

THE RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH IN THE LEARNERS' EDUCATION

by:

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There is nothing more in-depth, profound, and genuine than learning out of experience or learning through experiences. Experience-based learning is also termed as experiential learning. It is defined as learning based from the meanings and lessons perceived and understood out of relevant experiences. In order to arrive at a more effective experiential learning, the learners' experiences must be concrete, authentic, practical, and realistic. It is through real-life experiences that the learners can directly and practically relate to the essence of experience-based instruction and education. This supports the idea of David Kolb who was enthused by the work of other educational psychologists including Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin, and John Dewey.

According to Kolb (cited in Cherry, 2020), there is a transformation that occurs with the students when they are able to understand the basic notions of applying their knowledge in real-life situations. This transformation also allows them to amplify the opportunities they make by changing their weaknesses into strengths. For example, if a student wants to learn how to cook a certain dish, the opportunity rests in the classroom and there is a teacher to supervise. The student, after watching the teacher perform the procedure, must do the practicum to instill the authenticity of the scenario. Upon constant practice, the learner becomes esteemed enough to do the cooking at home.

These are all evident and reflected in the concepts and principles of the Experiential Learning Theory. This primarily highlights the principle of learning by action. However, this theory stresses that before an individual arrives at a concrete learning by doing, he or she must first have a concrete experience, learn to reflect on that

experience, draw conclusions and abstraction of concepts, then proceed to purposeful actions. It therefore promotes the combination of reflective thinking and purposeful action to come up with meaningful learning by doing or learning by experiences.

Thus, the experiential learning approach to instruction requires a more activity-centered and task-based process of teaching and learning. This approach is also evidently more student-centered, focusing on learners' concrete experiences, reflection, abstraction and task execution and performance. The experiential learning approach is therefore suitable to performance-based learning tasks and outcome-based, activity-oriented and mobilizing teaching-learning tasks and engagement.

We cannot deny the fact that even the renowned Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, supports this endeavor and principle in the classroom as he coined the term "Problem-Posing Education" (1970) stating that all teachers must be the facilitators and provide enough time for the learners to do most of the activities in the classroom. If the teacher will only be spoon-feeding, there is no meaningful application of their learning. There has to be a season when students must shine in their own ways, indeed with guidance and supervision. The relevance of learning by doing makes the young people prepared for what is to come in real life; and who knows how further can they go in venturing their paths towards their future.

For our part, we should not create another stigma that learning must suffer even in this global crisis.

References:

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