EDUCATION THROUGH FILMS: A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

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ABSTRACT:

Learning is a complex process through which learners constantly change their understanding of world and continuously create and evolve newer schemes to adjust and adapt to ever changing world around them. Educational improvement is thus accomplished through indulging and involving into nature of learning and assessing student's involvement in it. The Dearing report (Dearing 1977) has emphasized the importance and need to introduce tasks to foster reflective thinking and skills to enable students to learn how to learn and to become lifelong learners. This lies in the heart of constructivism. Films are medium which uses all the senses hence involves a student completely. It is an effective audio visual medium which effects and influences a child.

Constructivism is an epistemology, a meaning making theory that offers explanation of nature of knowledge and how human beings learn. The constructivist learning approach emphasises upon the learner and their construction of their reality through their interaction with world. Films are medium through which a child can explore the reality. Learners should be constantly encouraged to explore the world, to learn by doing, to look at things in different ways, use all their senses to experience and understand the world around them. The constructivist learning approach emphasises upon the learner and their construction of their reality through their interaction with the world. Learning is perceived as cultural apprenticeship and cognition is argued to be situated in the specific context (Lave, 1988; Brown etal, 1989).

This paper discusses the salient features of constructivism, role of films and their impact on learning. The paper will focus on constructivist learning strategies and their applicability and adaptability at early childhood education.

KEYWORDS: Constructivist learning, lifelong learner, child – centred learning, Knowledge construction.

INTRODUCTION

Learning is a complex process through which learners constantly change their understanding of world and continuously create and evolve newer schemes to adjust and adapt to ever changing world around them. Educational improvement is thus accomplished through indulging and involving into nature of learning and assessing student's involvement in it. The Dearing report (Dearing 1977) has emphasized the importance and need to introduce tasks to foster reflective thinking and skills to enable students to learn how to learn and to become lifelong learners. This lies in the heart of constructivism. Constructivism is an epistemology, a meaning making theory that offers explanation of nature of knowledge and how human beings learn. It maintains that

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individuals create or construct their own understandings or knowledge through their interaction of what they already know and believe and the ideas, events and activities with which they come in contact. Constructivist Learning Approach: The constructivist learning approach emphasises upon the learner and their construction of their reality through their interaction with world and discussions with others (Bruner, 1986). Learning is perceived as cultural apprenticeship and cognition is argued to be situated in the specific context (Lave, 1988; Brown etal, 1989).

Thus learners should be constantly encouraged to explore the world, to learn by doing, to look at things in different ways, to discuss their world view with others and as a result continuously transform their understanding of world in light of these experiences. Films are a medium through which this can be achieved Many of our encounters with the world are not direct, our meaning and interpretation about an event is constructed through reflection on it with others.like watching a film does the same, experiencing the events indirectly and trying to understand them. Bruner (1986) suggests that we need to encourage a situation whereby information is not presented from one dominant view and where reflection, discussion and opposing views are included in the process. Education shapes our thoughts and ultimately the way in which we represent and view our world.

CONSTRUCTIVISM IN LEARNING AND USE OF FILMS: FEATURES

➢ It's an approach which focuses on each student; treat him/her as unique case with his own set of realities, experiences, values and cultures. Let child see, create the films learn from it.
➢ It emphasises that student should be taught in natural settings withmultiple representations of reality and varied experiences. Films offer the different perspective.
➢ Opportunities to explore, observe, discuss should be provided to students. After movie discussion lead to this and much more.
➢ Students should be encouraged to select, ask questions, share experiences, communicate, carry out analogies, and reach to conclusions based on evidences and draw inferences.
➢ It encourages and stimulates logical and rational thinking, reasoning and scientific skill.
➢ Negotiation of outcomes is equally important so that students can compare their reality with others and correlate their knowledge with outside world.
➢ Constructivist learning has emphasis on all three past, present and future. The students are actively involved in construction of knowledge by reflecting upon old and new knowledge, and learn, unlearns and relearns in this process. Constructivist Learning Strategies: Constructivist theory proposes that there is no objective reality; rather all reality is created by individuals. In the classroom setting, this translates into need for including and involving students in developing and maintaining their own positive learning environment. Such a philosophy focuses on allowing student to be active participants rather than passive recipients. Research also suggests that it is only through active engagement of student that the desired learning outcomes can be achieved. Thus, learning strategies include:
➢ Varied teaching methodologies like collaborative learning, cooperative learning, problem based learning and so on
➢ Questioning
➢ Brainstorming sessions
➢ Constructing and explaining models
➢ Communication of ideas, views
➢ Engaging in role plays, discussions
➢ Seminar and workshop mode of learning
➢ Diverse Evaluation methods/strategies
➢ Different levels of learning Constructivist Learning: Practical Adaptations
➢ Flexible learning: Flexibility in learning allows them to study at their pace and speed.
➢ Use of multiple sources of information: variety of sources provide information to students be it teachers, Internet, library, resource persons, industry, community interaction. Students get information from diverse fields and ways.

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- ➢ Use of Local resources: Interactions and MOU with local industry, labs, schools, help student use local resources.
- ➢ Varied Teaching Methodologies: Teachersshould use various and varied teaching methodologies ranging from class room lectures, discussions, ICT based teaching to case studies, flipped classrooms, collaborative learning and Team teaching etc.
- ➢ Involvement in Real life learning: construction of models/trainings/Internships/ summer internships /case studies areall examples of providing real life learning.
- ➢ Extend learning beyond classrooms: Field work should be an integral part of course which allows student to explore world outside the class and gets hands on experience.
- ➢ Self-paced Learning: Self Work should be infused in almost all the subjects which helps student to independently learn at its own pace and interest encouraging self-confidence and efficacy.
- ➢ Community interaction: SAP or social awareness programme should be part of curriculum as it helps students to learn by connecting with society and community, gaining multiple experiences as a result.
- ➢ Effective Communication: Communicating ideas and views is essential and students should be encouraged and provided opportunities to sharpen their communication skills by providing specially designed communication skill classes.
- ➢ Behavioural modification: Behavioural classes helps in modifying behaviour and help in dealing with stress, developing positive relationships. They should be an integral part of constructivist learning.
- ➢ Mentoring: Peer mentoring, industry mentoring helps students in adjusting and adapting with environment.
- ➢ Industry readiness: Students should be provided opportunities to become employable. Interaction with Industry people, mentors give them a view of real world and help them prepare themselves for it.

CONCLUSION

Constructivist learning is a refreshing shift from old dominant teaching to flexible student centred learning which connects research and practices together. Constructivist learning thus connects past, present and future. It enables learner to reflect upon past, connect it with present and improve both, present and future. It prepares us to move to next century with promise, excitement and creates generation of lifelong learners ready to embrace new challenges.

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