Black Hills State University

ELED PLT

Concepts addressed:
Theoretical foundations about how learning occurs: How students construct knowledge, acquire skills, and develop habits of mind

Literacy is ... (According to the National Institute for Literacy):
- "The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defines literacy as 'an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society.'
- This is a broader view of literacy than just an individual's ability to read, the more traditional concept of literacy. As information and technology have become increasingly important in shaping our society [sic], the skills we need to function successfully have gone beyond reading, and literacy has come to include the skills listed in the current definition."

Behaviorism
- Skinner, Bandura, Pavlov
- Supports the theory that the environment provides the stimulus that shapes the learning and language of the learner.
- Supports the theory that all behavior, can be explained in terms of habits established when responses to stimuli are reinforced with some reward
- Imitation, memorization, and generalization are important elements of the behaviorist's theory of learning
- Skills-based view (Behaviorism)
- Bottom-up: focuses on the products of learning
- Supports discreet skill instruction before actually involving actual text
- For more information about behaviorism refer to:
  - http://www.funderstanding.com/behaviorism.cfm
  - http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec540/Perspectives/Perspectives.html

Cognitivism
- Piaget (schema), Chomsky, Vygotsky (ZPD)
- Learning is developmental and social in nature
- Supports the premise the learner controls the language environment and helps determine what it learned
- The learner is central to the learning and what the learner already knows has significant impact on what is to be learned
- Suggest that humans have the "species-specific" ability to
  - Test various predictions to construct new inferences
  - Develop rules of a particular language and remember them
  - Assumes that learning is categorized, organized, and rule governed and the users need to create order and categories for use (schema)
- Holistic view (Cognitivism)
  - Top-down: learning is a natural process rather than a final product

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- Experimentation and approximation are accepted and encouraged
- Fragmenting and fracturing learning is avoided
- For additional information about this theory refer to:
  http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/w/x/wxh139/cognitivel.htm
  http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec540/Perspectives/Perspectives.html

Constructivism
- John Dewey - Progressive Movement
- Brian Cambourne - Conditions for Natural Language Learning
- Frank Smith - Theory of the World in the Head
- Ken and Yetta Goodman - Kid watching and Miscue Analysis
- Donald Graves and Richard Gentry - writing process and invented spelling
- Supports the coming together of the learner and the environment. Learners actively attempt to
  understand the language around and make predictions about HOW the language works
- Indicates that language and language learning are social processes and language is learned
  through interpretations
- Supports the assumption there is a relationship between reading and writing and both are
  learned through similar practices.
- Interactive (Constructivism)
  - Balanced: teachers are empowered to make decisions day to day about learning
  - Skills instruction is provided within meaningful contexts according to student needs
  - Whole - part - whole
- For additional information refer to: http://www.funderstanding.com/constructivism.cfm
  http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec540/Perspectives/PersDectives.html

Important Learning Theory Terms
- Readiness (Behaviorism)
- Conditioning and Reinforcement (Behaviorism)
- Emergent Literacy (Constructivism)
- Schema (Piaget)
- Scaffolding and ZPD (Vygotsky)
- Bloom's Taxonomy (6 Level Hierarchy of Thinking)