

Session 13

Learning Theories: Albert Bandura's Observational & Jerome Bruner's Constructivism Theories

A. Introduction

The Observational and Social Constructivism theories are one of the learning theories that can help teachers to better plan the process of teaching and learning in the class. Several activities that can be produced through these learning theory approaches in relation to the subject matter that is intended for the class interaction. This is a simple progression of teaching pattern from observation to pragmatic teaching approach down to constructive way of teaching.

B. Session Objectives

- ✧ Discuss the general principles of observational and social learning theories of Albert Bandura.
- ✧ Discourse how learning takes place through the spiral method (Jerome Bruner) of teaching and learning
- ✧ Determine classroom scenarios, community issues and / or events that concerns the developmental learning through social observation and learning progression.
- ✧ Elaborate the functions of observational, social and learning progression to learners' cognitive development.

C. Session Content

1. Topic 1

Albert Bandura's Observational Theory



Image 1. Stanford psychology professor Albert Bandura has died. (Source: Maccormick, H.,2021 (Online))

Albert Bandura is a Canadian-born American psychologist whose focus of study is Observational Theory of learning. His Social Cognitive Theory emphasized that people learn and develop a kind of behavior through interacting with the environment by means of observation, modelling and imitation. Learning takes place when one allows himself/herself to gain direct experience, positively or negatively. Everything that people learned from observation and modelling may provide different result depending on how a person perceived or process the experience to gain cognitive value and positive behavior advantage.

Bandura's Bobo doll experiment is a study of child behavior particularly on the aggression. This describes how a child learn from the observed behavior from an adult. In real life, a child is expose to several behaviors everyday in school, at home or even in a larger community. Children in their young age have yet to experience a lot in life, therefore, they are most likely to be exposed on new things which may be observed from his environment. The ability to judge whether the observed behavior is positive or unhelpful is critical because of the inability of the child to compare and analyze the situation by themselves. In child psychology of education, a child

learns a lot through imitation, hence, social learning theory through observation place a vital role in child's development when guided by the Most Knowledgeable Other (MKO).

The Four (4) Mediational Processes by Albert Bandura:

1. **Attention:** The first step in the observational learning process. There are several behaviors that are observed on a daily basis in which some are significant to learning and some are not. In classroom, in order for the child to learn the intended topic being discuss by the teacher, the ability to listen is very important. If at first, the attention of the child is not observed, the ability to *engage* and acquire significant knowledge may be compromised.
2. **Retention.** This is one of the crucial part in the teaching and learning process, to gauge the level of learning of the students. This is usually process by administering test or examination. The retention ability of the child will then be measured through the result of the examination.
3. **Reproduction:** This is the ability of an individual to perform what was observed from the model. Putting all together the pieces of learning and practically apply them to produce significant learning.
4. **Motivation.** The will to perform the observed behavior. This includes external, vicarious and self-reinforcement.

2. Topic 2

Jerome Bruner's Constructivism Theory

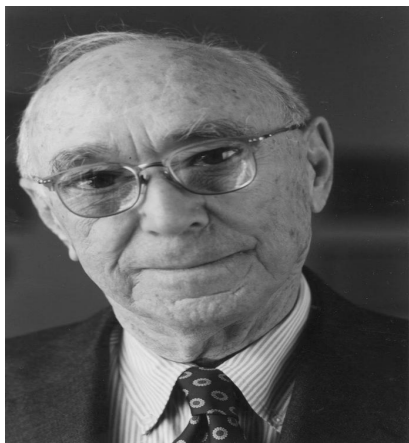


Image 3 . Jerome S. Bruner, influential psychologist of perception, dies at 100.
(Source: Schudel, M.,2016 (Online))

Jerome Bruner created the learning theory approach to education that focus on creating meaningful insights through the acquired series of different and related concepts. He consider learning as an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge.

Bruner termed cognitive structure as a way to provide meaning and to organize learning experiences in order to produce substantial outcome and output. The role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning is also highlighted in this theory of constructivism in making the lecture information applicable and appropriate to the learner's current level of understanding.

Three Principles of Learning

1. Learning plan should consider learners' experiences and readiness and as well as the context design so the students can adapt easily on the pace of the teaching and learning episodes.
2. Spiral organization of instruction in which teacher should also consider the level of understanding of the learning and make the learning plan follow a pattern of progression.
3. Teachers' instructions must be engaging and allows students self-directed method.

D. Conclusion

Teachers may consider incorporating observation as one of the teaching practices to enable students work independently and use that opportunity to discover learning episodes by themselves not just merely putting everything in place for the students in the process of teaching and learning. Observational learning is one of the many ways that can lead to pragmatic learning in which students are allowed and are capable putting the concepts learned into practice. By doing so, students are now capable of constructing more ideas according to the bases of observation and application. In every teaching and learning episodes, it is still best that we consider the environment as part of learning and the design of the lesson plan should be in progressive and spiral manner.

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