

Theoractive Learning towards Academic Endeavour

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Abstract: *Theoractive learning is an essential ingredient that can complement various academic theories, making them easier to apply to a learning environment. Although it appears that theoractive learning is the effect of the beneficial causes of teaching and learning in certain contextual settings; theoractive learning is, however, actions-oriented and relies on Skills, Ability, Competences and Intelligences (SACI). Theoractive learning research was conducted at the University of Tampere, Finland, in 2011 with students' participants from 7 countries. Although the participants found difficult to relate the transformation of theories into practices, they were theoractively conscious. A theoractive actions-orientation is based on critical reflexivity of content and process learning. It teaches through Art and Science educational domains, while applying a multi-dimensional attachment of theories and practices. The Art of Science and the Science of Art are two non-comparable and inseparable phenomena that are reliant on theoractiveness of orienting actions through the learning paradigms of content learning, process learning, and critical reflexivity, which requires SACI.*

Keywords: Theoractive; theoractiveness; theoractively; content learning; process learning; critical reflexivity; Art and Science of learning; practicing theories; contextual settings; contextual variations.

Introduction

Theoractive learning is a term that was first used by Rajbhandari et al. (2011). Recently, theoractive learning has incorporated, and is dependent on, Art and Science learning areas to deepen the understanding of these concepts through obstinacy actions-oriented behaviour; which is discussed as an Art Obstinacy and a Science Obstinacy (Rajbhandari, 2018). Theoractive comprises two words, theory and practice, which both relate strongly to Art and Science in order to apply sociological, psychology, management, educational, sciences and so forth theories to practice. Nevertheless, in any of these cases, applying theories into practices require oneself to extend their *Skills, Ability, Competences and Intelligence (SACI)* to understand the immediate context and to articulate *Actions-orientated behaviour*

(Rajbhandari, 2017) towards resolving the immediate contextual problems with the immediate *contextual intelligences* and *contextual experiences* (Rajbhandari, 2013) and the likable and anticipated variations in the contextual settings. In many academic articles, both conceptual and empirical theories are extensively used to indicate the rigorous and scientific undertakings of the research. Nevertheless, most readers and practitioners sometimes find it difficult to translate the theories into practice. Consequently, this research of scientific and academic rigor remains on paper. However, findings are often cumulated into practices on the basis of scientific and academic outcomes. Moreover, the findings in academic and scientific papers, within that context, may or may not fit into the real contextual settings of the practitioners, where they may apply. This is due to the lack of substantial contributions to the research in order to prove that it is scientifically valid. The research paper, therefore, needs to fit in with the practitioner's current contextual settings. However, the practitioner may not be equipped with the *contextual intelligence* and *contextual experiences*, resulting in additional *contextual variations* in the present and *immediate context* (Rajbhandari, 2013).

Theoractive learning research was conducted at the University of Tampere in 2011, with students from 7 different countries, who were studying for their PhD and Master's degrees. Participants mentioned that the theories they have learnt in their academic lives were only applied in their written exams. In reality, most participants did not know how and what theories they were to use in their real-life orientations. It was made clear during the open-group discussion that theory is used to interact, communicate, present etc. However, the question remains if theory can be used on all levels, at all times, while we are at the work place, or even at a social gathering. The answer is affirmative, as theory is used most of the time, and it may be social theory, leadership theory, cognitive theory, management theory, etc. However, the difficult aspect to understand is, how the theories work in context, when applied to practice. For example, personality theory, perception and emotional theory, cognitive theory and motivational theory, are generally incorporated within the social and psychological contexts, often unknowingly, subconsciously or unconsciously.



Figure 1: Theoractive constructions of critical reflex towards content and process-based learning

Theoractive construction is encapsulated within the framework of content-based learning, process-based learning and further generating critical reflexivity in practicing the theories towards the ontology in real life. Critical reflexivity is essential to understand the phenomena learnt during content-based and process-based learning in educational settings. However, it cannot be denied that theories which are learnt in educational institutes can also be learnt

outside of educational settings. The only phenomenon that is difficult to understand is what is being taught and consequently learnt within the social atmosphere. Social learning provides an opportunity to learn different phenomena from others; cognition is essential to judge the correct way to perform and provide an actions-orientation. Shown in Figure 1, critical reflexivity attempts to explain the interconnection between content-learning and process-learning, which are two different views of orienting actions into practice. However, critical reflexivity can discern wrong from right, and orient corrective action for a given situation and contextual setting.

Discussions and Conclusions

Suzawa (2013) states that it is necessary for an individual to know how to cope successfully in real-world situations, where knowledge is rapidly evolving. He further suggests that teaching devices and techniques should adhere to academic theories to make them conducive to teaching and learning, which generates critical and creative thinking processes from professional development and activities.

Another issue is whether or not only educated and university-going students and graduates are able and capable of using various theories. The answer is negative, as most scientific researchers practice their theory on people who are not well educated in various organizations or social grounds, where people may be comparatively less educated to the researchers. The theory that is generated from this context provides a rich source for scientific literature. Therefore, theories exist everywhere, at all times and involve everyone among and between individuals, groups and organizations. Suzawa (2013) states that existing theories of learning are academic-centred and not life-time centred theories.

The essential question I would want to ask in this article is: How can we connect and apply theory into practice; including theoractive learning as a connector between theory and practice? This is possible when learning is understood as an extensive process. Learning consists of three levels: content learning taught at schools, colleges and universities; process learning, referring to the way that we practice the content learnt phenomena; and critical reflexivity directed into action.

Theoractive learning is also guided by different theories of learning, such as social learning, cognitive learning, operant learning and classical learning (Bratton, 2007; Mullins, 2005). The three concepts of theoractive learning, which consist of content learning, process learning, and critical reflexivity, can also be applied to the different theories of learning within the disciplines of management, sociology, psychology, etc. However, all these theories are not mutually exclusive.

While theories are complex and difficult to understand, they are equally complex to apply in practice. For example, any organization that employs people can be interpreted according to theories of scientific management (Taylor, 1911). People are seen as scientific and time oriented, providing complexity to human nature, which leads to complexity at the work place.

Can the cause for this complexity be pinned on the failure to understand and apply theories in practices? Theoractive learning focusses on the positive aspects of the complexities of human nature. Arguments and conflicts in an organization is a general phenomenon. When people come together to work they bring their own ideology, values, morals, emotions, perceptions, etc. In certain circumstances, conflicts among and between peers are resolved according to their actions and will, using their own SACI, which is indicative of theoractive learning.

While resolving conflicts, people are theoractively involved either subconsciously or unconsciously. Conflict theory indicates five paradigms of conflict resolution; people in conflict either avoid the situation, confront the situation, compete with the opponent, compromise or collaborate within their situations and then proceed with their organizational working lives. In these ways, an individual may not know that they have applied conflict theory, but unconsciously or subconsciously they have theoractively oriented their actions towards theory application. Such is the case with many other theories in management, as well as in sociology and psychology. People subconsciously or unconsciously use theory in many places, involving others, either in their organizational lives, sociologically or psychologically. There are many more examples. However, only a glimpse of my understanding of theoractive learning is presented in this article.

While the students at the University of Tampere took part in the research on theoractiveness, they did not understand the concept or theory that they were applying. However, after the discussion, the students confirmed that theories are applicable. The difficulties of orienting theory into action in sociology, management, education or psychology, is that these disciplines are not absolute sciences where $2 + 2 = 4$. Rather they encompass areas of disciplinary studies in applied sciences where:

$$4 = 99 - 95 \text{ or}$$

$$4 = 88 - 84 \text{ or}$$

$$4 = 1111 - 1107 \text{ or}$$

$$4 = 1+1+1+1 \text{ or}$$

$$4 = 3+1 \text{ or}$$

$$4 = 3+1+1-1$$

$$4 = 2+1+1$$

$$4 = 5-1$$

$$4 = 7-4+1 \text{ so on and so forth.}$$

There are multiple ways to calculate 4. However, the way that best fits the context, would be an example of theoractively orienting theory into actions towards practice.

Thus, as a researcher, indicating and generally explaining the findings is not conclusive unless the theories are described according to how they were used and can be used; this would be a useful paper for learners and teachers to develop a theoractive orientation.

In connection to how theories can be brought into practice, many universities need to become actions oriented in their teaching and learning practices. Schroder, Kupczynski & Groff (2018) suggest that *active Team-Based learning* can be one of the useful ways to provide an actions orientation, rather than through passive learning. Active learning is a way towards enriching theoractive learning, where students can learn both theories and practical ways to apply them though problem-solving methods that fit into their contextual settings. This approach generates deeper understanding and learning, where theory can be applied to various real-life situations, rather than rote learning which does not provide a means to apply theory into practice.

Theoractiveness is not simply an academic term. It can be applied to the social periphery, for example, in a home situation where social environments are mostly experienced in a real manner rather than in a simulated way. Parents experience their children's behavior during adolescence as a period referred to as "*parents hell*" (David, 2018). In this article (David, 2018) explains adolescent psychology, emotion, sensitivity, insensitivity, over-excitability, criticism, discipline, inabilities, wisdom, etc., in real-life situations where parents need to be critically reflexive in their response. The theoractiveness of such parenting can be applied through SACI to maintain a favorable homely environment, by understanding and applying a theoractive actions-orientation to the situation. Thus, encouraging the adolescent and creating solidarity.

Another example of theoractiveness is shown when a diabetic patients are trained how to cook healthy food following a menu that is specifically designed for the dietary requirements of the patient, e.g., to reduce the effect of diabetes (Ashrafzadeh, Malekafzali, Ashrafzadeh, Farajirad, Rassi & Baylin, 2018). This training is a theory-based program, which involves both the art and science of cooking for enriching the nutritional value of food when cooked. The way towards theoractive teaching and learning can boost synergy through applied science, which can, therefore, be productive and effective.

Additionally, in gender studies, theories related to feminism are highlighted to empower women. However, despite such efforts women are still deprived within their social lives. In the study of *gender sadism* (Poudel, 2018) it is mentioned that women, even in higher educational settings, are facing grievances from male peers, the administration faculty and so forth. These grievances are mostly related to harassment towards females, where they are being teased and their problems are not competently addressed in educational settings within the academic arenas. Neither are women weak, nor are males stronger. Research investigates gender inequality to see where the problem lies, which is in corrupt thinking systems. This is not healthy for an educational institute, especially in developing countries. It is, therefore, essential to implement gender-based theories into practice and to empower women. Theoretically, genders are just a category to differentiate individuals. Nevertheless, females are equally capable of doing the same task or job of any man.

In management studies, theories are interconnected within the individuals, groups and organizations, rather than being absolute, where applied sciences are more practice based. For

example, Qutoshi (2018) in his book review explains the *architecture of innovation*, which is interlinked with the economics of creative organization in order to win the hearts and minds of consumers. Theories that are related to perceptions, consumer behaviours and theoractive practice within the organization can generate success and organizational effectiveness by understanding the people working inside and outside the organization.

Conclusively, theoractiveness is both an *Art* and a *Science* of practicing theories into real-life situation to solve the real-life problems with the real-life solution, which therefore is being street smart (Rajbhandari, 2013) theoractively. This consequently enables towards an academic endeavour for becoming successful as well as effectiveness. Although successful and effectiveness are taken as synonyms in many occasions, however, they are not the same and is not mutually exclusive (Rajbhandari, 2018). Therefore, theoractiveness is an art and a science of applying the theories into practices, which can enable an individual towards endeavouring success and becoming effectiveness in both the academic and real-life situations by being *theoractively smart*.

Reflections

In the current published volume of Journal of Interdisciplinary Sciences (JIS) (Volume 2, Issue 1, May 2018), interdisciplinary sciences are highlighted in various papers, interlinking education with management, health science with education and management, psychology with health science, and vice versa. These researched conceptual and empirical papers originated by applying theory into practice, thereby generating theoractiveness.

In the previous volume (Volume 1, Issue 1, November 2017) of the Journal of Interdisciplinary Sciences, most of the research papers covered aspects related to the sciences. Absolute science is technical and structured, whereas applied science usually relates to sociology, management, psychology, and so forth. Nevertheless, in both of these fields of science, the art of doing the right thing is essential. Consequently, Art and Science are not mutually exclusive. Although many curriculum disciplines are studied by different means and methods, these are all incorporated and are interdisciplinary, where both Art and the Science are required. The Art of Science and the Science of Art are non-comparable and inseparable phenomena. They rely on theoractiveness of orienting actions through the learning paradigms of content learning, process learning and critical reflexivity, which requires SACI.

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