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A social theory of learning is one that derives its cruxes from various traditional, social and cultural paradigms. Learning is considered an innate and fundamental human process by a social theory of learning. Where there is man, there is learning, irrespective of conscience and intent. Institutionalised learning emphasises theory, but the “*practicality*” of theory is an area all cognitive science experts must pay heed to. Apart from a well-designed curriculum and an articulate, succinct lecture delivery, participation in communities holds importance in reinforcing knowledge stored in distinct “*packets*” in the brain. A social theory of learning is not exclusively an academic enterprise, but rather also relevant in our daily actions, organisational systems that we design, our policies and much more. Thus, a new conceptual framework in thinking about learning is practical and indeed beneficial to all of us- in our relationships, organisations and communities.

A social theory integrates values from theories of **Practice, Identity, Social structures** and **Situated learning**. The contributions of the above are finely interwoven but distinctions can be made from certain perspectives. Theories of *Situated learning* focus on the interaction of people with their social environment, and give primacy to the individual and his/her role in a learning environment. Theories of *Social structures* give primacy to norms and rules that are considered conventional. These two theories often have clashes with each other, and the objective of a social theory of learning would be to homogenize and present them with minimal evidence of conflict. Theories of *Practice* and *Identity* on the horizontal axis constitute forms of historical and social continuity and discontinuity and are neither as broad as a socio-historical culture on a large scale (as advocated by *Social structures*) nor as decentralised as momentary experiences and interactions. Learning has many effects in a community; it reproduces and transforms social structures where it takes place and it evolves practices. It makes dynamic changes in a *newcomer*’s cognition and understanding of a subject. All this is en-route to transform the identities that are part of the community: to accept *newcomers* into the community and develop them into *old-timers*, so that their roles are more central to the community.

I was a member of an “*I Change my City*” group (inter-school competition) in 8th grade which emphasised on proposing new and innovative methods to deal with waste disposal on a local scale. My team of ten surveyed people on our target locality and collected insights from them. We also assessed and categorized the level pollution in different areas in that locality. We then presented our findings in meetings with experts on issues like pollution and local climate change. A notable person who I interacted with was **Smt. Medha Patkar**, a prominent environmentalist. We, the newcomers in the group would propose ideas that we thought would impact change on local pollution levels and society. Banners and posters along the pavement, possibly on every house would surely encourage people not to litter. But we were explained that it would not be met with equal zeal by local residents. So, apart from a situated learning experience about public waste management, we also educated ourselves in trespassing laws! Another solution was to increase electrical insect trappers to reduce fly infestation around the garbage disposal areas. We even carried this motion to the local administrator. Although he was not enthusiastic about the idea, he considered it and then explained budgetary concerns ie. How budget was prioritized. Public health facilities and basic amenities in which the locality was lacking obviously came above the ideas we presented. But in the end, sanitary visits to the above locality by government officials was increased and we were successful in our task! (*Won 2ND prize in Bangalore*) To say the least, we definitely ended up learning more than what the primary agenda of our group was based on, but that is the effect of learning when it takes place as a **Social** process. In the above scenario, you can make out traces of social structures, power, and subjectivity among the interactors. As evident, there are other contributors to a social theory - Theories of **Power, Meaning, Subjectivity** and **Collectivity**. Theories of *Meaning* accounts for the ways people produce meanings of their own. As expected, many theories of *Meaning* resist institutional and colonial *Power* through local cultural production and hence, a social theory has a job to neutralise these clashes. Theories of *Collectivity* address the formation of social configurations of various types and describes mechanisms of social cohesion by which these configurations are produced and sustained. Theories of *Subjectivity* seek to explain how subjectivity arises among individuals out of engagement in the social world. Since any social configuration is formed by individuals, theories of *Subjectivity* and *Collectivity* are closely intertwined and differences arise when the individual opinions are not coherent with the collective opinion. At the outset, it may be inferred that the ends of the two diagonals and the vertical in the diagram clash with each other in some respect. But this clashing evens out as we reach the horizontal (Theories of *Practice* and Theories of *Identity*), which happens to be two sides of the same coin as evident in communities of practice. A core observation is that the theories below the horizontal concern more about the individualistic experiences in learning whereas the ones above gauge collective opinions.