Instructional Design & Technology Learning Theories

The past few weeks we have been discussing Instructional Design Theories and Paradigms. Learning the various theories, and how each of them relate to the learner, as well as the factors that influence how the knowledge is absorbed.

The Learning Paradigms I will be discussing today are Behaviorism, Cognitivism, and Constructivism. Starting with Behaviorism, learning is based around and outside environmental or "external switches," which often are referred to as Stimuli. These "external switches" occur when there is a "change," or a "problem" to solve. Learning is based around the existence of being prompted and afterwards receiving reinforcement for the solution to a problem.

Next is Cognitivism, which as the root word suggest, is based around the Cognitive part of learning (i.e. Mental – in the mind). This theory recognizes that there are outside influences that occurs when it comes to learning, but the brain and the structures that make it up (i.e. Neurons), have discrete changes occurring while a "change" or Stimuli is presented; and thusly, making the learning occur as the mental state changes and the solution is presented.

Finally, there is Constructivism, and again looking to the root word for a definition, one can discover that this learning is based around "building." Not necessarily physically building, but mentally building a response as it would relate to a "problem," "challenge," or Stimuli. The previous two theories had a focus on the environment as it relates to learning, but with Constructivism, the learner is equally important because, this individual must contract a mental solution to a proposed Stimuli.

Moving onto the Learning Paradigms, they are as followed: Situated Cognition, ZDP, Self-Regulated Learning, Cognitive Load, and Communities Practice. Starting with Situated Cognition, which is all about learning occurring in/on a day to day occurrences as one would go through the various aspects of their day. This is based on "authentic," or "real" content that occurs within their circle.

Moving onto Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP), as it suggests is based around proximity, not partially in a physical sense, but what learning can naturally occur with and/or without in proximity to learned information, or knowledge already acquired. This theory is based around individual leaning that can occur bye someone solving a problem and gaining a solution independently or learning that occurs in the confines of a group setting.

With Self-Regulated Leaning this is one that is almost a review of oneself as it relates to learning. Being able to think about how oneself would go about gaining knowledge through a solution to a problem. It is based heavy in terms of a Cognitive sense, being that is weighs on the fact that one is thinking heavy on solutions that they are looking to find.

Now with Cognitive Load Theory it is heavy on the structure that Cognition is based around. The brain is the most technical, and instrumental part of the human body, and being able understand how the learning and cognition pieces relate is the overall intention of this theory.

Lastly, Communities of Practice, works with an idea that is based around a group of potential learning operations that benefit a group of learners that are engaged with one another. This takes into consideration the idea of "group learning." For this theory to take place the group must share a common goal, the solution of the problem, and has to work together (i.e. "Practice") for a solution to their

perspective issue, or problem. When these two factors are met in a group setting the Communities of Practice Theory is at work.

One of the best learning experiences I had, arose when I was working on my Capstone Project in my Undergrad here at West Virginia University. I had the privilege to work alongside the then Assistant Director of WVU's Dining Services to go through a full-scale Business Analysis of the operation. Being able to work very closely with the Assistant Director gave me access to a large range of tools, which allowed me to "Build" my experience, much like Constructivism. My outside Stimuli was coming up with a "Solution to a Problem." Which was not easy, since I had to define the problem, and then come up with possible solutions. Being able to build a learning experience with the help of guidelines from an instructor, as well as real world experience of the Assistant Director, it allowed me to build my learning experience which I was able to do and subsequently build my knowledge

RESOUCRES — READINGS

"Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger)." *Learning Theories*, 29 June 2016, www.learning-theories.com/communities-of-practice-lave-and-wenger.html.

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