

# Dtlls theories and principles for planning and learning



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Explain how theories and principles of learning and communication can be applied to promote teaching that is inclusive. Look at the different teaching and learning styles that are used in your own classroom and consider how they demonstrate these theories and principles of learning. Pay particular attention to communication in the classroom.

### Theories of Learning

The three main types of learning theory that can be separated into three main schools of thought:

1. The behaviourist school 2. The cognitivist school 3. The humanist school

The behaviourist school of thought is concerned completely with learned behaviour. Behaviourists believe that behaviour is learned from external stimuli and that learners react more to teaching rather than being actively involved in the process.

Cognitivists believe that the learning process involves thought, senses and experience as opposed to learning solely by response to stimuli. This takes into account some of the specific human thinking traits, aware that we have a more complex brain than the animals used in some of the behaviour experiments contributing to behaviourist theory. Cognitivists also believe that although the animal behaviour experiments may tell us something useful about learning we should still experiment further into human specific learning processes.

Humanists believe that learners should be totally at the centre of learning.

They believe that to develop autonomy, learners need personal goals and

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meaning to what they are learning. Although this is a less scientific method, it does offer a responsive approach to the individual differences that we experience in human learning. This school of thought is also heavily motivational to the point that most of the theorists behind this are motivation theorists rather than human theorists.

There are also different levels of learning (taxonomy of learning - Bloom) to be aware of which will allow for a type of differentiation between learners and can promote inclusivity when planning. This can be done by creating lesson plans, which accommodate for different levels of understanding within a group session regarding your planned outcomes. For example you can plan for:

All learners will be able to do X, Y and Z (low order skills) Most learners will be able to do A, B and C (increased order skills) Some learners will be able to do P, Q and R (high order skills)

There are three domains to consider when planning for varied levels of learning:

Cognitive Domain - thinking skills (Bloom 1956) Psychomotor Domain - practical or motor skills (Dave 1967) Affective Domain - attitudes or behaviours (Bloom and Krathwohl 1964)

These theories in practice can impact on initial assessment, diagnostic assessment, tutorials, planning and preparation, support strategies, referral systems and delivery of sessions. (Henshall, 2009: 386)

Principles of learning

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Principles of learning are otherwise known as the values or belief that a teacher wishes to achieve in a lesson. They are the core beliefs in a teacher's life. There is a slight difference when we speak of Principles for Learning as there relate more generally to diversity, inclusion and accessibility but is still worth taking into account when applying principles to lessons. Some possible Principles of Learning include:

I will plan my lessons to include learner based activities for all members of the class I will negotiate ground rules with learners I will help learners to set their own learning goals I will always help learners with their learning processes as well as just facts, so that they can transfer their learning skills to all aspects of life

These principles in practice can impact on attitudes, relationships, planning, delivery, and behaviour codes and dress codes. (Henshall, 2009: 386)

Theories of communication

Communication theories include some linear models (transition types) such as David Berlo's SMRC Model (1960), which includes the stages:

Source

Message

Channel

Receiver

This is known as a linear model as it has a start and an end to the process. I prefer the circular model as it also allows for the source to obtain feedback from the receiver in order to check that the message has been understood.

Another type of communication theory, started by Eric Berne, looks at the relationships involved when communicating rather than the actual process flow. His most famous work is that of transactional analysis where the encoder and decoder each have one of three main states. These include:

1. Adult
2. Parent
3. Child

The encoder is always the leader of the communication i. e. the teacher in our case. The decoder is the receiver of information i. e. the learner. The ideal state to achieve is that of Adult-Adult. This is the state where both parties show and receive most respect. Child-Parent must be avoided at all costs as the child is less experienced than the parent and the parent will always look to dominate the child. If the decoder is a child, they may need nurturing in order to learn the foundations of communication so either a parent or adult would be an acceptable state for the encoder.

### Teaching and Learning Styles in my classroom

As I work in a primarily adult based learning environment, I am naturally drawn into the Andragogy style of teaching with a humanist bias and a constructivism style of delivery. I truly believe in a very active learning

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process, with learners highly involved. This is a democratic approach overall. I believe that much more emphasis should be on learning techniques and thinking skills throughout education in general, hence their heavy focus in my session. A lot of my teaching and learning is motivation based, confidence building and lateral thinking. I try to relate as many examples of the lesson content to learning methods and thinking skills so that the learners feel confident to take more ownership of their own learning whilst in the classroom and after they leave.

I try to bear in mind four main principles throughout my sessions, which, several motivation theorists seem to agree, are the key factors that need to be met in order to achieve a motivated state:

1. Need
2. Drive
3. Goals
4. Satiation

I also use a circular model of communication in order to check that all learners have understood my messages and points. This acts as an on-going assessment of learning tool and therefore allows me to give learners immediate feedback on their understanding. As well as the circular model, I take up an adult state when communicating as I feel this get's the most out of most types of decoder. If the situation calls for it I may take up the state of parent but with the plan to shift this to adult as soon as I have altered the decoder state to something more receptive to it.

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As far as teaching methods are concerned, I would place myself within the discovery learning camp. I am aware that this is a cognitivist style of learning, whereas I previously stated that I place myself within the humanist school of thought. I would say that I am still a humanist but I take a more active role in the learning process when teaching learners ' how to learn' and then letting them be more involved in their own discovery of the facts regarding the curriculum thereafter. If I feel that I can give a good explanation of a method or proof, however, then I will offer it.