



Learning Experiences in School Based Subject

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Abstract

Learning is continuous & lifelong process. To modify or to change or to innovate the behavior, the learning experiences are essential. The goal of education is all round development of the child .To achieve this goal; learning is most important process. Learning leads to positive change in behavior. Learning occurs when child has an experience. The better understanding, acquiring knowledge, abilities, skills & attitude are essential things in the process of learning. In traditional school environment, majority teachers give factual information about every subject. Only imparting such information does not lead to understanding of particular topic in any subject. Learning experiences can be classified as direct & indirect experiences. Direct experiences refer to learning activity, which involves firsthand experience, while indirect experience doesn't include firsthand experience. In practical learning situations, there is always a combination of both the experiences.

While selecting any learning experience, teacher must see that it leads to the attainment of given educational objectives. Learning experiences are not merely confined to the class room, but they can be developed outside of the classroom. Home, society, mass media, playground etc are some of the major centers of learning experiences. Subjects like science, mathematics, geography are full of abstract concepts. For understanding these concepts, teacher can give direct or indirect experiences. Teacher can organize field trips, visits etc. For teaching subjects like languages, history teacher can have conversation, storytelling etc. In this edge of information & technology, teacher can use technology such computer multimedia programs to give indirect experiences effective use of such technology will lead towards enhancement of knowledge & enrichment of learning experiences.

Introduction –

“Education is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience , which adds to the meaning of experience, & which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experiences.” - John Dewey

Education refers to any act or experience that has a formative effect on the personality of an individual. Education is often regarded as synonymous with learning as he acquired experience of any sort – intellectual, emotional or sensor motor. Education is a product of experience. It is the process by which & through which the experience of race, i.e. Knowledge, skills & attitudes are transmitted to the members of the community. Life involves a constant & contiguous modification of the experiences. Learning helps a person to modify his behavior through experience.

All of us know that Learning is a continuous and lifelong process. Every human being learns anything through experiences. No doubt that human beings & animals are born with some inborn capacities or abilities but to modify or to change the behavior or to innovate the behavior learning is essential. For learning experience is an essential thing. Before we discuss the importance of learning experiences, let us try to understand the nature of learning process.

Concept of learning,

According to skinner, “Learning is not acquiring knowledge or skill by mere mechanical repetition. It is a process in which the learner organizes different elements & experiences to reach a particular goal”

According to dictionary of education “Learning means – change in response or behavior such as innovation, elimination or modification of responses, involving some degree of performance caused by partly or wholly by experience.”

Learning means modifying & changing one’s behavior to achieve a goal. Learning means development of a method for dealing a given problem. In the process of learning, a child acquires new information & according to it modifies the behavior through experiences. The goal of education is all round development of a child. To achieve this goal, one has to go through the process of learning. Learning leads to the positive change in the behavior.

Nature of learning –

- Learning is the modification of behavior.
- Learning creates interest to know new things.
- Learning is problem solving.
- Learning is a matter of habit.

- Learning is not only knowledge about subject but also understanding of the subject.
- Learning occurs in both formal & informal situations.
- Learning is caused partially or wholly by experience or training.

Concept of Learning Experience –

Learning occurs when the child has an experience that is when he reacts to the situation in which he finds himself. Learning takes place by interaction between the situation & the learner, when any situation acts upon the learner, the learner reacts, he modifies his behavior & this interaction results in learning. Experiencing is simply seeing, hearing, filling, testing, smelling & so on. The individual reacts to these experiences & learning takes place. We learn because things happen to us & we do something in turn. It is only through experience that we learn. Learning will not take place in the absence of any experiences. Every moment a child is learning because of varied experiences he is getting in life. The kind of learning experiences decides the quality of learning.

Most educators understand the important role experience plays in the learning process. A fun learning environment, with plenty of laughter and respect for the learner's abilities, also fosters an effective experiential learning environment. It is vital that the individual is encouraged to directly involve themselves in the experience, in order that they gain a better understanding of the new knowledge and retain the information for a longer time. As stated by the ancient Chinese philosopher, Confucius, "tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand."

In the traditional school environment, majority teachers give factual information about every subject. Teachers want to complete the syllabus with help of text books. The child memorizes the information by rote. Learning becomes only memorization & factual information becomes the learning product. But learning does not mean only memorization. It does not lead to understanding of a particular topic in any subject. For better understanding, for acquiring knowledge, abilities skills & attitude, experience is the most essential thing in the process of learning. Children learn by thinking, feeling & doing. Learning results from the active participation of the pupil to the stimulus situation which the teacher creates in the class.

According to learning consultants, experiential learning is about creating an experience where learning can be facilitated. How do you create a well-crafted learning experience? The key lies in the facilitator and how he or she facilitates the learning process. An excellent facilitator believes in the creed: "You teach some by what you say, teach more by what you do, but most of all, you teach most by who you are." And while it is the learner's experience that is most important to the learning process, it is also important not to forget the wealth of experience a good facilitator also brings to the situation.

An effective experiential facilitator is one who is passionate about his or her work and is able to immerse participants totally in the learning situation, allowing them to gain new knowledge from their peers and the environment created. These facilitators stimulate the imagination, keeping participants hooked on the experience.

Creating an experiential learning environment can be challenging for educators; who have been taught through traditional classroom techniques. Identifying activities that allow learners to understand and absorb concepts can be a new and daunting experience. In traditional classrooms where lectures with PowerPoint slide sets are standard, educators need to be creative to engage students, get them up out of their chairs, involved in an experience. However, by providing direct experience in addition to standard written and visual materials, learners with different types of learning styles and strengths can be accommodated.

Learning experience is not a part of the syllabus nor is it unit nor the traditional lesson plan or activity. It is the interaction of the learner with the situation created by the teacher. All these situations help to modify the behavior of the pupil. Learning experiences can be classified into two broad categories – Direct experiences and Indirect experiences. Direct experience refers to learning activity that involves firsthand experience with various objects or symbols. It includes what is commonly referred to as perceptual learning. Perceptual learning applies to experiences dependent upon seeing, hearing, testing, smelling, feeling, handling & manipulating things in different ways. Indirect type of experience is a experience through which we acquire the learning outcome without firsthand experience. It makes use of direct experience of others. These experiences include such activities as reading, looking at pictures, listening to lectures & discussions& so forth.

Such learning activities are very important since it is impossible for us to have all firsthand experiences. We must keep in mind that the ability of the learner to profit by the experiences of the others depends upon the extent & adequacy of his previous or firsthand direct experience.

To be effective learners we must (1) perceive information, (2) reflect on how it will impact some aspect of our life, (3) compare how it fits into our own experiences, and (4) think about how this information offers new ways for us to act. Learning requires more than seeing, hearing, moving, or touching to learn. We integrate what we sense and think with what we feel and how we behave.

Without that integration, we're just passive participants and passive learning alone doesn't engage our higher brain functions or stimulate our senses to the point where we integrate our lessons into our existing schemes. We must do something with our knowledge.

Conclusion –

Teaching by 'pouring in' refers to a medieval belief that we could teach people by drilling holes in the human head and, with a funnel, pour information into the brain. Though we now snicker at that model, we use equally absurd methods today. As long as professors model passive learning to future teachers as acceptable and useful, instructors will be unprepared and unwilling to use other techniques such as experiential learning.

Likewise, because many of us haven't seen other techniques, we don't know what we're missing. Active learning results in longer-term recall, synthesis, and problem-solving skills than learning by hearing, reading, or watching. Western education needs to move from a learning-by-telling model and even learning-by-observing (as in the case-method) to a learning-by-doing model. We must move from passivity to activity. We must learn to extrapolate from our experiences and see how to apply what we've done to new instances.

In schools, the main emphasis is on developing the abilities related to cognitive domain rather than development of abilities related to affective & psycho motor domain. The formation of attitudes, appreciations, interests, ideals & habits of behavior is being neglected in school education. Teachers should therefore try to arrange learning experiences which can develop abilities of these domains. Teacher should try inculcating values to build the character of the student, with help of school based subjects.

Today we are living in such a knowledge based society & knowledge based global world, where knowledge is a great power, economy & strength of an individual & asset of a nation. The Indian education commission (1964-66) observes that education must serve as powerful instrument of social, economic & cultural transformation, necessary for the realization of the national goals. To achieve these national goals & to meet three explosions, i.e. population, knowledge & education explosions, & to create a good learning environment, the use of technology is essential. Teachers can make effective use of this technology in giving direct & indirect experiences to the students.

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