

My Philosophy as an Instructional Technologist

During my studies at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington in the Masters of Science in Instructional Technology program, I was introduced to the constructivist approach to learning. As my understanding of the approach as well as my experience in the field has grown, I have learned the significance of this approach in how I design and present instruction.

I believe that learning is an internal process in which the learner constructs meaning for themselves from the external stimuli they are presented with in instruction. People learn by building new construct of knowledge using new information as well as prior knowledge. Learning is a process of understanding concepts not only on the micro-level but also on the macro-level. By understanding both the parts and the whole, a learner is better able to apply their new knowledge in context.

Based on my understanding of constructivism, I design instruction to address the large scale instructional goal as well as the secondary goals and aid the learner in understanding the context in which this knowledge will be applied. In this way, the learner can create personal constructs that are meaningful to their needs and prior knowledge.

In addition, the idea of social constructivism plays a part in my design and development of instruction. Social constructivists believe that learning is a social activity in which learners interact with not only their environment but other learners and use these interactions to construct knowledge. In addition, learning is seen as an active process in which the learner is engaged rather than a passive activity. For this reason, I often incorporate appropriate social interactions into my designs to facilitate exchange of information as well as designing instruction in such a way that the learners must interact with the material through problem based scenarios, simulations, or inquiry based projects.

My use of multiple learning theories throughout my graduate studies has been instrumental in developing my philosophy because I have had the opportunity to apply these theories and models derived from these theories to my work. I have become familiar with Mayer's SOI Model, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, and Jonassen's Designing Constructivist Learning Environments theories during my studies as well as other learning theories that influence my design and development projects. These learning theories influence my design of instruction and provide guidance for developing instruction for a diversified learner population.