Educational Philosophy & The Role of Technology

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My Educational Philosophy

Growing up on a farm and coming from a family background of agriculturists and butchers, my days were rich in learning and teaching opportunities. Whether it was someone passing on information to me, or myself observing and learning from everything around me. The knowledge I accumulated was made up of previous lessons where I was able to construct my own understanding and use this knowledge by implementing it into everyday use.

Technology revolutionized the world of communication and created new opportunities to access information with just a click of a button. Growing up in this new era, the interaction of devices made it easy for me to connect with groups of people. This allowed to acquire new knowledge that was not been attainable in the past.

In my career I had found that when learning and teaching others new skill sets, it was helpful to relate situations to something that person was more familiarized with, so that they could compartmentalize and learn new skills.

My educational philosophy derives from the notion that learning can happen anywhere, at any moment, and anyplace; this can contribute to the way learning/knowledge is acquired and how teaching can occur. Therefore, applying the same approach for different topics to different people, in different environments will not result in the success of the learner, or the teaching process.

Compare and Contrast

Constructivism

My father always said, "Pay attention to everything you're taught and learn to use it for yourself". This is one of the reason why my philosophy of education falls in line with Constructivism. As Ertmer & Newby (1993) state "Learners do not transfer knowledge from the

external world into their memories; rather they build personal interpretations of the world based on individual experiences and interactions" (p. 55). My educational philosophy stemmed from how I personally constructed knowledge as a novice in the world. This came from how my family taught me to build upon what I had been taught by everything and everyone around me. Ertmer & Newby (1993) state "One does not learn to use a set of tools simply by following a list of rules. Appropriate and effective use comes from engaging the learner in the actual use of the tools in real-world situations" (p. 57).

The constructivist relies on the notion that learning is acquired from the environment and the learner creates their own understanding from it. Once this happens they continue to take in information and apply what they have come to understand and build on it. They then create a deeper understanding of materials of new information and lessons. However, the constructivist also states that the need to create meaning to an experience, isn't necessary to achieve new knowledge and skills. Though I highly agree with the theory on constructing upon already received knowledge to find deeper understanding of a subject, I cannot agree on it completely. I believe that most learning needs to attach some sort of meaning to an experience, if not the learner will most likely forget the information they have attained.

Connectivism

Not only has constructivism shaped the way I learn and teach others, but I feel that by being able to construct on previous knowledge such as using a keyboard or learning to navigate a computer i.e. use the internet, I unknowingly stumbled upon another form of learning and teaching, this being the Connectivism learning theory. Goldie (2016) talks about connectivism by saying "Learning occurs through the construction and traversing of networks…it emerges from the connections that are formed during network activity." (p. 1065). In my later years as I dove

into the wonders of technology and the internet, I found my accumulation of knowledge came from forums, like reddit and social media, talking to people and sharing ideas of different topics. This was handy when I needed help in school and was too shy to ask my teacher questions in class. Instead, I was able to connect with vast amount people online, that could help me work out a problem and or find more efficient ways to solve one. As Shirvastava (2018) states "Learners in today's time are no more passive consumers of information. Rather, they participate in producing information." (p. 26)

Connectivism is fairly new to learning theories, and is vastly reliant on technology. It focuses on interacting with devices and networks to create new knowledge that can then be applied to practice in order measure the success of comprehending the material. In this new modern age of technology connectivism is a theory that works great in incorporating the use of technology to be successful. This of course is the reason that it has its limitations. As much as I enjoy the idea and use of connectivism, I do not feel that all learning should only be approached through technology. When using connectivism other matters must be assessed, such as the understanding that technology is not perfect and can fail at any moment must be taken into account. Teachers must have a backup plan to assist them if errors from the tech aspects of the instruction are not cooperative.

Cognitivism

Finding ourselves in a new environment and having to learn a new skill is a relatively common situation most people will find themselves at various points in their life. These situations often lead to the need of acquiring new skills. As a teacher and learner I found that Learners are more successful when relating past experiences to new ones. This helps with the comprehension of acquiring a new set of skills. This relates to the cognitive learning approach. As Ertmer and

Newby (1993) state about the cognitive theory of learning "Cognitive theories emphasize making knowledge meaningful and helping learners organize and relate new information to existing knowledge in memory. Instruction must be based on a student's existing mental structures, or schema, to be effective." (pp. 53-54). Once the connection to the past experiences have been made by the learner, they are now able to compartmentalize the new material to their long term memory and start learning a new set of skills. With the cognitive approach, the learner organizes patterns from the environment and starts to recognize patterns, they are then able to hold this information in their short term/working memory to make sense of it and then store it in their long term memory (Driscoll, 2018).

When it comes to the Cognitive theory approach for learning and teaching this method can only be successful if the student/learner can make a meaningful connection to the information provided. The Teacher also needs to be able to help the learner create this connection and offer help to the student to make sense of the material presented. If this criteria is not met then the theory falls apart. This theory carries a lot of potential, and falls into my philosophy to make connections and create meaning out of past experiences, however it can only be used if those meaningful connections can be made, and can't be used in all environments or situations.

Role of Technology in My Philosophy

"Technology provides impact and benefits for innovative learning." (Rufaidah, Umamah, Sumardi, et, al. 2021) It can be used in many forms to teach and learn about various topics. It can be applied to various situation and be used in various ways. Technology can assist in learning in various situations, my philosophy is that learning and teaching can happen anywhere and can be done in various ways. (Cognitive) WB-learning can be used in classrooms in both synchronous

and asynchronous instruction. Teachers can create forums for class discussions so students can talk discuss among themselves, as the instructors provide guidance of the material. (Cook, 2005). (Connectivism) The gamification process is used to teach students new skills that can be applied to real world practices.

Reflection

This Module has let me facilitate theories of learning and understand their roles in the Instructional Design process. I was able to put together on how I perceive learning and teaching and how it can be applied in different situations. I plan on taking everything I have learned and use them in the future to create programs that will be useful to teaching learners based on their environment.   This module has definitely set a new understanding of myself, on where I come from as a learner and how I access my teaching method according to who and where I am to help teach the material.

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