



Study Of Constructivism And Social Constructivism In The Classroom

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Abstract : In the constructivist classroom, the focus tends to shift from the teacher to the students. The classroom is no longer a place where the teacher ("expert") pours knowledge into passive students, who wait like empty vessels to be filled. In the constructivist model, the students are urged to be actively involved in their own process of learning.

In the constructivist classroom, both teacher and students think of knowledge as a dynamic, ever-changing view of the world we live in and the ability to successfully stretch and explore that view - not as inert factoids to be memorized.

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What the student currently believes, whether correct or incorrect, is important. Despite having the same learning experience, each individual will base their learning on the understanding and meaning personal to them. Understanding or constructing a meaning is an active and continuous process..

Learning may involve some conceptual changes.

- When students construct a new meaning, they may not believe it but may give it provisional acceptance or even rejection.
- Learning is an active, not a passive, process and depends on the students taking responsibility to learn.
- The main activity in a constructivist classroom is solving problems. Students use inquiry methods to ask questions, investigate a topic, and use a variety of resources to find solutions and answers. As students explore the topic, they draw conclusions, and, as exploration continues, they revisit those conclusions. Exploration of questions leads to more questions.

In social constructivist classrooms collaborative learning is a process of peer interaction that is mediated and structured by the teacher. Discussion can be promoted by the presentation of specific concepts, problems or scenarios, and is guided by means of effectively directed questions, the introduction and clarification of concepts and information, and references to previously learned material.

Role of the teacher



Constructivist teachers do not take the role of the "sage on the stage." Instead, teachers act as a "guide on the side" providing students with opportunities to test the adequacy of their current understandings

Theory Implication for classroom

- The educator should consider the knowledge and experiences students bring to class
- Learners construct their knowledge through a process of active enquiry
- ‘Discovery’ is facilitated by providing the necessary resources
- Knowledge is actively constructed & learning is presented as a process of active discovery
- Provide assistance with assimilation of new and old knowledge
- Learning programme should be sufficiently flexible to permit development along lines of student enquiry
- Due to its interpretivist nature, each student will interpret information in different ways
- Create situations where the students feel safe questioning and reflecting on their own processes
- Present authentic tasks to contextualize learning through real-world, case-based learning environments
- Support collaboration in constructing knowledge, not competition
- Encourage development through Intersubjectivity
- Providing Scaffolding at the right time and the right level
- Provide opportunities for more expert and less expert participants to learn from each other

Role of the student

The expectation within a constructivist learning environment is that the students plays a more active role in, and accepts more responsibility for their own learning.

Theory Implication for classroom

- The role of the student to actively participate in their own education
- Students have to accommodate & assimilate new information with their current understanding
- One important aspect of controlling their own learning process is reflecting on their experiences
- Students begin their study with pre-conceived notions
- Students are very reluctant to give up their established schema/idea & may reject new information that challenges prior knowledge



- Students may not be aware of the reasons they hold such strong ideas/schemata
- Learners need to use and test ideas, skills, and information through relevant activities
- Students need to know how to learn or change their thinking/learning style
- Because knowledge is so communally-based, learners deserve access to knowledge of different communities
- For students to learn they need to receive different 'lenses' to see things in new ways.
- Learners need guidance through the ZDP

Social Constructivism in the classroom

Reciprocal Teaching

Where a teacher and 2 to 4 students form a collaborative group and take turns leading dialogues on a topic. Within the dialogues, group members apply four cognitive strategies:

- Questioning
- Summarizing
- Clarifying
- Predicting

This creates a ZPD in which students gradually assume more responsibility for the material, and through collaboration, forge group expectations for high-level thinking, and acquire skills vital for learning and success in everyday life.

Cooperative Learning

More expert peers can also spur children's development along as long as they adjust the help they provide to fit the less mature child's ZPD.

Situated Learning

As early as 1929 concern was raised (Whitehead) that the way students learned in school resulted in a limited, 'inert' form of knowledge, useful only for passing examinations. More recently sev

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