

Types of learning theories and learning styles



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The purpose of this essay is to outline the episode of learning that I have been involved, I am going to discuss how different types of learning theories and learning styles informed to develop my knowledge, it also reflect and evaluate the type of strategies that has been used within the episode of learning and it will discuss the implications in relation to my future role as a register nurse.

In accordance with the Nursing and Midwifery Council Code of Conduct and Performance NMC (2008) Patient information must be treated as confidential and should only be used for the purpose intended for to maintain confidentiality. Therefore the patient's name, hospital and the learning facilitator name will be disclosed.

Education is an activity undertaken or initiated by one or more agents that is designed to effect changes in the knowledge, skill, and attitudes of individuals, groups or communities. The term emphasizes the educator, the agent of change who presents stimuli and reinforcement for learning and designs activities to induce change (Malcolm et. al 2005). The term learning, by contrast, emphasizes the person in whom the change occurs or is expected to occur. Learning is the act or process by which behavioural change, knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired (Boyd, et al. 1980) therefore learning is not just attending a class or reading books it is all about changing behaviours and attitudes, reflecting what has been taught by practicing.

When I was doing my placement in the medical ward my mentor taught me how to carry out an electrocardiogram (ECG) when she showed me the first

time I was very confused and thinking how I am going to know which leads is going to where after she has done the procedure on the patient she explain everything step by step, there was also a diagram as a guideline on the machine showing how and where to stick the leads. After seeing her carrying out the procedure on many patient one day she asked me to carry out the procedure on a patient even though I saw her doing it so many times but I had no confidence to do it however, she encouraged me and also said she will be there to help me all the way, as usual I introduce myself to my patient and ask his consent to carry out the procedure and draw the curtains to respect patient dignity, according to NMC (2008) obtain consent before you give any treatment or care and it also says that we must respect patients dignity. She observe me and correct my mistakes which was preventing me from repeating the same mistakes again because the way she corrected me she didn't just say that I was wrong, she explain everything if I do it in the wrong way that's going to give me the wrong reading which can affect patient treatment, she also suggested me to read about the heart and how to assess patients with heart problem and when a new patient admits to the ward what type of assessment we should carry out? And she asks me why? So I learnt a lot from her.

In this episode of learning various learning theories has been contributed in order to develop my knowledge. From social learning theory behaviourism was the first one I used according to Pritchard (2005) defining behaviourism is a theory learning focusing on observable behaviours and discounting any mental activity.

Learning is the acquisition of new behaviour. I believe I learn through observing others behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours. According to Bandura (1977) most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling. From observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. By observing my mentor for so many times while she was carrying out the procedure of ECG I was able to remember the procedure step by step. However, Bandura (1977) argue that people cannot learn much by observation unless they attend to and perceive accurately, the significant future of the modelled behaviour, which is right because if I was not get the chance to practice what I observe, it is easy to forget all about it so I found it very useful and I fully understood when I did the procedure by myself rather than observing it all the time.

Working with and observing a mentor enables students, through a process of reflection, to internalise their mentor's behaviour and build on previous knowledge and experience (Schon, 1987). My mentor has been a good role model, she act professionally she advocate for her patients best of interest and she dose follow the hospital rules and regulations in order to give the best care and she also have a good communication skills with the multidisciplinary teams regarding to the patients that she is looking after so I learnt so much from her that I will continue to build it up on my future placements, Role modelling is a process that allows students to learn new behaviours without the trial and error of doing things for themselves (Bandura, 1977). The benefits of role modelling lie in the opportunities for students to work with experienced and knowledgeable practitioners (Spouse,

1998). Therefore my mentor teaches me every single thing that she knows and she shared her experience with me by giving me the opportunities to work with her at all the time and she always monitor my progression anything that I need to improve she advices me to write down my action plan and she always check me if I met them.

According to Rogers(1993) Individuals want to learn and do so best when they feel free to express and choose their own direction, My mentor was professionally friendly, trusting, mutually respectful, informal, warm, collaborative and supportive openness which allows me to do best and learn quickly. When they are able to do this, mentors fulfil a dual role of teacher and learning facilitator and they must help their students to identify what direction learning should take and to facilitate the best conditions for this to occur, (Rogers, 1983). According to Hartley and Ellis (2000) The mentor must create trust in an atmosphere where the student can ask questions freely without feeling foolish, therefore my mentor when she wants to explain things she always take me to the side and we discuss everything she is open I feel comfortable to ask her any questions. Also NMC (2008) you have a duty to facilitate students of nursing, midwifery and specialist community public health nursing and others to develop their competence. You have a responsibility to deliver care based on current evidence, best practice and, where acceptable, validated research when it is available.

Pratt(1988) recognize that most learning experiences are highly situational, and that a learner may exhibit very different behaviours in different learning situation, for example it is entirely likely that a learner may be highly confident and self directed in one realm of learning but very dependent and

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unsure in another. Because of the different learning opportunities from being dependent I become more confident on doing ECG, by reading and practicing does help me to develop my knowledge. My mentor was encouraged me and explain things that I didn't know and she answer any question that I ask her without being judgemental, so we had a good mentor and student relationship.

According to Rogers (1983) the humanists theorist, the key factors in motivating learning is the quality of the relationship between the learner and the teacher, each learner must be respected and valued for who and what she is, he also mention that a relationship of trust must be built between the teacher and the learner unconditional positive regard. My mentor showed positive interest to teach me which makes me feel valued and respected therefore it is motivating me to learn more and to be competent. Operant conditioning is a method of learning that occurs through rewards and punishments for behaviour. Through operant conditioning, an association is made between behaviour and a consequence for that behaviour Reinforcement is the key element, in Skinner (1971) a reinforce is anything that strengthens the desired response. It could be verbal praise, a good grade or a feeling of increased accomplishment or satisfaction. Every time after I have done the ECG procedure my mentor gives me positive feedback that encouraged me to do it more often and it also gives me the confident that I needed. According to Malcolm (2005) the Andragogical Model in adult learners has a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Ones they arrived at that self-concept, they develop a deep

psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of

self-direction.

As I am an adult learner I know what I need to learn and move towards independently, I have my own responsibilities for my own learning. Having positive feedback and encouragement from my mentor does motivate me to learn all new things. Reflecting on this experience the good thing going well is knowing my learning style According to Honey and Mumford (1986) we need to be able to adopt one of four different styles in order to complete any given learning task satisfactorily which are activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists, as I am a reflector, I like to stand back and look at situations from different perspectives before coming to conclusion to carry out any procedure or new things, so before I carry out the ECG I use every opportunity to observe my mentor and other nurses doing it, I take time to read about it and I have did research which makes me to have the confident to carry out the ECG by my own on any patient. According to NMC (2008) maintain your professional knowledge and

competence you must keep your skills and knowledge up to date throughout our working life. In particular, you should take part regularly in learning activities that develop your competence and performance.

Knowing my learning style also helped me to develop my knowledge. For my future

role as a registrant nurse I can be able to carry out any procedures effectively because as I am a reflector I do research and collect as much information to do any procedures accurately, according to Pritchard (2005) the strength of reflectors is their painstaking data collection and its subsequent analysis, which will take place before any conclusion is reached.

I am also a visual learner I learn fast by seeing I am good at

reading maps, graphs and any displays, in this particular learning the diagram on the ECG machine which shows how to carry out the procedure does help me to do my job quick and I can relate it with what I read before which gives me a full understanding on what I am doing, in relating to my future role it is important to be able to engage with new technologies, in health care settings there are a lot of different machines that we are using, in emergency situation it's good to act fast how that machine is working just only by reading the manual or following a diagram or a poster showing how to operate it. According to NMC (2008) you must have the knowledge and skills for safe and effective practice when working without direct supervision.

The use of charts on the ECG machine which demonstrates all the concepts of the lesson which helps me be able to capture information as I observe from our discussions and from the demonstrations provided by my mentor and other nurses. The charts are acting as visual aids which are observable. This helps me to be able to observe what the charts have stressed on and I achieve great knowledge by observing the charts as a set of required example. According to West, Clark and Jasper (2007) provide students with best opportunity for success during the assessment process it is essential to ensure they have a feasible workload for their stage of education that can

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enable them to learn as well as to work therefore my mentor was giving me every opportunities to learn and to reflect what I learnt by practicing and she assess me by giving me home work and by asking me questions which does building up my confidence.

In conclusion, having the knowledge of the different type of theories help me to understand the practice better, having a mentor who encourage and motivating me to practice also give me the confident to apply theory in to practice. The use of different learning strategies also met my learning style. I learnt the important of knowing patients learning style which can make it easier for them to understand their condition or treatment better and. For my future role as a register nurse I can apply my knowledge to do health promotion. As a student nurse I will continue to use my learning styles in both theory and practice.