The Youtubivism Theory-A Self-Motivated Learning Theory

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It is the age of self-learning. Never before has learning been so accessible to the human population. We are can freely attend Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), like Coursera, edX and openculture, that offer college level courses from prestigious universities at no cost to us. We can find YouTube tutorials and courses in math, computer programing and maintenance, bread making and endless others. We can learn new languages in our cars while on our way to travel destinations and listen to free course lectures on podcasts from universities like Princeton, Oxford and UC Berkely. Learning is literally at our fingertips, and many of us are taking full advantage of it. YouTubivism is a learning theory bases on self-determined, self-regulated, intrinsically motivated and inspired learning done completely online using one’s own self-will as the controller. YouTubivism is fully autonomous and emerges from Siemans’ Modern Connecivist Theory (2005), the Deci and Ryan (2000) Self-Determined Theory and Bandura’s (1986, 1997) Social Cognitive Theory and self-efficacy perspective, conjoined to Self-Regulation and Motivation Theory. In this paper I will use Ertmer and Newby’s (1993) 7 question criteria as a template for understanding the issues that make YouTubivism a viable learning theory.

Define learning

Merriam-Webster (2014) defines learning as “the activity or process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practicing, being taught, or experiencing something (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/learning).” One process of learning is actively seeking knowledge for one’s own quality of life. My new learning theory provides definition and explanation as to why we as human beings are motivated to seek this information and the rapid feedback that comes from seeking and quickly and easily finding, on-demand information without boundaries.
Learning can take place through conditioning, changing behavior, self-discovery, reflection and application, practice, social and environmental interaction (Driscoll, 2005). These are all characteristics of current learning theories that can be used together or apart to facilitate the educational experiences of individuals. These theories however, lack the idea of learning as a sole self-determined, self-regulated and self-motivated search for meaningful knowledge as the main component of the theory. YouTubivism is a framework for this type of self-learning.

YouTubivists believe that an intrinsic pull exists toward learning that it is strong enough to encourage the seeking out of material that is readily available and accessible through single or multiple channels. The learner is further motivated by the fact that these channels exists as libraries of searchable videos and is confident that, with little effort, they will be able to locate tutorials relevant to what they want to learn. This ease of free access enhances the learner’s motivation and contributes to the learner’s quality of life.

**How does learning occur in YouTubivism?**

In YouTubivism learning is demonstrated by performance of the learned task or the ability to teach or reteach a skill acquired by watching a demonstration. Learners incorporate an “expectancy component” for self-motivation when taking on a new task. In other words they “believe” they can perform the task and are “responsible for their own performance (Pintrich, DeGoot, 1990, p. 33).” Bandura (1986, 1997) explained that individuals judge themselves as to whether they think they can perform a task or not and decide to engage in learning based on this decision. For example, a learner is motivated to seek information on learning a task. Deci and Ryan (2000) describe people as having 3 basic needs when it comes to learning. They are: autonomy, competency and relatedness. Autonomy gives the learner control to navigate to the
YouTube website and search for a video related to the task. There are two levels of competency in YouTubivism, one is the learner will need to know how to search for the learning and know when they find the learning that will provide the most meaning for them and that will guide them through the process of doing the task. The search will ultimately reveal one or more tutorial videos that will take the learner step-by-step through the task. The learner may then choose the video that clearly defines the process for them, watch the video and then watch it again while performing the steps. Relatedness or feeling like they fit in can be accomplished through the social feedback and forum option included on the video page. Talking to others online about any difficulty they had with the task instruction or adding helpful suggestions to the forum. The learner can then demonstrate the steps of the task to a friend. In this instance learner takes on characteristics of gaining knowledge and teaching it to someone else.

**What factors of YouTubivism influence learning?**

The main influence in YouTubivism is the need for a device. On demand self-motivated learning can only occur if an internet connected device is readily available. George Siemans (2005) explains that learning is now occurring over a variety of inlets, but most influential is through the connectedness of the online environment. He describes this access as, “Know-how and know-what is being supplemented with know-where” (Siemans, para 4) or the understanding of where to find knowledge needed. How we know and what we know is connected to how we search for information.

Another factor that may influence learning is if there is no prior knowledge of using the on demand device and or using a video website. There may be a delay in gratification and an increase in frustration if the individual needs to learn how to use the device or website before
being able to search for information. This will slow the process and may even become a type of “amotivator” described by Chen and Jang (2010) as the “least self-determined type of motivation” or a lack of trying for some inexperienced learners. Learners are also less likely to model behavior if they feel the model is not competent meaning they have expectations of learning instruction. Bandura (1986, 1987) describes the incentive of positive expectations, which are comprised of physical, social and self-evaluative effects, is the motivator in performance. By watching videos with peer models as instructors, self-efficacy will increase for the novice user producing positive expectations about their own performance.

What is the role of memory in YouTubivism?

Memory does not have a defined arena in self-motivated learning. The goal of the instruction is to provide fast, search capabilities and quick tutorials so the learner does not have to use memory, rather simply replay the tutorial again and again from the device. If the video is repeatedly viewed and the learner repeatedly practices the steps demonstrated in the video, the learning will eventually result as used in the cognitive learning approach, especially for the novice (Driscoll, 2005). In the case where the learner already has background in the information they are searching for, they may be better able to easily refine their search as long as they are not using the tool for the first time. Upon continued practice the learner will also become more efficient at seeking and finding specific videos because they remember the title of the video or perhaps the category.

How does transfer occur?

Transfer may or may not occur in YouTubivism. Transfer may occur similarly to constructionist learning theory where, “the authenticity of the experience becomes critical to the individual’s
ability to use ideas” (Etmer, Newby 1993, p 57). The learner will use a video in context with what they want to learn or, search for a relationship that makes sense or appears to be useful to them. For example if I want to make a cake but I have only made cookies, I may choose to search for a video that compares making cookies to making cake and then search for a video to make cake. In the same light, I may want to make chocolate chip cookies and the video I watched was instruction on making sugar cookies. If I cannot transfer the information from chocolate chip to sugar, I may have to be more specific and search for a video on making chocolate chip cookies. The on demand video will be a resource for the learner to practice in a real-world situation providing a stepping stone to transfer information to a new but related use.

**What types of learning are best explained by YouTubivism?**

As in cognitive approaches to learning, keeping irrelevant material out of the content is critical to YouTubivist learning. Information that has little to do with the information that the learner is searching for will only frustrate the learner. YouTubivism is precise and expedient learning. Digital age learners who have grown up immersed in a world rich in media and connections with other digital users expect to not only use these tools but participate and engage with others while using them. Oblinger and Oblinger (2004) coined these users as millennial learners who expect educators to adopt tools to meet their experience and communication needs. Online video as well as social networking, wikis, blogs and podcasts are all effective tools to meet these needs (Seimens, 2005). However, learning institutions need to align interactive media with current instructional practices to provide a more innovative approach to teaching digital aged learners. YouTubivism provides learner autonomy and supplies the instructional developer with ready to use learning alternatives to incorporate into their design.
What basic assumptions/principles of this theory are relevant to instructional design?

The important aspect of YouTubivism is that it is a self-motivated learning theory. Individuals actively seek out learning experiences in an environment where content may be professional instructor led or created by the learner’s peers or even the learner themselves. Assumptions are:

- Learners are self-determined to seek for information-Instructional Designers can use this aspect in a more constructivist approach by having the learner help develop their own instruction
- Learners search for information to use on demand-Instructional Designers can help reinforce learning by creating transfer opportunities through on demand learning
- Learners look for meaningful experiences to improve their quality of life- Instructional Designers can help provide context to make meaningful, the experience the learner is gaining from watching the video(s)

How should instruction be structured?

YouTubivism is based solely on learner motivation and the instruction from the video the learner is watching. Instruction will vary depending upon who is teaching in the video so the learner will be exposed to good and bad instruction and will have to rely on their judgments which may or may not be accurate. However, lessons in judgment will sharpen the learner over time. Keeping with constructivist theory, “as they uncover their naïve theories, they begin to see such activities in a new light, with guides them towards conceptual reframing (learning)” (Ertmer, Newby, 2013, p. 59).

What motivates us to use these tools to learn more about our world?
As described by Rita Kop and Adrian Hill (2008) state, “…the starting point for learning occurs when knowledge is actuated through the process of a learner connecting to and feeding information into a learning community” (Kop & Hill, para 6). We need a social support component to retain our new learning and the process can occur through any type of learner interaction. The connectivist model describes connecting points where community groups or nodes are always part of a larger network than itself. There are many nodes within a network and “the capacity to know is more critical than what is actually known” (Siemans, 2005, para 5) therefore one must also have the capability of seeking information and filtering out what is important and what is not. In this regard, learners must have a motivation to seek information. The motivation could be to find the information itself, to network with others who have similar interests in the information sought or to just connect to others regardless of the information.

Resources


