

Principal Challenges in the Transition From a Traditional Teaching Practice to a Constructivist Teaching Practice

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Abstract: This article has the purpose to show principal challenges that teachers deal with and have the intention to transit from a traditional teaching practice to a constructivist teaching practice. In conclusion, this sort of transition is not easy and those teachers would keep teaching on constructivism because we consider this last teaching model has more advantages than traditional teaching so as to increase the learning and is more human in order to set students in the core of the process teaching learning and helping them so that foster their potentialities.

Key words: constructivism, traditional didactic, transition, teachers, students

1. Introduction

This article has the purpose to show principal challenges that teachers deal with and have the intention to transit from a traditional teaching practice to a constructivist teaching practice. This paper is divided in four sections: In the first, we propose the literature review about principal concepts and characteristics of a traditional didactic and the constructivism. In the second section, the setting of the question, we put forward the reasons why there are challenges of transition from a traditional didactic approach to a constructivist approach. In the third section, we propose the method and the technique applied in order to develop this work. In the last part, we put forward those referred challenges.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Traditional Didactic

The traditional didactic flourished in the seventeenth century. It matched with the rupture of the feudal order, the constitution of national states and the born of the bourgeoisie. Its kind of didactic is the way more generalized at many schools in Mexico.

Humberto Jerez proposes an idea of didactic: “Didactic based on speculative attitude of the idealism and the positivism that unknowns the teaching of development pedagogy and does not make chains between motivation and learning, its effectiveness is on the work of the teacher and its methods are formalism and memorizing” (Jerez, 1997, p. 97).

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Pablo Rico Gallego puts forward principal characteristics of a traditional didactic:

Mogocentric: All activities are accomplished by the professor.

Logocentric: The interest of students are set in a second place.

Memoristic: It is verbalistic and is based exclusively on working the mind.

Evaluative: In a negative meaning, it makes exams only to review the knowledge or to get the waited answers from students.

Discipline: It is exaggerated and repressive.

Students: The role of students is passive.

Schedules: Every schedule is always the same and inflexible.

Places: All educational activities have as a stage the closed classroom.

Teaching: It is to every student without concerning individual differences.

Learning goals: Every goal is perceived as general scopes focused on teaching rather than learning (Rico, 1992, pp. 127–128).

2.2 Constructivist Didactic

Constructivism began in the first decade of the twentieth century. First it emerged as an epistemological model concerned by discerning problems of knowledge getting. Highlighting the conviction about knowledge is built actively by cognocents subjects; in other words, knowledge does not receive passively from the environment or from others (Díaz Barriga, 2010, p. 22).

Authors Corsi, G., Esposito, E. and Baraldi, C. (1996) put forward constructivism is “a heterogeneous conjunct of theoretical settings that come from many disciplines (biology, neurophysiology, cybernetics, psychology, etcetera) that share the way according to knowledge is not supported on external reality, but always only on constructions of one observer” (Corsi, 1996, p. 51).

Soler proposes:

The apprentice is an active because he processes and integrates himself new information to his previous experience of learning.

There are many perspectives gathered so as to build a whole vision of a domain of knowledge supported by authors, teachers, pairs and actors of a cultural and social environment.

Learning process asks to collaborate and cooperate to participants communicating to other members of the community of learning so as to synthesize and give a meaning to knowledge that the community builds to it.

There is a support of an authentic environment with experiences of the real life, avoiding knowledge that is outside of a context and without gathered a meaning.

The contact with other apprentices about solving problems of the real life, makes connections stronger between learning and performing in life's specific situations (Soler, 2006, p. 34).

3. Setting of the Question

However, in our point of view is better to learn when one teacher applies on her or his job a constructivist didactic rather than one teacher who applies a traditional didactic. There is some resistance from many educational institutions and students as well to the teacher changes her or his didactic view. It is because of this is a strong root about the job of a traditionalist teacher in Mexican educational system many years ago. It is the name “traditional”

comes from.

4. Research Method

We applied an analytic method because of we analyzed principal challenges that a teacher faces in order to transit from a traditional teaching to a constructivist teaching. About technique, we applied documentary technique because of we reviewed bibliographic material so as to support the theoretical and conceptual framework.

5. Principal Challenges of Transition From a Traditional Teaching Practice to a Constructivist Teaching Practice

We are going to describe principal characteristics, first of one traditional teacher who runs her or his practice with a traditional way and secondly of another different teacher who runs on constructivism. Then we shall describe principal challenges of transition from a traditional teaching practice to a constructivist teaching practice.

We put forward characteristics of a traditional teacher:

- Her or his teaching is very rigid because of it is based in only its action and it avoids participating to students.
- The teacher considers that the student has a second place, he or she thinks about students as subjects that they should receive the learning and accomplish instructions without any kind of asking.
- In some cases, the teacher bases her o his teaching on control ways, such as the fear, punishment and retaliations in order to obligate to students learn.
- Teacher´s methods are orientated to teaching and not to learning.
- Teaching in the classroom must become in one universal truth, and nobody can opine or ask about it.
- Teacher asks in the classroom that contents should be memorized.
- Almost always the teacher applies the verbal exposition as a teaching method.
- The teacher considers that the student should adapt to the pre-established in education, and do not interact in the classroom, only they should listen and learn, and as the student only receive information, her or his unique obligation is to memorize contents given by professors.
- The teacher points that students should learn so as to approve without consulting other information resources.
- As the teacher's teaching method is based on severity and discipline, it is not difficult to him or her takes control of any number of students.
- The teacher applies a few resources, almost, one book and the board.
- The professor supports final notes of students on exams, where students should repeat exactly, with periods and comas, that the teacher taught in the classroom.
- Because of severity of the method, it is almost impossible having a personal relationship with students.
- The teacher should support sentences on pre-established truths by other authors, and he or she has to transmit it, that it limits his or her work.
- The professor is only a transmitter of knowledge, he or she feels out to results that students could have.

Qualities of a constructivist docent are:

- The teacher gives importance to every student on the process teaching learning.
- The docent searches that a student is interested in learning.

- The professor wants a student to learn so as to apply that he or she learned. It is not enough with repeating that he or she learned, it is necessary that knowledge has a practice utility.
- The docent creates conditions in order to students learn.
- The teacher considers to students as active agents, that is the school and the teaching are organized for.
- The professor is a guide along the process teaching learning.
- The docent adapts teaching to the real capacities and limitations of students, he or she clarifies their doubts and he or she helps them in their difficulties.
- The professor considers that a student does not exist to a subject but a subject exists so as to be useful to a student.
- The teacher teaches to students the way that they can learn to have and set by themselves fundamental principles of any discipline.
- The docent asks students to study the contents before they take classes. It produces that students study before a class and then they have more tools of understanding when the contents will be explained in the classroom.
- The professor considers that the classroom is not a straitjacket, the order of the contents can change according to the view of students and the teacher.
- The teacher promotes that students participate in the classroom.
- The docent permits and stimulates the creative attitude of every student.
- The teacher is interested in making docent materials so as to support the learning of students in order to they can appropriate knowledge easier.
- The professor considers that in the time that he or he is teaching, he or she can learn and complementing her or his personal growing.
- The docent knows that he or she should make a team with students in teaching, it produces a better relationship among them.
- The function of the teacher is helping students in order to develop their capacity.
- The professor searches that interesting will be the motivation of students so that they learn.
- The docent looks for knowledge got by students could be useful for them in their everyday life.
- The teacher considers that students are different among them; then, every one of them should learn according to their own rhythm of work and their capacities.
- In the classroom, the discipline is less tough and it is supported on the criterion of students.
- The docent searches the development of working in teams.
- The professor induces to students to think, reason and argue problems.
- Because of ideas of rigor disappear, such as the excessive order and the authoritarianism, the student can live with happiness her or his own learning.
- The teacher trusts students.
- The docent considers that about learning, students should have will because they will not learn if they do not have the purpose.
- The professor considers that practicing is very important in teaching.
- The teacher authorises that evaluation would be accomplished by students.
- The docent searches significant learnings last to students so that they can use those learnings when they need.

Besides according to challenges of change from a traditional docent practice to a constructivist docent practice, we point that some people who work at educational institutions have distrust when the teacher applies the constructivist practice because of that people think that students will not be prepared if educational institutions permit that students run their own learning.

But the problem does not finish here. In some students there is some apathy to constructivist approach. It is a consequence of they have been educated for a lot of time by traditional teachers. Many students hope the docent will make all the process teaching learning, will dictate them, will let them know homework and they will not have more work. We watched in some groups where we taught that some students did not like to participate in the classroom, neither worked in teams nor made group dynamics. In another way, if students are not enough mature to understand the work of constructivist approach, in the moment of auto evaluation they are not objective and they ask the professor for a better note.

Nevertheless besides we have observed, although in a few cases, that some students appreciate participating in the classroom with a constructivist approach, they feel motivated, we have seen them happy because there is a nice environment, they can interact and cooperate each other. Besides they feel good because we trust in their capacities, it develops their creativity.

6. Conclusion

When the transition from a traditional docent to a constructivist docent is not easy step yet, we should keep trying because a constructivist docent has more advantages in order to improve the learning of students, besides she or he is more human because she or he sets to students in the core of the attention and she or he can help to develop their potentialities.

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