

Analysis of pre-school in three cultures

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This paper is an analysis of two different preschools from two diverse cultures. The analysis was done by observation of the video “ Preschool in Three Cultures”. The video explores a typical day at three different preschools around the world. The video presents several different instructional learning activities that use both constructivism and behaviorism methods of teaching. Examples of several different teaching techniques of each theory that were demonstrated in the video are discussed.

Constructivism is a type of learning theory where individuals create new perceptions based on different life experiences. The focus of this theory is based on the students want and capability to learn the material being instructed. A constructivist teacher will help guide self-directed learning. They will focus on making connections between facts and developing new understanding in students. These teachers work on modifying their strategies based on their student responses. It is important for them to encourage their students to analyze, interpret, and predict information usually in collaboration with others. The classroom I found to be the most constructivist, was the preschool located in Japan named Komatsudani. There were many more clear examples of constructivist teaching techniques demonstrated. Below are detailed examples of those approaches and how they are well designed to improve learning: From the time the children arrived at the preschool, they engage in outdoor play with mixed age groups. The outdoor play is necessary for cognitive growth. Through outdoor play, the preschoolers have the ability to develop and refine motor skills. They have a chance to experience the joy of mastery in a sport or game; they will also develop and use basic academic skills such as counting, reading, and

maybe even writing. The teacher in this classroom scaffolds the students during instructional activities. A lesson on counting is presented to the students; they must color in one box for each number presented. One of the students had trouble understanding the concept. The teacher went by the table to give her some additional assistance. Once the student's ability increased and she was able to color the appropriate number of boxes the teacher left the table. Finally the child was able to complete the assignment and master the concepts independently which is the main goal of the teachers scaffolding. After the student's are done eating their lunch they are allowed to play freely throughout the school. One student begins to hit another classmate and is throwing toys over the balcony. While this is happening another student goes to tell the teacher. The teacher's approach to this problem was to refrain from intervening in the social conflict and ask the student to take care of it herself. The teacher was confident she has modeled appropriate strategies that would help the child use logical-reasoning skills to solve the problem. Behaviorism is another type of learning theory that occurs when new behaviors or changes in behaviors are acquired as the result of an individual's response to stimuli. All students work for things that bring them positive feelings and approval from people. The influence of the external environment contributes to the shaping of the individual's behavior. Whether the behavior occurs again all depends on the consequence that follows it. The classroom I found to be the most behaviorist, was the preschool located in Honolulu, Hawaii named St. Timothy. There were clear examples of behaviorist teaching techniques demonstrated in this preschool. Below are detailed examples of those

approaches and how they are well designed to improve learning: One of the first activities the teacher begins with was a word skill exercise. The teacher selects different children in the class to get a white funnel cloud and place it on a blue sky display board. The students are asked to describe what their cloud looks like. The instructor uses this hand on activity to teach the concept of simile. Although the hand on activity displays a constructivist approach, the grammar translation method is not. The grammar translation method requires the teacher to explain vocabulary words, phrases, and sentence structure. After the word skill activity follows a teacher read aloud and learning center free time where the teacher observes students behaviors. On both of these events the teacher continues to use the same grammar method approach. While reading a book about making soup, she shows students the illustration in the book and asks them questions. She encourages her students to put their thoughts into words. When the students are working in their learning center the teacher is approached by a child who has finished completing a puzzle. Again the teacher uses her grammar method and asks him to describe the kind of puzzle he completed. Another behaviorism approach was also demonstrated during the students learning center free time. When the teacher announced it was time to clean up, one student refused to do so. She sat next to the student and asked the child calmly that he had to clean up. Once he refused again she used presentation punishment for a correct response. The teacher takes the student and sits him in the corner and tells him that he will stay there until he is ready to pick up his mess. This method was used in an effort to decrease the student's bad behavior. The next time the student is asked to clean up; he will do so

because he will not want to be sent to the corner again. I will be teaching in the elementary school level, instructing all academic subject areas. I feel it is extremely important that all teachers learn to arrange an appropriate environment for all students to teach them any instructional material. It would reassure the teacher that the student will appropriately use the material they learned in a variety of situations. In my opinion the best way to create the most appropriate environment for all students is with a combination of both constructivist and behaviorist approaches. In order to maintain a standard in the classroom I would use behaviorist ideas such as rewards and punishments, but I would also allow for the constructivist ideas of the students involvement in decision making. When teaching math and reading skills I would use behaviorist approaches because they are subjects that must be taught through sequential steps and repetitive practice. When beginning any of these lessons I would state objectives and break them down into steps. I would use constructivist approaches for all other subjects because I feel students will respond better to discovery learning than direct instruction. I would create group learning activities that are personally meaningful. The video " Preschool in Three Cultures" was an interesting film because it demonstrated how teachers have many different philosophies on education. Although the teachers that were observed in the video had different philosophies, it was interesting to me that they all combined both constructivist and behaviorist approaches for instructional teaching. I think that says a lot about taking only one learning approach into a classroom. They were three different teachers from totally diverse cultures that used

both of these philosophies to effectively educate the students in the best possible manner.