

Thought Paper # 3

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**Truth and the Constructivist Approach - Thought Paper # 3**

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## Truth and the Constructivist Approach

In order to reflect on my epistemology about truth, knowledge and learning in relation to constructivism, I will begin by defining my understanding of constructivism based on Glasersfeld (2008) when he states: “[...] it appears that knowledge is not a transferable commodity and communication not a conveyance” (p. 48). Indeed, constructivist principles are based on the idea that knowledge is not passively received in a teacher-centered environment, but rather actively built by individuals based on their prior learning.

Constructivist principles establish that learning outcomes depend on both the learning environment and prior knowledge and experience of a learner. As such, educators need to create a learning environment that allows individuals to explore ideas and make meaning of their learning through reflection, since the construction of knowledge is a continuous process.

The ideal learning environment should help individuals restructure their ideas based on sharing and discussing information with peers, so they can reflect, construct and evaluate new ideas. When presented with new information, learners need to be provided with various tools and activities that will help them construct on prior knowledge. Scaffolding activities should provide adequate stimuli for learners to express their understanding and build on their learning - changing and reconstructing their ideas and views about their understanding along the way.

Based on these principles, ‘truth’ can be but an idea; since it would appear individuals construct explanations of their experiences that lead to ‘ways of understanding’ new learning. So I can agree with Glasersfeld’s when he states: “[...] to assess the truth of your knowledge you would have to know what you come to know before you come to know it” (p.37), for in a sense

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individuals do rely on their experiences and prior knowledge to build on knowledge and form new opinions.

## References

Von Glasersfeld, E. (2008). Learning as a Constructive Activity. *AntiMatters*, 2(3), 33-49.