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Field of study: **Language Sciences**

Level: **Master One**

Module: **Psycholinguistics**

Course Number: **5**

Course Title: **Learning is Continuum**

***1- Constructivism:***

* According to Nelson Goodman the reality is made constructed and not discovered. The construction of reality results from that of the signification shaped by tradition, thinking and culture. The role of education, then, is to help young people in learning how to use the means of elaborating meanings and to construct a reality adapted to the reality they live.
* Transmitting knowledge entails a reciprocal relationship that deals with two parameters teacher/ learner. The teacher is not necessarily human, it may be a computer, a documentary…an important element in this situation is interaction. Through interaction, the child discovers the different parameters of culture he is internalizing and developing. In short, the teacher is no more the one that possesses knowledge but his job is to guide learners.
* Teaching is now based on some basic ideas that concern mainly the learner’s mind. The beliefs and all theories of education either inside or outside the school are no more than our own vision of education
* Bruner considers that it is more important to know what the child thinks he is doing than what he is doing. The aim is to involve the child in his learning process through various responsibilities and make him think about what he thinks. Howard Gardner (1991) states that it is important to put in the child’s mind elements that make him wonder about the origins and the force of his own conception. This is referred to as the intelligence at school.
* As defined by Tomasello, Kurt et Ratner (1993) The child is then an actor, he has already known, he makes experiments, he is a thinker who cooperates with others.
  1. ***Pedagogical and minds models***

A - the child learns through imitation: acquisition des savoires faires

When an adult demonstrate an action that requires any competence implicitly based on a knowledge he possesses:

* a) the child does not know how to do,
* b) The learner is able to learn if he is taught how to do that supposes,
* c) the child wants to do,
* d) he may try to do it. In order to learn through imitation, the child should identify the aims the teacher want to reach, the means used and that the result will be useful for his future life. Thanks to this method the child knows what, how and when to do things. This method corresponds to a traditional society for it is not enough to a pianist to know the solfége and music to be a good one

***1.2 The child learns through a didactic*:** “un savoir declarative”

* Teaching through didactics believes that the child does not know and needs to learn and understand the rule first. It is believed that learning entails two main aspects listening and searching, that leads to an explicit corpus where the “savoir faire” results automatically from the learning of the rule. The child is then considered as a big pot that should be filled with information always related to the preceding ones. For example, “what is the capital of Albania” and the child is given four propositions. If he fails he is qualified as having a feeble IQ.
* What is dangerous is that this conception considers the child’s mind as being empty and passive.
* The child is a thinking person: the development of inter-subjective change
* Recent investigations on the development of the child’s mind involve him in his schooling system. In this approach the teacher tries to understand the child’s opinion and includes it in the classroom. Adding to this both teachers and learners are involved in analyzing their own experience. This pedagogy helps the child in understanding better in more objectives and froms various views the world he lives in, all this is achieved through communication and cooperation while he is encouraged to express his ideas in order to widen his horizons and accept others’ opinions.
* This pedagogy is in favour of one idea that the human minds are able to communicate even if they do not share the same opinions and also to develop capacities through interaction. Different ideas and beliefs may be established on logic and acceptable basis that is why the diversity is not necessarily a handicap.
* The child’s mind is not empty but is ready to think and shape coherent ideas. That is why this pedagogy relies on two main aspects mutuality and didactics and focuses mainly on interpretation and comprehension than on the realization through competence.
* All the recent research tries first to understand the way children organize their own learning strategies, thinking, memorization and production. Metacognitive investigations considers that the child “thinks” when learning and needs to remember and thinking is important mainly of his own activities in this domain and how to do it. That is to say, learning involves many cognitive operations that take place at the same time and influence all the mental procedures.

**2. Schooling and Culture**

* The role of school is not limited to a model of learner or teacher rather it is to develop the competence and abilities to communicate knowledge made of facts and theories, also to make the comprehension of beliefs and opinions better.
* Bruner declares that children living in miserable places are deprived from many things show a real delay as compared to the reset of the children when being at school. They lack many things like medicine, food and vitamins that are essential for their natural development. Adding to this, he describes the works of the prime minister of Norway who wanted to struggle against violence at schools in his country through the classroom.
* It was noticed that when the teacher dealt with this topic, children were very interested and a whole debate was raised including even the parents. In short, the debate about violence at school led to a whole debate about violence in the society even outside school.
* Bruner considers early human interaction that start at school is very important since it involves the child in a debate and makes him aware about the socio- cultural elements that shape his personality. As a consequence, Bruner believes that the primary school plays a very great role in the society that is why the content of its lessons should be deeply studied and well elaborated for at this level a whole schooling culture is established that involve the child in his social life and teaches him how to solve problems. The abilities acquired do no concern the primary school but develop a whole conception that spread among the members of the community. However, the result is that a mutual work and a culture of mutuality develop through time in the society.
* According to Bruner the aim of school is not to teach languages, mathematics and sciences but to develop a mind a whole culture that make people able not only to be the leaders of the world in realm of science as it is the case in the U.S.A but to know how to stay leaders and how to solve the socio-economic problems of people.
* Bruner considers that there are four main notions that should developed at school: “the ability to act, thinking, collaboration and culture”.

1. thinking is related to “meta” that makes the child wonder about what he has already learnt and realized and use it in the future. It is not enough to use theories in order to explain events that are not always possible mainly in human sciences. Thinking is the result of a whole labor that starts with interpretation of events and texts which aim is not to explain but to understand through analysis. Comprehension then, is analyzing a contextualized event with no attempt to explain it. For this reason it is very important to teach children how to make a literary interpretation of a text that may be of history or psychology. Accordingly, thinking rigorously and respecting different “histories” that tell us how things are and how they used to be, is also a scientific one that gives logical and pragmatic arguments
2. the ability to act an collaboration A.L.Brown has linked in her work the ability to act to collaboration when dealing with culture in the classroom. She noticed that children proposed their own hypothesis that they negotiated with their friends and teachers for instance they dealt with saving animals from oil flooding in oceans. Children elaborated their own critics and proposals about the topic.

On the other hand Bruner considers that competence is the main instrument of the ability to act that is acquired through collaboration and without competence there is no ability in all the domains.

3- culture: Bruner and other anthropologists agree that culture is more defined as a fixed strongly established element that allows us to think, believe and act; it is rather in constant change and development and influenced by all mutation that take place all over the world thanks to immigration and the mass media. Through text and literature, the past and the present are taught and through a logical interpretation and analysis of events make the child think about what is possible. The aim of teaching culture, according to Bruner, is the three “P” past, present, possible of the human condition

**3: Teaching sciences**

* Science is not independent from nature, it is rather a means to understand and discover nature.
* Learning is simplifying data in order to understand it; this may be achieved through various ways depending on the context and the learners. However the success of any learning is reached when the learner is able to deal with the topic using his own words. The target according to Bruner is to make the learner developing his own ideas and opinion about the topic in question and all this is shaped by a syllabus.
* Bruner considers that in an acceptable form, everything may be taught to the child at any age for the capacity of learning is not innate but built. Accordingly, he adds that any learning may be built at different levels of complexity and abstraction for knowledge is not found and is expressed both in a simple or complex way and in a concrete or abstract manner that depends on the teacher. On the other hand, Bruner believes deeply that before the elaboration of any syllabus the conceiver should take into consideration age of the learner and the development of his conception as clearly described by Piaget in his different works. The syllabus should not go beyond the cognitive and the metacognitive capacities of the child, otherwise he would be unable to grasp what he is in front.
* Meanwhile, Margaret Donaldson (1978) adds that the development of the child does not rely only on the cognitive abilities and that of his conception; it entails the manner he approaches the context and the situation where he should solve a problem. She also declares that an intuitive comprehension in a given field leads to a precise and clear thinking that paves the way to the next step where the child is confronted to a more or less similar situation. As teachers, we should encourage the child in developing such a behaviour that widens his abilities in thinking objectively and this should start at a very young age.