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4-2 Final Project: Reflection Journal

The two pedagogical theories that I will be addressing in my Strategy Inventory will be Cognitivism and Current-Traditional Rhetoric (CTR). Both learning theories are quite distinct from each other.

As indicated by the chart from *Theories in Adult Learning and Education*, Cognitivism focuses on internal mental processes and cognitive thinking. According to this table, the teacher's role is to "structure content of learning activities...in order to develop the skills to learn better" (Bélanger 51). Historically and culturally, Cognitivism had a greater impact during the 70s and 80s, however it still remains relevant even in today's teaching environment (Module 1). While this concept can be applied in a number of ways, one of the most common strategies include providing tasks or activities that help to promote cognitive as well as individual learning (Powell 242). Comprehension and understanding are key to this pedagogy, so having material or coursework that is challenging but applicable to the student is important. This method would be appropriate for students who are familiar with the requirements of English; for those students that have trouble with the coursework or for those whom English is a second language, they may encounter more difficulty since the task would require individual cognitive effort.

Another strategy for Cognitivism is utilizing the redundancy effect. Through this method, "other sources merely reiterate the information of the first source in a different form" (Mayer 27). In other words, an instructor can facilitate the learning process by having students watch an

instructional video on editing, and then having them edit their own papers afterwards. The same information is being disseminated in two different ways, thus helping to reinforce the cognitive lesson. I feel that this type of lesson is better suited for students encountering difficulty with the lesson, since the material is being reiterated in a different manner that may be better suited to their learning style, rather than through singular method. Since this method can also utilize visuals and audio, it would be able to better assist students from various demographics.

The modality effect is another resource that can be used for Cognitivism pedagogy. With this strategy a student would divide their focus on different sources of information; though this concept seems counter intuitive, the “[c]ognitive load is reduced because the use of dual modality increases effective working memory capacity” (Mayer 27). Regarding this method, I feel that both struggling students and students from another culture or demographic may encounter difficulty with this pedagogy due to the divided attention on the material being learned. Through this method, there is an increased chance for confusion.

CTR theory is perhaps one of the oldest pedagogical theories that is still in use today. Unlike Cognitivism, CTR places a special emphasis on the “formal features of a finished product” rather than the process of writing (Enos 156). According to *Reclaiming Composition for Chicano/as and Other Ethnic Minorities: A Critical History and Pedagogy*, CTR grew out of classical rhetoric, and if one examines the pedagogy, an individual can still see elements of that methodology within CTR (52). *The Testing Trap: How State Writing Assessments Control Learning* further mentions how, “[teachers] see their task as teaching knowledge about standard forms of writing that have been in the American curriculum for a hundred years...” in regards to CTR (190). However, different strategies can be done to emphasize the learning process for CTR. One strategy with this method is having students write towards an academic audience. As

noted in the “Using Digital Rhetoric in a Multimodal Assignment to Disrupt Traditional Academic Writing: Conventions in a First-Year Writing Classroom” this method would “emphasize product, usage, style, and form” (Gagich). This method would be helpful for struggling students and for students of different demographics as it would encourage them to write towards an academic audience and to put their best effort forward. Even if they fall short, the practice will help in enriching their writing skills. Melanie Gagich also recommends utilizing “digital rhetoric as a conceptual composing framework” (Gagich). This method utilizes multimodal assignments in order to help students. Thus, I feel that this method would be helpful to struggling students and those of various demographics as it relies on different tactics to incorporate the lesson. Another method is copying the rules of English and diagramming it; this method is also good for struggling students or students from a different culture or demographic as it embeds the rules and applications to memory as they write them down (Taylor 177).

Works Cited

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