



Experimental Learning: Need for Changing World

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Abstract

Teaching through experience is stimulating and challenging to both teacher and children. Knowledge is socially constructed and based on experiences. This knowledge should be organized in real-life experiences that provide a context for the information. Experiential learning involves learning from experience. According to Kolb, this type of learning can be defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Experiential learning is a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values. This article describes meaning, need, importance and taxonomy of experiential learning. This paper also informs about steps of experiential model. It will be of immense utility to teachers, student teachers and educationists.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching through experience is stimulating and challenging to both teacher and children. Interest heightens, and discipline problems are usually far less frequent as a result. Experiential learning as a method implies far more than the possibility of learning by experience. Knowledge is socially constructed and based on experiences. This knowledge should be organized in real-life experiences that provide a context for the information. The teacher's role is to organize this content and to facilitate the actual experiences. The experiences are based on the capabilities and readiness of the learners. The quality of the experience is the primary component of the theory. Upon completion of the experience, learners have the knowledge and ability to apply it to differing situations. Thus, they have

created new knowledge and are at a different level of readiness for continued acquisition and construction of new knowledge. (<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED481922>)

Experiential learning is also referred as experiential teaching, or experiential training and development, or experiential activities, and other variations of these terms. Experiential learning differs from conventional teaching in several important aspects. It stresses giving the children a multiplicity of experiences, rather than instructing them by lecturing or reading. It involves stimulating them to thought and action. It emphasizes learning and activities which are relevant to the child's life.

Experiential learning focuses on the learning process for the individual. It is often used synonymously with the phrase experiential education; however, while experiential learning considers the individual learning process, experiential education should be considered a broader philosophy of education. As such, it is concerned with issues such as the relationship of teacher and student, as well as broader issues of educational structure and objectives. An example of experiential learning is going to the garden and learning through observation and interaction with the plants, as opposed to reading about plants from a book. Thus, one makes discoveries and experiments with knowledge firsthand, instead of hearing or reading about others' experiences. Experiential learning differs from conventional teaching.

Differences between experiential learning and conventional training and teaching might be represented simply as:

conventional training	experiential learning
training-centred/focused – theoretical	learner-centred/focused – really doing it
prescribed fixed design and content	flexible open possibilities
for external needs (organization, exams, etc)	for internal growth and discovery
transfers/explains knowledge/skills	Develops knowledge/skills/emotions via experience
fixed structured delivery/facilitation	not delivered, minimal facilitation, unstructured

timebound measurable components	not timebound, more difficult to measure
suitable for groups and fixed outcomes	individually directed, flexible outcomes
examples: powerpoint presentations, chalk-and-talk classes, reading, attending lectures, exam study, observation, planning and hypothesizing, theoretical work,	examples: learning a physical activity, games and exercises, drama and role-play which becomes real, actually doing the job or task, 'outward bound' activities, teaching others, hobbies, pastimes, passion.

Concept of Experiential Learning: -

Various terms have been used to label the process of learning from experience. John Dewey (Dewey and Dewey 1915) discussed “learning by doing,” while Wolfe and Byrne (1975) used the term “experienced-based learning.” The term “trial and error” learning is used to explain inductive learning processes. The AACSB Task Force (1986) used the term “applied experiential learning,” (<http://www.wmich.edu/casp/servicelearning/files/>)

Experiential learning involves learning from experience. The theory was proposed by psychologist [David Kolb](#) who was influenced by the work of other theorists including [John Dewey](#), [Kurt Lewin](#), and [Jean Piaget](#). According to Kolb, this type of learning can be defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming experience.” (<http://psychology.about.com/od/educationalpsychology/a/experiential-learning.htm>)

Experiential learning is a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values” Experiential learning is also referred to as learning through action, learning by doing, learning through experience, and learning through discovery and exploration, all which are clearly defined by these well – known maxims I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand. ~ Confucius, 450 BC
Tell me and I forget, Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I will learn. ~ Benjamin Franklin , 1750. There is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education. ~ John Dewey, 1938.

Experiential learning where students are involved in learning content in which they have a personal interest, need, or want. Learning through experience is not a new concept for the college classroom.

(http://www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/guide/strategies/experiential_learning.pdf)

Experiential learning task structure proposed by Wolfe and Byrne (1975). They state that experientially-based approaches involve four phases: design, conduct, evaluation, and feedback.

Design: -This phase involves the upfront efforts by the instructor to set the stage for the experience. This phase included the specifications of learning objectives, the production or selection of activities for participants, the identification of factors affecting student learning, and the creation of a scheme for implementation.

Conduct: - This phase involves maintaining and controlling the design. The design phase may include the creation of a timetable for the experience, but the conduct phase involves the altering of the original timetable and activities to sustain a favorable learning environment. The important implication of this phase is that the experience is a structured and closely-monitored one.

Evaluation: - Evaluation is conducted by the instructor. But the emphasis here is on the provision of opportunities for students to evaluate the experience. Participants should be able to articulate and demonstrate specific learning gained from the design and conduct of the experience.

Feedback: - Feedback should be an almost continuous process from the pre-experience introduction through the final debriefing. Included is the monitoring of the process by the instructor in order to foster positive aspects and eliminate those features that are negative.

Need of Experiential Learning: -

There are good reasons why we should be supporting and encouraging it:

- Because, if something goes well, we want to repeat it.
- Because, if something goes wrong, we want to avoid it happening again.

Children like to attend the modern school where they can learn happily. Time is changing fast. But the school atmosphere is not changing with that speed, because of many

reasons. E.g. teacher's attitude, teaching methodology, curriculum, government's rules regulations etc. Some of the above reasons are out of the control of teachers, but the teacher's attitude and teaching methodology are within the control of teachers. So teacher should take interest in the students. He should take efforts for students to learn new things. He should give motivation to the students. He should be sure there is some work for each child, at all times. He should praise their work and display it as often as possible. Teaching through experiences is stimulating though it is challenging to teacher and children. It is teacher's task to offer to student's specific situations, and specific stimuli, and it is the reactions to these stimuli which make learning experiential.

Now a days discipline problems come from a number of causes, of which boredom may be considered. A bored child often becomes disruptive. We can do a great deal to make education more effective by giving meaningful experiences. Students have a huge amount of physical energy. They cannot sit still doing nothing. If you get them interested, you can easily channel this energy into worthwhile activities. Student uses their energies constructively if they get proper experiences. The experiential leaning program involves using a great many activities and projects. Through experiential learning teacher can improve student's behavior, which will be helpful to them in their future life. It will be also helpful to become the democratic citizen of India.

Importance of Experiential Learning: -

Students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting. Experiential learning encompasses a variety of activities including internships, service learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, and other creative and professional work experiences. Well-planned, supervised and assessed experiential learning programs can stimulate academic inquiry by promoting interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, career development, cultural awareness, leadership, and other professional and intellectual skills.

Learning that is considered "experiential" contain all the following elements:

1. Reflection, critical analysis and synthesis

2. Opportunities for students to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results
3. Opportunities for students to engage intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, or physically
4. A designed learning experience that includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes
5. Experiential learning is determined and controlled by the individual for the purpose of achieving personal development and growth.

Experiential learning also brings into play the concept of [multiple intelligences](#). Experiential learning, especially used at the beginning of a person's new phase of learning, can help to provide a positive emotional platform which will respond positively and confidently to future learning, even for areas of learning which initially would have been considered uncomfortable or unnecessary.

According to [David A. Kolb](#), an American educational theorist, knowledge is continuously gained through both personal and environmental experiences. He states that in order to gain genuine knowledge from an experience, certain abilities are required:

- The learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience;
- The learner must be able to reflect on the experience;
- The learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience; and
- The learner must possess decision making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experiential_learning

Taxonomy of Experiential Learning: -

No	Taxonomic Level	Description	Role of Preceptor
1	Exposure	The student will have observed	Motivator
2	Participation	The student now shows the ability to participate.	Catalyst
3	Identification	Seeks and applies new knowledge and research findings, demonstrates ability to use problem solving skills, critical analysis	Moderator
4	Internalization	Shows ability to perform manipulative skills, operationalises communication	Sustainer
5	Dissemination	Advises others, shows ability to teach junior colleagues identifies personal management style Critical analysis, evaluation and decision-making skills demonstrated.	Evaluator

The experiential learning model by Kolb (1984) : -

1. Participant(s) experience the activity–perform or do it.
2. Participant(s) share the experience by describing what happened.
3. Participant(s) process the experience to determine what was most important and identify common themes.
4. Participant(s) generalize from the experience and relate it to their daily lives.
5. Participant(s) apply what they learned to a new situation.

Five Steps of the Experiential Learning Model: -

1. Experience: - The model begins with an experience. Action! This immediately focuses the attention on the learner rather than the teacher. The leader should provide guidance throughout the experience, but not be directive. The goal is for the students to “experience”. Many types of activities can be used to provide a learning experience.

Processing the Experience: - – Debriefing the experience is what moves an experience from an activity to a learning experience. The primary purpose of processing the experience is to

allow participants the opportunity to integrate their learning and provide a sense of closure or completeness to their experience. The leader can assist in this process by:

1. Setting aside enough time to reflect on the experience(s).
2. Asking the right questions.
3. Listening to the youth carefully.
4. Planning appropriate opportunities to help youth reflect on their experiences.
5. Supporting each youth's unique learning.

The questions asked to walk through the experiential process are critical. Leaders need to prepare the questions they will use to process the experience ahead of time.

2. Share: - - Sharing is accomplished by asking the group or individuals to reflect upon what they did. Ask questions that help them think about:

- What they did.
- What they saw; felt; heard; smelled, tasted; etc.
- What part of the experience was the most difficult and what was the easiest for them.

This step should generate information leading to the process step.

3. Process: - In this step, the questions and discussion focus on the process of the experience or activity. Participants are asked to think about how the experience was conducted or how the activity was performed. Questions should lead youth to think about:

- What procedures or steps they used in doing the activity.
- What problems or issues came up as they did the activity.
- How they dealt with these problems.

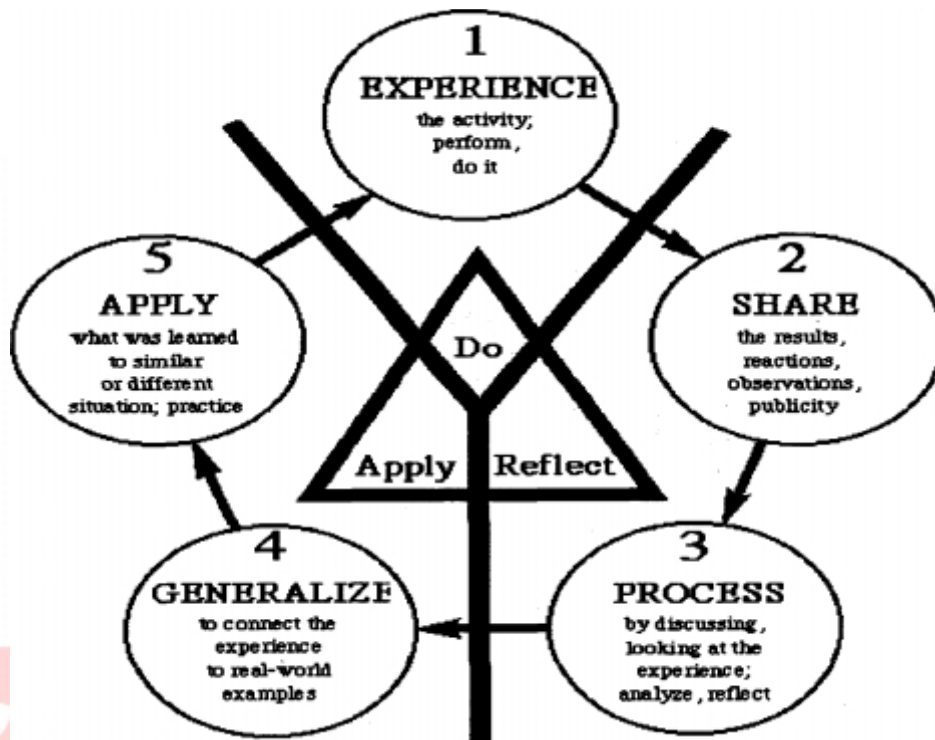
4. Generalize : - In this step, the discussion becomes more personal and focuses on what the experience meant to the participant and what was learned from it. Questions should lead to determine:

- What they learned about (the activity objective) from the experience.
- How this learning relates to other things they have been learning.
- What similar experiences they have had (with subject matter)

5. Apply: -- This final step in the Experiential Learning model directs to apply what they learned to their lives. They are asked to think about how the learning from this experience could be used at another time or under other conditions. They are led to think about how what they have learned might change the way they approach a similar task. Questions are structured to address:

- How what they learned relates to other parts of their lives.
- How they can use what they learned.
- How they can apply what they learned to future situations.

(http://florida4h.org/clubs/files/101.10_Using_Experiential_Learning_Model.pdf)



Concluding Remark: -

Experiential learning means that the child lives and breathes education. No longer is he confined to a little seat and desk or a single school building. Now the whole world becomes his classroom. Let us nurture his creative abilities, so that he and his fellow students may enjoy to the fullest possible measure the fruits of his intellectual powers.

References

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