

A Case Study Analysis - Jamie's Dream School's Jamie Oliver on Fish

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Abstract: *This paper analyses a case study on Jamie's Dream School's Jamie Oliver on Fish by looking thoroughly into its aspects of learners and learning of the first ten minutes of the video. The paper describes Jamie's teaching strategy, along with the analysis of the case study according to Vygotsky's perspective; Gardner's multiple intelligence perspective, the information processing theory perspective, and Skinner's reinforcement perspective.*

Keywords: jamie oliver, multiple intelligence, vygotsky, information processing theory, reinforcement theory

1. Introduction

Humans develop and learn as they live. In other words, we are all learners. The complicated term „human development“ is described as “the changes that occur in humans between conception and death” (Marsh, McInemey, Nieto, Larrivee, Mercer, & Maloy, 2015, p. 32). The concept of learning is very intricate that it has no particular definition commonly shared by all the people (Illeris, 2009, p.1). Theories in learning are as complex as human development. In fact, there are several theories in learning as each theorist will have specific thoughts of what forms the learning process (Gould, 2012, p.2). “We need theories so that we can think about how things work”, (Hunt, 2010, p. 70). Hunt (2010) asserts that a theory is supported by evidence when it accurately predicts and observation.

This paper attempts to analyse a chosen case study by looking thoroughly into its aspects of learners and learning. The case study chosen for this paper is Jamie's Dream School's Jamie Oliver on Fish and the first ten minutes of the video will be analysed as instructed.

2. Jamie's Teaching Strategy

Although Jamie may not be a real teacher but he seems to naturally possess very effective teaching skills. We know that teaching teenagers is very challenging as it is difficult to grab and maintain their attention because they always think lessons are boring (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). Jamie has portrayed the use of demonstration teaching strategy in his lesson. Demonstration teaching strategy is commonly used to teach psychomotor skills (Humphrey & Milone-Nuzzo, 1996). Jamie was doing a lot of talking and trying hard to get the students involved with short discussions, the demonstration teaching strategy is more effective when the teacher provides explanation and discussion to get learners to be more engaged with the lesson (Humphrey & Milone-Nuzzo, 1996).

Jamie used directed questioning throughout his lesson and clearly get prompt feedback from the learners as he demonstrated the method to cook fish (Marsh et al., 2015). It can be seen that Jamie is also very lively and passionate about what he is doing. However, Killen (2007) argued that demonstration teaching strategy highly depends on the students' ability to observe and some learners may not

possess good observation skills, the students may not be able to see what you intend them to see. Fortunately, in Jamie's lesson, the learners were all able to understand and successfully complete the task as most of them were able to cook the fish accordingly. Although this is shown past the ten minutes of assigned period, yet it is important to see the outcome of Jamie's lesson.

3. Vygotsky's Perspective

As a social constructivist, Vygotsky believed that individual's socialization plays a major role in human development and cognition (Leonard, 2002, p.157). He claimed that an individual's cognitive development is determined by people around them (Marsh et al., 2015, p.42) and bounded by his or her culture (Leonard, 2002, p 157). Jamie began to introduce fish in his cooking lesson by relating fish to what the students most probably come across their mind about fish. As about half of the students do not prefer fish, he mentioned the reasons for their negative perception about fish. This is most likely derived from the students' family background as some families may have never eaten fish at all.

Social communication and culture determines the development of cognitive competency such as communicating, learning, and thinking (Leonard, 2002, p.157). Jamie used his power as the teacher to influence the students. through a lot of communication. He started to change the students' perception about fish by any means. First, he talked about the goodness of fish and how it can affect their brain, then as he moved on, he continuously persuaded the students to try his dish and this managed to change most of their negative thoughts about fish. He even persuaded Jamal who clearly showed the least interest on fish to try his dish. Vygotsky emphasised on social and cultural influences on learning and development which lead the students to actively internalise the things they learn from others (Edelman, Mandel, & Kudzma, 2013, p. 346). The students tried Jamie's dish and they began to be more interested in fish and the methods of cooking fish. Knoell (2012), found that student-teacher relationship can significantly affect students' performance and their lives outside school. This explains that learners exist wherever or whenever social interaction takes place.

Furthermore, McCombs & Whisler as cited in Knoell (2012), outlined five aspects to assist each learner develop to their utmost potential, which included "Learning occurs best in an environment that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions and in which the learner feels appreciated, acknowledged, respected, and admired." Jamie constantly praised the students. He acknowledged the students' answers to his questions and categorised their answers to a lucid concept and make them realise their thinking ability. For example, when he wrapped the fish with the meat and asked the students what will the meat do to the fish, the students responded with answers such as seasoning, flavour, and keep the moisture. Jamie then associated their answers to the scientific context and complimented them by telling them that they are clever.

As the learning process begins through socialization, learners need assistance from More Knowledgeable Others (Gould, 2012, Moll, 1992). Vygotsky came out with two concepts to describe how the learning occurs; the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Zone of Current Development (Gould, 2012, p. 117). The Zone of Proximal Development denotes that a learner has a borderline to a limit of their independence in knowledge and skills acquisition, however, the learner needs to be assisted by MKO if he or she exceeds the limit of independence (Marsh et al., 2015, p. 43). The Zone of Current Development describes what a learner is able to achieve independently (Gould, 2012, p. 117). To illustrate, Jamie's students may already know the methods of cooking such as poach, grill, bake, roast, or steam and this is their Zone of Current Development (ZCD), but they may not know the methods that can be applied to cook fish and Jamie as the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) needs to assist them to exceed their limit of independence through the teaching of the different ways of cooking fish. Jamie's teaching on how to cook fish basically describes their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Therefore, in order to promote effective learning, Vygotsky stressed the importance of the person who assist learning to be more knowledgeable, by which he used the term More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) (Gould, 2012, p. 117). Moreover, as a learner acquires cognitive strategies, he or she may not only depend on inner speech, he or she may ask for assistance from the More Knowledgeable Other (Moll, 1992, p. 186).

4. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Perspective

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence takes into account the diversity of individuals in terms of their capability in understanding complicated ideas, environment adaptability, learning from their experience and engaging in different patterns of reasoning (Marsh et al., 2015). Gardner's theory focuses on how the human mind works on the world existence such as numbers, persons, etc. (Armstrong, 2009). The MI theory has become always been favoured by educators and learners as it presents a positive outlook in education whereby a student who may not perform well in conventional subjects may possess competency in music, bodily movement, social and communication, or even art (Hunt, 2010). It gives us a sense that every individual has a unique talent and potential. In the context of the learners in Jamie's lesson, when Jamie

advised them "Don't have me give up on you ,cause that what people have done all their bloody life to you. Do you know what I mean? For God's sake! I really give a s**t about you guys...", it seems like the learners may not be higher achievers in conventional subjects in the school. Jamie is playing his role as the teacher to bring out the best in his students. He seems to believe that the other people (could possibly be the other teachers for other subjects) may not understand the students' talent as they may not perform well in other subjects but that does not mean they can not perform in his subject. Jamie's assertive thought is acceptable as Gardner (2011) believes that it is wrong to think that humans only have "a single mind, as single intelligence, a single problem-solving capacity"(p. 9).

Cooking requires multiple intelligences such as bodily-kinesthetic (Armstrong, 2009), interpersonal, linguistic, and logical-mathematical (Davis, Christodoulou, Seider, & Gardner, 2011). Davis et al. (2011) believe that cooking is a fusion of the existing multiple intelligences. This can be illustrated through the cooking process itself. Firstly, it requires one to make a decision on what to cook either to himself or some other people, this is derived through his interpersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Secondly, when it comes to reading the recipe, one needs his linguistic intelligence, followed by the logical-mathematical intelligence to measure and estimate the ingredients, and the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence to dice the tomatoes, pour the olive oil, chop the basil leaves, flip the fish, and mix the salad. Finally cooking also requires one to utilise their naturalist intelligence in working with the natural ingredients of cooking such as salt, pepper, lemon, fish, olive oil, basil leaves, tomatoes, or even smashing spices and herbs in the pestle and mortar which is made of rock, an element of nature.

Davis et al. (2010) idea can also be closely related to the learners in Jamie's cooking lesson. The students were asked to give their opinion about fish, it involves interpersonal skill for learners to give their point of view or make choice about something (Armstrong, 2009). Next, throughout the lesson, Jamie was demonstrating the methods of cooking fish on how much ingredients should be added, how long to cook and if the fire should be high or low, and the mixing of the ingredients. Jamie's demonstration requires the learners' linguistic intelligence to be able to interpret what was being taught and presented effectively as linguistic skills refer to the students ability in both verbal and written language (Hunt, 2010). Furthermore, the learners also applied their logical-mathematical intelligence through learning about the amount of ingredients needed for the recipe, the length of time it should be cooked, and the perfect measurements or estimations to mix the ingredients. The learners were also able to connect these intelligences to one another because of they were able to integrate it, they will most likely be able to cook the dish properly.

5. The Information Processing Theory

As Jamie was introducing the pestle and mortar to the students, he began to ask them if they remember yesterday's lesson ingredients and regard them as "some friends of yours". He then reintroduced the ingredients and reminded

them that the flavours are exactly the same as yesterday's with the same herbs and spices except this time the mixture was not being cooked in the pan but poured over the steamed fish instead. At this part of the lesson particularly, we can relate it to the information processing theory. The information processing theory views human minds similar to a computer in terms of how "the information flows, is operated on, and is converted to output" (Klahr & Siegler as cited in Shaffer & Kipp, 2009, p.57).

Human mind has a "complex cognitive system analogues" (p.59), that is similar to a digital computer, by which the information processing involves encoding, recoding, or decoding it; comparing or combining it with other information; storing it in memory or retrieving it from memory; and bringing it into or out of focal attention or conscious awareness (Flavell as cited in Marsh et al., 2015, p.59). The students may have already stored the information on the ingredients for the lesson they learnt the day before the lesson on cooking fish, this is the encoding process whereby the material is mentally stored in the memory to be retrieved later (Marsh et al., 2015). When Jamie asked the students about the ingredients they used in yesterday's lesson, the students's brain went through the retrieval process in which they were accessing their long-term memory to attain the information related to the lesson they learnt the day before specifically on the ingredients and flavour used (Marsh et al., 2015).

Moreover, Jamie played his part in making the lesson more meaningful. Marsh et al. (2015) denotes "meaningful material really means material that can be related to already existing schemes of knowledge in the long-term memory" (p. 64). Jamie tried to relate the new ideas he taught during the lesson to the students' prior knowledge. Besides the example on how Jamie related the lesson's ingredients to the previous lesson ingredients, this matter can also be illustrated when Jamie taught them how to fry, steam, pan-bake, and grill the fish. The students know these cooking methods so it is their prior knowledge but Jamie was teaching these methods of cooking fish by introducing new ideas to each method. He mentioned what each type of cooking method could possibly do to the taste and flavour of the fish and the students can successfully relate the new ideas taught as they responded efficiently. Indeed, prior knowledge enhances learning (Myers, 2003).

6. Skinner's Reinforcement Perspective

Skinner as cited in Petri & Govern (2012) focused the reinforcement concept is the relationship between the stimulus and response in which if the stimulus is present, the response is strengthened and more frequent. Such effect on reinforcement can be closely related to motivation (Petri & Govern, 2012). Therefore, one's behaviour depends on reinforcements, which are the reactions to their behaviour and if similar feedback is given, similar behaviour is more likely to be performed (Skinner as cited in O'Neil, Drillings, & O'Neil, 2012).

A common example of reinforcer is praise. Jamie used praise to reinforce his students. If a teacher uses praise effectively the occurrence of positive behaviour is likely to

increase (O'Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2011). When Jamie was teaching the students the methods of cooking fish he acknowledged answers from them and praised them with words such as clever but he did not exaggerate it. They seemed to like the praises and were more motivated to pay attention. Also, we can observe that the students were motivated to provide feedbacks as Jamie valued their response. Thus, praise, if used occasionally may be effective to reinforce student's positive behaviour (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002). On the other hand, found that praise can weaken motivation as students may become too performance-oriented (Mueller & Dweck, 1998).

7. Conclusion

Jamie's lesson on cooking fish is definitely a very lively and active lesson. Most of the students were engaged in the lesson and Jamie tried to not leave any of them behind. In Vygotsky theory, Jamie assisted the students to go beyond their Zone of Current Development. The students knew how to cook, then, also learnt the methods of cooking fish. Moreover, the students' multiple intelligences were integrated as they learn how to cook. They were also actively processing information as they retrieve material from their prior knowledge and relate it to the new material in the lesson. Also, they are reinforced and motivated by positive feedback they attain from answering Jamie's questions throughout the lesson. Prior knowledge and motivation are important for learning (Myers, 2003).

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