LEARNING THEORIES FOR TEACHERS
EDUC-I 251
FALL 2025, CLASS #12593
SYLLABUS

Welcome to Learning Theories for Teachers (I251)! I am excited to have you in this course as we explore how people learn and how that knowledge can inform your future teaching. Learning Theories for Teachers introduces major theories of learning within the context of school-based education and is a required course for teacher education majors–which I'm guessing is why most of you are here. While learning theories can sometimes feel daunting and/or overwhelming, my goal is to make them clear, relevant, and useful for your future work in the classroom. I look forward to getting to know each of you and for great semester of learning, discussion, and growth together.

About the Instructor

Instructor:	Kyle Beyersdorf
	I am a first-year PhD student with the IU Learning Sciences program in the Learning, Design, and Adult Education (LDAE) department. My research focuses on the impact of generative artificial intelligence on teaching and learning in higher education.
Office:	Virtual
Office Hours:	Office hours are available by appointment. To schedule a meeting, please email me with 3-5 times that you are available, indicate whether you prefer to meet in person or virtually, and briefly share what you'd like to discuss. I welcome meetings for a variety of reasons, including clarifying course content or assignments, connecting to learn more about each other, discussing your academic or career goals, or navigating personal challenges– whether or not they directly impact your coursework. Your success and well-being are important to me, and I encourage you to reach out whenever you'd like to talk.
Email:	kbeyersd@iu.edu
Contact Info:	Email is the preferred method of communication. Please include [I251] at the beginning of the subject line when sending course-related emails. You should receive a response within two (2) business days. If no response is received within that timeframe, you are encouraged to send a polite follow-up email.
Supervising Faculty:	Susan Drumm (sdrumm@iu.edu) is the supervising faculty member of this course in 2025-2026. Dr. Drumm is a Clinical Assistant Professor with the Instructional Systems Technology Program in the LDAE department. If you have issues that you cannot resolve with me then you are welcome to contact Dr. Drumm. Daniel Hickey (dthickey@iu.edu) was responsible for the design of this course is the official faculty of record for this course. Dr. Hickey is a Professor and Coordinator of the Learning Sciences program in LDAE.

About the Course

Class Meetings: Monday and Wednesdays from 2:20 to 3:35 PM
Class Location: Room 1204, Wendell W. Wright Education Building
Canvas: In addition to in-person class meetings, the entirety of the course will be facilitated through our Canvas page. Our Canvas page will host all course texts and materials, syllabus, assignments, announcements, etc.

Course Goals & Learning Outcomes

Course Description: This is a required course for teacher education majors designed to introduce the theories of learning in the context of school learning.

Class Goals: The overall goal of this course is to understand two main things, the first is the ***process*** of learning, and the second is the ***relationship*** between the process of learning and the act of teaching. Many people conflate the processes of learning with the practices of teachers. After completing this course, you should be able to answer and discuss two key questions in specific educational settings:

1. What happens when people are learning?
2. How can teachers use their knowledge of learning to support student success?

Importantly, there isn't one "grand theory" that is the best. Each theory emphasizes some aspects of the learning process while obscuring others. Our job as a learning community will be to explore the uses and drawbacks of each theory so that we can employ them effectively in our own classrooms.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the class, a successful learner will be able to:

1. Describe the major contemporary learning theories, including behaviorism, social cognitive theories, cognitive information processing theories, and sociocultural theories, and discuss the key differences between them.
2. Design instruction based on each of these theories.
3. Explain the implications of each of these theories for motivating learning.
4. Explain the implications of each of these theories for assessing learning
5. Explain the differences between the four primary "asset-based" approaches to education.
6. Articulate their own philosophy of learning based on at least one major learning.
7. Describe some of the ways you will encounter these theories again in subsequent teacher education courses.

Grading

Assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	Total Points
Initial Thoughts on Learning	Sunday, August 31	5
Exit Tickets: Key Principle	Midnight of Day of Class	14 *(28x.5 pts.)*
Workshops (in-class)	Midnight of Day of Class	30 *(5x6 pts.)*
Midterm Video Analysis	Friday, October 17	20
Dear Future Me… Letter	Friday, December 5	8
Final Video Analysis	Thursday, December 11	20
Lasting Principles	Friday, December 12	3
		100 total

Final Letter Grade:

Final Grade	Grade
93-100	A
90-92.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
73-76.9	C
70-72.9	C-
60-69.9	D
0-59.9	F

Note: Teacher Education candidates need to receive a C (≥73) or higher in P/I251 to move on with the degree/program.

Grade Dissemination: Final grades will be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by Monday, December 15, 2025. You can expect to view your official course grade in the Student Center via One.IU by Tuesday, December 16, 2025, as it typically takes about one day for grades to appear after submission. If you believe your posted grade is incorrect, you must contact me no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Thursday, December 18, 2025, to resolve the issue.

Attendance: You may miss up to four class periods. After four absences, in other words your fifth absence, will result in a full letter grade deduction of your final grade. You do not need to share why you were absent, but it is helpful to know ahead of time if you do not plan to be present in class. If you are absent from a single class for more than 20 minutes, it is considered one full absence.

Number of Absences	Maximum Letter Grade
4	A
5	B
6	C
7	D
8	F

Extra Credit:	None available and none will be offered.
Late Submissions:	All assignments are due by 6:00 PM on the specified due. Submitting work on time helps you stay on track and allows me to provide meaningful, timely feedback. That said, I understand that life can be unpredictable. If you do not request an extension in advance and submit an assignment late, the following policy will apply:

- Late work will receive a 5% deduction per calendar day, for up to five days after the due date.
- After five days, the maximum score you may receive is 75%, regardless of the assignment's quality.
- Final assignments and the final exam may not be submitted late due to university deadlines for grade submission.
- All coursework must be submitted no later than Friday, December 12, 2025, at 6:00 PM. Work submitted after this deadline will receive an automatic zero.

Extensions:	I understand that unexpected situations come up and that students may occasionally need more time to complete an assignment. If you find yourself needing an extension, please contact me before the due date whenever possible. In most cases, I am happy to offer a short extension–no explanation required–as long as communication is respectful and timely. If you are honest and respectful, I will be reasonable with you. My goal is to support your learning while also encouraging responsibility and time management.
	Final assignments and the final exam are not eligible for extensions because I am required to submit final grades by a university deadline. Please plan ahead to ensure that your final work can be submitted on time.

Course Policies

In-Class Expectations

Notetaking:	You are welcome to use whatever notetaking method you choose (e.g., notebook, laptop, tablet, etc.). However, if such method becomes a distraction to your own or others learning, you will no longer be able to utilize such method.
Phones in Class:	To support an engaging and focused learning environment, please refrain from using your cell phone during class unless it is part of an assigned activity. If you anticipate needing to use your phone for any reason during class, please notify me in advance. At times, you may be asked to use your phone or another electronic device to support class activities. When doing so, please ensure it remains a tool for learning and does not become a distraction. Once the activity is complete, devices should be put away.
Writing Style:	All assignments that you submit should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document, use double-spacing, 1" margins on all sides, and 12 pt. Times New Roman font. If/When referencing others' work, you must follow APA 7th ed. guidelines and provide references to all work that you reference.

Course Expectations

IU Student Code: All students are expected to abide by Indiana University "Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct." This code can be found at http://studentcode.iu.edu.

Accessibility and Accommodations: Indiana University is dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities (e.g., chronic health, neurodevelopmental, neurological, sensory, psychological & emotional, including mental health, etc.) have the support services and reasonable accommodations needed to provide equal access to academic programs. To request an accommodation, you must establish your eligibility by contacting the Accessible Educational Services (AES) Office (iubaes@iu.edu or 812-855-7578). Note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place, and are not retroactive; captions and alternate media for print materials may take three or more weeks to get produced. Please contact your campus office as soon as possible if accommodations are needed. They can also be found at 1900 E 10th St., Eigenmann Hall, Suite 001.

Religious and Civic Observances: Students missing class for a religious observance can find the officially approved accommodation form by going to the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs webpage for religious accommodations. The form must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the anticipated absence.

Bias-Based Incident Reporting: Bias-based incident reports can be made by students, faculty and staff. Any act of discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability can be reported through any of the options: 1) email biasincident@indiana.edu or incident@indiana.edu; 2) call the Dean of Students Office at 812-855-8188 or 3) use the IU mobile App (m.iu.edu). Reports can be made anonymously at https://reportincident.iu.edu.

Sexual Misconduct and Title IX: IU policy prohibits sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with the IU Sexual Assault Crisis Services at 812-855-8900, or contact a Confidential Victim Advocate at 812-856-2469 or cva@indiana.edu.

University policy requires me to share certain information brought to my attention about potential sexual misconduct with the campus Deputy Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator or the University Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken, and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/index.html to learn more.

- The Sexual Assault Crisis Services (SACS) at (812) 855-8900 (counseling services)

- Confidential Victim Advocates (CVA) at (812) 856-2469 (advocacy and advice services)
- IU Health Center at (812) 855-4011 (health and medical services)

Student Well-Being and Success: In this course the instructor wants to make sure you connect with resources that will help you be successful. If you receive a message through the Student Engagement Roster that asks you to consult your advisor, please know that the message is sent to both you and your academic advisor, who will follow up and view the feedback from this course.

Academic Misconduct: If you are expected to have cheated, plagiarized or otherwise committed academic misconduct, the process as outlined in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct: http://studentcode.iu.edu/ will be followed.

Therefore, <u>DON'T DO IT!</u> Please seek assistance with how to properly reference materials without claiming it as your own work (e.g., using online lesson plans, paraphrasing other people's ideas, or directly quoting material without referencing is a NO, NO!). There are several services available on campus (see Library Services) to help you with ensuring you are not plagiarizing anyone's work. If you have questions, ask me several days in advance of submitting your assignment to me and I will assist you with where to go for help. Course Policy: If it can be proven, you have plagiarized any part of an assignment you will receive an automatic zero for that assignment and no make-ups will be given.

First Amendment Freedoms: It is the policy in this class to respect not only the right to religious expression but also freedom of speech. You will not be penalized if your religious beliefs require you to submit an assignment late, or express a particular view. Be sure, however, that you notify the instructor of these circumstances should they arise. In addition, you will not be graded based on your expressed political views, if you support your position with evidence, comply with evaluation criteria, and your comments do not express contempt for others in the classroom community (which would violate other university policies).

FERPA Statement: As an enrolled student, you are protected from having your graded work be seen by others and your privacy protected in general. While most of the work you do will be public to other students in the class, your grades will be kept private. In particular negative feedback will only be provided in the privacy of the grade book.

Syllabus Revisions: This syllabus should be seen as a living document is intended to serve as a guide for our semester together. As such, I reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus throughout our semester in response to the needs of the class, scheduling conflicts, or unforeseen events.
Any revisions (such as changes to due dates, assignments, or class topics) will be communicated clearly and in a timely manner, both in class and via Canvas or email.

Campus Resources

Accessible Educational Services (AES)
AES assists with a broad range of services and is responsible for determining reasonable academic accommodations for students with both physical and learning disabilities. If you are a student requiring special accommodations of any kind, you should contact this office.;
> *Location:* 1900 E 10th St., Eigenmann Hall, Suite 001
> *Phone:* 812-855-7578
> *Website:* https://studentlife.indiana.edu/care-advocacy/iub-aes/

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
CAPS supports students who are looking for an opportunity to discuss problems with someone they can trust, including but not limited to serious mental health crises.
> *Location:* IU Health Center, 4th floor
> *Phone:* 812-855-5711
> *Website:* https://healthcenter.indiana.edu/counseling/

Writing Tutorial Services (WTS)
WTS offers free help at any phase of the writing process, from brainstorming to polishing the final draft. When you visit WTS, you'll find a tutor who is a sympathetic and helpful reader of your prose.
> *Location:* Herman B. Wells Library, 1st floor (West Tower)
> *Phone:* 812-855-6738
> *Website:* https://tutoring.indiana.edu/writing/

Student Health Center
Offers a full-service medical clinic, laboratory and radiological services, a pharmacy, and even physical therapy.
> *Location:* Herman B. Wells Library, 1st floor (West Tower)
> *Phone:* 812-855-6738
> *Website:* https://tutoring.indiana.edu/writing/

Gender Inclusive Restrooms
In the IU School of Education Building, two gender inclusive restrooms are located on each wing of the second floor.

Readings and Other Course Materials

Allen, A. (2022). An introduction to constructivism: Its theoretical roots and impact on contemporary education. *Journal of Learning Design and Leadership*, *1*(1), 1–11.

Aubrey, K., & Riley, A. (2019). Lev Vygotsky: An early social constructivist viewpoint. In *Understanding & using educational theories* (2nd edition, pp. 55–68). SAGE.

Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (n.d.). *Situated cognition and the culture of learning.*

Charles, L., Rankin, W., & Speight, C. (2019). *Knowledge, and learning: An overview of research and theory about constructionism and making* (An Overview of Research and Theory About Constructionism and Making, pp. 1–3).

Clark, R. E., Kirschner, P. A., & Sweller, J. (2012). Putting students on the path to learning: The case for fully guided instruction. *American Educator*, 6–11.

Clemson University. (2021). *A quick introduction to "Bloom's Taxonomy" for higher education.*

Delpit, L. D. (n.d.). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review.*

Esmonde, I. (2016). Power and sociocultural theories of learning. In *Power and Privilege in the Learning Sciences* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Holbert, N., Berland, M., & Kafai, Y. B. (2020a). *Designing Constructionist Futures: The Art, Theory, and Practice of Learning Designs.* The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/12091.001.0001

Holbert, N., Berland, M., & Kafai, Y. B. (2020b). Introduction: Fifty years of constructionism. In N. Holbert, M. Berland, & Y. B. Kafai (Eds.), *Designing Constructionist Futures* (pp. 1–16). The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/12091.003.0002

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (Ed.). (2018). Motivation to learn. In *How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures* (pp. 109–133). National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24783

National Research Council (Ed.). (2001). The nature of assessment and reasoning from evidence. In *Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment* (pp. 37–54). National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/10019

Zhou, M., & Brown, D. (Eds.). (2015a). Behaviorism. In *Educational Learning Theories* (2nd ed.). GALILEO. https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/education-textbooks/1

Zhou, M., & Brown, D. (Eds.). (2015b). Information processing theory. In *Educational Learning Theories* (2nd ed.). GALILEO. https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/education-textbooks/1

Zhou, M., & Brown, D. (Eds.). (2015c). Social cognitive theory. In *Educational Learning Theories* (2nd ed.). GALILEO. https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/education-textbooks/1

	Date	To Prepare for Class	In-Class Activities & Topics
1	Monday, August 25	▪ Review: Syllabus	Introduction to the Course and Learning
1	Wednesday, August 27	▪ *Read:* Zhou and Brown (2015a) ▪ *Listen:* NotebookLM's Podcast on Behaviorism	What is Behaviorism? ***Due:*** What is Learning? (August 31)
2	Monday, September 1	**No Class: Labor Day**	
2	Wednesday, September 3	▪ *Review:* Zhou & Brown (2017a) ▪ *Review:* NotebookLM's Podcast on Behaviorism	Behaviorism in the Classroom
3	Monday, September 8	▪ *Read:* Zhou & Brown (2015c) ▪ *Listen:* NotebookLM's Podcast on Social Cognitive Theory	What is Social Cognitive Theory?
3	Wednesday, September 10	▪ *Review:* Zhou & Brown (2015c) ▪ *Review:* NotebookLM's Podcast on Social Cognitive Theory	Social Cognitive Theory in the Classroom **Workshop #1**
4	Monday, September 15	▪ *Read:* Zhou & Brown (2015b) ▪ *Listen:* NotebookLM's Podcast on Information Processing Theories	What are Information Processing Theories?
4	Wednesday, September 17	▪ *Review:* Zhou & Brown (2015b) ▪ *Review:* NotebookLM's Podcast on Information Processing Theories	Information Processing Theories in the Classroom
5	Monday, September 22	▪ *Read:* Clark, Kirschner, & Sweller (2012)	The Case for Fully Guided Instruction
5	Wednesday, September 24	▪ None	Engaging with a Principal about Learning Theories Information Processing Theories **Workshop #2**
6	Monday, September 29	▪ *Read:* Allen (2022) ▪ *Read:* Clemson University (2021)	What is Constructivism?
6	Wednesday, October 1	▪ *Read:* Charles, Rankin & Speight (2019) ▪ *Read:* Holbert, Berland, & Kafai (2020)	What is Constructionism?
7	Monday, October 6	▪ None	Constructivism & Constructionism in the Classroom
7	Wednesday, October 8	▪ None	Constructivism & Constructionism **Workshop #3**
8	Monday, October 13	▪ None	Debates in Education
8	Wednesday, October 15	▪ None	Review & Workday ***Due:*** Midterm Video Analysis (October 17)

9	Monday, October 20	▪ *Read:* Aubrey & Riley (2019)	What is Sociocultural Theory?
9	Wednesday, October 22	▪ *Review:* Aubrey & Riley (2019)	Sociocultural Theory in the Classroom
10	Monday, October 27	▪ *Read:* Brown, Collins, & Duguid (1989)	Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning
10	Wednesday, October 29	▪ *Read:* Esmonde (2017)	Sociocultural Theory **Workshop #4**
11	Monday, November 3	▪ *Read:* Delpit (1988)	What are Asset-Based Educational Theories?
11	Wednesday, November 5	▪ *Review:* Delpit (1988)	Asset-Based Theories in the Classroom
12	Monday, November 10	▪ *Review:* Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework ▪ *Watch:* Linday Lyon's (2023) What is Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education? YouTube video	Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Frameworks
12	Wednesday, November 12	▪ None	Asset-Based Theories **Workshop #5**
13	Monday, November 17	▪ *Read:* National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018)	Motivation to Learn
13	Wednesday, November 19	▪ *Review:* National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018)	Motivation by Design
	Monday, November 24	**No Class: Thanksgiving Break**	
	Wednesday, November 26	**No Class: Thanksgiving Break**	
14	Monday, December 1	▪ *Read:* National Research Council (2001)	What Is Assessment For?
14	Wednesday, December 3	▪ *Review:* National Research Council (2001)	Designing Meaningful Assessments ***Due:*** Dear Future Me… Letter (December 5)
15	Monday, December 8	▪ *Listen to:* NotebookLM's Podcast on all the readings from this semester	Review Day
15	Wednesday, December 10	▪ None	End-of-Semester Celebration ***Due:*** Final Video Analysis (December 11) ***Due:*** My Lasting Principles (December 12)
16	Monday, December 15	**No Class: Finals Week**	
16	Wednesday, December 17	**No Class: Finals Week**	

Assignment 1:   **What Is Learning? Initial Thoughts**
Description: Before we explore the major learning theories this semester, take time to reflect on your current beliefs and experiences. This short paper is your opportunity to answer the question: "What is learning?"

Your response should be personal, reflective, and thoughtful. You don't need to cite academic sources–this is about your beliefs, values, and vision as a future educator. Think of this as a snapshot of where you are right now in your understanding of teaching and learning.

What to Include:
You don't need to answer every question below in order. Use them as guiding prompts to organize your thoughts. Be sure to touch on each main component in your paper:

1. Your Beliefs About Learning
   a. What do you believe learning is?
   b. How do you think learning happens?
   c. What do you believe is happening in a successful learning experience?
2. Your Beliefs About the Role of the Teacher
   a. What do you believe a teacher's role is in the learning process?
   b. What are your values, beliefs, and aspirations as a teacher?
   c. What does an ideal teaching scenario look like to you and why do you consider it "ideal"?
3. Your Goals and Objectives as a Teacher
   a. What do you hope your students will gain as a result of your teaching?
   b. What are the ideal outcomes–skills, habits, understandings–you want to see in your students?

This assignment is due very early in the semester. That is intentional. You are not expected to have perfect or polished answers. Your ideas about learning will continue to evolve as we engage with different theories, examples, and classroom practices throughout the course.

You'll grow a lot this semester. Your views may shift, deepen, or even be challenged… and that's part of the process. But the beliefs you hold right now still matter. They're the foundation we'll build on together.

This assignment also helps me get to know you not just as a student in the course, but as a person. I'm excited to learn more about your values, your goals, and how you're beginning to see yourself as a future educator. Write what you truly think and don't worry about "getting it right."

Due: Sunday, August 31, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Total Points: 5
Rubric:

Criteria	Excellent	Needs Improvement	Points
Beliefs About Learning	Thoughtful, personal explanation of what you believe learning is and how it occurs	Brief, vague, or missing this section entirely	/3
Role of the Teacher	Clearly reflects on the teacher's role, personal values, and vision for an ideal teaching scenario	Minimal or unclear reflection on teacher's role	/1
Goals for Students	Clearly describes what students should gain from your teaching and identifies the impact you hope to have on students	Little to no mention of student goals or intended outcomes	/1

Assignment 2: **Exit Tickets: Key Principle**

Description: At the end of each class session (excluding the syllabus review and designated workdays), you will take a moment to write 1-2 key principles or takeaways that reflect what stood out to you from that day's discussion, activity, or concept. These should be short, personal, and thoughtful—not just summaries, but reflections on the most meaningful ideas you're taking with you.

These reflections will help you track your learning over time, build habits of synthesis and reflection, and contribute directly to your Lasting Principles assignment at the end of the semester.

Each entry should be 1–3 sentences and written in your own words. You are encouraged to tie in examples, personal reactions, or connections to teaching whenever possible.

Due: 11:59 PM the day of each class
Total Points: 14 total points (0.5 points per class, excluding workdays and syllabus day)
Rubric:

Criteria	Meets/Exceeds Expectations	Needs Improvement	Points
Submission	Submitted on time and includes 1-2 clear, thoughtful takeaways that are relevant to class content and written in student's own words	Not submitted or submitted late without approval; Reflection is unclear, copied, or off-topic	/0.5

Assignment 3:	**Workshops**
Description:	There will be a total of five Workshops throughout the semester, all of which will be completed in-class with groups. These workshops aim to provide you the opportunity to practicing using theory in practical, real-world situations. No out-of-class work is expected. Further instructions will be provided during the class session of which a workshop is scheduled (see course schedule above).
Total Points:	30 points (5 workshops x 6 points each)

Assignment 4:	**Video Analysis Midterm**
Description:	To demonstrate your ability to recognize and apply the learning theories we have covered up to the mid-point of the semester, you will analyze instructional video clips, similar to the tasks completed in M101.
Due:	Friday, October 17, 2025, by 6:00 PM
Total Points:	20

Assignment 5:	**Video Analysis Final**
Description:	To demonstrate your ability to recognize and apply the learning theories we have covered throughout the semester, you will analyze instructional video clips, similar to the tasks completed in M101. These theories include Behaviorism, Social Cognitive Theory, Information Processing, Cognitive Constructivism, Sociocultural Theory, and Asset-Based approaches.
Due:	Thursday, December 11, 2025, by 6:00 PM
Total Points:	20

Assignment 6:	**"Dear Future Me..." Letter**
Description:	You've explored a wide range of learning theories this semester–from behaviorism and cognitive constructivism to sociocultural and asset-based perspectives. Now it's time to reflect on what you've learned and what you'll carry forward.

In this assignment, you will write a letter to your future self–the educator you will become in a few years. This is not just a summary of course content. It's a personal, purposeful reflection that connects theory to who you are becoming as a teacher. You are to draw upon your first assignment that outlined your initial thoughts.

What to Include:
1. What You've Learned
   a. What learning theories impacted you the most this semester?
   b. Which theory shifted how you think about students, teaching, learning, schools?
   c. Were there any theories you found confusing, surprising, challenging, irrelevant?

2. Your Teaching Philosophy in Progress
    a. What kind of teacher do you want to be? How will learning theory shape that?
    b. What beliefs or commitments will you carry with you into your classroom?
    c. What kind of learning environment do you want to create–and why?
3. Practical Takeaways
    a. How will you use learning theory in your future practice?
    b. Give at least one or two classroom examples or situations where theory will guide your decisions.
    c. How will you explain the "why" behind your teaching to students, families, or colleagues?
4. Your Growth
    a. How have you changed since the start of the semester? Feel free to reference your "What Is Learning" assignment from the beginning of the semester.
    b. What assumptions about learning or learners have you reconsidered?
    c. What do you want to continue learning about beyond this course?

This letter is for you, but it is also a demonstration of your learning and growth. Write honestly, connect theory to your real intentions, and give your future self something to be proud of... and to draw back upon.

Due: Friday, December 5, 2025, at 6:00 PM
Total Points: 8
Rubric:

Criteria	Excellent	Needs Improvement	Points
Connection to Learning Theories	Thoughtful and accurate reference to all five (5) learning theories, clearly integrated into reflection	Minimal or unclear reference to learning theories; inaccurate or missing	/3
Application to Teaching	Provides specific and thoughtful examples of how learning theory will inform future teaching practice	No clear application of learning theory to teaching practice	/3
Organization & Voice	Well-organized, easy to follow, and written in an authentic, personal tone	Disorganized or lacks personal, reflective voice	/1
Grammar, Spelling, & Mechanics	Few to no noticeable errors; writing is polished and professional	Frequent errors that significantly disrupt readability	/1

Assignment 7: **My Lasting Principles**

Description: Before we close out the semester, I want to give you a chance to capture what you're taking with you. What really stuck?

In this assignment, you will write the 3 (to 5) most important, lasting principles or takeaways you've gained from this course in bullet point format. Think of this like a "time capsule" of insights that your future self–15 or 20 years from now–might appreciate revisiting as a teacher, parent, or learner.

These lasting principles do not need to be tied to specific course content (e.g., memorizing a historical detail about a particular theory). Instead, focus on the broader, more powerful ideas that connect and transcend what we've explored together–concepts that shape how you understand learning, teaching, and education more broadly.

As you craft your lasting principles, imagine someone who wasn't in this course asking you: "What was that class about?" "What did you really learn?" or even, "Why did you take the course?" Let your principles reflect the big-picture insights you'd want to share–what truly mattered.

What to Include:
1. Three to five most important, lasting principles or takeaways you've gained from this course as bullet points.

This assignment is your chance to pause, reflect, and name those lasting principles–the ones that truly mattered this semester and may continue to shape you in the years ahead.

Due: Friday, December 12, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Total Points: 3

Rubric:

Criteria	*Excellent*	*Needs Improvement*	*Points*
Thoughtfulness & Depth	Each bullet point shows meaningful reflection and personal insight; clearly connected to learning in the course	Bullet points lack reflection or relevance to the course	/1
Lasting Significance	The principles clearly transcend the course and feel meaningful, lasting, and relevant to future teaching or life experiences. They reflect values or beliefs the student could carry 10–20 years into the future.	There is minimal evidence that the principles extend beyond the current class. They may feel overly specific, temporary, or lack future-oriented thinking– no enduring value.	/2