Applying constructivism in instructivist learning cultures

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Multicultural Education & Technology Journal
ISSN: 1750-497X
Publication date: 12 April 2011

Abstract
Purpose
Many educators have advocated constructivist-based pedagogies as a way to develop the skills needed in knowledge societies. However, many countries have a tradition of instructivist-based practices, which rely on didactic lectures, rote memorization and high-stakes exams. The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize the reactions to constructivist-based pedagogy in instructivist-based learning cultures.

Design/methodology/approach
The author employs a literature review to compare the philosophical and pedagogical differences between constructivism and instructivism, and proposes a conceptual model for introducing constructivist-based pedagogies into instructivist learning cultures.

Findings
The needs of teachers, students, and institutions intersect during pedagogical innovations, which take place within national systems. The alignment between students' and teachers' educational philosophies, as well as an institutional system's resources, policy, and culture can bring conflict or congruence, as teachers, students, administrators and other stakeholders dismiss, adapt, ignore or celebrate the (mis)alignment.

Originality/value
The model described in this paper is intended to serve as a guide for educators who are introducing innovative pedagogies in a variety of settings, and will continued to be validated through a design-research study in Oman.

Keywords
Teaching  Education  Learning methods

Citation
https://doi.org/10.1108/17504971111121919

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Many educators have advocated constructivist-based pedagogies as a way to develop the skills needed in knowledge societies. However, many countries have a tradition of instructivist-based practices, which rely on didactic lectures, rote memorization and high-stakes exams. The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize the reactions to constructivist-based pedagogy in instructivist-based learning cultures. Design/methodology/approach – The author employs a literature review to compare the philosophical and pedagogical differences between constructivism and instructivism, and proposes a conceptual model for introducing constructivist-based pedagogies into instructivist learning cultures. Findings. Constructivism is an approach to learning that holds that people actively construct or make their own knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner. Cultures and their knowledge-base are constantly in a process of change and the knowledge stored by individuals is not a rigid copy of some socially constructed template. In learning a culture, each child changes that culture. Learning exists in the mind. The constructivist theory posits that knowledge can only exist within the human mind, and that it does not have to match any real world reality (Driscoll, 2000).