

C-7a

U-3c

English

Q. Describe the Paradigm shift in teaching - learning of English through constructivist approach.

Ans.

The concept of Paradigm shift offers one means of making such connection the discuss paradigm shift in learning in English. It determines whether our education goals have been met or not.

Constructivism is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. The constructivist teaching is based on constructivist learning theory that believes that the learning occurs as learners are actively involved in the process of meaning and

knowledge. When they encounter something new, they need to reconcile it with their previous ideas and experiences, often change the way they believe or discard the new information if found irrelevant.

Constructivist teaching fosters critical thinking and creates motivated and independent learners. This theoretical framework holds that learning always builds upon knowledge that a student already knows (prior knowledge is called schema). Since all the learning is filtered through pre-existing schemata; constructivists suggest that learning is more effective when a student is actively engaged in the learning process, rather than receive the knowledge passively. The students should be the creator of their own knowledge — they need to ask

questions, explore and assess the already known facts.

In this approach the basic assumption is that learners make their own meaning based upon their background knowledge, experiences and purposes. This is very similar to the communicative approach in the sense communication is central to the pedagogy here too. The difference lies in the focus of the approach. The basic difference between the communicative and constructivist approach is of the emphasis on form. Communicative approach as discussed earlier, places equal focus on meaning, use and knowledge of form, on the other hand constructivist approach focuses primarily on meaning and expect that the form will be learnt in the process.

Thus teachers who adopt a constructivist approach to teaching (of grammar) prompt students to

formulate their own questions; allow multiple interpretations and expressions of learning and lastly encourage group work and use of peers as resources.

The most important advantage of this approach is that learners are trained to discover rules and construct their own knowledge. As a result his knowledge can be used in innumerable situations, different from the situation in which they have learnt it. Thus, they become independent users of the language.

Example:- Preparing a curriculum vitae.

On entering the class, the teacher talks to the children about a CV and engages them in a lively discussion by asking questions like when would you need one, what are its sections, which information should come in the beginning, etc. Then in groups of 3 or 4 ask the students to prepare their CVs; the group members will support each other. The teacher while moving around in the class encourages students to speak in English and help each other in their groups.