

## ENHANCING CREATIVE THINKING THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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### Abstract

*Now everyone talks about National Education Policy, Nai Talim, Life Education, Compulsory education and many more concepts. The real motto of education is to educate the countrymen and provide them knowledge, information, different skills, etc. A century back well-known American philosopher, John Dewey, was introduced a theory of education, that is 'Learning by doing'. He rejected a popular theory like, behaviourism, due to its complex nature. Today, modern researchers understand the importance of student's involvement in teaching learning process so, they come up with the new theory that is Experiential learning which brings out a reformation of the educational system.*

*The Experiential learning trust that, the best way of learning is to create a practical curriculum which is related to the students' life and day today experiences. Experiential learning is student-centric learning system, where the students are more motivated and engaged than regular classroom situation. They learn through collaboration and constant critical thinking and reflection on particular topic. Such conscious learning method effect on student's critical as well as creative thinking. Finally, the conceptualisation from the experience ultimately resulted into a learning success.*

*Here in this conceptual research paper researcher wants to discuss the ways through which teacher can implement experiential learning to enhance student's creative thinking.*

**Keywords:** *Creative Thinking, Experiential Learning*

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### INTRODUCTION:

*I hear and I forget, I see and I remember,  
I do and I understand. Tell me and I forget,  
Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I will learn.  
-Benjamin Franklin*

The above quote itself declares the theory as well as philosophy of teaching learning process. Only audio, video or both experiences are useless until you involve students in teaching & learning process. If you involve them, they will learn themselves. After so many research

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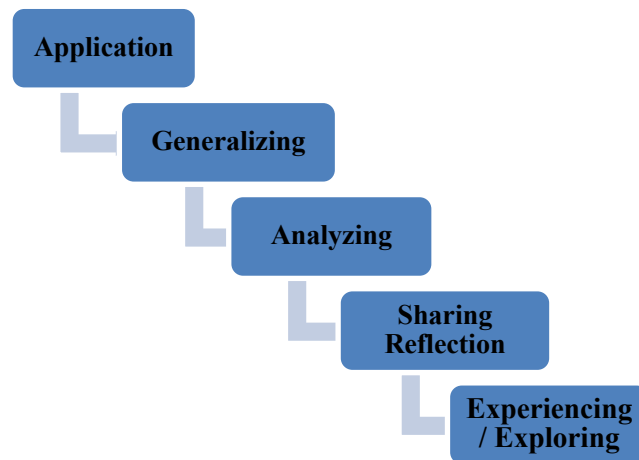
studies now educationalists also conclude that the active involvement of a child/student can only bring positive change in the teaching and learning process. Now according to National Education Policy (NEP), along with bookish or theoretical knowledge children must get touchy experiences. NEP emphasizes learning by doing or activity-based learning which is a student-centric methodology as we aim to create a Thinker, Explorer instead of an Imitator. To define the term Experiential learning we can say that it's a philosophy and methodology in which teachers purposefully engage the students in direct experience and then give focused on their reflection to increase their knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values. Learning through experience is not a new concept for the school or college classroom. Notable educational psychologists such as John Dewey, Carl Rogers, and David Kolb have already designed the groundwork of learning theories. According to John Dewey, there is an intimate and necessary relationship between the process of experience and education.

Experiential learning focuses on problem-solving and creative thinking instead of memorization and repetition. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, soft skills like Creative thinking, creative problem solving, innovative and analytical thinking skills are very important to every student or individual. Each and every sector demands for such faculty those who have such skills Education sector is not exception in it. Educational institutes also required skilled, innovative teachers who can boost student's curiosity and research attitude. Even new IT companies or any businessmen seek candidates that are analytical and outside-the-box thinkers which are iterations of creative thinking skills. Experiential learning is in favour of learning through action, learning through discovery, and exploration. According to the researcher, schooling is the best place where we can inculcate this skill among students by using Experiential learning methodology so, the researcher takes this present topic for a present research study.

### **ENHANCEMENT OF CREATIVE THINKING BY USING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (EL)**

Thinking is a human being's natural skill, but it doesn't mean every thought is useful for them. Creative thinking is somehow different from normal thinking. Here thinking which is out of the box or wide in the range is expected slowly gradually the learner can imbibe it. It's a part of the process and learning from the process is the core part of experiential learning. Experiential learning involves several steps that offer the student group learning and reflective learning experience which also helps them to thoroughly learn a new concept or content. Here

researcher has discussed how a teacher can enhance creative thinking by implementing experiential learning.



### 1. Experiencing/Exploring

The researcher wants to call this step **“Doing”**. A key of experiential learning is what the student learns from the experience rather how he/she. Instead of quantity of experiences the quality experience matters a lot. Here teachers can create a suitable environment for students to learn and explore new things from it. The teacher can plan an activity in which with little or no help from the instructor-student can perform or experience the thing, for ex- New products or models, role-playing, problem-solving memory games, etc.

### 2. Sharing/Reflecting

After providing experiences teacher can take reflection from the students by asking a simple question like **“What Happened?”** Students will share their results, reactions, and observations with their classmates and for that purpose; they will defiantly start thinking critically that what we expect from them. Students will also share their observations by using critical thinking procedure.

### 3. Analyzing

In this third step, to enhance Student’s creative thinking teacher can ask, **“What’s new?”** so that students may discuss, analyse, synthesis and creatively rethink about the experience. Describing and analyzing their experiences allow students to think creatively & critically. For ex- Students will discuss the merits, demerits, causes and effects. They may come up with the new innovative solutions or alternatives for the problem.

#### 4. Generalizing

In the following, step students can connect their experience with day today real-life examples. Student will try to find out some new trends or common truths from the experience, and try to understand the real theory behind that experience. We can call this step as generalization step. The teacher can simply ask students to generalize their learning or their experience. For certain conclusions or generalizations, high-level thinking is required that we can enhance through implementing this step of experiential learning.

#### 5. Application

The application of knowledge is the key component of learning. “**How will you use it?**”. In this step, students will apply what they learnt from the experience. Students will also discuss the answers of following questions like where he/she will implement this new knowledge. In which situation it will be useful? how their discussion on certain issues can be useful in future situations? In this step a teacher plays very important role. The teacher helps each student to feel a sense of ownership.

### ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE CREATIVE THINKING THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Creative thinking doesn't happen in a day. Teachers are supposed to take lots of effort to inculcate this skill among the students. Following are some activities that teachers can use under the experiential learning

#### 1. Tell Me, Role Model

After showing or giving information about selected dynamic personalities like APJ Abdul Kalam, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, etc. The teacher can ask them who is their role model among them and why? It's very important to ask students about their opinions, and thoughts. Creative thinkers/ students will consider multiple perspectives to decide on their role model and along with this, it will create curiosity among them about how others think. To give their justification they will think creatively which is known as box thinking.

#### 2. Six Thinking Caps

Six thinking Caps is another game to evaluate the student's creative problem-solving skills. This activity can implement in a group of six more or fewer. The teacher will place one on the

table and students will seat around it. After this, the teacher will put forward the genuine problem in front of the students & ask expert solution to it. The student who wants to share or express the solution needs to wear a cap. Finally, the student who wears the cap maximum time will be the winner.

### **3. 20 Dots**

20 Dots is a very creative game, where qualitative thinking is a main goal. Students will get a sheet of paper with 20 Dots (Different sizes) on it. The teacher will provide a short amount of time, usually 5 minutes, to sketch or to join those 20 dots innovatively. This activity can be taken as a group or individual activity. In a group, it becomes more challenging. After this teacher can ask students about their thought processes.

### **4. Dictionary tale**

This is a very interesting activity. The teacher will provide a dictionary in the class and ask students to select 10 words randomly from the dictionary. After the selection of 10 words teacher will give further instructions to them to use those words in any order without repetition and create or develop a story on it. Finding a way to create an interesting, tenacious story from selected random words can improve the student's ability to make abstract connections and combine different ideas that don't necessarily relate to each other.

### **5. Reading habit**

It is said that '**Creative thinking is a seed that grows when you Read**'. This activity teacher can conduct in the classroom or library. The teacher will ask students to select a book and read it to see what new knowledge they can extract from it. Reading is a powerful means of knowledge that can affect on Creative thinking of a child.

### **6. Free Talk**

The teacher can spare a few minutes every morning to talk on any new topic. It can be plan during or immediately after assembly. This type of free talk, where students can speak whatever comes to mind in a flow without any interruption. The free talk is a nice activity to understand the student's subconscious ideas, through which one can get an innovative solution to a problem. For example, topics like causes, effects, and remedies of noise pollution.

## **7. My Storyboard**

Teachers can utilize any one corner of a class with the title 'Storyboard'. It is a very simple but useful creative game for establishing or improving new techniques of creative thinking. Instead of teaching how to write down the story here, the teacher can allow students to write down or paste their own created story on that board. Teacher can allow student to narrate that story in front of whole class.

## **8. 'Complete the figure' test**

The 'Complete the figure' test is an interesting creative thinking exercise. Students can use a small, simple shapes, like a half-circle, line, or curve, to create draw something new from it for example from given half circle, student can draw full circle and can turn that full circle into sun, ball, earth, laughing face, weeping face etc. This activity can be conducted in a group lastly students will cross check how other groups interpret the same small design. Through this activity we can expand their creative thinking.

## **9. Paper clip test**

The paper clip test is a creative thinking exercise. Students can play it individually or in a group. In this activity, groups receive a box of paper clips and they are all supposed to find different and innovative uses of paper clips. For example paper clips for holding papers, as a wire, U pin, etc. After activity time, each group then share their ideas with the rest of their classmates. This innovative thinking habit definitely adds some values in student's personality. From this game student also learn how they can use the available resources effectively.

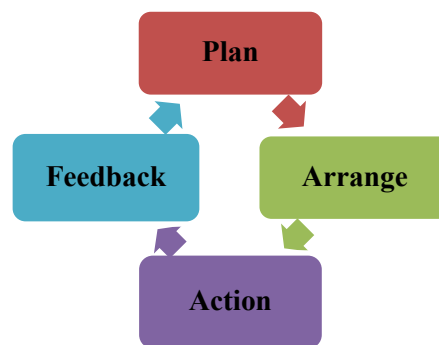
## **10. Use me differently**

This can be a very interesting activity. The teacher provides some objects to the students and asks them to use those objects innovatively. The objects, like staplers, pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, folders, tape, pictures, and paper, may come in it or students can redesign a new product from it. This activity is also executed in groups. After each individual or team has finished redesigning a product, they can share or compare their creations with other groups. The use may be judge on different parameters like uniqueness, originality of thinking,

brilliance, and gumption. This exercise is especially helpful for developing brainstorming skills.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF (EL) IN TEACHING TO ENHANCE CT**

It is observed that many times, teachers are willing to implement new strategies in the classroom to enhance creative thinking skills, but fail to implement them due to a lack of knowledge and support. According to the researcher Experiential learning is the best way to implement the new strategies in the classrooms. Here Researcher wants to tell four easy steps to implement Experiential learning in teaching to enhance creative thinking.



### **Plan**

As per the mental and physical level of the students, first upon teacher decides the Experiential learning experience which will be beneficial for their learning. In this initial stage it is expected that the teacher should plan the experience which is related to the course learning objectives. Teacher plans the whole agenda of execution as: how much time will be allotted for the students to complete the experience or assignment? As per objectives it may be one day, one week, one month or more. Teacher plans the evaluation tool or matrices. Teacher decides that whether students will perform individually or in a group.

### **Arrange**

After planning teacher arrange the materials which is part and parcel of experience for example material like, rubrics, parameter, things related to experience, and evaluation tools. Teacher ensures that everything is ready before the experience begins.

## Action

This is the stage where students actually come into action. Teacher elaborates the details of experience to the students. Once the activity begins, the teacher just plays the role of facilitator. The teacher provides all the content and information to the students related to the activity. Instead, of readymade answers or clues, the teacher only guides them how they can search the solutions to the problem which finally resulted in creative thinking.

## Feedback

The final stage of experiential learning is feedback. Here the teacher takes the feedback from students about their experience, their thinking procedure, etc. Teacher evaluates the discussions, reflections, and a debriefing of every individual based on thoughts they express creatively originality, etc.

## STUDENT'S ROLES IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The success of experiential learning is depending upon the students' active involvement in it. When students decide to involved personally in the learning experience then only we'll get the expected result. Here the researcher wants to give some guidelines to the students as follows\_

- Students' mentality should be clean, clear, and stress-free when he/she take part in the activity.
- Students should respond actively to challenging situations while searching new things.
- Students should self-judge their progress or success in the learning process.
- Students should always ready or open to change.
- Students should motivate themselves to think differently, widely. They can expand their boundaries of creative thinking.

## THE BENEFITS OF APPLYING EL FOR CT

When we apply experiential learning to enhance Creative thinking it offers many benefits to the students who involve in it. Such as\_

- **Improved creative thinking:** Experiential learning and Creative thinking exercises improve students' mental abilities. The teacher can observe the small or drastic change in student's thinking process, that they never notice before. It enhances student's creative & critical thinking power.



- **Discovery of Multi-Dimensional Ideas:** Experiential learning help students to discover truly new solutions for the same problem. Creative thinking exercises not only help to develop students' creative view but also allow them to see the problems, ideas, and objects with a new attitude.
- **Student-Centric Teaching-Learning Process:** Repetition of the same thing makes the teaching-learning process monotonous. Experiential learning is a Student Centric Teaching –Learning Process where the teacher guides them instead of directs the learning process. Here students are individually, willingly interested in the learning process.
- **More Energetic:** The implementation of Experiential learning in the classroom makes the classroom environment more energetic; even the students also respond positively and actively in the class.
- **Improved Teamwork:** Exercises that teacher uses under Experiential learning to enhance creative thinking help students and a group of students to improve their interpersonal skills like communication, problem-solving and unity, leadership quality, team building, etc.

Here Researcher wants to conclude by saying that in traditional classrooms students always compete with each other, many times they remain uninvolved or align from teaching learning process but in experiential learning classrooms students instead of compete, they cooperate and learn from one another. In EL instructions are well designed to engage students in direct experiences that finally resulted into creative thinking. **“The focus of Experiential Learning is placed on the process of learning and not the product of learning”**

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