

Traditional and Constructivist Learning Theories

| | Traditional beliefs (Past) | Constructivist beliefs (Contemporary) |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| View of learning | <p>Knowledge is objective (a fixed body of information which can be transmitted intact from teacher to student)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> through 'telling' and 'reading' | <p>Knowledge is subjective and individuals construct their own knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> through discussions with others and reflection on prior experiences |
| Ownership of knowledge | <p>Textbook and teacher are authoritative sources of knowledge; they own the knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> students agree because they respect or fear teacher | <p>The authority for constructed knowledge resides in the ideas (in the argument) and evidence; student owns knowledge.</p> |
| Managing students' learning | <p>Teacher is responsible for this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides instruction and information lead students through activities | <p>Teacher and students share responsibility for initiating and guiding learning</p> |
| Instruction style | <p>Teacher explains, checks for understanding, and judges correctness of students' responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Didactic | <p>Teacher facilitates discussion of ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> poses questions seeks clarification promotes dialogue help group to reach consensus |
| Nature of questions asked | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convergent - conforms to what has been taught Applications of learnt models/ideas that require step by step algorithms Is the answer right? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divergent and open ended Applications to authentic issues and problems that require higher order thinking Does it work? Is the idea working? Is the idea viable? |
| Students' Learning preference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students mostly passive and alone Memorisation and replication of teachers'/textbook ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate and co-construct shared/consensual understanding through sustained dialogue Reflection – individually & reflective discussion in groups |
| Focus of learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and teaching Reproduction of knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student and learning (learner/learning-centred) Producing new knowledge |