Social Constructivism: Knowledge is individually constructed and socially mediated. By participating in a broad range of activities with others, learners appropriate (internalize) the outcomes produced by working together; these outcomes could include both new strategies and knowledge.

Sociocultural Theory: Emphasizes role in development of cooperative dialogues between children and more knowledgeable members of society. Children learn the culture of their community (ways of thinking and behaving) through these interactions.
Lev Vygotsky:
Was a Russian psychologist who studied learning and development to improve his own teaching. His ideas on thinking and speech provide alternatives to many of Piaget’s theories. One of his key ideas was that our specific mental structures and processes can be traced to our interactions with others. These social interactions are more than simple influences on cognitive development—they actually create our cognitive structures and thinking processes.

Cultural Tools:
Vygotsky emphasized the importance of cultural tools, including the real tools (computers, instruments, etc) and symbol systems (numbers, language, graphs) that allow people in a society to communicate, think, solve problems, and create knowledge.
**Scaffolding:**
Support for learning and problem solving. The support could be clues, reminders, encouragement, breaking the problem down into steps, providing an example, or anything else that allows the student to grow in independence as a learner.

**Zone of Proximal Development:**
The area where a child can solve a problem with the help (scaffolding) of an adult or more capable peer.
More Knowledgeable Others:
Vygotsky suggested that children’s cognitive development is fostered by interactions with people who are more capable or advanced in their thinking—people such as parents, teachers, or more knowledgeable peers.

Differentiated Instruction:
A flexible approach to teaching that matches content, process, and product-based on student differences in readiness, interests and learning needs.
Further Reading/Viewing

Dr. Jane McGonigal, TED Talks (watch the whole 20 min. video)
http://www.ted.com/talks/jane_mcgonigal_gaming_can_make_a_better_world.html

Game Based Learning (read the whole article)
http://wp.nmc.org/horizon-k12-2010/chapters/game-based-learning/

Mithril- A model of an MMORPG math game.
http://stanford.edu/~pnaqlada/mithril/

What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy
(2007 revised and updated edition) by James Paul Gee

Rethinking Education in the Age of Technology: The Digital Revolution and Schooling in America (2009) by Allan Collins & Richard Halverson