

A brief summary of schools of learning

In general, schools of learning are classified into four types: behaviorism, cognitivism, humanism, and social interactionism.

Behaviorism: It has its roots within positivism and explains all learning in terms of some form of conditioning. Learning happens through repetition and memorization in this school. There is no place for thinking, emotions, or interaction.

Cognitivism: learners' mental processes are involved for learning and learners are seen as active participants in the learning process and they themselves need to make their own sense of the world through thinking and linking their previous knowledge to the new one. Attention, perception, intelligence, memory, and noticing are the key concepts in this school. Problem solving tasks are the most frequent activities suggested to teachers in this school.

Humanism: it emphasizes the importance of learner and places individual's thoughts, feelings, and emotions at the forefront of all human development. Teachers are suggested to help students become more like them and less like each other and help them develop a sense of personal identity. In order to become self-actualizing, learners should be helped and encouraged to make choices for themselves in what and how they learn. Teachers are suggested to encourage creativity, self-esteem, and self-evaluation and consider each student's needs and style of learning.

Social interactionism: In this school learning and cognitive development happen through interaction either with an experienced teacher or a capable peer; that is, through interaction learners can make sense of the world.

Significant people in the learners' lives can enhance their learning by selecting and sharing the learning experiences presented to them. It is believed that working together with another person, either an adult or a more competent peer at a level that is just above learner's present capabilities is the best way for the learner to move into the next layer. Pair work and group work are the most frequently used activities in this school.

Social interactionism is being practiced in developed countries; however, unfortunately in Iran we are mostly practicing principles of behaviorism in our schools and universities.