

## Learning Theory in the Classroom

In recent years, the key goal of education reform has been to give the learner more control. The modern classroom should reflect a learning environment that is far different from what is now called the "traditional" model. Curriculum and instruction should be geared to educate students (generate understanding) rather than to train them (produce specific performances)" (Draper, 2002, p. 521).

Because we tend to teach in the manner in which we were instructed ourselves, professional development is designed to help us learn instructional strategies that we can be used to "educate" students. Too often, however, we employ those strategies for a period of time and then revert to at least some of the traditional strategies that reflect our older beliefs. Indeed, those of us who have been teaching for more than 20 years can plot the pendulum-like nature of education reform as theories emerge, are given a practical application, and eventually disappear.

However apt the pendulum analogy may be, it implies that older theories are out of favor, outmoded, or just plain wrong. The analogy also suggests that the newer theories offer a panacea and educate everyone in just the right way, at just the right time.

This raises a question: Should older theories be discarded and newer theories used to the exclusion of others? As we consider this question and related issues in this course, we'll explore several influential models and take a look at how those learning theories function in the classroom.

In this six module course, you will explore several influential teaching models and discuss the role of personalization through the incorporation of learning and teaching styles into the educational paradigm. You will also investigate the strengths and weaknesses of behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism.

## Course Objectives

- Explain the value of language assessment and describe what it means to assess authentic language use.
- Learn how to design an assessment measure and understand the impact that both learner characteristics and test administration procedures have on the reliability of test results.
- Explain how to determine the value of items on a language measure, describe different scoring methods, and explain how to convert raw scores into values that are easier to interpret.
- Learn how to evaluate a language measure in a systematic and rigorous way and be able to identify issues of concern in interpreting test results.
- Identify different types of tests and test-taking strategies.
- Learn how to write test instructions.
- Understand the range of options that can be used to generate items and procedures for language measures.
- Describe common formats used to assess comprehension and vocabulary knowledge on reading assessment instruments.
- Explain the processes involved in reading in a first and second language.
- Identify key components involved in assessing listening, speaking, and writing skills.
- Learn how to conduct performance assessment.
- Explore how computer-assisted language testing differs from traditional assessment.
- Review guidelines for the ethical use of tests.

## Course Syllabus

<p><b>Module 1</b></p>	<p><b>Behaviorism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Behaviorism and Learning</li> <li>• Behaviorism in the Modern Classroom</li> <li>• Media: How People Learn</li> <li>• Application: Behaviorism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 2</b></p>	<p><b>Cognitivism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Cognitivism and Learning</li> <li>• Behaviorism in the Modern Classroom</li> <li>• Are Emotions Important?</li> <li>• Application: Cognitivism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 3</b></p>	<p><b>Constructivism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Constructivism and Learning</li> <li>• Learning and Understanding</li> <li>• Constructivism in the Modern Classroom</li> <li>• Is Constructivism Always Appropriate</li> <li>• Media 1: Sunni's Story</li> <li>• Media 2: Creating a Time for Telling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 4</b></p>	<p><b>Brain-Based Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Traditional Models of Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Brain-Based Learning</li> <li>• Media: How People Learn</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application: Brain-Based Learning in My Classroom</li><li>• Module Journal</li></ul>
<b>Module 5</b>	<b>Learning Styles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Learning Styles and Learning</li><li>• Examples of Learning-Style Models and Inventories</li><li>• Perceiving</li><li>• Organizing</li><li>• Processing</li><li>• Application: Matching Learning and Teaching Styles</li><li>• Module Journal</li></ul>
<b>Module 6</b>	<b>Bridging Theories in the Classroom</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Teacher Characteristics</li><li>• Video: Using Mind Mapping</li><li>• Module Journal</li></ul>