

Reflection Paper #2: Learning Journeys

Submitted by: Jennifer Maddrell

Learning Journeys is a compilation of life lessons. Taken in whole, the lessons of the book form a learning theory to explain how we grow and learn. The stories selected by the editors (Goldsmith, Kaye & Shelton) both create and deliver the book's overall thesis. The themes (or learning principles) that emerge from each story contribute the thesis that life is a continuous learning process where growth and learning are influenced by the learner's ability to:

- adapt from past experiences,
- gain from the help of others,
- become (and stay) motivated,
- achieve self-knowledge, and
- set and follow future goals.

Continuous learning is described by the editors as a “back and forth process” between teaching and learning. The stories in the book illustrate that learning does not just occur in a classroom, but occurs everywhere. By facing crossroads, difficult choices, and painful experiences, growth and learning occurs. Growth may also involve “unlearning” things that ultimately did not work in the past.

The book demonstrates that learning occurs from sharing in the experiences of others, where “the collective knowledge” of a group of people provides more than the experience of one. By providing insight from past experiences, teachers and mentors can motivate and “wake us up to an important lesson”, as well as “reach, direct, support and nurture” (Goldsmith, Kaye & Shelton, 2000, p. xxii).

The continuous learning process is described to require an understanding of one's “self” as a part of journey to set and follow future goals. Through self-reflection, one achieves:

- self-perspective to “see yourself and ideas as others do”,
- self-knowledge to find a “true voice” to reveal a “true self”, and
- self-challenge (or motivation) to know the “limits you set for yourself and challenge yourself to go beyond them”.

The following highlights five chapters within the book that support the learning principles that comprise the book's overall thesis and evaluates each story's key message as a learning principle. Exhibit A provides a comparison of key concepts presented in these chapters to the concepts, theories and theorists covered to date in this course.

1. Stephen Covey – Chapter 8: Shaping Experiences

Message: Covey emphasizes the power and impact of six experiences that shaped his future. He states that, “All six of these shaping forces have encouraged and empowered me to constantly strive to build for the long term – to build a life, a marriage, a family and an organization on the foundation of correct principles and the character ethic.” The overriding theme in his commentary is the importance of establishing and following personal goals that are based on

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timeless and universal principles including “involvement, accountability, responsibility and commitment over time.”

Evaluation of Message as a Learning Principle: The inclusion of Covey’s story contributes to the overall thesis of the book by focusing on the importance of setting, monitoring and achieving **goals** – a learning principle that is shared by other learning theories (as outlined below). While Covey describes goals in terms of a “personal mission statement”, the objective is the same - to develop a road map that provides guidance and assists in learning and development.

A weakness in Covey’s story is the lack of a clearly stated summary thesis. Covey mixes elements of his thesis within descriptions of his experiences. However, his message would be stronger if he instead summarized his learning principles into a final driving message. Instead, he lists his “shaping” experiences and leaves it to the reader to pull the message together to form the thesis. While the last sentence of the piece appears to be an attempt to summarize his message “of constantly striving to build for the long term”, it is not strong enough to create a compelling and comprehensive statement about the story’s key learning principle – the importance of setting, monitoring and achieving goals.

2. James Belasco – Chapter 10: The Learner’s Point of View:

Message: “What do you think the students learned?” This was the question raised by Professor Mesic after he observed Belasco deliver a discussion session in Mesic’s course. Belasco notes that the question “stopped me cold.” While he had meticulously prepared for the session, he had not considered what he wanted the students to learn or how he would know if they had learned it. Mesic’s message to Belasco was, “It’s not what you teach that’s important; it’s what they learn that matters most. And the only way you ever know what they learn is to see our lesson plan from their point of view.”

Evaluation of Message as a Learning Principle: The inclusion of Belasco’s story contributes to the overall thesis of the book by illustrating the importance of learner-centered design in motivating learners. The learning principle in this story can be compared to Keller’s Model of Motivation Design. As cited in Driscoll (2005), Keller proposed “four conditions for motivation that must be met to have a motivated learning” (p. 333), including:

- Gaining Student **Attention**: Mesic’s critique illustrates that Belasco did a good job of gaining student attention. By engaging and involving the students, he had achieved a high level of discussion during the session.
- Enhancing **Relevance**: A key learning principle of this story is the importance of developing curriculum that is relevant from the learner’s point of view. Mesic’s message was that Belasco did not achieve this during the session.
- Building **Confidence**: Keller proposes that confidence is enhanced when learners are provided “with a reasonable degree of control over their own learning”. Mesic’s critique highlighted that Belasco’s session was controlled solely by the teacher which would not allow the learners the degree of control necessary to increase their confidence.

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- Generating **Satisfaction**: Keller notes the importance of “making sure that learning outcomes are consistent with the expectations established at the outset of learning.” As Belasco had not appropriately contemplated his expectations for the lesson, it is unlikely that the discussion generated learner satisfaction.

While Belasco’s story is effective in illustrating the importance of learner-centered design, it would be even more valuable as an instructional design tool if it provided additional insight on *instructional strategies* for achieving learner-centered design. For example, it would be helpful to know *how* Belasco has amended his instructional strategies to enhance relevance and to set clear instructional goals.

3. Elizabeth Pinchot – Chapter 21: Sometimes It Takes an Elbow in the Ribs

Message: Included in the section entitled, “Self-Knowledge”, Pinchot’s story is short, but powerful. Sitting in a discussion group, Pinchot began to get agitated at the questions being raised to the speaker following the lecture. However, due to her lack of self-confidence, she did not speak up, but muttered her feelings under her breath. Suddenly, she received a shot in the ribs from the woman sleeping next to her (Margaret Mead) with the command, “Stand up and make yourself heard.” Pinchot overcame her fear and spoke.

Evaluation of Message as a Learning Principle: The inclusion of Pinchot’s story contributes to the thesis of the book by illustrating the importance of developing positive self-knowledge. The story illustrates principles that are similar to those presented in Bandura’s self-efficacy concept. As cited in Driscoll (2005), Bandura proposed “self-efficacy as a belief system that is causally related to behavior and outcomes . . . based on their judgments [of their ability to perform] they proceed or not to engage in those actions.” (p. 316) Bandura’s concepts are found in the following elements of Pinchot’s story:

- Via *verbal persuasion*, Meade positively modified Pinchot’s self-efficacy beliefs.
- Pinchot was impressed with the primary speaker (“his gentle and humorous wisdom”) that provided a positive *vicarious experience*, described in Driscoll as “the learner’s observation of a role model attaining success at a task.” (p. 322)
- While she felt “out of place”, Pinchot appeared to be in a positive *physiological state* by stating, “I [spoke] as best I could. I wouldn’t have done it otherwise”.
- By succeeding, Pinchot gained *enactive mastery experience* (described in Driscoll as “a learner’s own previous success at a task”- p. 322) that positively influenced her feelings about her abilities.

While this story is effective in demonstrating how self-efficacy influences our ability and motivation to perform, it would be more valuable if Pinchot had elaborated on the root of her self-consciousness, which ultimately affected her self-efficacy and motivation to speak. She describes feeling “out of place” and less physically attractive, yet it appears she felt herself to be intellectually *capable*. Asked another way, *why* did she feel self-conscious and *why* did those issues prevent her from originally speaking?

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4. Stratford Sherman – Chapter 23: What Strength Really Means

Message: Sherman's key message is that growth comes from self-reflection and adaptation. Sherman found himself at a crossroad when he faced conflict within his relationship with his future wife. Staying on his current path would have meant giving up something he valued. As a person with strong personal convictions, he had not considered *his* need for change to be an option. He states that he was "attracted to the idea of change – so long as it involved other people." However, his life lesson came when he realized (through self-reflection) that he needed to change (adapt) when he was on the wrong path.

Evaluation of Message as a Learning Principle: The inclusion of Sherman's story contributes to the overall thesis of the book by illustrating the impact of self-reflection and adaptation on learning. Sherman's growth occurred when he recognized that his fears and perceptions were wrong and he adapted his behavior. The learning principles shared by Sherman parallel both *schema theory*, as well as the process of *self-regulation*.

Schemata, as cited in Driscoll, represent "our knowledge about all concepts: those underlying objects, situations, events . . . actions" (p. 129) that dictate our reactions to situations and our subsequent actions. When faced with conflict in his relationship, Sherman relied on his prior schemata (change is fine – "so long as it involved other people") and resisted commitment as it "challenged his independent identity".

This story demonstrates that schemata are frequently modified. As cited in Driscoll, **restructuring** "involves the creation of entirely new schemata which replace or incorporate old ones." Sherman came to a point where he needed to "launch a frontal assault on the idea that strength is about resisting change." From restructuring, Sherman overcame his fears and ultimately altered his resistance to change.

As noted in Driscoll, "monitoring progress toward goal attainment is a critical component of **self-regulation**". (p.329) As illustrated in Sherman's story, through self-reflection, he realized he was not attaining his goal of happiness with his wife. Sherman's monitoring (or self-reflection) set in motion a process of adaptation (**self-regulation**) that is similar to the Zimmerman and Schunk **feedback loop** described in Exhibit A.

5. Lou Tice – Chapter 34: Mentoring for Untapped Potential

Message: Tice asserts that mentors help others "grow into their greatness." He notes that a mentor's value is "to inspire" and "to see possibilities" that one otherwise may not see. He notes, "Great coaches and mentors are so unshakably convinced that we have greatness in us, and their vision of what is possible for us is so clear and powerful, that they wind up convincing us, too."

Evaluation of Message as a Learning Principle: The inclusion of Tice's story contributes to the overall thesis of the book by illustrating how learner motivation can be enhanced by the help

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of others. Tice illustrates how a mentor can positively influence a learner's *self-efficacy* and *motivation* (as highlighted in Exhibit A).

Tice's story is also valuable for his emphasis on how *feedback* can positively influence motivation. He suggests that via feedback, mentors can:

- Help in identifying and evaluating options
- Create scenarios for courses of action
- Point out possibilities
- Share strategies and similar experiences
- Propose constructive actions or behavior changes
- Help others examine and adjust their "self-talk", as well as the consequences of their decisions

References

Driscoll, M. P. (2005). *Psychology of learning for instruction* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.

Goldsmith, M., Kaye, B. L., & Shelton, K. (2000). *Learning Journeys: top management experts share hard-earned lessons on becoming great mentors and leaders* (1st ed.). Palo Alto, Calif.: Davies-Black Pub.

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Exhibit A: Course Terms - Comparison of Learning Journey Concept to Learning Theory / Theorist

Concept	Learning Journeys Author and Event	Parallel to Learning Theory or Theorist	Reference within Marcy P. Driscoll's <i>Psychology of Learning for Instruction</i>
Goals	Covey (8): "... importance of having a mission statement ... having a clear sense of destination and direction."	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Radical Behaviorism 2. Motivation: Bandura 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step One (in planning a program of behavior change): Set Behavior Goals: (Driscoll, p. 53) 2. "When individuals set goals, they determine an external standard to which they will internally evaluate their present level of performance (Driscoll, p. 314)
Learn by Teaching	Covey (8): "The best way to get people to learn is to turn them into teachers. In other words, you learn the material best when you teach it."	Cognitive Information Processing	"Process of Learning: Processing information and storing it in memory includes processes of attention, pattern recognition, encoding, chunking, rehearsal and retrieval" (Driscoll, p. 110)
Curiosity, Attention and Motivational Design	Belasco (10): Mesic states, "You are a gifted lecturer. You are energetic and enthusiastic, and that's contagious in your classroom. You engage and involve your students at high levels of discussion. You're a brilliant teacher."	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Origins of Motivation: Gagne & Driscoll 2. Gaining and Sustaining attention per Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design 3. Sensory Memory (CIP) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Curiosity, in children and adults alike, is a strong motivator of learning . . . Not only do learners pay greater attention to unexpected events, but they are also moved to try new ways of perceiving what they are looking at." (as cited in Driscoll, p. 313) 2. "To make the most of curiosity . . . teachers can capture students' interest by using novel or unexpected approaches to instruction or injecting personal experience and humor" (Driscoll, p. 334) 3. "... a student who is not attentive misses some of the information to be learned." (Driscoll, p. 78)

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Concept	Learning Journeys Author and Event	Parallel to Learning Theory or Theorist	Reference within Marcy P. Driscoll's <i>Psychology of Learning for Instruction</i>
Satisfying Expectancies (Natural Consequences of Learning)	Belasco (10): For Belasco, "My value as a teacher is measured by the performance of my students." Belasco provides motivation by gearing his instruction to the future outcomes of his students.	Motivation - Keller	"One of the most rewarding (and subsequently, motivating) results of learning is to use the newly acquired skills or knowledge." (Driscoll, p. 324)
Verbal Persuasion / Building Confidence	Pinchot (21): "Margaret Mead hissed in my ear: 'Stand up and make yourself heard.'" Tice (34): "[A mentor's} vision of what is possible for us is so clear and powerful, that they wind up convincing us, too."	1. Bandura: Self-Efficacy and Motivation 2. Building Confidence: per Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design	1. Modifies self-efficacy beliefs by "persuading a learner that he or she is capable of succeeding at a particular task" (Driscoll, p. 320) 2. To instill confidence in learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create positive expectation for success • provide success opportunities • help learners recognize that learning is a direct consequence of their own efforts (Driscoll, p. 332)
Physiological States	Pinchot (21): "I did the best I could. I wouldn't have done it otherwise." Sherman (23): "The real issue [of why he couldn't commit to marriage] began to emerge: I didn't want a nice person like Meredith to get such with a horrible guy like me."	Bandura: Self-Efficacy and Motivation	Learner's physiological state or "... 'gut feeling' convinces them of probable success of failure." (Driscoll, p. 322)

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Concept	Learning Journeys Author and Event	Parallel to Learning Theory or Theorist	Reference within Marcy P. Driscoll's <i>Psychology of Learning for Instruction</i>
Vicarious Experiences	<p>Pinchot (21): The speaker's "gentle and humorous" wisdom" provided a positive example of a role model succeeding.</p> <p>Tice (34): "We can share our own strategies and the results of similar experiences that we have lived through, both successful and unsuccessful."</p>	Bandura: Self-Efficacy and Motivation	Affects self-efficacy beliefs when "the learner's observation of a role model attaining success at a task" (Driscoll, p. 319)
Enactive Mastery Experiences	Pinchot (21): By succeeding, Pinchot was motivated and the experience positively influenced her feelings about her abilities in the future."	Bandura: Self-Efficacy and Motivation	"Learner's own previous success at a task and influences self efficacy beliefs . . . Enactive mastery experiences provide feedback on learners' own capabilities . . . They are the most influential source of self-efficacy beliefs because they provide the most authentic information learners on their ability to do what it takes to succeed" (Driscoll, p. 318)
Schemata - Restructuring	Sherman (23): "During this time of contemplation, I began to trace the origins of my way of life." "My desire to keep her in my life finally compelled me to launch a frontal assault on the idea that strength is about resisting change."	Schema Theory	Learners "use, modify and automate schemata in solving problems." (Driscoll, p. 151)
Self Regulation	Sherman (23): Sherman observed his past (standing firm), compared it to his desired outcome (to be with his wife) and realized he needed to change in order to reach is goal.	Self-Regulation: Schunk and Zimmerman (Feedback Loop)	<p>The feedback loop includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Reflection: Observing one's performance • Forethought: Comparing one's performance to a standard or goal • Performance: Reacting and responding to the perceived difference (Driscoll, p. 329)