

# ACHIEVING ALL - ROUND DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER TRAINEES THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Ms. Nikita Mehta<sup>1</sup> and Ms. Bhakti Gala<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to state the importance of experiential learning strategies that aim in transforming theory into practice. This paper outlines experiential learning as a pedagogy adopted by the SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education to train the trainees who have enrolled for programs to impact their future professional life. This paper also explains the benefits of experiential learning that helps trainees to empower themselves. The paper throws a light on how experiential learning is successfully delivered to the teacher trainees during the course.*

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## INTRODUCTION

*“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I will learn” stated Benjamin Franklin, 1750.*

Experiential Learning as the name suggests is the process of learning by doing, experience, discovery, and exploration. By engaging students in hands-on experiences and reflection, students can connect theories and knowledge learned in the classroom to real-world situations.

Experiential learning is an educational method that highlights both practical and personal experiences in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Students will be able to develop a passion for learning and a desire for knowledge by engaging in realistic experiences that allow them to learn what they need to know.

Experiential learning theory proposed by psychologist David Kolb emphasizes how experiences influence the learning process. Kolb defined experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming the experience." The present paper is an illustration of experiential learning as a method to achieve all - round development of teacher trainees at the SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education (SIES ICE) which is a renowned teacher training institute in Mumbai.

## THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

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<sup>1</sup> Faculty, SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education, Sion (W), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

<sup>2</sup> Faculty, SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education, Sion (W), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Experiential learning cycle allows participants to observe, review and reflect on their practices and critically reflect to link their experience to theory or previous experience. Experiential learning concretizes the learning process of both theory and practical, enhancing students understanding of concepts.

A four-stage learning cycle given by David Kolb

- Concrete Experience means a new experience or situation is encountered
- Reflective Observation of the new experience
- Abstract Conceptualisation is reflection that gives rise to a new idea
- Active or reflective experimentation is where the learner applies them to the world around them to see the results.

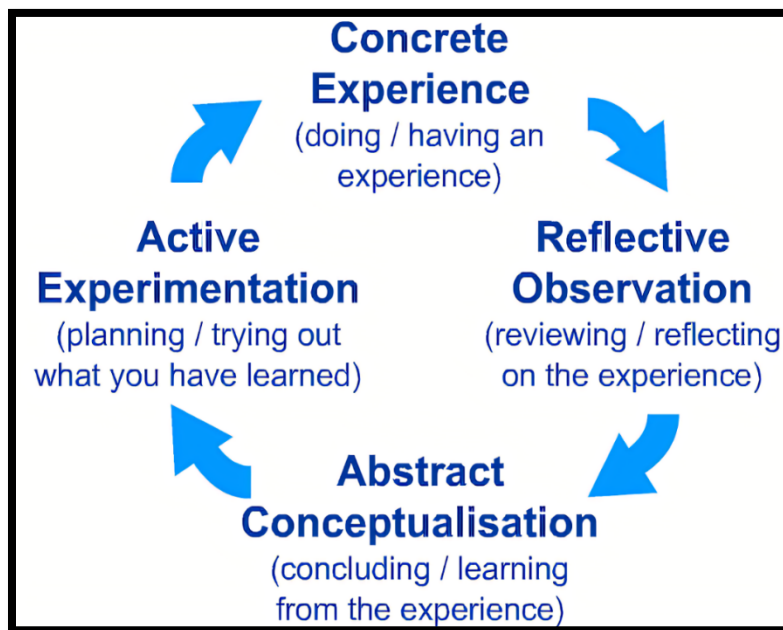


Fig. 1: [www.skillshub.com/what-are-kolbs-learning-styles/](http://www.skillshub.com/what-are-kolbs-learning-styles/)

According to Kolb, concrete experience provides information that serves as a basis for reflection. From reflection, we assimilate the information we gathered through a concrete experience and develop new theories about the world which we then actively or reflectively experiment with. Kolb also noted that people who are considered "watchers" prefer reflective observation, while those who are "doers" are more likely to engage in active experimentation.

Studies have shown that children who are taught by providing experiences retain information longer than those who are being traditionally taught by just giving the information. This helps the students to be motivated and enthusiastic about what is being learnt.

**Experiential learning activities that we offer for our teacher training students at the SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education:**

Experiential education is focused on learning through connection and collaboration, provides workforce skills required for the next decade. At the SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education, we truly believe in providing hands-on learning to the teacher trainees to bring out the best in them as they deal with the formative years of children. Experiential activities are planned to mould the trainees in a holistic manner, keeping in mind the skills, attitude and knowledge required for engaging with young learners. The following activities are adopted at our institute:

**a. Experiential activities for the self-development of the trainees**

- Workshop to bring out attitudinal change, develop sensitivity, professionalism in teachers, develop self-esteem, manage stress and time, developing creative writing in teachers to name a few

**b. Activities that help them learn about the field**

- Field trips are organized to various schools and NGOs
- Extensive internship is planned for teacher trainees, which helps them understand the nuances of a classroom teaching where they plan, execute lessons, and observe students
- Community outreach program are also arranged to sensitize trainees towards the society

**c. Experiences/activities that will help trainees to plan some interesting and child friendly activities for preschool and primary students**

- **Activities in the form of workshops:** Games for all round development of children, music and movement, non-fire cooking activity for preschoolers, sensorial training for young minds, engaging in teacher initiated and child directed activities, planning curriculum, devising assessment tools for children
- **Activities in the form of presentations:** Different presentations are conducted to help the trainees to be equipped with skills required by a preschool teacher like theme-based project presentation based on the principles given by John Dewey,

theme-based puppet show is conducted for students at SIES High School, festival presentation highlights the importance of each festival in our country. Presentation like planning an assembly, planning of activities for fostering scientific curiosity, planning of activities for enhancing listening, speaking, reading, writing and number concepts in children. Trainees plan interactive events for students and peers

- **Preparation of folders:** A creative folder, an origami folder and a follow up activity folder are done by teacher trainees, observing two students in internship school, and presenting it in the form of case study is undertaken too. Trainees gain encouragement for peer learning by observing and giving feedback to their peers. The trainees also prepare a remedial kit as a process of inclusion in the classroom.
- Teacher trainees plan **10 lessons** on the **theory of Multiple Intelligences** by **Howard Gardener**.

These experiential activities are blended with not only theory but also with the Indian ethos for the all-round development of a teacher.

**Experiential Learning strategies that we adopt at SIES ICE are thus aimed at achieving the following:**

- a) Students are involved in problems that are practical, social, and personal.
- b) Students are often involved with difficult and challenging situations while discovering.
- c) Students learn from the learning process and become open to change. This change includes less reliance on the instructor and more on fellow peers, the development of skills to Concrete experience (CE), Reflective observation (RO), Abstract conceptualization (AC), Active experimentation (AE).
- d) Investigate and learn from an authentic experience, and the ability to objectively self-evaluate one's performance.
- e) Students are holistically developed and are equipped to take on the challenges and excel in the profession.

Experiential learning benefits both the teacher and the student because it gives teachers a chance to explore new ideas and techniques that they can use in the classroom while allowing students to be a part of what they are learning in a way that is fun and beneficial for all involved. It allows both the teacher and student to get what they need from what is being

taught, making what happens in that classroom more effective and what the student will remember more clearly. Offering experiential learning opportunities has a **positive influence** on student recruitment, **retention, and completion rate**.



*Box 1: Benefits of Experiential Learning*

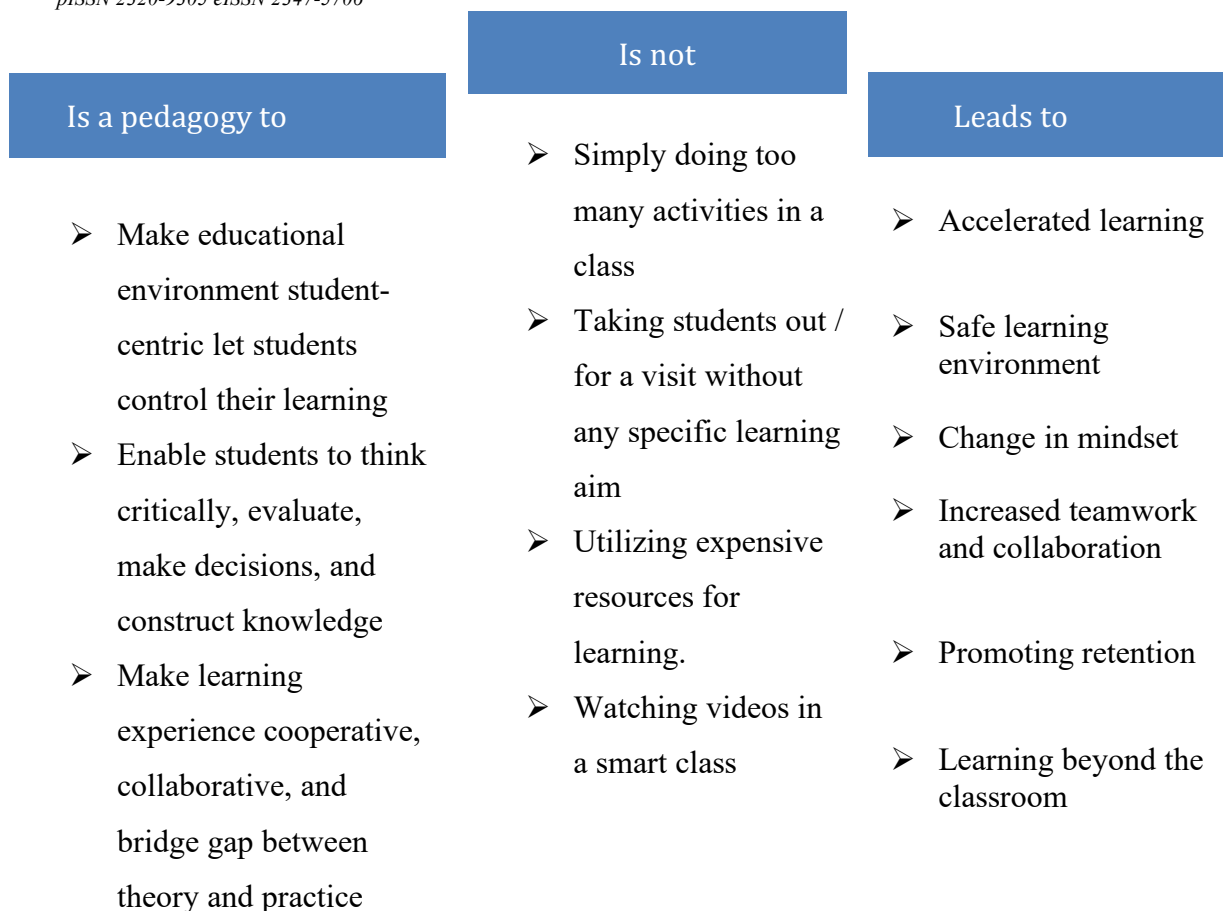


Fig. 2: 02-New Final Text Page (EL HandBook) 24-08-2019 (cbseacademic.nic.in)

**CONCLUSION**

Experiential learning generates shifts in the learner’s grasp of worldly knowledge, positively impacting the future on completion of their learning, thus preparing them for the real world.

An academician’s bounty of bookish knowledge vis-à-vis the practical understanding gained by application and experience are entirely different.

Learning by doing enhances understanding of the real world, fostering skills for character development. As a springboard to deepen understanding by activities conventional learning practices can be blended into experiential learning.

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