

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND THE TEACHING OF ARALING PANLIPUNAN

by:

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As John Dewey emphasized, students learn best when they are doing something; thus, learning by doing is the core principle of experiential learning as an instructional theory and approach. Literally, when students become the real actors in the learning process by performing, acting, and/or manipulating, they can fully maximize their own learning paces.

In context, experiential learning emphasizes the application of knowledge manifested through the following: connecting learning with real-life experiences, active learning, motivation, critical and reflective thinking, and inventing and resolving problems; incorporating learning progress; and applying concepts learned to real-life contexts and first-hand experiences, to acquire knowledge, skills, and experiences.

To effectively implement experiential learning, teachers need to address obstructive practices, redirect teacher-directive styles, and introduce reforms on the quality of educational experiences, both online and face-to-face. With such subtle changes in the paces of instruction, learners become more engaged in the process.

More so, the Araling Panlipunan curriculum also emphasizes the use of experiential learning to maximize the learning experiences provided to 21st-century learners. Through such experiences, learners can understand better the situations, people, and events being analyzed either in Philippine, Asian, or world contexts. Learning Araling Panlipunan at the secondary level entails a lot of analysis and a deeper understanding of the courses of events that happened in history and in society at large,

thus, providing meaningful learning experiences to the learners is quite challenging, to say the least.

In promoting further experiential learning as an instructional theory and approach, teachers must see to it that learners are involved in the process; that, they are provided with opportunities to engage and establish connections with the activities or tasks given to them. Such first-hand experiences enable them to reflect and establish deeper connections, making them real actors in the learning process. It also amplifies the fact that learners are capable of learning on their own and recalibrating their understanding based on their experiences.

Indeed, learners can actualize their full potential through direct experiences and focused reflections reinforced by experiential learning opportunities provided to them.

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