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Personal Theory of Learning
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Learning is the most addictive thing we do. From the moment we are born our brains are hardwired to process the stimuli around us, discern patterns and try to make sense of our world. When we finally understand something and correctly apply our new understanding of our world, our brain craves to do that same thing again. As teachers it is in our best interest to tap into the need of our students' brains to make sense of our world. This process of taking in stimuli, discerning patterns, applying them, and observing the results is learning, and it is a cycle that constantly repeats itself. However, learning is also a skill; something that can be practiced and improved upon. (Skinner)

Learning can take many forms (Auditory, Visual, and Kinesthetic) (Willingham), but the two I will focus on are active and passive learning. Passive learning is the easiest, meaning it takes the least amount of effort. You sit there, listen and hope you retain what is being said or what you are reading. This could take the form of a lecture, reading a textbook or watching a documentary. While this works for some, it does not have the lasting effects of active learning. Passive learning changes to active once the student does something to engage in what is being taught (taking notes or doing some form of activity). Active learning has purpose or a goal and engages the student in a way that makes the information being learned authentic. The person is making connections based on their previous experience and integrating the new information and data. This process can be reflected upon and someone else can provide feedback and help the person grow and develop. When students are actively learning they are more likely to repeat the process and be able to become lifelong learners.

Unfortunately what helps to facilitate also can hinder learning, and that is a person's prior knowledge or schema (Cherry). Schemas can include but are not limited to a person's previous experiences, or other information they have learned in the past. When we are presented with information or data that challenges our world view we can either grow and integrate this new information into our knowledge, or we can cling to what we know and reject the new information. While this is a double-edged sword, a teacher must understand a student's current world view in order to help them grow and develop.

My goal as an educator is for my students to become lifelong learners. As they grow and develop, if they are actively engaged in their education they can be empowered to overcome obstacles, rise to any challenge, and be successful in their future endeavours. (Bransford) If I can give them the tools to understand their world, the curiosity to learn more, and the wisdom to apply what they know, then I can say my students have learned.

Bransford, J. L., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Expanded Edition). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Willingham. Why Students Don't Like School (Chapter 7: pp 147-168) "How Should I Adjust My Teaching for Different Types of Learners?"

Cherry, Kendra. (June 22, 2016). What is Schema in Psychology.
<https://www.verywell.com/what-is-a-schema-2795873>

Skinner, B. F. (1976). *About Behaviorism*. New York: Vintage Books.