

A Constructivist Perspective on Effective Learning Strategies for Malaysian University Students

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Abstract : This paper aims to identify the most effective learning strategies for successful university students and explore any challenges associated with these methods. Ultimately, this paper will examine the correlation between these contemporary methods and recent developments regarding constructivism. Constructivism has become a leading theory of knowledge in the educational field. The idea refers to students developing knowledge through personal meaning and their own experiences. Based on this principle, constructivist-oriented teaching has been shown to foster a deeper understanding and application of complex concepts in students. Although this concept has come to be widely agreed upon within the scientific community, it is unclear the extent to which it can be utilised in a practical setting and how exactly it relates to students' learning preferences. To address this, a mixed-method triangulation approach is used among 18-21 year old students taking a paper-based assessment format. Among the 278 students that participated in the survey and observation, practice testing was singled out as the most preferred learning strategy, followed by metacognition and elaboration. Interestingly, active learning was noticeably absent from these students' routines. Based on these findings, students who employ constructivist learning methods are able to understand the problems presented at an intimate level and thus are able to respond to problems of varying difficulty. Nevertheless, a constructivist understanding is not a prerequisite for success, as some students who forgo this method are still able to thrive under the current assessment format.

Keywords : constructivism, education, learning strategies, problem based learning

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