn is self-confidence, whether they have been told before that they are not XYZ enough to accomplish something or have not found success and assume that they will never find success. When we limit ourselves and what we believe we can, we take away so many opportunities. I believe that when we look at learning through Paget's lens of schemas, we are better able to allow ourselves and others grace for the stage that they are at in the learning journey. Cherry does a beautiful job of creating a parallel for understanding this idea when it is stated, "as experiences happen and new information is presented, new schemas are developed, and old schemas are changed or modified" (Cherry, 2019). To help this, I believe we should always be each other's cheerleaders and voice of encouragement as they set out to learn new things or learn through new experiences.

While I feel confident in my understanding of what learning is and how it occurs, I also acknowledge that there are possible unconscious biases that influence what I believe learning to be and look like. Just as our world is ever-changing, I hope to keep my mind open to new ideas, experiences, and viewpoints to better understand how all people learn and receive information.

References

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