Chapter 1
Use of Social Media in Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

Social media tools are used to visualize resources especially. However, there is a limited range of created content in social media, instructors and students have a tendency to use shared materials rather than edit an existed material or create a new material. However, this does not change the situation of social media in education, it is proved that social media improves teaching and learning process. Therefore, researchers stressed that instructions should consider supporting academic staff with technical and pedagogical guidance as the academicians do not meet the requirements of digital native students. Their web self-efficacy and digital competencies should be improved (Manca & Ranieri, 2016a; Manca & Ranieri, 2016b).

CONSTRUCTIVE LEARNING THEORY

Constructivism is a learner-centered educational approach which emphasizes that learner constructs his or her own knowledge by connecting new information to the existed ones (Henson, 2003). Information is not transferred from environment passively; in contrast, it is formed in individual's mind actively (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991). That is, the information does not exist on the outside; it is constructed by human brain. Learning is defined as the creation of relationship between new knowledge and prior experience rather than simply storage of the transferred knowledge by teacher, according to constructive learning theory (Balım, İnel & Evrekli, 2007). Students meet their learning needs, reach their learning goals and solve problems with the guidance of teacher, variable resources and tools by supporting each other as a group (Wilson, 1996).

Hence, active participation is required for the construction of knowledge in constructive learning theory model. Instead of acquiring messages from environment, students construct meanings through correlating, comparing and interpreting their perceptions. Students' correlations, comparisons and interpretations are affected by prior knowledge constantly (Mayer, 1999)

Learning is a collaborative effort spent by solving problems related to the actual design, assigning in independent, unrepeated tasks in the process of problem-solving and creating social environment by forming groups as stated in constructivist approach. Rather than how much information is learned, how information is learned is important, so development of learning-teaching and thinking strategies is crucial. Instead of memorizing information, constructing their own knowledge is a demanded outcome for individuals (Moussiaux & Norman, 2003).

The preliminary information of learner should be aroused by teacher before teaching new knowledge and concepts because new concepts and information stay more permanent if they are correlated with the old ones (Persall, Skipper & Mintzes, 1997).

Information does not exist without individual and human brain cannot be perceived like a blank sheet in any stage of learning, as stated in constructivist theory. Instead, information is controlled by human and is made up from reconstruction by comparison of old and new ones.

Constructive learning theory is examined under two main sections; one of them is cognitive constructivism pioneered by Piaget and Bruner, the other one is social constructivism pioneered by Vygotsky (Özden, 2003).

Social Constructivism

According to Vygotsky (1987), social constructivism is to construct knowledge in social environment together with sharing, interaction, discussion and active participation among individuals in which effective learning occurs. Information is formed by mutual decision of the individuals in a social group. When constructing knowledge in a social environment, individuals are not also affected by others but also affect others' opinions by sharing ideas (Fer & Cırık, 2007). Learning takes place in such interactive social environments by the interaction with others and co-operate with peers. Students' problem solving skills bring students up to a point by themselves, which is called the level of actual development. However, students' level of potential development can bring the students a further point in success, since the students' potentials are emerged with the guidance of teacher and collaboration with peers. The difference between actual development level and potential development level forms student's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Student's group mates can be role models for student, can encourage the student, can help in problem solving and can guide student with explanations about the task (Henson, 2003).

Social constructivism is a developmental process in which the individual interacts with the cultural and social environment; in fact, the individual and his or her socio-cultural environment completes each other (Hickey & McCaslinprees, 2001). The cognitive development of human is directed from socio-cultural environment where individual lives, to the individual himself. Socio-cultural environment is created by language which is the most important element that provides interaction between environment and human.

Information is constructed subjectively, that is, every individual has his/her own information different from others. Students construct their existed cognitive and social knowledge with gained experiences in the process. Social interaction increases the permanency of constructed knowledge.

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