

# Considering approaches to research through the lens of constructionism

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## Abstract

This workshop provides an opportunity for the community to discuss and debate the methodologies and methods used in constructionist research, critiquing existing approaches in relation to both pedagogy and philosophy of constructionism. While there may be numerous texts on conducting educational research, there has been little consideration of how pedagogical theory or philosophy should inform a researcher's approaches. In this workshop, constructionism is the lens through which we explore methodology, methods and tools. We explore several ways in which the process and outcomes of learning through constructionist activities can be uncovered, considering the role of approaches such as design research, randomised control trials and case studies, and looking at data sources such as interviews, data logs, artefacts and observations. The aim is to construct both individual knowledge and a communal understanding of the opportunities and tensions of the approaches we use and the process being studied and is suited to all those with an interest in researching constructionist learning experiences.

## Keywords

Constructionism; pedagogy; philosophy; research; methodology; methods

## Workshop

While there may be numerous texts on conducting educational research, there has been little consideration of how pedagogical theory or philosophy should inform a researcher's approaches. In this workshop, constructionism is the lens through which we explore methodology, methods and tools. As a core commitment of constructionism is that learning is best represented in the process, rather than the product, studying or evaluating constructionist environments and experiences requires methodologies that provide detailed descriptions of both physical *and* mental constructions in process. We explore several ways in which the process and outcomes of learning through constructionist activities can be uncovered, considering the role of approaches such as design research, randomised control trials, case studies and action research, and looking at data sources such as interviews, data logs, artefacts and observations.

### Format

The workshop will be delivered in three phases, beginning with a panel who will discuss some of the approaches used in their own research, their strengths and their limitations as viewed through a constructionist lens. This discussion will provide the initial stimulus for small group discussions facilitated by each of the panel members. Small group discussions will be organized around open questions as well as methodological and research design challenges currently faced and posed by participating members. In the final phase each group will present ideas and solutions that emerged during their discussions.

### Participants and Outcomes

This workshop is designed for all those involved in researching constructionist learning with intended outcomes for both individuals and the community. At an individual level it will provide participants with an opportunity to find out about and develop their understanding of different methodologies, methods and tools. Specifically, we hope participants will come away with actionable ideas for employing a variety of methods and techniques to study personally relevant research questions. As a community we aim to build a shared knowledge of the opportunities and tensions in using these approaches within the frame of constructionism, considering how and to what extent constructionist philosophy and pedagogy can or should inform a researcher's methodological choices and modes of analysis. To extend the dialogue beyond the conference a summative report on the session will be written for the broader constructionist community and available via the conference website.

No limit.

### Equipment

Participants: No equipment is necessary to participate, however we may use online tools to support back-channel conversations and record ideas within groups.

Presenters: Presenters will require a digital projector, screen and internet access. It would also be helpful if post-it notes, flipchart paper and marker pens were available for the group activities.

Room: Flexible seating.