

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING - A MEANS TO ACHIEVE CONSTRUCTIVISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

There has been a shift from an industrial society towards information and knowledge society (Keating, 1998; Kessels, 1996). It is no longer the production of goods which is most important, but more and more importance is attached to the ability of dealing with information and acquisition of knowledge. Work situations change rapidly. Therefore, employees are expected to adapt to new circumstances all the time. They do not get a contract for the rest of their lives, but nowadays contracts of employment are flexible. Undoubtedly, everyone agrees with the claim that life-long learning is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. The labor market can be characterized as a dynamic environment in which people can only keep upright by permanent learning: learning to survive (Thijssen, 1997). Not only the period of learning is new, the view of learning, learning instructions and learning outcomes has changed fundamentally as well. Simons et al. (2000) gave three reasons for talking about 'new' learning: (1) There is much more attention for the role of active and self-directed learning than before; (2) there currently is a much greater emphasis on the combination of active learning, so-called learning to learn and collaborative learning than before, and (3) the present wave of attention to new forms of learning has much more of a basis in the psychology of learning and instruction than the waves of learning propagated by traditional school innovators. Constructivism, the culture of new learning, is strongly influenced by constructivist ideas about education. This paper seeks to present how Constructivism and Collaborative learning are aligned to achieve desired goals in Education. First, the paper will discuss the existing differences between Constructive view of learning and Traditional education. Then the paper will explore how the constructive learning strategies are increasingly becoming important in the fields of Higher education. Then, finally, the presenter will show case the advantages of collaborative learning facilitated by computers in order to achieve constructive learning.