

A SWOT Analysis of the Rise and Pedagogical Implications of the Social Constructivist Epistemology in Educational Practice

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ABSTRACT In this paper the researchers argue that constructivism is a term that should be used with caution because of its multifarious nature. It is widely used in many disciplines with very different meanings that make it appear 'like a *chimera*' creature whose real identity is a subject of debate. For instance, in education where it has been widely embraced as a modern progressive pedagogy as opposed to the traditional 'jug and mug' or banking concept (Freire 1990), it is also used with many and varied meanings, for example, to describe learning and teaching as well as curricula and assessment. The researchers explore the rise of the social constructivist epistemology by focusing our attention on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the approach in pedagogical terms. In doing so, the researchers draw from the views of both apologists and critics of the social constructivist epistemology. The paper is basically a conceptual theoretical discursive analysis of a seemingly popular teaching philosophy. The analysis therefore unfolds with an examination of the genesis and development of the social constructivist epistemology and proceeds with a discussion of the merits and insights generated by the approach in pedagogical terms. This implies that the opportunities and threats the epistemology offers to classroom practitioners are dealt with. The paper thus seeks to offer a critique of the constructivist epistemology in education through the SWOT analysis strategy.