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## **INNOVATIVE CONSTRUCTIVISTIC APPROACH OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In the present scenario educational curriculum and instructional methods are changing to the challenging needs of the learners. The most important component of the current redevelopment of all subjects' area curricula is the change in focus of instruction from the transmission curriculum to a transactional curriculum. National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) recommends that curriculum should help learners to become constructors of knowledge and emphasizes the active role of teachers in relation to the process of knowledge construction. This paper highlights that the Constructivist approach of teaching and learning fosters critical thinking, interactive and reflective attitude, collaborative and inquiry based knowledge among the learners. In the constructivist approach, learners construct their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying them to new situations and integrating new knowledge gained with preexisting intellectual constructs. It frees teachers to make decisions that enhance and enrich learners' development in all areas.*

### **Keywords:**

*Teaching, Learning, knowledge.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Constructivism is a view of learning, based on the belief and knowledge which is constructed by learners through an active, mental process of development. Learners are the builders and creators of meaning and ideas. It has been evolved from cognitive psychology and the paradigm is based on the contribution of Piaget Lev Vygotsky, Bruner, Howard Gardner and Nelson Goodman. The reflective thinking of John Dewey has influenced the Constructivist theory. Thus, Constructivism is a synthesis of many dominant perspectives on learning. Today the key element of Constructivism is learners learn by actively constructing their own knowledge, comparing new knowledge with their previous understanding and using all these to come to new understanding.

## **2. BASIC CONCEPTS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM**

- Knowledge is actively constructed by the learner individually or collectively and not passively received. Building knowledge with already acquired experience is the essence of the approach.
- Learners acquire knowledge and make it theirs by constructing their non-interpretations (Cheek, 1992)
- Learning is conceived as a process of changing or conditioning of observable behavior due to selective reinforcement of an individual, response to events that occur in the environment.
- Constructivists take more cognitive approach, emphasizing on meaning, representation and thought.
- Constructivism acts as a theory, a tool, and lens for examining educational practices.

## **3. INNOVATIVE CONSTRUCTIVISTIC LEARNING**

Constructivist Learning occurs by an active construction of meaning, rather than by passive receipt. When the learners encounter an experience or a situation that conflicts with current way of thinking, a state of disequilibrium or imbalance is created. So the learners must then alter the thinking to restore equilibrium or balance. For this, learners make sense of new information by associating with what the learners already know and by attempting to assimilate it into their existing knowledge. When learners are unable to do this, they accommodate the new information by restructuring present knowledge to a higher level of thinking.

It draws on the developmental work of Piaget (1977), TwomeyFosnot (1989) Kelly (1991) and defines constructivism by reference to four principles: (i) knowing new ideas (ii) inventing ideas (iii) meaningful learning through rethinking (iv) and drawing conclusions about new ideas. A productive, constructivist classroom leads of learner-centered and active instruction centered approach. In such classroom, the teacher as a facilitator provides learners with experiences that allow them to hypothesize, predict, manipulate objects, pose questions, research, investigate, imagine, and invent the process.

## **4. STEPS INVOLVE IN PLANNING CONSTRUCTIVISTIC LEARNING**

- Encourage and accept student autonomy.
- Use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive, and physical materials.
- Use cognitive terminologies like classify, analyze, predict and create. It opens up the opportunities of the learners to explore and design the learning environment.
- Allow learners response to drive lessons, shift instructional strategies and alter the content.
- Inquire about learners' understanding of concepts.
- Encourage learners to engage in dialogue and discussion with teachers, Peer group and others.
- Prompting learners' inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encouraging them to ask questions with each other.

- Seek elaboration of learners' initial responses.
- Provide time to construct relationships and create metaphors.
- Nurture natural curiosity through the use of four steps of learning cycle models, (i) identifying the concept (ii) introducing the concept (iii) and applying the concept and (iv) evaluating the concept.

## **5. CONSTRUCTIVISTIC TEACHING**

Constructivist teaching is based on the belief that learners actively create, interpret and reorganise knowledge. They are practically involved in a process of meaning, ideas and knowledge construction as opposed to passively receiving information. It fosters scientific critical thinking, and creates motivated and independent learning.

A constructivist teacher is distinguished from a traditional teacher by a number of identifiable qualities: (i) active involvement (ii) creating democratic classroom environment (iii) interactive activities (iv) facilitating the learning process in which learners are encouraged and to be responsible and autonomous. The change to a constructivist approach of teaching is a developmental process that occurred over time and involved in a paradigm shift.

The most important component of the current redevelopment of all subjects' area curricula is the change in focus of instruction from the transmission curriculum to an innovative transactional curriculum. Constructivist approach of teaching and learning fosters critical thinking, interactive and reflective attitude, collaborative and inquiry based knowledge. Using constructivist strategies, both teachers and learners are more effective to promote communication skills and create flexible of thoughts. The learning relationship in a constructivist classroom is mutually beneficial to both learners and teachers.

In the teaching learning process a context is created within which learners are able to explore new ideas and experiences. Within this context, a teacher's role in providing information decreases and is replaced by a "strengthened role in eliciting and supporting learners' own thinking and meaning-making skillful abilities". In this process approach to learning, new concepts and thoughts are allowed to develop in the learner's own mind through a series of related, supportive activities. Generating hypotheses are encouraged by postponing evaluation and new skills are learned in supportive instructional contexts. A constructivist teacher offers the learners options and choices in their work. Constructivist teaching creates active and motivated learners and learning of all subject areas and involves inventing and constructing new ideas. This theory is to be incorporated into the curriculum, and advocated that teachers create environments in which learners construct their own understandings.

## **6. CONSTRUCTIVISTIC CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

Constructivist learning environments engage learners in knowledge construction through collaborative activities that embed learning in a meaningful context and through reflection on what has been learned through conversation with other learners. A constructivist classroom exhibits a number of discernable qualities marked different from a traditional or direct instruction classroom. A constructivist teacher is able to flexibly and creatively incorporate

ongoing experiences in the classroom, into the negotiation and construction of lessons with small groups and individuals. The environment is democratic, interactive and learner centered, and the learners are empowered by the teacher who acts as a facilitator.

Constructivist classrooms are structured and learners are immersed in experiences within which they engage in meaning-making inquiry, action, imagination, invention, interaction, hypothesizing and personal reflection. Teachers need to recognize learners in using their experiences, prior knowledge and perceptions and physical and interpersonal environments to construct knowledge and meaning. The goal is to produce a pleasant classroom environment that provides meaningful learning experiences for autonomous learners. The learners illustrate colorful dictionaries, charts, maps, models, learner-created serial postcards, adventures, and visual responses that decorate the classroom. In the classroom itself, an abundance of learners' works are displayed. The constructive classroom environment emphasizes shared responsibility and decision-making capacity.

## 7. CONCLUSION

With the development of a constructivist philosophy, a teacher of any discipline is able to create pleasant classroom environment within which learners are able to become constructive learners. The Constructivist teachers develop skills and abilities to empower learners and to make them feel competent and significant. It encourages active and meaningful learning and promotes responsibility and autonomy. This learning is beneficial in achieving desirable educational goals and objectives, and is important for teachers to grow professionally towards a constructivist practice.

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