Overview: Theories of Human Learning & Motivation

Key Learning Theories & Theorists

- Theories of Adult Learning
  - Information Processing Theory
  - Associative Bond Theory
  - Contextual Theory
- B.F. Skinner
  - Learning Curves & Outcomes
- Ivan Pavlov
- John Watson
  - Stimulus-Response (S-R)
- Edward Cell
  - Response Learning, Situation Learning, Transsituational Learning, & Transcendent Learning
- Gestalt Theory
  - Learning is a problem-solving activity
- Albert Bandura
  - Social Learning Theory
- Jean Piaget
  - Cumulative impact of the knower and known
- Jurgen Habermas
  - Theory of Communicative Action
- Gregory Bateson
  - Four Categories of Learning: Zero Learning, Learning I, Learning II, & Learning III
- Kurt Lewin
  - B = P + E Behavior is a function of the interaction between person and environment

Defining Learning: Why do we learn?

- "..to make sense of experience, to reduce the unknown and uncertain types of life to a manageable level, and to act skillfully in ensuring one's survival and security" (MacKeracher, 2004, p.6).
- "..to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12).
- "..acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes…social and personal adjustments and growth…experiential opportunities" (Knowles, et. al 2005, p. 11).
- Karl Popper: "..we learn in order to change the structure of our expectations…" (Mezirow, 1991 p. 39)
- To justify and validate prior learning experiences (Mezirow, 1991).
- To acquire new modalities of stimulus-response associations (Lerner, 2002)
- To validate or repudiate meanings and choices (MacKeracher, 2004)

How do we learn?

- Operant Conditioning vs. Classical Conditioning (Goldhauber, 2000)
- Learning styles (Knowles, et. al, 2005)
  - Dunn & Dunn
  - Kolb
  - Gregorc
  - Grasha-Reichman
- "…people learn by watching before they perform" (Bandura, 1977, p. 35)
- Modeling: "In teaching modeling, the teacher behaves in ways he or she wants the leaner to imitate" (Knowles, et. al, 2005, p. 103)
- Making meaning and connectivity out of metaphors (Mezirow, 1991)
- Self-directed

The Role of Storytelling in Learning & Motivation

- "..we learn how people as individuals and as groups make sense of their experiences and construct meanings and selves" (Josselson, et. al, 2003, p. 80)
- Engaging all layers of the conscious & unconscious (Nelson, 1998)
- "Reflective action or "mindfulness" is associated with greater accuracy of perception of the unfamiliar and deviant, avoidance of premature cognitive commitments, better self-concept, greater job productivity and satisfaction, flexibility, innovation, and leadership ability" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 117).

Motivation & Learning: What inspires us to learn?

- External Factors
  - Better Jobs, promotions, higher salaries, etc.
- Internal Factors
  - Desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, improved quality of life