

Assessment And Evaluation of Learning in A Constructivist Paradigm

Dr. Sheeja Thomas

Assistant Professor (HOD) Education, Department of Education, St. Thomas College, Bhilai

Abstract:

The paper focuses on the characteristics of assessment in a constructivist learning environment, the purpose of assessment and evaluation in constructivist approach. The paper also focuses on the various assessment tools and process that are to be used in a constructivist teaching learning environment to continuously assess the students to further their learning. The paper discusses about Formative assessment, Alternative assessment, Authentic assessment, the tools of assessment as concept map, portfolio, rubric, process of assessment as self-assessment, peer assessment and various other strategies that can be used in a constructivist paradigm.

Keywords: Assessment, Evaluation, Constructivist Approach, Portfolio, Rubric

Introduction

Constructivism transforms the learner from a passive recipient of information to an active participant in the learning process. The learners construct knowledge of their own experiences. Constructivism is often associated with pedagogic approaches that promote active learning or learning by doing. Assessment in constructivism should provide continuous feedback to learners about their learning progress and how it can be enhanced further. In constructivism the process of gaining new knowledge is viewed as being just as important as the product.

Characteristics of Assessment in a constructivist classroom

- Assessment and learning: inextricably linked.
- Assessment is a two-way process.
- Assessment includes higher order skills (Analyze, create, predict, evaluate)
- Assessment is integrated throughout the curriculum.
- Assessment is situation based.
- Immediate feedback is given.
- Improves teaching learning process.
- Assess true potential of learners.
- Daily routine activities can be used to assess (discussions, observations etc.)
- Interaction between assessment and learning.
- Dialogue between assessor and assessee.
- Non-judgmental (purpose is not to judge the students).
- Continuous assessment to construct new understanding and acquire requisite skills.

- Feedback lays foundation for further development (both teaching and learning)
- Continuous and ongoing as against end term.
- Meant to improve both teaching and learning.

PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT IN CONSTRUCTIVISM

- Measures the achievement of the learner.
- Measures the process skills of the learner.
- Provides feedback to the learner.
- The feedback created by the assessment process serves as a direct foundation for further development.
- Formative assessment helps the teacher to plan and provide new learning experiences to the Learner according to their individual needs.
- To diagnose the weakness of the learner and to provide appropriate remedial learning experiences.
- To assess and evaluate the creativity and problem-solving abilities of the learner.
- To monitor student's growth and promote growth.
- To promote growth in cognitive aspects.
- To promote the development of social, emotional aspects of the child.
- To develop the psychomotor skills of the learner.

PERSPECTIVE OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IN CONSTRUCTIVISM

- Assessment is not just for the sake of assigning some marks or grades for student learning but to improve and strengthen student learning.
- A constructivist approach to assessment is formative rather than summative. Its purpose is to improve the quality of student learning.
- Assessment is context-specific and ongoing.
- Assessment is a collaborative process.
- Evaluation focuses on how a learner can learn new material by linking it with previous knowledge and the ability of the learner to apply it in new situations.
- Opportunities for self-assessment and reflection should be given to the learner.

In Constructivist classroom the following assessment and evaluation methods can be adopted:

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is the form that is widely accepted in constructivist learning which calls for elimination of grades and standardized tests. Here the learners are evaluated in the process of creating their competencies and abilities. one of the factors that makes this form of assessment so intriguing is the importance of feedback on a learners performance that should allow them to draw conclusion and improve for the future (Brown 2004).In constructivist theory assessment is viewed as a part of the learning process in which students play a greater role in judging their own progress.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

The traditional approach to assessment is reduced to minimum in the classroom of constructivism. The teachers are then in favour of alternative approaches which are considered more developing and reliable for the process of learning. According to O Malley &Valdez (1996) the main characteristics of alternative

assessment is that it “consists of any method of finding out what a student knows or can do that is intended to show growth and inform instruction and is an alternative to traditional forms of testing”

Alternative assessment is criterion referenced. So it tells the teacher about what the learner can actually do in the given task. Brown (2004) points out that it provides accurate feedback on specific course objectives. Alternative assessment is also considered very authentic because it puts an emphasis on tasks which resemble real life situations.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT OR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Authentic assessment is also referred to as performance assessment which calls a student to demonstrate specific competencies in an oral or written way. An authentic or performance assessment usually provides a task for the learner in which they need to perform. The results of their performance are evaluated with the use of a rubric which is a kind of table with specifically prepared criteria for students’ performance allocated to the accurate levels of Proficiency

TOOLS OF ASSESSMENT IN CONSTRUCTIVISM

Concept Map, Portfolio and Rubrics can be used as assessment tools in constructivism teaching learning environment.

Concept Map-Concept mapping is one way to help student’s link new ideas to knowledge they already have. They allow a learner to explore an idea and its relationship with other concepts.

Portfolio-Portfolio is a type of tool by which different aspects and skills of a student can be assessed which are otherwise not possible in traditional assessment. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student’s efforts, progress or achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of the student’s self- reflection (Paulson FL, Paulson PR and Meyer, C)

Rubric-Rubric is a scoring guide used to evaluate the quality of students constructed responses. Rubrics usually contain evaluative criteria, quality definitions for those criteria at particular levels of achievement and a scoring strategy. A scoring rubric is an attempt to communicate expectations of quality around a task. Rubric also provides basis for self- evaluation, reflection and peer review. Rubric improve student performance by clearly showing the student how their work will be evaluated and what is expected.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS IN CONSTRUCTIVISM

Self assessment: Self assessment is an assessment which allows students to assess their own performance. Self assessment helps students to evaluate the quality of their work, identify their strengths and weakness and modify their work accordingly.

Peer assessment: Peer assessment is the assessment of student by other students. In Peer assessment students take the responsibility of assessing the work of their peers based on assessment criteria. It encourages students to critically reflect upon each other’s work and give constructive feedback.

Some other assessment strategies include:

- Individual And Group Projects
- Observations
- Oral Discussions
- Journals

- Hands on activities assessed through observation, checklist etc.
- KWL (H) Chart
(what we know, what we want to know, what we have learnt, how we know it)

Conclusion

In constructivism learners are active participants in their learning process, knowledge is constructed based on experiences. Constructivist approach to assessment is a formative rather than summative. Assessment and Evaluation in constructivism focuses on the process that the individual learner takes in the process of knowledge construction rather than just the product. Assessment tools such as portfolio and Rubrics and the assessment process of self- assessment and peer assessment should be made use of for assessing the learner in a constructivist paradigm.

References

1. Begum, J., and Reddy, L., (2016). Assessment for Learning; Rakhi Prakashan Pvt.Ltd.
2. Brooks, J. G., & Brooks, M. G. (1993). In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms. Alexandria, Va.: ASCD.
3. Brown GTL., (2004). Teachers' conceptions of assessment: implications for policy and professional development. *Assessment in Education* 11(3): 301–318.
4. Brown, D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. White Plains, NY: Pearson.
5. Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*.
[http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-rubrics:Using Assessment Rubrics](http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-rubrics:Using%20Assessment%20Rubrics)
6. Novak, J. D. (2010). Learning, Creating, and Using Knowledge: Concept maps as facilitative tools in schools and corporations. *Journal of e-Learning and Knowledge Society*, 21-30.
7. Novak, J., & Gowin, B. (1984). *Learning how to learn*. Oxford: Cambridge University Press.
8. O'Malley, J. M., and Valdez Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners: Practical approaches for teachers*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
9. Paulson, F. L., Paulson Pearl R., and Meyer C. A. (1991, February). What makes a portfolio a portfolio. *Educational Leadership*, 46(6), 60-63.