

## Educational Psychology and Learning Theory

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### Learning Goals

- Consider the goal of education
- Understand the concept of learning theories
- Identify what the bible has to say about learning and knowledge
- Understand why learning theories are important for education and ministry

### Emile (Rousseau)

- Describes the ideal French citizen (Emile) and how to educate him
- Who is the ideal Nigerian citizen?



### Psychological Definition of Learning

- Definition: Relatively permanent change in behavior or knowledge as the result of experience.
  - **Relatively permanent:** Knowledge or behavior must persist for some time
  - **Change:** Alteration of previous behavior or knowledge
  - **Behavior or Knowledge:** New knowledge does not always affect behavior immediately
  - **Result of Experience:** Experience with the environment or rational analysis

## Spiritual Understanding of Learning

- Jesus Christ is the source of knowledge
- Knowledge that rests on ideas outside of Jesus Christ leads to ruin
  - **HOWEVER:** The Bible should NOT be read as a textbook in science, psychology, etc.
- Knowledge has its foundation in *love*.
- Learning requires both:
  - Knowledge of God
  - Obedience to Truth (Behavior)
- Obedience to God's Truth is impossible for us to attain by ourselves. However, God helps us to be obedient to what we learn through his great and precious promises (2 Peter 1:4)

## Spiritual Understanding of Learning

- There is an intimate link between KNOWLEDGE and BEHAVIOR.
  - Behavior is guided by knowledge
  - Knowledge that does not manifest itself in behavior is useless
  - **Link:** Traditional African views of intelligence that views intelligence as having a strong element of social responsibility
- Matthew 11:19: But wisdom is proved right **by her actions.**
- James 3:13-18
- Increased knowledge must lead to improved behavior

## Learning Theory

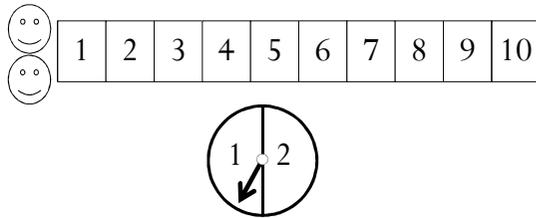
- **Theory:** Organized set of principles that describes, predicts, and explains phenomenon
  - **Describe:** What happens
  - **Predicts:** What will happen
  - **Explain:** Why it happens
- **Learning Theory:** Theory that describes what changes (behavior, knowledge, etc.) and what input is necessary to causes these changes (what type of experiences)

## Importance of Learning Theories

- *In order to master an art, one has to first master the theory and then one can master the practice.*  
-E. Fromm
- Understanding learning theories are important for:
  - Developing an educational environment that fosters effective learning
  - Improving teaching practice
  - Provide solutions to educational problems

### Improving Teaching Practice (Siegler & Ramani, 2009)

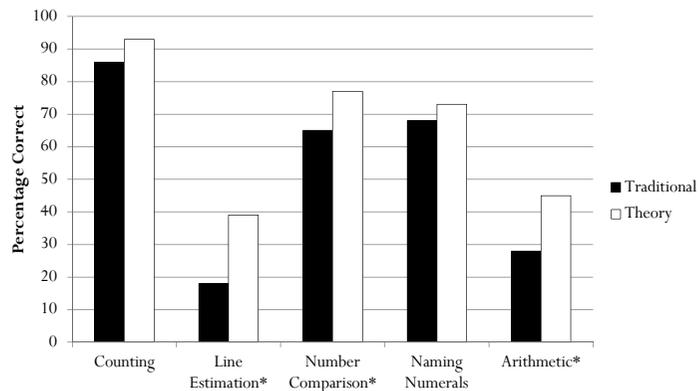
- Teaching mathematical skills to young children
  - Traditional:** Recite the number string, Count objects, and Name numerals
  - Based on theories of how children learn number:** Play a board game



### Improving Teaching Practice (Siegler & Ramani, 2009)

- Outcome Measures of Numerical Knowledge:
  - Counting
  - Number Line Estimation
  - Number Comparison: Determining which number is larger
  - Naming Numerals
  - Arithmetic Problems

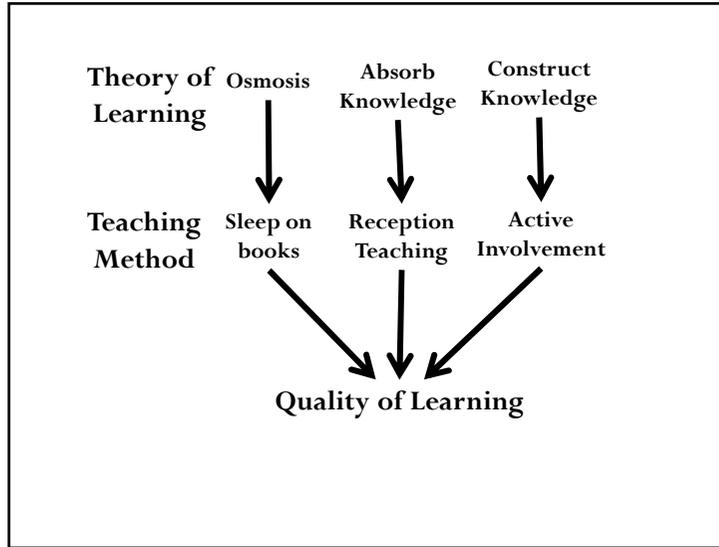
### Improving Teaching Practice (Siegler & Ramani, 2009)



\*Significant effects at  $p < .05$

### Solutions to Educational Problems

- Students perform well on CRE exams, but they are not being obedient to the Truth
  - Research in learning theories has described the difference between rote memorization and meaningful learning and how teachers can teach for meaningful learning
- Youth are not attending traditional youth programs in the church
  - Research in motivation explains why individuals choose certain behaviors
- Church members do not learn from sermons.
  - Research in learning theories explains the importance of maintaining attention.



Next week...

- Bring a cup to class