



## **Approaches for Implementing Constructivism in Teacher education- Hurdles and Means**

**Mr. Sunil Kalekar**

**Adhyapak Mahavidyalaya, Aranyeshwar, Pune 9**

### **Introduction:**

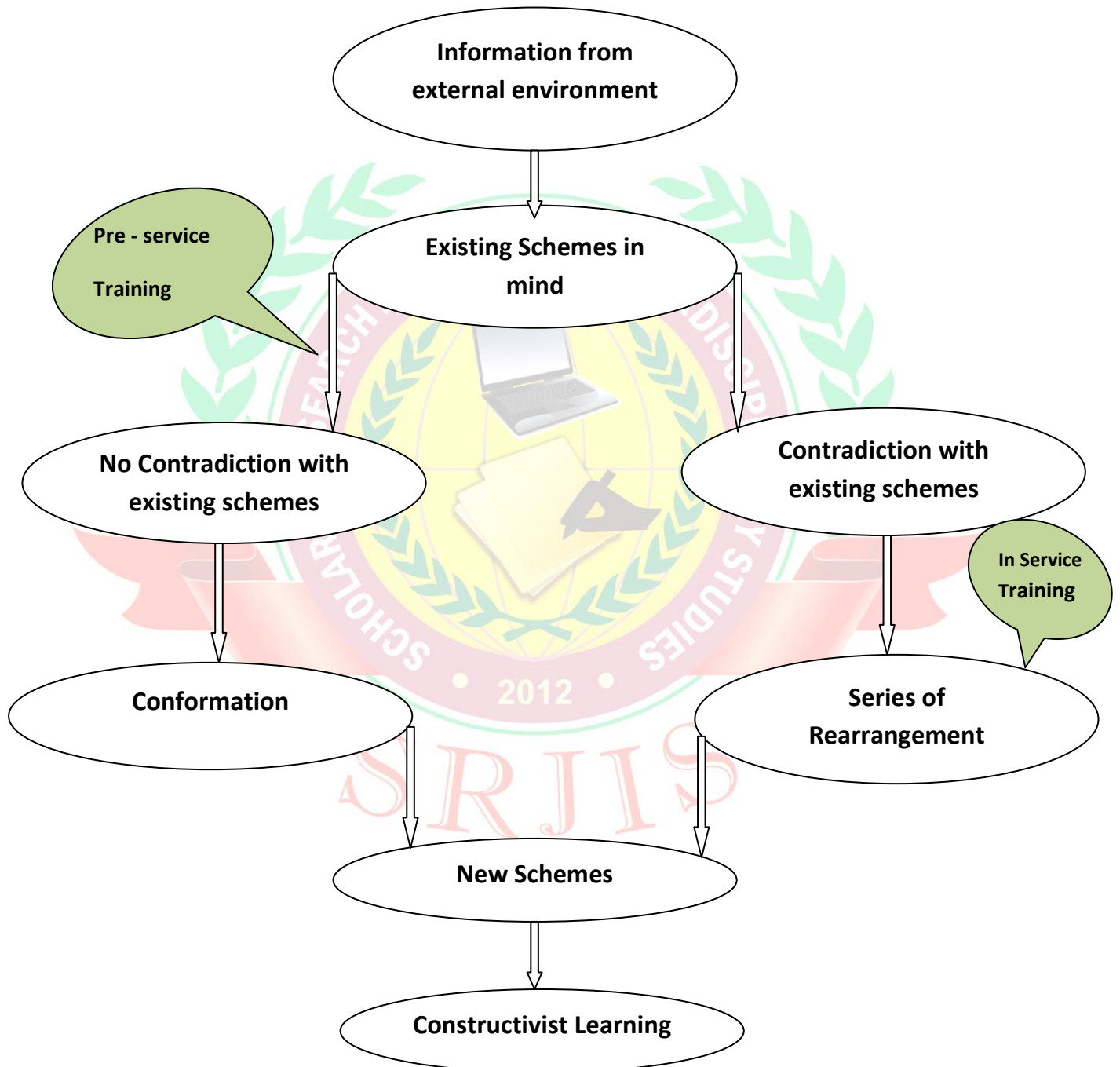
Constructivism is a theory that is much talked about from past two decades in India. Efforts have been taken to implement constructivism in secondary school education. But there are several problems faced by teachers while using constructivist approaches in schools. These problems are basically due to poor training of teachers. The major reason given for not using constructivist approaches in schools as follows:

1. Teachers do not know the methods, strategies to use constructivism.
2. Teachers find the constructivist methods very time consuming.
3. The teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and adequate skills to make use of these strategies in class room.
4. Syllabi are too vast to be taught by constructivist approaches. .

These are general reasons given by the secondary school teachers but the basic reason is something that is not been uncovered.

The constructivist asserts that all learning process is something that is related with mental constructivism. According to this assumption, the individual structure the elements to be

learned in relation with their previous knowledge. In constructivist process, the individual does nothing but create meanings with respect to the information and adopt such meanings with his previous knowledge. The individual conducts the learning process by structuring the information in their minds rather than original form in the introduction. (Yasar, 1988).



Today's teachers have gone through an educative process which has not formed related mental schemes to constructivism. When they are been told about what is constructivism and approaches to implement constructivism, it gives them contradiction with existing schemes which in turn needs series of rearrangements. Thus it becomes difficult for these teachers to accept constructivism as a useful theory of learning hence, very few rearrangements of thought take place leading to no new schemes that are positive for constructivism. Thus it is very essential that sufficient in-service programmes are conducted and teachers form new schemes that are supportive to constructivism.

### **Pre service Programme and Constructivism:**

When we think about prospective teachers, they are today's student and have gone through an educative process that is been introduced by constructivist approaches. Although it is a separate issue to be investigated through research, whether they are been taught using real constructivist approaches. But still one can assume that student entering teacher training programme has got some indirect introduction to constructivism by way of project work, concept maps, collaborative team work, activities etc. Thus today's student teacher has got some mental schemes in mind related to constructivism. Now is pre service training programme gives them sufficient opportunities, these mental schemes will not be in contradiction with existing schemes, rather they will give conformation to the existing schemes and will help to form new modified schemes that will strengthen the concepts of constructivism. This will help tomorrow's teachers to be well equipped with knowledge and skills to adopt constructivist approaches in schools. In fact, they will be convinced for using such methods in school which is more important.

### **Scope of Constructivism in present teacher education curriculum:**

There is a need to incorporate constructivism in teacher training programme. Most universities have included constructivism in their B. Ed. Curricula. It is the theory that is been taught in one of the papers like educational psychology. Constructivism should not be taught as a discrete theory. It has to be infused in the syllabus in such a way that student teacher gets the real feel of what constructivism is. It is often found that student teachers can write a full length answer to the question asked in the exam but if he/ she is asked to conduct a lesson using any constructivist approach, he / she is not able to do that. Thus the very purpose of including the element on constructivism in the syllabus fails. The student teacher should be able to understand the structure of syllabus and text book. They should realize the importance of the activities, exercises, assignments, games etc given in the text book. They should be able to relate their information about constructivism with the practical class room applications. The student teacher today, fails to do this because the training programme does not include sufficient experiences.

### **Expected pre-service programme in accordance with constructivism:**

The component on constructivism in teacher education curriculum should not be taught only as theory part but it should be infused in various courses. The whole curriculum should be implemented in such a way that student teachers get sufficient opportunities to practice the pedagogy of constructivism. Their learning should be organized in such a way that it includes open ended questions, activities, projects and assignments that are individualized as well as group work. They should be made responsible for their own learning. They should be able to design, implement and showcase their own work in novel way. Two important things that can be done while implementing curriculum are:

1. Teacher educators use constructivist approaches while teaching various units of their course work
2. The course related practical work should be rethought and changed drastically.

**A. Methods of Teaching:**

Teacher educators should adopt constructivist strategies while conducting their classes. Instead of focussing on lecture method alone they should use methods / strategies that will enable the student teachers to understand the content of the coursework better and they will get good idea for conducting lessons using constructivist strategies. These methods should include activities like brain storming, mind / concept mapping, Quizzes, Puzzles, Think –Pair –Share activities, KWHL charts, group activities and group games, individual and group presentations, Lessons conducted using models of teaching such as role play model, inquiry training model etc. This will give good exposure to variety of methods to students. Teacher educators should focus on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) while giving them assignments or tutorials. The methods of evaluation should also be novel. Instead of focussing only on the evaluation tools provided by the university, teacher educators should be innovative and make use of informal assessment tools like peer evaluation, reflective diaries, muddy points, share your learning etc. Where students work is not assessed for giving marks and grades but it helps teacher to check student's real learning.

**B. Course related practical work:**

Most of the universities have 5-6 courses in teacher education programme. Each course has its related practicum part. Student teachers are seen copying files/ journals while completing them. They are often found at photocopier's shop or cybercafés doing copy paste work. Thus the purpose of practical work is lost. The very objective behind asking them to do practical work is to allow them to go in the actual field ,

observe , record , analyze and learn. The practical work that is been advised need detailed thinking. Some of the practical work suggested below is just a tentative list. An exhaustive study needs to be done on the kind of course related practical work given to the students. One should also think about students designing their own practical work based on their understanding of the course and the method of presenting it.

Course	Related practical work	Method of presentation
1. Education in Emerging Indian Society ( Educational Philosophy & Sociology)	a. Collection of news paper cuttings on peace education/ globalization/ Privatization etc. b. Preparing an educational advertisement for mass media.	Journal with paper cuttings+ student's observations. Advertisement demo./ video
2. Educational Psychology	a. Visit to a special school and interaction with differently able students. b. Collection of information about NGO working for special education.	Visit report. Information + Images report.
3. School Management	a. Designing a school plan	Design of school plan

	<p>for ideal school.</p> <p>b. Visit to high excellence school</p>	Collage of images.
4. Evaluation	Preparing a tool of continuous comprehensive evaluation and using it in school.	Evaluation tool.
5. Information and Communication Technology	<p>a. On line resources for teaching learning</p> <p>b. Collection of Evaluation tolls for CCE and modifying them as per Indian Context</p> <p>c. Developing website / BLOG of the school</p> <p>d. Preparing student records using excel/ access</p> <p>e. Preparing on line surveys and collecting data online</p>	<p>Technology based lesson</p> <p>Modified Evaluation tool</p> <p>Website/ BLOG</p> <p>Excel/ access file</p> <p>On line survey</p>

## **Conclusion:**

The above table gives just a suggestive list of activities. A lot of research is needed to make it a comprehensive and exhaustive list. While conducting those practical works the students involvement in the activity is of prime importance. They should not again turn into replica of one standard work. Two important issues that may arise while using such approaches ; they are: teacher educators competencies and time frame. Both these issues need to be tackled well. Teacher educators should be well trained for conducting such experiments in their curriculum and for that their positive mind set has to be developed. For accomplishing such experiments extended time frame is needed which has to be thought about by all universities conducting pre- service teacher education programme. Fitting all these activities successfully in a limited time span of one academic year ( 9 – 10 months of actual academic interactions) is a challenging job.

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