



## Connecting Learning Theories to Your Teaching

### Strategies: Culminating Assignment

**Note:** Make explicit references to the textbook to support your answers, and cite any sources you are using outside of what is provided in the workshop.

**Describe an online course based on behaviorism. What are the learners doing? What is the teacher doing?**

Your answer to the question:

Key Principles of Behaviorism (Stavredes, 2011)

- Grounded in the study of observable behavior (Location No. 981)
- Knowledge exists outside of a person and is gained through behavior modification (Location No. 983)
- Learning involves recalling facts, defining concepts and explanations, or performing procedures (Location No. 999)
- Instructor provides learners with information about the appropriateness of the behavior through frequent feedback (Location No. 1004)
- Feedback either reinforces learners' behavior or determines consequences in the form of corrective actions for the learner to achieve the desired performance behavior (Location No. 1005)
- Learners' role is simply to respond to the learning content and demonstrate a level of performance (Location No. 1002)
- Model of stimulus-response-reinforcement ensures that prescribed learning outcomes are achieved (Location No. 1003)

In accordance with these principles, an example of an online course based on behaviorism would be this machinery operation procedure course at a manufacturing plant. New hires are required to complete the asynchronous online course before they can do in-person training on the factory floor. The recorded presentations from the teacher deliver information on the procedures for operating the required machinery, and the students must learn the steps of these procedures exactly. Students are assessed through online quizzes in which they must demonstrate the ability to order the procedural steps correctly, and there is immediate feedback when a quiz is submitted. Learners must continue practicing in the online course until they can successfully order the steps for all the necessary machinery procedures.

**Describe an online course based on cognitivism. What are the learners doing? What is the teacher doing?**

Your answer to the question:

**Key Principles of Cognitivism (Stavredes, 2011)**

- Theory's foundation is information processes and understanding the memory structures of the mind for knowledge acquisition (Location No. 1015)
- Knowledge is still considered to exist outside of the person (Location No. 1014)
- Focus is on understanding how human memory works to acquire knowledge and promote learning (Location No. 1015)
- Organization of content for learning and focus on information processing, including organization, retrieval, and application (Location No. 1030)
- Use of pretests and more formative assessment strategies (Location No. 1017)
- Task analysis shifts from behavioral objectives to performance (Location No. 1018)

A cognitivist online course example would be the following customer interaction best practices course. Over the years, Company X has researched best practices for interacting with customers about various topics, like sales, support, and common questions, related to its products. This online course for new hires teaches these best practices in synchronous cohorts at various company locations. The course is well-organized for maximum student retention and retrieval of information. It begins with a pre-test, has various formative quizzes throughout the coverage of the topics, and ends with a summative performance assessment in which students must interact one-on-one through a private Zoom session with the instructor, who poses as a customer. Each topic of the course is presented according to Gagne's 9 events of learning (1985 as cited in Stavredes, 2011, Location No. 1037), and the students at each location practice with each other during each class, make and submit a recording of their practice, and get emailed feedback from the instructor on those submissions. A best practices quick guide .PDF is distributed to each student upon completion of the course as an on-the-job reference.

**Describe an online course based on constructivism. What are the learners doing? What is the teacher doing?**

Your answer to the question:

**Key Principles of Cognitivism (Stavredes, 2011)**

- Learning as a process in which learners construct knowledge and meaning by integrating prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (Location No. 1061)
- Knowledge does not exist outside of the person but is constructed based on how a person interacts with the environment and experiences the world (Tennyson & Schott, 1997 as cited in Stavredes, 2011, Location No. 1062)
- Cognitive constructivism focuses on the individual characteristics or attributes of the learner and their impact on learning (Location No. 1067)
- Social constructivism focuses on how meaning and understanding are created through social interaction (Location No. 1068)
- Transfer involves the use of meaningful contexts that allow the learning to be transferred to a novel situation and applied (Location No. 1090)
- Real-world examples, as well as opportunities to solve real-world problems, allow for the greatest opportunity for transfer (Location No. 1091)
- Learners are active participants in the learning process and knowledge construction (Location No. 1100)
- Instructor takes on a new role of facilitator rather than lecturer (Location No. 1102)

Constructivist principles would be evident in this course on new marketing trends. Company Y wants to train its marketing professionals in the latest marketing strategies. They hire a trainer from a marketing think tank to deliver an online synchronous course for employees in their 3 main offices. After presenting preliminary information on a new marketing strategy and further resources where students can look for more information, the instructor gives the students at each office the assignment to work together in developing an overview of a campaign using that strategy. In the next week's class, the 3 groups present and discuss their campaign overviews. Students and the instructor all make comments during the discussion, and the instructor offers points of direction to keep raising the level of student understanding per Vygotsky's theory of zones of proximal distance (1978, as cited in Stavredes, 2011, Location No. 1079). This pattern of instruction and projects is followed for the entirety of the course. At the end of the course, the campaign overviews are presented to the company executives, who then select one of the campaigns for the marketing team to develop fully and deploy.

**Describe an online course based on pedagogical assumptions. What are the learners doing? What is the teacher doing?**

Your answer to the question:

**Key Pedagogical Assumptions (Elm Learning, 2022)**

- Learner is dependent on teacher, who evaluates progress and assumes responsibility for what is taught and its efficacy
- Learner has little experience and is seen as a “blank slate”
- Students advance once they have completed necessary steps
- Learning is prescribed by instructor and sequenced to make logical sense
- Learners are motivated by external sources
- Topics are completed by pass or fail grades

A course with pedagogical assumptions would be necessary for training on a complicated proprietary software system for quality assurance at a supplement manufacturer. Since the software was developed from the ground up specifically for this manufacturer and its products, new hires have no prior experience with it. In this asynchronous course, recordings of instructor screen shares demonstrate tasks step-by-step in the software. After watching the instructor perform a task, the students follow along on their own computers, doing what the instructor does. Students then practice with several similar scenarios on their own before taking a quiz at the end of each class on the content that was presented. Students are not allowed to move on to the next class until they can pass the quiz for the previous one. The new hires receive a lower training pay, and once they pass the final on all the software topics, their wages increase by \$3 per hour and they begin official work under a supervisor’s guidance in the quality assurance department.

**Describe an online course based on andragogical assumptions. What are the learners doing? What is the teacher doing?**

Your answer to the question:

**Key Andragogical Assumptions (Elm Learning, 2022)**

- Learner is depending on self through self-evaluation, direction, and taking responsibility for the process
- Learner uses life experience as a foundation
- Adults learn from instructor but also from one another
- Learning is triggered by any number of life experiences and not necessarily led by designated instructor
- Learners fill knowledge gaps
- Learning is prescribed by self
- Learners are motivated by intrinsic means
- Topics are completed by mastery

An example of a course with andragogical assumptions would be this course produced by Company Z for their line of specialty cooking utensils. The course is asynchronous and offered for free on the company website through a coupon code that comes with the purchase of a single tool or the full tool set. Students self-select demonstrations of the various techniques based on what they don't know how to do, and they can skip over skills they have already mastered. The company encourages students to upload 1-minute videos of themselves cooking various items with the tools and/or favorite recipes with which they like to use the tools in a social media-style user area of the course.

**Describe three strategies you would use to motivate learners in your online course and explain why these strategies would motivate your learners.**

Your answer to the question:

With adult learners, I would employ the following strategies from Knowles and colleagues (1998, as cited in Stavredes, 2011).

1. *Increase internal motivation by addressing the need to know.* According to Knowles et al., “Adults need to know why they should learn something” (Location No. 589). Understanding the why behind a learning experience helps learners see how it can affect internal priorities, like “increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life” (Location No. 599), which are more important to adults than external motivators.
2. *Employ life-, task-, or problem-centered learning.* Expanding on the need to know, Knowles et al. indicated that adults “want to see how what they are learning will apply to their life, a task they need to perform, or a problem they need to solve” (Location No. 597). Presenting information with this pragmatism in mind lets adults learn more effectively.
3. *Give opportunities to incorporate experience.* Knowles et al. pointed out the importance of previous experience for adult learners, since “adults have a lifetime of experience and want to use and share what they know to enhance their learning” (Location No. 593). Adult learners find activities that draw upon their experiences and connections they can make from those experiences more engaging.

**References**

Elm Learning. (2022, May 17). *Pedagogy vs. andragogy: where many get it wrong in their learning strategy*. Retrieved June 25, 2022 from <https://elmlearning.com/blog/pedagogy-vs-andragogy/>

Stavredes, T. (2011). *Effective online teaching: foundations and strategies for student success*. Jossey-Bass. <https://amzn.to/39zKHfk>