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Effective Listening Project: A Constructivist Activity

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ABSTRACT

Constructivist learning allows learners to synthesize and understand new ideas and concepts based on their own current and past knowledge and experiences. This paper describes the constructivist philosophy of learning. The constructivist teaching and learning model is applied to a unit used in an effective listening course or a class with a unit in listening. Students construct a listening campaign demonstrating the importance of effective listening for a target audience.

Introduction

“A young child who has never been to the hospital is in her bed. ...the nurse calls over the intercom above the bed, ‘Hi, Chelsea, how are you doing? Do you need anything?’ The girl looks puzzled and does not answer. The nurse repeats with the same result. Finally, the nurse says emphatically, ‘Chelsea, are you there? Say something!’ The little girl responds tentatively, ‘Hello wall—I’m here.’ Chelsea encountered a new situation—a talking wall. The wall is persistent. It sounds like a grown-up wall. She shouldn’t talk to strangers, but she is not sure about walls. She uses what she knows and what the situation provides to construct meaning and to act. Constructivist theories of learning focus on how people make meaning” (Woolfolk, 2001, p. 329).

Constructivist theorists believe Chelsea made sense of the talking wall because she linked what she knew with what was happening in her environment. She constructed meaning by activating her knowledge structures. “Human learning is a matter of strengthening internal knowledge structures. As one becomes engaged in experiences, his or her existing knowledge structures are activated” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 13).

The purpose of this paper is to examine constructivist learning theory, to present a brief history of the movement, and to discuss how constructivism affects knowledge, teaching, and learning. Finally, a constructivist model for teaching a major unit in an Effective Listening course will be proposed.

Constructivist Knowledge

“Constructivism means that as we experience something new we internalize it through our past experiences or knowledge constructs we have previously established” (Crowther, 1997, para. 5). Learners employ their own strategies, experiences, and active methods to organize and make sense of data rather than simply receiving knowledge from a sender or an “expert.” More specifically, “constructivism is an epistemological view of knowledge acquisition emphasizing knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission and the recording of information conveyed by others. The role of the learner is conceived as one of building and transforming knowledge” (Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000, p. 38). As Baylor, Samsonov, and Smith (2002; para. 3) note, constructivist knowledge is viewed:

as something created, discovered, and experienced (Snyder, Bolin, & Zumwalt, 1992). Students have the opportunity ‘to take personal responsibility, exercise initiative, and be in control in the instructional setting through a variety of learning experiences’ (p. 415). According to Applebee and Purves, constructivists view ‘knowledge as an active construction built up by the individual acting within a social context that shapes and constrains that knowledge but does not determine it in an absolute sense’ (p. 738).

In order to transform knowledge, learning must be an active and on going process based on previous knowledge and linked to new knowledge. Students can then make decisions based on this new experience (Jordan, Metha, & Webb, 2000).

This new knowledge satisfies the “learners need to be seriously engaged in constructing meaning. Knowledge is not just something told to them. They must personally construct their sense of something” (Hunkins & Ornstein, 1998, p. 212). Knowledge is acquired “not by internalizing it from the outside but by constructing it from the inside, in interaction with the environment” (Kamii, Manning, & Manning, 1991, p. 18). Knowledge and meaning are linked with the world and with experiences in the world. Hanley (1994) clarified this process when she said “meaning is intimately connected with experience” (para. 5).

Constructivist theory provides “a beginning from which to achieve a deeper understanding of the individual’s action in social reality. Constructivism and constructivist theory examine the thoughts behind the actions of individuals” (Ritchie, 1982, p. 31). Learners understand concepts based on what is important to their schema, their world and their needs. Even though variations exist among students, Cobern (1991) said each “student constructs knowledge so that the knowledge is meaningful in the student’s life situation” (as cited in Crowther, 1997, para. 11). Davidson (1995) continued, “learning is an internal process and influenced by the learner’s personality, prior knowledge and learning goals” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 4-5). In the constructivist viewpoint, students learn because they are “constructors of their own knowledge, rather than reproducers of someone else’s knowledge” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 8). Knowledge is actively built and transformed rather than passively accepted. Constructivists transform knowledge “by fitting new information together with what

they already know. People learn best when they actively construct their own understanding” (*What is constructivism?*, 2002, para. 2).

Historical Background

“Constructivism is not a new concept. It has its roots in philosophy and has been applied to sociology and anthropology, as well as to cognitive psychology and education” (Hanley, 1994, p. 1). In fact, “aspects of the constructivist theory can be found among the works of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (ranging from 470-320 B.C.), all of which speak of the formation of knowledge (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p.23)” (as cited in Hanley, 1994, p. 1). More recently, “constructivist perspectives are grounded in the research of Piaget, Vygotsky, the Gestalt psychologists, Bartlett, and Bruner, as well as the educational philosophy of John Dewey, to mention just a few intellectual roots” (Woolfolk, 2001, p. 329). “The main philosophy of constructivism is generally credited to Jean Piaget (1896-1980)” (Crowther, 1997, para. 9). However, “constructivism...from a practical perspective has roots in the ‘progressive’ model of John Dewey. ...learners are active participants in knowledge acquisition, and engage in restructuring, manipulating, reinventing, and experimenting with knowledge to make it meaningful, organized and permanent. (Davidson, 1995)” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 4-5).

“Contemporary constructivism (thus emphasizing that there are currently a variety of conceptions in the literature) can be clearly linked to the educational philosophies of John Dewey (1933) and the Progressive movement” (Battaglia et al., 2001, p. 87). John Dewey’s experiential learning is often cited as a forerunner of the American constructivist perspective. Constructivist theory and learning strategies are clearly connections with John Dewey’s methodology. John Dewey (1938) believed experiential learning took place when a person was involved in an activity, looked back and evaluated it, determined what was useful or important to remember and used the information to perform another activity. Pragmatism, the philosophy of education proposed by John Dewey, is often defined as learning by doing. Simply stated, when one is actively involved in the learning process then what is learned has more relevance and meaning. However, Dewey did more than propose a simple learning by doing model. “From Dewey’s educational philosophy came the emphasis on experience, activity, and problem solving that helped to reshape our thinking about education and schooling” (Gutek, 1997, p. 101). Historically and philosophically, Dewey’s philosophy is easily linked with constructivism in that both promote active learning.

Learning and Constructivism

Teachers have always made decisions about teaching and learning based on their formal training, and the theories they professionally trust. In fact, “for centuries educators have assumed that children acquire knowledge by internalizing it from the environment” (Kamii et al.,

1991, p. 18). However, “today constructivist teaching is based on recent research about the human brain and what is known about how learning occurs” (*What is constructivism?*, 2002, para. 5). In fact, “dramatic developments in brain research and imaging technology are rapidly advancing our conceptualization of the human brain...The brain is powerfully shaped by genetics, development, and experience while actively shaping the nature of our experiences and culture in which we live” (Green, 1999, p. 682).

There is some evidence that constructivism has a link with increased learning. “In searching for answers, researchers in the 1990s have uncovered a massive amount of interrelated evidence in the brain sciences, the biological sciences... This evidence is starting to show in considerable detail how humans actually learn. We now can see why learning is much more than just the flip side of good teaching...Instead of thinking of the brain as a computer, researchers now see it as a far more flexible, self-adjusting entity--a living, unique, ever-changing organism that grows and reshapes itself in response to challenge” (Abbott & Ryan, 1999, p. 66). Abbott went on to build a case linking current brain research and constructivism. He believed current brain research supported constructivist learning theory. “For the brain’s predisposition toward constructivist learning to thrive, we must consider all aspects of a child’s learning environment. Constructivism is open ended, as is the neural structure of the brain” (Abbott & Ryan, 1999, p. 69).

Constructivist Classrooms

Constructivism is concerned with how the learner structures or configures knowledge. There are neither black and white, clear-cut solutions to problems, nor fast, easy answers to questions. Typically, the constructivist classroom fosters and rewards multiple interpretations of reality. The constructivist classroom depends on multi-cultural, active, experience-based learning methods and activities. “Again and again, the idea of learners getting involved in their learning, instead of passively receiving information from an instructor, has been considered the essence of education” (Herbert & Rubin, 1998, para. 1). Constructivist environments engage learners in relevant and meaningful knowledge construction. Classroom discussions are student driven and allow for brainstorming of ideas to reach conclusions. The students reflect on their own experiences and link their experiences to various aspects of their life. Prawat (1992) stated, “while there are several interpretations of what (constructivist) theory means, most agree that it involves...putting the students’ own efforts to understand at the center of the educational enterprise” (as cited in Applefield et al., 2000, p. 35). The individual student is at the core of the process. In the constructivist classroom the key to developing constructivist lesson plans is the inclusion of active learning strategies. “Both constructivism and student-centered design emphasize experiences, are activity centered, and are relevant. Students have the freedom to learn and create information; the curriculum is centered on their needs and interests. Individual students have the final responsibility for their learning” (Jordan et al., 2000, pp. 490-491).

John Zahorik, a professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, synthesized several models for a constructivist classroom. He explained the worldview of knowledge and learning within a theory of constructivism. Zahorik's assumptions about teaching and learning included, "knowledge is...not a set of facts, concepts, or laws waiting to be discovered. It is not something that exists independent of a knower. Humans create or construct knowledge as they attempt to bring meaning to their experience" (Zahorik, 1995, p. 11). Further, he stated, "Since knowledge is a construction of humans and humans are constantly undergoing new experiences, knowledge can never be stable" (Zahorik, 1995, p. 12). Based on his research and his assumptions about knowledge, Zahorik proposed a model for constructivist teaching. He found *five basic elements* that exist in all constructivist teaching. Constructivist teaching and learning depend on activating knowledge, acquiring knowledge, understanding knowledge, using knowledge, and reflecting on knowledge (Zahorik, 1995).

Driscoll (1994) and Marshall (1992) enumerated the most widely accepted assumptions about the constructivist classroom proposed in several prominent constructivist models. They found constructivist perspectives include "complex, challenging learning environments and authentic tasks, social negotiation and shared responsibility as a part of learning, multiple representations of content, understanding that knowledge is constructed, and student-centered interaction" (as cited in Woolfolk, 2001, p. 334). Hunkins and Ornstein (1998) summarized the basic tenet of the constructivist classroom when they said, "getting the student to be active in learning the curriculum is part of the constructivist emphasis....each learner must participate in generating learning...which...is constantly being connected with already existing knowledge" (p. 115).

Learning in a constructivist classroom is guided not only by different assumptions, axioms, and principles, but the constructivist classroom may appear different than a traditional classroom. A constructivist classroom might be viewed by the casual observer as chaotic and nonproductive. Dede and Sprague (2002) stated, "as teachers, we are taught to believe that learning takes place in a quiet and orderly setting. Activities in which students are taking an active role and sharing information with each other make for noisy classrooms. To an outsider, the classroom may appear to be in chaos. This does not mean students are not learning" (para. 12). However, a constructivist classroom allows for a traditional, quiet and orderly setting as well as the more active approach. Just as students create their own reality, they can also create their own environment by choosing more traditional approaches to learning the material. Caprio (1994) also addressed how the constructivist classroom differs from one based on the traditional model. "The average traditional American classroom, whether grade school or college level, tends to resemble a one-person show with a captive but often comatose audience. Classes are usually driven by 'teacher-talk' and depend heavily on textbooks for the structure of the course. Instruction in these classrooms is based on the idea that there is a fixed world of knowledge that the student must come to know. Information is divided into parts and built into a whole concept. Teachers serve as pipelines and seek to transfer their thoughts and meanings to the passive student. There is little room for student-initiated questions, independent thought or interaction

between students. The goal of the learner is to regurgitate the accepted explanation or methodology expostulated by the teacher” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 7).

Unfortunately, and realistically “teachers worry that this type of classroom environment may be misinterpreted by others who see a constructivist teacher as not in control or not working hard” (Dede & Sprague, para. 12). A novice instructor teaching at a four year university provided a specific example. The novice asked the advice of a seasoned, albeit traditional, instructor regarding a lesson plan. The novice clearly proposed a constructivist model for the lesson. However, she was discouraged from using the plan because the seasoned instructor asked “Where is the teaching?” The novice teacher has since realized there was indeed teaching taking place; however, it was not the traditional “lecture” model which so often defines the “good teacher.” Unfortunately, the use of constructivist learning strategies is often met with such criticism and resistance.

The teacher in a constructivist classroom faces other unique challenges. Constructivist teachers must be creative and flexible in their approach to a subject and to the environment. “Constructivist instruction...places high demands on the teacher’s subject-matter understanding. The teacher must not only be familiar with the principles underlying a topic of study but must also be prepared for the variety of ways these principles can be explored” (Windschitl, 1999, p. 754). In the constructivist classroom, the instructor designs curriculum which encourages “students to discover principles by themselves. The task of the instructor is to translate information...into a format appropriate to the learner’s current state of understanding. Curriculum should be organized...so that the student continually builds upon what they have already learned” (2002, para. 2). In summary, in the constructivist classroom, “educators value and encourage students’ points of view...adapt the curriculum to challenge students’ suppositions...create opportunities for students to exhibit their work and share ideas...provide non-judgmental responses to their work and assess their performance authentically within the context of learning” (Kaufman, 1996, p. 43).

Constructivist Teachers

Wheatly proposed that the teacher’s role is to “provide stimulating and motivational experiences through negotiation and act as a guide in the building of personalized schema” (as cited in Crowther, 1997, para. 14). The role an instructor plays in any classroom is fundamental to teaching and learning. Constructivist teachers share their love of learning with their students because, in the constructivism perspective, “a teacher is, and always has been, ‘the most important agent of change in the classroom.’ The irony for teachers is that, while we encourage students to be co-teachers, we must not forget that as teachers we are also students” (Phye, 1997, p. 595). Kaufmann (1996) reinforced the teacher as learner paradigm when he said, “constructivist teacher educators are first and foremost learners who participate in the learning cycle with their students as they observe, participate, reflect and design new initiatives” (p. 42).

Brooks and Brooks (1993) produced the following summary of characteristics of a constructivist teacher. They found constructivist teachers:

1. *become one of many resources that the student may learn from, not the primary source of information.*
2. *engage students in experiences that challenge previous conceptions of their existing knowledge.*
3. *allow student responses to drive lessons and seek elaboration of students' initial responses and allow student some thinking time after posing questions.*
4. *encourage the spirit of questioning by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encourage thoughtful discussion among students.*
5. *use cognitive terminology such as "classify," "analyze", and "create" when framing tasks.*
6. *encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative. Be willing to let go of classroom control.*
7. *use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive physical materials.*
8. *don't separate knowing from the process of finding out.*
9. *insist on clear expression from students. When students can communicate their understanding, then they have truly learned" (as cited in Hanley, 1994, para. 2-3).*

Phye (1997) claims that "for many classroom teachers, constructivism means modification of teaching practices rather than sweeping change. The modifications will likely take the form of changing the social structure of individual classrooms with less teacher-initiated instruction and more cooperative learning opportunities" (p. 594). Brooks and Brooks (1993) continued, "becoming a constructivist teacher may prove a difficult transformation since most instructors were prepared for teaching in the traditional, objectivist manner. It requires a paradigm shift and...abandonment of familiar perspectives and practices and the adoption of new ones" (Garmston & Wellman, 1994, p. 25). Therefore, when implementing constructivist methods an individual teacher may want to start slowly. Teachers may want to devise small units of study following a constructivist mode until they feel comfortable with a new style of teaching and learning. The teacher in the classroom is essential; however, the focus of the constructivist classroom is the learner.

Constructivist Learners

Most importantly, in the constructivist classroom the learner is at the heart of the process. "Emphasis is placed on the learner...rather than the teacher or the instructor" (*What is constructivism?*, 2002, para. 1), because "constructivists place the learner at the center of the equation; ...the learner constructs knowledge rather than passively absorbs it (Brooks and Brooks 1993)" (Garmston & Wellman, 1994, p. 84). Constructivism "emphasizes the active role

of the learner in building understanding and making sense of information” (Woolfolk, 2001, p. 329).

As opposed to a traditional teacher centered classroom, constructivist learners are more often “encouraged to take responsibility in their own learning process (Wilson, 1996)” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 11). Combined with material, skills, and knowledge considered important by educators, researchers, parents, and other stake holders in a student’s education, students are able to “...determine what they need to learn, manage their own learning activities, and also develop greater metacognitive skills. Students who...construct their learning...will graduate with the higher level thinking and problem solving skills that are necessary to be successful in today’s world” (Baylor et al., 2002, para. 11). Constructivist learners are empowered in the learning process. “Constructivist learning relies on the learner doing the work of learning (Dershem, 1996). Constructivist teaching empowers the learner to construct and interpret his/her understanding of knowledge and reality” (Baylor et al., 2002, para. 3).

The constructivist learner “interacts with objects and events and thereby gains an understanding of the features held by such objects or events. The learner...constructs his/her own conceptualizations and solutions to problems” (*What is constructivism?*, 2002, para. 1). They tend to become physically and mentally engaged in learning because constructivism allows students to be active participants in their own learning. Constructivist learners “search for their own understandings rather than to follow other people’s logic” (Thielfoldt, 1995, p. 15). Rather than relying on others to impart knowledge to them, students become active in the learning process. They learn how to think and how to learn. “In utilizing constructivism, a teacher can teach a student how to think and be a thinker” (Thielfoldt, 1995, p. 22).

Another benefit for the constructivist learner is the opportunity to engage in collaborative learning and research groups. Learners in the constructivist classroom take part in group activities and engage in group exploration of knowledge and truth. “Learners interact with the knowledge, the learning environment, and with other learners (Dershem, 1996)” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 2). Frances, Kinzie, Muller, and Simmons (1998), found one of the general principles that promote learning for college students was “social learning experiences, such as peer teaching and group projects, particularly those that promote group construction of knowledge” (para. 4). Not only are group projects important because “two heads are better than one” but group projects also “allow a student to observe other students’ models of successful learning” (Frances et al., 1998, para. 4). Further, interaction with other learners tends to “alter the knowledge and change the learner’s perceptions of that knowledge; so what is learned is not based just on an individual’s past experiences, but on the collective experiences of the learning community” (Baylor et al., 2002, para. 2). Constructivist theory espouses that all learners possess a unique, personal view of reality which may be determined in part by their learning style. One’s reality is tied directly to one’s own perceptions, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and frame of reference.

Finally, constructivist “students are more actively involved than in a traditional classroom. Regardless of student learning style, the constructivist environment allows students to

search out the knowledge they need using the learning style that best fits them. They are sharing ideas, asking questions, discussing concepts, and revising their ideas and misconceptions... Collaborative environments...encourage the knowledge construction needed for more lasting learning (Jonassen, 1996)” (as cited in Dede & Sprague, 2002, para. 10).

Constructivist Model—the Effective Listening Campaign

By developing a listening campaign using a constructivist model, students learn the importance of effective listening in their personal and professional lives. The effective listening campaign is reminiscent of experiences students often have in elementary school with the Science Fair. The final result of the campaign is a poster display and an oral presentation. The purpose of the display is to sell the effective listening campaign to selected audience.

What follows is one unit of an effective listening class which will fundamentally reflect Zahorik’s five basic elements described earlier. This unit can be applicable to many situations—it can be used in either a high school or college level course, perhaps even on an elementary level. This project can be adapted to any course which contains a unit on effective listening. Through such a unit, “students will acquire knowledge, understand knowledge, use knowledge, and reflect on knowledge” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 8). This one activity-based experience can serve as a basis for constructing other effective listening concepts and activities. After learners discover what aspect of effective listening interests them most from this activity, they can construct means for learning effective listening skills. This activity triggers knowledge by having learners choose a relevant target audience for an effective listening campaign. *See appendices for a student handout that describes the assignment (Appendix A) and suggested grading rubric (Appendix B).*

Research indicates listening is the most frequently used communication skill. “If frequency is a measure of importance, then listening easily qualifies as the most prominent kind of communication” (Adler & Rodman, 1997, p. 283). In 1926, Paul T. Rankin conducted what is considered the breakthrough study of listening. Statistically, Rankin found that 45% of communication time was spent listening, while 30% was spent speaking, 16% was spent reading and nine percent was spent writing (Floyd, 1998). Awareness of how important it is to be an effective listener is the beginning for developing listening skills. Superseding the knowledge or behaviors that make up effective listening is the need to understand the importance of effective listening in the learners’ lives.

Following teacher directed lectures, activities, and assigned readings, students identify a target audience of their choice. Generally speaking, students choose an audience related to their major or field of interest. Accurate and appropriate audience analysis is the first step in effective communication and helps the students activate knowledge. In this case, students are assigned to a committee representing a relevant target audience. Each committee is responsible for creating a positive, effective listening campaign designed to highlight the importance of effective listening for the target audience they represent. Accurate and appropriate audience analysis is the first step in effective communication. An analysis of the target audience helps the students to activate

and thereby construct their own knowledge. Students address the importance of good listening in that context. Students are directed to relevant listening research using the *International Journal of Listening*, textbooks, business sources, online databases, and any other scholarly resources.

Zahorik's second element, acquiring knowledge, is evident by the use of references and sources of information. Students begin the project by employing textbooks, online resources, articles in journals, and conducting interviews with experts. These sources, resulting in acquisition of knowledge, provide the students with the data needed to prepare, perform, and document the needs of their target audience. Objectives are framed based on solid theory gleaned from scholarly resources.

Once the needs of the target audience are identified and objectives are framed, a methodology for advertising and announcing the campaign is prepared. Clearly, students in a constructivist classroom will generate their own ideas for advertising methods; however, they generally welcome some template ideas. Students have designed tee shirts, newspaper ads, posters and banners, caps, mugs and cups, brochures, web pages, billboards, buttons and pins, bumper stickers, and media public service announcements as methods of advertising to their target audience. Whatever methods are chosen, students prepare prototypes for the audience to react to, to see, to read, and/or to hear. Because of the public presentation of their results, students must employ elements of effective visual aids and visual displays. Students actively use their knowledge in order to construct the products, and processes as well as develop presentation skills.

Assessment of the campaign includes submission of a typed, detailed explanation of the campaign, the procedures, objectives, outcomes, sources of funding, operational details, equipment needs, and time commitment. This project must be clearly appropriate to the target audience. These details allow learners to continue activating, acquiring, understanding and using knowledge throughout the entire assignment. Within the basic assignment framework students are free to discover their own resources, examples, models, assessment tools, and structure. Finally, a set of references is prepared and included with the project paperwork.

Constructivist Listening Campaign—An Authentic Task

Students may, in their lifetime, be asked to prepare a campaign for something either personally or professionally; therefore, this assignment is an authentic task. At work, students might be involved with a public relations campaign. As members of organizations, students might be involved with campaigns to resolve social or political issues or problems. Social negotiation, or shared responsibility, is important in constructivist teaching. In this project, social negotiation exists because results are constructed in small groups. Students work on these projects collaboratively to construct meaning in a field of listening in which they are interested.

In the constructivist learning environment, assessment does not take place "at the end of the course but instead assessment methods are integrated into the learning process itself. The

purpose of assessment is...to promote the learning...and to find...what...qualitative changes are taking place in students' knowledge base" (Tynjala, 1998, p. 177). "Reflection involves scheduled, structured time to review, think about, and analyze an experience to gain deeper understanding" (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 1). As an important adjunct to learning, learners are given the "opportunity to think about the knowledge they have gained, how their attitudes have changed" (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 1). Additionally, "formative evaluation (assessment that occurs throughout the learning process)...plays a key role in helping learners as they experiment during the constructivist activity" (Alesandrini & Larson., 2002, para. 5). Formative assessment can help the instructor determine if students are using their time wisely, if appropriate and sufficient resources are available, if there are ways in which the teacher and students can restructure the learning environment to promote learning. While periodic formative evaluations may not satisfy the university requirement for grades, the procedure can clearly keep learners are on the right track. By providing for several periodic student reflections and formative assessment opportunities, students have more training in writing and speaking. Reflection papers also allow students to take stock of what they are learning and how their tasks are meeting their own needs for learning.

At the conclusion of this campaign, students contemplate issues and reflect on their experience. There are also several types of reflection that can be employed. Specifically, "There are three types of reflection. Cognitive reflection examines the new knowledge and skills students acquire from their experience: information, data, alternative ways of knowing or perceiving (curriculum links are usually addressed as part of the cognitive reflection). Affective reflection examines what students feel as a result of an experience: emotions and attitudes. Process reflection examines what students learn from experiencing a process: planning, consequences of one decision making scheme versus another, working with others" (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 4).

Just as there are different types of reflection to meet the needs of the learners, there are also several channels for reflection. Students might be asked to write journals, "one of the most commonly used reflective assignments. However, writing exercises such as essays, plays, stories, and letters are alternatives to a journal" (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 5). Discussions, debates, or presentations "give students an opportunity to improve their communication skills and reflect on the project. Performing a drama, song or dance; or creating a painting, collage, or multi-media show are effective reflection strategies" (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 5).

Reflections utilizing several types of media allow "...students to showcase their strengths...the student who takes wonderful photographs but struggles with writing has a chance to shine" (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 5). Allowing for alternative options for reflection allow students to further employ constructivist perspectives. Students who are given the opportunity to construct their own evaluation techniques gain valuable knowledge. They have the power to realistically and authentically reinforce their knowledge construction based on their own schema and learning style.

Conclusion

Frances, Kinzie, Muller, and Simmons' (1998) listing of practices which promote learning among college students included several references to constructivism. They cautioned teachers: "...although it might be difficult or even impossible to incorporate all these practices into one college class, if most college classes could incorporate just a few of these elements, colleges would develop into more learning-centered communities and would move toward meeting the learning needs of a greater portion of their students" (para. 6).

The constructivist philosophy of learning can be applied to effective learning in general. Synthesizing this philosophy into a campaign which identifies the importance of effective listening is a viable option for teachers and learners. By using constructivist principles and methods, classrooms become more learning-centered communities and meet the learning needs of many students.

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Appendix A

Effective Listening Campaign Assignment

You have been assigned to a committee. Your team will be responsible for creating a positive, effective listening campaign designed to highlight the need for and values of effective listening for a target audience of your choice. Some examples include our college's students, employees of a business, college or high school or elementary teachers, people employed in the helping professions, owners of a company, a high school professional development faculty committee, the CEO of a business/place of employment, the employees of a company, etc. The goal of the campaign is to promote effective and active listening. You will be designing a display booth "selling" your campaign. These may be reminiscent of your high school "science fair" displays.

Begin by choosing a target audience and then addressing the importance of and the need for good listening for that audience. The rewards and costs of listening should also be considered. You should start by revisiting material we discussed in class, by doing an online search for effective listening importance, visiting the International Listening Association webpage (www.listen.org), or journals and various texts you find in the library. What are your objectives for this campaign? Why is the campaign needed for this audience? Your group must prepare a presentation that will "sell" your campaign to the appropriate committee you have chosen.

Once you have done a needs assessment and have framed some objectives, You need to prepare at least 2 different processes or products to show in your "booth." You may choose from the following products or processes or include your own ideas to get the word out to your intended audience: Whatever ever methods you choose you must prepare a prototype to see, read, and/or react to. (Therefore, if you are proposing a listening tee shirt, be sure to have a design ready for review on a transparency, on poster board or on an actual tee shirt!) Be sure to employ good techniques for effective visual aids. Some possible products include: tee shirts, newspaper ads, posters/Banners, caps, mugs or cups, brochures, web pages, billboards, buttons or pins, bumper stickers, radio/TV public service announcements

Specifically, this project includes the following components:

1. A detailed explanation and rationale for your campaign. Be sure the procedure, sources of funding, operational details, etc. are all well defined. Even without hearing a presentation or seeing your "booth," a constituent of your target audience can get a sense of what this campaign is all about. Why is this campaign needed? Why is it needed for this specific audience? Be sure your campaign is clearly appropriate to your target audience. Justify why it is specific to your audience rather than to any audience.
2. Clear and specific objectives for the campaign which are detailed, complete and written as specific outcomes for this campaign. What do you want the target audience to learn, to be able to do, or to value at the end of this campaign?
3. Both of your processes and procedures should be well planned, carefully thought out, and appropriate to your audience and to a public setting.
4. Finally you will need to prepare a bibliography of 5 credible and timely sources of information.

All your paperwork and materials and "artifacts" need to be prepared so that they can be handed in for me to keep. If you need to have material for your portfolios, keep another copy for yourself. We can take digital photos of your "booth" for your portfolios as well. If you make banners or posters, I will want the originals with your paperwork/materials handed in.

Appendix B

Campaign Rubric

Team Members Names _____

Listening Campaign “Booth” Rubric--60 points

Attention getting display	10
Adequate summary of your campaign is evident from the presentation/display	10
Logical/organized development or project	10
“Polished” exhibit	10
Team members seem credible/knowledgeable	10
Display appropriate for public and for your specific committee	10
Possible Points for Presentation	60

Listening Campaign Paperwork Rubric—40 points

Typed, detailed explanation of campaign; well defined (Even without hearing a presentation or seeing the “booth,” a reader can get a feel for/a sense of what this campaign is all about)	5	4	5	2	1
Objectives for the campaign are detailed and complete (You have listed specific outcomes for this campaign)	5	4	5	2	1
Rationale for campaign is complete/needs assessment (You have clearly addressed why this campaign is needed)	5	4	5	2	1
Campaign clearly appropriate to target audience (MSU, company, community, a business you define, etc.)	5	4	5	2	1
Campaign Processes well planned, thought out, appropriate	5	4	5	2	1
Bibliography of 5 credible sources of information	5	4	3	2	1
Bibliography of 5 timely sources of information	5	4	3	2	1
Prototypes/products are attractive, well prepared, easy to see	5	4	5	2	1
Possible Points for Paperwork	40				