

# The main principles of learning and the action theory

[Education](#)



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Every person has his or her own individual way of working with information and earning experience, thus of learning. The fact, that people do not learn information in the same way can be explained by a variety of such obvious reasons as character, psychological temperament types and the like.

Consequently, it would be correct to conclude that the methods or principles of learning are various. The significance of relevant principles of learning lies in presenting material to a learner in the most effective way possible.

However, considering that studying process often takes place in groups (classes in schools, groups in universities etc.) it is vitally important for a teacher to offer as much ways of remembering material as possible.

Principles of learning are derived from the following learning theories: action, cognitive-gestalt, experiential, facilitation, holistic, reinforcement, sensory stimulation learning theory.\* In this respect, we shall analyze them according to the theories the are most tightly interwoven with.

The main principles of learning based on the action theory state that no effective learning can be presented without proper action-application experience. In most cases small 'action learning sets'\*\* are created in order to give the learners an opportunity of applying their knowledge on practice, making mistakes and learn from them without having to deal with unwanted consequences of their decisions.

Cognitive-gestalt learning is based on insights and problem-solving.

However, unlike the first theory, it puts a stress on the learner's individual ways of interpreting problem situations.

Experiential theory speaks of a four-stage process of learning material

(concrete experience, active experimentation, abstract conceptualisation, observation and reflection). A great benefit of this theory is that despite all of the stages are being necessary, an individual can choose (consciously or subconsciously) the most suitable one to contribute more efforts to it.

Besides, stages can be repeated one by one as many times as it takes to exclude all of the mistakes.

Principles of learning used in a facilitation theory are based on the acknowledgement of the fact that a human being is naturally eager to learn and perfect oneself. Thus, here learning process includes polemics with teacher in attempt to find as much answers as possible and, what is more important, to research a topic instead of simply remembering the facts given. Such approach is commonly used in humanitarian education.

Holistic approach suggests that the process of learning should activate all of the individual's senses, his imagination and intuition. All in all it stands for approaching towards learner as a whole system, not just, for example, his ability to memorise.

Reinforcement principles of learning are the following: if a learner is successful, he should be rewarded (with saying " Good work" etc.), if he is not - punished. Such an approach is meant to stimulate an individual to reach his goals in learning an aim even higher.

Sensory stimulation learning principles imply such methods of teaching and learning where illustrations, video and audio records are used to help the learner in his studies. This method is the most common and widely used in learning process.

The best way to give and get education is to use all of the above stated

principles of learning. However, in teaching first aid some of them should prevail above others. We should conclude that action and holistic principles of learning are the most effective in our teaching practice, for they provide a learner with expedient and practical knowledge which can be immediately applied in the case of a slightest need.

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\* Lee Dunn, " Theories of learning". - Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University Wheatley Campus, Wheatley, Oxford, 2000 [Online] retrieved from [http://www. brookes. ac.](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/2_learntch/theories.html)

[uk/services/ocsd/2\\_learntch/theories. html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/2_learntch/theories.html) on 14. 07. 2005

\*\* McGill, I. & Beaty, L. " Action Learning, second edition: a guide for professional, management and educational development" - London, Kogan Page, 1995.