

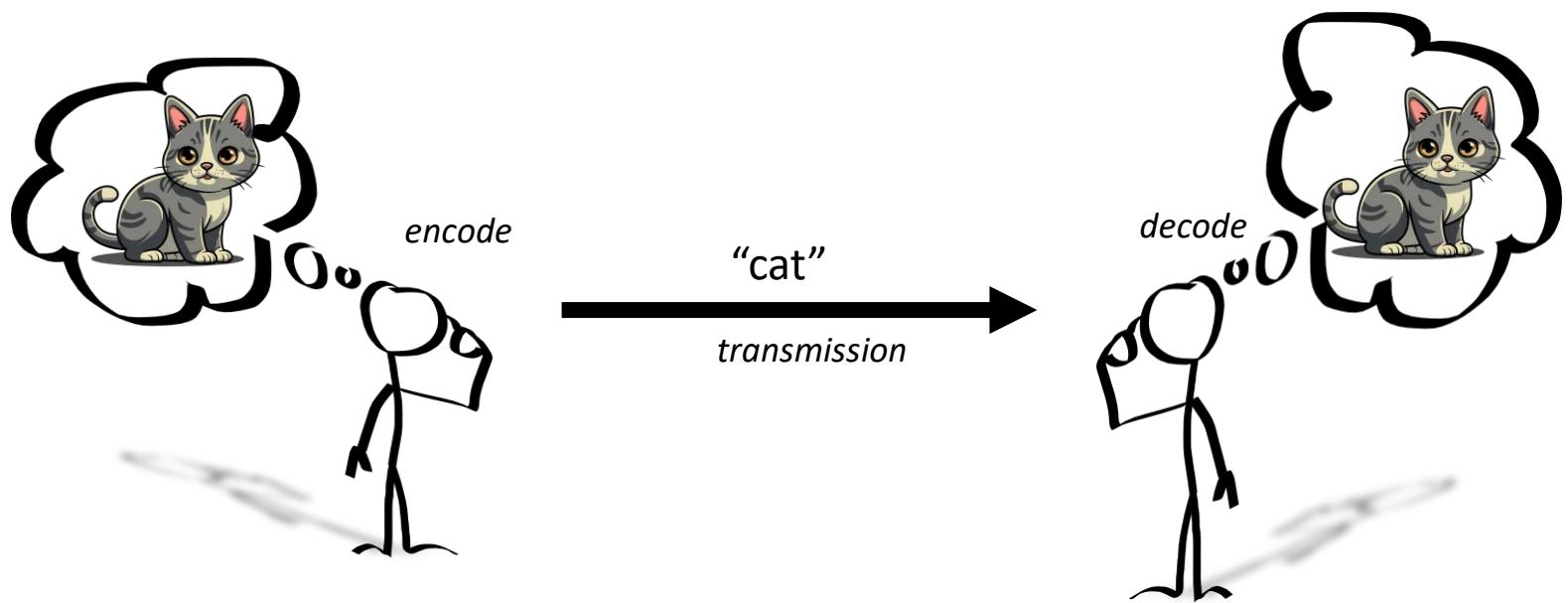


# Introduction to Social Constructivism

- Stephen Downes
- November 16, 2023
- Maskwacis Cultural College Online Microlearning Series
- <https://www.downes.ca/presentation/576>

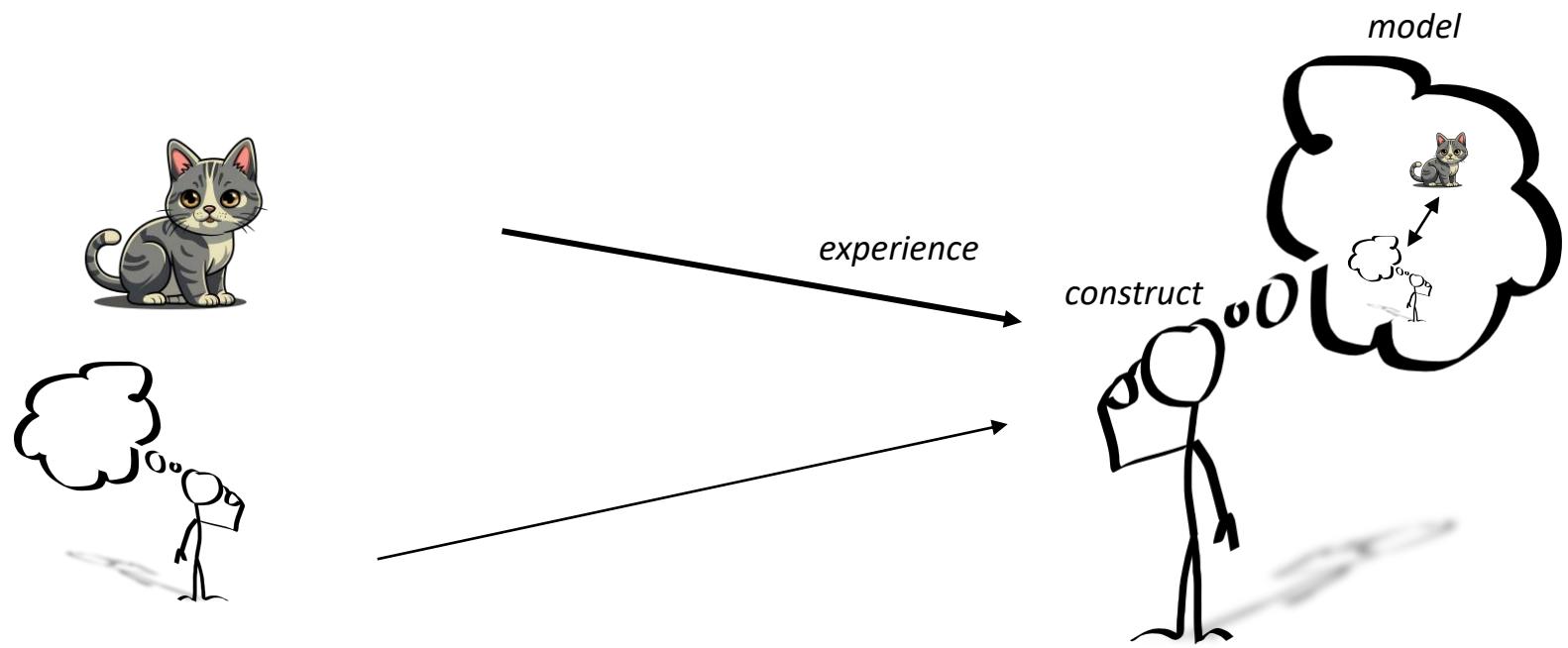
# Constructivism

- Individuals or learners do not acquire knowledge and understanding by passively perceiving it within a direct process of knowledge transmission



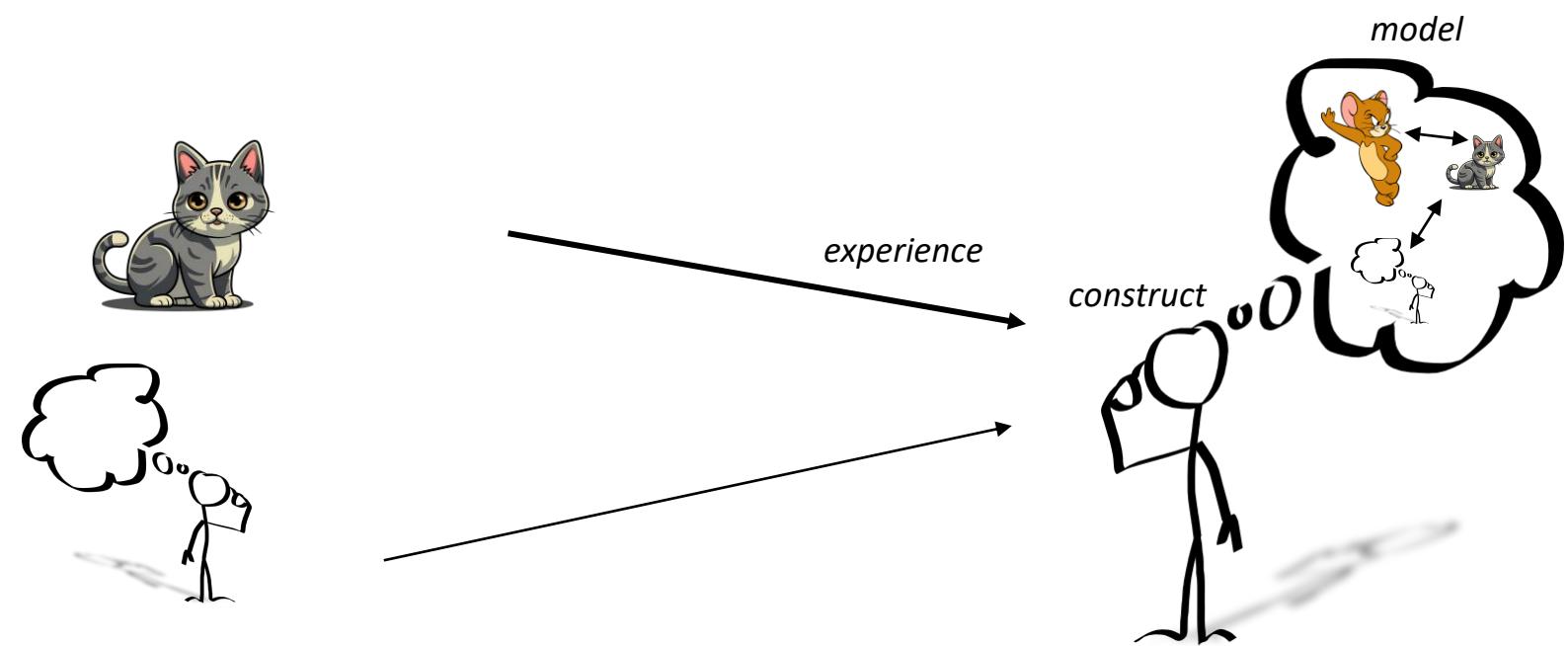
# Constructivism

- Instead, they construct new understanding and knowledge through experience and social discourse



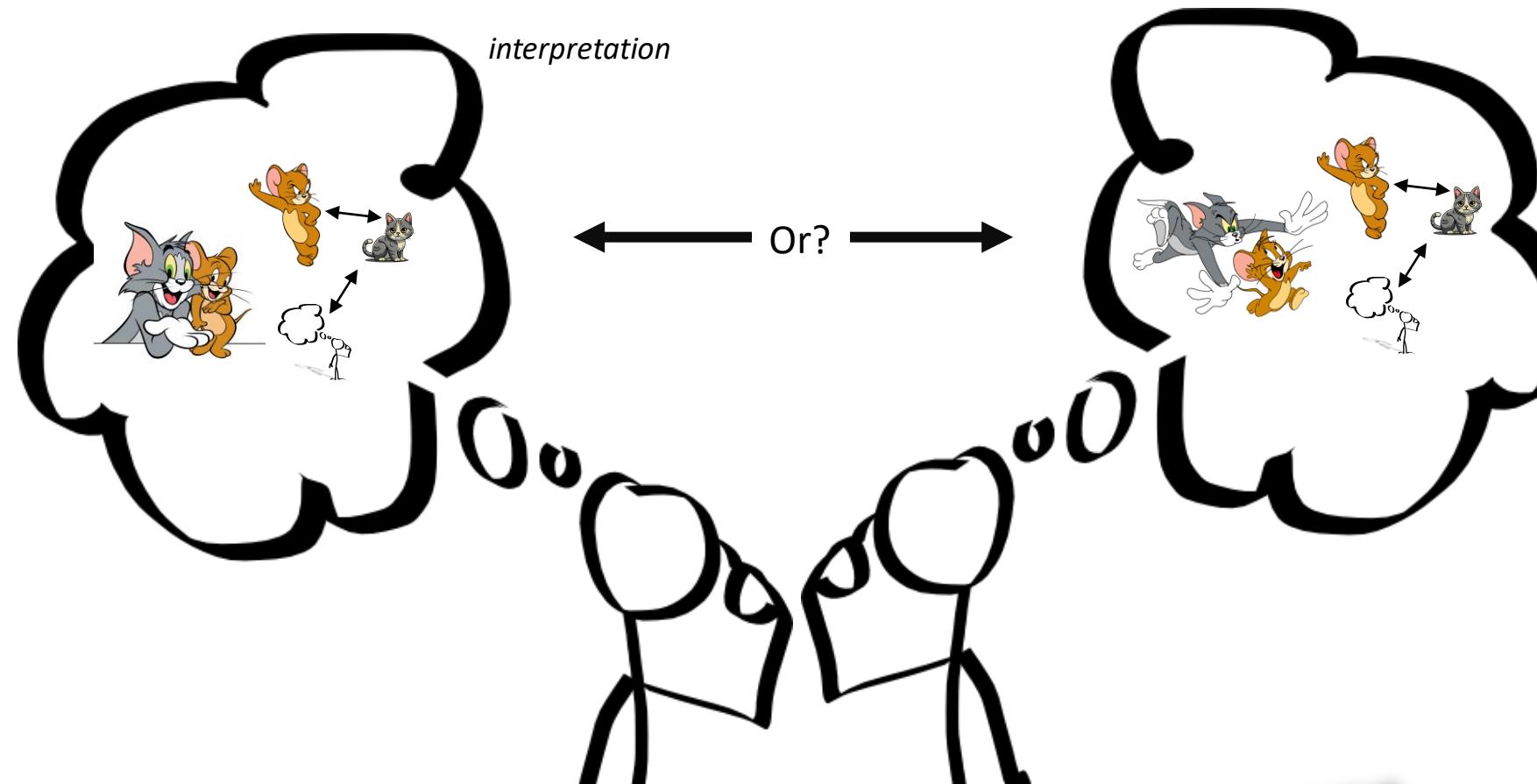
# Constructivism

- New knowledge is integrated into what is already known and thereby extended



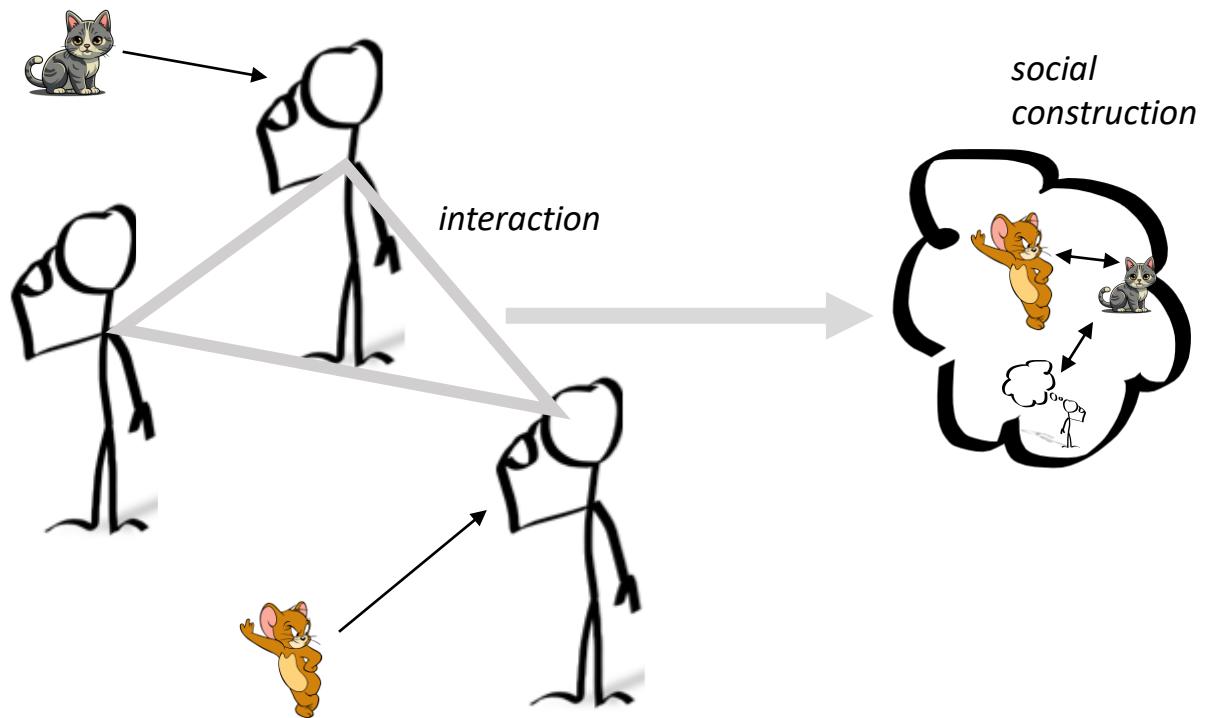
# Constructivism

- How new knowledge is integrated is a matter of interpretation



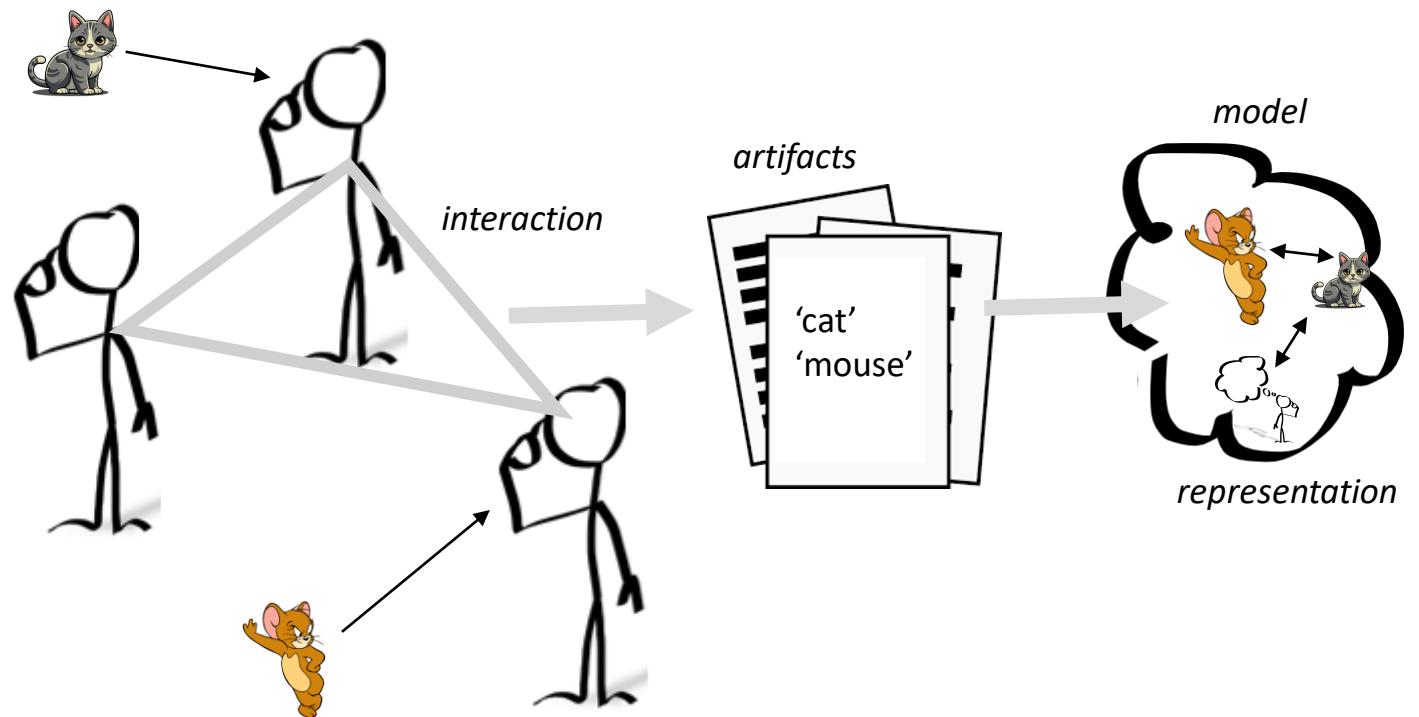
# Social Constructivism

- Human development is socially situated, and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others.



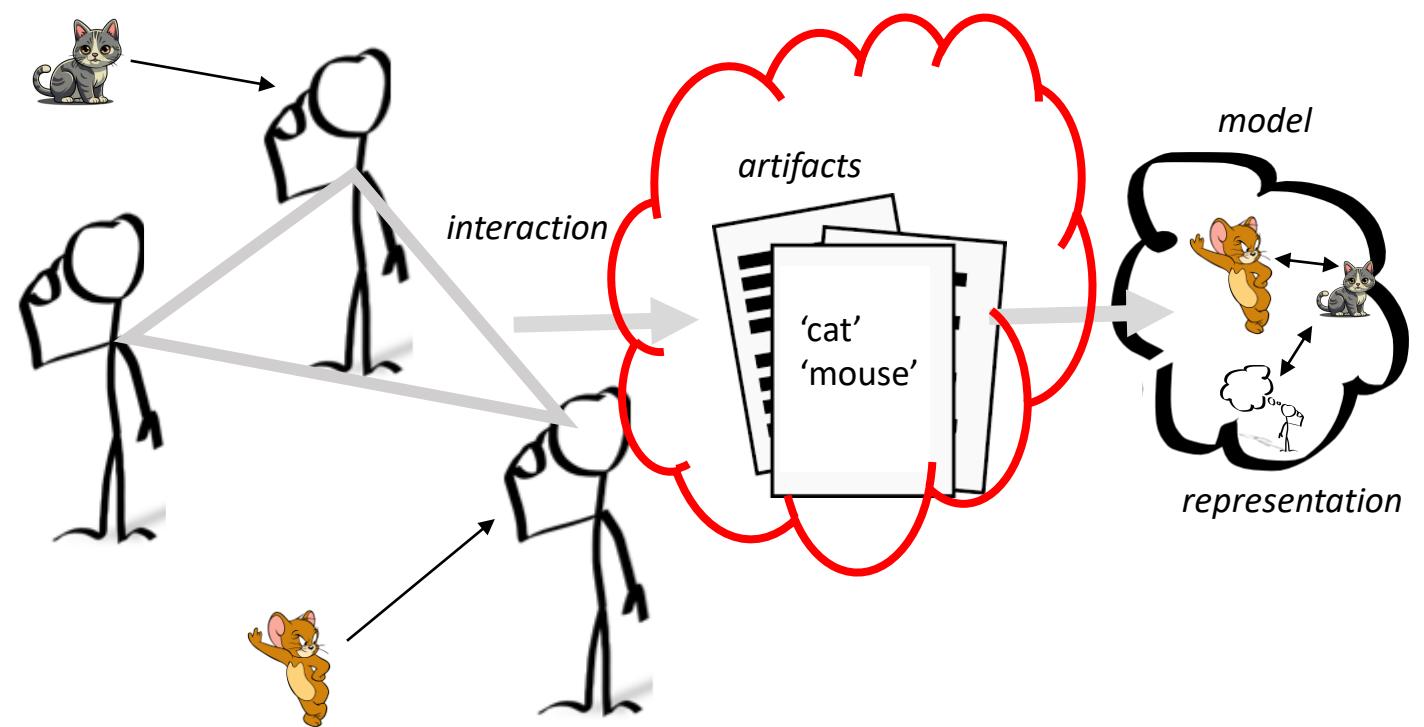
# Social Constructivism

- People work together to actively construct artifacts that represent or stand for the socially constructed models



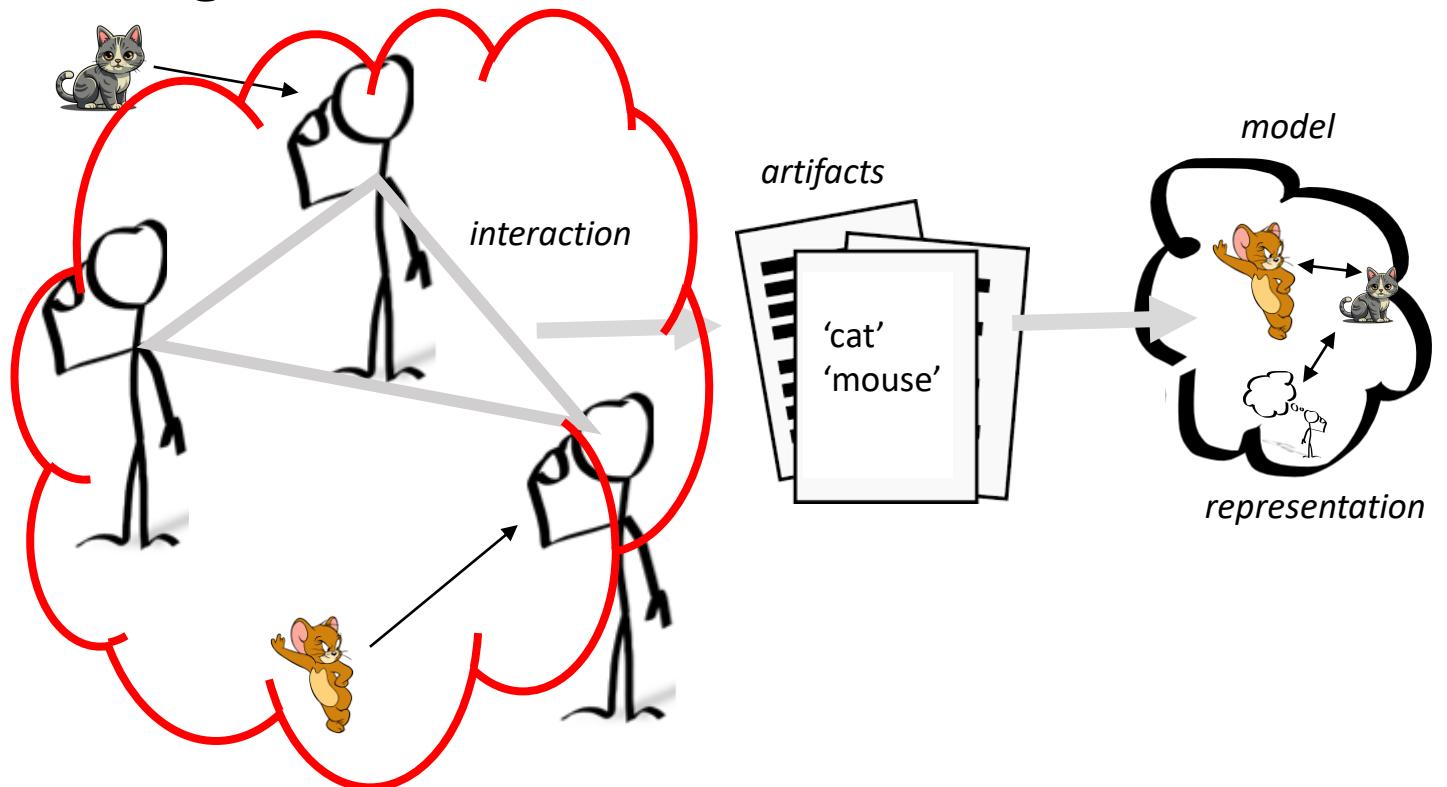
# Social Constructivism

- Social **constructivism** focuses on the artifacts (constructs) that are created through social interactions

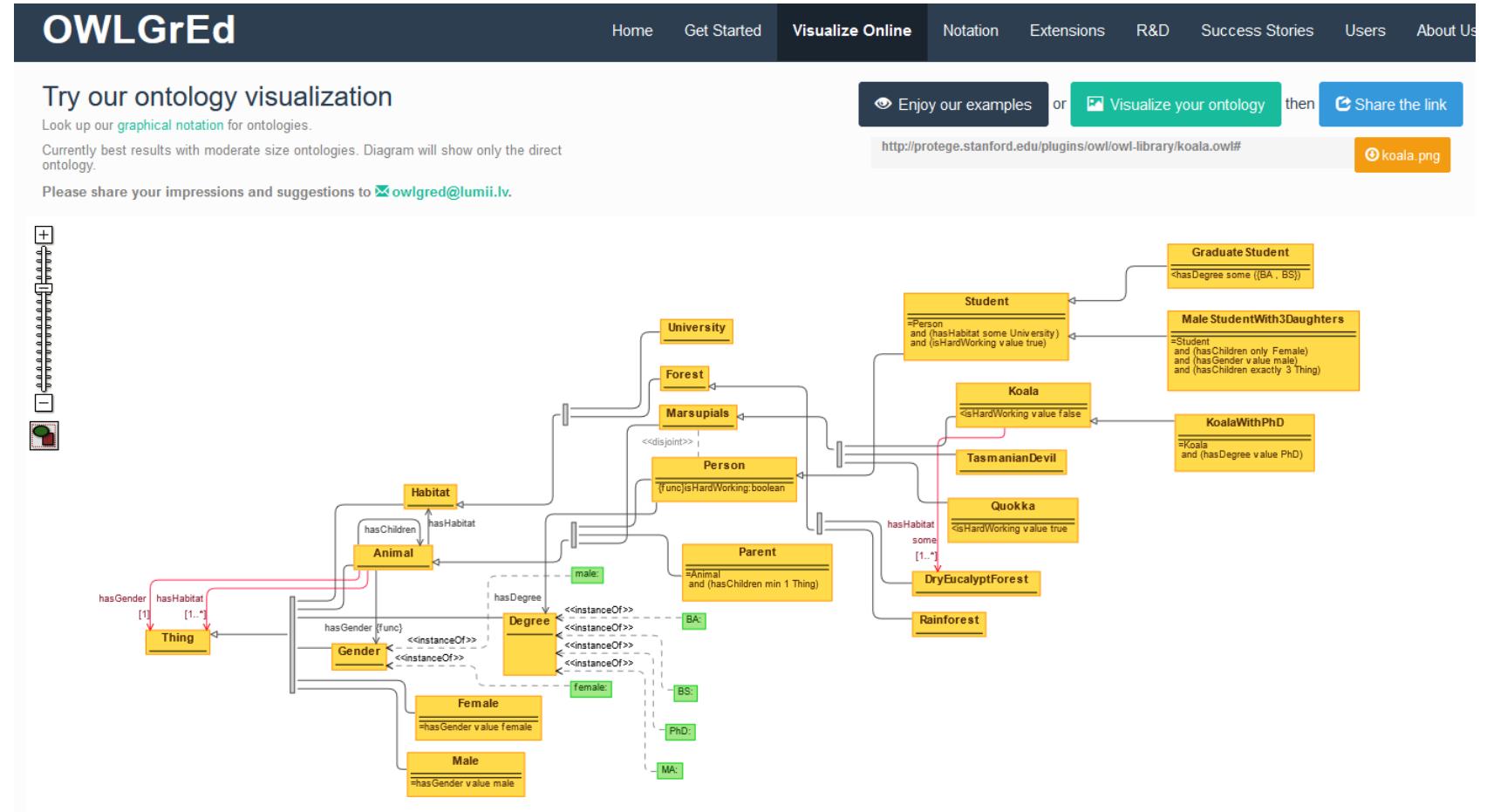


# Social Constructionism

- Social **constructionism** focuses on the artifacts (constructs) that are created through social interactions



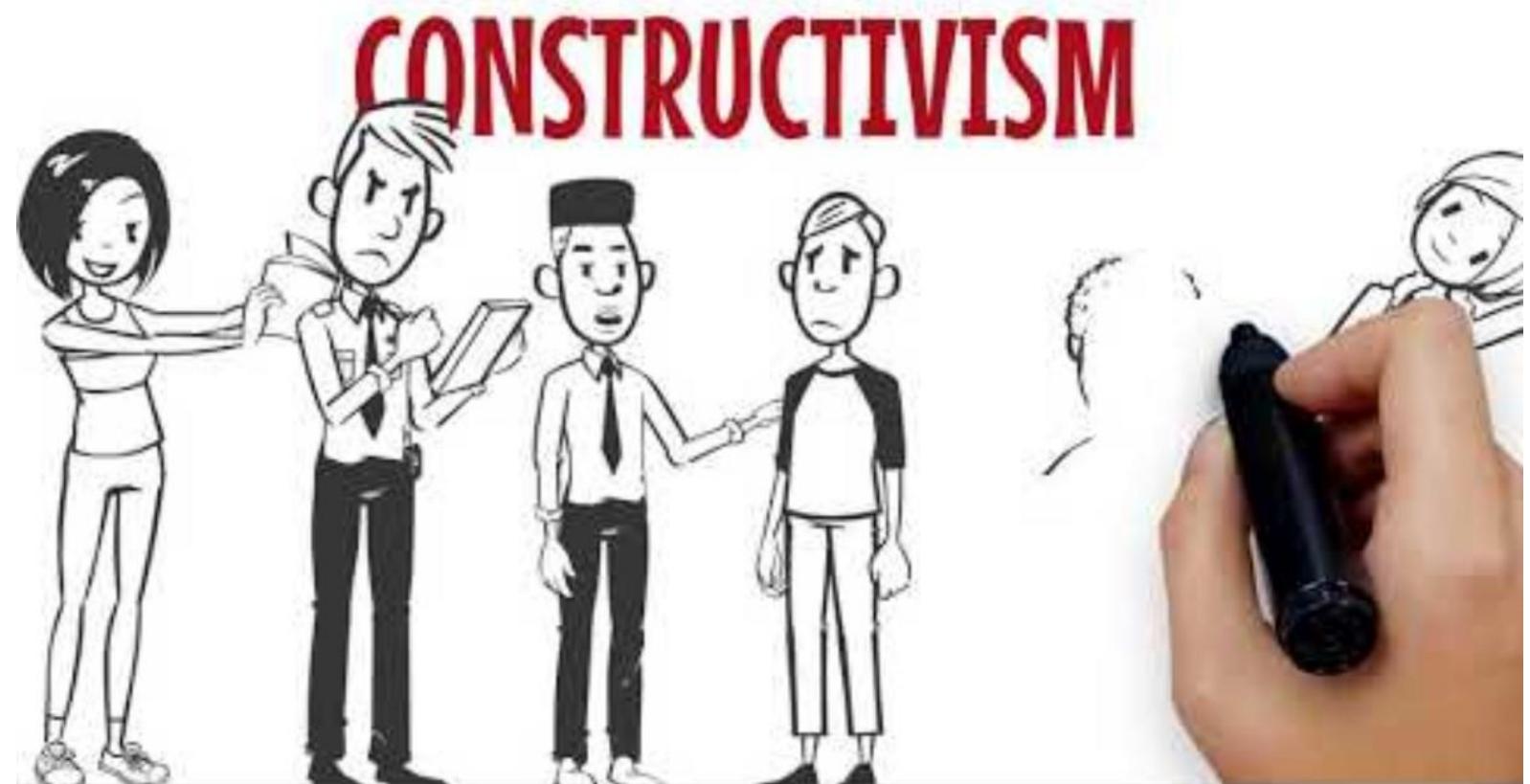
# Building an Ontology



- [http://owlgred.lumii.lv/online\\_visualization](http://owlgred.lumii.lv/online_visualization)

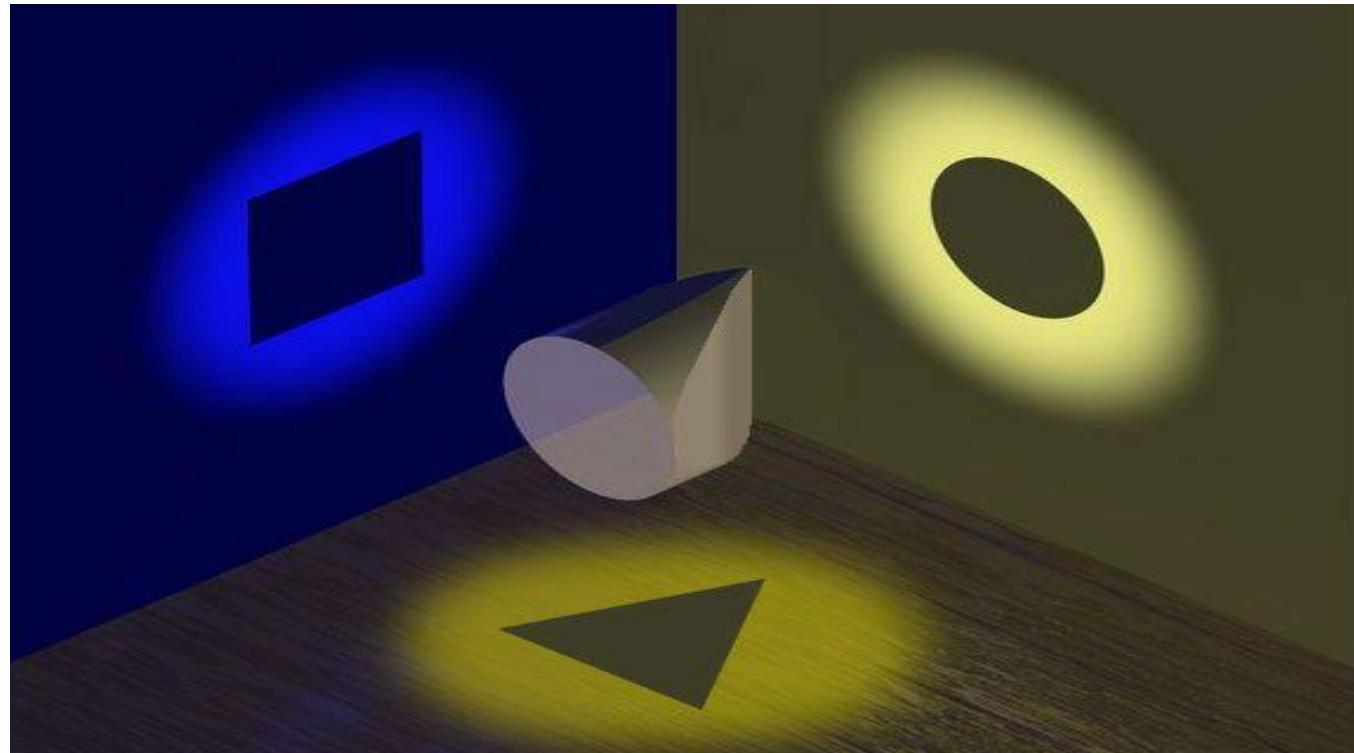
# Constructivism and Reality

---



# Constructivism and Reality

- There is no inherent contradiction between constructivism and realism



# Constructivism and Reality

## The Logicist Perspective

- There are objective principles of fact and reason, for example, mathematics and logic
- Kant: necessary *a priori* and the philosophy of rationality
- Chomsky: syntactic structures and the philosophy of language
- Stages of development and transformations: Piaget

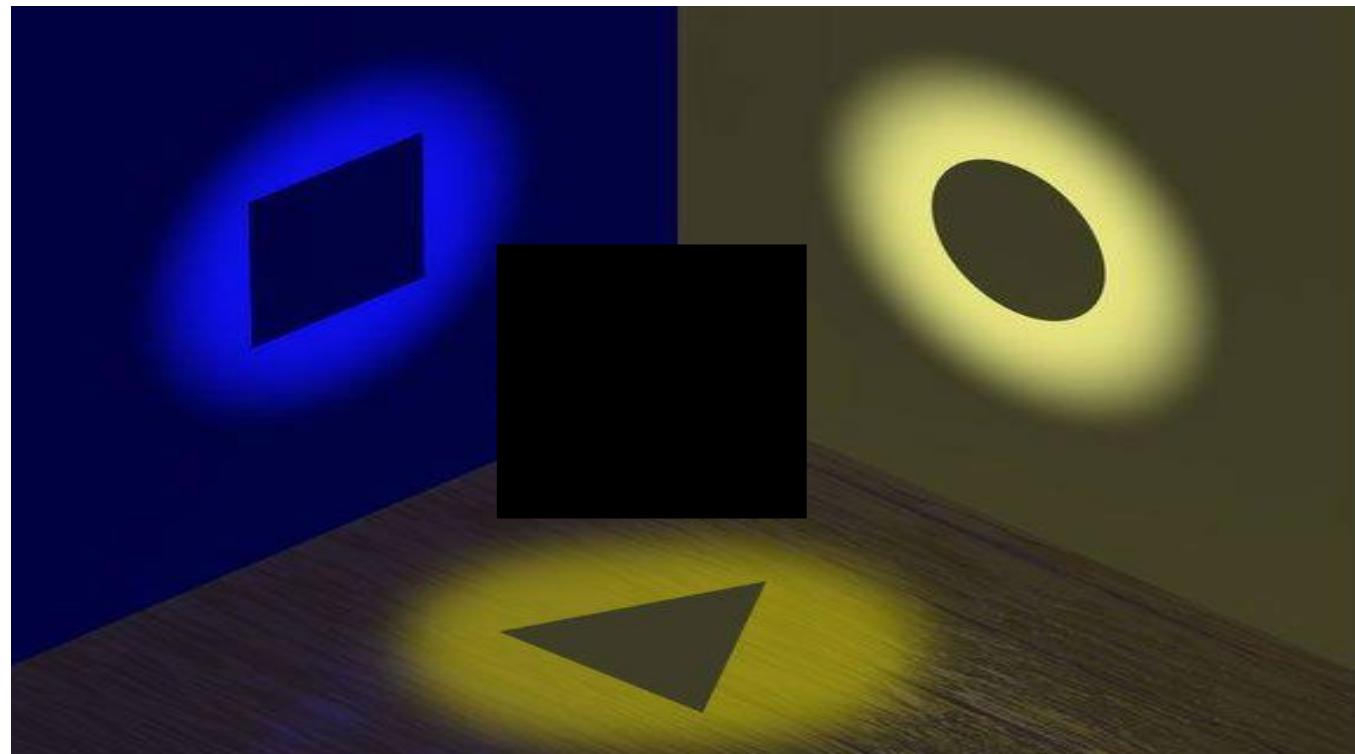
# Constructivism and Reality

## The Scientific Perspective

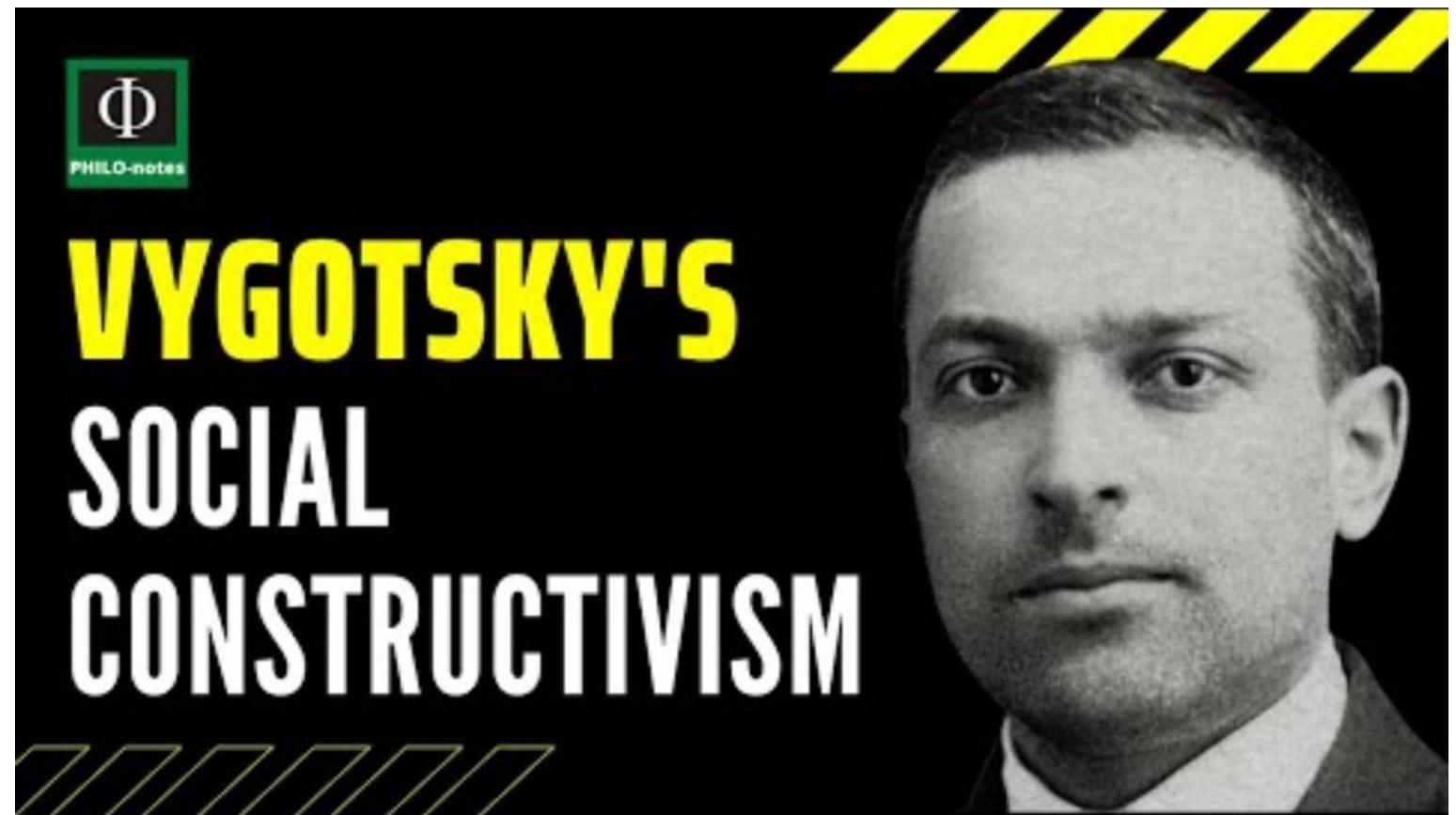
- Science is a social process that subjects models (composed of theory and observation) to testing and confirmation
- Popper and the logic of falsification
- Van Fraassen and constructive empiricism

# Radical Constructivism

- Even if there is an objective reality, it is beyond our reach.



# Social Cultural Learning



# Two Views of Theory

## Critique of Traditional Theory

- The natural sciences attempt to descriptively mirror a given set of facts or establish law-like generalizations
- However, traditional theories fail to analyze the broader social context in which they are embedded

Quoted from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-theory/#CritTheoVersTradTheo>

# Two Views of Theory

## Critical Theory

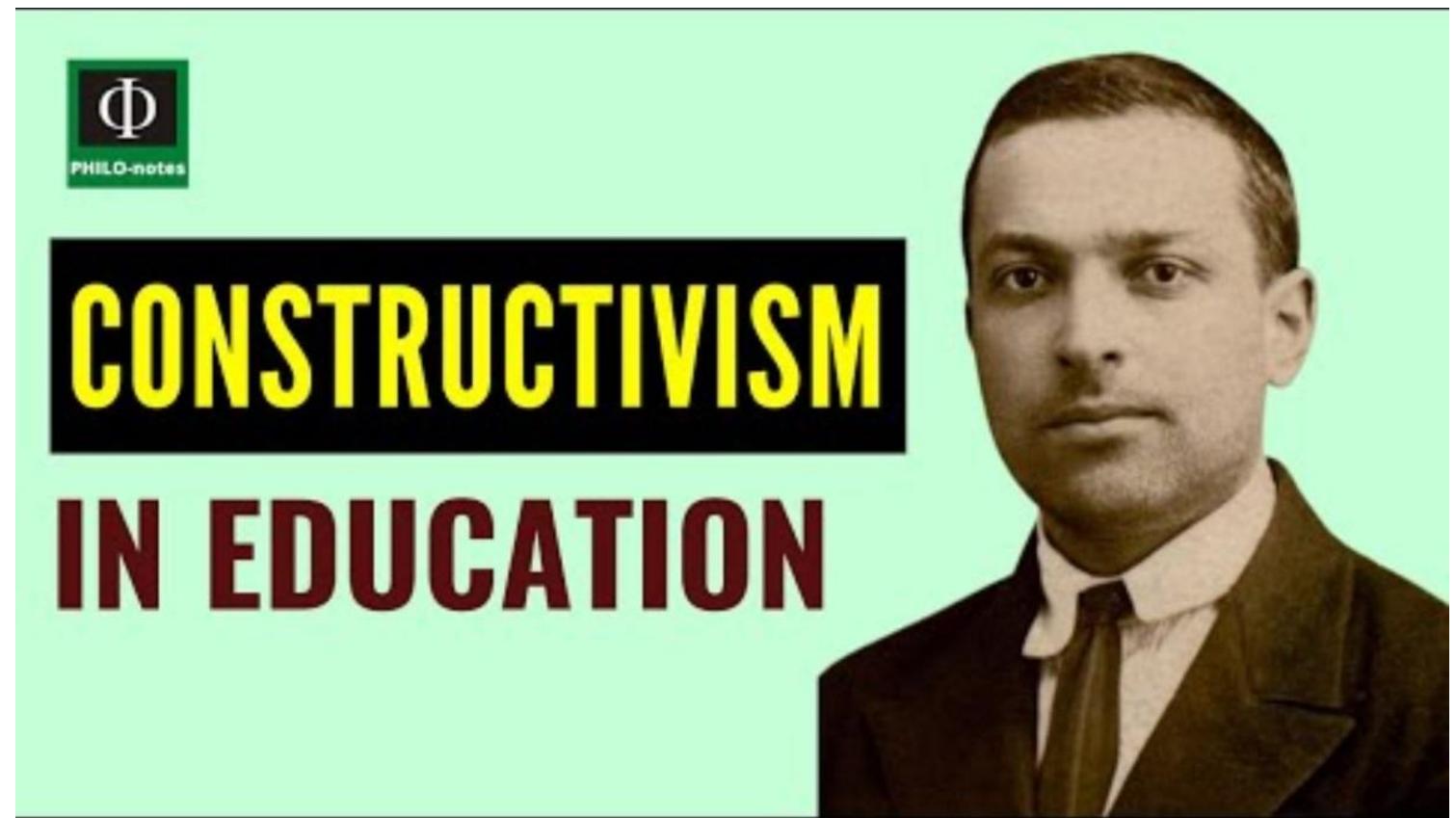
- Reflects on the context of its own origins and aims to be a transformative force within that context.
- Aims to find insights into the forces of domination operating within society in a way that can inform practical action and stimulate change

Quoted from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-theory/#CritTheoVersTradTheo>

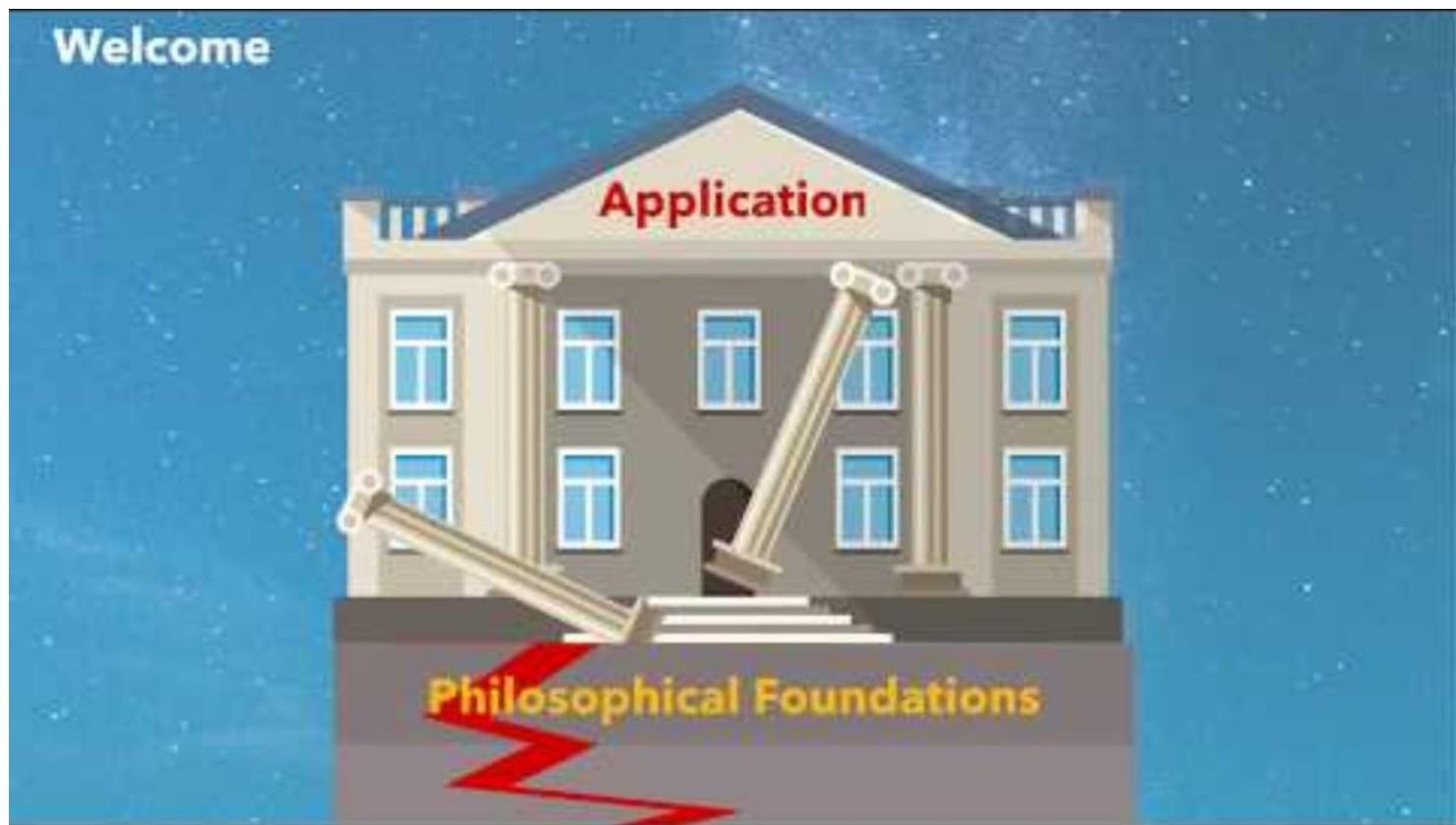
# Constructivism and the Classroom

- Teachers are not instructors so much as facilitators
- Need to learn about students in order to facilitate experiences
- Shared authority and responsibility for learning
- Focus on interaction, especially in small groups

# Constructivism and the Classroom



# Criticisms of Constructivism



# Constructivism Redux

- Do our experiences tell us how or why something works?
- Knowledge can't be transmitted through language?
- The potential for novices to uncritically digest false knowledge?
- The assumption that truth will prevail is especially dubious in constructivist classrooms?

# Constructivism and Learning Redux

- Is all knowledge is subjective we can't differentiate between science and pseudoscience?
- The problem of peer pressure
- The phenomenon of cognitive load

Stephen Downes

<https://www.downes.ca>

