

Psychological foundation of education

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2008 Teaching and learning are complex processes that bring people together. While teaching consist of behaviors are practiced by the teacher to facilitate and development of the individual, learning implies a relatively permanent change in behavior potentiality resulting from maturation and experience.

Teaching and learning are both psychological processes. They are the main concerns of the teacher since learning is the ultimate purpose of teaching. The teacher who has a knowledge of the theories and principles of human development specifically intellectual development can design learning activities appropriate learner and will promote effective learning. The educative process has three components namely, the learner who is the center of the educative process in a school, the teachers who provides needed learning opportunities and guide learners, and the learning process undertaken to achieve the desired outcomes.

There are two general factors that affect the human development: heredity and environment. Heredity and environment complement and supplement each other in every phase of growth and development. In the life p of human beings, there are stages of development based on the chronological age of individuals. These are prenatal period, infancy or babyhood, early childhood, late childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle age and old age.

Corresponding to each stage are certain characteristics and social expectations termed developmental tasks.

Several theories of development were formulated by psychologists to explain behavioral changes at various stages of development. The five theories of development are Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Vygotsky's theory of development, Erikson's psychological theory of development, Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Kohlberg's theory of moral development. For successful teaching, educators should understand variations among individuals. They show physical, intellectual, and behavioral differences.

Learning is the acquisition through maturation and experience of new and more knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable the learner to make better and more adequate reactions, responses, and adjustments to new situations and conditions. An understanding of the nature of learning and the conditions under which learning takes place is very important to the teacher. There are three types of learning Cognitive learning which pertains to the acquisition of knowledge, facts and information, principles, ideas, concepts, understanding, reasoning.

Affective learning which involves the process of acquiring good attitudes ideas, judgment and values and Psychomotor learning which involves the use of the muscles in bodily movement. Learning theories are classified as behavioral learning theories and cognitive learning theories. Among the behavioral theories are: Thorndike's connectionism; Skinner's operant conditioning; Pavlov's classical conditioning; and Albert Bandura's social learning theories. Cognitive theories of learning emphasize the concept that learning is a process of discovering and understanding relationships.

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Among the cognitive theories are; Kurt Lewin's field theory, Kohler's insight theory, Ausebels's meaningful learning theory, Bruner's cognitive theory, and information-processing theories. The teacher is the key factor in the classroom learning situation. She performs varied roles as model, manager, counselor, facilitator and evaluator of learning. Motivation is the process of arousing and sustaining interest in activity in order to achieve a goal. There are two kinds of motivation; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic is an internal stimulus that arouses one to action while extrinsic motivation is an external stimulus to action.

It comes in the form of praise, high grades, medals, incentives, etc. There are various theories of motivation related to learning. A well-known theory of motivation is by Abraham Maslow. Other motivation theories are David McClelland's need achievement theory and attribution theory. Communication is also very important in the learning situation. In the classroom, different patterns of classroom interaction are adopted by the teacher and students ensure effective learning. Knowing and understanding learning styles will enable the teacher to design strategies and methods of teaching that will match diversity of learning styles among pupils.