| **Aspect** | | [**Behaviourist**](http://infed.org/mobi/the-behaviourist-orientation-to-learning/) | [**Cognitivist**](http://infed.org/mobi/the-cognitive-orientation-to-learning/) | [**Social /situational**](http://infed.org/mobi/the-socialsituational-orientation-to-learning/)**/Experiential** | [**Humanist**](http://infed.org/mobi/humanistic-orientations-to-learning/) |
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| **Learning theorists** | | Thorndike, Pavlov, Watson, Guthrie, Hull, Tolman, Skinner | Koffka, Kohler, [Lewin](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-lewin.htm), Piaget, Ausubel, [Bruner](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/bruner.htm), Gagne | Bandura, [Lave and Wenger](http://www.infed.org/biblio/communities_of_practice.htm), Salomon | Maslow, [Rogers](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-rogers.htm) |
| **View of the learning process** | | Change in behaviour | Internal mental process (including insight, information processing, memory, perception | Interaction /observation in social contexts. Movement from the periphery to the centre of a community of practice | A personal act to fulfil potential. |
| **Locus of learning** | | Stimuli in external environment | Internal cognitive structuring | Learning is in relationship between people and environment. | Affective and cognitive needs |
| **Purpose in education** | | Produce behavioural change in desired direction | Develop capacity and skills to learn better | Full participation in communities of practice and utilization of resources | Become self-actualized, autonomous |
| **Educator’s role** | | Arranges environment to elicit desired response | Structures content of learning activity | Works to establish communities of practice in which conversation and participation can occur. | Facilitates development of the whole person |
| **Manifestations in adult learning** | | Behavioural objectives  Competency -based education  Skill development and training | Cognitive development  Intelligence, learning and memory as function of age  Learning how to learn | Socialization  Social participation  Associationalism  Conversation | Andragogy  Self-directed learning |
| **View of knowledge** | Knowledge is a repertoire of behavioural responses to environmental stimuli. | Knowledge systems of cognitive structures are actively constructed by learners based on pre-existing cognitive  structures. | Knowledge is constructed within social contexts through interactions with a knowledge community. |  |
| **View of learning** | Passive absorption of a predefined body of knowledge by the learner. Promoted by repetition and positive reinforcement. | Active assimilation and accommodation of new information to existing cognitive structures. Discovery by learners. | Integration of students into a knowledge community. Collaborative assimilation and accommodation of new information. |  |
| **View of motivation** | Extrinsic, involving positive and negative reinforcement. | Intrinsic; learners set their own goals and motivate themselves to learn. | Intrinsic and extrinsic. Learning goals and motives are determined both by learners and extrinsic rewards provided by the knowledge community. |  |
| **Implications for Teaching** | Correct behavioral responses are transmitted by the teacher and absorbed by the students. | The teacher facilitates learning by providing an environment that promotes discovery and assimilation/ accommodation. | Collaborative learning is facilitated and guided by the teacher. Group work. |  |

Taken from <https://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/theories/overview.html>

**Four orientations to learning (after Merriam and Caffarella 1991: 138)**

## Learning Theories and Transfer of Learning

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| The behaviourist orientation to learning | |
| In essence three **KEY ASSUMPTIONS** underpin this view:   * Observable behaviour rather than internal thought processes are the focus of study. In particular, learning is manifested by a change in behaviour. * The environment shapes one’s behaviour; what one learns is determined by the elements in the environment, not by the individual learner. * The principles of contiguity (how close in time two events must be for a bond to be formed) and reinforcement (any means of increasing the likelihood that an event will be repeated) are central to explaining the learning process. (Merriam and Caffarella 1991: 126) | In terms of learning, according to James Hartley (1998) four **KEY PRINCIPLES** come to the fore:   * *Activity is important*. Learning is better when the learner is active rather than passive. (‘Learning by doing’ is to be applauded). * *Repetition, generalization and discrimination are important notions*. Frequent practice – and practice in varied contexts – is necessary for learning to take place. Skills are not acquired without frequent practice. * *Reinforcement is the cardinal motivator*. Positive reinforcers like rewards and successes are preferable to negative events like punishments and failures.   *Learning is helped when objectives are clear.* Those who look to behaviourism in teaching will generally frame their activities by behavioural objectives e.g. ‘By the end of this session participants will be able to…’. With this comes a concern with [competencies](http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-comp.htm) and [product approaches to curriculum.](http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-curric.htm) |
| The cognitive orientation to learning | |
|  | **THE PRINCIPLES** he identifies are:   * *Instruction should be well-organized.* Well-organized materials easier to learn and to remember. * *Instruction should be clearly structured*. Subject matters are said to have inherent structures – logical relationships between key ideas and concepts – which link the parts together. * *The perceptual features of the task are important*. Learners attend selectively to different aspects of the environment. Thus, the way a problem is displayed is important if learners are to understand it. * *Prior knowledge is important*. Things must fit with what is already known if it is to be learnt. * *Differences between individuals are important as they will affect learning.* Differences in ‘cognitive style’ or methods of approach influence learning. * *Cognitive feedback gives information to learners about their success or failure concerning the task at hand.* Reinforcement can come through giving information – a ‘knowledge of results’ – rather than simply a reward. |
| Humanistic orientations to learning | |
| Level one: *Physiological needs* such as hunger, thirst, sex, sleep, relaxation and bodily integrity must be satisfied before the next level comes into play.  Level two: *Safety needs* call for a predictable and orderly world. If these are not satisfied people will look to organize their worlds to provide for the greatest degree of safety and security. If satisfied, people will come under the force of level three.  Level three: *Love and belonginess needs* cause people to seek warm and friendly relationships.  Level four: *Self-esteem needs* involve the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery and competence. They also involve confidence, independence, reputation and prestige.  Level five: *Self-actualization* is the full use and expression of talents, capacities and potentialities.  Self actualizers are able to submit to social regulation without losing their own integrity or personal independence; that is they may follow a social norm without their horizons being bounded in the sense that they fail to see or consider other possibilities. They may on occasion transcend the socially prescribed ways of acting. Achieving this level may mean developing to the full stature of which they are capable. (Tennant 1997: 13) | He saw the following **ELEMENTS** as being involved in significant or experiential learning.   * *It has a quality of personal involvement—*the whole person in both feeling and cognitive aspects being *in* the learning event. * *It is* *self-initiated.* Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovers of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within. * *It is pervasive.* It makes a difference in the behaviour, the attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner. * *It is evaluated by the learner.* She knows whether it is meeting her need, whether **it** leads toward what she *wants* to know, whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance she is experiencing. The locus of evaluation, we might say, resides definitely in the learner. * *Its essence is meaning.* When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience. (Rogers (1983: 20) |
| The social/situational orientation to learning | |
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