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Learning Theory and Design
Learning Theory Foundations
Reflection narration
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When I reflect upon different learning experiences I've had it is easy to see how the three traditional theories of learning have been present in my academic career and how those experiences and pedagogical training have influenced my instructional choices.

As part of my adjustment to full time mission work in Kenya, I've enrolled in an online Rosetta Stone language program to learn Swahili. From the very beginning of the course, learning outcomes have been evaluated by sound effects indicating my success or failure in any given component. This obviously behaviorist-based program is conditioning me to desire and perform for the positive sound effect.

Graphic organizers are a favorite cognitive tool of mine both as an instructor and student. In a previous course, Digital Literacy, I created many graphic organizers to process the many types of literacy and analyze them for similarities and differences. This tool is an outward example of the internal computation that is happening as I receive and inculcate new information.

I have always appreciated the opportunity to apply learning to my current setting or experience. This has been afforded in most of my graduate classes. Specifically, in Leadership and Technology I was able to create a technology policy both as an assignment and for real use in the high school I was teaching. This example of a constructive learning experience demonstrates the theory's emphasis on interpreting new information into a personal experience for immediate use.

As a educator I have made use of all three traditional learning theories as well as the newer connectivist theory. When teaching historical writing, I used a behaviorist model to ensure proper skills of cause/effect, compare/contrast, and change over time were developed before encouraging older students to become more sophisticated and original in their academic writing. As already stated, I personally appreciate graphic organizers, and so I use them frequently as an instructional tool to both demonstrate and encourage the internal processing inherent in the cognitive theory. I found that anytime a student could personally engage with material, learning occurred faster. A particular assignment I gave AP World History was to create a multimedia presentation about an ancient Chinese invention that is still used today. Firecrackers, makeup, and toilet paper were suddenly not only part of everyday life, but a contribution of ancient Chinese culture! Additionally, I strive to help my students, in America or Kenya, to become critical thinkers, always gaging the reliability of a source. This is a tenant of the connectivist theory.