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# Constructivism: A Biblical Critique

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# Historical Enlightenments

## Modernism

- Positivism: Knowledge is based on sense perception and the investigations of objective science
- Scientific method is the means to get to the truth
- Children are the peak of evolutionary change
- Children are active, optimistic, self-confident

## Postmodernism

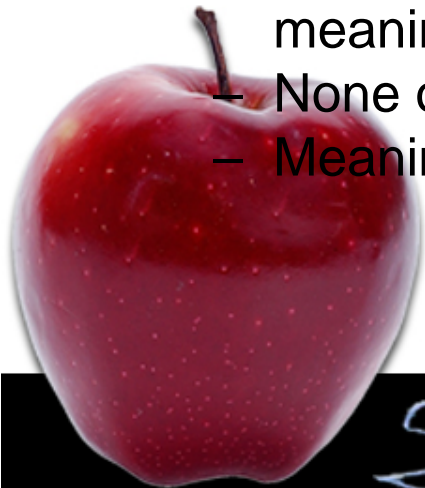
- Denials of universal order, objective meaning, social harmony
- Focusing on the individual, the subjective, the fragmentary
- Children are formed by culture, language, society
- Children are passive, cynical, insecure



# Constructivism

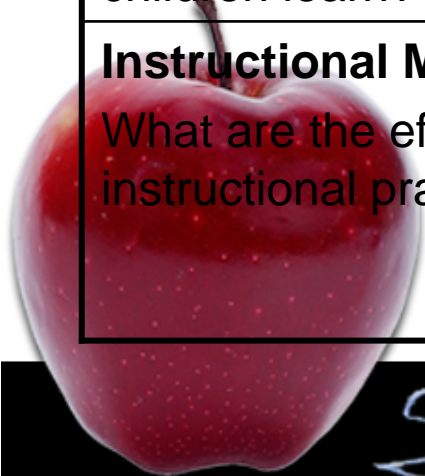
- Constructivism
  - Learning is a constructive process in which the learner is building an internal representation of knowledge and personal interpretation of experience (Bedner, Cunningham, Duffy & Perry, 1992)
- Assumptions of Constructivism
  - The world is real, but
  - Structure is not a part of this reality; rather, meaning is imposed by the world by our experience
  - There are many ways to structure the world; thus many meanings or perspectives may be generated on the same data
  - None of the meanings is inherently correct; and
  - Meaning is rooted in experience

Duffy & Jonnassen (1992)



# 3 Hats of Constructivism

Hats (Main Questions)	Answers	Compatible w/ Bible
<b>Philosophy</b> What is the nature of reality? What is knowledge?	There is no objective reality. Knowledge is not discovered, but constructed	L
<b>Learning Theory</b> What is the source of learning? How do children learn?	Learning is developmental, active, collaborative, contextual, cultural. Children construct personal meaning as they interact with the environment	M
<b>Instructional Method</b> What are the effective instructional practices?	Learning is effective when places value on the students' unique experiences. Learning is inseparable from the context of the activity in which the learning takes place.	H

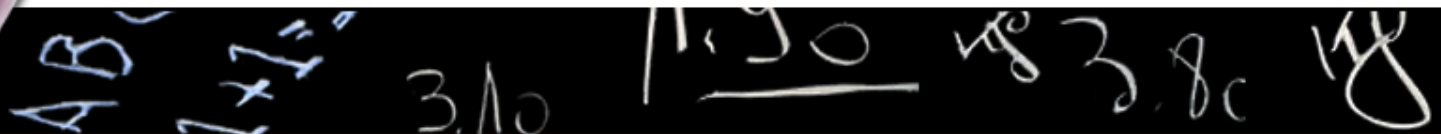


# Constructivism as Philosophy

- Main questions
  - What is the nature of reality?
  - What is knowledge?
- A constructivist continuum (Moshman, 1982)
  - Exogenous Constructivism
    - Cognitive, information processing, psychological
  - Dialectical Constructivism
    - Social, sociocultural, symbolic interactionist
  - Endogenous Constructivism
    - Radical, schema-based

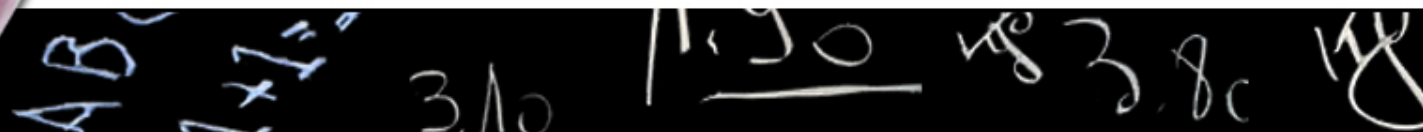


	<b>Exogenous Constructivism</b>	<b>Dialectical Constructivism</b>	<b>Endogenous Constructivism</b>
What is real, knowledge	There is the external reality. That reality is knowable.	Reality is knowable only in light of one's context	No external reality. Reality is not knowable
How we construct knowledge	Knowledge is seen as the internalization and reconstruction of external reality	Knowledge is result of the interaction between the learner and the environment	Knowledge constructed from earlier mental structures.
Application to Education	Through the transmission process, students constructed an accurate representation of the original knowledge	Learning is process of building internal representation of reality, influenced by one's belief, culture, experience and language	Personal discovery, exploration, and experience (not the direct result/ accurate representation of experience)



# Evaluation

- Biblical Critique
  - God made all things perfect, without defect
  - We are fallen creatures who can only see a portion of the picture. We see 'through a glass darkly'
  - We construct reality differently, not because reality has no inherent structure, but because we each have an incomplete and distorted perspective
  - Even as we remain imperfect, we have insights into that perfect knowledge in Scripture
- Evaluation
  - There is the objective truth. It conflicts with a Christian view.
  - We cannot accept Constructivism as a Philosophy of Christian education.



# Constructivism as Learning Theory

- Main question
  - What is the source of learning?
  - How do children learn from the sources?
- Two branches of constructivism theories
  - First wave constructivism
    - Focus on individual and psychological source of knowing
    - Constructing knowledge depends on personal meaning-making
  - Second wave constructivism
    - Focus on the social and cultural sources of knowing
    - Learn strategies and knowledge of the world and culture in a social and cultural context
    - Constructing knowledge depends on interactions between culture and personal interpretation





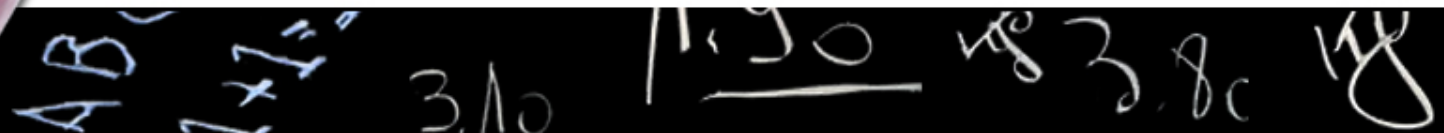
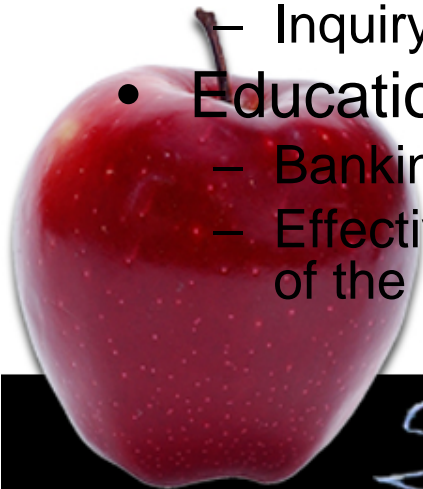
# Evaluation

- Biblical critique
  - Scriptures emphasize to teach the uniqueness of the individuals and also emphasize the social and cultural role of the community.
  - However, there is ultimate truth and knowledge that students should learn. The truth can be found only when revealed by God. The truth cannot be found by students when they construct.
- Evaluation
  - Who is the owner of learning? Constructivism argues that knowledge is constructed by learner and learning starts with children's own ideas.
  - However, Bible says, "fear of the Lord is beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10). God is the source of all learning.
  - We cannot accept Constructivism as Christian learning theory.



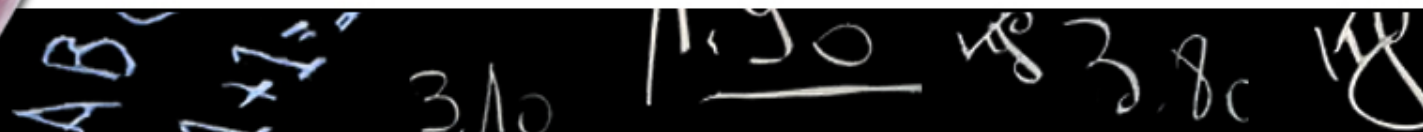
# Constructivism as Instruction Method

- Main question
  - What are the effective teaching strategies?
- Constructivism offers many useful learning methods in which students actively participate in the learning process, including
  - Zone of Proximal Development, Scaffolding
  - Cognitive Apprenticeship
  - Cooperative Learning
  - Project-based Learning, Problem-based Learning
  - Inquiry-based Learning
- Educational Trends
  - Banking model of education -> Praxis (Freire)
  - Effective learning requires the active and dynamic involvement of the learner



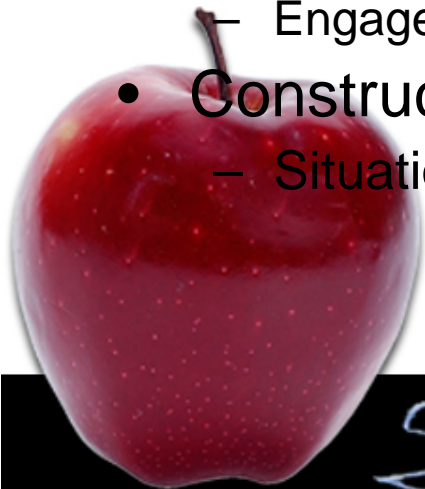
# Evaluation

- It is compatible with Scriptures
  - Multimodal educations (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)
  - Understand children's unique way (Prov. 22:6)
  - Encouraging collaboration (1 Corinthians 12)
  - Christ's method involved questioning rather than telling, the cognitive apprenticeship, learning by doing, discovery
- Evaluation
  - Christian constructivism
    - Compatibility of constructivists and Christ methods
  - It is clear that constructivism is not acceptable within a Christian worldview. However, the methods implied are in most cases consonant with good Christian teaching. (Archer, 1998)



# Constructivist Method

- Principles of Constructivist teaching (Brooks & Brooks, 1993)
  - Posing problems of emerging relevance to students
  - Valuing holism in the questions posed and ideas presented
  - Emphasis on seeking and valuing the students' view
  - Adapting the curriculum to address students suppositions
  - Learning is best assessed in the context of teaching
- 5Es Model
  - Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate
- Constructivist Learning Design (Gagnon & Collay)
  - Situation, Grouping, Bridge, Questions, Exhibit, Reflections



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# Was Jesus a Constructivist?

- Constructivist teaching practices (Kim, 2005)
  - Engaging and accepting student
  - Using raw data along with other materials
  - Framing learning tasks using cognitive terminology
  - Allowing student response to drive lessons
  - Inquiring students' understanding
  - Encouraging students to engage in dialogue
  - Encouraging student inquiry by asking questions
  - Seeking elaboration of students' responses
  - Engaging students in experiences and then encouraging discussions
  - Allowing wait-time after posing questions
  - Providing time for students to discover relationships and create metaphors
  - Nurturing students' natural curiosity
  - Assessing student learning in the context of teaching



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- Jesus' model of teaching (Lee, 2006)
    - Identifying teachable moments
    - Guiding inquiry with intriguing questions
    - Allowing exploration of a hypothesis
    - Encouraging application.



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# Conclusion

- Is constructivism and faith-based education a good combination?
  - Only yes, when we consider it as a teaching method
  - Truth-based education, not student-oriented
  - But, the role of teachers is critically important
- New way of a school innovation movement
  - Focusing on the role of schooling in nourishing the spirit

