Hope Comes to Learning Theory

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Abstract

Originally published in Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books, 1961, Vol 6(2), 33–36. Reviews the book, Learning Theory and Behavior by O. Hobart Mowrer (see record 2005-06665-000). This new book of Mowrer's brings to mind Pandora's box. According to one version of the myth, when man, out of curiosity, opened this box, all of the blessings of the gods contained therein flew forth and were lost, and only hope, which was at the bottom, remained. In all of this there is further evidence that Mowrer, working at the business of theory and not of application, is still willing, almost eager, to translate the principles of learning theory to a language of everyday usage. He asserts in several places—without justification—that one of the great shortcomings of Hullian theory has been its reluctance to handle the concept of fear. "In the end," he says, "we are going to discover that all learning is reducible to cover conditioning". (PsycINFO Database Record(c) 2006 APA, all rights reserved)

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Harnessing Hope
This text on Learning Theory will provide you with some basic background about how students learn. We hope that this background will inform your thoughts about each of the other texts you will read this spring, especially Instructional Planning & Delivery and Classroom Management & Culture. For example, the information discussed here may provide insights into the following questions: · My school just switched me from fifth grade to second grade. · One of my students is homeless and seems to come to school hungry and sleepy every day. These problems are clearly interfering with his ability to learn. What should I do to address those problems?

Computational Learning Theory (CLT) is a branch of statistics/machine learning/artificial intelligence (in general) which deals with fundamental bounds and theorems about analyzing our (man and machine) ability to learn rules and patterns from data. It goes beyond the realm of specific algorithms that we regularly hear about — regression, decision trees, support vector machines or deep neural network — and tries to answer fundamental questions about the limits and possibilities of the whole enterprise of machine learning. Sounds exciting? Our short tour comes to an end here but much more ‘learning’ lie ahead. I hope this article could initiate some interesting concepts about fundamental machine learning theory and helped to wheat your appetite to learn more on these topics. Adult learning theories are not just a collection of jargons, concepts, and ideas about how adults learn. These theories help you plan your course during conception, development, and execution, in a way that will facilitate the learning process. Here are four reasons why ID folks MUST know about adult learning theories: · Willingness: For adults, the willingness or readiness to learn comes from perceiving the relevance of the knowledge. They want to know how learning will help them better their lives, and they learn best when they know that the knowledge has immediate value for them. Transformational learning theory explains how adults learn through such aha moments.