ADULT LEARNING LEARNING THEORIES

BEHAVIORISM

Learning occurs as a change in behavior. It is a reactionary process to the external world/stimuli.

What factors influence learning?
Process of rewards, punishments and repetition that conditions behavior and learning.

What does it look like in practice?
Values doing and observable change, feedback, performance pay, controlled task-based learning, applying explanations

Role of the teacher?
Identify behavior to be changed, set conditions to support change, determine type of reinforcement most likely to be successful, state measurable desired response objectives, design learning activities to learn and use behavior, set conditions for reinforcement, monitor and reinforce behavior

Role of the learner?
Knowledge acquisition

Cognitivism

Learning is a mental process and focuses on how information is processed, problem solving and memory and the brain.

What factors influence learning?
Information input through senses → information is processed and filed → information is sent to long term memory and output as a learned capability (Piaget’s Four Stage Model)

What does it look like in practice?
Problem solving, Concept Formation and Reasoning

Role of the teacher?
Support the process of meaningful learning: what does your learner already know, what to they need to know and how do you help them to connect it.

Role of the learner?
Knowledge internalization

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Learning comes from active interpretation. Knowledge is constructed by the learner who is center to the learning process.

What factors influence learning?
Depends on what we already know, new ideas occur as we adapt/change our old ideas (not just accumulating facts), meaningful learning occurs when we rethink old ideas and come to new conclusions (Fosnot’s 4 Principles)

What does it look like in practice?
Problem solving - allows learners to use knowledge practically and deepen understanding collaboration. Allows learners to test their knowledge and learn from others. Hands on self directed tasks, design and discovery.

Role of the teacher?
Teacher is the Facilitator. Creating a collaborative environment.

Role of the learner?
Knowledge discovery

HUMANISM

Learning occurs in and of itself. Complex process that can’t and shouldn’t be controlled. Everyone has the potential to learn and grow.

What factors influence learning?
Based on the individual’s needs (Maslow’s Hierarchy) and/or perspective (Roger’s learner centered approach: 1. personal involvement 2. pervasive 3. evaluated by learner 4. meaning making 5. learning is self initiated 6. wants to know)

What does it look like in practice?
Open classroom (learner centered), learning styles, co-operative learning (learners engage with one another towards a common goal), experimental learning (addresses wants and needs of the learner)

Role of the teacher?
Create an environment that values learning and reduce obstacles to learning. Help learners clarifying their needs.

Role of the learner?
Knowledge discovery