THEORIES OF LEARNING

5. MOTIVATIONAL AND HUMORIST THEORIES

5.1. Humanism Overview

Humanistic psychology is a psychological perspective which rose to prominence in the mid-20th century in response to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and B.F. Skinner's Behaviorism. With its roots running from Socrates through the Renaissance, this approach emphasizes an individual's inherent drive towards self-actualization and creativity. It typically holds that people are inherently good. It adopts a holistic approach to human existence and pays special attention to such phenomena as creativity, free will, and human potential. It encourages viewing ourselves as a whole person greater than the sum of our parts and encourages self-exploration rather than the study of behavior in other people. Humanistic psychology acknowledges spiritual aspiration as an integral part of the human psyche. It is linked to the emerging field of transpersonal psychology. Humanistic psychology has sometimes been referred to as the third force in psychology, distinct from the two more traditional approaches, which are psychoanalysis and behaviorism. In the context of post-industrial society, humanistic psychology has begun to be seen as more relevant than the older approaches. It is largely responsible for new approaches towards human capital stressing creativity and human wholeness. Previously the connotations of creativity were reserved for and primarily restricted to, working artists. In the 1980s, with an increasing number of people working in the cognitive-cultural economy, creativity came to be seen as a useful commodity and competitive edge for international brands. The five basic principles of humanistic psychology are:

1. Human beings, as human, supersede the sum of their parts. They cannot be reduced to components.
2. Human beings have their existence in a uniquely human context, as well as in a cosmic ecology.
3. Human beings are aware and are aware of being aware - i.e., they are conscious. Human consciousness always includes an awareness of oneself in the context of other people.
4. Human beings have some choice and, with that, responsibility.
5. Human beings are intentional, aim at goals, are aware that they cause future events, and seek meaning, value, and creativity.
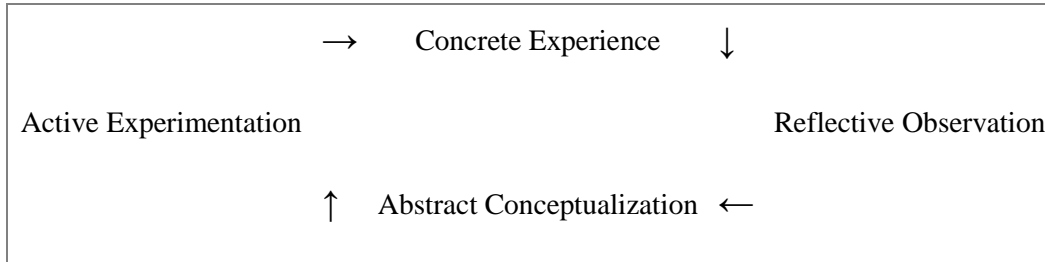
5.2. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior. There are three models of EI. The *ability model*, developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer, focuses on the individual's ability to process emotional information and use it to navigate the social environment. The *trait model* as developed by Konstantin Vasily Petrides, encompasses behavioral dispositions and self-perceived abilities and is measured through self-report. The final model, the *mixed model* is a combination of both ability and trait EI. It defines EI as an array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance, as proposed by Daniel Goleman. Studies have shown that people with high EI have greater mental health, exemplary job performance, and more potent leadership skills. Markers of EI and methods of developing it have become more widely coveted in the past few decades.

5.3. Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is the process of making meaning from direct experience, i.e., "learning from experience". The experience can be staged or left open. Aristotle once said, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them". David A. Kolb helped to popularize the idea of experiential learning drawing heavily on the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. His work on experiential learning has contributed greatly to expanding the philosophy of experiential education. Experiential learning is learning through reflection on doing, which is often contrasted with rote or didactic learning. Experiential learning is related to, but not synonymous with, experiential education, action learning, adventure learning, free choice learning, cooperative learning, and service learning. While there are relationships and connections between all these theories of education, importantly they are also separate terms with separate meanings. Experiential learning focuses on the learning process for the individual. It is often used synonymously with the phrase experiential education, however, while experiential learning considers the individual learning process, experiential education should be considered a broader philosophy of education. As such, it is concerned with issues such as the relationship of teacher and student, as well as broader issues of educational structure and objectives.

Figure 1 – David Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (ELM)

$\rightarrow$ Concrete Experience $\downarrow$

Active Experimentation   Reflective Observation

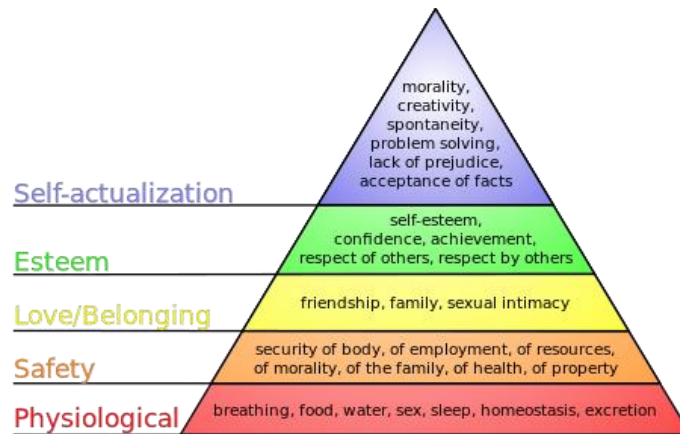$\uparrow$ Abstract Conceptualization $\leftarrow$

Experiential learning can exist without a teacher and relates solely to the meaning-making process of the individual's direct experience. However, though the gaining of knowledge is an inherent process that occurs naturally, for a genuine learning experience to occur, there must exist certain elements. According to David A. Kolb, an American educational theorist, knowledge is continuously gained through both personal and environmental experiences. Kolb states that in order to gain genuine knowledge from an experience, certain abilities are required:

- **The learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience;**
- **The learner must be able to reflect on the experience;**
- **The learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience; and**
- **The learner must possess decision making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience.**

5.4. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" in *Psychological Review*. Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of humans' innate curiosity. His theories parallel many other theories of human developmental psychology, some of which focus on describing the stages of growth in humans. Maslow used the terms Physiological, Safety, Belongingness and Love, Esteem, Self-Actualization and Self-Transcendence needs to describe the pattern that human motivations generally move through.

Self-actualization — morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

Esteem — self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

Love/Belonging — friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety — security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property

Physiological — breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top. While the pyramid has become the de facto way to represent the hierarchy, Maslow himself never used a pyramid to describe these levels in any of his writings on the subject. The most fundamental and basic four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": esteem, friendship and love, security, and physical needs. If these deficiency needs are not met, with the exception of the most fundamental (physiological) need, there may not be a physical indication, but the individual will feel anxious and tense. Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher level needs. Maslow also coined the term Meta-motivation to describe the motivation of people who go beyond the scope of the basic needs and strive for constant betterment. The human mind and brain are complex and have parallel processes running at the same time, thus many different motivations from various levels of Maslow's hierarchy can occur at the same time. Maslow spoke clearly about these levels and their satisfaction in terms such as relative, general, and primarily. Instead of stating that the individual focuses on a certain need at any given time, Maslow stated that a certain need dominates the human organism. Thus Maslow acknowledged the likelihood that the different levels of motivation could occur at any time in the human mind, but he focused on identifying the basic types of motivation and the order in which they should be met.

5.5. Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro theory of human motivation and personality, concerning people's inherent growth tendencies and their innate psychological needs. It is concerned with the motivation behind the choices that

people make without any external influence and interference. SDT focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined. In the 1970s, research on SDT evolved from studies comparing the intrinsic and extrinsic motives, and from growing understanding of the dominant role intrinsic motivation played in an individual's behavior but it was not until mid-1980s that SDT was formally introduced and accepted as a sound empirical theory. Research applying SDT to different areas in social psychology has increased considerably since the 2000s. Key studies that led to emergence of SDT included research on intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to initiating an activity for its own sake because it is interesting and satisfying in itself, as opposed to doing an activity to obtain an external goal (extrinsic motivation). Different types of motivations have been described based on the degree they have been internalized. Internalization refers to the active attempt to transform an extrinsic motive into personally endorsed values and thus assimilate behavioral regulations that were originally external. Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan later expanded on the early work differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and proposed three main intrinsic needs involved in self-determination. According to Deci and Ryan, the three psychological needs motivate the self to initiate behavior and specify nutriments that are essential for psychological health and well-being of an individual. These needs are said to be universal, innate and psychological and include the need for competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness. SDT is centered on the belief that human nature shows persistent positive features, that it repeatedly shows effort, agency and commitment in their lives that the theory calls inherent growth tendencies. People also have innate psychological needs that are the basis for self-motivation and personality integration.

SDT identifies three innate needs that, if satisfied, allow optimal function and growth:

1. **Competence**
2. **Relatedness**
3. **Autonomy**

These needs are seen as universal necessities that are innate, not learned, and seen in humanity across time, gender and culture. Also, Deci claims that there are three essential elements of the theory:

1. Humans are inherently proactive with their potential and mastering their inner forces (such as drives and emotions)
2. Humans have inherent tendency toward growth development and integrated functioning
3. Optimal development and actions are inherent in humans but they don't happen automatically