

## Discussion Notes

### Seymour Papert: Situating Constructionism

Take the last 10 minutes of my segment to form the students into groups and have them design a constructionist lab about voltage. Pretend that they have full reign over the curriculum, but they still must be practical. The groups should quickly share their ideas at the end of the segment. On Thursday, they will get to make another pass, revision, or rework on their idea.

This should end up being a dumbed-down version of a constructionist activity, by my take. It has a long-term nature, it is public so that students can get ideas from each other, it is building something. The only thing that it will miss will be learning content :-). However, that may come, too, as they read and think about voltage for Thursday.

- Constructionism isn't simply a new teaching methodology. It entails changing both how and *what* students learn. "... to break the sense of necessary connection between improving learning and improving teaching." Indeed, so how can we incorporate constructionism into a traditional classroom, since our institutions won't go for radical change?
- "A variant of this strong claim is that [constructionism] is the only framework that has been proposed that allows the full range of intellectual styles and preferences to each find a point of equilibrium." Is that really the case? I am an example of a person who best absorbs mathematics by being lectured from a person (as opposed to a book). What does a constructionist math environment have for me?
- "[Building knowledge structures] happens especially felicitously in a context where the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a *public* entity ...."
- "... the project was not done and dropped but continued for many weeks. It allowed time to think, to dream, to gaze, to get a new idea

and try it and drop it or persist, time to talk, to see other people's work and their reaction to yours—not unlike mathematics as it is for the mathematician, but quite unlike math as it is in junior high school.”