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A Complete Guide To The Different Learning Theories

By Joshua Poyoh

Educational theorists, from philosophers like Socrates and Rousseau to researchers like Howard

Gardner today, have addressed theories of learning. Many of their ideas continue to influence homeschoolers as well as traditional educators. A little familiarity with some of the ideas most popular among homeschoolers will help you make sense of the wealth of available materials when you begin to make choices for your family.

Jean Piaget and Cognitive Development

He proposed that children go through several distinct stages of cognitive growth. First comes the sensorimotor stage (birth to two years), during which the child learns primarily through sensation and movement. At the pre-operational stage (ages two to seven), children begin to master symbols such as language and start to be able to form hypotheses based on past experiences. At the concrete operational stage (ages seven to eleven), children learn to generalize from one situation to similar ones, although such reasoning is usually limited to their own concrete experience.

Finally, at the formal operational stage (eleven years older), children can deal with abstractions, form hypothesis and engage freely in mental speculation. Although the rate at which children progress through the stages varies considerably, the sequence of stages is consistent for all children.

Therefore, to be appropriate and effective, learning activities should be tailored to the cognitive level of the child.

Rudolf Steiner and the Waldorf Schools

Steiner divided children's development into three stages: to age seven, children learn primarily by imitation; from seven to fourteen, feelings and emotions predominate; and after age fourteen, the development of independent reasoning skills becomes important. Waldorf education tends to emphasize arts and crafts, music, and movement, especially at younger ages, and textbooks are eschewed in favor of books the students make for themselves. Waldorf theories also maintain that the emphasis should be on developing the individual's self-awareness and judgment, sheltered

from political and economic aspects of society until well into adolescence.

Montessori and the Prepared Environment

Italian physician Maria Montessori's work emphasized the idea of the prepared environment: Provide the proper surroundings and tools, so that children can develop their full potential. Montessori materials are carefully selected, designed to help children learn to function in their cultures and to become independent and competent. Emphasis is on beauty and quality, and that which confuses or clutters is avoided: Manipulative are made of wood rather than plastic tools are simple and functional, and television and computers are discouraged.

Charlotte Mason: Guiding Natural Curiosity

Charlotte Mason was a nineteenth-century educator advocated informal learning during the

child's early year contrast with the Prussian system of regimented learning then in vogue. She recommended nature study to develop both observational skill and an appreciation for the beauty of creation and extended that approach to teaching history geography through travel and study of the environment rather than as collections of data to master. She felt children learn best when instruction takes into account their individual abilities and temperaments, but she emphasized the importance of developing good habits to govern one's temperament and laying a solid foundation of good moral values.

Holt and Unschooling

Educator John Holt wrote extensively about school reform in the 1960s. Although he originally proposed the word "unschooling" simply as a more satisfactory alternative to "homeschooling." Unschooling now generally refers to a style of homeschooling, in which learning is not separated from living, and children learn mainly by following their interests. Children learn best, he argued, not by being taught, but by being a part of the world, free to most interests them, by having their questions answered as they ask them, and by being treated with respect rather than condescension.

Gardner and Multiple Intelligences

Psychologist Howard Gardner argues that intelligence is not a single unitary property and proposes the existence of "multiple intelligences." He identifies seven types of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Because each person has a different mix of these intelligences, learning is best tailored to each individual's strengths, rather than emphasizing the linguistic and logical-mathematical approaches traditionally used in schools. A bodily kinesthetic learner, for instance, might grasp geometric concepts presented with hands-on manipulative far more easily than she would if they were presented in a more traditionally logical, narrative fashion. A teaching approach that recognizes a variety of learning styles might encourage many individuals now lost by conventional methods.

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Results From Motivation Theories In Business Success

By Jerry Hall

Motivational theorists differ on where the energy is derived and on the particular needs that a person is attempting to fulfil, but most would agree that motivation requires a desire to act, an ability to act, and having an objective. There are numerous theories of motivation. Ramlall (2005) identified the most relevant theories and explained the respective theories of motivation and how motivation may impact employee commitment in an organization. Five methods of explaining behaviour – needs, reinforcement, cognition, job characteristics, and feelings/emotions – underlie the evolution of modern theories of human motivation. In this motivational theory effort, the following motivation theories were selected: (1) need theories, (2) equity theory, (3) expectancy theory, and (4) job design model given their emphasis and reported significance on employee retention.

In general, need theories attempt to identify internal factors that energize the behavior of an individual. Needs as defined previously are physiological or psychological deficiencies that arouse behavior. These needs can be strong or weak and are influenced by environmental factors. Thus, human needs vary over time and place.

Having synthesized and critically analyzed the motivation theories, the effects of major factors from the respective theories in employee retention efforts are as follows.

1. Needs of the Employee. Employees have multiple needs based on their individual, family, and cultural values. In addition, these needs depend on the current and desired economic, political, and social status; career aspiration; the need to balance career, family, education, community, religion, and other factors; and a general feeling of one's satisfaction with the current and desired state of being.
2. Work Environment. Employees want to work in an environment that is productive, respectful, provides a feeling of inclusiveness, and offers friendly setting.
3. Responsibilities. Given that one feels competent to perform in a more challenging capacity and has previously demonstrated such competencies, an employee may feel a need to seek additional responsibilities and be rewarded in a fair and equitable manner.

4. Supervision. Managers and other leaders more frequently than others feel a need to teach, coach, and develop others. In addition, these individuals would seek to influence the organization's goals, objectives and the strategies designed to achieve the mission of the organization.

Jerry H.Hall has an interest in Career Change Management related subjects. If you are interesting in finding out more information on Career Changes, please visit this successful Career Change site:

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