

Constructivism

The Constructivist Theory posits that learning is an active and constructive process. The main proponents of this theory are Vygotsky, Piaget, Dewey, and Bruner (Bruner, 1966). Piaget focuses on the interaction of experiences and ideas in the creation of new knowledge. Vygotsky explores the importance of learning alongside peers and how culture affects the accommodation and assimilation of knowledge. And Dewey emphasizes inquiry and the integration of the real world and classroom activities.

It stipulates that the learner is an information constructor. Learners have to form/create their own presentations and new information is always linked to the knowledge they already have. Therefore, in the Constructivist Theory, instructors are not inclined to be part of the knowledge creation process. Instead, students should be allowed to construct knowledge for themselves. Thus, in this theory, students construct knowledge rather than acquire it. This knowledge, the theorists assume, should be constructed based on students' relevant previous knowledge and their personal experiences. Bruner's (1966) Constructivist Theory is a general framework for instruction based on the study of cognition. Learners engage in discovery learning and obtain knowledge by themselves. They select and transform information, construct hypotheses and make decisions, relying on a cognitive structure.

In order for discovery to occur, learners require background preparation in the form of cognitive structure that provides meaning and organization to experiences and allows the individual to go beyond the information given. Bruner emphasizes teaching as a means of enhancing cognitive development; hence, the task of the teacher is to translate information to be learnt into a format appropriate to the learner's current state of understanding.

He suggests that the theory of instruction should address four (4) major aspects:

- Predisposition towards learning.
- The ways, in which the body of knowledge is structured so that it can be most readily grasped by the learner.
- The most effective sequences, in which to present material.
- The nature and spacing of rewards and punishment.

(Reference: Nutakor, A.E. & Israel, P.C. (2023). Influence of social media on students' academic writing and performance: A study within Ghanaian senior high school setting. *Social Education Research*, , 29-41. <http://ojs.wiserpub.com/index.php/SER/>)

1. According to the Constructivist Theory, who is responsible for constructing knowledge?
 - a) Teachers
 - b) Peers
 - c) Learners
 - d) Parents

2. Which theorist emphasizes the importance of learning alongside peers and the influence of culture on knowledge assimilation?
 - a) Piaget
 - b) Dewey
 - c) Vygotsky
 - d) Bruner

3. What is the main focus of Piaget's contribution to the Constructivist Theory?
 - a) Inquiry and integration of real-world activities
 - b) Cognitive development through teaching
 - c) Interaction of experiences and ideas
 - d) Accommodation and assimilation of knowledge

4. According to Bruner, what is the role of the teacher in the Constructivist Theory?
 - a) To facilitate knowledge construction by learners
 - b) To provide rewards and punishment for learning
 - c) To determine the sequence of material presentation
 - d) To structure the body of knowledge for learners

5. Which aspect does Bruner suggest should be addressed by the theory of instruction?
 - a) Predisposition towards learning
 - b) Role of peers in knowledge construction
 - c) Spacing of rewards and punishment
 - d) Role of parents in knowledge acquisition

Answers:

1. Learners
2. Vygotsky
3. Interaction of experiences and ideas
4. To facilitate knowledge construction by learners
5. Predisposition towards learning