Case Study: Study Of Behaviorism

Teaching-learning refers to a plan that consists of teaching steps that teachers will implement in the classroom. It consists of general details, lesson topics, objectives, skills, and teaching aids. Existing knowledge of the student should also be considered before starting the lesson. In addition, the application of knowledge and the application of values to students such as cooperation, crafts, courage, and trust are important as they can enhance knowledge and provide new experiences for students that they can practice in everyday life. This essay is an analysis of two case studies that I have chosen from the course. As an Education student, these two case studies chosen will assist me to understand and comprehend the learning theories. The aim of this essay is to demonstrate my understanding of how learning theories are applied in some teaching situation and how it provides possible strategies to solve the problem. Firstly, each case study will be highlighted and follow by discovering how that problem occurred. Secondly, this essay then will discuss the possible and workable solution by incorporating two learning theories for each case study. Next, this essay will compare the two chosen case study which will talk about diversity in education as well as self-reflection in which I will reflect upon both case studies for future reference to be a better educator.

The first case study is about a teacher, Janet Johnston, who is recently started her first year of teaching primary school in a third grader class. In the previous lesson, Ms. Johnston had taught her students about timetables of 1 to 4 and planning to teach them a timetable of 5 as a lesson for next week. However, after observing her students last week she noticed that a few of them are still struggling with timetables of 1 to 4. Despite that, she must keep moving on with the lesson as the student will be having their break in two weeks while they are behind the schedule. As for next week's lesson, Ms. Johnston wondering what to teach and how should she teach her students.

There could be the various cause why few of the students are struggling with timetable of 1 to 4. The students may not have a clear understanding of numeracy and how it is important in everyday life. The teacher can analyze the issues with the help of learning theories such as cognitivism and constructivism. Cognitivism can be referred to as a shift from the environment (stimuli) to the learner’s mental processes (input – throughput – output: information processing) (ref). Cognitivism focuses more on the inner mental activities such as information processing, problem solving, memory, and the brain (Sharan and Bierema 2014, p. 32) and these mental activities need to be explored. According to Jean Piaget, children go through the same stages of development but at different ages. Piaget argues that the environment does not shape children's cognitive development, rather, children build their environment. This occurs through various processes of exploration, manipulation, and evaluation of its physical environment. Jean Piaget has introduced four stages of cognitive development namely sensory-motor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operations. Another relevant theory that can be applied to this situation is constructivism. The learning theory of constructivism is an educational theory that aims at enhancing the development of the logic and conceptual of learners. Constructivists believe that learners build knowledge for themselves. The role of a teacher is very important in the theory of learning constructivism. Instead of giving lectures, a teacher acts as a facilitator who helps learners with their understanding.

The second part of this essay will discuss the second case study situation which involving Kaplan Smith as a teacher and his students. Mr. Smith believes that students are able to choose their own behavior. For example, they can choose to cooperate or not in the classroom, or, doing their work or not. He kept reminding her students about their choice before he assigns everything. However, if the students ignore what he tells them to do he keep them in for recess and saying “you choose to stay. Since Mr. Smith also conduct a meeting with his students

Clearly, the main concern in this situation is the lack of student’s behavior and motivation. By giving them the opportunity to choose their own behavior, students were to trust to make the right decision. Students need to know that there are some set of boundaries they needed to follow in school. In addition, teachers should play an important role to shape the student as well as motivate them. There are times where they can make the students choose their behavior but mostly it should be controlled by the teacher. In this case, the teacher should analyze the issue with the help of learning theory. The two relevant learning theories for this case study can be behaviorism and social cognitive theory.

Behaviorism was founded by Watson in the 1920s and developed by Skinner and others (Sharan and Bierema 2014). Behaviorism is a theory of behavioral development, which can be measured, observed, and generated by student responses to stimuli. The response to the stimulus may be reinforced by positive (reward) or negative (punishment) feedback on the behavior. For example, one of the famous experiments conducted by Ivan Palov who did an experiment with the dog in his laboratory…..Another possible relevant to understand this case study better is social cognitive theory. While behaviorism focus on objectively observable behaviors, social cognitive learning theory highlight how human learning occurs in a social environment by observing others, people acquire knowledge, rules, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes (Sharan and Bierema 2014).

There can be several solutions to resolve the modeled situation in this case study. Firstly, the teacher can observe and specify the behavior that needs to be changed among the students. As all behavior can be learned it also can be changed. For example, Mr. Kaplan can set some rules that must be followed by the student. By doing this, the teacher can show the students although they have their option to choose their behavior, there always be a consequence to that actions. The consequences may be positive (rewarding) or negative (punishment). If the students obey the rules, they get a reward by perhaps giving them a good behavior certificate for their ongoing cooperation in class which makes the student feel appreciated and wanting to do it often. Meanwhile, for those who disobey the rules may be punished by not giving them recess time. In doing so, it will encourage the students to improve their behavior for wanting to go out and socialize with their friends.