

A Critical Examination Of The Foundations Of Learning Theories In Contemporary Psychology From The Perspective Of The “Expanding Vessel” Metaphor

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Abstract

Learning theories can be divided into two general philosophical and psychological parts. Despite the existence of numerous psychological theories about the learning a few people such as Christopher Winch and Peter Jarvis have also discussed learning from a philosophical perspective. Theorizing about learning, like other topics in the humanities, is based on the theorist's view of human nature. The first Imam of the Shiites in a famous statement said: “the capacity of any vessel is narrowed by placing something in it, except for the vessel of knowledge, which is further filled by knowledge.” Using this expression, which implies the abstraction of the soul, we created the metaphor of the expanded vessel, and we believe that based on this metaphor, a basis for a theory of learning can be devised. According to this metaphor, mechanical perspectives such as information processing on learning - which reduce knowledge to information alone and learning to the transmission of information - are criticized. The purpose of this descriptive-analytical article is to provide a basis for theorizing about learning from an Islamic perspective, based on which existing psychological theories which are based on specific Western philosophies can be challenged. Based on the metaphor of the expanded vessel, we have criticized theories of learning from three perspectives: worldview, abstraction of the soul, and scientism. The metaphor has implications for learning, the purpose of education, and the curriculum mentioned at the end of the article.

Keywords: Metaphor, expanded vessel, learning, soul, knowledge, behaviorism, information processing.