

Aurora School

Traditional Classrooms		Progressive Classrooms	
Education is to prepare people for the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factory model • Training to take orders and follow directions 	Education is to prepare citizens for active participation in a democratic society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self reliant • Know how to ask the questions • Know how to find information • Skills and confidence to challenge and make a difference • Actively participate in the democracy
Students are viewed as “blank slates” onto which information is etched by the teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of discrete facts to be memorized handed down from previous generations • Multiple choice • “What do you want me to say?” 	Students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change is inevitable—there are new things to be discovered • Children come to school open and confident—keep them so • Your ideas are valuable • Thinking and creativity over memorization
Education is more or less confined to basic curriculum content—contained within the school walls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of curriculum is not often evident. • “When are we ever going to use this?” 	No boundaries: school into society, society into school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School work has a purpose and an affect—there is a reason to learn this stuff and it is evident • What students do can have an immediate impact • Community service/service learning

Traditional Classrooms		Constructivist Classrooms	
Curriculum is presented part to whole, with emphasis on basic skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on text books and tests • Isolated skills (ie: phonics only, math facts out of context. arithmetic before word real world problems) 	Curriculum is presented whole to part with emphasis on big concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic approach (thematic units, projects, integrated instruction using many content areas at once) • Plays and other performance pieces integrating learning styles and curriculum
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum same from year to year • Curriculum determined and developed away from school • Teacher proof 	Schools are laboratories—places for experimentation and testing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curr may vary each year • Teachers empowered and confident to pursue ideas • Mistakes encouraged at critical to learning and assessment

Traditional vs. Progressive / Constructivist Classrooms

<p>Curricular activities rely heavily on textbooks and workbooks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of flexibility • Culturally biased • Created off site 	<p>Curricular activities rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few texts or workbooks • Teacher/student generated materials • More attuned to individual and class needs • Hands-on > natural learning
<p>Curriculum is determined far from primary learning site geared to the “average” learner and often influenced by political whim.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One size fits all • Developmentally inappropriate • Pressure to “succeed” beyond ability • Adds to stratification • Student and teacher frustration 	<p>Curriculum can be flexible recognizing individual development. More control at the point of instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students at both ends of developmental spectrum can be challenged and successful. • Teachers can determine timeline for learning
<p>Teachers generally behave in a didactic manner, disseminating information to students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher at the front of the room • One method of teaching 	<p>Teachers generally behave in an interactive manner, mediating the environment for students. Pursuit of student questions is highly valued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More egalitarian between students and teachers • More personal • Critical to draw upon students ideas and confidence
<p>Teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One right answer 	<p>Teachers seek the students' points of view in order to understand students' present conceptions for use in subsequent lessons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore mistakes • Encourage alternate answers • Develop multiple possibilities • Open-ended problems
<p>Assessment of student learning is viewed as separate from teaching and occurs almost entirely through testing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests that take weeks away from teaching and give no feedback to students or parents about learning • Teacher mistrust • Parent insecurity 	<p>Assessment of student learning is interwoven with teaching and occurs through teacher observations of students at work and through students' exhibitions and portfolios.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher as most knowledgeable • Students <i>sees</i> progress • Efficient use of time • Immediate feedback
<p>Students primarily work alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition • Unnatural learning environment 	<p>Students primarily work in groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is social • Preparation for real world