

Constructionism 2012

Theory Practice and Impact

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Table of contents

Plenary Presentations

<i>Ackermann K.E.</i> Programming For The Natives: What is it? What's In It For The Kids?	1-10
<i>Clayson J.E., Noss R.</i> Café philo at Constructionism 2012	11-15
<i>Eisenberg M.</i> Constructionism: Changes in Technology, Changes in Purpose	16-22
<i>Goldenberg E.P.</i> Constructionism and the confirmation of a reluctant constructivist or Why, in American mathematics education, talk of constructivism is “out,” talk of constructionism never really happened, and it might not really matter anyway	23-32
<i>Harvey B.</i> The Beauty and Joy of Computing: Computer Science for Everyone	33-39
<i>Kynigos C.</i> Niches for Constructionism: forging connections for practice and theory.	40-51
<i>Resnick M.</i> Mother's Day, Warrior Cats, and Digital Fluency: Stories from the Scratch Online Community	52-58
<i>Sherin B.</i> Constructionism and the new learning analytics	59-68

Panel Debates

<i>Kynigos C., Clayson J.E.</i> Panel Debates: Rationale	69
Leader <i>Wilkerson-Jerde M.</i> Panel - debate 1: Changing the subject	70
Leader <i>Blikstein P.</i> Panel - debate 2: Segregation for ever?	71
Leader <i>Goldenberg P.</i> Panel - debate 3: How do we know it when we see it?	72
Leader <i>Valente J.</i>	73



Research Reports

Constructionist Classroom Experiences

<i>Oldenburg R., Rabel M., Schuster J.</i> A Turtle's genetic path to Object Oriented Programming	74-82
<i>Paparistodemou E., Meletiou-Mavrotheris M.</i> Children's Reasoning about Samples and Sampling in a Project-Based Learning Environment	83-93
<i>Papademetri-Kachrimani C.</i> Is this Constructionism? A case of young children, mathematics and powerful ideas.	94-103
<i>Stager S. G.</i> Friends of Papertian Constructionism	104-114
<i>Worsley M., Blikstein P.</i> A Framework for Characterizing Changes in Student Identity during Constructionist Learning Activities	115-125
<i>Sacristán A.I, Jiménez-Molotla J.</i> The Continuing Story of the Painless Trigonometry Projects: Eratosthenes' method and the Parthenon	126-135
<i>Zantzou I., Kynigos C.,</i> Differential approximation of a cylindrical helix by secondary school students	136-145
<i>Papadopoulos I.</i> Nicodemus explores Egyptian fractions: A case study	146-155
<i>Liarakou G., Daskolia M., Papanikolaou A.</i> Children Learning about 'Urban Sustainability' through Playing and Re-constructing a Half-Baked Microworld	156-165
<i>Fuhrmann T., Greene D., Salehi S., Blikstein P.</i> Bifocal Biology: The Link Between Virtual and Real Experiments	166-173
<i>Moustaki F., Kynigos C.</i> Meanings for 3d mathematics shaped by on-line group discussion	174-183
<i>Markopoulos C., Alexopoulou E.</i> Representational systems on 3d navigation process	184-193
<i>Daskolia M., Kynigos C.</i> Tinkering Creatively with Sustainability	194-203



Constructionism and the Curriculum

<i>Campos F.</i> Science, Education and Technology: Robotics in the curriculum at schools in Brazil	204-210
<i>Ó Dúill M.</i> Towards Turing Teaching	211-220
<i>Skiadelli M.</i> Interactive Board Games in classroom	221-230
<i>Kim K.H., Song M.H.</i> Building the System of Designing Own Mathematics Textbook	231-239
<i>Ó Dúill M.</i> Back to the Future: Can we reverse a quarter-century of regression?	240-249

Constructionism in Teacher Education Programs

<i>Valente J.A., Martins M.C.</i> Preparing Teachers to use Laptops Integrated to Curriculum Activities: the Experience of One Laptop per Student Project at Unicamp	250-259
<i>Fessakis G., Kladogenis D., Markouzis D.</i> Training mixed groups of teachers and students in educational robotics using the studio pedagogical model.	260-269
<i>Gkiolmas A., Chalkidis A., Karamanos K., Papaconstantinou M., Skordoulis C.</i> A Constructionist Method for Teaching Teachers about basic Properties of Complex Systems, using a NetLogo Model.	270-280
<i>Kalogeria E., Psycharis G., Ardavani P.</i> Designing and modifying artifacts through actual implementation in mathematics classrooms	281-290
<i>Anastopoulou S., Daskolia M.</i> Construction kits for teachers: implications for design	291-298

Informal Education (Collectives and Social Networking)

<i>Glezou K.</i> Educational online social networking in tertiary education - A teaching intervention	299-308
<i>Lerner M.R., Levy T.S., Wilensky U.</i> Social Interactions Among Modelers	309-317
<i>Miyata Y., Ueshiba T., Harada Y.</i> Cultivating Constructive Mindset in World Museum, collaboration across cultures and generations	318-327



Levy T.S., Hirsh A.
Of particles and bikers: Junior triathletes invent drafting tactics with agent-based models 328-338

Millner A.
Computer as Chalk: Supporting Youth as Designers of Tangible User Interfaces 339-348

Constructionist Technologies

Kahn K., Noble H., Hjorth A., Sampaio F.F.
Three-minute Constructionist Experiences 349-358

Feurzeig W., Horwitz P.
MultiMap: A Computational Environment for Supporting Mathematical Investigations 359-369

Holbert N., Wilensky U.
Representational congruence: Connecting video game experiences to the design and use of formal representations 370-379

Mavrikis M., Kahn K., Dragon T.
Constructionist Discussions With and Around Microworld Referable Objects 380-384

Olivera M., Sacristán A., I.,
An Online Setting for Exploring, Constructing, Sharing and Learning Mathematical Ideas 385-394

Educational Robotics

Przybylla M., Romeike R.
My Interactive Garden – A Constructionist Approach to Creative Learning with Interactive Installations in Computing Education 395-404

Arlegui J., Moro M., Pina A.
How to enhance the robotic experience with Scratch 405-414

Verner I., Cuperman D.
The Symbiosis of Design and Inquiry-Based Learning in Creating Robotic Models of Biological Systems 415-424

Constructionist Competences in the 21st Century

Wilkerson-Jerde M.H., Maldonis J.
Toward A Data Expression Toolkit: Identifying the Elements of Dynamic Representational Competence in Young Learners 425-434

Learning Processes and Concepts

Urrea - Giraldo C., Badilla-Saxe E., Miranda-Garnier X., Barrantes-Acuña, D. 435-446



Theory, Practice and Impact

Make to Think: Ideas, Spaces and Tools

- Ó Dúill M.*,
The Technicity Thesis: a constructionist proposition 447-457
-
- Latsi M., Kynigos C.*
Gestures as a tool of semiotic mediation in 3d turtle geometry environment 458-467
-
- Abdu R., Schwarz B.*
“Metafora” and the fostering of collaborative mathematical problem solving 468-479
-
- Simou P.*
Drama in Education and Constructionism 480-489
-
- Yiannoutsou N., Mavrikis M.*
Learning how to learn with microworlds: feedback evaluation and help seeking 490-499
-
- Portocarrero E.*
Designing Tools for Creative Learning 500-509
-

Epistemology in terms of Constructionist Theory

- Psycharis G., Morgan C.*
Networking constructionism and social semiotics in order to investigate students’
bodily engagement with tasks in three-dimensional space 510-519
-

Demonstration of Constructionist Media

- Athanasiadis C., Antoniou A., Salonikidis I., Klonari A.*,
Using Virtual Globes and GIS in Digital Geography Textbooks 520-524
-
- Benacka J.*
Supersonicman – an informatics x physics project 525-529
-
- Geraniou E., Mavrikis M., Gutierrez-Santos S., Poulouvassilis A.*
Teacher Assistance Tools for the Constructionist Classroom 530-534
-
- Hjorth A. Wilensky U.*
Acting like a Turtle: A NetLogo Kinect Extension 535-539
-
- Lerner R.M., Levy S.T., Wilensky U.*
Modeling Commons 540-543
-
- Rojano T., Abreu J.L.*
Dialogs with Prometheus: Intelligent support for teaching mathematics 544-548
-
- Wagh A., Wilensky U.*
Evolution in Blocks: Building Models of Evolution using Blocks 549-554
-



Weintrop D., Wilensky U.
RoboBuilder: A Program-to-Play Constructionist Video Game 555-559

Best Practice Reports

Bonilla J., Sacristán A.I.
Logo-based activities for learning counting for children with Down syndrome 560-564

Cho H. H., Lee J.Y., Song M.H.
Construction and Design Activities through Logo based 3D Microworld 565-569

Chehlarova T., Sendova E., Stefanova E.
Dynamic tessellations in support of the inquiry-based learning of mathematics and arts 570-574

d'Abreu J. V. V. , Bastos L.B., Giachetto G.F.A.O.
EDUCATIONAL ROBOTICS IN One Laptop per Student – UCA Project 575-579

Dagdidelis V.
Teaching how to teach how to teach programming 580-585

Dagiene V., Jasute E.
Constructionist learning of geometry 586-596

Danahy E., Hynes M., Ronen A.
Design Compass: Facilitating metacognition in construction activities in K-16 classrooms 597-601

Farkas K., Csink L.
Greek Salad instead of Spinach or Playful Informatics 602-609

Isarasena P., TutiyaPhuengprasert N., Sipitakiat A.
Growing Under Pressure: A Thai School Learning How to Prosper While being Different 610-614

Kouletsi E.
Exploring the cone through a half-baked microworld 615-619

Mioduser D., Kuperman A.E., Levy T.S.
Design and Learning (D&L) in the Kindergarten 620-624

Smyrniou Z., Moustaki F.
Creating motion models by manipulating parameters that correspond to scientific conventions 625-629

Spathis M., Kouletsi E.
The necessity of the tangent 630-634

Tempel M. 635-639



Constructionism in the Oilfield

Tzoumerkas J., Petropoulou V.
Literamovie – creativity in multilingual and multimedia e-editions of classic texts 640-644

Weintrop D., Holbert N., Wilensky U., Horn M.
Redefining Constructionist Video Games: Marrying Constructionism and Video Game Design 645-649

Poster Presentations

Anastopoulou S., Daskolia M., Rozaki M.
“Neighborhoods”: Engaging students into inquiring about their local communities from a place-based perspective 650

Deveraki M., Xenos M., Daskolia M.
Representations of Students’ Experience of their Local Environment in their Constructions of Digital Games 651

Drechsler M.
Knowledge building on line. A new way of training for the primary teachers? 652

Glezou K.,
Science simulation development with Scratch 653

Gounari N., Daskolia M., Flogaitis E.
Use of an Exploratory Software for Teaching and Learning about Environmental Issues 654

Mitropoulou V., Argyropoulos N., Vasiliou V., Gikas A. et al.
Constructivism embedded in the digital activities of the eBooks of Religion for Secondary Education 655

Moustaki F., Economakou K., Diamantidis D., Kaitsoi A.
Collaborative meaning generation processes while interacting with a 3d turtle geometry microworld 656

Ortiz – Moreno A., Pretelín-Ricárdez A., Luviano-Juárez A.
Simulator for Learning Robotics Topics in Xbox Consoles 657

Papademetri-Kachrimani C., Louca L.L.
Mapping Modeling-based Learning in Early Childhood Education 658

Papanikolaou D.
Smart Cities Workshop 659-660

Parthenis C, Tseliou E.
THE PROGRAM: “EDUCATION FOR ROMA CHILDREN”. Description of its 661-662



actions and perspectives of further development

Shiakalli M.A., Papademetri-Kachrimani C., Zacharos K.
Mapping Problem-Solving in Early Childhood Education through Problems Involving Construction 663

Smyrnaioy Z., Tsigaridis K., Varypati E., Evripidou R., Chantzaras T., Dimas J., Tsoutsou E.
Playing Games on-line and at the schoolyard for generating meanings on Science 664

Smyrnaioy Z., Moustaki F., Xenos M.
Using the “D-stage” Kit to develop 2d Science Microworlds 665

Tsakonas P., Petsos A., Toukiloglou P, Saridaki A., Christopoulou E., Paliouras A., Jimoyiannis A.
Supporting students’ construction of programming mental models with e-books: The case of Computer Science e-book 666-667

Tsouma E., Daskolia M.
Students’ Collective Creativity while Co-Constructing Digital Games on the Idea of Sustainable City 668

Xenos M.
Artificial Intelligence Supporting Collaborative Constructionist Activities in Environmental Education 669

Zantzou I.
Using MaLT for restructuring the approach of curves in secondary education 670

Exarchou E., Klonari A.
Using a social bookmarking system to enhance the environmental and geographical learning of secondary students. A pre-study review 671

Workshops

Benacka J.
3D in Excel 672-674

Bratitsis T., Fachantidis N.
The RoboScratch Theatre: Constructing knowledge with Lego Mindstorms and Scratch through artistic activities 675-677

Dagiene V., Futschek G.
Knowledge construction in the Bebras problem solving contest 678-680

Harvey B.,
The Snap! Programming Language 681



Theory, Practice and Impact

Kynigos C., Yiannoutsou N, Moustaki F., Xenos M., Anastopoulou S.
Constructing microworlds with E-Slate. 682

Psycharis G., Latsi M., Moustaki F., Zantzou I.
3d Math: creating and dynamically manipulating 3d geometrical figures 683-685

Resnick M.
Explore the Next Generation of Scratch 686

Yiannoutsou N., Moustaki F., Xenos M., Mavrikis M., Abdu R.
Metafora: Learning to learn together during explorations with microworlds 687

Author index 688



Preface

Constructionism 2012 in Athens carried on the tradition of the bi-annual meetings of the Eurologo community in Dublin (1987), Gent (1989), Parma (1991), Anavissos (1993), Birmingham (1995), Budapest (1997), Sofia (1999), Linz (2001), Porto (2003), Warsaw (2005) and Bratislava (2007) and Paris (2010). Our highly successful meeting in Paris in 2010 was characterized by the change in our title to 'Constructionism' in order to delineate our head - on addressing of and reflection on our constructionist epistemology on learning and using Logo-like digital systems.

It was also remembered for the broadening of learning domains from mathematics and programming to the arts. Permeating our discussions was the feeling that in 2012, it is time to look at and to question Constructionism in the future, to discuss the associated learning theory in a world where connections and integration is sought in a landscape of fragmented theoretical frameworks and constructs. What has constructionist learning theory to offer in our understanding of how and what we learn? It was felt that it is equally time to reconsider constructionism as a theory of pedagogical design and practice.

In a world where educational reforms and wide scale initiatives are becoming more pertinent and where curriculum materials and management systems crop up at unprecedented scale, availability and variety, how can constructionists have an impact? How can we make use of new media and how can we describe our designs and our practices to be convincing and relevant? The theme of our 2012 conference, 'Theory, Practice and Impact' was thus meant to reflect our on-going discussions and provide challenge for our meeting in Athens which we hope you all enjoyed.

CONFERENCE CHAIRS

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Playing Games on-line and at the schoolyard for generating meanings on Science

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Engaging in processes that require working together in groups for addressing complex scientific problems is an issue that has come at the surface lately in the field of Science Education. The Study on which this poster reports concerns how students come to generate meanings about moving in Newtonian spaces as they collaboratively addressed complex scientific situations.

The Study took place in the 1st Experimental High School of Athens with fourteen 13 to 14-year-old students divided in three Groups and lasted for 20 school hours. We particularly focus on how students talked about scientific laws and concepts as they observed the motion of different objects while playing games at the schoolyard and as they worked on-line with a 3d microworld called “3d Juggler” (Smyrnaïou et al., 2012). 3d Juggler (Kynigos, 2007) is a game microworld that is designed to offer students opportunities to build and explore models of motions and collisions inside a Newtonian 3d space. The students, after carrying out a set of experiments at the schoolyard using different types of balls (e.g. tennis balls, basket balls etc), moved to 3d Juggler to collaboratively create their own games that would include shooting balls and hitting specific targets. To explain in detail the exact design of their game, the students were also encouraged to use Pixton, a story-telling tool. While working on-line with the 3d Juggler microworld, the members of the Group communicated through a Discussion Tool, which, just like the 3d Juggler Microworld, is integrated in a web-based Platform call METAFORA.

The poster presented during the Constructionism 2012 Conference will include episodes in which the Groups of students discuss around their game constructions and engage in meaning making processes with regard to scientific concepts and laws that underpin the design of their games.

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