Using Danielson’s Framework for Teaching and Common Core Curriculum will only be enhanced by adopting a Constructivist approach toward teaching.

When as teachers we allow students to become self-directed and responsible learners, they learn more. When we allow our students to construct their own knowledge based upon what they already know and the incorporation of prior experience, they not only learn better, but they retain what they learn.

To become Constructivist teachers, we need to move to the role of facilitator. Now, we pose the question, and allow the students to seek the answers. We show them a problem and encourage them to seek a solution and tell us how they arrived at that conclusion. We provide the resources and tools to allow them to “construct” new information and ideas. This happens best when students are allowed to work in groups and share information.

Consider the following examples:

**Teacher A** is teaching prepositions. She has been working on this concept for sometime. She has explained prepositions to her students and had them memorize some to use in their writing. She finds that although they have been taught this many times previously, they seem to keep forgetting.

Teacher B goes to the Smart Board and draws a mountain. Students assemble in groups. She asks her students to write words in relationship to the mountain.

The groups arrive at many words

Under the mountain
Over the mountain
Near the mountain
Behind the mountain
Atop the mountain
Beside the mountain
The list goes on and on. The students have worked collaboratively to construct knowledge and share ideas to gain an understanding of how prepositions work. It is very unlikely they will forget this again, but instead recall the exercise they completed using the mountain as a referent.

The list below is a series of excellent websites to encourage and offer tips about Constructivist Teaching.

http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/constructivism/index.html * excellent resource
www.geoffpetty.com/downloads/WORD/constructivism3.doc
http://saskschoolboards.ca/research/instruction/97-07.htm
http://www.unc.edu/~bwilder/inls111/111beyondactivelearningWED.pdf
http://www.pbs.org/teacherline/courses/inst335/docs/inst335_brooks.pdf
https://sites.google.com/site/assocforconstructteaching/
http://investigations.terc.edu/library/bookpapers/constructivist_learning.cfm
http://www.slideshare.net/nataliea/constructivist-teaching-methods#btnNext

Constructivist Teachers:

- Encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative
- Use raw data and primary sources along with manipulative, interactive and physical materials
- When framing tasks, use cognitive terminology like “classify”, “analyze”, “predict”, and “create”
- Allow student responses to drive lessons, shift instructional strategies, and alter content (teachable moment)
- Inquire about students’ understandings of concepts before sharing their own understandings
Encourage students to engage in dialogue, both with the teacher and with one another.

- Encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encouraging students to ask questions of one another.
- Seek elaboration of initial student responses.
- Engage students in experiences that might be contradictory to their hypotheses, and then encourage discussion.
- Allow wait time, and be considerate for students who process differently.

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