

Professional Reflections

“The Benefit of Experiential Learning for Corporate and Academic Education”

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This is my personal reflection on the benefit of using Experiential Learning methodologies in corporate and academic education. This is a topic that is important to me as I deliver knowledge across both domains and I often reflect on the systems and dynamics which enable knowledge to be delivered in the most productive way at the ideal time for the optimal outcome with the greatest amount of efficiency for both the learner and instructor as well.

As an instructor and lecturer one of my core beliefs is in the importance of Experiential Learning. The theory of Experiential Learning began in the 1970s with David A. Kolb. According to Kolb (1970), Experiential Learning can be defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming the experience."

Experiential learning theory differs from cognitive and behavioral theories in that cognitive theories emphasize the role of mental processes while behavioral theories ignore the possible role of subjective experience in the learning process. The experiential theory proposed by Kolb takes a more holistic approach and emphasizes how experiences, including cognitions, environmental factors, and emotions, influence the learning process.

I was formally introduced to Experiential Learning through an article written in Wired magazine. The article shared a story of how a teacher from one of the poorest cities in Mexico was able to implement an Experiential Learning system in his classroom which resulted in his students scoring in the highest percentiles on national exams across Mexico. This was a substantial accomplishment considering the level of poverty and lack of resources facing these students and teacher alike.

As a result of reading the article I was inspired to use Experiential Learning in any learning experience I lead. It was after this transformation that I realized that Experiential Learning is equally applicable in both the Corporate and Academic world. I also found that as a result of incorporating Experiential Learning into my teaching that I am often able to use the same pedagogy across both domains with great success. As a result, it is my personal experience that Experiential Learning allows the learner to more easily access the knowledge and the instructor to more flexibly teach the content across a multitude of different environments, which results in a better overall experience for the teacher and more importantly the student as well.

References

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