
Indigenous Perspectives on Learning and Meaningful Learning

Dr. K. A. Korb
JETS

Learning Goals

- Explain indigenous principles of learning for the First Nations ethnic groups
- Distinguish between Rote Learning and Meaningful Learning
- Identify the three conditions necessary for Meaningful Learning to occur
- Describe teaching strategies to achieve Meaningful Learning
- Be able to classify learner activities according to Bloom's taxonomy

Four Indigenous Perspectives on Learning

- What did you find most interesting about this perspective of learning?
- What principles (if any) are similar to the theories of learning we have discussed?
- What principles (if any) are different from the theories of learning we have discussed?
- What aspects of the learning model are useful for your profession?
- How can those aspects be incorporated into your profession?

Effective Learning

- There are two conditions for effective learning:
 1. **Retain:** Remember what is learned in the future
 2. **Transfer:** Use what is learned to guide thinking and behavior in a new situation

Transfer

- **Transfer:** Effect of previous learning on new learning.
- Research has found that transfer is very difficult in the traditional classroom situation
 - Learning in a traditional classroom seldom transfers to behavior outside of the classroom.

Meaningful vs. Rote Learning

Meaningful Learning

- Concept is fully understood by student
- New information is related to what students already know (prior knowledge)

Rote Learning

- Verbatim memorization of new information
- No connection between new and previous knowledge

The purpose of a fish trap is to catch fish and when the fish are caught, the trap is forgotten. The purpose of a rabbit snare is to catch rabbits. When the rabbits are caught, the snare is forgotten. The purpose of the word is to convey ideas. When the ideas are grasped, the words are forgotten. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words? He is the one I would like to talk to.

Meaningful vs. Rote Learning

- Rote learning (memorization) only achieves *retention* of new information
- Meaningful learning achieves both *retention* and *transfer*, and even achieves *retention* better than rote learning.

Teaching for Meaningful vs. Rote Learning

Meaningful

- Relate information to everyday experiences
- Deliberate effort to link new knowledge with prior knowledge

Rote

- Present definitions, formulas, and new information without explaining relationship with students' experiences
- Random presentation of new knowledge into memory with no effort to integrate new knowledge with prior knowledge

Meaningful Learning

- Three conditions for Meaningful Learning to occur:

1. **Learners:** Approach the learning task with the purpose of engaging in meaningful learning
 - If a learner only wants to memorize then meaningful learning cannot occur
 - **Application:** Encourage students to engage in meaningful learning and teach the benefits of meaningful learning
2. **Learners:** Must already have background knowledge that relates to the new material
 - **Application:** Ensure that students have foundational knowledge for a new topic

Meaningful Learning

- Three conditions for Meaningful Learning to occur:

3. **Educators:** Lesson must be meaningful
 - **Application:** Lesson must be carefully prepared and presented in a way that is:
 - Clear
 - Meaningfully related to students' lives and prior knowledge
 - Well Organized

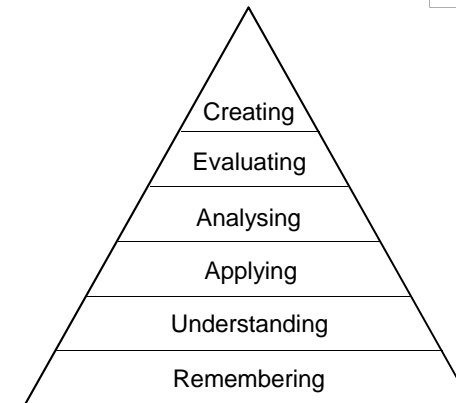
Summary: Meaningful vs. Rote

- Very few things need to be learned by rote (Woolfolk, 2007)
- **Point of Meaningful Learning:** Make materials meaningful to the learner
- **To achieve Meaningful Learning:** Organize instruction to make meaningful connections to what learners already know

Teaching for Meaningful Learning

- Use analogies (similarities with ordinary concepts)
- Tell stories to demonstrate concepts
- Ask students for their relevant experiences
- Ask students questions beyond what you have directly taught to test their understanding
- Make students explain their reasons for their answers: *Why?*
- Answer questions with questions

Bloom's Taxonomy



Bloom's Taxonomy

Category	Definition	Keywords
Remembering	Recall information.	Recite. Define. Identify. Describe. Recognize. Know. List. Name.
Understanding	Understand the meaning of a concept.	Comprehend. Explain. Summarize. Translate.
Applying	Use a concept in a familiar situation. Use a procedure.	Apply. Compute. Predict. Demonstrate. Implement. Use.
Analysing	Break information into parts to explore relationships and understanding.	Analyse. Compare. Contrast. Differentiate. Distinguish. Diagram.
Evaluating	Make judgment about the value of a concept based on standards.	Criticize. Critique. Evaluate. Justify. Support.
Creating	Generating new ideas, products, or ways of viewing something.	Create. Design. Generate. Plan. Construct. Produce. Invent.

Bloom's Taxonomy

1. What is the definition of rote memorization?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of teaching for meaningful learning?
3. How can you use meaningful learning in your classroom?
4. Create your own lesson that focuses on meaningful learning.
5. What are the similarities between meaningful learning and constructivism?
6. Why should students engage in meaningful learning?

