Overview: Social activism theory is based on the constructivist theory. Social activism focuses on cooperative learning in which students work together to solve a common goal through a real-life learning (Leonard, Noh, & Orey, 2007).

Contributors: The main contributors to the constructivism are Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget. John Dewey is often considered the philosophical founder of the constructivist approach (Huitt, W., 2009). Jean Piaget’s work focused on cognitive development. And Lev Vygotsky contributed understanding of how social interaction develops an individual’s cognition and behaviors (Huitt, W. & Hummel, J., 2003).

Major Principles: There are several major principles to the social activism theory. According to Conole, Dyke, Oliver & Seale two major principles of this theory are that language is a communicative tool used for sharing and developing knowledge, organizing thoughts, reasoning, planning and reviewing our actions. Also, that our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it is ultimately what learning is to produce (2004). Social activism theory also follows the major principles of constructivism which according to Jonassen & Land include that learners within a cooperative group define meaning of knowledge. Learning should take place in an authentic context. Learners within a cooperative group have freedom and should negotiate and interpret personal beliefs and perspectives. Prior learning experiences should contribute to the groups construction of meaning. And finally, technology should be used to scaffold higher metal processes (2000).

Application: One application of social activism theory would be to incorporate online learning communities for cooperative groups to elicit information as needed. The online learning community could include a variety of expertise. A peer mentor who has done similar cooperative activities may be useful as a guide in the overall process. An online coach may help to scaffold the groups learning as difficulties arise by providing additional resources or helping the group to identify gaps in their process. In addition to a mentor or coach it may be possible to establish a professional-apprenticeship relationship among individuals or the collaborative group (Petraglia, 1998).
References:


