



## Concept of Experiential Learning and its Importance in Present Education System

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### ABSTRACT:

The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our constitution as per National Policy (2020). The society is also clamoring for an education that teaches students the competencies they need for real-world success and for bridging the gulf between theory and practice. Although we can simulate the real world in the classroom and laboratory, authentic experiential learning creates an invaluable opportunity to prepare students for a profession or career or discover how the discipline creates evidence to contribute to its body of knowledge. Present paper is designed to throw light on the conceptualized knowledge of experiential learning and its importance in present education system. Researcher has also focused on the benefits of experiential learning strategies in classroom over the traditional learning.

Key Words: Experiential Learning

### INTRODUCTION

“A good quality education is one that provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being.” (VVOB) After completing a certain level of education, children must have developed a minimum standard of skills. Quality education requires a results-oriented approach. A good education institution is one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered, and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. Attaining these qualities must be the goal of every educational institution. However, at the same time, there must also be seamless integration and coordination across institutions and across all stages of education. It is rather needed to be improved and relevant.

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

At the heart of all learning is the way we process our experiences, especially our critical reflections on our experiences. Now a day's experiential education considered as a key approach to student-centered learning for a sustainable future.

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” (Association for Experiential Education). Experiential learning is also referred to as learning through action, learning by doing, learning through experience, and learning through discovery and exploration.

According to **Kolb** (1984) learning “The process of knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”. Kolb explains that the experiential learning mindset consists of four steps:

**Concrete Experiment** (students are tasked and completed);

**Reflective Observation** (students discuss it);

**Abstract Conceptualization** (reflection of conclusions on each cycle about the level of achievement of success criteria);

**Active Experimentation** (Applying knowledge in new situation).

According to **Lewis and Williams** (1994) Experiential learning means learning by doing or learning from experience. There are two main categories of experiential learning: field-based experience and classroom-based learning. Field-based experience includes practicum, internships, and service learning.

Experience-based learning in the classroom can take many forms, including role playing, games, simulations, case studies, presentations, and various types of group work.

In the process of learning a student choosing to solve problems will be different from other students, and what a student takes from an experience will be different from the others. In other words “learners play an important role in assessing their own learning” (Wurdinger, 2005). To gain success in experiential learning students are given examples of simple exercises and led through discussions that make them familiar with the concepts, then move from basic to more complex forms.

**Sullivan and Rosin (2008)** argue that the mission for higher education should be to bridge the gap between theory and practice

**Bass (2012)** suggests that to do this, the educational environment needs to intentionally create rich connections between the formal and experiential curriculums.

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## CHARACTERISTICS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Instructors should create a safe space for students to be able to perform analysis, exploration, and working on their own self-discovery process; Activities should build students' ability to see relationships in complex systems and find ways to work within them.

Students should be able to reflect on learning, and gain insight about themselves and their interactions with the learning environment. Experiential Learning Assessment to confirm on the learning and growth that has and is occurring. Furthermore, the use of appropriate assessment methods produces a reflective process that ensures continued growth after specific learning is completed. Therefore, it is necessary to design a unique assessment method to measure success in both process and product (Wurdinger 2005).

**Association for Experiential Education (2007-2014)** has given the following characteristics of Experiential Learning.

1. Experiences are carefully chosen for their learning potential as these provide opportunities to the students to practice and deepen emergent skills, encounter novelty under unpredictable situations which support the new learning as well as help to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes.
2. Throughout the experiential learning process, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, and constructing meaning, and is ready to do inventiveness, make decisions and be accountable for results.
3. Reflection on learning during and after one’s experiences is an integral component of the learning process. This reflection leads to analysis, critical thinking, and synthesis (Schon; Boud; Cohen; & Walker; 1993).
4. Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, and/or physically, which produces a perception that the learning task is authentic.
5. Learner developed and nurtured the relationships with the world at large.

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## CORE PRACTICES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

- The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and collaborator.
- Facilitator (Teacher) select suitable experiences or problems for students
- Facilitator (Teacher) ensures availability of appropriate resource, frame boundaries, facilitate the learning process and support learners by ensuring physical and emotional safety.
- The task teachers and learners do together is infused from the beginning with learner choice and revision.
- The academic integrity of the work, teachers and learners to do work together is clear.
- The work is characterized by active learning.
- Peer teaching, small group work, and teamwork are all essential features of classroom.

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## IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STRATEGIES IN PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM:

Keeping the requirement of present real society, experiential learning strategies are discharging an important role in present education system in various ways:

- Students learning become more powerful.
- The knowledge of students get deeper due to repeated experience followed by immediate reflection
- focused on development of skills through practice and reflection,

- support the construction of new understandings when placed in unknown situation,
- support in bringing their learning back to the classroom.
- student learning are best supported by experiential learning approach.

**Ambrose et.al., (2010)** stated that in experiential learning strategies students are engaged in learning experience. Opportunities for practice and feedback enhance the relevance of learning for them leading towards increase in motivation to learn content as well as skills. Through experiential learning, students are confronted with unfamiliar situations and tasks in a real-world context. To complete these tasks, students need to figure out what they know, what they do not know, and how to learn it. In experiential learning strategies students reflect on their prior knowledge and strengthen their knowledge through reflection; transfer their previous learning to new contexts; frame generalizations; master new concepts, principles, and skills. (Linn et al.; 2004). Ultimately, these skills create students who become life-long learners.

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## CONCLUSION

Experiential learning acknowledges that the learning through experience supports students in formulating and solving problems in different ways in unpredictable situation. Along with this students like to engage in the learning when they found value in their learning, desired outcomes, believe to be successful and perceive supportive environment. So it is need of the hour that education system should redesign its pedagogical approach not for pre service teachers but It is suggested that even in-service teachers should be given orientation/refresher course on latest pedagogical approach like Experiential Learning strategies to make teaching-learning more meaningful, interesting and effective.

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