



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONSTRUCTIVISM APPROACH OF TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Teacher education is being challenged in the last decades on every front by fundamental changes in the concepts about the nature of knowledge, the phenomenal speed at which knowledge is created, the emerging knowledge- driven economy, the paradigm shift in the theories of learning, rapid developments in the information technology and globalization. In the turmoil, the teachers are being held accountable for the failure of schooling and teacher education held accountable for the quality of teachers. From the positive perspective, teachers are being regarded as the key change agent in the education reform and reform of teacher education is seen by the policy makers and educators as mandatory for the nation to face up the many challenges in the new century. Thus, there are compelling reasons for teachers to approach a 'culture of innovation' from the perspective of the knowledge economy, that is, to see innovation as a driving force for the kinds of knowledge needed in the knowledge society. The present paper highlights the constructivism approach of teaching learning process.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning discourse has been changed. New roles of the teaching process have been derived from the concept of knowledge society at all educational levels. In the contexts of information and / or knowledge societies and lifelong learning strategy, a new frame of pre-service and in-service teacher education needs to be defined. The current level of the learning technology development provides opportunities for collaborative engagement, access to information, interaction with the content and individual empowerment. Rapid changes in communication technologies enable teachers to move from traditional classroom activities to process based classroom. The opening paragraph of Sri Aurobindo's prophetic article, the Human Mind, which he had written in giving vision to national system of education. Sri Aurobindo's had envisaged that teacher's role would be more subtle and challenging than that of an artist or a sculptor. A teacher, unlike an artist or a sculptor who gives shape only to dead materials like wood or stone, works with an infinitely subtle and sensitive person of a child. Sri Aurobindo's principles of teaching continue to be missing from the teacher education curricula. "The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught.

The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster; he is a helper and a guide. The second principle of teaching is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape designed by the parent and teacher is barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is the child who must be induced to expand in accordance in his own nature." These two principles are more relevant now, as children of today have to live in the information age. These principles recognize the autonomy of learner and that learner has the capacity to learn on his own and can construct his own knowledge. We may have to remold teacher education for preparing such teachers as can prepare lifelong learners. Any work which plays the constructive role in development of education will be an ideal example of constructivism in education. The density of our nation is being shaped in classes. Thus teaching which take place in classroom is also good example of constructivism in education. The meaning of constructivism varies with respective to different constructivist. The various approaches regarding the constructivist are as follows:

"Constructivism is a learning theory in which learning is seen as an active process in which learners construct ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge". (Bruner)

Constructivist teacher education

Constructivism is a philosophical view on how we come to understand or know. Constructivism is a philosophical of

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learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of world we live in. Each of us generates our own “rules” and “mental models,” which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences. The three main propositions of this philosophy are as follows:

1. Understanding is in our interactions with the environment. This is the core concept of Constructivism. What one understands is a function of context, the activity of the learner and goals of the learner. Cognition is not just within the individual but rather it is a part of entire context, i.e., cognition is distributed.
2. Cognitive conflict is stimulus for learning and determines the organization and nature of what is learned. Learner’s puzzlement is the stimulus and organizer for learning.
3. Knowledge evolves through social negotiation and through the evaluation of the viability of individual understanding.

The role of teacher in any constructivist learning environment will not be the same as that of a teacher in an objectivist-learning environment. In constructivist learning environment a teacher must become a guide or facilitator who helps point the student in the direction of learning materials and as distributor of learning material. The teacher’s role in a constructivist learning environment must include spending time developing or preparing the constructivist learning environment for the student to use. This can require detailed preparation to ensure that the students are exposed to relevant authentic tasks. Hence the teacher’s role in constructivist learning environment is very important.

Characteristics of constructivist teachers

There are nine characteristics of constructivist teachers:

1. Teachers serve as one of many resources for students, not necessarily the primary source of information.
2. The teacher engages students in an experience that challenges previous conceptions of their existing knowledge.
3. The teacher uses student’s responses in the planning of next lesson and seeks elaboration of student’s initial responses.
4. The teacher encourages questions and discussions among student by asking open ended questions.
5. The teacher assists student to understand their own cognitive processes (met cognition) by using cognitive terminology such as classify, analyze, create, organize, hierarchy etc., when framing tasks.
6. The teacher encourages and accepts student’s autonomy and initiative by being willing to let go of classroom control.
7. The teacher makes available raw data and primary resources along with manipulative and interactive physical materials.
8. The teacher does not separate knowing from process of finding out nouns and verbs.
9. The teacher facilitates clear communication from student in writing and verbal responses, for the point of view that

communication comes from one deep structural understanding of the concepts being communicated when they can communicate clearly and meaningfully, they have truly integrated the new learning.

The 5 e model of constructivism

The 5E’s is an instructional model based on the constructivist approach to learning, which says that learners build or construct new ideas on top of their old ideas. The 5 E’s can be used with student of all ages, including adults. Each of the 5 E’s describes a phase of learning and each phase begins with letter “E”: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate. The 5E’s allow students and teachers to experience common activities, to use and built on prior knowledge and experience, to construct meaning and to continually assess their understanding of a concept.

1. **Engage:** This phase of the 5E’s start the process. An “Engage” activity should do the following:
 - a) Make connections between past and present learning experiences.
 - b) Anticipate activities and focus students’ thinking on the learning outcomes of current activities. Student should become mentally engaged in the concept, process, or skill to be learned.
2. **Explore:** This phase of the 5E’s provides students with a common base of experiences. Students directly involved with material, inquiry drives the process, teamwork is used to share and build knowledge base.
3. **Explain:** This phase of the 5E’s help students explain the discoveries, processes and concepts they have been exploring.
4. **Elaborate:** This phase of the 5E’s extends students ‘conceptual understanding and allows them to practice skills and behaviors. Through new experiences, the learners develop deeper and broader understanding of major concepts.
5. **Evaluate:** This phase of the 5 E’s encourages learners to assess their understanding and abilities and lets teachers evaluate students’ understanding of key concepts and skill development.

Constructivist classroom

Constructivist classroom has the following features:

- a) Curriculum begins with the parts of the whole. Emphasizes basic skills.
- b) Curriculum emphasizes big concepts, begging with the whole and expanding to include the parts.
- c) Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.
- d) Materials are primarily textbooks and workbooks.
- e) Pursuit of student questions and interests is valued.
- f) Materials include primary sources of material and manipulative materials.
- g) Learning is based on repletion.
- h) Learning is interactive, building on what the student already knows.
- i) Teachers disseminate information to students; are recipients of knowledge.

- j) Teachers have a dialogue with students, helping students construct their own knowledge.
- k) Teacher's role is directive, rooted in authority.
- l) Teacher's role is interactive, rooted in negotiation.
- m) Assessment includes student works, observations and points of view, as well as tests. Process is as important as product.
- n) Assessment is through testing, correct answers.
- o) Knowledge is seen as inert.
- p) Knowledge is seen as dynamic, ever changing with our experiences.

Conclusion

Constructivism approach towards education may lead to all round development of a child and ultimately the development of nation. By switching over to constructivism in education intellectual development of the students can easily be achieved. To create the positive attitude among all the teachers the concept of constructivism must be inspired in them. The teachers will become dutiful to shape the future on destiny of our nation.

Constructivism in education is a medicine for almost all the problems in education. The only thing required to achieve this target is to take a decisive step towards constructivism in education.

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