EDEP 6224: Constructivism and Education

(CRN 14751 – SPRING 2024)

Instructor:Peter DoolittleDate/Time:Thursdays, 7:00-9:50 pmOffice:1750 Kraft Drive (Rm 2039)Location:1750 Kraft Drive (Rm 2010)Office Hrs:By AppointmentWebsite:www.peterdoolittle.org

Email: pdoo@vt.edu Prerequisite: Graduate Status

PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to answer three fundamental questions: What is the nature of knowledge? How do we come to know? How is knowledge valued?

Course Description

Constructivism involves the active creation and modification of thoughts, ideas, actions, and understandings as the result of experiences that occur within individual and socio-cultural contexts. Central issues in this creation of understanding include: (a) What is the nature of knowledge? (b) How do we come to know? and, (c) How is knowledge valued? Constructivism emphasizes the active role played by the individual learner in the construction of knowledge, the primacy of social and individual experience in the process of learning, and the realization that the knowledge attained by the learner varies in its accuracy as a representation of an external reality. This course will explore these issues as they pertain to teaching, learning, technology, society, research, and education – broadly applied. Ultimately, this course is about the construction of knowledge and knowing in education and everyday life.

Learning Goals and Outcomes:

- LG1: Students will be able to understand the concepts of reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and value (axiology) as related to the realm of education, broadly.
 - LO1: Students will be able to *explain* the essential concepts and terms associated with reality, knowledge, and value as they related to education.
 - LO2: Students will be able to *apply* the essential concepts and terms associated with reality, knowledge, and value to educational issues.
 - LO3: Students will be able to demonstrate a questioning perspective on the nature, function, and investigation of knowledge within education and society.
- LG2: Students will understand the basic similarities and differences between various types of constructivism.
 - LO4: Students will be able to *differentiate* the core similarities and differences within various types of constructivism (e.g., cognitive constructivism, social constructivism, social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, radical constructivism).
 - LO5: Students will be able to *apply* the core similarities and differences within various types of constructivism to educational issues (e.g., learning, assessment, equity, curricula, technology).
- LG3: Students will understand the relationship between constructivist tenets and educational methods in the development of constructivist pedagogy and research.
 - LO6: Students will be able to *create* instructional strategies based on the application of constructivist tenets.

Evaluation

Student performance will be evaluated in three ways: the completion of a series of 25-Word Summaries, the completion of a series of In-Class Daily Primings, and Post-Class Evaluations. The 25-Word Summaries provide an opportunity for students to extract the essential meaning from a reading and summarize that meaning clearly and concisely in 25 words or less. The In-class Primings provide an opportunity for students to activate and review core ideas from the readings at the beginning of each class in the form of a series of multiple-choice questions. The Post-Class Evaluations allow students the opportunity to reflect on their learning and provide feedback to the instructor on the conduct of the course. The assignments are delineated in the 25-Word Summaries, In-Class Primings, and Post-Class Evaluations handouts.

In-Cla		25-Word Sumn In-Class Daily Post-Class Eva	Prim	ing	(22 x 100 pc (22 x 30 pc (14 x 20 pc	oints)	660	2200 pts 660 pts 280 pts			; ;
	A 3140-293 A- 2950-283	51 100-94 % 26 93-90	B+ B B-	2825-2731 2730-2637 2636-2512	89-87% 86-84 83-80	C+ C C-	2511-2417 2416-2323 2322-2198	79-77% 76-74 73-70		F	< 1884

Course Readings

Constructivism and Education's pedagogical approach focuses on Reading • Discussing • Explaining • Applying. Readings – articles, chapters, and books – are an essential aspect of the class. To support this process, all articles and chapters (but not books) are available online once you have logged-in.

Attendance Policy and Late Policy

All students are expected to attend class regularly and promptly, and to come prepared to class by having read the day's readings, completed any pre-class assignments, and contemplated the reading's meaning and application. Submitting an assignment late will result in a grade of 0 points unless the late submission was cleared by the instructor in advance of the due date.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Virginia Tech welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. The University promotes efforts to provide equal access and a culture of inclusion without altering the essential elements of coursework. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers that may be due to disability, including but not limited to ADHD, chronic or temporary medical conditions, deaf or hard of hearing, learning disability, mental health, or vision impairment, please contact the *Services for Students with Disabilities* (SSD) office (540-231-3788, ssd@vt.edu, or visit www.ssd.vt.edu). If you have an SSD accommodation letter, please meet with the instructor privately during office hours as early in the semester as possible to deliver your letter and discuss your accommodations. You must give the instructor reasonable notice to implement your accommodations, which is generally 5 business days and 10 business days for final exams.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Supporting the mental health and well-being of students in my class is of high priority to me and Virginia Tech. If you are feeling overwhelmed academically, having trouble functioning, or are worried about a friend, please reach out to any of the following offices:

Cook Counseling

- Schedule an appointment and/or 24/7 crisis support: 540-231-6557
- ucc.vt.edu for more information

Dean of Students Office

- General advice: 540 231-3787
- After-hours crisis: 540-231-6411
- **dos.vt.edu** for more information

Hokie Wellness

- · hokiewellness.vt.edu for more information about health and wellness workshops and consultations
- Virginia Tech Recovery Community: hokiewellness.vt.edu/students/recovery.html

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

- Accommodations and other disability-related supports: 540-231-3788
- ssd.vt.edu for more information

See a full listing of campus resources on well-being.vt.edu

Also, please feel free to speak with me. I will make every effort to work with you; I care about your well-being and success.

Essential Needs

For any student who has difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and if you believe this may affect your performance in this course, you are urged to contact the Dean of Students office for support at 540-231-3787 or complete an interest form to participate in The Market at Virginia Tech (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?VirginiaTech&layout_id=15).

The Dean of Students, through The Market at Virginia Tech, offers food options and other resources. There is also a Student Emergency Fund program (https://dos.vt.edu/emergencyfund.html). If you are comfortable in doing so, please notify your professor or departmental advisor of your situation. This will enable them to provide any resources they have access to.

Honor Code

The tenets of the Virginia Tech Graduate Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course, and all assignments shall be subject to the stipulations of the Graduate Honor Code. For more information on the Graduate Honor Code, please refer to the GHS Constitution (https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations/graduate-honor-system.html).

Principles of Community

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Mobile Technologies

Mobile technologies, such as cell phones, tablets, and laptop computers may only be used in class for class related purposes. Please respect your fellow students and the professor by turning off cell phones before class begins and refraining from using computers and tablets during class to check email or social media. There will be time during class breaks to check email and social media.

- Cell Phones: Cell phones should be turned off during all classes. It is understood that there may be occasions when you will need to leave your cell phone on to receive a phone call of extreme importance. In these extreme cases, please notify the instructor prior to the beginning of the class, have your cell phone set to vibrate.
- Tablets and Laptop Computers: Tablets and laptop computers should only be used for legitimate class related purposes (e.g., taking notes, reviewing readings, searching the web for class-based concepts). Please refrain from using these technologies for entertainment purposes during class (e.g., email, movies, music, social media).
- Zoom Interface: Zoom may be used to conduct the class synchronously online in the case of snow, pandemic, illness, or some random even of which we are currently unaware. It is requested that you attend a Zoom class with your camera (video) on and your Zoom profile display name set your preferred name (e.g., Peter Doolittle). This is a request only.

Course Zoom

There may be a time when you simply cannot make class in person and, thus, must attend class via Zoom. If so, here's the course's Zoom link (see below). That said, you **should not** think of this Zoom link as an option. That is, if you are sitting at home on your couch at 6 pm, with your dog or cat or favorite child, and think "do I want to go to class or should I just Zoom into class," your next thought should be "No!" or "Nein!" or "Hemae!" or "Nej!" or "No!" or "Nei!" or "No!" or "No!" or "Ni!" or

Zoom is an option of you need it, but not as a casual alternative to attending class in person.

https://virginiatech.zoom.us/my/doolittle/

Religious and Ethnic Holidays

From the VT website (https://www.registrar.vt.edu/dates-deadlines/religious-ethnic-holidays.html):

As a publicly funded institution of higher education, Virginia Tech does not officially recognize religious holidays and celebrations. However, as an institution we recognize the importance of such events in the lives of our community members. In the spirit of inclusive excellence and our Principles of Community, faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to be cognizant of major religious and cultural observances when planning courses and campus events and to be sensitive to potential conflicts.

If you have religious or ethnic holidays that may prohibit or impact your attendance or participation in class, please let the instructor know in advance. While completion of all assignments and understanding of all material will still be required, adjustments to address your needs will be enacted, as possible.

Inclement Weather

In the presence of inclement weather, there are three guidelines related to class cancellation:

- 1. University Cancels Class: VT campus closings due to inclement weather may be obtained by calling the Weather Hotline, (540) 231-6668; tuning to WVTF-FM 89.1 or 91.9; accessing the VT Twitter feed, twitter.com/vtalerts; or, viewing the VT home page, http://www.vt.edu or University State page, https://vt.edu/status.html. If the university is closed, then we do not have class and I will send the class an email to that effect.
- 2. *Instructor Cancels Class*: If the weather is potentially hazardous, and the university is not closed, then I may cancel class myself. If I cancel class, then I will send an email to the class indicating the cancellation no later than 4 pm (although I will try for 12:00 pm) the day of class with the final word regarding whether class will be held.
- 3. Student Misses Class: If you determine that traveling to campus during inclement weather might be hazardous, then please send me an email indicating that you will not be attending class. Please use your best judgment in making this type of decision be safe! If you decide not to come to class, based on inclement weather, you are still responsible for any work missed. You can participate in class using Zoom if travel is not an option.

Communicating with the Instructor

All students are welcomed and encouraged to communicate with the instructor on issues relating to the course, grading, and special issues. The best way to contact me is in person: before, during, or after class. The second-best way to contact me is via email at pdoo@vt.edu. If you use email and you do not get a response from me in 48 hours, please email me again (I appreciate the reminders!).

Syllabus Change

The syllabus is subject to change by the instructor in the event of extenuating circumstances. All changes will be announced in class and provided to students in writing.

A Final Thought

I'm here to help you be successful – that's my job and desire. If there's something that I can do to help you succeed, please let me know.

Tentative Course Calendar

Date	Topic	Reading for Class	Weekly Assignment**
1/18	Introduction	None	
1	Syllabus		
1/25	DI'I I TO I O C I	T 1 (1005)	Post-Class Evaluation
1/25	Philosophy: Truth & truth Modernism & Postmodernism	• Kvale (1995) • Ellaway (2020)	25-word Summary In-Class Priming
2	Wodernism & Postmodernism	• Ellaway (2020)	Post-Class Evaluation
2/1	Cognitive Constructivism	• Siegel (2022) – https://t.ly/JZiDs	25-word Summary
	Theory & Practice	• Hruby (2012)	In-Class Priming
3			Post-Class Evaluation
2/8	Radical Constructivism	• von Glasersfeld (1984)	25-word Summary
4	Theory	• von Glasersfeld (2001)	In-Class Priming
	2 11 12		Post-Class Evaluation
2/15	Radical Constructivism	• Walsh (2020)	25-word Summary
5	Practice	• Ulrich et al. (2014)	In-Class Priming Post-Class Evaluation
2/22	Social Constructivism	• Vygotsky (1978)	25-word Summary
	Theory	• Doolittle (1997)	In-Class Priming
6	Theory	Boomine (1997)	Post-Class Evaluation
2/29	Social Constructivism	• Fivush (2010)	25-word Summary
7	Practice		In-Class Priming
/			Post-Class Evaluation
3/7	Spring Break		
8			
3/14	Sanial Camatanationian	. Dansan & Landausen (1067) 5	25 1 C
	Social Constructionism Theory	• Berger & Luckmann (1967) 📚	25-word Summary In-Class Priming
9	Theory		Post-Class Evaluation
3/21	Social Constructionism	• Hacking (1999)	25-word Summary
10	Practice	• Conrad & Barker (2010)	In-Class Priming
10			Post-Class Evaluation
3/28	Legitimation	• Granja & Machado (2023)	25-word Summary
11	Theory & Practice	• Bartlett et al. (2018)	In-Class Priming
4/4	Symbolia Interactionism	• Plumor (1060) =	Post-Class Evaluation
	Symbolic Interactionism Theory	• Blumer (1969) 📚	25-word Summary In-Class Priming
12	Theory		Post-Class Evaluation
4/11	Symbolic Interactionism	• Irwin (2001)	25-word Summary
	Practice	• Chen (2020)	In-Class Priming
13			Post-Class Evaluation
4/18	TBA	• TBA	25-word Summary
14		• TBA	In-Class Priming
	WI LIG	1 1: (1000)	Post-Class Evaluation
4/25	What I Constructed	• Jenkins (1990) 📚	25-word Summary
15			In-Class Priming Post-Class Evaluation
			FOST-Class Evaluation

CONSTRUCTIVISM AND EDUCATION – EDEP 6224 25-WORD SUMMARIES

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on each reading and to generate short, meaningful summaries. Creating thoughtful summaries requires considerable cognitive organization and reflection, and results in significant meaning making.					
Rationale: The processes of reflection, knowledge organization, and the self-generation of meaning have be quite effective in fostering meaningful learning (see Baddeley, 1999, and Haberlandt, 1999). Writing a very short summaries (e.g., 25-word summaries) requires you to reflect on the chapter read and abstract for chapter the essential message or theme that characterize the author's purpose in writing. This abstraction generate significant understanding and organization of the material.	rom the				
Format: Each summary should be a clear, concise, and coherently organized statement of the main ideas reading. Specifically, each summary must be 25 words or less and should focus on the essential ideas of reading. It is important to remember that the task is to represent the <i>author's</i> essential ideas (why was the article/chapter/book written?). Whether or not you agree with the essential ideas is a different issue. Ultimexpressing the author's essential ideas, you will demonstrate your own understanding of the material in the	the mately, in				
The following guidelines/recommendations for completing 25-word summaries were extracted from interstudents near the end of previous classes where 25-word summaries were completed.	views with				
 Provide time to read, annotate, write, and rewrite. Provide time between reading and writing. Develop a strategy for annotating. Look for important details while reading. Read the entire article before committing to main ideas. Every word counts—write and rewrite. Writing summaries develops over time. 					
Grading: Each 25-Word Summary is worth 100 points and will be assessed using the following criteria:					
1. Structural Format a. Is the summary 25 words or less? b. Is the summary a coherent sentence, or sentences? c. Does the summary avoid a simple listing of concepts, terms, or themes?	20 pts				
2. Clarity of Thought and Expressiona. Are the ideas expressed well, well thought out, and integrated?c. Does every word in the summary have a meaningful purpose?d. Are correct grammar and syntax used?	40 pts				
3. Delineation of Core Messagea. Does the summary accurately reflect the reading's essential message(s)?b. Does the summary accurately integrate more than one essential message?	40 pts				

Pragmatics:

1. Be thoughtful Think before you write.

2. Be concise There is much to include in a 25-word summary.

3. Be accurate Reflect on the author's main ideas, themes, and concepts.

4. Be precise The meaning of every word counts.



References:

Baddeley, A. D. (1999). *Essentials of human memory*. East Sussex, UK: Taylor & Francis Group. Haberlandt, K. (1999). *Human memory: Exploration and application*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.



Honor Code: The Graduate Honor Code will be strictly enforced on this assignment. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Honor System. Students are allowed to discuss with other students the nature of this assignment, their understanding of their own observations, and the general concepts he or she will be discussing. Student should not, however, share their completed responses, before submission, with other students in the class. Beyond that, the Honor Code general principles of cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and academic sabotage are still applicable (see http://graduateschool.vt.edu/).



CONSTRUCTIVISM AND EDUCATION – EDEP 6224 IN-CLASS DAILY PRIMING

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Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with the opportunity to revisit and activate course content extracted from the readings just as class is beginning in order to facilitate in-class meaning making.
Rationale: Exposure to and the processing of information – text, images, concepts, and contexts – can positively influence the readiness of associated or related information. This positive influence is termed <i>priming</i> . Priming is accompanied by the spread of cognitive activation from the original information to the related information and occurs whether the individual is aware of the association, or not. In the case of the In-Class Daily Primings, the questions that students answer at the beginning of the class will be based on concepts from the readings, thus priming the subsequent use of the readings for in-class activities and increased meaning making.
Format: Each In-Class Daily Priming will consist of 5 multiple-choice questions <i>for each reading</i> . On days where you have read a book for class, the priming questions will address the book, at large (i.e., general themes and discussions, not specific concepts on specific pages). The multiple-choice questions will range from term definitions to conceptual relationships. These questions will be available online, will be completed during the first 10 minutes of class, and are open notes/readings. As noted above, these questions are not to determine what you know or do not know, but rather, to activate in your mind (i.e., prime) the ideas that we will be addressing in class.
Grading: Each In-Class Priming consists of 5 multiple-choice questions per reading and each question is worth 6 points; thus, the priming for each reading is worth 30 points.
Pragmatics:
The questions will be straightforward if you have read the book/chapter/article closely. The questions will focus on main ideas, not small details. The main reason for the questions is to prime your memories of the readings, not to stump you or determine what you do not remember from the texts. Also, several of the readings will address unfamiliar ideas, so deep knowledge of the readings will not be assumed.
Honor Code: The Graduate Honor Code will be strictly enforced on this assignment. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Honor System. Students are allowed to use course readings in completing primings, but no other sources are allowed. Beyond that, the Honor Code general principles of cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and academic sabotage are still applicable (see http://graduateschool.vt.edu/).

CONSTRUCTIVISM AND EDUCATION – EDEP 6224 POST-CLASS EVALUATIONS

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Purpose: The Post-Class Evaluation assignment is designed to allow students to reflect on the class and evaluate their current level of understanding of the effectiveness of the instruction's ability to foster learning. This assignment will allow students to discuss with other students their understandings of the teaching they have observed and construct socially integrative knowledge of teaching and learning.
Rationale: The rationale for this assignment is the power of observation and engagement as an instructional strategy. This assignment provides students with the opportunity to (a) reflect on their learning, (b) analyze the teaching in terms of knowledge construction, and (c) construct an evaluation of the learning and teaching.
Format: Students will provide a short evaluation of each class of the Constructivism and Education course. Each student should complete a class evaluation within 48 hours of the completion of each class using the online utility provided on the course web site. Please note all evaluations are anonymous.
Grading: Each Class Evaluation is worth 20 pts.
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Timeline: See Syllabus
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References: Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Chism, N. (1999). Peer review of teaching. Bolton, MA: Anker.
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Honor Code: The Graduate Honor Code will be strictly enforced on this assignment. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Honor System. Students are allowed to discuss with other students the nature of this assignment, their understanding of their own observations, and the general concepts he or she will be discussing. Students should not, however, share their completed responses with other students in the class. Beyond that, the Honor Code general principles of cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and academic sabotage are still applicable (see http://graduateschool.vt.edu/).

Evaluations

Directions: Following class, please complete the following class evaluation. **This evaluation is anonymous**, so please share what you think and feel. The goal of the daily evaluations is to improve the course by informing the instructor what is working and what is not, and what you like and what you do not like.

Complete Evaluation

Directions: Please answer the following questions based on the previous class. Your feedback will be used to modify next week's class so that concepts are clear and topics addressed are relevant. **All evaluations are anonymous**.

- 1. Please consider the instruction used in the last class. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Your responses will help to make the class a better learning experience.
 - 1 = Strongly Disagree
 - 2 = Disagree
 - 3 = Somewhat Disagree
 - 4 = Somewhat Agree
 - 5 = Agree

6	= Strongly Agree						
		Di	Disagree		,	Agree	
Item	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
a.	The introduction provided organization and context to the lesson.	0					
b.	The activities engaged students in $\it cognitively$ constructing knowledge.	0					
C.	The activities engaged students in <i>socially</i> constructing knowledge.	0					
d.	The closure stressed the essential aspects of the lesson.	0					
e.	Overall, the class was well constructed and executed.	0					
2. What	aspects of the content addressed in class are still confusing?						
					//		
2 \X/hat	elements of the instruction were particularly effective in stimulating learning	na?					
J. What	Committee of the management were paralleled by Checking Indianaling tearing	19.					
					//		
4. Other	comments/thoughts?						
					//		
	Submit						