

**NURS-FPX6105 Assessment 1: Learning Theories and Diversity**

Student Name

Program Name or Degree Name (e.g., Bachelor of Science in Psychology), University

COURSE XXX: Title of Course

Instructor Name

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## **Learning Theories and Diversity**

Learning theories explain how knowledge is created and transferred from the educators to the learners through the learning process. These learning theories direct educators to make instructional choices and develop personal philosophies of teaching, which guide their instructional designs. An educator's philosophy of teaching should consider potential diversity in the learning environment involved and develop ways to manage conflicts that may arise from the diversity. This paper presents a teaching plan detailing a topic from a course I am interested in teaching in an educational environment and the educational theory that I could use to guide the development of the course. Additionally, the paper will explore potential diversity in the anticipated teaching group, describe how these issues can be addressed in the learning environment, and describe ways of managing conflict in the classroom.

### **Anticipated Topic, Course, and Educational Environment**

The anticipated topic of instruction is ethical decision-making in nursing practice. The topic is derived from the course introduction to clinical ethics in nursing. The course is offered to nursing students to develop ethical, legal, and moral principles used in nursing practice. It also prepares nursing learners to assess and deal with ethical issues during practice. Therefore, the intended educational environment that I will utilize for teaching is an institution of higher learning, specifically a nursing college. The anticipated audience for the course is nursing students from the institution of higher learning.

### **Constructivism Learning Theory**

Different learning theories aim to describe the knowledge-creation process and learning. Constructivism is one of the major learner-centered learning theories that stipulates that the learner has an active role in building their knowledge and understanding. Learners actively

participate in their learning theory; knowledge is constructed based on their social or individual experiences, hence the term constructivism.

According to Muhajira (2020), the primary idea of the theory is that critical thinking and meaningful knowledge are constructed actively in a cognitive, cultural, emotional, and social sense, whereby the individual learns through active involvement and engagement in the classroom. Additionally, the theory acknowledges the role of prior knowledge in learning new concepts based on the belief that individual learners interpret new concepts based on what they already know. Learners also build knowledge from social constructs such as common beliefs and shared expectations on values and behavior. More so, active engagement and participation in the classroom entail the educator facilitating learning through the development of a supportive environment and activities aimed at building on what the learners already know.

The constructivism learning theory was selected due to its appropriateness in teaching nursing students in the higher learning institution educational environment. Epp et al. (2021) note that constructivism is an effective theoretical basis for developing courses in the innovative nursing curriculum. The topic of ethics is also widely known to nursing learners as it is offered in other core units, such as philosophy. Therefore, the application of ethics in nursing practice will entail building on the already existing knowledge of general ethics.

### **Justification of the Constructivism Learning Theory in the Intended Context**

Research shows the constructivism theory's effectiveness in informing the nursing curriculum's teaching (Epp et al., 2021). In addition, nursing ethics is an application topic that will require critical reasoning and thinking abilities. Therefore, the students will be required to relate to their previous individual experiences in dealing with ethical issues in the process of learning to assess and deal with ethical issues in future practice. Relating the new concepts to the

previous knowledge on ethics and ethical issues will provide a platform for the students to participate actively in the classroom, thus boosting the learning process.

However, alternate theories that would apply in this context include behaviorist and cognitive learning theories. Muharija (2020) notes that behaviorism theory stipulates that learning depends on the learner's interaction with the external environment and that the learning process occurs when the learner experiences the consequences of interacting with the environment. The theory is less applicable in the context of learning ethics in a nursing classroom environment since nursing students may have limited experience with ethical issues particularly related to nursing practice. The cognitivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of memory and recall in learning, is also less applicable in this context since it entails teaching approaches such as retrieval practice, which may be challenging to apply in learning ethical issues in nursing practice.

### **Potential Learners' Diversity**

Educators should consider the diversity factors in a learner group while developing the teaching philosophy and identifying the approach that will best suit the group. The anticipated learner group of nursing students is diverse. The diversity factors in the intended learner group are age, gender, multiculturalism, and ethnicity. The age diversity factor occurs when learners in a group have an age range that spans across different age groups. Age is a significant diversity factor in the intended learner group since the group is likely to include young students from high school and older students advancing their nursing studies.

Furthermore, the learner group is expected to be composed of students across all genders, thus a significant diversity group (Cary et al., 2020). Gender as a diversity factor is an essential consideration in developing the educational content and selecting the instructional approach

since a diverse learner group should be taught in a gender-sensitive language, and the examples and activities provided during learning should be gender sensitive. Fuentes et al. (2021) note that educators should address the gender diversity factor in a learning environment by ensuring gender inclusivity and sensitivity in the teaching process and participation activities.

The other diversity factors in the anticipated learner population are multiculturalism and ethnicity. Cary et al. (2020) note that nursing schools, especially in the international space, mostly have students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, thus forming diverse cultural and ethnic learner populations. These populations require educators to consider developing course contents that are inclusive and culturally sensitive, thus promoting effective learning for all learners. Leidl et al. (2020) also note that nursing educators dealing with a diverse learner population group should consider the learners' needs based on the different diversity factors involved and use the considerations to inform the selection of teaching approaches and strategies.

### **Evidence-Based Strategies for Managing Conflicts in a Diverse Classroom**

Following the differences that may arise from the diversity factors, conflicts may be inevitable in a diverse learning environment. Educators should, therefore, identify ways of managing these conflicts, thus enhancing learning. Among the strategies used to manage conflicts arising from diversity in a learning environment include cultivating a culture of respect and having common rules/classroom expectations, actively involving the learners in solving problems emanating from diversity factors, and encouraging a sense of clinical and classroom community for all the learners (Valente & Lourenço, 2020).

According to Valente and Lourenço (2020), the educator plays a crucial role in setting the pace to address conflicts and manage the diverse classroom by setting up common rules and

enhancing respect for one another in the classroom. The educator should discuss the common class rules during the first class with the learners and encourage the learners to abide by them to create a safe and inclusive learning environment. In addition, the educator should encourage respect for all by emphasizing the importance of respect in developing a safe and inclusive learning environment and guiding learners in mentioning their expectations in relation to the class.

Furthermore, the educator can actively involve the learners in solving issues that result from diversity, thus preventing further conflicts. Valente and Lourenço (2020) note that the active engagement of learners in problem-solving builds their capacity to solve similar issues and encourages them to prevent conflicts as much as possible. More so, the problem-solving process usually makes the learners realize that the classroom environment should be safe for all learners to enhance learning, hence empowering them to prevent other conflicts. Most importantly, educators can make the learners understand the essence of clinical and classroom community in promoting learning and developing a safe learning environment.

### **Conclusion**

Learning theories guide the selection of teaching philosophies and strategies. The constructivist theory is appropriate for selecting instructional strategies for the course and topic identified above. The theory notes that knowledge is built on already-existing experiences and new concepts. It is vital to recognize potential diversity factors in a classroom environment and develop strategies to manage the diversity and conflicts that may result from the same.

## References

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