

## Constructivist approach

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### Abstract

The constructivist approach offers a theoretical basis for developing a learning model in which students are led to active and reflective and which could codetermine their creativity. Constructivism is a theory of learning in which students construct their own knowledge on the basis of their prior experiences with meaningful interaction of learning activities. Learning in the constructivist framework contributes to intellectual, social and psychological development of learners unlike other methods of instruction and enable the learners to construct a knowledge valid knowledge and also enable to transmit it in different context.

**Keywords:** constructivist approach, learning

### Introduction

Teaching is a scientific and goal directed activity. It is the most fundamental responsibility of teachers. Among current approaches of learning, Constructivism most closely resembles the model of learning in which children actively construct things and learn from their own experiences. Applying constructivism concepts to the teaching can revolutionized the learning environment, and perhaps recapture the joy of learning as envisaged in the report “learning without burden”. We all agree that the central idea of constructivism in learning is active participation of learners where they construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and prior knowledge. To be most effective, we need to understand how children learn. Constructivism focuses attention on the children’s learning rather than on the teacher’s teaching. We can talk about a constructivist teaching in isolation as this is a contradiction. Constructivism, as a theory of learning, is more than simply “learning by doing” or “experimental learning”. Although practical activities may go some way towards helping children to build up knowledge, activity kits are not sufficient as they do not embody a concept. Children may manipulate kit items in the prescribed way but may not be learning, or they might not be able to transfer their knowledge to more formal representations or to other contexts. What is also needed is reflection on the activity. This might be individual reflection but will more often be promoted through discussion with the teachers or with peers. If the implications of constructivism are that there is more to teaching than just telling or trying to transmit knowledge to children, then how can teachers foster the development of knowledge?

### What is constructivism?

The verb “to construct” comes from the Latin word *construere*, which means to arrange or give structure. Constructivists believe that the process of actively engaging in building new knowledge structures is how new knowledge is created. Constructivists assumes that the nature of reality is multiple, constructed, holistic and asymmetric. The constructivist’s theory, therefore, relies upon a much different

set of assumptions that impact both learners and educators, than do traditional systems.

- Constructivism is a view of learning based on the belief that knowledge is not a thing that can be simply transmitted by the teacher to students. Constructivists consider the students as an active learner and the teacher as a facilitator in the learning process. The theory of constructivism is based on the idea that children learn better by actively knowledge and by reconciling new information with prior all are many schools of thoughts within constructivism, but all generally agree on the basic characteristics of constructivist teaching;
- Learner- centered instruction in a democratic environment;
- Active learners who build and create meaning and knowledge;
- Learners who reflect and make associations with prior knowledge to reach new understandings.

Adopting a constructivist viewpoint has consequences for educators. Teachers become facilitators or guides instead of the class authority. There are many versions of constructivism. The second version, in particular, has had a considerable impact on educational theory.

The first and the older is generally known as radical constructivism. It comes directly from Piaget. Its focus is on the individual, where all learning is centered. The key role of the teacher in constructivism is to promote analytical thinking by creating situations where students have to solve problems that challenges their current ways of thinking. Another version of constructivism is generally known as social constructivism. Social constructivists hold that the social context of learning is at least as important as what happens in the mind of an individual. By interacting with others we come to a public understanding and shared sense of what information is right and what is wrong. The construction of knowledge is a social act, leading to cultural variations in world-views. With social constructivism, group interact is key. The teacher interacts with the students to come to new understandings. Group work and class discussions are the critical activities in a classroom. It has generally been seen as more suitable than radical constructivism.

### Constructivist Learning

In the constructivist paradigms, this is exactly what instructors want students to do because, unless students build representations between old knowledge and new learning, they will not retain the new and be able to recall it later without difficulty. Thus the basic characteristics of constructivist learning are-

- Learning is not a passive receptive process but is instead an active meaning –making process required to solve meaningful problems.
- New learning depends on learners' previous knowledge which may sometimes interfere with the understanding of new information;
- Learning implies the reorganization of prior conceptual schemes;
- Meaningful learning occurs within authentic learning tasks.

Learning environment in constructivist approach, supports knowledge construction and multiple perspectives. Students should explore multiple pathways open to them. Teachers should also be flexible in their approach and accept different points of views presented by the students. In classroom, the teachers' role is that of facilitator who guides the students learning in their own way. The teacher should also be flexible in evaluating different students' outcomes and products which will be present in a constructivist classroom.

Constructivism has suggested a new paradigm for teaching and learning, which will also necessitate a new paradigm for evaluations well. In Constructivism, on the other hand, it is required to shift evaluation towards a more encompassing approach, wherein there is no pre-set criteria. Learners are expected to interpret the world in their own way based on their personal set of experiences.

Further in order to make learning more meaningful, constructivism emphasizes that learners should be given authentic tasks. Thus learners should be asked to do things they would do in real life rather than perform artificial tasks than the instructor developed for the sake of an exercise.

### Conclusion

The recent research findings in cognitive learning and teaching have given new dimensions of constructivist view of teaching and learning approach. Instruction and construction cannot be put in to effect using a simple 'all-or – nothing' principle. Learning always demands motivation, interest and activity on the part of the teachers, thus, every learning process is constructive, the major objective of teaching is to enable and activate constructive learning. Hence, it requires a paradigm shift and the commitment to adopt the instructive perspective with constructivism. Gradually with more awareness of constructivism, a changeover in the approach to teaching, leaning and evaluation. Constructivism works and it promotes the interpersonal skills for deeper learning.

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