Reflection Essay

EDFR 6302 Foundations in Cognition, Learning & Human Development

Professor: Dr. Karin Ann Lewis

Ruben Zamora

UTRGV

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Introduction

When I signed up to get a master's in educational technology, I had no idea that an EDFR course would be a requirement. I thought to myself, how would this be of any benefit to me? I was very wrong. In going through the required reading for this course (Educational Psychology by Anita Woolfolk) it became very apparent that I could implement a lot of the ideas and skills from reading this book to my everyday work life. Throughout this essay, I will focus on 4 key components of this course that made the biggest impact on me. Those 4 key components are:

- Cognitive Views of Learning (Chapter 8 in our text)

- Complex Cognitive Processes (Chapter 9 in our text)

- Constructivism and Designing Learning Environments (Chapter 10 in our text)

- Motivation in Learning and Teaching (Chapter 12 in our text)

Cognitive Views of Learning

While I am not an educator in the sense, meaning I do not teach a classroom every day I do work in a department that teaches faculty/staff/students how to use technology in their classroom quite often. This chapter was particularly interesting to me because it discusses ideas like memory, short term and long term, environments, etc. that all influence how we remember and retain knowledge. How images and text can affect how we remember what we are taught. This is extremely important in our department because develop a lot of

instructional handouts. If we have too many words, the learner may feel overwhelmed with text and not really remember much. So, we need to create documents and presentations with a good balance. It also talks about learning environments and how to set a mood in the classroom for learners to feel confident and comfortable.

Complex Cognitive Processes

This section of our text resonated with me because I feel that if I knew some of the strategies in this section when I was younger from k-12 I would have been a slightly better student.   Taking good lecture notes, doing concept maps are things I was not very good at, concept mapping was something I didn't even know was a thing back then.   So, this section really resonates with me in that sense. While I may not apply much of this section in my actual job, its very useful to have in the back of my head.

Constructivism and Designing Learning Environments

This section on designing learning environments was my favorite. I may be a little biased because I work in educational technology, so I'd like to focus more on the last section of this chapter which was "Designing Learning Environments in a Digital World".   I have been in the educational technology field since 2000. I have worked for the Center for Online learning & Technology my entire employed life (as a student worker and now full time since 2006). And one of the main things I have learned throughout the course of my career is that technology can not drive the process of education. By that I mean, you have to have a plan for it, you can't just simply throw a bunch of technology at your course because it's the latest and greatest.

There needs to be some good pedagogy behind it. It has to compliment the teaching and not pushed to the forefront taking over what is important.

Motivation in Learning and Teaching

Finally, motivation in learning and teaching. This is something I most definitely can implement in my day-to-day work. As I mentioned earlier, training or professional development is one of our many tasks here at the Center for Online Learning & Teaching Technology. This chapter really focuses on how to motivate learners. What can we do as educators to motive students to learn. In my situation most of the learners we provide professional development for are faculty.   So, they are pretty aware of a lot of concepts outlined in this course, however this chapter helps me with ideas on how we can improve our trainings to make the faculty more motivated to learn new technologies or best practices in online learning.

Final Thoughts

Overall, this course was a great experience for me. I really enjoyed the collaborative nature of it, versus the traditional quiz/test type of courses.   I think the discussions and videos were a great way to get to know my fellow students and have a real connection with them. The idea of discussion prompts was very well executed, and the prompts focused us to pay special attention to our text and discuss how the text can relate to what we already do in our careers.

Video Link: https://youtu.be/38_J_6F1wes