

Constructivism



Welcome to online lectures
Stay Home Stay Safe

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Constructivism

Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences we construct our own understanding of the 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 guiding principles of Constructivism:

- Learning is a search for meaning. Therefore, learning must start with the issues around which students are actively trying to construct meaning.
- Meaning requires understanding wholes as well as parts and parts must be understood in the context of wholes. Therefore, the learning process focuses on primary concepts, not isolated facts.
- In order to teach well, we must understand the mental models that students use to perceive the world and the assumptions they make to support those models. The purpose of learning is for an individual to construct his or her own meaning, not just to memorize the "right" answers and repeat someone else's meaning. Since education is inherently interdisciplinary, the only valuable way to measure learning is to make assessment part of the learning process, ensuring it provides students with information on the quality of their learning.

How Constructivism impacts learning:

- Curriculum - Constructivism calls for the elimination of a standardized curriculum. Instead, it promotes using curricula customized to the students' prior knowledge. Also, it emphasizes hands-on problem solving.
- Instruction - Under the theory of constructivism, educators focus on making connections between facts and fostering new understanding in students. Instructors tailor their teaching strategies to student responses and encourage students to analyze, interpret and predict information. Teachers also rely heavily on open-ended questions and promote extensive dialogue among students.
- Assessment - Constructivism calls for the elimination of grades and standardized testing. Instead, assessment becomes part of the learning process so that students play a larger role in judging their own progress.

Five Guiding Principles of Constructivism

- Engage students in problems that become relevant and meaningful
- Organize curriculum into activities that address broad primary concepts
- Seek out and value students' perspectives
- Encourage students to investigate and challenge their assumptions and suppositions
- Use assessment to guide student learning