

Constructivist Teaching through Blended Learning

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My belief as a teacher

Social Constructivism:

- Knowledge is dynamic
- Builds on prior experiences
- Created through dialogue & meaningful interaction

Blended Learning (BL)

- The incorporation of technology into teaching
- Fusing of on-line and face-to-face instruction

Research shows that BL:

- Expands opportunities for students to participate in **discussions**
- Enables **collaboration**
- Allows students to cultivate **identity** via on-line spaces
- Can be a tool for **reflection**

In this session, I will highlight two ways that I employed BL in support of constructivist principles.

Example 1: Group Activity (TLS3003)

The first major assessment component in TLS is the group presentation, which comprises 30% of the course grade. I have noticed that with regards to group work, there remain instances when one or two people end up bearing more responsibility and/or exerting more effort compared to others. With an eye towards equitable distribution and closer collaboration in preparing for the presentation, I sought help from the BL resource person, Brant Knutzen (brant@knutzen.se), to set-up Moodle groups and to use Google docs powerpoints.

Group Activity

The purpose of the group activity is to expand students' collective understanding of principles and practices that undergird curriculum and/or assessment policy initiatives in Hong Kong. Students will be organized into major/discipline groups and given time to prepare a 20-25 minute presentation. The presentation is comprised of two parts: actual presentation and discussion with the class. To prepare for the presentation, groups will read about the selected policy, focusing on specific aspects (for example, catering to student diversity within the "Learning to Learn" Policy). Groups will draw on the references listed in the course outline, as well as other resources, to expand knowledge of the topic. Groups will then go to their assigned Moodle group discussion forum to discuss questions, and collaborate to prepare for the presentation.

- About 70% participation rate
- Not all groups utilized the dboards to exchange information
- Example of a “good” discussion is on the A-class website
- I read through comments and “stepped in” when needed
- Used comments to check progress and meet with groups

Example 2: PGDE class

Discussion board (2 groups of 15 students each)

- *Write a reflection on your understanding of curriculum (from the worksheet) and discuss how, in your view, your primary/secondary school experiences were influenced by the global forces*

The discussion board rules

- One student started the conversation
- Each student was required to contribute at least twice
- <https://moodle.ied.edu.hk/mod/partforum/discuss.php?d=1036>

Contributions from Dboard

- Students shared prior knowledge of global influences
- Linked field experience (in NZ) to their understanding
- Showed what they already know
- I used their contributions to spur discussions when we came back to class

Appadurai's "Global-scapes"

- Ethnoscapes

Andrew:

The society has become more multicultural. The background of students is more diverse. Their abilities, learning styles and cultures are all different.

Multiculturalism enhances creativity. But at the same time, we should be careful of cultural integration. **What should be adopted and what should be abandoned so that we can maximize the positive outcome of cultural difference?** How can we extend the knowledge of students by giving them opportunities to experience other cultures? (see also Germain's comment).

Appadurai's "Global-scapes"

- Finanscapes

Pui Man: Globalization also brings this influence to hk, making hk...emphasize...business. Therefore, how about those who enter in non business field such as pe music or art? How does it influence the curriculum in school? I guess it would bring an influence to school curriculum. Schools maybe put more focus on academic subjects and results. Therefore, students may be fixed to put more focus on business. Do they have space and way to explore other interest? Will they still have chance to explore those non academic and business aspects? I guess less.

Different success rates: Why?

	BEd (TLS 3003)	PGDE (CU5046)
Age	Younger	Older
Practical experience	No field work	Field work in NZ
Nature of on-line task	Collaboration and planning – open ended	Discussing – with roles assigned
Assessed?	Not really	Yes – participation & attendance
Accountability	Followed-up face-to-face in small group meeting	Followed-up face-to-face in class

Some thoughts...

- On-line activity more effective when students see that it “fits” into a larger scheme – that it is built upon in class
- Quality of on-line engagement rises when there are roles and expectations
- BL should be assessed as part of overall participation

The awesome TLS3003 Team

- We've used some form of BL to collaborate ourselves – to design rubrics, moderate presentations on video, plan meetings
- Last year, we saw the need to formalize the group presentation
- More recently, EE's and students' comments drew our attention to assessing the process and product of group presentations
- This has led to formal revision of rubric to include class participation (overall) and process of collaboration in group activity

Constructivism is a shared principle

- We want our students to learn by reflection, discussing with others, and applying what they learn
- Dialogue and collaboration are key
- BL gives our students to learn through constructivist approaches and for us as colleagues to communicate and strengthen our own shared goals