









	<p>Session Seven: Debates about how best to build student knowledge (1)</p>			<p>?</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>Topic Focus</p> <p>The purpose for today's reading is to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why social constructivism and socio-cultural theory are popular pedagogic approaches. • What the constraints and limitations of these widely supported approaches are. 	<p>Guided Learning</p> <p>Activity 1 (30 mins.) Understand and record the essential principles for knowledge building using a social constructivist approach, and compare these to those of a teacher centred transmission approach (pp 340 – 341)</p> <p>Activity 2 (60 mins.) Understand and graphically organise the four foundational concepts that underpin a socio-cultural view of knowledge building (pp. 342 – 346)</p> <p>Activity 3 (60 mins.) Discuss what constraints a social constructivist approach places on students' knowledge building (pp. 351 – 353)</p> <p>Activity 4 (30 mins.) Synthesise a "Third Way" that describes a "best practice" approach building student knowledge.</p>	<p>Self-directed Learning</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good, T.L. & Brophy, J.E. (2008). <i>Looking in classrooms (10th ed.)</i>. New York: Pearson pp. 340 – 346, 351 – 353. <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the four tasks on one Word document and upload it to Stream for colleagues to read. 	<p>Q: What does "having expertise", or being considered 'an expert' mean for the subject specialist secondary teacher?</p>  <p>Q. Would Tolkien have had the expertise to undertake a social constructivist approach to a literary analysis of LOTR.?</p> <p>Q. Would his expertise be cherished in today's English Departments?</p>




	<p>Focus:</p> <p>Why are social constructivism and socio-cultural theories popular pedagogic approaches? What are the constraints and limitations of these widely supported approaches?</p>	
<p>i</p>	<p>In my work as an English and Literacy adviser, one English HOD asked me why a “pedagogy of telling” seemed so unwelcome and unacceptable as a useful instructional approach. Group work, she argued, allowed the bored, disengaged and non-comprehenders to remain so, they claimed the group’s work as their own, and were disdainful of, or disconnected from, working collectively. In other words, they used the industriousness of the group to camouflage their inaction, and seemed to get away with it. Almost as an afterthought, she asked how any knowledge the group constructed socially could be trusted anyway, if the teacher felt discouraged from directly instructing – “telling” – her students about what they were learning. After all, who was the expert here?</p> <p>Students’ ePortfolio comments about practicum experiences echo a similar tension. In the privacy of this forum, students have taken issue with conservative, teacher centred, and passive student instruction. They criticise the unchallengeable position of the teacher as the sole source of valid knowledge, the passive acceptance by students of what the teacher says, and the inevitable reproduction of that knowledge in assessments, as evidence of valid and deep learning. Students ask: what of group work, negotiated learning, scaffolded instruction, active engagement and the teasing out and testing of information – the instructional approaches we learn of at College, and aspire to use in our work?</p> <p>In this and next week’s session, we explore this debate with the help of two texts. This week, we will close read Good and Brophy’s (2008) work on Social Constructivism. In next week’s Session 8, we will examine the position taken by Anna Sfard (1998), who argues for a measured, less ideological approach to theorising about teaching and learning that builds knowledge.</p>	<p>Q. How would you describe the dominant teaching approach of <u>your</u> secondary teachers?</p> 

	<p>Activity 1: Our reading purpose: <i>to discuss</i> the foundational principles of social constructivism</p>	
 	<p>Read pages 340 – 341 from Good & Brophy (2008). As you read, look for and record information about these tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 What would you identify as the important foundational principles of a social constructivist approach? 1.2 How did the research of Lev Vygotsky contribute to its conceptual development? 1.3 Look carefully at Table 11.1 (p. 341). Write brief, one sentence answers that explain differences between social constructivist and transmission teaching with respect to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What constitutes knowledge and how it is constructed? b) What is the role of the teacher c) What is the role of the student? 1.4 To highlight the differences in practice: briefly describe what happened in two lessons you observed during Practicum 2, where one lesson was identifiably transmission and teacher centred, while the second was clearly social constructivist. 	<p>Q: Is social constructivism merely naive idealism in the context of our secondary school system?</p>

	<p>Activity 2: Our reading purpose: <i>understand and graphically organise</i> the four foundational concepts of socio-cultural view of knowledge building as a form of social constructivism.</p>	
 	<p>Continue your reading of Good & Brophy (2008) pp. 342 -346. As you read, look for and record information about these inquiry tasks:</p> <p>2.1 How might we describe an English department in socio-cultural terms i.e. as a community of practice? Indeed, how might membership of this English course constitute a community of practice?</p> <p>2.2 Using a graphic organiser of your own design, summarise the important conceptual features of this approach as explained by pertinent subheadings in the text.</p> <p>2.3 Review the information read and recorded so far in the Session. Write two paragraphs: the first identifies the key arguments in support of social constructivist knowledge building, while the second explains why it is preferable to a transmission approach.</p>	<p>Q: What assumptions do social constructivists make about a teacher's classroom management skills, discipline strategies, and their students' relationships?</p>
	<p>Activity 3: Reading purpose: <i>evaluating the constraints of social constructivism.</i></p>	
 	<p>Continue your reading of Good & Brophy (2008) pp.351 - 353. As you read, look for and record information about these inquiry tasks:</p> <p>3.1 Construct a T-chart with which to record relevant information. Title one column "Advantages", the other "Disadvantages".</p>	<p>Q. How much influence does NCEA assessment have on teachers' instructional approaches?</p>

3.2 Record on the chart the limitations, reservations and cautionary notes the authors discuss about adopting social constructivist approaches. By inference, record in the “Advantages” column the attributes you think these “Disadvantages” seek to repudiate.



	<p>Activity 4: Purpose is to synthesise our understandings of social constructivism, using writing to add to Chart 11.1</p>	
  	<p>Your task is to add a third column to Table 11.1 p. 341: The column heading is “Integrating two opposing positions”.</p> <p>4.1 Note that there are eight points of comparison in Table 11.1. You will list a further eight points in your third column whose statements attempt to describe features of a teacher’s practice that combines the best of both sides – a Third Way if you will.</p> <p>4.2 Should you require some further points, put them in but make clear their links to points in the initial two columns.</p> <p>4.3 Present the table in its complete 3 column form.</p> <p>Action: Once you have proofed your notes and responses, upload to the STREAM forum as a single word document for others to read. The deadline for uploading is Friday 20th July at 23.55hrs.</p>	<p><i>Q: In what ways has the work completed in this session reflected elements of either, or both approaches?</i></p>