

What Is Project Construct?

Developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in 1986, Project Construct is a learner-centered curriculum and an approach to teaching for preschool, primary and elementary grades. It was developed from research demonstrating that learners *construct* knowledge through interactions with their physical and social environments.



What does a Project Construct classroom look like?

In a preschool, a four-year old begins a letter to Mommy, connecting letters and sounds in an attempt to write words: “Dr Mom hau ar u....” In a second-grade class, small groups of students work together, solving a math problem and creating posters to explain their solutions to their classmates. In a fifth-grade class, two ten-year-olds sit together in a quiet corner, deep in conversation about the characters in the book they are reading.

What do these scenes have in common? They are all examples of children constructing knowledge, confident they can succeed in learning. They are also scenes that take place daily in Project Construct classrooms.

In a Project Construct classroom, each child is valued and respected, both as a learner and as a person. Educators using Project Construct

support children’s development as individuals, as learners, and as members of a classroom community. Along with a thorough understanding of curriculum (what children need to know and be able to do at each grade level), teachers in Project Construct classrooms

- use students’ interests to motivate and engage them in learning,
- encourage children to collaborate and work together,
- allow children to take initiative, express opinions, and make choices,
- view children’s errors as learning opportunities,
- assess children’s thinking, as well as their work, in order to teach more effectively.



Project Construct teachers

also believe that the classroom environment is an important tool for helping children learn. Room arrangements and daily schedules, while carefully designed, are flexible.

Student work is on display everywhere, signaling to students that the room belongs to them. There are tables for children to work together in groups and individual spaces for independent work. Ultimately, however, each Project Construct classroom is unique and designed to meet the changing needs of its students and teachers.

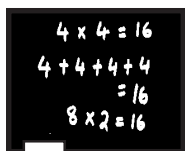
While Project Construct teachers each have their own ways of involving students in the subject matter, you can be sure of one thing;

they all believe that high expectations and rich learning environments challenge students to reach their maximum potential.

How will Project Construct benefit my child?

The Project Construct approach provides clear advantages to students. Preschool-age children arrive at kindergarten ready and eager to learn, while school-age children are better prepared for the assessments demanded by new academic standards, confident in themselves as successful learners.

In Project Construct classrooms, students solve realistic problems, explain their thinking, and examine their reasoning. They also learn to function as members of a community. As a result, they attain deep understandings in the



core content areas, become critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers, develop cooperative and collaborative skills, and develop a love of learning.

In addition, the Project Construct curriculum is closely linked to both state and national standards. Like the Show-Me Standards—Missouri’s rigorous academic standards—the Project Construct curriculum is shaped by the belief that student success depends on both a solid foundation of content knowledge and the ability to apply it to real problems and new situations. Also like the Show-Me Standards, the Project Construct curriculum is built on the understanding that “active, hands-on learning” benefits students of all ages. As stated in the Standards document, this kind of learning “stays in the mind long after the tests are over

and acts as a springboard to success beyond the classroom.”

What part do families play in Project Construct?

Learning is a lifelong journey that adults and children go on together. As parents and families, you are not just important companions on this journey, you are necessary partners. You are your children’s first and primary teachers and thus have a very important role in the Project Construct classroom. Your child’s teacher will be happy to provide you with information on ways you can support your child’s learning, both at home and at school. Family involvement significantly increases the chances of a student’s success, and together, we can prepare our children to meet the challenges of a new era and ensure a brighter tomorrow.

For more information about Project Construct and the Project Construct National Center, please visit our web site or call us.

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