Humanism

Slide 1	Welcome to a brief overview of humanism and its approach to education. My name is Bill Huitt and I am Professor Emeritus at Valdosta State University and Adjunct Professor at Capella University. The presentation is narrated by Geoff Huitt who is helping me produce these videos.
Slide 2	Remember that in the early 20th century psychology was dominated by the
Slide 3	psychodynamic theories of Freud, Adler, and Jung and the
Slide 4	behavioral theories of Watson, Thorndike, and Skinner.
Slide 5	By the middle of the 20th century the humanistic theories began to gain hold. The theorists who developed the humanistic perspective were following in the traditions of
Slide 6	Ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle as well as
Slide 7	philosophers of the Renaissance such as the Italian philosopher Petrarch and the Dutch philosopher Erasmus.
Slide 8	The mid 20th century researchers Abraham Maslow,
Slide 9	Carl Rogers, and
Slide 10	Eric Fromm brought forward the concept that human beings were different from animals and advocated that psychology should move away from the reductionism and determinism of psychodynamic and behavioral theories.
Slide 11	Humanist theorists proposed that the proper study of psychology was the whole person who displayed
Slide 12	agency and the ability to choose personal goals and strategies that were not controlled by biology or the environment.

Slide 13	They also proposed that affect, emotion, and values were as important as cognition and rational thought. The humanistic movement became so popular that it was labeled psychology's Third Force.
Slide 14	Humanistic thought began to be applied in education in the 1960s and 1970s.
Slide 15	Although there were a wide variety of approaches to education that labeled themselves humanistic, 5 basic principles were accepted as foundational.
Slide 16	These included an assumption that human beings will learn best when the content and skills that are taught overlap with what learners want to learn and what they personally believe they need to know. Education should, therefore, place an emphasis on helping learners make good choices.
Slide 17	A second principle was that knowing how to learn, developing competence in applying a variety of learning strategies, is more important than acquiring a lot of knowledge, especially if it is only rote learning. This emphasis was readily accepted by many educators at the time as the information age was just beginning to be influential and information processing theorists emphasized the importance of learning to learn.
Slide 18	A third principle was that self-evaluation was the only meaningful way that a learner's work should be evaluated. The emphasis was on developing learners' skills in self-regulation and internal expectations for creating high quality products.
Slide 19	A fourth principle was that feelings and affects were just as important as facts and concepts and should be considered when creating learning activities and environments. This point is central to the work done more recently by those working in the area of social and emotional learning.
Slide 20	Finally, a fifth principle was that learners do best in a non-threatening environment. That means not just physically, but also emotionally, socially, and cognitively. This last principle seems best applied to younger learners and those who are just beginning to learn a new discipline. However, empirical studies showed that for older, highly motivated learners, a neutral or even slightly cool environment seems to work best.
Slide 21	There are a number of educational objectives that humanist educators emphasize.

Slide 22	One is that learners should be provided with opportunities to develop self-direction and autonomy. This is an objective that aligns with much of the recent work done in positive psychology as we will see in another presentation.
Slide 23	A second objective is that educators should focus on helping learners gain skills in personal responsibility and self-regulation. This is also an objective shared by other more recent theories, especially those working under the umbrella of Bandura's social cognitive theory.
Slide 24	A third objective is that educators should help learners develop a sense of curiosity about themselves and the world in which they live. Again, this is an objective that other theorists would support, such as those working within a Piagetian perspective as well as those working within positive psychology.
Slide 25	A fourth objective is for educators to facilitate the development of creativity and innovation. Many of the futurists who are concerned about developing a workforce for the 21st century would concur with this objective.
Slide 26	Finally, humanistic educators generally advocate a focus on the arts as that is a means of both engaging learners as well as facilitating the development of affect and emotions.
Slide 27	As with principles and objectives, there are a wide variety of methods used by humanistically-oriented educators, but 5 that seem to be most common are:
Slide 28	First, provide learners with choices about what and how to learn as much as possible. This does not mean that learners should be absolutely free to develop their own curriculum, but rather that educators should look for ways to provide opportunities such as allowing learners to select books to read, topics to write about, or arts to explore.
Slide 29	Second, help learners set realistic goals that seem reasonable given the learners' prior knowledge and the time available for learning. While setting stretch goals should not be discouraged, learners should be provided opportunities to reset goals they miss and continue in their efforts to meet them.
Slide 30	Third, learners should be provided opportunities to work in groups. This is a method that is congruent with those advocating a Vygotskian approach to learning as well as those using social cognitive theory as a foundation. The method of cooperative learning has solid empirical support for positively impacting student learning.

Slide 31	Fourth, teachers should act as facilitators of learning rather than the primary communicator of information. This is often referred to as "guide on the side" rather than "sage on the stage." This was one of the earliest influences for the modern development of a constructivist approach to instruction.
Slide 32	Finally, and perhaps most importantly from a humanistic perspective, is that teachers should act as role models. They should display all of the qualities that they want learners to develop. In fact, teachers should consider themselves as first learners and then facilitators and guides. To be a humanistic educator means to be constantly working on self-development.
Slide 33	As mentioned previously, the humanistically-oriented open education approach was most popular in the 1960s and 1970s. In the early 1980s, Giaconia and Hedges completed a meta-analysis of the multiple studies that had been published at that time.
Slide 34	One finding was that learners involved in an open education program displayed an increase in cooperation, creativity, and independence. Open education met expectations on those outcomes.
Slide 35	A second finding was that learners in these programs had more positive attitudes toward school and teachers as well as towards being creative and a willingness to adjust to changing situations.
Slide 36	However, some negative outcomes also were found. For example, scores on language achievement were slightly decreased and
Slide 37	overall achievement motivation was moderately lower. This was one finding that gave parents and teacher educators pause in promoting this approach.
Slide 38	Finally, there was no impact on math, reading, or other academic subjects,
Slide 39	and there was no impact on learner anxiety, locus of control, or self-concept. As these latter outcomes were important objectives of open education, this was a major disappointment to advocates.
Slide 40	However, there was one program whose data was included in the meta-analysis that showed quite different results. It was the program developed by Carl Rogers which he labeled facilitative teaching.

Slide 41	In this program, teachers were encouraged to respond to student feelings with kindness and empathy.
Slide 42	They were encouraged to use learners' frames of reference and learners' prior knowledge when designing lessons.
Slide 43	There was also an advocacy for educators to dialog with learners
Slide 44	in authentic and less ritualistic ways, and
Slide 45	to use student ideas when interacting with them.
Slide 46	Rogers proposed that teachers look for positive or desired activities of learners and provide contingent praise often.
Slide 47	And, finally, teachers were encouraged to smile at learners. Notice that all of these program methods are congruent with an instructivistic approach to education that the vast majority of teachers were using at the time. Therefore, these suggestions could be added on to the instructional process teachers already knew and were practicing.
Slide 48	In 1975, Aspy and Roebuck completed an analysis of the programs that had implemented facilitative teaching. They actually went into classrooms and observed how teachers had implemented the strategies and methods of facilitative teaching. They found that in classrooms where teachers were more facilitative, that learners had
Slide 49	an increase in self-concept,
Slide 50	an increase in math, reading, and other traditional measures of academic achievement,
Slide 51	an increase in spontaneity and engaged more often in higher levels of thinking related to Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain,
Slide 52	A decrease in learner absenteeism that amounted to missing an average of 4 fewer days of school,

Slide 53	a decrease in disciplinary challenges at the school level, and
Slide 54	a decrease in school vandalism. Overall, the results of the Facilitative Teaching program produced more satisfactory results both in terms of the objectives advocated by humanistic educators as well as on traditional measures of academic achievement.
Slide 55	Again, please notice that these are recommendations that can be implemented readily in an instructivistic or constructivistic approach to instruction. As such they should be in every educator's tool kit when delivering instruction.
Slide 56	A humanistic approach to education has been carried forward by William Purkey,
Slide 57	Betty Siegel,
Slide 58	John Novak and other educators and scholars through the development of Invitational Education. An overview of that program will be provided in a separate presentation.
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