Chapter 2
Teaching and Learning Theories for an Interdisciplinary Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Historical and contemporary theorists have consistently influenced the philosophy of education. Theorists such as John Dewey, the forefather of progressive education, Lev Vygotsky, the creator of the zone of proximal development theory, Paulo Freire, the architect of a social justice-infused curricula, Sonia Nieto, the trailblazer in the multicultural movement, Nel Noddings, the groundbreaker of the care perspective, Emile Durkheim, the originator of sociology, Adam Smith, the spearhead of the economic theory, Howard Gardner, the mastermind of the multiple intelligence theory, and Maxine Greene, the visionary behind the aesthetic experience, have reasoned that a multidisciplinary approach to learning would allow students to recognize their learning potentials, and most importantly, offer students the knowledge and experience they need to connect to life itself.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Although there is no doubt that teaching and learning are necessary components of life, notions of how, what, when, and why we teach have constantly changed and evolved throughout educational history. From the time ancient theorists such as Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato searched for truth and knowledge, the

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-4065-6.ch002
Teaching and Learning Theories for an Interdisciplinary Curriculum

term philosophy, or “love of wisdom” (Critchley, 2009, p. xxii), emerged as a basis for teaching, learning, and understanding. Similar to inquiring about the philosophy of life, the unspoken question in education has often been “What is [the] . . . philosophy of education?”; however, as Peters (2015) suggests, “to ask such [a] question. . . is one thing . . . but to answer . . . is quite another” (p. 15).

Objectives

- Identify the philosophy of education
- Recognize the perspectives of past and present educational theorists
- Examine educational movements that initiated an integrated curriculum
- Distinguish the purpose of an integrated curriculum

CENTRAL THEORISTS FOR AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Although the educational theorists’ philosophies selected for this chapter are distinct in nature, they all have a common goal in mind: to offer students the skill and knowledge they need to make the world a better place. These theorists have undertaken an effort to produce intelligent and caring citizens who not only have the capacity to make intellectual and moral decisions for themselves, but also for future generations. The theorists have reasoned that an interdisciplinary curriculum offers students the knowledge and experience they need to connect smaller concepts into major ideas, and, above all, link them to life itself. With an emphasis on democratic, moral, and practical education, most of the theorists base their educational philosophies on real-world and hands-on learning in and out of the school setting. The philosophies in this chapter provide tools to promote a more communicative, culturally responsive, and democratic classroom which incorporates dialogue (to evoke social action), social interaction (to build cultural relationships), and socialization (to instill and reinforce positive characteristics). A focus on imagination offers ways to think beyond the norm, generate new and creative ideas, and interpret concepts subjectively rather than objectively. Amongst the various philosophies featured, all theorists believe that a multidisciplinary approach to
Related Content

RTI and Reading at the Secondary Level
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/rti-and-reading-at-the-secondary-level/134226?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/rti-and-reading-at-the-secondary-level/134226?camid=4v1a)

Using Digital Tools to Teach Writing in K-12 Classrooms
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/using-digital-tools-to-teach-writing-in-k-12-classrooms/88139?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/using-digital-tools-to-teach-writing-in-k-12-classrooms/88139?camid=4v1a)
Montessori Language Arts – The Excellence Path to Early Childhood Language Development: English for Specific Purposes
[www.igi-global.com/article/montessori-language-arts--the-excellence-path-to-early-childhood-language-development/247110?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/montessori-language-arts--the-excellence-path-to-early-childhood-language-development/247110?camid=4v1a)

All the Class Is a Stage
[www.igi-global.com/article/all-the-class-is-a-stage/247107?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/all-the-class-is-a-stage/247107?camid=4v1a)