

A Current View of Constructivism

Una visión actual del constructivismo

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Received: 11-02-17

Approved: 05-05-17

Online: 09-05-17


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Cited as:

Caycho, T. (2017). A Current View of Constructivism. *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 5(2), 475 - 482. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2017.v5n2.159>

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Frisancho, S. (Ed.) (2016). *Ensayos Constructivistas*. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la PUCP. ISBN: 978-612-317-181-0.

This review is aimed at analyzing the progress of constructivism and its main contributions to education and social sciences in general based on the arguments mentioned in the 8 chapters of the book titled *Ensayos Constructivistas*, edited by Dra. Susana Frisancho. Before reading the book, the general hypothesis that motivates us is the fact that in the last years, contributions to constructivism have gone hand in hand with the new education needs worldwide.

Before discussing the book, let's dedicate some words to the editor. Dra. Susana Frisancho is one of the most important psychologist of Peru. She studied psychology at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP, by its Spanish initials) in Peru and the United States of America. She specializes in cognitive development, moral development, constructivism and other education-related subjects. On her initiative, in 2011, the PUCP organized a meeting of researchers interested in the Piaget's theory. This event is the origin of the book that we are mentioning.

Ensayos Constructivistas summarizes a group of chapters related to the constructivism study from different perspectives and derived from several sociocultural contexts. The book is aimed at providing information about the importance of constructivism as theoretical and epistemological framework, of the professional and research work of the psychologist and teacher. This objective is even more important if we take into account that constructivism has been misunderstood for many years.

The prologue is written by one of the main representatives of constructivism in the world, Juan Delval (Spanish). Delval explains that the constructivism is not a psychological theory but an epistemological theory with applications to psychology and education, which is focused on internal explanations about knowledge formation, specifically transformations inside the subject from the new knowledge acquired resulting from experience. In addition, although

diverse background information on constructivism, such as Kant's papers, can be mentioned, the current constructivism is built on Jean Piaget's current proposals from the need to have a different explanation from the innatistic or spiritualistic movements, from the origin of knowledge as a result of a constant interaction between subject and reality.

As mentioned above, the book is composed of 8 chapters, apart from the prologue written by Deval, written by 8 authors from Spain, Peru, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. The chapters address, with the constructivist perspective, a socio-historical view, thereby allowing the discussion of different problems. The first chapter is focused on the review of the main characteristics of constructivism as an interaction between subject and context from a psychological and epistemological perspective, with applications to education. The second chapter addresses the role of the theory in the clinical method, providing evidence for its appropriate application in different contexts. The third chapter analyzes the problem of raising awareness about the activity itself, which is a basic and important process to differentiate between what is done and what is understood. The fourth chapter proposes new problems about awareness raising. It analyzes the problem of chance and the use of the dialectical-teaching method and the cognitive conflict for the analysis of explanations. The fifth chapter addresses the study of morale and its contribution to teaching. It suggests a redefinition of the role of the teacher as a mediator between students and objects of knowledge.

The sixth chapter discusses the role of the cultural context in the knowledge building process based on the analysis of the morale problem. Then, the penultimate chapter addresses the use of stories and tales as teaching instruments from a psychological perspective. Finally, the last chapter is focused on the role of diaries written by Mexican and Spanish children in the development of narrative thought as an expression of thought organization and social interaction.

The feeling of going from one chapter to the next one is the dynamism between contexts, times and theoretical and methodological perspectives.

This dynamism contributes to highlighting the important subject of the book: constructivism. For scholars of education topics, the book has some important parts, conclusions and bibliographical references updated for each one of the chapters.

The book presents an order of the information with a narrative style that attracts the reader and that presents a joint view of constructivism in the field of social sciences. In conclusion, the book is the testimony of the utility of constructivism nowadays. Therefore, it is expected the increase of the edition of books like this one for the benefit of all of the individuals interested in cognitive psychology and constructivism.