THE POWER OF 'LEARNING BY DOING' IN EDUCATION

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Have you ever noticed that you can easily recall the time you rode a bike for the first time, and actually note how to do it again, yet you struggle to remember the details of a lecture you heard just last week? This is because we learn more when we actively do, not just when we passively listen.

"Learning by doing" is an educational approach that promotes hands-on practice to enhance understanding and retention. As the phrase itself suggests, it involves actively engaging in tasks to learn more effectively and quickly — students will learn through being involved in the process. This method, proposed by American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey, promotes the importance of practical experience in the learning process (Justas, 2022). Additionally, experiential learning is grounded in several influential educational theories, including John Dewey's educational philosophy, David Kolb's experiential learning theory, Jean Piaget's constructivist theory, and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Efectio, 2023). These theories all agree on the idea that learning is most effective when it involves active participation in real-world experiences and collaborative learning, followed by thoughtful reflection and the construction of meaning from those experiences.

Learning by doing involves a cyclical process that can be broken down into four key phases: experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimenting (SMOWLTech, 2022). This method ensures that learners engage deeply with the material and solidify their understanding through practical application. This might involve designing new experiments or tackling different problems using their developed concepts. This

approach includes methods such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, challenge-based learning, and cooperative learning, all of which position students as active participants in their education.

To integrate learning by doing into formal education, several strategies can be employed. Curricula should include hands-on learning opportunities like lab experiments, field trips, internships, and project-based assignments. Teachers should be trained to guide students through the phases of hands-on learning, creating environments that encourage observation, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation.

Assessment methods should go beyond traditional exams and quizzes, incorporating portfolios, project presentations, and reflective journals so that the learners themselves can use these assessments as part of their learning process. Schools should be equipped to support hands-on activities with resources like science labs, art studios, or technology workshops. While this is often used in science or technical fields, learning by doing should also be integrated across various subjects. For example, in history classes, students could engage in role-playing historical events or conducting research projects that require primary source analysis (Bruce & Bloch, 2012).

When experiential learning is integrated into formal education, students have a better point of view of the world because they experienced it themselves. They develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills that are essential for success in modern careers. They do not just learn in theory – but in practice. By providing practical experiences, schools can help students connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, preparing them for future challenges and opportunities.

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