

Constructivist Teaching

Wednesday, March 27, 2013
8:38 AM

PART 2 - Constructivist Teaching (20 minutes)

Lesson planning guidelines from Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers

A. Introduction (10 minutes)

Last month, we talked about the impact our identity can have on how we participate in discussions and plan lessons, and we focused a lot on content. Today, I'd like to focus more on how our identity and background can influence the methods we choose when teaching - specifically, I want to unpack the differences between direct instruction and constructivist teaching.

Let's just briefly review Ladson-Billings. You all tell me, what are the 3 components of our framework for CRT?

- Student Achievement - Students emerge on a path of expanded opportunities due to enduring personal, emotional and academic growth.
- Cultural Competence - Students and teachers have a deep understanding of themselves and others across lines of difference and feel affirmed and valued in their own identities.
- Critical Consciousness - Students are critical of the world around them and feel empowered to change the inequity they see.

(Take questions if people have them)

In just a moment, I'm going to give you a moment to review the reading for today. I'm going to put this out there: culturally responsive teachers use constructivist teaching methods. When we debrief, I'm hoping you'll be ready to tell me a little more about why.

B. Reading (15 minutes)

Review the reading - [Strand 4](#) from Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers - focusing on the constructivist section

C. Synthesize (20 minutes)

I asked you to think about why Culturally Responsive teachers use constructivist teaching methods. Let's start there -- this is more of a check for understanding to make sure we're on the same page.

Now, the more juicy questions:

- What are your initial reactions to this reading?
- What kind of school did you go to? How does that impact your teaching?
- Think about how we trained you at Institute (or other teacher. What role does that play in your teaching?
- What is hard about constructivist teaching?

What I hope to get to in this discussion: If I want to be truly culturally responsive, that means I must adopt constructivist views of knowledge. And if I want to co-construct knowledge with my students, rather than disseminate it to them, I have to plan for that. When I look at my objective, I don't think

"what am I going to tell my students about this objective?" I consider "how are my students and I going to discover this objective together?"

I am not the arbiter of knowledge; I am a learner. My perspective isn't "right" -- it is derived from my identity and experiences. I have to remember this both while I am reading and while I am teaching.

This is hard. It's probably not the way I was taught, and it's not the way I've been trained to teach. Rather than dwell in these challenges, I feel responsible and excited to adjust my instruction to be more constructivist.

D. Analyzing an Example (30 minutes)

I'm sure the burning question is *how*. How do we do this well? We'll we're going to try learning more in a constructivist way ourselves. I want everyone to leave here tonight really clear on what and why, ready to try some new things in their classroom. Next month, we're going to focus even more on how. To get started, I want to check out an example for what this can look like in our specific context.

Thanks to EJO for opening up her classroom. Not a perfect example, but a solid example from a peer who has been focused on becoming more culturally responsive by integrating more constructivist teaching practices into her classroom.

(on handouts)

SWBAT analyze and evaluate different perspectives of history represented by multiple texts.

First -- what do you notice about this objective?

High rigor

VIDEO FRAMING: This is an example of guided reading, planned for constructivist methods. As you watch, consider these questions. Frame with guiding questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzNiCQUQHdg>

- What's effective about Ms. Johns-O'Leary's instruction?
- How is Ms. Johns-O'Leary setting her students up for success? Where does she "lean in" with explanations and where does she "lean back?"
- How does Ms. Johns-O'Leary help her students get to her objective? How guide her students to build knowledge?
- What's the ultimate outcome? Are students meeting the objective?