

**ASSOCIATION FOR CONSTRUCTIVIST
TEACHING CONFERENCE 2006**

Lisle/Naperville Hilton in Lisle, IL

October 20 - 21, 2006

The Association for Constructivist Teaching is grateful to the Early Childhood Program at Old Dominion University (offering both Master and PhD programs in ECE) for printing the ACT 2006 conference program. THANK YOU!!

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ASSOCIATION FOR CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING**

Lisle/Naperville Hilton in Lisle, IL

Friday, October 20, 2006

Registration 7:30 am - 8:30 am

Breakfast 8:00 am - 8:30 am

Outside Birch/Hickory/Oak

Opening Remarks/Keynote Address

8:30 am - 10:00 am

Birch/Hickory/Oak

"Trudge Toward Freedom: Education in Troubled Times"

Bill Ayers

Education in a democracy is rooted in humanism, emphasizing the inherent value of every human being, the importance of the participation of each, and the essential incompleteness and complexity of teaching and learning. Constructivist education, which is in this tradition, must find its way in an era of standardization and the reduction of teaching to sorting and ranking, monitoring and punishing. This presentation will return to first principles, and build a discussion of strategy and tactics on the foundational ideas in the humanist tradition.

Book Signing 10:00 am - 10:30 am

Session One 10:30 am - Noon

Conference Room One

Are Constructivist Classroom Unstructured?

Beth Van Meeteren, Freeburg School

Rheta DeVries, Northern Iowa University

When observers of constructivist classrooms watch children engaged in many different activities at the same time, they often interpret the level of noise and activity as chaotic and unstructured. As more constructivist teachers enter American schools, they bring with them a new paradigm of teaching and learning that often conflicts with an existing traditional paradigm. Conflicting paradigms are reflected in different ideas about the meaning of the term "structure," especially with regard to organization of curriculum, schedule, movement and noise within the classroom, the teacher-child relationship, and evaluation of children's learning. Constructivist teachers structure each of these program aspects.

Conference Room Two

What Does Descriptive Psychology Have to Offer to Constructivist Teachers?
Joel Jeffrey, Northern Illinois University

Descriptive Psychology is a holistic, inclusive, common-sense oriented way of talking about and understanding people that incorporates all the aspects of being and doing-behavior, perception, relationships, embeddedness in culture and cultures, motivation, learning, and all the many facets of being a person- into a single, systematic, coherent network. It has no orientation-behaviorist, cognitive, information-processing, psychodynamic, gestalt, experiential, or any other. With this network, we can develop useful tools for both inside and outside the classroom, including heuristics for figuring out what works, systematic procedures for thinking through issues that come up in teaching, and ways to explain to non-constructivists how what we do makes practical educational sense.

Conference Room Three

Constructing Constructivism
Julie Rainer Dangel, Georgia State University
Linda Kroll, Mills College
Teresa Harris, James Madison University
Joanne Falinski, Pace University

Would you like to have a better understanding for constructivist teaching and learning? This workshop will explore some of the basic tenets of constructivism. Join us in the session as we interact and construct the meaning and application of constructivism.

Conference Room Four

Teacher Autonomy and Teacher Research
Kathryn Castle, Oklahoma State University

This session will present findings from a study of teacher autonomy and teacher research.

Hickory/Oak

Math Nerds and the Development of Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching
Laurie Cavey, James Madison University

Come explore ways to facilitate the development and understand the nature of mathematical knowledge for teaching. Participants will analyze cases from middle and high school mathematics to generate lessons for the learning and teaching of mathematics and the preparation of teachers. Information about MathNerds.com, a free question-and-response service will be shared.

Lunch on your own Noon - 1:30 pm

Informal "Table Talk" in the Hotel Dining Room

Join Alice Wakefield & Julie Dangel to talk about writing for *The Constructivist*

Join Carolyn Hildebrandt to talk about current practices in
constructivist moral education for young children

Session Two 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Conference Room One

Math and Life

Patricia Lins-E-Silva, Escola Parque-Rio-Brazil
Paula Castro, Escola Parque-Rio-Brazil

The project, "Math & Life" encourages student to think freely about reality to discover the many mathematical instances of life. Through extensive visual materials we intend to show our students being challenged to solve problems and discovering solutions, and reflecting about how to use mathematics in photography, art, literature, sports, and in activities with parents.

Conference Room Two

Constructing a Community of Learners

Kristen Stone, Jane Adams Elementary, South Redford District
Michelle Case, Reading Resource Teacher, South Redford District
Kristina Harmon, Principal, Jane Adams Elementary, South Redford District

Our session, *Constructing a Community of Learners*, is for teachers, resource personnel and administrators who seek to create a community of learners within their classroom, school or district. The purpose of the session is to share the tools and practices our elementary building, specifically the primary team, has used to create a community in which learning by all parties-teachers, students, and parents, is encouraged and flourishes. The presentation will focus on these three areas: teachers as learners, students as learners and parents as learners.

Conference Room Three

Multi-Tiered Mobile Construction Experience Between Fifth and First Graders

Richard Jarrell, University of Houston Charter School

The session will provide a view into a collaborative physical knowledge project between twenty - two (22) 5th graders and first (1st) graders at the University of Houston Charter School. The project involves constructing multi-tiered mobiles with the 5th graders will then assist with the components and guide the 1st graders as the 5th graders introduce the activity in small groups. Attendees will have the opportunity to construct a multi-tiered mobile to better understand the thinking involved and challenges encountered.

Conference Room Four

From Polynomials to Rationals: It's Upside Down

Janice Krouse, Illinois Math and Science Academy

What's the reciprocal of wet spaghetti? Here's a different way to think about teaching polynomials and rational functions that will turn your world upside down! Experience, first hand, how your students can learn by exploring, doing, and reasoning.

Hickory/Oak

Exploring Constructivism as a Theory in our own College Classrooms

Teresa Harris, James Madison University

Holly Pence, James Madison University

Two teacher educators decided to become learners in one another's classrooms in an attempt to better understand how constructivist theories of learning might be applied to their teaching practices.

Session Three 3:15 pm - 4:45 pm

Conference Room One

4th Annual Research Roundtable

Are Gender Differences an Indicator of the Quality of Math Instruction?

Alice Wakefield, Old Dominion University

The Difficulty of Subtracting a Few Cents from a Dime Compared to Adding Them in K-4

Constance Kamii, University of Alabama-Birmingham

Building Communities of Practice with Collaborative Coaching & Learning in Mathematics (CCLM)

Andy Carter, Roosevelt University

Conference Room Two

Using Videos of Practice to Learn to Teach Better: Student Teachers

Learning from One Another's Work

Linda Kroll, Mills College

Kristin Anderson, Mills College

Rosa Barbara, Mills College

Jennifer Ellis, Mills College

Linda Honeyman, Mills College

In this presentation we examine the use of videotaping one's teaching practices and using videos in seminar settings to improve student teacher teaching. We will discuss a video of one of the presenters teaching, and discuss the protocol for these discussions. Our goal is to think together about how to make these discussions critical and productive.

Conference Room Three

For a Holistic Framework of Constructivist-Generated Teaching

Octavian Lecca, Math teacher, Montreal, Math Research Group

Doina Lecca, TESL Centre, Department of Education, and Concordia University (Montreal)

Confronted with an unprecedented rate of change, societies all around the world are looking for new solutions. *Development of reasoning* will soon be the most valuable heritage the school could offer students in order to prepare them to deal with *change*. This session looks at 'development of reasoning' as the aim of education and explores how constructivist teaching could be the core of a theoretical teaching framework that prepares students to cope with a society of change. The session's activities will focus on applications to math teaching.

Conference Room Four

Spaces of Liberty: Constructing Meaning in a Test-Prep World

Irene Plonczak, Hofstra University

Andrea Libresco, Hofstra University

Jacqueline Grennon Brooks, Hofstra University

The classroom doesn't need to look like the test in order to prepare students for the test. This workshop responds to the often-heard comment that teachers don't have time to teach with a constructivist approach because they have too much material to cover. Participants will engage in an analysis of a state exam and then engage in a sample lesson that addresses the test items while simultaneously offering students meaningful opportunities to construct new knowledge.

Hickory/Oak

Democracy Rules: Creating a Democratic Learning Community through Class Meetings

Shelly Counsel, Northern Iowa University

Craig Hutton, West Delaware County School District, Manchester, Iowa

Sergiovanni (1994) insists that "community building must become the heart of any school improvement effort" (p .xi) if children are to grow intellectually and emotionally to the greatest extent possible. This is particularly true within today's test-driven culture. This presentation will examine and discuss, from a constructivist perspective, the employment of democratic principles through the implementation of three different kinds of daily class meetings in order to enhance and support the learning community.

Hickory/Oak

Special Session

5:00 - 6:00 pm

"Documentation" to Reflect Practice in Kindergarten

Professor Jiaxiong Zhu, East China Normal University

Zhang Lu, East China Normal University

Some kindergarten teachers in China are using "documentation" as a reflective tool to understand children's learning process and to improve their teaching. This presentation demonstrates how kindergarten teachers use various media to document what they believe are valuable and contextually related activities and to make learning visible.

Meet the ACT Board Members

Wine and Cheese Reception

6:00 - 7:00 pm

Location: Willow Room

Association for Constructivist Teaching

<http://www.odu.edu/act>

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Saturday, October 21, 2006

Registration 7:30 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast 8:00 am – 8:30 am

Outside Birch/Hickory/Oak

Session One 8:30 am – 10:00 am

Conference Room One

PBL Studio: Producing Understanding

Debra Gerdes, Illinois Math and Science Academy

Jane Seidel, Illinois Math and Science Academy

Yolanda Willis, Aurora East High School

This session will focus on the process of Problem-Based-Learning (PBL), a powerful model of inquiry that motivates students to learn and reinvigorates teachers. Participants will learn some basics of PBL: what it is, how it is used in classrooms, and what current research says about why it's important now in this age of accountability and standards-based education. Learn how teachers can integrate PBL in their classrooms to produce understanding as students meet curricular goals and standards. Elements of the session will include discussion, classroom video clips, and handouts of key information.

Conference Room Two

Uncovering Teaching and Learning Metaphors Through Autobiography and Clay:

The Beginning of a Journey for Teacher Education Students

Efleda Tolentino, University of Vermont

This presentation gives the audience a glimpse into the experience of entry level Teacher Education students as they engage in the process of developing self-awareness through autobiography, peer dialogue, and the medium of clay. Inspired by William Ayers' work, this presentation features narratives and teaching/learning metaphors developed by students who are at the beginning of their journey into Teacher Education. Through this forum, participants will reflect upon themes that resonate for Teacher Education students as they construct who they are as learners and shape their understanding of what it takes to teach.

Conference Room Three

Collaborative Self-Study: Teacher Voice

Karen Tardrew, National-Louis University

The purpose of this study was to collect the stories of practicing teachers regarding their collaborative process of self-reflection. The complexities of teacher identities using narratives, integrated narratives and photographic self-portraits were analyzed in the research. This research session will discuss and further analyze the co-construction of the teachers' experiences that focus on voice, isolation, and professional growth.

Conference Room Four

Lesson Study as Constructivist Professional Education for Science Educators
Steven Rogg, De Paul University

Lesson Study is described as teacher-led professional development. We will explore ways in which Lesson Study, when implemented with fidelity to core features, is inherently constructivist and exemplifies characteristics of exemplary professional development. Experiences of the *Chicago Lesson Study Group* will be shared.

Hickory/Oak

Tapping a Writer's Potential with Poetry, Music and a Garage Band
Kate Chechak, The School at Columbia University

Ever wish you could be in a garage band? Every kid does. One teacher shows how her children wrote poems as lyrics, set those words to music and brought it all together using a computer program called *Garage Band*. By using this process she proves that when we listen to our students and encourage spontaneity, they will always surprise and impress us.

Session Two 10:15 am - 11:45 am

Conference Room One

Constructing Spaces for Science and Literacy in an Urban 3rd Grade Classroom
Justine Kane, University of Illinois at Chicago
Jennifer Hankes, Chicago Public Schools
MariaVarelas, University of Illinois at Chicago
Christine Pappas, University of Illinois at Chicago

This session will present a research study in which young African-American children and their teacher negotiate spaces for discussing, exploring, and making meaning in the context of integrated science-literacy units. Through read-alouds, hands-on explorations, and on-going journaling and semantic mapping, and creating a class mural, students and teacher studied earthworms in the context of a forest ecosystem unit. Intended for a diverse audience, this session will offer participants the possibilities and the challenges that arise as young urban children and their teacher construct spaces for science and literacy in their classrooms.

Conference Room Two

Constructivism and Online Teaching/Learning in Higher Education: Two Examples from University of Alaska Southeast and Pacific Oaks College
Seon Chun, Pacific Oaks College
Jennifer Thompson, University of Alaska, Southeast

Through examination of two distance learning programs- one at the University of Alaska Southeast and the other at Pacific Oaks College, this presentation will show how constructivist educators actively accommodate, contribute and participate in the distance teaching/learning setting, which has been growing rapidly in higher education.

Conference Room Three

Empowerment and Understanding through Service-Learning: An Inner City Professional Development Leaves No Children no Preservice Teachers Behind
Virginia Jagla, National Louis University

This presentation will show slides of teachers, students, and preservice teachers involved with a service learning project at Dodge Academy in Chicago. The presenter will make heard the voices of all involved. Through presentation and analysis of the data collected, participants will create meaningful insights regarding this special aspect of experiential learning.

Conference Room Four

Using the Bridging Question Strategy to Activate Prior Knowledge in Mathematics Teaching
James Pelech, Benedictine University
Richard Singer, Professor Emeritus, Webster University
John Pais, Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School

While the importance of activating prior knowledge is the starting point for learning and developing new knowledge, it has always been a challenge for educators to find prior knowledge that is common for all students. The Bridging Question Strategy (BQS) does this by empowering students to connect everyday, common knowledge and concepts to mathematical concepts.

Hickory/Oak

*Becoming a Member of a Constructivist "Knowledge Building" Environment-
The Shifting Role of the Teacher*
Richard Messina, Grade 5/6 Teacher
Carol Stephenson, Senior Kindergarten Teacher
Benjamin Peebles, Physical Education Teacher

The Institute of Child Study Laboratory School (University of Toronto) has offered a Deweyian constructivist approach to education since its inception 80 years ago. Scardamalia and Bereiter have indicated that to make the transition to a knowledge building community requires a dramatic shift from an incidental focus on learning activities to a focus on the construction of collective knowledge (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1999). This workshop will use specific examples of classroom life (science inquiry in senior kindergarten and in grade 4: physical education in grade 5/6) and data from recent studies to support the belief that real accountability in education compels educators to examine their role in the classroom and to define a brave new curriculum-one that engages the body, mind, emotions and the spirit of each child.

Keynote Luncheon
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Birch/Hickory/Oak

"Spaces of Liberty: Learning Among the Mandates"
Jacqueline Grennon Brooks

The press in classrooms to cover the material and prepare students for the test is omnipresent in today's world of high stakes testing. Is there any opportunity to engage in real learning and teaching? Yes, there is! Constructivist teaching is all about the basics.

Session Three 2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

Conference Room Two

Teaching as Research: Becoming a Competent Teacher
Seong Bock Hong, University of Michigan-Dearborn

This session shares the construction and reconstruction of student teachers' understanding of the teaching and learning process. This is an action research study designed to evaluate the effect of the cycle of inquiry process in teacher development. This session discusses the concept of the teacher as researcher, which is a non-linear process of developing and testing hypotheses to achieve better understanding and construct knowledge of teaching.

Conference Room Three

The Constructivist Teachers Dilemma: How to Provide Individually Meaningful Learning to Students Evaluated by Standardized Assessments?
Roberta Liebler, School of Education, Walden University, and Visiting Faculty, School for Learning, De Paul University

How can a teacher determined to provide meaningful learning experiences for each student also raise the scores of the aggregate? One way the constructivist teacher can adhere to curriculum requirements while remaining true to constructivist principles is through differentiated instruction. In the mainstreamed classroom with widely diverse students, differentiated tiered learning enables the busy teacher to make small modifications in scale and scope that positively enhance student achievement.

Conference Room Four

Constructivist Conversations: Taking Theory and Practice to the Next Level
Teresa Harris, James Madison University
Laurie Cavey, James Madison University
Holly Pence, James Madison University

If constructivism is a theory of learning, what is "constructivist teaching" all about? We invite you to join in the discussion of constructivist theory as it informs the practices of teacher education in math, science, and social studies across the K-12 spectrum.

Hickory/Oak

Teachers Constructing Knowledge through Professional Study Groups

Joanne Falinski, Pace University

Liz Fogel, Manhattan College

Teaching and learning for understanding demands new conceptions of content and pedagogy as well as re-examination of teacher and student roles. The presenters will discuss their personal experience in the use of study groups as a way to help teachers construct knowledge about practice and support deep sustaining change, and help participants to form an action plan for using the study group model in their own workplace.

Book Signing 5:00 - 5:30 pm
Outside Birch/Hickory/Oak

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Travel home safely!

See you in Oakland, CA in 2007!!

Watch for Call for proposals on line SOON at:

<http://www.odu.edu/educ/act/conf.html>

Watch for the fall issue of the ACT journal,

The Constructivist, on-line SOON at:

<http://www.odu.edu/act/journal>

Association for Constructivist Teaching

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