

T.C.
GAZİ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

**PERSONALIZATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING
IN CONSTRUCTIVISM: A POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE**

MA THESIS

By
Burcu ARSLANER

ANKARA
Haziran – 2009

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BURCU ARSLANER'e ait **PERSONALIZATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CONSTRUCTIVISM: A POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE** adlı çalışma jürimiz tarafından İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ Anabilim Dalında **DOKTORA /YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ** olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ÖZET

GAZİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ, İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ PROGRAMI OLUŞTURMACI BAĞLAMDA YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENİMİNİN KİŞİSELLEŞTİRİLMESİ: POSTMODERN BİR YAKLAŞIM

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Bu araştırmada oluşturmıcılık kuramı ışığında kişiselleştirilmiş ders programının Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Bölümü öğrencilerinin başarı düzeylerine etkisi ölçülmüştür. Dolayısıyla araştırmanın amacı geliştirilen başarı testi ile oluşturmacı bir uygulama olan kişiselleştirmenin etkisini incelemek ve bu uygulamanın İngilizce eğitiminde uygulanabilirliğini ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmada aynı zamanda öğrencilerin normal öğretim veya ikinci öğretim bölümlerinde okuyor olmaları ile mezun oldukları okulun başarılarına olan etkisi de incelenmiştir.

Araştırma evreni 2008–2009 eğitim öğretim yılı ikinci döneminde Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Bölümü öğrencilerinden 44 öğrenci ile oluşturulmuştur.

Bu araştırma deney ve kontrol grubu üzerinde uygulanmış ve ön-test ve son-test kontrol gruplu desen kullanılmıştır. Uygulama 6 hafta sürmüştür. Bu süreçte deney grubuna (n=22) oluşturmacı metotlarla hazırlanmış kişiselleştirilmiş dersler sunulurken kontrol grubu (n=22) geleneksel metotlarla çalışmıştır. Her iki gruba da öğrendikleri konulara yönelik 40 soruluk çoktan seçmeli bir test uygulanmıştır. Test sonuçları istatistikî ve sözel olarak sunulup yorumlanmıştır.

Araştırmanın sonucunda, İngilizce öğretiminde oluşturmacı bir uygulama olan kişiselleştirmenin öğrenci başarısını artırdığı yönde olumlu olarak etkilediği ve araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin normal öğretim veya ikinci öğretim olmaları başarı düzeylerinde farklılık yaratırken; mezun oldukları okulun öğrencilerin başarı düzeyini etkilemediği gözlemlenmiştir.

ABSTRACT

GAZİ UNIVERSITY, ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT PERSONALIZATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CONSTRUCTIVISM: A POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE

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In this thesis, the effect of personalized course activities under the light of constructivism on the success level of students studying at Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department has been assessed. Thus, the main purpose of this research is to examine the effect of the constructivist instruction, personalization on the success levels of students with an achievement test and to display the employability of this instruction within Foreign Language Learning. In the research also students' department types: day or evening classes and high school types have been examined in relation to their success.

The research population has been composed of 44 students studying at Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department in the second term of 2008-2009 education years.

This research has been implemented on experimental and control groups besides pre-test and post-test control group pattern has been used. The practice process continued approximately for 6 weeks. Within this process, while the experimental group (n=22) was instructed by constructivist personalized methods, the control group (n=22) was instructed by traditional methods. Both groups were administered a 40-question multiple choice test directed to the subject matters they learnt. The findings are interpreted statistically and verbally.

As a result of the research, it is seen that the constructivist personalized instruction in Foreign Language Learning has a positive effect by increasing the students' success. It is also proved that students' department types: day or evening classes can create a difference in their academic achievements; however their high school types do not have a significant effect on the success levels of the students.

*To my family in deep gratitude
for their parenting...*

Knowledge is only perception

SOCRATES

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

For the past a few decades the world has undergone many changes. New experiences and different technologies have enabled us to broaden our viewpoints and consider everything from a different perspective. In this age of changes it is not possible that education can stay as it is. Contrary to the previous understandings of education like in industrialization period which promised the idea of bringing up children who are obedient, disciplined, specialized and self-sacrificing, the information age and society, especially new technologies and science have presented new learning environments which are based on multiplicity of perspectives and where people can realize themselves by studying with others in collaboration. For these reasons it is unavoidable that education, especially foreign language learning and teaching gets its own shares, is reinterpreted and finds new meanings.

Language has been such a significant tool in a world where limits are being cleared away and where communication is gaining more and more importance. The keystone of this frame is people who can interact with others, effect and be affected by them. Within this social interaction process, such people use their experiences in the construction of new ones and thus it facilitates activating both the learning and teaching processes. Novak (1998) summarizes this idea as below:

“ Meaningful learning underlies the constructive integration of thinking, feeling, and acting that occurs in human learning and in new knowledge construction...Human constructivism is... both for the way in which humans learn their usable knowledge and also

for the way in which they construct new knowledge. The nature and process of meaningful learning underlies both human learning and knowledge creation.” (Novak, 1998:79-80)

Furthermore, in order to increase the efficiency of these processes, to provide people opportunities to realize themselves and direct them to creative and critical thinking, they need learning environments where they can express themselves freely, that is, without hesitation. Besides, foreign language learning, different from other areas offers people more possibilities to develop a better understanding of who they are and compare and contrast themselves with others. In that sense, foreign language learning has been an important tool owing to the fact that it supports multi-perspectives, respect for universality and free idea in a global world in which personal relations have been complex and become dense. Thus, the key point of postmodern education philosophy, which centers upon students, is the variety of ideas, emphasize on the multi-perspectives and the rejection of exclusion of the reality from the self. Meaning cannot exist independently in a world open to people’s perceptions due to the fact that reality is a construction of human beings based upon their experiences.

To be more precise, meaning is a construction of the person. While this idea leads to the repudiation of objective reality, it also supports the idea that people’s own experiences shape their construction of knowledge. Within these construction processes students are the active participants of the course, expressing their ideas freely, working in collaboration, reflecting and developing a better understanding of the subject matter. Therefore, constructivist learning environments should include the personalization of the learning process in order to awake their minds, take them into the lesson easily, and enable them to realize themselves, understand themselves and others so that they can question and construct new ideas and reflect on their own experiences.

In a foreign language class, it is a necessity to create such a lively atmosphere that makes students creative and their minds active. As a matter of fact, constructivist classrooms should be environments where students’ active

participation to the course becomes a natural process, meaning is constructed in their minds considering the dynamic nature of the knowledge and therefore, students are seen as the important for the decision of the process and personalization is placed at the center of the activities presented.

Postmodern constructivist philosophy which gives support to variety of perspectives, hands-on experience, trying to understand the other, considering participation as a significant point, the importance of cultural basis to make sense of texts, the development of the self concurrent with the development of the ideas, has been considered as an important instruction that enriches learning, teaching and assessing systems.

1.2. Problem

Today's fast changing world gives way to question, re-interpret things we have already had and reshape the concepts in our minds. In such an era it is also inevitable not to reconsider the idea of education due to the fact that it helps people to order their minds, perspectives and lives. Therefore, the new technologies and improvements in science make people closer to each other by clearing the limits away. In that sense, foreign languages gain a great significance owing to the fact that it lessens the distances, enables people to communicate with each other, provide them with different perspectives, makes us realize that there is not only one truth and people should not only tolerate but also celebrate the multiplicity of ideas, perspectives and cultures.

However, there has also been a lot of discussion and writing in the education profession over the last few decades about the nature of foreign language learning and teaching. This mainly stems from the experiences that foreign language students even after a couple of years of instruction cannot use the language properly and produce it actively and without hesitation. One reason for this is that teaching has generally been connected to managing a class, making students understand and receive the necessary input and assessing this input by applying some quizzes and

exams. On the other hand, learning has been connected to be ready for the course, listening to the teacher and understanding the given input, doing the necessary homework and getting ready for the exam to have a higher education. Yet, it has been understood that within this framework learning can neither be realized nor become permanent. And when it comes to the foreign languages where production is important, it for the most part, results in failure.

If knowing is a process of construction of the meaning rather than memorizing or receiving a particular knowledge, teachers should revise and re-think about the methods, techniques they use and tasks they present to the class. It means what is to be considered is that the purpose of education is not transmitting a body of knowledge to students' minds, making them memorize the ready-made input and/or validated truths. Instead, it should involve students in the knowledge production process, analyzing, questioning, deriving meaning, comparing/contrasting and interpreting to construct a variety of knowledges appear from different locations.

Thus, the problem is if constructivist methods affect the success of students in FL classrooms and how teachers can prepare their students to become good learners and interpreters of learning, what teachers should do to involve their students into the process, how they can make them internalize the knowledge by connecting it with the prior experiences. Constructivism, at this point, offers that there is no fixed knowledge for everyone to be injected to the students or no fixed way to make them receive the target knowledge owing to the fact that the goal of education is not giving a product but being involved into the process where the students can interpret the world, ask questions and draw conclusions in the lights of their experiences. Hanley summarizes what constructivism tells us as below:

“Focusing on a more educational description of constructivism, meaning is intimately connected with experience. Students come into a classroom with their own experiences and a cognitive structure based on those experiences. These preconceived structures are valid, invalid or incomplete. The learner will reformulate his/her existing structures only if new information or experiences are connected to knowledge already in

memory. Inferences, elaborations and relationships between old perceptions and new ideas must be personally drawn by the student in order for the new idea to become an integrated, useful part of his/her memory. Memorized facts or information that has not been connected with the learner's prior experiences will be quickly forgotten. In short, the learner must actively construct new information onto his/her existing mental framework for meaningful learning to occur” (Hanley, 1994).

The obvious conclusion is that foreign language learning and teaching has been under the reign of traditional methods in which teachers are considered as a information-giver and students as receivers. The problem if we can convert our learning environment to a place where students collaborate, share ideas, construct their own meaning, question, interpret and a place where teachers can personalize the course and involve them into the knowledge construction or meaning making processes.

1.3. Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent a constructivist classroom, which emphasizes upon the individual differences and critical thinking by applying personalized tasks, can provide a more effective and permanent foreign language learning. It is in such a postmodern era, which gives importance to the process of knowledge construction rather than the product, creating a more efficient learning environment based on multiplicity by personalization of the process, thus enabling permanent learning by featuring the person has been a must for teachers. In this respect, this study also attempts to find out how constructivist classrooms can be constructed and what the teacher's role is.

This study aims at providing student-centered tasks by which students construct the knowledge actively and determine the processes they will be involved in. Within this framework the following questions are going to be answered:

- * What is the relationship between postmodernism and constructivism?

- * How does postmodernism effect foreign language learning?
- * How can personalization be related to constructivism?
- * How do constructivist personalized activities make a difference in comparison with traditional methods?
- * How can postmodernism, constructivism and foreign language learning be related among each other?

1.4. Importance of the study

Nowadays, in this information society, the qualities of people have become different from the traditional ones. It is expected from people of this information society to be creative, tolerable, initiative and productive. However, while on one hand school curriculums are too strict and limited to achieve these goals, on the other hand teachers' own approaches towards language teaching and learning are too narrow.

For this reason, it is important to not only broaden teachers' points of view towards teaching and learning processes, but also learning environments and applied tasks should be converted into meaning construction processes shaped by students' own experiences within their own mental frameworks.

Active learning environments created by constructivist personalized tasks give individuals opportunities to express their ideas in a free atmosphere and present them by interpreting under the lights of their own experiences and background knowledge. So, their sense of responsibility is going to be improved and they are going to become aware of their ability to make decisions and, in the end, they are going to realize themselves. This is why personalization and in general constructivism are of great importance.

Equally important point is that constructivist studies have generally been carried out in the fields of math, science and mostly in primary school teaching. For this reason, it is hoped that this study aiming at presenting examples of efficient and permanent learning environment with supportive, fun, free atmosphere in foreign language teaching will provide a comprehensive data concerning the constructivist classrooms in a foreign languages department in a university.

Finally it is expected that this study is going to help teachers who want to bring a different perspective to their instruction, tasks and learning environment they try to create.

1.5. Assumptions and Research Questions

The major research questions observed in this study are:

1. Does the implementation of personalized constructivist activities affect the success of FL classes?

1.1. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of experimental and control groups in terms of pre-test?

1.2. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in control group between pre-test and post-test?

1.3. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group between pre-test and post-test?

1.4. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of experimental and control groups in terms of post-test?

1.5. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in control group participated in the study in their pre and post- test results in terms of their high schools?

1.6. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group participated in the study in their pre and post- test results in terms of their high schools?

1.7. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in control group participated in the study in their pre and post- test results in terms of their class types: formal and evening classes?

1.8. Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group participated in the study in their pre and post- test results in terms of their class types: formal and evening classes?

Regarding the main goal of this study the assumptions are the followings:

1. Foreign language classrooms have generally been considered as places where traditional methods are applied to transform the necessary knowledge to students' minds.
2. Constructivist approach from a postmodern perspective has an important effect in the personalization of foreign language learning.
3. Personalized tasks prepared under the lights of constructivism can attract students' attention better and facilitate students' involvement into the process.
4. Success in foreign language classrooms can be increased and made permanent and more effective by using tasks which are

shaped by constructivist approach and postmodern perspective that supports autonomy of the individuals and enables them construct their own knowledge by their own awareness in comparison with the traditional ones.

5. Students' high school types do not affect their academic success before or after applying constructivist methods.
6. Students' studying in a formal or evening class does not affect their success before or after applying constructivist methods.

1.6. Limitations

The data for this study were collected at Eskişehir Osmangazi University. Despite the fact that there are a lot of classes at Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department, just two of them including 44 students were observed for this study. This study is also limited with traditional activities applied to control group and constructivist activities applied to the experimental group.

1.7. Definitions of Terms

In this part of the study the concepts that are mostly used through the work are going to be defined.

Postmodernism can be defined as a term that repudiates certain, objective knowledge and grand theories stemming from the absolute truths. It is a philosophy which is grounded on multiple perspectives, therefore, pluralism in cultures and ideas. Although it is an elusive term which is difficult to define, it can be interpreted as a philosophy stemming from rejection of single-mindedness and universality, challenges static predetermined identities and any kind of meta-narratives trying to

explain the world. “It is a skepticism that results from the discrepancy between modernity’s ideals and promises about grand narratives, and the actuality of the oppression and destruction which characterizes the contemporary world” (Usher, R. I. Bryant and R. Johnston., 1997:6).

Along the same line, in education, postmodernism asserts the idea that the learning environments must be student-centered, based upon the multiple perspectives of individuals, have a flexible curriculum, activate students’ collaboration within the classroom where they can have the opportunity to experience their own meaning making process.

Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning. It deals with what knowing is and how people construct knowledge in their minds. Constructivism suggests that there is not external truths independent from people, instead, meaning is constructed in people’s mind interpreted by their past experiences and knowledges. Therefore, constructivism supports creative, inquiry-based and personalized tasks with cooperative learning, reflective and creative thinking.

In constructivism knowledge is internalized not by giving reaction to the environment passively but by being involved into the meaning making process as a self-regulating individual. It is a theory which puts students at the center of the course by giving them the right to make decision for the flow of the course. They participate in the course actively by collaborating, asking questions, criticizing, drawing conclusions and making their own meaning. On the other hand, constructivists support the idea that teachers are the ones who define students’ profiles and interests to prepare suitable tasks accordingly, the ones who activate their minds and making them ready for the process of interpreting and constructing knowledge. To sum up, constructivism is simply based on the idea that “in our interactions with the world, we actively *construct* our experience and understanding in accord with the categories, concepts and previous experiences that we bring to the situation” (Jardine, 2006: 34).

Constructivism is also a postmodern thought in education owing to the fact that both reject objectivist externally constructed knowledge and a single truth. Besides, both celebrate the multiplicity of ideas and welcome different cultures, perspectives and attitudes.

Personalization, as the term implies, is the process in which students personalities play the central role in many respects. Owing to the fact that in the postmodern education “fixed reference points and solid groundings becoming increasingly detached and shaky...it becomes pleasurable in opening up possibilities for constituting identities” (Usher, R. I. Bryant and R. Johnston.,1997:5), thus, it is of great importance to be aware that each student has a unique world and if they can discover themselves, education would be more meaningful and effective. At first, in a constructivist learning environment personalization means students’ being decision makers for the whole process. Then tasks are personalized by the teacher to attract their attention, to facilitate the involvement process and to help them find some things to relate with their experiences in their lives. Personalization has a crucial role in respect of providing them with opportunities to become aware of their own skills, mental schemata, engage them into the course actively by helping them get things to identify themselves with.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. What is Modernism?

The word modern brings the one which is different from the old into mind and includes the dynamics of change per se. And “modernity” is used to distinguish the contemporary and signifies the things belonging to the contemporary time. Sarup defines the term modernity as the progressive economic and administrative rationalization and differentiation of the social world (Sarup, 1993).

Modernism was grounded in the beliefs of the Enlightenment which dates back to the eighteenth century. Thus, it clarifies the change and differentiation in art, science, culture and the social structure of society. This modern project, built upon the Enlightenment, “which saw the beginning of a process of modernization, of socio-economic and cultural change and disruption” (Usher, R. I. Bryant and R. Johnston.,1997:2), presupposes an understanding of capitalism, urbanization, secularism, industrial revolution, human identity, human rights, scientific knowledge and etc.

Right from the emergence of the Enlightenment, old forms of government has been cast off and new social experiments have just began and many established truths have been called into question; as a result, reason has been discovered.

“The discourses and practices of modernity are characterized by an emphasis on progress and a faith in rationality and science as the means of its realization” (Usher, R. I. Bryant and R. Johnston.,1997:6). The West, within this period, dismissed the old traditions and headed towards rebuilding the world via “reason”.

The proponents of modernism have been motivated by this modern spirit and led to make ambitious claims for the power of human reason. Scientists have maintained that reason plays an essential role which makes it probable for people to develop an understanding of nature and regimes that confirm rights and liberties of humanity. The human mind is seen as the apex of evolution owing to its capacity to think, interpret and discover which lead us towards the perfect society. They began to reinterpret government, education, art, and the social structure of the society at that period according to the tenets of reason. Putting human mind into the center in place of traditional beliefs, regimes and King, the West supported people's intellectual abilities to compose a new social framework for his attempt.

Under the light of scientific knowledge and reason, The West, beginning from the eighteenth century has experienced a great change and agricultural society has been transformed into industrial one. The society after this transformation has been called modern and it is known that many great changes have been meant when this term is used. In this respect, various revolutions in many fields such as science, politics, culture have shown up, whose changes are effective from agriculture to industry, from ancient to modern. In terms of science, the modern spirit has been considered as the driving force behind the scientific thought that the universe can construct and arrange itself as a machine on its own and "modernity is characterized by a search for an underlying and unifying truth and certainty" (Usher, R. I. Bryant and R. Johnston.,1997:10). Thus, under the sovereignty of this positivist paradigm, the modern science has substituted itself in place of religion. These developments have brought about the birth of modern science and it has rejected all kinds of knowledge that cannot be discovered and proven by methods and techniques of modern science.

Enlightenment project which has shaped the ideals of modern era has become a hope for humanity by creating a utopian world. What is more, it has charged an important mission to the modern science to realize these ambitions. And, in the end, transformed into the technology, scientific knowledge has created industrial revolution which changed the destiny of humanity.

Among the modern social projects, education has also its own share and the schools have been institutionalized. They are organized as a factory that mass-produces. By the same token, “education is interpreted as a means of enabling pre-existing coherent and authentic self to be uncovered” (Usher, R. I. Bryant and R. Johnston.,1997:10).

Modernism including many great changes also supports the idea of universality. Owing to the fact that the West has a dominant power over the other civilizations, it is supported by some modernists that all the values and institutions of the West should spread through the world.

In the final analysis, it is clear that the modern age coinciding with the consolidation and global expansion of industrial capitalism, supports order, authority and hierarchy as the basic rules of institutions, rationalization in the fields of economy, society, and government; it also supports globalization, humanism and domination of nature by using technology under the light of science and scientific knowledge.

All these universal claims have been accepted for a long time due to the fact that they are the common expectations of humanity. However, when these values have functioned for the benefit of only the West, they have been questioned and people have begun to hesitate about the validity of all these ideas and skepticism towards all these principles and ideals have shown up. And, evidently, postmodern challenges rest upon these hesitations and skepticism.

When all the projects that address to humanity such as progress, development, democracy, human rights and the dominance of scientific knowledge crashed, postmodern criticism finds its own way to realize and appreciate itself. And in the long run modernism has been one of the most important reference points to make clear all the principles and basis of postmodernism contrary to the idea that they are against each other.

Thus it is clear that in order to understand the premises of postmodernism, the principles of modernism should be revised. Jane Flax (1990:41) makes a good summary about these ideas as above:

1. There is a stable, coherent, knowable self. This self is conscious, rational, autonomous, and universal--no physical conditions or differences substantially affect how this self operates.

2. This self knows itself and the world through reason, or rationality, posited as the highest form of mental functioning, and the only objective form.

3. The mode of knowing produced by the objective rational self is "science," which can provide universal truths about the world, regardless of the individual status of the knower.

4. The knowledge produced by science is "truth," and is eternal.

5. The knowledge/truth produced by science (by the rational objective knowing self) will always lead toward progress and perfection. All human institutions and practices can be analyzed by science (reason/objectivity) and improved.

6. Reason is the ultimate judge of what is true, and therefore of what is right, and what is good (what is legal and what is ethical). Freedom consists of obedience to the laws that conform to the knowledge discovered by reason.

7. In a world governed by reason, the true will always be the same as the good and the right (and the beautiful); there can be no conflict between what is true and what is right (etc.).

8. Science thus stands as the paradigm for any and all socially useful forms of knowledge. Science is neutral and objective; scientists, those who produce scientific

knowledge through their unbiased rational capacities, must be free to follow the laws of reason, and not be motivated by other concerns (such as money or power).

9. Language, or the mode of expression used in producing and disseminating knowledge, must be rational also. To be rational, language must be transparent; it must function only to represent the real/perceivable world which the rational mind observes. There must be a firm and objective connection between the objects of perception and the words used to name them (between signifier and signified).

2.2. What is Postmodernism?

The term postmodernism in terms of its meaning and implications has hardly gained consensus as a social condition. It causes a great many confusion owing to the fact that there are miscellaneous definitions of the term in respect to distinct areas, academic disciplines, and cultural practices such as literature, music, art, education, architecture, media, politics and etc.

Right from the emergence of the term in the late 1950s, it has kept its popularity and as the term evolves, it is regarded as both vague and vogue. It is a vague and an “exasperating term” (Bertens, 1995:3) because postmodernism “has meant different things to different people at different conceptual levels” (Bertens, 1995:10) which actually brings us to the idea that it has been used to tell different things at different times and basis. It is also in vogue because it is not just a philosophical term, but rather, a widespread term whose definitions are formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints. As Bertens states it has developed in the course of the last three decades and has drawn more and more disciplines into its orbit (Bertens, 1995:18).

Though “no single definition of postmodernism has gone contested and has been widely accepted” (Bertens, 1995:12), postmodernism, for an initial characterization of its basic premises, may be summarized as a skepticism toward

long-cherished concepts and models of thought, an unwillingness ‘to accept taken-for-granted components of our reality and the “official” accounts of how they came to be the way they are’ (Dean, 1994:4).

Since the historian Arnold Toynbee first used the term in 1950s, the concept of postmodernism has expanded its range and dominion. In 1960s the term was used in the writing of a group of French intellectuals, especially Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Jacques Derrida who rejected the firmly established and fixed social structures. However, postmodernism, which rejects standardization and integration, revolts against the people who try to state the meaning of the term precisely. Evidently, there are miscellaneous definitions of the term which means that different people have used the term in terms of politics, psychology, economy, philosophy, art and etc. meaning different things.

Arnold Toynbee considers this term including the distinctive events of his ages such as great wars, revolutions and chaos. This chaos means a cultural chaos. On the contrary, modern ages characterize the period dominated by determination, progress and rationalization. For Toynbee, in the postmodern era ethics of Enlightenment are destroyed and people have stepped into a chaotic time. The postmodern era is described as a catastrophe and ruin in terms of the values of modern ages and Enlightenment movement. According to this, the term postmodernism is used by Toynbee to describe a negativeness and breakdown (Şaylan, 1999: 31).

Lyotard believes that rationalism, Marxism, and positive science are all taboos of modernism and describes them as metanarratives and thinks that postmodernism is a kind of disbelief in them. He not only has a doubt at modernism but also sees postmodernism as an initiation to destroy reality basing upon this doubt. Lyotard severely criticizes the positivist scientific knowledge. He separates knowledge in two categories: scientific knowledge and narrative knowledge. For him, scientific knowledge ignores what it cannot explain, therefore; repudiates

subjectivity and finds a way of legitimatization. And, accordingly defines postmodernism as the return of subjectivity.

Sociologist Jean Baudrillard argues that people live in a world of images which are only simulations. He suggests that many cannot understand this concept that “we have now moved into an epoch...where truth is entirely a product of consensus values, and where science itself is just the name we attach to certain modes of explanation” (Norris, 1990:169).

Hassan uses the term to mean an artistic tendency and interpret it as an artistic avant-garde. Yet, as it is known, the term avant-garde shows up within the boundaries of modern understanding of art. However, Hassan bases postmodernism on the instant and uncertain principles of art and places avant-garde in a postmodern framework that ignores artistic styles and aesthetic standards (Şaylan, 1999:54). Postmodern artists view postmodernism as a stage at which the prejudices, assumptions and constraints of modernism are abandoned and profusion of pop and mass culture, irony and contradictions are embraced. From this perspective postmodernism is a kind of combination of forms and genres, de and re-contextualization of styles in all kinds of art.

Another important figure Gitlin who is an American sociologist, political writer and novelist offers a different perspective on postmodernism by considering it from an artistic point of view. For him, postmodernism self-consciously splices genres, attitudes, styles. It relishes the blurring or juxtaposition of forms, stances, moods, cultural levels...It pulls the rug out from under itself, displaying an acute self-consciousness about the work's constructed nature. It takes pleasure in the play of surfaces, and derides the search for depth as mere nostalgia (Gitlin, 1989:52).

Though Sarup lays stress on the ambiguity between whether postmodernism is a continuation of modernism or a break from it, he asserts the idea that postmodernism refers to the incipient or actual dissolution of those social forms

associated with modernism. For Sarup, postmodernity, as a term, emphasizes the various forms of personal and social identities in today's world (Sarup, 1993:185).

Habermas agrees with many respectable proponents of postmodernism and, besides; by and large, he considers postmodernism as a new interpretation of the conservative ideology that tries to invalidate the values and theories that liberates people. For him, the French thinkers of the 1970s, such as Derrida and Foucault, represent a specific repudiation of Enlightenment 'modernity' that supports the possibility of progress and the faith in reason. They attacked, in his view, the ideals of reason, clarity, truth and progress, and as they were thereby detached from the quest for justice, he identified them as 'young conservatives' (Barry, 1995:85-86).

It is clear that many philosophers and theorists all diversely gather around this territory and each takes different stances on postmodern claims, which means that there is no point in thinking that a common thesis or form of assertion can be extracted which may piece their unlike views together.

As for Peters postmodernism and postmodernity are catch-all concepts, allegedly signaling an epochal break not only with the so-called modern era but also with various traditionally "modern" ways of viewing the world (Peters, 1995:22). In that sense it is the renunciation of the doctrine of the sovereignty of reason, linear course, the belief in the rationality and therefore the perfectibility of man, the concept of reality, and the idea that there is and one right way to do things and that man can create a better world. According to postmodernism, reality is a phenomenon that is socially constructed and there is always multiplicity in our lives. Due to the fact that postmodernism struggles against all kinds of totalizations, postmodernists doubt the systems of thought that attempt to explain the world, which Lyotard describes as the 'incredulity toward metanarratives' (Lyotard, 1986:xxiv). Namely, grand stories like Marxism and Liberalism which make sense of the world according to a dominating truth are all resisted.

While it declares the end of grand theories that explain the true morality, history, politics, the human nature and many other universal terms, within this term there is also the celebrity of different styles, tolerance of diversity and ambiguity, support for change and novelty, and stress on the plurality of perspectives and multiple truth. An important aspect of postmodernism is its assertion that meta-narratives, which are also called as super-narratives and which purport to explain and reassure are really illusions, fostered in order to smother difference, opposition, and plurality. What Lytoard calls as ‘the incredulity of metanarratives’ is explained by Barry as below:

“Grand narratives of progress and human perfectibility, then, are no longer tenable, and the best we can hope for is a series of ‘mininarratives’, which are provisional, contingent, temporary, and relative and which provide a basis for the actions of specific groups in particular local circumstances. Postmodernity thus ‘deconstructs’ the basic aim of the Enlightenment, that is ‘the idea of a unitary end of history and of a subject, and directs people to content themselves with mininaratives about small parts of their experience and make no claim for their universality and validity for all.” (Barry, 1995:86-87)

Postmodernists believe that the history has come to its end and the world is a disjointed phenomenon where all conflicts and strains are individual and/or regional. However, while on one hand individuality is discussed in postmodernism, on the other hand they argue that self is a construction of its own cultures values and principles. As Beck states that self cannot exist without being affected by its encircling world:

“For that reason, it has rightly questioned the idea of a universal, unchanging, unified self or “subject” which has full knowledge of and control over what it thinks, says, and does. It has shown that the self is strongly influenced by its surrounding culture, changes with that culture, and is fragmented like that culture. To a degree, it is not we who think, speak, and act but the culture which thinks, speaks, and acts through us” (Beck, 5).

After all struggles to explain what postmodernism is, the obvious conclusion can be that it is an intellectual trend that includes many quite distinct philosophical theories; therefore, cannot be considered as a particular theoretical position itself. This variety of overlapping and conflicting definitions highlights one of the main paradoxes of postmodern thought – that it rejects the label of an explanatory system - but is unavoidably subject to various systematizations and schemas of interpretation and description, many of which are common and cohesive for both postmodernists and skeptics of postmodernism alike (Long, 2004:1). However, in order to develop a basic understanding of what it is or at least what it connotes, it may be useful to state what themes it is likely to revolve around and summarize some characteristics of postmodernism upon which are mostly discussed agreed:

- * It celebrates the plurality of perspectives and multiple truths.

- * It does not trust Grand theories of science, politics, and etc...that try to explain and make sense of the world. It is a kind of a denial of natures, essences, and any other universals which place a grounded and steady meaning on things. Because absolute truth is something unattainable, no doctrines can be trusted.

- * There is no universal reality. Reality is something socially constructed. It can change according to context or cultural conditions. What we call as reality is just the representations of it. Therefore any kind of truth that is or will be accepted as universal is actually unattainable.

- * Postmodernists believe that the Notion of truth is a contrived illusion, misused by people and special interest groups to gain power over others.

- * Truth and errors are synonymous- facts, postmodernists claim, are too limiting to determine anything. Changing erratically, what is fact today can be false tomorrow.

* Self-conceptualization and rationalization- traditional logic and objectivity are spurned by postmodernists. Preferring to rely on opinions rather than embrace facts, postmodernists spurn the scientific method.

* Traditional authority is false and corrupt- Postmodernists speak out against the constraints of religious morals and secular authority. They wage intellectual revolution to voice their concerns about traditional establishment.

* Disillusionment with modernism- postmodernists rue the unfulfilled promises of science, technology and government.

* Morality is personal - Believing ethics to be relative, postmodernists subject morality to personal opinion. They define morality as each person's private code of ethics without the need to follow traditional values and rules.

* Globalization – Many postmodernists claim that national boundaries are a hindrance to human communication. Nationalism, they believe, causes wars. Therefore, postmodernists often propose internationalism and uniting separate countries.

(Retrieved from <http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/characteristics-of-postmodernism-faq.htm>, December 5, 2008.)

2.2.1. How Does Postmodernism Differ from Modernism?

As postmodern studies began to expand, there occurred a better understanding of the necessity of making a differentiation between modernism and postmodernism. Along the same lines, in order to make sense of the postmodern condition, one should examine what modernism is and what it is not and in what senses it affects postmodernism. In Connor's words, in order to understand and participate in the postmodernist break, it was necessary to undergo a kind of apprenticeship in modernism (Connor, 2004: 9).

Modernism is generally understood as the condition in which society must legitimate itself by its own self-generated principles, without appeal to external verities, deities, authorities, or traditions (McGowan,1991:3). When looked at a broader perspective on the question of modernism, it is easy to realize that the roots of it lie much deeper in history than the middle of the 19th century.

However it is accepted that the idea of modernism can be said to have emerged in the Renaissance Period and it takes its roots from the concepts of humanism and secularism, which have put man at the very center of the world as the one who is responsible for his own and the measure of all things.

Humanism has been the focal point of modernism as it makes humans the focal point of the world and whatever has been going around it. He can learn, create experiences and live them, master the nature of the universe and can be the reason of what he has lived, that is he can shape his own way and therefore the world.

The starting point of modernism, The Age of Enlightenment headed for the humanity to move themselves away from myths and superstitions and the sovereignty of the nature on them. By the help of reason, human mind succeeded to realize his own potential and set himself free from the restraints of ignorance, thus it would be a pertinent remark to call modernism as a new world opened up ahead of humanity.

The transition from the traditional to the modern was marked by scientific, political, cultural and industrial movements at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. And this idea of humanism promoted scientific knowledge which is objective enough to guide the human mind to find the truths of the world and of himself and reshape all. It actually gave way to question and reinterpret every aspect of existence. Therefore modernist movement led humanity to progressive and practical ways.

In essence, the idea of modernism claimed that new realities of the industrialized and mechanized world were at hand and everlasting. Therefore, what people had to do was to make the necessary changes in their point of views to welcome modernism which gave them the freedom to enlighten themselves to uncover things in their lives and most importantly what they need to do with such a freedom was to use the freedom to use their minds. At this point postmodernism is interpreted as a response to modernism as Wilson states:

“However, 'Postmodernism', as the term implies, is largely a response to modernity. Whereas modernity trusted science to lead us down the road of progress, postmodernism questioned whether science alone could really get us there. Whereas modernity happily created inventions and technologies to improve our lives, postmodernism took a second look and wondered whether our lives were really better for all the gadgets and toys. Postmodernism looked at the culmination of modernity in the 20th century-the results of forces such as nationalism, totalitarianism, technocracy, consumerism, and modern warfare-and said, we can see the efficiency and the improvements, but we can also see the dehumanizing, mechanizing effects in our lives“ (Wilson, 1996:3).

As it is stated above postmodernism rejects the objective knowledge as a thoroughly trustful guide for people and it questions anything having a certain description, border or value in our lives. Though the interpretations may naturally differ from one to another, the underlying ideas of modernism and postmodernism can be roughly summarized as below:

Contrast of Modern and Postmodern Thinking		
	Modern	Postmodern
Reasoning	From foundation upwards	Multiple factors of multiple levels of reasoning. Web-oriented.
Science	Universal Optimism	Realism of Limitations
Part/Whole	Parts comprise the whole	The whole is more than the parts
Language	Referential	Meaning in social context through usage

Table 1. Contrast of Modern and Postmodern Thinking excerpted from <http://private.fuller.edu/~clameter/phd/postmodern.html>, October 6, 2008

Postmodernism is generally understood as a philosophy which stands against modernism; however, it seeks for ways to improve its premises and established concepts. Although it seems to have rejected science, postmodernism actually refuses the scientific approach that has been taken through years as such that shapes our worldview. It indeed offers a new identity for scientific, cultural and religious establishments. While on one hand modernism deals with the results and the product, postmodernism is limitless focusing on the process.

Postmodernists, in essence, criticize concepts and erase distinctions with which modernists are comfortable. Connor emphasizes the points modernism makes to make a distinction between the two as below:

“The modern constitution arises out of the sense of the sharp separation of nature and culture, and out of the forms of knowledge they produced and are addressed by. Nature produces science, the knowledge of how things are in themselves. Culture produces the social sciences and the discourse of morality, politics, psychology, etc. Modernity is characterized by the belief that there is no relation between these two kinds of object or

between this two kinds of knowledge; indeed, by the requirement that they should be kept rigorously distinct” (Connor, 2004:7).

Postmodernists define modernism as a philosophy that fundamentally focuses on its support on objective knowledge which takes its roots from objective reality that is accepted as occurring to different people in the same way. Modernists claim that there is an obtainable knowledge by the self owing to the fact that reason can acquire this objective knowledge whose reliability and validity are and can be proven. Furthermore, this knowledge is a product of the human mind produced by the reason of the mind. However, postmodernists reject the idea that there are truths obtainable by the mind. Truths are only stories created in the mind of individuals changing according to their backgrounds, experiences and as a result their mental schemas. The thing that can be more important to be considered may be their claim that even these schemas are shaped by the established values of a certain culture or they are pleasing a particular society. Thus each society’s meaning making values and processes are different than others. In that sense it is not possible for them to talk about any kind of objective knowledge, because language cannot represent what we call as reality, the world is not accessible to us through the use of this transparent language and therefore knowledge arises out of our direct experience of reality...(Bertens, 1995).

While postmodernism rejects truths valid for the majority, by the same token, it also denies grand narratives that try to make sense of the world. Instead postmodernists believe that there are mini-narratives accepted by a particular society owing to the fact that they are localized, situational and impermanent having no relation with universality or such totalizations.

Another aspect that makes modernism and postmodernism different is their idea of language. Postmodernism claims that language is a self-explanatory system which means it is actually transparent. It has been accepted as a truth for years in terms of linguistics that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is clear which means that signifiers always aim at the signifieds. Nevertheless, because

postmodernism repulses a steady, grounded reality, it also comes into conflict with the relationship between the signifier and the signified. That is, the signified is out of question which means that there is only the signifier to be mentioned. Bertens (1995:6) states “language constitutes rather than reflects”. This leads us to the concept of knowledge owing to the fact that it is also interpreted in different ways from the points of the two terms. In postmodernism it is believed that knowledge is created, stored and interpreted differently than modernists do. In such modernist societies knowledge is associated with objective reality, that is, science. While postmodernists believe in narrations which are localized and institutionalized, modernists refuse it by claiming that narration is unreasonable and rudimentary and that “knowledge is always distorted by language, the historical circumstances and the specific environment” (Bertens 1995:6). Similarly, modernism promotes the idea that ‘knowledge is for its own sake’, that is, one can gain the necessary knowledge and can change his/her point of view, way of life and so educate him/herself. On the contrary, postmodernism puts emphasis to the function of it. People have education in order not to gain the necessary knowledge but to use them where necessary. Thus, postmodernism deals with the abilities one has through knowledge and how s/he uses it.

As a final thought modernism and postmodernism can be differentiated from each other in several points, however, it should be kept in mind that postmodernism is not totally an opposite term to modernism but it is the continuation of it, which tries to improve the things that modernism presents by enlarging their borders.

2.2.2. Postmodernism and Reality

At the very centre of postmodernism there is skepticism about the existence of external reality. It is not acceptable for postmodernists that there can be truths welcomed by many people, contrarily; there one can mention about only socially constructed truths. If this is the case, then postmodernism naturally questions West’s essential philosophies which include taken-for-granted concepts in the framework of culture, morality and science. Due to the fact that all realities are socially and

culturally constructed there cannot be permanent, fixed truths but only assumption of them.

Postmodern philosophers and historians inquire cultural identities and the representation of history in terms of reality and they think that history does not reflect what really happened, on the contrary, they see history as a narrative of what happened. Many postmodernist historians assert that people can access history only in narrative form. There arises the difference between fact and fiction. Postmodernists erase the difference between the two. They think that there cannot be a necessary connection between words and things, subject and object, signifier and signified. For this reason, all the discourses claimed to be explaining truth, such as history, has no greater connection to its referent than fiction. Thus, they claim that history and fictional narratives only substitute for reality. Barry states that:

“...what is usually known as ‘the loss of the real’, that is, a loss of the distinction between real and imagined, reality and illusion, surface and depth. Within postmodernism, the distinction between what is real and what is simulated collapses: everything is a model or an image, all is surface without depth...” (Barry, 1995:89)

As it is supported above what postmodernists claim is that people invent stories to make sense of the world and explain what has been going around them. For them, it is clear that they are just the representations of reality rather than realities themselves. It is even more complicated that these representations differ according to the culture they were born in. Thus, owing to the fact that belief systems and narratives may vary and people define their own, realities may be various in numbers and styles, too. For postmodernists, reality is obviously situational that may change according to cultural conditions and characteristics. Furthermore, it also shows differences according to the voices and communities which are defined by their experiences and their histories. Marshall states that:

“Postmodernism is about history. But not the kind of ‘History’ that tells us think we can know the past. History in the postmodern moment becomes histories and questions. It

asks: Whose history gets told? In whose name? For what purpose? Postmodernism is about histories not told, retold, untold. History as it never was. Histories forgotten, hidden, invisible, considered unimportant, changed, eradicated. It is about the refusal to see history as linear, as leading straight up to today in some recognizable pattern-all set for us to make sense of. It is about chance. It is about power. It is about information. And more information. And more. And. And that's just a little bit about what postmodernism is" (Marshall, 1992:4).

It is claimed by postmodernists that people can never leave their cultural luggage that has been shaped beginning from the time they were born. People are all what they have in their minds. What postmodernist points out eventually is that the way we perceive anything in the world and the world itself is influenced by our upbringings, experiences and the culture we were born in. The possible conclusion then is the impossibility of being objective about anything and the rejection of totalitarian, rationalist modernist approaches which hold objective and exact knowledges to be true.

2.2.3. Postmodernism and Education

Education may be simply described as the way we understand not only our relations and ourselves but also the way we experience and change the world. What is more it has been always regarded as "a key role in the forming and shaping of subjectivity and identity so that subjects become fully autonomous and capable of exercising their individual and intentional agency, bringing out the inherent potential to become self-motivated and self-directing" (Usher and Edwards, 2006:24-25).

Upon considering the modernist and postmodernist views on education, one can conclude that these ideas belong to the modernist doctrines. Owing to the fact that according to modernism education verifies and concerns the ideals of enlightenment, reason, and individuality, it makes human beings free to decide and therefore people can shape their way of life, thoughts, attitudes and their own course of action which means that they can be the master of their lives.

However, it should be noted that education does not only deal with the reason, the free-will and the individuality of humans, but also power, dominance and their being organized and institutionalized. To put it in another way, the goal of education is to give a shape to the direction of peoples' lives. Yet, it is not a one-way process but rather depends on a mutual interaction. It means that while it forms our way of lives, it is also affected by itself and the powers it creates. The important thing here is that although people are seen as the ones that can shape their own way of thinking they are managed by the powers in a society. These powers are so neutralized that people can never feel their existence and mostly reject that their mental operations are under the control of some things, what postmodernists call as socially constructed values and powers in a culture. Anything we see as ours may be only a kind of perception for postmodernists, even our interpretations, thoughts, decisions. Therefore, education is a tool that shapes us and makes us what we are supposed to be by seeming as our own choice although education, itself, is also shaped by other powers neutralized in our daily lives.

A different standpoint may be the one which sees education as something clearing the otherness away and creating sameness in a way. According to Usher and Edwards education is:

“...a manifestation of violence insofar as it attempts to reduce difference, contingency, provisionality and play to one in the same. Education is a site where meanings are reduced to a single, determinate meaning, where otherness is brought under the control of reason and difference is reduced to sameness.” (Usher and Edwards, 2006:139)

Such a concept putting objectivity, neutrality and scientific production into question and the education which places people into a same order, puts the very possibility of knowing and individual interpretation deeply into question. However, as Beck states:

“It would be just an exaggeration, to maintain that because the self is limited, conditioned, and contingent in this way it has no significance, identity, or capacities. Individuals may be no more important than cultures, but neither are they less so. Individuals

are just as unified and characterizable as communities, and they have considerable (though not unlimited) capacity for self-knowledge, self-expression, and self-regulation. There is no basis for emphasizing culture or community to the neglect of individuals.” (Beck, 5)

What should be considered is that, though it seems a little ambiguous and changing and though it puts emphasis on possibilities rather than facts and certainties, postmodern education gives way to individuality in the interpretation of texts which shows various needs and experiences. Authenticity must be put at the very center of the class because we no longer seek for the truths and/or certain knowledges. The idea is to participate into and contribute to the knowledge-making process. Considering that mental schemas, therefore interpretations and aims may change from one to another, students are supposed to be a part of the creation of the information. In the end there occur the individual stories and personal products which let students make the most of what they have in their minds and realize themselves. In that sense Usher and Edward emphasize experiences student have in education by saying that “Experience is most often accorded importance as the ‘authentic’ representation and voice of the individual. Experiential learning has been constructed as a progressive and emancipatory movement within education” (Usher and Edwards, 2006:187).

This leads to the idea that education cannot be kept under universally acceptable objectives pre-determined by powerful institutions. Contrarily, the objectives of education and accordingly its processes should be more various. It should free itself from repressive and strict voices which should replace itself by accepting, unprejudiced and progressive voices to make learners encourage to experience their ‘self’. Peters emphasizes this progressive voice as below:

“And knowledge will not be exteriorized with respect to the “knower” and the status of learner and the teacher is transformed into a commodity relationship of “supplier” and “user”: Knowledge is not and shouldn’t be produced in order to be sold, and be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production” (Peters, 1995:28).

Along the same line, the teacher's role should also be redefined in postmodern education. Contrary to the common belief that they are authorities in the classroom atmosphere, in postmodern education teacher is not the one who is omniscient, but s/he is a facilitator of the meaning making processes by considering the importance of the materials to be used, knowing his/her students way of approaching the processes in the class and presenting to them new opportunities to participate into the meaning making operations while fostering their mental states to improve their values and attitudes.

Upon considering all these, characteristics of postmodern education may be summarized as below:

- Education should be more diverse in terms of goals and processes and consequently in terms of organizational structures, curricula, methods and participants.
- Education should no longer function as a means of reproducing society or as an instrument in large-scale social engineering. It should become limitless both in time and space.
- Any attempt to place education into a straitjacket of uniform provision, standardized curricula, technicised teaching methods, and bearer of universal 'messages' of rationality or morality would be difficult to impose.
- Education in the postmodern cannot help but construct itself in a form which would better enable greater participation in a diversity of ways by culturally diverse learners.
- Education in the postmodern is likely to be marked both by a general decentring and a general loosening of boundaries.

(Adapted from Edwards and Usher, 1994: 211-212).

Postmodern education seeks for ways to find alternative ways to make students use their experiences in a collaborative atmosphere and tries to broaden their minds while helping them develop new understandings to different situations at different contexts by observing their friends' interpretations and approaches to the processes. Therefore, although it seems that in postmodern education teachers are of no significance, the case is the reverse. Teachers should, at first, know their students in order to have an idea about their mental schemas. When various people's conditions are different depending upon the differences between them, then the differences between them cannot be ignored, which are of great importance. Postmodern education therefore stands against all kinds of standardized approaches to education in competitive atmospheres with highest objectives under the control of teacher's authority as in modernist viewpoint. Below is a table of the differences between modernist and postmodernist concepts to make their borders more clear in terms of knowledge and education:

Modern metanarratives	Postmodern metanarratives
High-stakes, standardized testing (Absolute measurement; focus on the product of learning)	Classroom-Based Assessment using portfolios, journals, formative self- and peer-assessment (Relativistic focus on process; deconstruction of the standardized testing paradigm)
Competition (aggression, competitive individualization, survival of the fittest, first-past-the-post)	Collaboration (Social learning, teamwork) balanced by a new form of individualization – autonomous learning and self-access learning
Studying English through its 'highest achievements' i.e. elitist English literature (Strict boundaries; restrictions of genre)	Learning English through pop-culture, comics, the internet, etc. (Plurality of genres; crossing boundaries; eclecticism)
Linguistic imperialism (Colonialism)	Postcolonialism (Use of diverse Englishes as

The English 'native-speaker'	variants of a lingua franca, providing a means of expressing local cultures; death of the 'native speaker')
Structural syllabi (Totalization)	Process syllabi, task-based and project-based learning (Deconstruction of propositional language learning concepts)
Quantitative, experimental, 'objective' research (Absolute measurement of rigorously isolated and independently observed 'truths')	Qualitative, subjective, action research (Relativistic description of perceptions; systems analysis of group learning environments)
Behaviorist view of learning as predictable and independent of emotions	Recognition of affective and social filters (language learning as social, cultural, emotional and unpredictable)
Standardized, Western English (Totalization)	Regional Englishes, dialects and pronunciations (Decentralization, Regionalization, Diversification)
Linear, sequential learning, language as code (Absolute, grammatical 'truths')	Self-reflexive use of meta-language and learning strategies in a non-linear learning format
Teacher-centered learning (Centralization)	Student-centered learning (Decentralization)
Teacher-controlled learning (Totalization)	Student autonomy, self-directed learning (Decentralization, regionalism)

Table 2. Contrasting modern and postmodern educational concepts

Excerpted from Finch, A. E. at www.tbtl.org/download/finch_handout.doc. January, 6

For postmodern approach, there is not a method, technique or an approach teachers can fully approve; therefore, teachers should question their authorities and allow students to question it. Such a standpoint indeed gives teachers an opportunity to evaluate, respect and appreciate viewpoints and approaches that enlarge their perception and also make them consider established methods, techniques, texts and any kind of applications critically.

As a final thought education then can be interpreted as windows on first the learners themselves and the world from the postmodern point of view. It should accordingly help students to let their potential out and develop their skills. Another important feature of education is its task to relate people themselves with others, which means that it should make bridges between the self and the communities. As O'Farrell emphasizes:

“If education can be a machine for social conformity, it can also be a machine for the investigation of new horizons and new possibilities. The proliferation of ‘difference’ and uncertainty in the postmodern world, far from being a problem, is a constant invitation to imagine the unimaginable.” (O'Farrell, 1999: 17)

While some have criticized that postmodernism makes all philosophical assertions valueless, some complain that it rejects epistemological basis. However, postmodernists do not think that they are useless. They only eliminate the necessity of foundations and of preferring one position over another which gives us the opportunity to construct our own positions. What is more it also opens new doors for educational research and practice, and gives way to new applications such as constructivism which is an approach in vogue in many fields.

2.3. Historical Background of Constructivism

It is an undeniable fact that learning has a revolutionary nature, trying to give different answers to the questions of the discipline. Since these questions, which are being asked permanently, are getting varied day by day, it is also true that the goals

of education have changed. For the past 30 years it has been realized that there is no use of systemization of the language and that the old goals such as implementing a particular rule through convenient skills or memorization is insignificant. Instead, the significance of developing skills for problem solving and lifelong learning has been emphasized.

Thus, philosophies dealing with how knowledge is created and obtained rather than what knowledge is, have gained more importance. And that's why constructivism concerning the nature of knowledge and reality has come into vogue recently and has a great impact on the teaching and learning process.

Now that it has popularity in educational area, many theorists studying on the nature of knowledge and learning embraced the tenets of constructivism some of which may vary according to their focus points.

Constructivism as a concept of learning and teaching has a long and diverse history. For centuries it has been introduced in many ways and forms and under many different names. To trace its history it is better to begin with a simple definition of the term. Constructivism is generally interpreted as a philosophical understanding which assumes that people construct their own reality. It presupposes that people have interactions with their environment on which they construct their own knowledges.

Origins of constructivism extend as far as Kant, Piaget and Dewey's epistemologies to the contemporary ones. An eighteenth century philosopher, Immanuel Kant considers constructivism as follows: "the human being can neither be merely trained, broken in, mechanically instructed, nor really enlightened. One trains dogs and horses, and one can also train human beings. Training, however, does little; what matters above all is that children learn to think. The aim should be the principles from which all actions springs." (Kant, 1803, *Werke*, vol ix, p.450 in von Glasersfeld 1995:178).

He actually puts emphasis to humanity and for him what must be central is the human reason including its form and construction and features in a world that can be discovered and known by the so called experienter, the people. Because it is not a passive construction but an active one, human mind has the capability to organize things, uncover and learn them. It is, Kant defined it, “a synthesizing faculty that, in the act of knowing something in the world, actively constructs orderliness out of the chaos of experience in accordance with human reason’s own structures, forms and categories” (Jardine, 2006: 23). He says:

“reason...must approach nature in order to be taught by it. It must not, however, do so in the character of a pupil who listens to everything the teacher chooses to say, but of an appointed judge who compels the witnesses to answer the questions which he had himself formulated. While reason must seek in nature, not fictitiously ascribe to it, whatever has to be learnt, if learnt at all, only from nature, it must adopt as its guide, in so seeking, that which it has itself put into nature” (Jardine, 2006:24).

American philosopher and constructivist theorist John Dewey, an important nineteenth century figure, argues that knowing is not something that should be juxtaposed with an outside observer. It is indeed a construction made by a contributor. He goes on claiming that knowing is a process of drawing understandings from experiences. An in the twentieth century Jean Piaget who is close to the spirit of Kantianism contributes constructivism by defining intelligent as an “adaptation”. He asserts that:

“In order to grasp its relation to life in general, it is necessary to state precisely the relations that exist between the organism and environment life is a continuous creation of increasingly complex forms and progressive balancing of these forms with the environment. To say that intelligence is a particular instance of biological adaptation is thus to suppose that it is essentially an organization and that its function is to structure the universe just as the organism structures its environment.” (Jardine, 2006:42)

Constructivism does not simply cover the construction of the knowledge in mind but also it deals with how we compose meaning by interacting with our environment. Thus, the process of meaning construction involves the social facets in people's lives. Wilson defines an effective learning environment as the places where "an individual's tool-using and information-using activities need to be complemented by the powerful sources presented by other people and by the surrounding culture." Thus, to Wilson constructivist learning atmospheres include "environments where groups of learners learn to use tools of their culture-including language and the rules for engaging in dialogue and knowledge generation" (Wilson, 1996:5).

Another important figure when constructivism is considered is Ernst von Glasersfeld who supports the idea that "the theoretical notions concerning the processes of communication and learning, the nature of information and knowledge, the interaction with others, the phenomenon of motivation all change when they are seen from the constructivist perspective"(von Glasersfeld, 1995:178).

Glasersfeld argues that from constructivist point of view all knowledges are 'instrumental'. And for him the initial thing to do is that "students be given the reasons why particular ways of acting and thinking are considered desirable. This entails explanations of the specific contexts in which the knowledge to be required is believed to work"(von Glasersfeld, 1995:177). Therefore, it is of great importance for constructivists to let students know and be aware why they are expected to know desired things and present them opportunities to express their own wishes, whys and hows. This is exactly because knowledge is not something that can be transferred into students' mind. As Riesbeck argues "the constructivist perspective on learning emphasizes the notion that knowledge is something that a student constructs using his/her pre-existing knowledge." (Riesbeck in Wilson, 1996:49). By the same token Jardine describes constructivism as "an idea that we actively construct our ongoing experience and understanding of the world based on previously acquired categories, concepts and experiences" (Jardine, 2006: 21).

Constructivists believe that there is nothing that is true or real other than what the experiencer creates within the mind. Fosnot sees constructivism as “interpretive, recursive and building process by active learners interacting with the physical and social world” (Fosnot, 1996:30). She sees it as a psychological theory of learning expressing how forms and mental schemas occur. To her, constructivism is not something that describes and portrays “the stages of thoughts or secluded behaviors obtained via reinforcement.

Though there are many definitions made by different educators, at different times and contexts, and now that it has been clarified where the term stems from, explaining what the constructivist approach is not can be a useful way to develop a full understanding of it:

- It is not just the provision of tasks for pupils to engage in
- It is not a ‘project’ in which pre-determined information has to be found
- It is not a practical way conducted according to a predetermined method, even if this is called an ‘investigation’.
- It is not the kind of lesson which leads children to an achievement which is exactly what the teacher expected.

But it is “a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem solving activities” (Wilson, 1996:5). Thus, it is constructing one’s own knowledge of the world in which s/he lives by reflecting his /her own mental models. So this process means adapting our mental schemas into new experiences. It deals with creating knowledge not getting it. It is actually all about searching for meaning for the sake of learning.

2.4. Postmodern Roots of Constructivism

It is clear that the roots of many constructivist ideas are simply rest upon postmodernism, the philosophy which supports rationalism and objectivism. To

begin with, postmodernism simply focuses attention on multiplicity of things. In terms of education it supports diverse learning environments where different ways of presenting, therefore, learning are encouraged. Thus in postmodern constructivist language classes besides the classroom-based ones, computer-based learning environments and using different multimedia tools are also drawn on.

In classroom-based environments many different supplies, variety of textbooks and extra materials can be used. These regular classrooms give students the opportunity to define their tasks and set of principles and learning tools and they are called as basic learning atmospheres. Computer-based environments containing a kind of multimedia approach to learning is a kind of micro world that helps students find more various learning tasks, activities and enable them to meet different ways of acquiring language skills. Postmodern education supports diversity in techniques, methods or processes to be used in the classroom. A direct and traditional method is thought to be a ordinary, inadequate and unproductive. That is, in order to enrich students' minds, teachers should enrich the processes and applications they create within the classroom which provides the basis of constructivist approach.

Another important point to be considered is postmodernism's rejection of reality or to be more precise, its repulsion of one single truth to be accepted by everyone regardless of their own viewpoints or interpretation stemming from the differences in their experiences. As radical constructivist Glasersfeld states "language opens a not quite transparent window on the abstractions and representations individual speakers glean from their experiential reality, but it does not, as analytical philosophers were hoping, open any window on the ontological reality of an independent world." (von Glassersfeld, 1995:137). His assertion can be interpreted that language cannot provide anyone with an opportunity to grasp the one single truth waiting there. Although it does not provide a possibility of reaching the expected representations stemming form our own experiences, it cannot enable people to be the owner of the objective knowledge. However, Glasersfeld does not describe it as the rejection of reality and says:

“It may be useful that this is no a denial of reality, nor does it deny that we interact with other speakers and with an environment; but it does deny that the human knower can come to know reality in the ontological sense. The reason for this denial is simply that the human knower’s interactions with the ontic world may reveal to some extent what the human knower can do- the space in which the human knower can move-, but they cannot reveal the nature of the constraints within which the human knower’s movements are confined. Constructivism, thus, does not say there is no world and no other people, it merely holds that insofar as we know them, both the world and the others are models that we ourselves construct” (von Glasersfeld, 1995:137).

Postmodernism does not accept any reality outside the persona and it argues that there is not any fixed reality or truth that is expected to be received by people. In the same sense constructivism refuses a standardized world of knowledge that is to be visited and uncovered, yet it welcomes students’ own construction of what they get by their experiences according to their own mental framework. Thus, what constructivists support is that there can be no reality other than what the students can create in their minds. It gives the message to students that the world is a chaotic place where numerous perspectives occur and the reality is usually a matter of interpretation.

In a similar way, constructivist classrooms give importance to people’s own interpretations and their own interests. By this way, they become aware of the fact that everyone has its own understanding of things about what is happening around and that there are different viewpoints to be considered other than theirs. This brings us to the idea of multiple perspectives in the classroom. In postmodernism there is the celebration of different ideas and interpretations. Along the same line, constructivist classrooms are based upon the celebration of multiplicity of perspectives. In constructivism because active construction of meaning is of great importance in such learning atmospheres it is emphasized that ideas are more important rather than facts, that reality is just a matter of interpretation and that everyone is unique in its own world. Thus, learning is seen as a personal interpretation of the world. Kincheloe argues that in addition to the common belief

that the world is socially and historically constructed, people and the knowledge they possess are socially, culturally and historically constructed, too:

“We create ourselves with the cultural tools at hand. We operate and construct the world and our lives on a particular, social, cultural and historical playing field. A key aspect of education in this context involves understanding the nature of these constructions. In the realm of knowledge, it is simple-minded and misleading to merely study random outcomes of the construction process-isolated “facts” and “truths”. Constructivists are as much concerned with the processes through which certain information becomes validated knowledge as with committing lots of it to memory. They are also concerned with the processes through which certain information was not deemed to be worthy or validated knowledge.” (Kincheloe, 2005:2-3)

Postmodernism rejects all kinds of grand theories or meta-narratives trying to explain the world due to the fact that there cannot be realities for a whole world. Things are always personalized, contextualized and localized by being interpreted differently in different cultures. In the same way, one of the major principles of constructivism is also its being context-dependent and related to practice. Thus constructivist learning environments are always personalized to empower their minds and enliven their inner world and understandings. The underlying philosophies of both postmodernism and constructivism are summarized below:

Underlying Philosophy	Theory about Cognition
Postmodernism Postmodern philosophy emphasizes contextual construction of meaning and the validity of multiple perspectives. Key ideas include: * Knowledge is constructed by people and groups of people; * Reality is multiperspectival; * Truth is grounded in everyday life and social relations. * Life is a text; thinking is an interpretive act. * Facts and values are inseparable; * Science and all other human activities are value-laden.	Constructivism * Mind is real. Mental events are worthy of study. * Knowledge is dynamic. * Meaning is constructed. * Learning is a natural consequence of performance. * Reflection/abstraction is critical to expert performance and to becoming an expert. * Teaching is negotiating construction of meaning. * Thinking and perception are inseparable. * Problem solving is central to cognition.

Table 3. Underlying Philosophies of Modernism and Postmodernism

Excerpted from Wilson, B. G. at

<http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~bwilson/postmodern.html>, November 6.

2.5. Constructivist Language Learning

What is crucial in education is the integration of reasoning and problem solving skills development with the interdisciplinary programs that places students in situations where they can practice solving problems in a meaningful and constructive manner. Such a program

- ◆ encourages student responsibility and decision making and intentional learning in an atmosphere of collaboration among students and instructors;

- ◆ promotes study and investigation within meaningful and information-rich contexts; and
- ◆ utilizes participation in dynamic activities that promote high level thinking processes, including problem solving, experimentation, creativity, discussion, and examination of topics from multiple perspectives (Wilson, 1996:6).

Constructivist language teachers, who should consider the things above, initially question their understandings of what knowledge and what instruction is. If they see themselves as instructors, then they most probably think that knowledge is in somewhere accessible to students when you give the necessary instructions. This is because they think that knowledge is something transmittable to the student. What is more, it is supposed that there is a targeted certain knowledge to be received by the students. At this point, they are the instructors to show them how they will achieve it. However, if they accept the fact that students construct their own meanings and that they become their own instructors in these meaning making processes, their understanding of instruction will change, too as below:

IF YOU THINK OF KNOWLEDGE AS....	THEN YOU MAY TEND TO THINK OF INSTRUCTION AS...
a quantity or packet of content waiting to be transmitted	a product to be delivered by a vehicle
a cognitive state as reflected in a person's schemas and procedural skills	a set of instructional strategies aimed at changing and individual's schemas
a person's meanings constructed by interaction with one's environment	a learner drawing on tools and resources within a rich environment
enculturation or adoption of a group's ways of seeing and acting	participation in a community's everyday activities.

Table 4. How our views of knowledge influence our views of instruction.
(Wilson, 1996:4)

Within this framework, constructivist learning environments can be seen as places where students are responsible for their own construction of meaning processes, where they draw their own conclusions, where they become aware of the fact that there are different ideas from their own and where they learn that when they interact with others, they can learn better and enrich themselves. Wilson in his book gives place to the seven pedagogical goals on which designers of constructivist learning environments put emphasis:

1. Provide experience with the knowledge of construction process: Students take primary responsibility for determining the topics in a domain they pursue, the methods of how to learn and the strategies or methods for solving problems. The role of the teacher is to facilitate this process.

2. Provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives: Problems in the real world rarely have one correct approach or one solution. There are typically multiple ways to think about and solve problems. For this reason, students must engage in activities that enable them to evaluate alternative solutions to problems as a means of testing and enriching their understanding.

3. Embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts: Most learning occurs in the context of school whereby educators remove the noise of real life from the learning activity. To overcome this problem, curriculum designers must attempt to maintain the authentic context of the learning task. Educators must ground the problems within the noise and complexity that surrounds them outside the classroom. Students must learn to impose order on the complexity and noise as well as to solve the core problem.

4. Encourage ownership and voice in the learning process: This illustrates the student-centeredness of constructivist learning. Rather than the teacher, the students will play a strong role in identifying their issues and directions, as well as their goals and objectives. In this framework, the teacher acts as a consultant who helps students frame their learning objectives.

5. Embed learning in social experience: Intellectual development is significantly influenced through social interactions. Thus, learning should reflect collaboration between both teachers and students, and students and students.

6. Encourage the use of multiple modes of representation: though oral and written communication are the two most common forms of transmitting knowledge in educational settings, the use of additional media such as video, computer, photographs and so on should be used to provide rich experiences that will broaden their understanding of the world.

7. Encourage self-awareness of the knowledge construction process: A key outcome of constructivist learning is knowing how one knows. It is the students' ability to explain why or how they solved a problem in a certain way; to analyze their construction of knowledge and processes. This is called to be reflexivity (Wilson, 1996: 11,12).

Besides these goals, students' own responsibilities to create rich environments to achieve them should not be ignored. They should make use of these rich environments to ally them in different contexts at different times. However, it should also be noted that in order to be responsible for such tasks, they should know the ways they learn by and they should have the capability to set goals, determine their weak and strong sides and describe how they can strengthen them.

Constructivism may be interpreted from different perspectives, with different characteristics by different people. In educational era, constructivism has been defined in several ways most of which agree upon its characteristics. Though there are some disagreements at some points and many educators set forth different principles to describe it, most agreed ones may be summarized as below:

- The targeted knowledge is not a meta that can be moved from one's mind to another and it is not something transferable through communication, imparted to students' mind or received senses through senses passively. It can only be

built by the adaptation of the students with what they experience and have in their mind.

- There is no knowledge external to the mind. It is apparent that school systems in the world make teachers apply a set of rules and obey a curriculum which eventually leads them to try to make students come to an outside world ready and waiting for them. However, constructivism rejects such an outside world waiting to be discovered by an outside mind. On the contrary every student's mind is a world that s/he should discover and by this way should construct his/her own knowledge thanks to his/her experiences.
- "Errors" have a really crucial place in a constructivist classroom. They are the most beneficial things to make students realize their own mistakes. By the help of the process in which they are trying to understand where the problem is and go deeper into the subject matter, errors turn into a very valuable way of learning in constructivism.
- Reflective learning also takes its place in a constructivist classroom by providing students with multiple perspectives. The discussions of ideas, outcomes and experiences need to be allowed due to the fact that reflection helps them generate different ideas and improve their own understandings of the subject matter.
- Collaborative learning should not be put aside in the application of constructivism. Classes should be seen a community where experiences, thoughts so minds are shared. Collaborations present students an opportunity to explain, defend and communicate their ideas within a community.
- Constructivists see learning not as an outcome of development but rather see it as a development itself. This idea should be reflected in the classes by allowing students to find their own way of thinking, express their ideas

without hesitation, ask questions and draw conclusions and lastly compare them with each other.

- Constructivism frees students from repeating certain procedures and chunks of information. It allows them to improve a deep understanding and revolve around larger ideas. Constructivism helps them to consider information from their own perspectives, see larger ideas and compare with theirs, focus on their own understandings, make connections, reformulate new ideas and get individual or/and distinctive deductions.

Teachers who follow constructivism should be aware of the fact that what students can have from school actually comes from their own practical knowledge or understandings they have. If the aim is to achieve a real learning atmosphere, tasks would be more meaningful to the students, which would provide them with cognitive development and allow them to uncover the targeted knowledge. Therefore, the core of constructivism lies in the idea that rather than reproduction 'construction' should be the aim.

2.5.1. Learning and Instruction in Constructivism

Constructivism does not favor the use of a standardized curriculum, on the contrary, it encourages adapting the curriculum according to students' prior knowledge and attitudes. Constructivist curriculum has also nothing to do with theoretical part of the course; contrarily it gives importance to hands-on experiences. Besides, the linear presentation of the subject should be avoided and spiral presentation would be the best way owing to the fact that it leads students constructing the knowledge step-by-step in a progressive way.

Under the theory of constructivism educators consider motivation as a key concept. This idea of motivation indeed includes involving students into decision-making process by which they have the chance to set goals and objectives in negotiation. In this way they can make sense of their own learning process and will

know the whys and hows of the lesson. Motivation is also related to a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere. Constructivist environments help students make connections between things and enable them to develop new ideas. It is therefore teachers' task to change the flow of the course according to students' responses and motivate them to ask, analyze, interpret and predict information. This also encourages self-analysis, inquiry, awareness and reflection.

When it comes to the use of what is learnt, language is seen as a process rather than a product and is thought in a subconscious way not by excluding explicit knowledge. In the same way, constructivist learning environment tries to create a communicative competence rather than linguistic one. It also gives emphasis not on forms or structures but on content and meaning. Thus, teachers should change and shape the material which is going to be used by the students in a way that it is going to suit their cognitive levels. They should change the atmosphere to innovative ones to evoke students' creativity and to encourage them to use it in different and useful ways. Gould states in her article that:

“Constructivist frameworks challenge teachers to create innovative environments in which they and their students are encouraged to think and explore. For conceptual learning to occur, however, it is not enough to organize a classroom with language art activities in which problems may be encountered. First, learners must play an active role in selecting and defining the activities, which must be both challenging and intrinsically motivating; second, there must be appropriate teacher support as learners build concepts, values, schemata, and problem solving abilities.” (Gould, J. in Fosnot, 1996:92)

In a constructivist classroom learning is seen as something:

1. Constructed:

Students are not accepted as people having nothing in their minds as blank sheets. They have their own cultural luggage carried by them, therefore, every little knowledge is exposed to their construction according to their own experiences and

mental schemas. They have already formulated ideas and understanding in their minds which actually help them construct the new input.

2. Collaborative:

One of the most important aspects of constructivist learning is its being collaborative. It is true that personalization in constructivist learning is a very strong way to make students' interests move into the subject; however, it doesn't mean that students are going to study alone. On the contrary, constructivism supports their collaboration among each other. By this way they will be able to reflect each other's ideas and develop theirs better, assess themselves and they can learn different strategies, methods or sometimes viewpoints. This actually brings us to the idea of celebration of multiple perspectives, and thus, to the idea of postmodernism owing to the fact that it helps students realize that there is not only one true perspective or style but rather, people have different point of views, so different constructions thanks to their different mental frameworks.

3. Active:

If constructivism defines learning as something constructed, then it is predictable that the constructors, that is, students are the active participants of this learning process. Initially they are given the right of deciding what subject they will study, how the process will work and even how they assess their learning. In that sense teachers lead, suggest and provide them with tasks requiring their full participation. Students, by this way, all responsible for their own choices and as a part of personalization process, they can choose tasks with which they can express themselves better.

4. Reflective:

The constructivist classroom relies heavily on a safe atmosphere where students feel free to ask, analyze and reflect their own process of learning. Reflection

has an important place in constructivism due to the fact that it helps students observe and control their own learning and as a result they can reflect on their experiences. That is how students become experts of their own learning.

5. Inquiry-based :

Whatever the subject-matter is, the tasks should be converted into problem-solving tasks. It is again teachers' duty to change the type of the task into analytical processes. Even in an English class aiming at teaching some certain vocabulary, students can be directed to problem-solving tasks that includes these words. These don't have to include the activities that can be completed in long terms. It may consist of some small open-ended tasks based on asking questions, drawing conclusions, searching for new meanings and etc.

Kincheloe states what knowledge production involves in constructivism:

- * Connecting the object of inquiry to the many contexts in which it is embedded.
- * Appreciating the relationship between researcher and that being researched.
- * Connecting the making of meaning to human experience.
- * Making use of textual forms of analysis while not losing sight that living and breathing human beings are the entities around which and with which meaning is being made.
- * Building a bridge between these forms of understanding and informed action.
- * Understanding that rigorous teaching always involves applying these concepts to any subject matter engaged in the classroom (Kincheloe, 2005:21).

2.5.2. Assessment in Constructivism

If the idea of constructivism lies in constructing one's own meaning, then it should not be a "right answer" course model, which means trying to adapt someone

else's own meaning. Thus, in terms of assessment it should be considered that the best way of evaluating students' learning process or progress can be achieved by involving them into this process and presenting them with information which has equivalent value with their quality of learning.

Gagnon and Collay say that teachers searching for ways to represent students' learning in the most comprehensive way must integrate assessment into their daily teaching by examining student thinking. They argue that only by elucidating how students make their own meaning and construct knowledge with others can teachers maintain individual and collective learning. According to them assessment is:

“...an integral part of every step in the process of constructivist learning design. Teachers design a situation based on their assessment of students' needs, developmental levels, and interests. Teachers design a process for groupings based on their assessment of interpersonal processes, thinking styles, and materials. Teachers design a simple assessment of what students already know as a bridge to what they want students to learn. Teachers design questions to guide, clarify, and integrate student thinking in order to assess their understanding of the concepts, skills, or attitudes they are trying to learn. Teachers arrange an exhibit for students to record what they have thought and to present it to others for peer assessment of thinking. Teachers arrange for reflections on students' collective learning and thinking as a self-assessment of individual learning” (Gagnon and Collay, 2001: 114).

Another important point in terms of assessment is that it should be authentic and interwoven with teaching. Any assessment independent from the learning process is rejected in constructivism, because, when the assessment becomes part of this process and when testing is integrated with the task, students can realize their own mistakes and see their own progress and thus can judge their own progress. Thus, it becomes a kind of self-analysis tool.

Assessment process gives importance not only to the product but also the process, thus, it cannot involve mere asking and answering process or testing yet it deals with observation and viewpoints of students as well as tests. Kincheloe argues that teachers develop and use various assessment techniques “ to better understand

the impact of their pedagogy. With such knowledge they are better equipped to self-criticize and to monitor student learning so as to continuously update, revise and improve curriculum and instruction” (Kincheloe, 2005:72).

Assessment is important in the sense that students can be aware of their present situation and how they gain understanding of their subject. Thus, as in an ideal constructivist classroom students question their work and apply what they learn to new situations; therefore they become experts on their subject. In this phase teacher’s role is of great significance. Although it seems that constructivist classrooms do not put such a great burden on teacher’s shoulders, their initial and perhaps a little challenging task is to encourage students in this process. In order to prepare developed assessment techniques teachers should be models, organizers, guides and observers of all processes in the classroom. They should bring a critical point of view into the curriculum and the instruction which should also involve multiple perspectives and sources of data.

2.6. Personalization of Language Learning In Constructivism

In constructivist learning environment students are involved in multiple activities under the reign of multiple learning goals with the teacher as a guide or facilitator. They obtain cognitive flexibility by being exposed to multiple interpretations and they gain transferability by witnessing multiple presentations of the same interpretations (Wilson, 1997:26).

Constructivism tells us about an active process in which there is no entirely independent variable. It means that knowledge construction process cannot be interpreted as a phenomena that belongs to the students themselves. But instead, they are affected by their environment and they affect it in a way and knowledge is internalized and personalized in their minds. Thus, personalization does not mean excluding their environment and society they are living in; on the contrary, students cannot be taken from their social worlds away, which actually compose their own mental schemas. In the end it is true that people are just small representations of their

world and their experiences, and they can develop their own understanding of that world effectively. Kincheloe states that:

“The knowledge of the classroom is constructed where students’ personal experience intersects with academic knowledge. A key skill of a constructivist teacher involves nurturing this synthesis of personal experience and academic knowledge. Such a pedagogical act is extremely complex, and teachers must work hard to bring the different perspectives together. They reveal how their own perspectives came to be constructed and how the social values, ideologies and information they encounter shape their pedagogies and worldviews.” (Kincheloe, 2005:4)

According to postmodern constructivism, as it was stated before, objective knowledge is not accepted, to be more precise, it argues that there is not fixed truths to be called as knowledge which will be transmitted to students’ minds. For them, truths are what we call as interpretations. Thus, there are not certain knowledges but rather ideas and interpretations. This idea brings us to the idea of personalization within constructivism. Students who are seen as the active participants of the meaning making processes should be presented with personalized activities in order to involve them into the process. The reason that lies under this idea is that personalized activities and instruction deal with students’ ideas and reactions to what they study and if their inner world is woken up, they become more interested in the subject-matter. Furthermore, if they personally have responsibilities in the decision making process and the flow of the courses, they will personally be involved into all and realize themselves more. Therefore, construction of the knowledge should be applied in individual tasks by the help of cooperation and negotiation between students. In that sense the table below shows the differences between the traditional classrooms which are generally teacher-centered and the constructivist ones which are student-centered:

Traditional classrooms	Constructivist Classrooms
Curriculum is presented part to whole, with emphasis on basic skills.	Curriculum is presented whole to part with emphasis in big concepts
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	Pursuit of student questions is highly valued.
Curricular activities rely heavily on textbooks and workbooks.	Curricular activities rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials.
Students are viewed as “blank slates” on which information is etched by the teacher.	Students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world.
Teachers generally behave in a didactic manner, disseminating information to students.	Teachers generally behave in an interactive manner, mediating the environment for students.
Teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning.	Teachers seek the students’ points of view to understand students’ present conceptions for use in subsequent lessons.
Assessment of student learning is viewed as separate from teaching and occurs almost entirely through testing.	Assessment of student learning is interwoven with teaching and occurs through teacher observation of students at work and through exhibitions and portfolios.
Students primarily work alone.	Students primarily work in groups.

Table 5. Contrasting Traditional and Constructivist Learning Environments.

(Brooks and Brooks, 1995:17)

Many of the items stated above deal with the personalization of the processes in the classrooms. Students are both the mean and aim in constructivist classrooms. Therefore, personalization as an idea involves also students’ being responsible for every step mentioned above.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1. The Design of the Study

Throughout the study experimental research design was followed to investigate the effect of constructivist personalized activities in students' academic success in FL classes. The research includes two groups; control group and the experimental group consisting of total 44 students in preparatory classes of Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department. While the control group was instructed by traditional methods, the experimental group was instructed by constructivist personalized methods.

A Pre-test – post-test control group experimental design was used in the study. Initially, a pre-test was administered to both groups, and then the implementation was carried out: the experimental group is taught in compliance with constructivist methods whereas the control group is taught by traditional methods. Finally, by administering the post-test the differences between two groups were found out.

The goal of this evaluation study was to determine whether the experimental group would show an accelerated rate of skills acquisition compared to the control group. This hypothesis was based on the following premise: in a constructivist learning environment which presents a self-directed, collaborative class with the appreciation of multiple perspectives and realistic context with individual tasks and where constructivist activities have been personalized and identified as instructional goals, the acquisition of target skills can be speeded up.

3.2. Subjects and settings

The subjects of this study consisted of the students studying in preparatory classes in Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department. Two different classes were selected in this research. Participants were 44 learners of English as a second language enrolled in elementary courses. However, it should be noted that throughout the implementation students of elementary courses have already completed elementary level and have started studying pre-intermediate level course books.

Each group has 22 learners at nearly the same ages. As for the academic achievement of the learners, the groups are compared firstly regarding their success averages they performed in the last midterm, which is the second midterm in the fall semester. Their success averages are compared by the help of the t-test included in computer software named as SPSS 8.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (there is not a significant difference between control and experimental groups in terms of their 2nd midterm averages.)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (there is a significant difference between control and experimental groups in terms of their 2nd midterm averages.)

The result of the first comparison is summarized in the table below:

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	control	22	59,8182	17,7513	3,7846	-0.037	0.970
	experimental	22	60,0455	22,4594	4,7884		

P>0,05

Table 6. The Results of the Comparison of the Groups Regarding the Success Averages in the Last Midterm (the second midterm) by means of the t-test included in SPSS.

According to the results above it is seen that there is not any statistically significant difference between the arithmetic means of the control and experimental groups' second midterm results. The acquired t-score (t) is -0.037 and the probability level (p) corresponding to this is calculated as 0.970. It is concluded that probability level is bigger than alpha which means that the level of significance ($p = 0.970 > 0.05$). H_0 hypothesis is accepted.

Therefore, the obvious conclusion is that the two groups are similar with regards to their success averages in the last midterm exam. Thus, they can be said to have approximate academic achievements which means that there is not a meaningful or significant difference between the successes of the students to be considered.

One of the most important criteria to consider whether the groups have equal language learning capacity or not is determined by applying a pre-test which includes forty multiple-choice questions prepared regarding the subject matter to be learned in the application process (see Appendix 7). The same test is applied as a post-test in order to see the difference between the two groups. After the implementation of the pre-test, the points of the groups were compared and the result is summarised in the following table:

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	control	22	39,2045	10,3045	2,1969	0.659	0.513
	experimental	22	36,9318	12,4626	2,6570		

P>0,05

Table 7. The Results of the Comparison of the Groups Regarding the Success Averages in Pre-test by means of the t-test included in SPSS.

The pre-test results of the control and experimental group have shown that both groups are at nearly the same levels ($p= 0.513 > 0.05$). This is of great significance for the reliability of the application of the study.

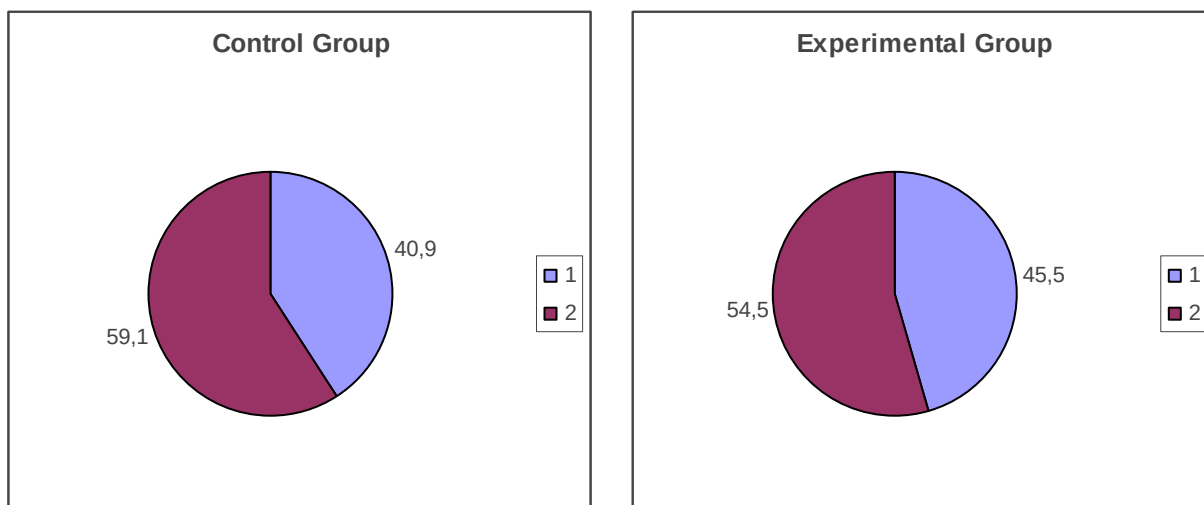
Another criterion for the comparison is the high school type of participants in control and experimental groups. Owing to the fact that students are mixed with regard to their high school types, the heterogeneity of the classes is determined in the following table:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Anatolian High School	9	40,9	40,9	40,9
	Regular High School	13	59,1	59,1	100,0
	Total	22	100,0	100,0	

Table 8. The Number and Percentage of Participants in Control Group in terms of Their High School Types.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Anatolian High School	10	45,5	45,5	45,5
	Regular High School	12	54,5	54,5	100,0
	Total	22	100,0	100,0	

Table 9. The Number and Percentage of Participants in Experimental Group in terms of Their High School Types.



1: Anatolian High School Graduates
2: Regular High School Graduates

Figure 1: The High School Type of the Participants in the Control and Experimental Groups.

As Tables 8-9 and Figure 1 above show that the control and experimental groups' educational backgrounds have an equal dispersion. The two classes include both regular and Anatolian high school students in nearly equal numbers.

Furthermore, it should also be considered as an important factor to determine whether these two classes comprise evening or day class students in terms of their university departments that they are going to study the following year. The tables below show their dispersion in both classes:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Day Classes	11	50,0	50,0	50,0
	Evening Classes	11	50,0	50,0	100,0
	Total	22	100,0	100,0	

Table 10. The Number and Percentage of Participants in Control Group in terms of Their Department Types: Evening or Day Classes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Day Classes	13	59,1	59,1	59,1
	Evening Classes	9	40,9	40,9	100,0
	Total	22	100,0	100,0	

Table 11. The Number and Percentage of Participants in Experimental Group in terms of Their Department Types: Evening or Day Classes.

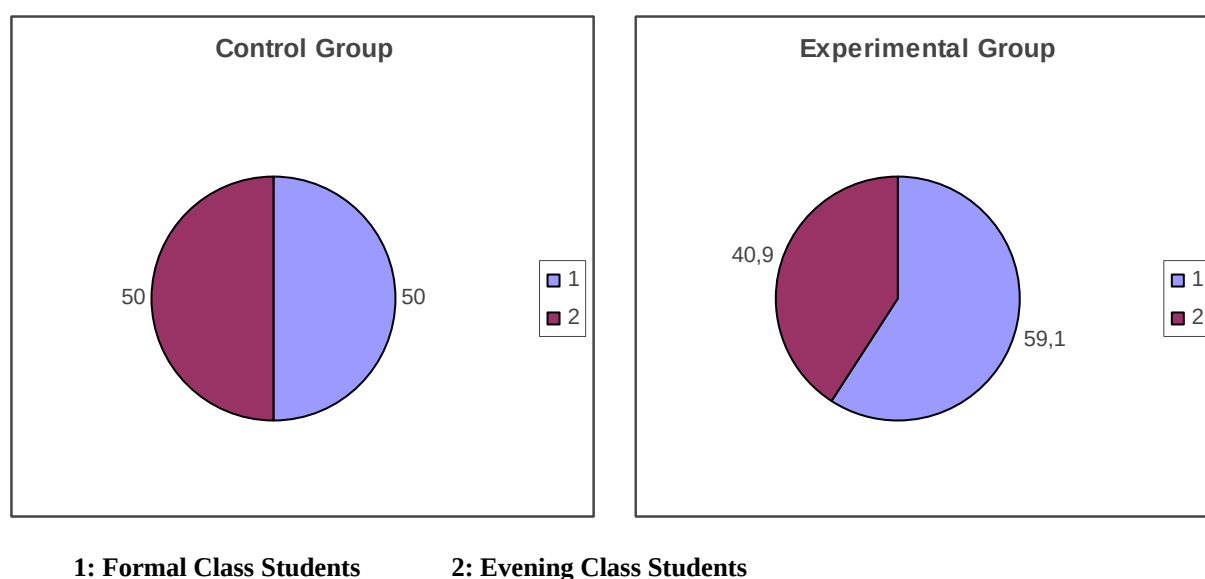


Figure 2: The Department Type of the Participants in the Control and Experimental Groups.

It is understood from Tables 10-11 and The figure 2 that both classes have almost an equal number with regard to their department types; formal or evening classes.

For all these reasons, in the final analysis it is obvious that the experimental and the control group have approximately the same academic success in English with regard to both their second midterm and pre-test results shown in the tables. Furthermore, students' educational backgrounds are also similar in terms of their high school types and class types. It means that there is no noticeable or significant difference between the groups and they are appropriate for the implementation of the personalized constructivist language teaching method.

3.3. Data collection

3.3.1. Personal Information Form

Personal information form was prepared by the researcher and was applied concurrently with the achievement test. The aim of the personal information form is to determine the independent variables that may affect the process of the application of constructivist learning methods. Independent variables stated in the form are students' high school types; regular or Anatolian and their department types; formal or evening classes.(see Appendix 5)

3.3.2. Subject Matter

It is considered that the four units of the book followed by Eskişehir Osmangazi University School of Foreign Languages, Success Pre-intermediate course book are suitable for the implementation process. The seventh, eighth, ninth and the tenth units of the book were chosen as subject matters. The units include the teaching of the following functions and structures:

	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	READING	LISTENING	WRITING
UNIT 7	* “Going to” & “will” future predictions * Adverbs of probability with may, might and will * First Conditional	* Science and technology * Adverbs of probability	* An article about the future of technology	* Listening to a fortune teller	* An election campaign leaflet
UNIT 8	* Gerund and Infinitive Verb Patterns	* Jobs and Professions * Adjectives to describe jobs	* A personality test	* A phone conversation	* Application Forms

			* An article about unusual jobs	* Interviews about work	
UNIT 9	* Present perfect and Simple Past	* Relationships vocabulary	* A short story about a family	* People talking about their relationships with others	* Writing a text message
UNIT 10	* Passive	* TV and TV programs * Newspapers, magazines and the internet	* An article about TV	* A radio phone-in	* Formal letter

Table 12. Unit Plan Prepared by the Students.

As a result of the items shown in the table it is determined that students will have the necessary skills to talk about future predictions and probabilities, to use different verb patterns, present perfect tense, simple past tense and passive forms in addition to the related vocabulary.

3.3.3. Preparation and the Reliability of the Achievement Test

The aim of this achievement test is to determine the success of students after the classes designed by using constructivist methods. In order to see the differences clearly it was used both as a pre and a post-test.

Within the preparation process, the number of questions to be asked should be determined. It is important to keep different factors in mind for this process. The duration of the test, the type of questions, the complexity of questions and the difficulty level of questions can be among these factors.

In that sense it was thought that the number questions to be answered should not exceed 40 in terms of time and the context of the questions should not be so difficult and complex considering the fact that they are elementary students trying to have the knowledge of the basics of language.

Functions and structures to be asked in the text were determined according to the subject matters placed in Table 12. The achievement test includes multiple choice questions in two respects: one is that students' following final exam is going to be multiple choice questions and the other one is that multiple choice items can be more reliably scored than other types of items. The achievement test is initially composed of 19 grammar and 21 vocabulary questions related to the topics mentioned before and shown in Table 12.

As for the reliability of the test, the test was conducted to 30 students in intermediate group students who have already learnt these subjects as a pilot study in Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department. The item analysis was conducted by using Iteman program (Item Analysis Program for Tests) and the items whose discriminative powers are more than 0.29 are selected and after their content validities were provided, they were accepted as achievement test questions. The alpha reliability coefficient of the items was raised to 0.75. In the final phase a 40-question multiple choice test was conducted both as a pre and a post-test to control and experimental groups.

3.3.4. The Teaching and Learning Process

Due to the fact that the objectives of the courses have been determined, the teaching and learning activities can be explained step by step. It should be stated that the implementation is going to be based upon Gagnon and Collay's six elements for the constructivist design.

The "Constructive Learning Design" developed by Gagnon and Collay emphasizes six important elements: Situation, Groupings, Bridge, Questions, Exhibit, and Reflections. They assert that the aim for designing these elements is to assist teacher planning and reflection about the course of student learning. They go on saying that:

“ The *situation* is a comprehensive overview of the learning episode with a clear statement of your purpose and of the task you expect your students to accomplish as they make meaning of the event. The details of the learning episode unfold chronologically through the other elements. We continue with *groupings* of students and materials and move to a *bridge* between prior knowledge and current learning. We frame questions that teachers or students will ask as they think together about accomplishing the task. After students accomplish the task so the teacher’s satisfaction as well as their own, they create an *exhibit* of their work. Then the teacher arranges for collective and individual *reflections* on their thinking. The students are the focus of the learning episode as they think together about how to accomplish the task.” (Gagnon and Collay, 2001:7)

Gagnon and Collay explain their six elements in constructivist model of learning as in the table below:

1. Situation:

What situation are you going to arrange for students to explain? Give this situation a title and describe a process of solving problems, answering questions, creating metaphors, making decisions, drawing conclusions, or setting goals. This situation should include what you expect the students to do and how students will make their own meaning.

2. Groupings: There are two categories of groupings:

A. How are you going to make groupings of students; as a whole class, individuals, in collaborative thinking teams of two, three, four, five, six or more, and what process will you use to group them; counting off, choosing a color or piece of fruit, or similar clothing? This depends upon the situation you design and the materials you have available to you.

B. How are you going to arrange groupings of materials that students will use to explain the situation by physical modeling, graphically representing, numerically describing, or individually writing about their collective experience. How many sets of materials you have will often determine the numbers of student groups you will form.

3. Bridge:

This is an initial activity intended to determine students' prior knowledge and to build a "bridge" between what they already know and what they might learn by explaining the situation. This might involve such things as giving them a simple problem to solve, having a whole class discussion, playing a game, or making lists. Sometimes this is best done before students are in groups and sometimes after they are grouped. You need to think about what is appropriate.

4. Questions:

Questions could take place during each element of the Learning Design. What guiding questions will you use to introduce the situation, to arrange the groupings, to set up the bridge, to keep active learning going, to prompt exhibits, and to encourage reflections? You also need to anticipate questions from students and frame other questions to encourage them to explain their thinking and to support them in continuing to think for themselves.

5. Exhibit:

This involves having students make an exhibit for others of whatever record they made to record their thinking as they were explaining the situation. This could include writing a description on cards and giving a verbal presentation, making a graph, chart, or other visual representation, acting out or role playing their impressions, constructing a physical representation with models, and making a video tape, photographs, or audio tape for display.

6. Reflections:

These are the students' reflections of what they thought about while explaining the situation and then saw the exhibits from others. They would include what students remember from their thought process about feelings in their spirit, images in their imagination, and languages in their internal dialogue. What attitudes, skills, and concepts will students take out the door? What did students learn today that they won't forget tomorrow? What did they know before; what did they want to know; and what did they learn?

Table 13. Constructivist Learning Design G. W. Gagnon. Jr., and M. Collay excerpted from <http://www.prainbow.com/cld/cldp.html>, December, 6.

At the first stage, as the implementation will last 6 six weeks, four plans for each units, that is, for each group were organized together with students. It should be emphasized here that each step of the following plan was determined together with the students due to the fact that in constructivist learning environments students are responsible for their own learning process and teacher is only the facilitator and a guide for this process. It is kept in mind throughout the whole process that teacher should participate in the lesson as if s/he is a student and rather than behaving like s/he knows all the answers, his/her attitude should be as if s/he is learning within the same atmosphere together with the students. Thus, the researcher during the whole process had the role to encourage students learning by sometimes asking questions and/or sometimes explaining her own thoughts. Under the light of these explanations the following plan, describing each step of the courses was prepared:

Situation & Groupings:

At the first phase the subject matters of the following four units were introduced to the students and they were asked to choose the subject to which they felt close. It is also told that two groups would include 5 people and the other two would include 6. And as all four subjects were about their everyday life, no difficulty was experienced during the decision process. They voluntarily organized four groups including six people. Furthermore, the teacher told the class that they were going to make a presentation by responding to an article they would choose and that presentation should cover the necessary vocabulary and the grammar items to be taught. They could also choose anything they like as their article. Then the teacher helped student find articles they can both like and manage.

Students were agreed that they could decide about their subjects in three days. After three days of research each group decided their articles according to the topic of their units (See Appendix 6).

A) The Group that is going to make the presentation of the week prepares their own materials to create a rich and real context, that is the situation and share the

tasks among each other. They also prepare the first week's worksheet and distribute them to the other groups.

B) Those groups having the first worksheet prepare their own works about the subject matter including their own thoughts and own questions before the presentation as a pre-class assignment. It means that while the presentation group is getting prepared for the class day, other groups have to prepare some tasks to awake both their background knowledge and past experiences, and prepare some questions to ask about the subject matter.

Bridge/ Questions :

Students who are going to make the presentation of the week prepare some questions to make their friends contribute to the lesson and build a relationship between their own experiences and the subject matter. It is emphasized by the teacher that questions must be personal in order to facilitate the involvement of the rest of the class. Questions are all shaped by the help of the teacher. These questions are given to other groups before the class day so that they can express their own thoughts, ask their own questions and talk about their own experiences.

Exhibit:

Students make a presentation by using charts, maps, power point slides, role-plays, photographs or any other visual representations. Firstly, they ask the pre-prepared questions and a discussion atmosphere is created. Then everyone in the class, that is every group, takes their own notes and again note down their own questions. Throughout the discussion in addition to the pre-prepared ones new questions occur in the way the discussion goes. Then students make their own presentation. The group firstly introduces the article and the new structures in the class, and then they present their own attitude towards the text. They are aware that they should use the necessary structures and vocabulary where necessary.

After the presentation each group decides about their own view point and prepares the necessary arguments for the discussion. In the discussion week the class

is directed by the presentation group and teacher also participate the discussion by explaining her point of view and also ask questions to awake their minds, and to direct them to see other part of things.

Reflections:

At the end of the discussion part, each group, and if they wish each participant in the group talks about what they learnt that week, how they felt before and after the class. What attitudes, skills and concepts will they take out the door?

Another important point to mention is that students all evaluate the presentation file of the presentation group which records every step of their preparation process. The evaluation criteria are prepared by the students.

3.4. Data Analysis

While the functions and the structures of the 7th, 8th, 9th and the 10th units were being implemented in the experiment group as planned, the control group studied the same functions and the structures in traditional ways, which means that the teacher explains the structures and the necessary rules by applying commonly used methods such as the Direct Method. At the end of the implementation, the pre-test was used as the achievement test to compare the learners' success. The data obtained were processed through SPSS 8.0.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

In this chapter the analysis made by using statistical techniques of the findings that are collected via the methods explained in previous chapters are shown in tables and interpreted.

4.1. Findings and Interpretation of the First Problem

The first problem of the study is explained as whether there is a meaningful difference between academic success of experimental and control groups in terms of their pre-test results or not. For this reason in order to compare them t-test that is included in SPSS program is used.

The means and the t-test analysis of both the experimental and control groups' pre-test results are shown in Table 14.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	control	22	39,2045	10,3045	2,1969	0.659	0.513
	experimental	22	36,9318	12,4626	2,6570		

P>0,05

Table 14. The Results of the Comparison of the Groups Regarding the Success Averages in Pre-test by means of the t-test included in SPSS.

According the results above it is clear that there is no significant difference between the arithmetic means of the control and experimental groups' pre-test results

The acquired t-score (t) is 0.659 and the probability level (p) corresponding to this is calculated as 0.513. It is concluded that probability level is bigger than the (alpha) level of significance ($p = 0.970 > 0.05$).

The table above indicates that the results of the control and experimental groups are approximately the same. It is important to prove that the students in both groups have nearly the same background in terms of the subject matters to be taught. Students participated in the study have statistically similar results in terms of their pre-test performances. As a result, this confirms the hypothesis that there is not a meaningful difference of academic successes of experimental and control groups in terms of their pre-test results.

4.2. Findings and Interpretation of the Second Problem

Throughout the study traditional methods are applied in the control group and personalized constructivist applications and methods are used in the experimental group. The second problem of the study is defined as: Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in control group between pre-test and post-test? It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (there is not a significant difference between the pre and post- tests results of the control group.)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (there is a significant difference between the pre and post- tests results of the control group.)

In order to show the differences between two groups the results of their post-test are analyzed via t-test. The statistics showing their success and their means are shown in Table 15.

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
Pair 1 mark 00003	39,2045	22	10,3045	2,1969	-12,689	0.00
	36,9318	22	12,4474	2,6538		

P>0,05

Table 15. The Results of the Comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of the Control Group.

In Table 15 it is shown that the arithmetic means of the pre-test result of the control group is 36,9318 and the means of the post-test of the same group is 39,2045. Furthermore, the acquired t-score is -12,689 and the probability level corresponding to this is calculated as 0.00. It is concluded that probability level is not bigger than the (alpha) level of significance ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). As it is seen above there is a statistical difference between the pre and post tests results of the control group. What is important here would be the comparison between control and experimental group's pre and post tests results, which will be discussed after the third problem.

4.3. Findings and Interpretation of the Third Problem

The third problem is expressed as "Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group between pre-test and post-test?" It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (there is not a significant difference between the pre and post- tests results of the experimental group.)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (there is a significant difference between the pre and post- tests results of the experimental group.)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
Pair 1	mark 00003	39,9318	22	12,4626	2,6570	-26,087	0.00
		77,7273	22	9,0931	1,9386		

P>0,05

Table 16. The Results of the Comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of the Experimental Group.

Table 16 indicates that the means of the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group makes a significant difference. While the pre-test means of the control group is 39,9318, the post-test means of the group is 77,7273. As a result, there is a meaningful statistical difference between the academic achievement marks of the students in experimental group in terms of their pre and post-tests results. Another discussion would be the comparison of the results of both groups. The control group pre and post test results make a difference within itself ($t = -12.689$), but experimental group showed a much bigger difference ($t = -26.087$).

The success level of the control group before and after the class does not make a big difference. The control group students after the class in which traditional methods are used will naturally be more successful no matter what the applications are. However, the experimental groups' success level is much higher, which shoes that they are more successful than the control group.

The obvious interpretation of the statistical analysis above could be that personalized constructivist learning atmospheres, where students can feel that they are responsible for their own learning and meaning construction processes, give students the opportunity to learn the targeted skills effectively. This is why experimental group means before and after the achievement test is so different and thus they become more successful. As a result, this confirms the hypothesis 1 that there is a meaningful difference in academic successes of students in experimental group between pre-test and post-test.

4.4. Findings and Interpretation of the Forth Problem

The forth problem is defined as: Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of experimental and control groups in terms of post-test? It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (there is not a meaningful difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of their post test results)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (there is a meaningful difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of their post test results)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	control	22	57,8409	12,4474	2,6538	-6,051	0.000
	experimental	22	77,7273	9,0931	1,9386		

P>0,05

Table 17. The Results of the Comparison of the post-tests results of the Experimental and Control Group.

According the results above it is clear that there is a meaningful and significant difference between the arithmetic means of the control and experimental groups' post-test results. The acquired t-score is -6,051 and the probability level (p) corresponding to this is calculated as 0.000. It is concluded that probability level is not bigger than the (alpha) level of significance ($p = 0,000 < 0.05$).

The table above indicates that the results of the control and experimental groups are considerably different. Students participated in the study have statistically similar results in terms of their pre-test performances. However, when the post-results of the two groups are compared, it is seen that the means of the results are not

equal or similar. As a result, this confirms the hypothesis that there is a meaningful difference of academic successes of experimental and control groups in terms of their post-test results.

4.5. Findings and Interpretation of the Fifth Problem

The fifth problem is defined as: “Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of the students in control group participated in the study in their post- test results in terms of their high schools?”. It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (There is not a meaningful difference in academic success of the students in control group in their post-test results in terms of their high school types.)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (There is a meaningful difference in academic success of the students in control group in their post-test results in terms of their high school types.)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	Anatolian high school	9	63,6111	10,5409	3,5136	1,922	0.069
	Formal high school	13	53,8462	12,4422	3,4508		

P>0,05

Table 18. The Results of the Comparison of the post-tests results of the Control Group in terms of their high school types.

In this study it is also aimed to find out if there are different variables that may affect change the results in constructivist learning atmospheres. Table 18 above statistically shows that in the control group, when the successes of the students who graduated from Anatolian high school and the ones from formal schools are compared, there is not a meaningful difference. It is calculated that the t-score is 1,922 and the probability level (p) corresponding to this is calculated as 0.069. It is

concluded that probability level is bigger than the (alpha) level of significance ($p = 0,069 > 0.05$). As a result, this confirms the hypothesis 0 that there is not a meaningful difference in academic successes of students who graduated from Anatolian and formal high schools in the control group.

4.6. Findings and Interpretation of the Sixth Problem

The sixth problem is defined as: “Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group participated in the study in their post- test results in terms of their high schools?”

It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (There is not a meaningful difference in academic success of the students in experimental group in their post test result in terms of their high school types.)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (There is a meaningful difference in academic success of the students in experimental group in their post test result in terms of their high school types.)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	Anatolian high school	10	77,7500	9,2384	2,9214	0,010	0.992
	Formal high school	12	77,7083	9,3819	2,7038		

P>0,05

Table 19. The Results of the Comparison of the post-tests results of the Experimental Group in terms of their high school types.

The same process was applied to the experimental group to show if there is a difference between the students who graduated from different high schools. Table 19

above statistically shows that in the experimental group, when the successes of the students who graduated from Anatolian high school and the ones from formal schools are compared, there is not a meaningful difference. It is calculated that the t-score is 0,010 and the probability level (p) corresponding to this is calculated as 0.992. It is concluded that probability level is bigger than the (alpha) level of significance ($p = 0,992 > 0.05$). As a result, this confirms the hypothesis 0 that there is not a meaningful difference in academic successes of students who graduated from Anatolian and formal high schools in the experimental group.

4.7. Findings and Interpretation of the Seventh Problem

The seventh problem is defined as: “Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in control group participated in the study in their post-test results in terms of their class types: formal and evening classes?” It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (There is not a meaningful difference in academic success of students in control group participated in the study in their post-test results in terms of their class types)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (There is a meaningful difference in academic success of students in control group participated in the study in their post-test results in terms of their class types)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	Day classes	11	63,1818	12,3537	3,7248	2,186	0,041
	Evening classes	11	52,5000	10,4881	3,1623		

P>0,05

Table 20. The Results of the Comparison of the post-tests results of the Control Group in terms of their class types.

Another important factor to be analyzed is students' department types, which means if they study in day classes or evening classes. By analyzing their success averages it is tried to be find out that if their department types may affect their success.

Table 20 above statistically shows that in the control group, when the successes of the students who are going to study in day classes and evening classes are compared, there occurs a difference.

It is calculated that the t-score is 2,186 and the probability level (p) corresponding to this is calculated as 0,041. It is concluded that probability level is not bigger than the (alpha) level of significance ($p = 0,041 < 0.05$). As a result, this confirms the hypothesis 1 that there is a difference in academic successes of students who are going to study in day classes and evening classes in the control group. Owing to the fact that their studying at an evening class or day class depends on their university exam marks, it can be concluded that their mark at the university exam can be determinant for their success.

4.8. Findings and Interpretation of the Eighth Problem

The eighth problem is defined as: "Is there a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group participated in the study in their post-test results in terms of their class types: formal and evening classes? It is hypothesized that:

H0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (There is not a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group participated in the study in their post-test results in terms of their class types)

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (There is a meaningful difference in academic success of students in experimental group participated in the study in their post-test results in terms of their class types)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	p
mark	Day classes	13	78,0769	7,6481	2,1212	0,212	0,834
	Evening classes	9	77,2222	11,3499	3,7833		

P>0,05

Table 21. The Results of the Comparison of the post-tests results of the Experimental Group in terms of their class types.

The same process was applied to the experimental group to show if there is a difference between the students whose department types are different. Table 21 above statistically shows that in the experimental group, when the successes of the students who are going to study in day classes and evening classes are compared, there cannot be find any difference. It is calculated that the t-score is 0,212 and the probability level (p) corresponding to this is calculated as 0,834. It is concluded that probability level is bigger than the (alpha) level of significance ($p = 0,834 > 0.05$). As a result, this confirms the hypothesis 1 that there is a meaningful difference in academic successes of students who are going to study in day classes and evening classes in the control group.

In the final analysis while there is a difference in post-test successes of the control group students who are going to study in day classes and evening classes, there is not a difference in post-test successes of the experimental group students. It is seen that their department types may be a variable which may change the successes of the students. Furthermore, because the group which is not affected by this is the experimental group, it may also be said that personalized constructivist methods applied in the classroom facilitate all types of learners within the classroom.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

In this study, it is aimed to find out the effects of personalized constructivist activities and instruction and it takes the assumption that one of the most important reasons why our students in FL classrooms cannot communicate in the target language as they are expected to and why they fail in learning the language is the methods used in language classrooms which see students as outsiders and receiver of the necessary information.

As a first step the philosophy which lies under the concepts of personalization and constructivism, that is postmodernism has been explained in order to have full understanding of the root of these terms. Then constructivism as a concept has been investigated with its whys and hows. It has been tried to be explained the boundaries of constructivism along with its definitions, underlying and basic ideas. Within this framework the characteristics of constructivist classrooms, teachers' and students' responsibilities have been introduced. Next, the application and the results of the method have been discussed.

Following the steps mentioned above, finally, it has been asserted that constructivism both with its theoretical and practical concepts and ideas constructs such creative learning atmospheres where learners are responsible for their own learning. By the help of the personalization constructivist instruction provides students with classes in which they can construct their own knowledge as they experience and discover.

This study also shows that personalized constructivist activities can be applied in FL classrooms. However it should be noted that along with its advantages, it has some impediments, too. First of all, constructivism may be a little time consuming. Owing to the fact that what constructivism suggests is creative learning atmospheres where many different opportunities are presented to make the students share the responsibility of learning, it may require more time than many other application. Besides, because there should be both collaboration and cooperation among students in constructivist applications, it would probably take much time. Another drawback can be caused by the fact that in constructivism students are the decision makers for the whole process in their classes. In that sense, it should also be considered that students cannot always be aware of these processes or may not develop a full understanding of the requirements of the class and their responsibilities. Thus the teacher should be a discoverer and a facilitator rather than being just an outsider. Lastly, constructivism offers a wide variety of different activities, techniques and materials, some of which cannot be provided by the schools in our country. It means that teachers again should be careful at this point to use as various materials as possible by sometimes converting activities to constructivist or personalized ones and sometimes adapt the units or the necessary materials to be used in the classroom.

Under the light of these ideas, this study has been fulfilled in Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Foreign Languages Department. Two classes including 22 students each were chosen as the subjects of the study. The two groups were exposed to pre-tests in order to see and compare their academic levels. After it has been proved that they are nearly at the same level, the implementation has started. While on one hand the control group has gone on studying with traditional methods where they have been exposed to direct methods, the experimental group has studied constructivist personalized tasks within an atmosphere where they can decide what they want to learn and how they want to learn it, where they can use and share their own experiences and ideas.

After the implementation of these processes, the results were processed in SPSS 8.0 statistics program and later the data were analyzed and interpreted and lastly presented in some tables and figures.

The findings according to the results are as follow: the academic success of the control group after the implementation has risen; however, the experimental group has shown a considerable difference in the academic successes of the achievement test. There is also a meaningful difference between the pre and post-test results of the experimental group. Another important outcome is the difference between the post-test results of the control and experimental groups. Apart from this, it is also seen that there is not a significant difference between the academic achievements of the students who graduated from Anatolian high school and formal high school. Yet, upon looking at their department types, it is also shown that it can be a variable for constructivist classrooms which may affect the success results.

In the final analysis it is clear that learning atmospheres based on constructivist instruction enable students to discover their own mental schemas and experiences. It presents the opportunity for them to be the active participants of the learning and teaching processes. At that point students become aware of the self and the ways how they can improve themselves, which prepares the background for the results of the study above.

In constructivist classrooms the learning atmosphere has been enriched by different materials and activities; besides, students are encouraged to uncover their inner feelings, talents and their own backgrounds to identify themselves with the processes. In that way they become the active participants of the lesson not by learning the necessary knowledge by heart but by awakening their former experiences and knowledges and combine them with the new ones and as a result by making sense of the whole applications.

Many educationalists, scientists, theorists and philosophers who say a word on constructivism have a profound effect on how we interpret on knowledge and learning. And, as a result, constructivism as a theory of knowledge and learning is going to have profound impact on our application within and out of the classroom.

Von Glasersfeld sums constructivism up by saying what it suggests to educators: “the art of teaching has little to do with the traffic of knowledge; its fundamental purpose must be to foster the art of learning” (von Glasersfeld, 1995: 192).

As a final conclusion it can be said that personalized constructivist activities and instruction are effective tools for learning and teaching English as a foreign language and it is all apparent that constructivism does and will change not only the way we shape our classes, curriculums and schools but also the philosophy of learning and comprehension of knowledge. Furthermore, it is hoped that the results of this study leads to more awareness of the lacking points of our FL classrooms along with the importance of personalized constructivist activities in FL classes.

5.2. How to Construct a Constructivist Classroom

In constructivism cognitive forms which are in students’ minds and can be moved from one’s mind to another have a crucial role in students acquiring the targeted subject matter. The important thing here is that every individual should build up his/her concepts. And in a constructivist classroom it is teachers’ duty to orient the students’ constructive process.

Every student has different conceptual constructs in their minds. Teachers can begin by knowing their students’ profiles and mental frameworks in order to construct right atmospheres with right tasks that will modify students’ thinking. In that sense the variety of the materials used in courses can increase the motivation of

learners. Therefore, teachers play crucial role in encouraging their students by presenting them a wide variety of tasks and activities.

Furthermore, a possible and sensible link between the subject and students' interests should be found to involve them into the process. The more interested they are in the subject matter, the more enthusiasm they would show for the topic and its problems. This leads us to the idea of personalization which is one of the most significant applications in constructivist learning atmospheres. If students can identify themselves with what they are asked, they can make a better sense of the things they learn. It means that if it is important to awaken students' former knowledges in constructivism, then the strongest thing to be applied is the personalization owing to the fact that students can build a bridge between their past experiences and the new ones.

Another important factor to be considered to construct a constructivist classroom is about teachers, who should not be the omniscient one, but rather they should be the people who learn with their students. In this way students feel that the teacher is not the only authority but they share it together. First teachers should discover the conceptual portraits of students, which indeed take a considerate time; however, in a way teachers should try to get more experience with their students to find out their way of thinking. Although they seem they are not at the very centre of the course, they should not be an outsider, either. The essential roles of the teachers in constructivist classrooms are discussed below.

5.3. Role of the Student

Contrary to traditional methods constructivism changes students' role from passive recipients of knowledge to active constructor of it under the teacher's guidance. Students' own discovery about their mistakes or the processes or sometimes their doing right and etc. is a significant point due to the fact that in constructivism teachers are not the know-it-all once or the bosses. When a student is wrong about anything and when it is told that it is not true and they are showed what

is right, students can rarely realize why it is so. If they can be aware of what wrong with their ideas is, it is much easier to make them conceptualize the situation and make inferences to apply to similar occasions. To von Glasersfeld when students are driven by their own interest to investigate and conceptually grasp a situation, the conceptual changes they are making during the process of reflection will be far more solid than if they were imposed by a teacher (von Glasersfeld, 1995:188). Thus any kind of self discovery can do more than an external criticism, because the moment of realization is more beneficial to conceptual accommodation.

In constructivism students are placed at the very centre of the courses where they take all the responsibilities of the whole project within the classrooms. At first they are the decision makers about what to study and how to do it. They should define their short or long term goals by the help of the teacher and be able to consider all the pros and cons of the process.

During the learning process they are builders and active participants of it, which means that they are the ones who design the course and can construct their own personal meanings from the learning tasks, make bridges between what is considered with what they have in their minds, who interpret things and share their own ideas in a collaborative atmosphere and besides who can ask questions and respond to others by reflecting on both their personal thoughts and the collective ones.

In summary, students are responsible for the construction of the whole project in the class by designing, deciding about the processes, collaborating with others, sharing ideas, thinking, posing questions, guiding, being guided, interpreting the tasks and thoughts, bridging the old and the new, situating, responding and reflecting their ideas in the classroom. And therefore, they not only learn the necessary knowledge but also they learn about the art of learning.

5.4. Role of the Teacher

As it has always been discussed there is neither one right way of teaching a language and nor there is an approach or a method that can tell teachers the best way to apply in a classroom. However, though most of the teachers are generally stuck by the curriculum or/and the didactic concerns of the schools, what should be considered as important by teachers is that many procedures told by various educationalists in different books can be converted into different activities suitable for a class' own needs and students' own profiles. In that sense, von Glasersfeld says

“..there is never only one right way, it could not produce a fixed teaching procedure...constructivism cannot tell teachers new things to do, but it may suggest why certain attitudes and procedures are fruitless or counter-productive; and it may point out opportunities for teachers to use their own spontaneous imagination. There have been excellent teachers at all times, but they were often hampered because the methods they wanted to use did not fit the didactic conventions that governed schools. The constructivist orientation may do some good in this regard. It is a philosophy that offers a congenial theoretical basis for the development of imaginative teaching methods. It is in this spirit that I venture to voice my suggestions. They are not intended as directives but as encouragement. (von Glasersfeld, 1995: 177-178)

Students need motivation to keep going and teachers should provide them with such a motivated atmosphere. However it is also true that they cannot have a full control of students' mental constructing process but they can put some restrictions or draw the limitations to position them in a certain route.

Much told above actually depend on the sensitivity and eagerness of the teacher. Due to the fact that it is necessary for a constructivist teacher to go along with students' way of thinking and their style of learning, they should consider their profiles, interests and relate tasks with their own experiences which can activate students and would make their minds ready for the acquisition process and for the construction of their own meanings.

Though it seems that teachers do not play a central role in constructivist classrooms, constructivism does not remove them from their active role, and at the same time it does not devalue their task. What constructivism does is to change their task according to the needs of the construction process. In order to avoid repeating and restating facts, teachers help them to construct knowledge, interpret, question and analyze it.

One of the most important tasks of a constructivist teacher is to provide them with tools based on problem solving processes and inquiry-based activities, which will help them involve into the analyzing, questioning, drawing conclusions and generating new ideas in a collaborative atmosphere.

“...collaborating with pupils and negotiating the curriculum with them is not easy. It requires a considerable degree of flexibility and an ability and readiness to meet the needs of children by providing information and materials that children will be interested in and wish to pursue. It also demands a constant creative stance with children-receptivity to children’s ideas and willingness to take them seriously...at the same time creating an authentic learning environment requires clear thinking and planning in relation to broad, long-term goals and imagination in finding specific themes, activities, and materials that will spark fresh interests and make connections between those that have already been developed.” (Gould, J. in Fosnot C. T., 1996:92-93)

As Gould states in his article finding long-term goals and specific themes and goals, that is, building a strong curriculum is also important. It should be considerate that the content of the curriculum is defined by the students in constructivist classrooms in a way; however, teachers should be able to direct their student to set long-term goals with flexible applications. Kincheloe states in his book that:

“We make knowledge through our actions and comments. The critical constructivist curriculum leaves us not with a sacred, never-changing set of truths but with a tentative encounter with the collective consciousness and a lingering uncertainty about the language

used in the process.” (Kincheloe, 2005:48) For him the expected questions in terms of curriculum content are like below:

- *Is content simply a collection of truths to be passed along to students?
- *Is content produced to be questioned?
- *What is the teacher’s responsibility when confronted by a body of content?
- *What are the unstated epistemological assumptions in a body of content?
- *What is the relationship of the content to knowledge production?
- *Do standards imply a particular relationship between pedagogy and knowledge?
- *Does the role of teacher as a knowledge worker change the relationship between teachers and content? (Kincheloe, 2005:68).

As part of the personalization process, teachers should not only be interested in students’ personal backgrounds but also in their preferences, choices, hobbies and interests. Therefore, what a constructivist teacher should do is to follow the latest trends in technology and popular media or any other things that students may attract their attention. Kincheloe emphasizes the importance of this role of the teachers as below:

“...In the new information order of the twenty-first century, teachers’ facility as knowledge workers becomes a basic pedagogical skill. Using such abilities, teachers become aware of the cultural pedagogies produced by television, radio, popular music, the internet, video games, and movies, and their impact on themselves and their students” (Kincheloe, 2005:71).

Teachers, to constructivists, are the ones who are responsible for gathering information about individual understandings of the students, who should encourage students to be able to make connections between the ideas in the class with big ideas and interpretations. The following represents a summary of some suggested characteristics of a constructivist teacher (Brooks and Brooks, 1993):

1. Become one of many resources that the student may learn from, not the primary source of information.
2. Engage students in experiences that challenge previous conceptions of their existing knowledge.
3. Allow student responses to drive lessons and see elaboration of students' initial responses. Allow student some thinking time after posing questions.
4. Encourage the spirit of questioning by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and thoughtful discussion among students.
5. Use cognitive terminology such as "classify," "analyze", and "create" when framing tasks.
6. Encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative. Be willing to let go of classroom control.
7. Use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive physical materials.
8. Don't separate knowing from the process of finding out.
9. Insist on clear expression from students. When students can communicate their understanding, then they have truly learned.

As a result, teachers are the activators, motivators and facilitators in constructivist learning atmospheres, who learn together, decide about the processes

with their students and improve students' chances to achieve their goals. Gould states the final words about the characteristics of a constructivist teacher:

“Teachers informed by the new constructivist theories seek to support learning, not control it...they continuously evaluate themselves, their students and the system in which they teach. They collaborate with their students and encourage them to collaborate, not to compete, with one another. Rather than waiting for a child to be “ready” or the right age to begin, teachers instead create opportunities for children to participate in joint literacy events with other, more mature members of the literate community. They become planners, models, guides, observers of development, facilitators and challengers to children's' existing personal models of the world. Instead of using a finite list of language arts skills as a curriculum, teachers informed by the new constructivist theories know that learning to write, spell, read, and speak are never-ending processes of meaning-making.”(Gould in Fosnot 1996: 101).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONS ON UNIT 7 : “LOOK TO THE FUTURE“

WEEK I

ARTICLE: EVILS OF THE INTERNET

Name & Surname:

Date:

PART I

1. What does technology mean to you?

2. How do you benefit from technology?

3. What devices do you use in your daily life?

4. Do you think you use technology in a good way?

5. Do you benefit from technology with good purpose?

6. What may be the future of technology?

7. I feel optimistic/pessimistic about the future of technology

because _____

PART II

IDEAS IN THE PRESENTATION

MY RESPONSES

PART III**COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PHRASES WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS.**

1. Computers will definitely _____

2. Mobile phones will probably _____

3. Internet may _____

4. I will be really disappointed if _____

5. I will be very pleased if _____

6. People probably won't _____

PART IV

monitor communicate change disappear unusual avoid
 practice properly inappropriate enable interactive replace
 definite damaging consume harmful advance violent
 popular

WHAT DO THE WORDS ABOVE ASSOCIATE TO YOU? CHOOSE AT LEAST FIVE AND FILL IN THE TABLE BELOW.

THE WORD					
WHAT DOES IT ASSOCIATE TO YOU?					
YOUR OWN SENTENCE					

PART V**FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHT.**

I like/don't like the idea of _____ because _____

I dis/agree with the idea of _____

Before the presentation I thought that _____

And/but now I think that _____

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONS ON UNIT 8: “THE WORLD OF WORK “

WEEK II

ARTICLE: INTELLIGENCE TYPES

Name & Surname:

Date:

PART I

1. What does “having a job” mean to you?

2. Do you think there are different intelligence types? How?

3. Is it important to be aware of the intelligence type you have while deciding on a job?

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE BEST JOB FOR YOU? For each pair choose the one that best describes you.

1- A I enjoy studying for my exams with a friend.

B I like learning for exams on my own.

2- A I'm good at remembering facts and information.

B I'm good at remembering jokes and funny stories.

3- A I always hope to get high marks at school.

B I love helping friends with their problems.

4- A If I don't like something, I'm not afraid saying so

B If I don't like something, I always manage to be diplomatic

5- A I must finish my work before I think about going to a party

B I can always find time to enjoy myself- even if I have a lot of things to do

6- A I want to use my practical knowledge in my future career.

B I would like to use my imagination and my creativity in my future career.

7- A When I'm with my friends, I hate being the center of attention.

B When I'm with my friends I love being the leader.

8- A I need to have new experiences and meet new people very often- If I don't, I start feeling bored.

B I avoid being in new situations if possible

(Excerpted from Longman Success Pre-Intermediate Students' Book, pg. 68–69)

What do you think your answers mean? _____

PART II

IDEAS IN THE PRESENTATION

MY RESPONSES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PART III

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PHRASES WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS.

1. I prefer working _____

2. A doctor should _____

3. If you are a director in a company you should avoid _____

4. I can't stand _____

5. I would like to _____ in the future.

6. People probably won't _____

7. I think the most stressful job is _____

PART IV

improve increase stand employ hard stressful
 mind personality cheerful experience application good at
 qualified attention flexible complain career practical
 ambition

WHAT DO THE WORDS ABOVE ASSOCIATE TO YOU? CHOOSE AT LEAST FIVE AND FILL IN THE TABLE BELOW.

THE WORD					
WHAT DOES IT ASSOCIATE TO YOU?					
YOUR OWN SENTENCE					

PART V

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHT.

I like/don't like the idea of _____ because _____

I dis/agree with the idea of _____

Before the presentation I thought that _____
 And/but now I think that _____

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONS ON UNIT 9: “LOVE AND TRUST “

WEEK III

ARTICLE: GOOD AND BAD TEACHERS

Name & Surname:

Date:

PART I

1. Have you ever met anyone famous? How did you feel?

2. Have you ever gone one on a blind date? With whom? How was the experience?

3. Have you ever had an argument with a friend or someone in your family? How did you feel

4. What kind of a relationship do you have with your family and friends?

5. Who do you get on well with in your family? Why do you think so?

6. What does “love and trust” mean to you?

7. Do you think you have a good relationship with your teachers? How?

8. Have you ever had a serious argument with them? Why?

9. What do you think the features of a good teacher are?

PART II

WHAT or WHO DO THE WORDS BELOW MEAN or ASSOCIATE TO YOU? WHY?

_____ SPLIT UP WITH _____	_____
_____ CARING _____	_____
_____ HAVE A LOT IN COMMON _____	_____
_____ TRUST _____	_____
_____ ARGUE _____	_____

PART III

IDEAS IN THE PRESENTATION

MY RESPONSES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PART IV

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PHRASES WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS.

1. I have always/never been _____ to my friends.
2. A good teacher should _____
3. My high school teachers were _____
4. I haven't had an argument with _____
5. A bad teacher always _____
_____ and I have always/never fallen out with each other because _____
6. A good teacher should/ shouldn't give a lot of freedom because _____

PART V

fall out with	relationship	trust	get on well with	have a lot in
common	secret	argument	caring	passionate
sense of humor	leave	disagree	gossip	freedom
generation	unfair	friendly		

WHAT DO THE WORDS ABOVE ASSOCIATE TO YOU? CHOOSE AT LEAST FIVE AND FILL IN THE TABLE BELOW.

THE WORD					
WHAT DOES IT ASSOCIATE TO YOU?					
YOUR OWN SENTENCE					

PART VI

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHT.

I like/don't like the idea of _____ because _____

I dis/agree with the idea of _____

Before the presentation I thought that _____

And/but now I think that _____

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONS ON UNIT 10: “THE MEDIA “

WEEK IV

ARTICLE: NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION

Name & Surname:

Date:

PART I

1. What does “television” mean in your life?

2. Do you think television is watched by a majority of people in the world? Why do you think so?

3. Is newspaper read in your family? How often?

4. What sorts of things do you like reading most? Why?

5. Would you like to live without TV for a week? Why or Why not?

6. Do you think you are affected by TV? In what ways?

7. How are children influenced by TV? Do you think it should be limited?

8. What do you enjoy doing instead of watching TV?

PART II

IDEAS IN THE PRESENTATION

MY RESPONSES

PART III

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PHRASES WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS.

1. I think TV should/doesn't have to be because _____

2. Young people are affected by _____

3. _____ is read by millions of people in my country because _____

4. I can't stand _____ programs because _____

5. On the TV in my country there are too many _____

and there aren't enough _____

6. My favorite TV programs are _____

7. I agree/disagree that children should be kept away from TV because _____

PART IV

enjoy damage healthy hot potato average spend
 section invention print waste exaggerate destructive
 publish vital disorder prevent necessary vivid
 productivity

WHAT DO THE WORDS ABOVE ASSOCIATE TO YOU? CHOOSE AT LEAST FIVE AND FILL IN THE TABLE BELOW.

THE WORD					
WHAT DOES IT ASSOCIATE TO YOU?					
YOUR OWN SENTENCE					

PART V

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHT.

I like/don't like the idea of _____ because _____

I dis/agree with the idea of _____

Before the presentation I thought that _____

And/but now I think that _____

APPENDIX 5

PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

My full name is :

Class:

Graduated from:

My department is: _____

evening ☐
day ☐

APPENDIX 6

Essays Studied During the Application Weeks

First Group	Evils of the Internet	http://www.essaydepot.com/essayme/2455/index.php
Second Group	Academic intelligence vs. everyday intelligence	http://www.custom-essays.org/samples/Academic_intelligence_vs_everyday_intelligence.html
Third Group	Good and Bad Teachers	http://www.custom-essays.org/samples/Good_and_Bad_Teachers.html
Fourth Group	The Negative Effects of Television	http://www.custom-essays.org/examples/negative_effects_of_television_Argumentative%20Essay.html

APPENDIX 7

ACHIEVEMENT TEST

DURATION: 50 minutes

NAME:

CLASS:

NUMBER:

1. Einstein who _____ in 1955 _____ the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921.
 a) was died/ was awarded b) is dead/ is awarded
 c) died/ was awarded d) dies/ has awarded

2. The five most popular newspapers in the world _____ in the same country- China.
 a) has sold b) are sold c) sell d) is sold

3. Scientist _____ that a new planet may _____ in the future.
 a) agreed/find b) agreed/be found
 c) agree/be found d) are agreed/found

4. We _____ by our teachers to learn foreign languages at school.
 a) are encouraged b) encourage c) encouraged d) will encourage

5. There was a terrible accident here last month and six people _____.
 a) are being injured b) are injured c) injured d) were injured

6. I prefer _____ cartoons rather than soap operas. They are much more enjoyable.
 a) watched b) watch c) to watch d) being watched

7. Environmentalists hope _____ a solution for the increasing air pollution around the world.
 a) creating b) to create c) being created d) to be created

8. She is really keen on _____ foreign languages. She knows five different languages and has learnt Spanish recently.

- a) learn b) learning c) to learn d) learned

9. He seems _____ an academic intelligence because he is good at _____ logic connections.

- a) to have/establish b) having/establishing
c) having/establishing d) to have/establishing

10. You spend so much time on your homework; I think you need _____ a break.

- a) taking b) take c) to take d) being taken

11. She _____ for many different companies since she graduated but still can't find the one she likes.

- a) has worked b) hasn't been mended
c) being mended d) is mended

12. Throughout history people _____ to improve new technologies to facilitate their daily tasks.

- a) will try b) have tried c) tried d) are trying

13. They _____ very well since they realized that they have common interests.

- a) got on b) will get on c) may get on d) have got on

14. They _____ married for nearly twenty years and no one knows why they are splitting up now.

- a) have been b) will be married c) are being d) married

15. I _____ just _____ all the cleaning, thus I feel really tired now.

- a) may/just b) will/finish c) have/finished d) will/ be finished

16. It is certain that there _____ computer-centered classrooms in the near future.

- a) are b) will be c) may be d) should be

17. If I _____ the answer key, I will tell you the correct answers of our last exam.

- a) will find b) have found c) may found d) find

28. The lack of money and facilities depressed and _____ him.

- a) frustrated b) excited c) inspired d) encouraged

29. He has _____ his life to helping blind people after his wife's death.

- a) devoted b) progressed c) expanded d) established

30. At the moment our technology is more advanced, but other countries are _____ us.

- a) catching up with b) splitting up with
c) coming up with d) getting away with

31. She is always _____ when she has an appointment – she never arrives late.

- a) punctual b) arrogant c) selfish d) proud

32. I can't come out tonight. I have to _____ for my history exam.

- a) revise b) solve c) reserve d) propose

33. All over the world, many people are _____ from cancer.

- a) suffering b) belonging c) challenging d) beating

34. I don't think they can afford their children's college education because rent from the old farm is their only source of _____.

- a) income b) salary c) earning d) wage

35. I phoned the hotel and _____ my reservation when I learned that it was a very bad hotel.

- a) cancelled b) replaced c) delayed d) enrolled

36. She's always very _____ for appointments. She is never late.

- a) convenient b) efficient c) punctual d) practical

37. He was a(n) _____ person, so he thought he could not possibly lose the game. He thought nobody was better than him.

- a) arrogant b) selfish c) tolerant d) modest

38. Even though I've been acting for 40 years, winning the Oscar prize will be a(n) _____ and I want to experience this excitement.

- a) instinct b) intuition c) irritation d) thrill

39. The earthquake was really destructive and all the villages were _____ out by it. They were completely destroyed.

- a) restricted b) altered c) adapted d) wiped

40. Although she is quite young, she is extremely _____. That's why; she can deal with difficult situations much better than most people of her age.

- a) wise b) lonely c) helpless d) naughty