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Abstract

The constructivist pedagogies that are increasingly part of teacher education course work and expectations emerge from an intellectual world where knowledge is seen as created rather than received, mediated by discourse rather than transferred by teacher talk, explored and transformed rather than remembered as a uniform set of positivistic ideas. Increasingly, teacher educators ask new teachers to learn how to elicit and then use students' existing ideas as a basis for helping them construct new, more reasoned, more accurate or more disciplined understandings. While the role a teacher plays in developing or shaping students' thinking via constructivist pedagogies is obvious to teacher educators who advocate such strategies, the case of Taylor, a prospective English teacher, suggests that the role a teacher plays when using these strategies may not be at all clear to prospective teachers. Rather than understanding

constructivist pedagogies as techniques for thinking with learners, for teaching them, Taylor saw these strategies as ends in themselves. Faced with models of constructivist pedagogies, Taylor concluded that the teacher's role ends when she has activated learners, invited them to talk, successfully engaged their participation. This article describes how she reached this conclusion and explores the ways in which constructivist pedagogies can lead prospective teachers to project a thin vision of their role as a teacher.



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