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Review On Learning Orientations

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ABSTRACT: The need has arises towards the consideration of individual difference to let learners engage in and responsible for their own learning, retain information longer, apply the knowledge more effectively, have positive attitudes towards the subject, have more interest in learning materials, score higher and have high intrinsic motivation level. As regard to the importance of individual differences, Martinez (2000) has grounded a new theory, which is Intentional Learning Theory that covered individual aspects of cognitive, intention, social and emotion. This theory hypothesizes that the fundamental of understanding how individual learns, interact with an environment, performs, engages in learning, experiences learning, and assimilate and accommodate the new knowledge is by understanding individual's fundamental emotions and intentions about how to use learning, why it is important, when the suitable time, and how it can accomplish personal goals and change. The intent of this theory is to focus on emotions and intentions of an individual regarding why, when and how learning goals are organized, processed, and achieved. In conclusion, Learning Orientations introduced by this theory describes the disposition of an individual in approaching, managing and achieving their learning intentionally and differently from others.

Keywords: *Learning & Orientations*

ABSTRAK : Perbezaan antara individu semakin menjadi keperluan dalam pendidikan kini bagi menggalakkan pelajar melibatkan diri dan bertanggungjawab terhadap pembelajaran mereka, mengekalkan maklumat yang diperolehi lebih lama, mengaplikasikannya dengan lebih efektif, menampilkan sikap yang lebih efektif terhadap subjek yang dipelajari, lebih berminat terhadap bahan pembelajaran, memperolehi markah lebih tinggi dan mempunyai tahap motivasi intrinsik yang tinggi. Berikutan kepentingan perbezaan individu yang perlu diutamakan dalam pembelajaran, Martinez (2000) telah membina teori baru iaitu Teori Pembelajaran Intensional yang merangkumi aspek individu iaitu kognitif, niat, sosial dan emosi. Teori ini menyimpulkan bahawa pemahaman terhadap emosi dan niat seseorang individu terhadap pembelajaran, kepentingan pembelajaran, waktu pembelajaran yang sesuai dan kaedah untuk mencapai matlamat dalam pembelajaran merupakan asas bagi pemahaman tentang bagaimana seseorang individu belajar, berinteraksi dengan persekitaran, melaksanakan aktiviti, terlibat dalam pembelajaran, menghayati pembalajaran serta mengasimilasi dan mengakomodasi pengetahuan baru. Teori ini menumpukan kepada emosi dan niat seseorang individu berkaitan mengapa, bila dan bagaimana matlamat dalam pembelajaran disusun, diproses dan dicapai. Kesimpulannya, orientasi pembelajaran yang diperkenalkan oleh teori ini menjelaskan tentang sifat seseorang individu dalam mendekati, mengurus dan mencapai tujuan mereka dalam pembelajaran yang berbeza daripada individu yang lain.

Kata Kunci *: Pembelajaran & Orientasi*

1.0 LEARNING ORIENTATIONS

In order to ensure learners engage to and take responsibility for their own learning, many researchers (Weber, Martin, & Cayanus, 2005; Aviram et al., 2008; Jung & Graf, 2008; Kim, 2009; Retails et al., 2004) suggested that the differences and distinctiveness of each learners must be taken into account in preparing the learning. The differences of learners include their learning styles, learning orientations, learning rates, cognitive styles, multiple intelligence, talents and many more. All learners will be provided with the necessary challenges and opportunities for self-development and learning if these differences are taken into account (Aviram et al., 2008; Jung & Graf, 2008). In addition, according to Weber, Martin, & Cayanus, (2005), learning is a constructive process. This is supported by the research that has been done by Chapman (2006) that found the learning occurs best when learners understand the relevance and meaningfulness of the learning to them, and also when learners are actively engaged in creating their own idea or knowledge and able to connect what they learned with their prior knowledge and experience.

Lots of approaches have blossomed over the last decade and most of them have primarily cognitive perspectives. For example, according to Lim (2007) learning style as known as cognitive learning style has many dimensions of theories such as Felder-Silvermann Learning Style Theory, Field Independence or Dependence, Honey & Mumford Learning Style, Kolb's Learning Style Model, Myers-Brigs Type Indicator and so on. Although Keefe (1979) defined learning style as characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviours that indicates how learners interact with and respond to learning environment, Martinez (1999I), Martinez (1999D), and Martinez (1999A) realized that the approach mostly focusing on cognitive aspect, and demote other factors to secondary or no role. Therefore, there are some contemporary researchers (Martinez, 1999I; Martinez, 1999A; Bentley, 2000; Chapman, 2006; Unfred, 2003; Martinez, 1998; Martinez, 1999D; Martinez & Bunderson, 2000; Tasir, Noor, Harun, & Ismail, 2008; Martinez, 2001) have included important conative or emotions and affective or intention influence to extend their cognitive investigations on learning differences when they recognized the importance of these psychological factors in students' learning.

Intentional Learning Theory hypothesizes that the fundamental of understanding how individual learns, interact with an environment, performs, engages in learning, experiences learning, and assimilate and accommodate the new knowledge is by understanding individual's fundamental emotions and intentions about how to use learning, why it is important, when the suitable time, and how it can accomplish personal goals and change events (Martinez & Bunderson, 2000). Learning Orientation Model introduced by this theory is not focusing primarily on cognitive constructs but concerned more on conative, affective and social aspects of how an individual learns and manage their own learning construct (Martinez, 1998; Martinez, 1999; Martinez & Bunderson, 2000). According to Unfred (2003), the intent of this theory is to focus on emotions and intentions of an individual regarding why, when and how learning goals are organized, processed, and achieved. In other words, Learning Orientations describe the disposition of an individual in approaching, managing and achieving their learning intentionally and differently from others.

Other than that, According to Martinez, (1999D) and Martinez, (1999A), Learning Orientations focused on whole-person perspective and can be used as a framework to examine the dynamic flow between deep-seated psychological factors, past and future learning experiences, subsequent choices about cognitive learning preferences, styles, strategies and skills, and responses to treatment, and lastly, learning and performance outcome. Learning Orientations construct three key attribute of learners, which are focus on emotions and intentions of learning focus, committed strategic planning and learning effort, and learning

independence or autonomy (Martinez, 1999D). These attributes refers to the degree that learners plan, engage and effort to accomplish learning. These attributes can also be referred to the individual's desire and ability to take responsibility, make choices, self-motivate, manage and improve their learning (Martinez, 2001).

Based on the research that has been done by Martinez (1999I), Martinez (1999A), and Martinez (2001), Learning Orientation is rational and useful in providing theoretical foundations using a comprehensive view of learning. Furthermore, from the research, Learning Orientation could help to recognize dominant psychological factors such as conative and affective, that influenced learning, other than just cognitive aspects. The results of the research also recognized the usefulness of Learning Orientation to analyze and differentiate the students regarding what works for each of them, and to guide the design, development, implementation, analysis, and evaluation of learning solution or environment. Moreover, the research found that the matching of Learning Orientations and learning environment has 99% impacted satisfaction and 95% learning efficacy. Thus, these evidences suggest that it is useful to recognize and being sensitive to Learning Orientations in designing the instructional solution and environment. Tasir, Noor, Harun, & Ismail (2008) found that Learning Orientations are considered useful and rational for online students when considering the impact of emotions, intentions, effort to accomplish learning and success, and social factors on learning.

Learning Orientations Questionnaire constructed by Martinez (1999dissertation) is used in categorizing students into four profile of learners based on Learning Orientations Model, which are Transforming Learner, Performing Learner, Conforming Learner, and Resistant Learner (Martinez, 1999I). According to Bentley (2000), Learning Orientations Questionnaire can help in finding new ways to assess and explore the differences in individual learning. The questionnaire also helps Martinez (1999) and Martinez (2001) in determining and identifying the learning design guidelines for each learner. In short, Transforming Learner prefers discovery-oriented, non-linear and mentoring environment, Performing Learner prefers task- or project-oriented, competitive and interactive or hands-on environment, and Conforming Learner prefers simple, scaffolded, structured, facilitated and low-risk environment.

2.0 LEARNING ORIENTATIONS PROFILE

Table 1 below shows conative and affective aspects, strategic planning and committed learning effort, and learning autonomy of each learning orientations profile.

ORIENTATION	CONATIVE/AFFECTIVE ASPECTS	STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMITTED LEARNING EFFORT	LEARNING AUTONOMY
TRANSFORMING LEARNER (Transformance)	Focus strong passions and intentions on learning. Be an assertive, expert, highly self-motivated learner. Use holistic-thinking and exploratory learning to transform using high, personal standards.	Set and accomplish personal short- and long-term challenging goals that may or may not align with goals set by others; maximize effort to	Assume learning responsibility and self-manage goals, learning, progress, and outcomes.

		innovate and reach personal goals. Commit great effort to discover, elaborate, and build new knowledge and meaning.	Experience frustration if restricted or given little learning autonomy.
PERFORMING LEARNER (Performance)	Focus emotions/intentions on learning selectively or situationally. Be a self-motivated, focused learner when the content appeals. Meet above-average group standards only when the benefit appeals.	Set and achieve short-term, task-oriented goals that meet average-to-high standards; situationally minimize efforts and standards to reach assigned or negotiated standards. Selectively commit measured, detailed effort to assimilate and use relevant knowledge and meaning.	May situationally assume learning responsibility in areas of interest but willingly give up control in areas of less interest. Prefer coaching and interaction for achieving goals.
CONFORMING LEARNER (Conformance)	Focus intentions and emotions cautiously and routinely as directed. Be a low-risk, modestly effective, extrinsically motivated learner. Use learning to conform to easily achieved group standards.	Follow and try to accomplish simple task-oriented goals assigned and guided by others, then try to please and conform; maximize efforts in supportive environments with safe standards. Commit careful, measured effort to accept and reproduce knowledge to meet external requirements.	Assume little responsibility, manage learning as little as possible, be compliant, want continual guidance, and expect reinforcement for achieving short-term goals.
RESISTANT LEARNER (Resistance)	Focus on not cooperating. Be an actively or passively resistant learner. Avoid using learning to achieve academic goals assigned by others.	Consider lower standards, fewer academic goals, conflicting personal goals, or no goals; maximize efforts to resist assigned or	Assume responsibility for not meeting goals set by others, and set personal goals that avoid

		expected goals either assertively or passively. Chronically avoid learning (apathetic, frustrated, discouraged, or disobedient).	meeting formal learning requirements or expectations.
	Situational Performance or Resistance: Learners may situationally improve, perform or resist in reaction to positive or negative learning conditions or situations		

Table 1: Learning Orientations Profile (Martinez, 1999; Martinez, 2001)

3.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Table 2 below shows learning issues preferred by each learning orientations profile.

LEARNING ISSUES	TRANSFORMING LEARNERS	PERFORMING LEARNERS	CONFORMING LEARNERS
General Environment	Prefer loosely structured, mentoring environments that promote challenging goals, discovery, and self-managed learning.	Prefer semi-complex, semi-structured, coaching environments that stimulate personal value and provide creative interaction.	Prefer simple, safe, structured environments that help learners avoid mistakes and achieve easy learning goals in a linear fashion.
Goal-Setting and Standards	Set and accomplish personal short- and long-term challenging goals that may not align with goals set by others; maximize effort to reach personal goals.	Set and achieve short-term, task-oriented goals that meet average-to-high standards; situationally minimize efforts and standards to reach assigned or negotiated standards.	Follow and try to accomplish simple, task-oriented goals assigned by others; try to please and conform; maximize efforts in supportive environments with safe standards.
Learner Autonomy and Responsibility	Self-motivated to assume learning responsibility and self-direct goals, learning, progress, and outcomes. Experience frustration if restricted or given little learning autonomy.	Situationally self-motivated to assume learning responsibility in areas of interest. May willingly give up control and extend less effort for topics of less interest or in restrictive environments.	Cautiously motivated to assume little responsibility. Will self-direct learning as little as possible, and likely to be more compliant
Knowledge	Commit great effort to	Selectively commit	Commit careful,

Building	discover, elaborate, and build new knowledge and meaning.	measured effort to assimilate and use relevant knowledge and meaning.	measured effort to accept and reproduce knowledge to meet external requirements.
Problem Solving	Prefer case studies and complex, whole-to-part, problem solving opportunities.	Prefer competitive part-to-whole problem solving.	Prefer scaffolded support for simple problem solving.
User Interface	Open learning interface for high- stimulation and -processing capacity	Hands-on learning interface for medium stimulation and processing capacity	Consistent and simple interface for minimal stimulation and processing capacity.
Presentation	Prefer occasional mentoring and interaction for achieving goals (MENTORING).	Prefer continual coaching and interaction for achieving goals (COACHING)	Prefer continual guidance and reinforcement for achieving short-term goals (GUIDING)
Feedback	Prefer inferential feedback.	Prefer concise feedback.	Prefer explicit feedback.
Motivational Feedback	Discovery	Coached Discovery	Guided effort
Learning Module Size	Short, concise, big picture with links to more detail if necessary	Medium, brief overview with focus on practical application	Longer, detailed guidance, in a step wise fashion
Examples	One good example and one bad example.	A few good and bad examples.	Multiple good and bad examples
Information Need	Holistic, specific information needed to solve a problem	General interests, practice, short-term focus	Guidance to fill requirements
Content Structuring	Prefer freedom to construct own content structure	Prefer a general instruction, limited ability to reorganize	Prefer to let others decide content structure
Sequencing Methods	Hypertext, sorting by meta-tags, precise access	Semi-linear, logical branching, access by subtopic	Linear, page-turner representations general access
Peer Interaction	High, belief that everyone can commit and contribute valuable, holistic insights	Moderate, easily frustrated by time required for peer interaction and theory	Minimal, values group consensus and commitment, wants answers from the instructor
Quality of Assignments	Usually far exceeds stated requirements	Fulfills requirements but does little more than that	May not meet the minimal requirements
Questioning Habits	Asks probing, in-depth questions about content	Asks questions to complete assignments, too busy taking notes	Asks mechanistic questions about assignments

Table 2: Design Guidelines (Martinez, 1999; Martinez, 2001)

4.0 CONCLUSION

Learning Orientations categorized learners based on how they choose to plan, set, perform and attain goals, intend to commit and expend effort and also, experience learning and achievement. The Learning Orientations Questionnaire has been proved by Nor Aziah, Haziah & Masitah (2005), Bentley (2000; 2001), Higgins & O'Keeffe (2008) and Own Zang-Yuan Chen & Juin-Rei (2004) as the new way to assess individual differences. This became no doubt in the usage of this questionnaire in today's education. Therefore, students' learning orientations need to be taken into account in developing the best learning environment for better learning.

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