In this tutorial, we'll discuss the elements of constructivism in the classroom, and we'll learn about some habits and techniques of constructivist teachers. Let's get started.

Constructivism is the idea that learning is the result of assimilation and accommodation. In this theory, learning refers to both the development of knowledge and the determination of meaning behind that knowledge. So constructivist theory states that we assimilate information. In other words, we connect new knowledge to the knowledge we already have.

So constructivist theory says that learning happens in two ways-- through assimilation, which is when we connect new knowledge to our prior knowledge, and through accommodation, which is when we actually adjust our view of the world in order to accommodate new knowledge that has been presented to us. So in constructivism, learning is really personalized to each individual learner, because each individual person is constructing their own meaning out of new information.

Here are some elements of constructivism in the classroom. First, students construct meaning only through active engagement. Students can't be passively involved in a constructivist classroom. Students need to be actively involved in constructing new understanding that is based on their prior knowledge and that is facilitated by the learning activities that they are engaging in.

Learning involves metacognition, so not only are students learning content, but also with every learning activity that they're engaging in, they're also learning more about themselves and their own learning preferences or how they learn best.

The term reflective activity, coined by Dewey, this is what allows students to construct that individual meaning and take ownership of their learning. In constructivist theory, learning is a very social activity. It requires the use of language to communicate with others around you. This is because learning occurs in context. We can't construct meaning just from facts in isolation. Relevance, or the why of learning, is important in constructivist theory. Students have to understand the relevance of what they are learning if we want it to be motivating for them.

So in a constructivist classroom, students are actively engaged in all of the learning activities. They are thinking about their learning, and they're aware of how their minds are working to construct this new knowledge. They're using language to effectively communicate with one another, and they're learning in context as they engage in activities that teachers have carefully designed to be relevant to students in order to increase their motivation.

We can apply these elements of constructivist theory right into our classroom teaching. Here are five principles of
constructivist teaching identified by Brooks and Brooks. As we go through these principles, we'll also relate them to competency based education, both in terms of the iNACOL design principles and elements identified by CompetencyWorks.

In constructivism, teachers should pose problems of emerging relevance. This refers back to the CBE principle that states that the competencies that we have identified need to include high-level cognitive skills. Students need to be asked to create and apply their knowledge and to develop skills that are important for their future learning, including in college and in their future careers.

Next, constructivist teachers should structure learning around big ideas or important concepts. Remember, in CBE we are told that clear learning targets need to be established and communicated to students. These targets need to be measurable. They need to be important concepts that students can generalize to a variety of contexts. This helps both to empower students and to help them take ownership of and focus on their own learning.

Next, constructivist teachers should seek and value students' points of view. Although this element does not necessarily relate directly to the five CBE principles that are identified by iNACOL and CompetencyWorks, we all know that student voice and student choice are important parts of classroom instruction in many learning methodologies.

Constructivist teachers should adapt their instruction to address students' needs, to address students' prior learning, and to avoid misconceptions. This correlates to the principle in CBE that students need to receive timely and differentiated support that is based on their own unique learning needs.

Finally, in constructivism, teachers should assess student learning in context. Ideally this should be done using formative assessments, and this definitely relates to a principle of CBE, stating that assessment provides meaningful information to both students and teachers. Assessment is supposed to be a positive experience for students. It helps them to know exactly where they are and exactly where they need to go next on their learning paths.

In this tutorial, we identified the elements of constructivism in the classroom, and we discussed some habits and techniques of constructivist teachers. So here's a chance for you to stop and reflect. Do you have a solid understanding of constructivist theory? Do you see how the principles of constructivism can be applied in your classroom?

For more information on how to apply what you learned in this video, please view the additional resources section that accompanies this video presentation. The additional resources section includes hyperlinks useful for applications of the course material, including a brief description of each resource. Thanks for watching. Have a
great day.