



Abstract

The unicist ontology of human learning

*This is a synthesis on the research carried out by Peter Belohlavek
on the genesis and ontology of human learning.*

Human learning implies acquiring new knowledge to adapt to reality. It is the application of intelligence in the development of new paths to generate better results.

Learning ontology describes the natural structures of this process that can be synthesized as follows:

- 0) The beginning of the learning process as a result of necessity. There is no true learning outside the field of the individual's vocation. The field of vocation is where the individual feels a great sense of transcendence. Outside his field of vocation, the individual can only train automatisms and produce mechanical improvements.
- 1) A process to approach reality considering it both as an external element to the individual and as part of "him" at the same time. This begins with the recognition from a previous experience that could either be or not be conscious. This recognition evolves until generating a higher level of synthesis that allows managing reality in a much more effective way.
- 2) A cognitive process that has to do with the management of the elements that integrate a certain reality. It begins with the intent to understand reality as a whole, and then tries to understand it in its functioning until reaching the point of influencing that reality.
- 3) A maturative evolution that begins with the necessity to find a role model that works as a figure of authority to initiate the process until reaching a level within which the individual is capable of learning from feedback of his environment.

Once the driving idea of the learning process is established, the nature of the problematic and cognitive learning process begins to evolve until it reaches the functionality that maturative evolution permits.

The learning level is basically driven by and limited to the individual's level of intelligence within the field and role he is trying to learn.

The learning process ends when the person has fulfilled his needs.

0) Development of the driving idea

In the learning process, which by definition is self-directed (even when such self-direction implies being led by a teacher), the individual decides what he wants to learn. This decision is closely related to the ideal that he seeks as a person.



We define the driving idea as the awareness of the object of learning aimed at completing the individual's identity in accordance with the ideal being sought at that moment.

The driving idea is a “variable” in the learning process. The individual begins to change his learning driving idea while he incorporates new elements or reorders the existing ones. This modification generally starts unconsciously and reaches higher levels of awareness as the individual begins to know and accept himself.

The conscious driving idea may be identical to or different from the unconscious one. It becomes necessary that the individual apply his driving idea in works related to the learning object in order to becoming aware of it. Here we will unequivocally see if the conscious and verbalized driving idea is contradictory to or coincident with the idea exposed in his work.

From this driving idea on the individual needs to develop his true felt ideal.

Human beings sometimes set unreachable goals. These utopias set the basis for guilt, which the individual may feel but may not always be aware of its existence.

On the other hand, these utopias may be both the driver for man to evolve from an unpleasant situation, and the basis for a suicidal omnipotence.

Omnipotence is an ambivalent concept.

Omnipotence is necessary to approach a new subject. But, what elements are to be known so as to realize if a certain subject can be managed or not?

Most of the times, few conscious elements are present. One should count on intuition. Omnipotence is what grants us the strength to get started.

When the basic driving idea of a learning process has been established with adequate compatibility between the learners's conscious and unconscious goals it usually remains unaltered.

But the driving idea is usually complemented with sub-objectives that are linked to the situations being experienced during the learning process.

Sometimes it even seems that the driving idea is changing because of the appearance of interests resulting from conjunctural needs.

The learning process can begin only when the idea of what the individual wants to learn is internalized according to his ideal.

In a learning process the basic driving idea usually remains unaltered. From that driving idea onwards, a teacher can either facilitate or inhibit the learning process, but he can never stop it.



There is no learning without the decision to learn.

1) Stages of development to approach reality

Syncretic stage

The starting point of all learning process is the syncretic perception that the individual has of the subject he is trying to learn, however distant that may be from the actual reality.

This deviation evaluation calls for a double analysis. On the one hand, there is an objective deviation, due to the lack of instruments, that thwarts any other perception, and on the other, there are subjective deviations.

In the former, for instance, if a man considers that the earth is flat it would suffice to get him onboard a spaceship in order to perceive the earth's roundness.

These objective deviations, which are one of the definite goals of the analytical stage of the problem, are easily solved if the subjective deviations have already been solved.

The latter, which are related to the individual's attitude towards adaptation to the environment, require a deeper analysis: can they be solved in the period of time assigned for the learning process or not?

If they are solvable, a strategy to address the subject must be developed. When the deviation is minimal a confrontation with reality will suffice.

When the deviation is not minimal, it is necessary to set a path so that the individual's syncretic vision gets as close to reality as possible. It is worth clarifying that the grounds for success lie in that the teacher perceives reality truthfully.

The syncretic stage is aimed at structuring the global perception of the problem as truthfully as possible.

Analytical stage

During the analytical stage the individual analyzes all the "variables" involved in a problem. When this stage is over, the individual understands the problem in its parts and is able to solve analogous problems at a simulation level.

When the scope of the problem exceeds the individual's analytical capacity, the analytical stage implies dividing the problem into its constituting parts, having the risk of transforming these parts into the purpose of learning.



When the problem is complex a concept map is needed so as to manage all sub-concepts of the problem.

Synthetic stage

The individual experiences the learning process by elaborating permanent syntheses on the subject under analysis.

These syntheses, which are the object of work in the learner-counselor relationship, end up in a final synthesis that replaces the syncretic vision that the individual had when beginning to approach the subject. This synthesis works as such when the individual has managed to integrate it to his reality.

There are no rational syntheses. Synthesis is a totalizing concept that includes rational and emotional, conscious and unconscious aspects.

Synthesis marks the end of the learning process from two points of view; on the one hand, it implies the learning of the object to be learnt pursuant the learning agreement set whilst on the other hand, it implies the individual's preparation to manage, in an adapted and independent manner, analogous and homologous problems.

2) Cognitive structure

The cognitive structure encompasses three stages as follows:

1. Knowledge
2. Comprehension
3. Application

Knowledge

Knowledge is defined as the awareness of the variables that define a problem. For this purpose the basic variables related to the problem and their relations are analyzed. The problem, regardless of whether it is simple or complex, is considered as simple. "Knowledge" is a simple understanding of reality.

In order to achieve this goal, the individual is required to give a certain order to his syncretic vision in an objective way so as to then develop a logical analysis.

Acquiring knowledge requires appraising the components of the whole, and doing a critical analysis according to the primary cause-effect relations.



Comprehension

Comprehension is the stage in which cause-effect relations of the variables involved and their inter-relations are developed. The problem needs to be analyzed as simple.

Comprehension implies the analysis of the problem in all its components, rational and emotional, regardless of the possibility of real application.

In the process of comprehension man places himself in the position of an observer, even of himself, until analyzing and managing the learning object's causal relations.

Application

Application implies that the individual adapts what he has learnt to the environment. It is uncommon to see an individual that puts into practice in a real application what he has learned and had no adverse effects during such practice.

The greater the differences between the individual's new actions if compared to the previous ones (new goals versus previous goals), the greater the influence of the environment to avoid changes.

Any individual that modifies a behavior generates a reaccommodation process within the group he acts in. Therefore there is a natural tendency in a group to avoid that the member changes.

Application is the ultimate end of a learning process. It occurs when the individual manages all situations in his field of action and is potentially prepared to solve problems and excels his teacher.

3) Maturative Evolution

This research is based on the concept that the evolution of "Childhood-Adolescence-Maturity" is a natural process and is therefore present in every learning process.

Childhood

Childhood is defined as a stage in learning in which the individual acts, fundamentally subordinated to his teacher's guidance on his own free will. The role of a teacher could either be played by a subject or an object that the individual considers a role model.

The individual projects on his teacher the characteristics that he lacks, but that he needs in order to incorporate them in the counter-transference process. A large portion of the learning in this stage results from imitation and, in general, the learner idealizes his teacher-counselor.



Childhood ends when the pupil-trainee, whose main goal is to resemble his teacher, manages to operate the object of learning fluently.

Adolescence

The adolescence of learning is the period in which the trainee breaks up with the figures of authority he had internalized during his childhood. This break up is necessary to continue his path toward the development of his own identity.

During this period, there is a great risk that the individual, if not prepared, develops the subject of learning generating a distortion of reality and returning to his previous idea in the process. In this case his learning experience is frustrating.

Maturity (adulthood)

The real learning stage begins in maturity, which is when the adult-adult relationship between counselor and student is achieved. The relation is between peers.

This stage never ends. Nevertheless, teaching is no longer necessary, it is pure learning.

Senility

It is the end of the learning process.

The ontology of learning should be considered when designing programs for our own learning process and the learning process of others. When it is not considered, programs work as inhibitors of learning. In this case it becomes difficult to catalyze learning processes.

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