

January 8, 2022

Dear HP 201 class,

You really did very well in the World Café of Learning Theories task. I know that it was a very challenging task. This is because it required of you high order thinking – analysis all the way to synthesis and creation. Because we now know about Bloom’s taxonomy you can appreciate that this is very much HOTS (higher order thinking skills). Aside from that it was a group work so you needed to collaborate with each other. Because of the limited time and the fact that it had to be through virtual meetings, collaboration is also extra challenging during these covid times. I honestly could feel your frustrations at the start...but I had to stick to my guns because I know that it is worth it. I was giving you an experience of Outcome Based Education (OBE): Student Centered, Active and Collaborative Engagement, and Self Reflection and Metacognition. I had to control and limit myself to providing scaffolding, while letting you design and execute your plans yourself. Any educators lament that in the Philippines we simply don’t have the mature, self directed learners envisioned in the OBE framework. But that is because the teachers – with the pressure of achieving the outcomes – spoon-feeds the outcomes to the students, or gives such stringent and specific directions that the students turn in uniform and standardized results.

I hope you are happy with the results...and more importantly – with your efforts (shoutout to the Growth Mindset of Carol Dweck). I truly appreciate the amount of work that went into your individual reports and the Integration done by each team. I have allowed you maximum freedom to be creative. But having said that... I hope that you try to keep the academic rigor of your papers, and presentations. This means taking care of the basics of Grammar and Composition, and always citing your references. You may use APA 6 or 7.

Here are some final thoughts on the topic of the Learning Theories, and an Excel File of the Assessment. I apologize if anyone feels uncomfortable about this, but I have anonymized the entrees and did not put the names of the reporters. There are some things I wanted to point out, which I think is valuable to reflect upon, you all are being teachers yourself.

1. The quantitative and qualitative feedback do not necessarily coincide. For example, someone with very high praises ..can give very low marks. Similarly someone can have negative criticisms yet give high marks. This is why its always good to include a Comment Section when asking people to fill up an assessment. The numbers alone won’t give an accurate picture of the assessors evaluation.
2. There will always be outliers. Some works were assessed as 100 by one and 70 by another. There is nothing unfair about this. But you can offset this by the number of respondents. The outliers get balanced out by the rest. This is why its important to have many respondents. Some even make it compulsory-like in conferences where you cannot get your certificate unless you turn in an evaluation form.
3. In most cases the Teacher’s Evaluation is higher than the Peer Evaluation. I assume you answered honestly and not strategically (like most undergraduates do – they give 100 to all as a way of putting up their grades. Also the Group Evaluation is always Lower than the Individual Evaluation. This could be because of the fear to hurt the individual. This is why we anonymize the assessment.

Hope you learned something about assessment from this exercise. Please read on.

BEHAVIORISM: It would have been better to start with BEHAVIORISM...because historically it was the first. It is consequently also the most simple of all the theories. If you position it chronologically - Behaviorism - Cognitivism (Gestalt, Piaget's CDT, Vygotsky Social Cognitive Devt Theory)- Humanism you would have seen the movement of the learning theories in their understanding of man and how he learns. The Behaviorists define learning as change in behavior. It focuses on Man's materiality. He is a BODY with senses which perceive/experience the phenomenon and therefore reacts to it. Teaching is a matter of Conditioning so that man responds in a consistent predictable way to a stimulus. Hence learning is always OBSERVABLE. That's why we have Observable Learning Objectives in our Instructional Plans.

COGNITIVISM: After the Behaviorists who focused on Man's Materiality, the body...The COGNITIVIST focused on the MIND. They realized that there is something beyond the body which is actually where Learning takes place. So Learning is IMMATERIAL and man is capable of learning because he has an spiritual INTERIORITY - his Mind - which is capable of acquiring and keeping knowledge not limited to the here and now. The Gestalt Theorists started it. Actually the Gestalt theories are in between Behaviorism and Cognitivism. It starts with what is perceived but they recognized that learning is Interior, The INNER BOX (mind) Learning is the Reorganization of the Inner World of Man. Piaget theory discovered that this capacity of man -to interiorize things is developed with age, in stages Social Developmental theories are sometimes categorized under Social Cognitive Theory, or under Humanism as Sociocultural Theory. There are many Instructional Theories and Models that developed from Cognitivism...From Mastery Learning, Blooms Domains of Learning, Gagne's Conditions of Learning, etc.

HUMANISM: In an ever broadening perspective of Man and his Learning...the Humanists realize that not only does Learning involve both the Material and Immaterial aspects of man, but that these aspects of man is also multi-dimensional. For example: The Cognitivists already said that learning involves man's immaterial MIND. So they studied this interior workings of man's mind...the stages of development, the dynamics of knowledge acquisition, the complexity of the resulting representations, or Schemas, which are somehow evidence of intelligence. Starting from the Social Cognitivists they went outside man's interiority and realized that man's social dimension also influenced his learning. In a way this opened the space for Humanism to develop...and psychologists began to study the many DIMENSIONS of Man: both INTRA and INTERPERSONAL. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence studied the intrapersonal dimension of man and realized there are many kinds of intelligences. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs talk of both the intra and interpersonal dimensions of man. The more basic needs, because they are usually also material needs, are more open to the interpersonal dimension of man. We can directly help each other at this level. The higher levels, being more immaterial focuses more in the intrapersonal dimensions of man. Man's awareness and appreciation of his own intrapersonal dimension – Self awareness, self concept, self-fulfillment.

Many of the critique of Humanist theories state that in broadening the scope it tended to revert back to the speculative and philosophical rather than the focused, scientific and evidence based. I believe the solution is in the balance. We shouldn't lose sight of the forest because of focusing on the individual tree, but at the same time the study of individual trees are important to get indepth knowledge that may be transferable to all and hence useful for caring for the whole forest. Similarly, the Behaviorists and Cognitivists continue to be significant as they focus on the material and immaterial dimensions of man and learning, but the Humanists keep us in sight of the bigger picture – Man's relationship with the world – both within and outside himself.

Thank you very much for your engagement.


Dots Salvacion