

## **A REVIEW OF CONSTRUCTING MINDS: EVALUATING THE ROLE OF CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACHES IN ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CRITICAL THINKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study critically examines the application of constructivist learning theories in higher education, with a particular focus on how these pedagogical approaches influence student engagement and the development of critical thinking skills. Drawing on theoretical foundations from Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner, the research explores how active, social, and contextualized learning environments empower students to take ownership of their learning processes. Through a qualitative analysis of existing literature, case studies, and institutional practices, the paper highlights the benefits of constructivist models in promoting deeper understanding, autonomy, and collaborative learning. However, it also addresses the limitations and challenges associated with implementing constructivist methods, such as the need for well-prepared educators, student readiness, and scalable instructional design. The findings suggest that while constructivism offers significant pedagogical advantages, its effective application requires a balanced, context-sensitive approach supported by institutional frameworks. Recommendations are made for integrating constructivist practices in a hybrid or blended learning context to accommodate diverse learners and maximize learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Constructivism, Higher Education, Student Engagement, Critical Thinking, Active Learning, Pedagogy.