

## Social learning

Over a century of research in cognitive and educational science confirms that students make significant learning gains when instructors cultivate a social classroom environment. Because instructor-to-student interactions are necessarily limited, a social approach provides a dynamic space of “joint negotiation for discovery” where students can spend more time articulating understanding, recognizing misconceptions, and learning to communicate (National Research Council, 2000). The field of education development builds on this research by increasingly emphasizing the ways that inclusivity and diversity issues impact students’ experiences with social learning environments (Ambrose et. al, 2010).

These theories emerged in part from the work of the psychologist **Lev Vygotsky**, who considered social learning between and amongst individuals to be of particular significance (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996). Vygotsky is best known for describing the “zone of proximal development,” wherein learners work together to attain certain knowledge or skills with proper assistance (Chaiklin, 2003, p.40). Vygotsky posited that students can benefit from interactions with individuals closer to their zones of proximal development; applied to the college classroom, ideal dialogue should include instructor - student and student - student interactions. Instructors can consider a variety of techniques for engaging students in dialogue, including group work, effective class discussions, case- based learning, integrated lecture, and other active learning techniques.

**Social learning** , in psychological theory, learning behaviour that is controlled by environmental influences rather than by innate or internal forces. The leading exponent of the concept of social learning, often called modeling, is the American psychologist Albert Bandura, who has undertaken innumerable studies showing that when children watch others they learn many forms of behaviour, such as sharing, aggression, cooperation, social interaction, and delay of gratification. In Bandura’s classic study of imitation learning, children who saw a model punished for aggressive behaviour tended to exhibit fewer aggressive responses than children who saw the model rewarded for such behaviour, or than those who saw the model neither rewarded nor punished. Bandura’s research has led some psychologists to question the potential “learning experiences” offered children by

popular television shows and motion pictures, particularly those shows in which antisocial or violent behaviour is presented.

#### **4 elements of social learning:**

- Attention. We cannot learn if we are not focused on the task. ...
- Retention. We learn by internalizing information in our memories. ...
- Reproduction. We reproduce previously learned information (behavior, skills, knowledge) when required. ...
- Motivation.
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#### **Examples of social learning:**

- Students work together in class on problem sets or case studies. Through interactions with one another they remedy points of confusion, note their habits of thought against those of others, learn to articulate their thinking, and negotiate solutions.
- Students perform in-class peer reviews of each other's essays using a grading rubric developed by the instructor. Students provide both written and verbal feedback to one another to help them improve upon their writing. This practice in turn frees the instructor to provide feedback on more complex issues.
- Students work together to develop presentations on a particular theory. Through interactions with one another they become more capable at articulating and applying the major tenets of the theory.

#### **Recommendations to promote social learning in a classroom:**

- **Active Learning:** Instructors can use a range of activities from discussion and Think-Pair-Share to concept mapping, debate, role play, case studies, and experiential / field trips to cultivate social moments where students dialogue, master vital cultural skills, and explore social realities.
- **Group Activities:** Instructors can consider activities that place students in groups, where they engage in dialogue, solve problems, or analyze

information. Best practices include jigsaws, problem- or presentation- based projects, clear expectations, and accountability.

- **Interactive Lecture:** Instructors can introduce social components to their lectures where students discuss questions in groups, discuss content as a whole class, participate in polls, or debate lecture content. Research suggests that effective lectures integrate social and active components into the instructor's monologue.
- **Peer Review:** Students can peer review one another's written assignments and provide both written and verbal constructive feedback. Instructor can provide a rubric to scaffold this process, and provide additional metacognitive questions where students consider the merits, challenges, and gains of peer review.
- **Collaborative Exams:** Instructors may consider implementing collaborative exams. One model, the Two-Stage Exam (link is external) (from the University of British Columbia) has students first take their exam individually, turn it in, and then retake the test with a group. The extra points received are given for participation, and students can obtain immediate feedback to uncover errors and clarify misconceptions.
- **Study Halls, Study Groups, and Peer Tutoring:** Instructors can require, advise, or suggest opportunities, where available, for students to meet with one another, a teaching fellow, and/or the instructor in order to clarify points of confusion, review content, and / or practice skill sets.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** The most effective social classrooms provide all students with the freedom and opportunities to think, participate, and express their thoughts. An inclusive classroom climate can ensure that all students benefit from peer interaction.

**The following recommendations are made to guide the social learning in classroom environment :**

1. Teachers should be careful of the behaviours displayed in front of the students to avoid creating the wrong impressions.
2. Parents and teachers could suggest admirable role models for the learners to follow.
3. Good and healthy social interaction patterns should be encouraged in classrooms.
4. Students learn fast through what they see, hear, feel in the learning environment, hence instructional materials that can be manipulated should be frequently used in classrooms.
5. Teaching methods such as role playing and demonstration, simulation and games, dramatization should be used to teach appropriate behaviours, and also prolongs knowledge retention.
6. Teachers should efficiently punish bad behaviours and reinforce the right ones to help develop the right attitude in the learners