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Learning Theories Paper

Multidisciplinary practices seemingly have little to nothing in common; what do English and Engineering have in common? They mutually must be taught in a comprehensive and thorough manner. By understanding the core of the content, one may recognize the similarities in effective teaching practices including the focus on the student, effective communication, and deep understanding of content knowledge. Despite this, effective teachers deviate from practices in their theory and understanding how they may best educate the students. Dual approaches to education include Behaviorism or “a teaching method and controlling the ‘stimuli’ and reinforcing the appropriate responses” juxtaposing Humanism, or a practice which indicates “students are central to the learning process and learn through active self-discovery rather than response to external stimuli” (Pugsley 266-267).

Behaviorism stems from a psychological analysis inculcating classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and modeling into the classroom setting (Idris & Nalliah 51). In other words, Behaviorism includes rewarding students for socially and academically correct responses to classroom situations and content. Behaviorism emphasizes the student as a passive learner, one who is malleable to positive and negative reinforcement. In the behaviorist model, a teacher

controls the classroom through providing incentives and punishments. The Behaviorism Theory often calculates operant and classical conditioning results based on animal experimentation which then is generalized to humans (Idris & Nalliah 51). For instance, a behaviorist approach would be providing students with marbles for completing assignments and good behavior, while taking away points or work time with misuse of time. Divergently, a teacher may utilize the Behaviorist Approach to use a checkmark method each time a student misbehaves before sending him to the office. Despite being a popular method, I would articulate my teaching style shifts away from extrinsic negative motivation and focuses on motivating the student through understand for the content, positive reinforcement, application in the real world and our professional relationship developed.

In contrast, the Humanism approach focuses on student centered approach where the student takes on “active self-discovery rather than response to external stimuli” (Pugsley 267). This places the teacher as a facilitator that inspires and cultivates the child, rather than direct their learning. Additionally, the teacher helps to guide the student by allowing the student to take ownership, direct their studies and work at their own pace (Pugsley 267). An example of Humanism approach includes a teacher allowing students to choose a research project and form of media they wish to display their research. Divergently, the Humanism approach also includes internships or entrepreneur activities where students are responsible for developing their own product or company. These dual examples help one understand the significance of Humanism within the classroom.

In accordance with the Behaviorist approach and my teaching philosophy, I would implement day one policies based on mutual respect, yet an understanding that there is a procedure to be followed. Practices which I plan on implementing include greeting students,

having a phone box, an expectation for homework completion and listening when I speak. I would use the behaviorism approach in that I would praise, or compliment students for following the rules and being positive which features positive reinforcement. Likewise, when student safety is at risk, I would implement strict negative reinforcement by telling students to stop immediately, follow up with discussion, reflection and consequences to prevent future circumstances from repeating. Specifically, in my classroom design, I would also include a smelly stickers and healthy food with student choice to reward students for self-improvement on tests, presentation, or discussion grades. Also, I wish to avoid a teacher directed learning style and give students greater student choice.

Although inculcating part of the Behaviorist approach, I wish to a greater extend include the Humanism Theory by creating a student-centered classroom. I wish to give student influence in designing the classroom rules and improving student choice. I wish to positively reinforce creativity and students who own their own learning style and process. I wish to implement the Humanism Theory through three central ways including project-based learning, assessment choice and research projects in set time eras providing students leeway to explore their interests and pursue their own interests. This will create a dynamic in which students will be able to buy into their education through studying historical events and phenomenons that transform society, but also relate personally to them.

Therefore, through studying Behaviorism and Humanism, one recognizes the importance of student control and freedom. Behaviorism focuses on how to influence and curb student behavior to transform their behavior into the teachers wanted behavior. Humanism focuses on curbing the lesson to match student interest and inspiring students to take on responsibility and pursue their education and interest for intrinsic reasons rather than external rewards. This

naturally helps cultivate the student's individual thinking and cognitive abilities. By inculcating aspects of both learning theories, a teacher may facilitate and control student learning in a way that prompts students' self efficacy, but also curbs negative detrimental behavior to a classroom.

Works Cited

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Pugsley, Lesley. "Begin to Get to Grips with Educational Theory." *Education for Primary Care*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2011, pp. 266–268., doi:10.1080/14739879.2011.11494009.