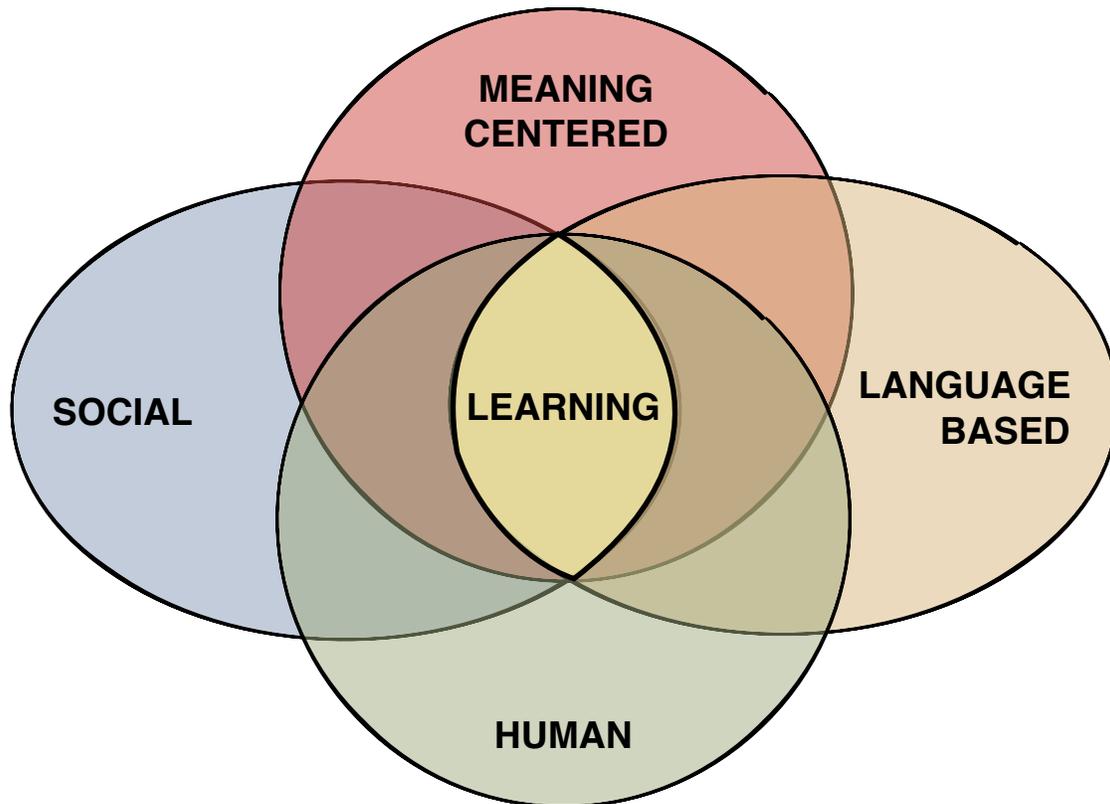


## THE FOUR LENSES: OVERVIEW

### What are the four lenses?

The four lenses way of looking at students' learning and teachers' teaching from a variety of perspectives, our vision colored by the interaction/combination of each lens. This is how we learn best. The purpose of the theory is to make teachers aware of all the different aspects of learning so they can incorporate them in the classroom experience.



### Lens #1 - Learning as meaning-centered

*Are students able to find meaning in the material with which they are engaged? Are they able to connect the topic at hand with their own lives.*

We are constantly trying to make sense of our experiences, of the world around us. In other words, we are trying to figure out what it means. Our prior experience and knowledge influence how we interpret what we see, hear, read, and/or write. In the same way, what we are experiencing now influences our interpretation. This is where the "transaction" or interaction comes in. We "transact" or interact with the new material. Each person has a unique interpretation. Each student will "transact" with the material in a different way.

Students learn more effectively if they can talk about the concepts, practice them with real-life examples, and write the problems. They "transact" with the material by reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This allows them to discover and clarify the concepts they're learning.

## **Lens #2: Learning as social**

*We learn from the people around us. Learning does not take place in a vacuum.*

We understand and interpret experiences based on what we've learned from the people around us. This is the social lens. Language is the most obvious social learning experience. How else could you explain the vast differences in pronunciation, sounds, and accents? Each subject requires the student to learn different terms, symbols and rules. Students need to interact with the language of the subject.

This socialization process influences how you "interpret" new material. Your parents, siblings, friends, community all have an impact on your understanding of the world around you. Students have their own language.

## **Lens #3: Learning as language-based**

*The more students read, write, speak, and listen over the course of one class period, the more learning will take place.*

We learn best when we are involved in activities that require us to use the material. This is easy for language. We all talk, or at least most of us do. We use language every day.

Classroom activities, such as writing prompts and questions, should reflect the lives of the students and their communities.

## **Lens #4: Learning as human**

*Because students bring their own prior knowledge and experience into the classroom, we must tap into the human lens to connect students to everything we teach.*

As teachers we often focus on learning material, the "word". We must realize that our "world" is also important. It is the context for our interpretations. We can learn the same words, but the associations and applications of those words will be different for each individual.

We each have an understanding of our potential, skills, strengths and weaknesses. Learning is not only about gaining knowledge; it is about gaining an understanding of yourself, how you think, what influences you, what you do well and what you aren't very good at.

What does this mean for the classroom? It means that we, as teachers, have many different "worlds" in our classrooms. We have our own context and the context of each student. Allowing the students to interact gives them the opportunity to expand their "worlds", to make meaning in their own way with the help of others.

## Summary and Applications:

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How I understand and could use:

**The Meaning-Centered Lens:**

**The Social Lens:**

**The Language-Based Lens:**

**The Human Lens:**

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**Questions I still have:**