
Experiential Learning in your classroom

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Three Goals for us today...

1. Share a little background information about the history of Experiential Learning
 - 2. Provide you with examples and ideas to use it effectively in your classroom
 - 3. Keep you Alert, Engaged and Smiling!
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What is TEACHING?

- Does it just involve presenting information?



What is TEACHING?

- Or does it require that **learning occurs**?

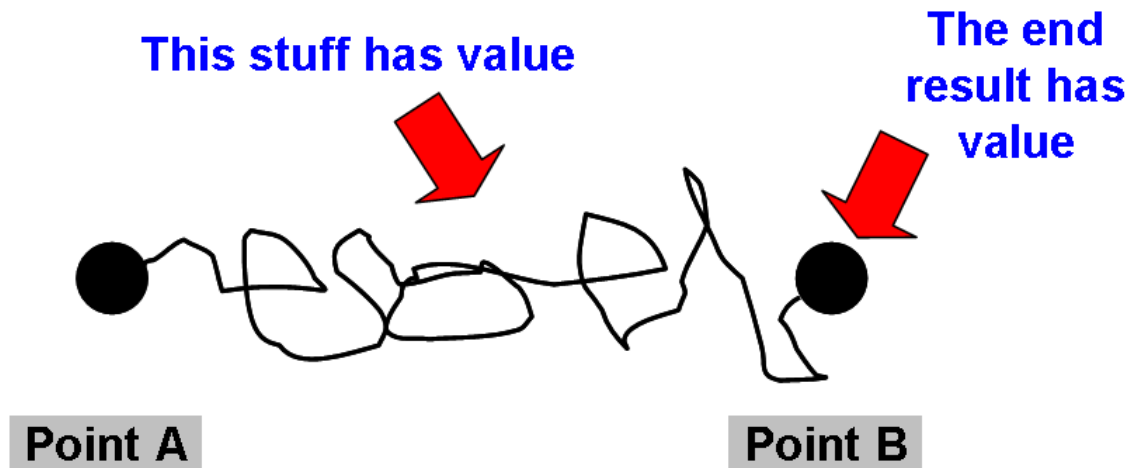


The job of a great teachers is to facilitate his/her students' movement from where they are to where he/she wants them to be regarding specific skills, information, and behaviors.

So how do we get them there?

- **Consider this analogy...**

Our purpose is to help students / clients reach a determined destination



So how do we get them there?

As trainers/ teachers, we choose
the vehicle they use on their journey
to reach that destination



So how do we get them there?

- Unfortunately, what most teachers still use is an outdated horse-drawn wagon...



*(...and **students are the horses** that are encouraged, implored, and threatened to go where the teacher has already been with little thought about the horses' experience!)*

Horse and Wagon? Huh?

- Yes! This style of transportation is just as outdated (and nearly as ineffective) as lectures and worksheets have been...
 - But still, even though the horses are often **unmotivated**, **unaware** of why they are being driven, or otherwise **distracted** from working to get there, this is the style that a majority of educators continue to choose!
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TELLING & PASSIVE-LEARNER STYLES DON'T GET RESULTS!

“Experience automatically stimulates approximately 95 percent of all neurons that provide the massive neural firing that is the basis for all long-term memory, verbal presentation in general fires only 5 to 20 percent of neurons”

JW Wilson

Cracking the Learning Code

TELLING & PASSIVE-LEARNER STYLES DON'T GET RESULTS!

“Investigations document that even students that have been well trained and who exhibit all the overt signs of success - faithful attendance, good schools, high grades and high test scores, accolades from their teachers - typically do not display an adequate understanding of the materials and concepts with which they have been working.”

Howard Gardner

Harvard Educational Researcher

Can you think of a better way?

- Consider how YOU best learn and you may begin to appreciate how experiential learning and can transform your own classroom.
 - Take out a sheet of paper and draw two lines so you have split the page up into three columns.
 - *Think of something you are good at. What are some reasons you got good at it?*
 - *Next, think of something you not good at. What are some reasons you didn't learn it better?*
-

Other people are very similar!

- The most common answers are that:
 - *You experimented and learned by doing it yourself and/or by having others help you do it yourself, and then maybe by teaching others.*
 - ...and
 - *You didn't think it was important and/or you didn't understand the information as it was presented because it was theirs, not yours!*
-

Change the Paradigm!

- Instead of us driving the horses to perform or remember what they aren't really invested in understanding, maybe we could...
 1. Supply a new, fun vehicle for them to use
 2. Give our students / clients the keys
 3. Provide a clear, safe road to travel on
-

THAT is Experiential Learning!

- *It is NOT discovery learning*
(...which can be far too unstructured)
 - Experiential Learning Paradigm =
 1. Teacher defines specific relevant activity
 2. Student experiences active involvement
 3. Teacher focus is on classroom culture
(provide a safe environment and questions to reflect on)
-

EVER HEARD OF THESE GUYS?

**“Knowledge is experience,
everything else is just information.”**

(Einstein)

**“One must learn by doing the thing;
though you think you know it,
you have no certainty until you try.”**

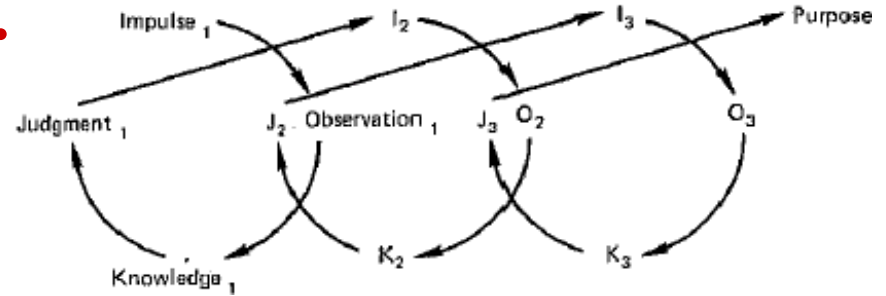
(Sophocles, 495-406 BC)

THEIR IDEAS INFLUENCED THESE GUYS:

- JOHN DEWEY
 - KURT LEWIN
 - DAVID KOLB
 - PHIL RACE
-

A Quick Summary..

John Dewey(1859-1952)



- ❑ In the 1930's, John Dewey became famous for pointing out that the authoritarian, strict, pre-ordained knowledge approach of modern traditional education was too concerned with delivering knowledge, and not enough with understanding students' actual experiences.
- ❑ Dewey became the champion, or philosophical father of experiential education, or as it was then referred to, progressive education. But he was also critical of completely "free, student-driven" education because students often don't know how to structure their own learning experiences for maximum benefit.

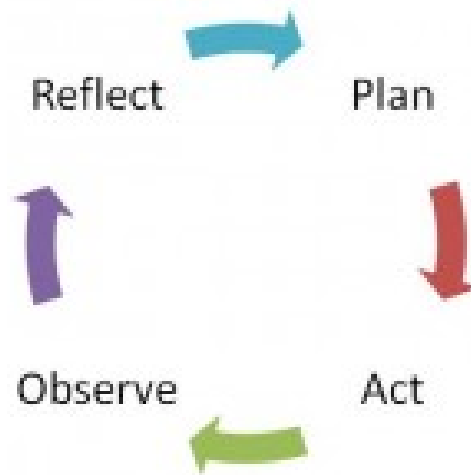
“Experiential Learning takes place when a person **involved in an activity** looks back and **evaluates** it, **determines** what was useful or important to remember, and **uses** this information to perform another activity.”

John Dewey

A Quick Summary...

Kurt Lewin (1890-1947)

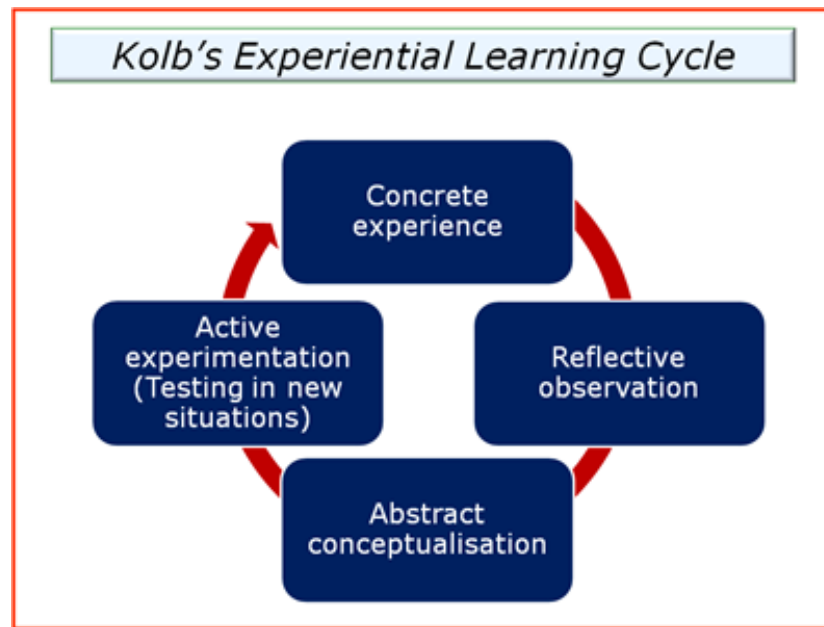
- Prussian / German “Father of Social Psychology”
- Best known for “integrating theory with practice”
- Developed a four-stage cycle of education



A Quick Summary...

David Kolb (1939-)

- Built upon ideas of Dewey and Lewin
- Created a four-part “cycle of learning” model:



A Quick Summary

Phil Race (1942-)

- one of the most inspiring (and practical) staff developers/researchers in UK higher education
- Supports a model similar to that of Kolb, but as “ripples” (not only as a sequential cycle)

Needing/Wanting - motivation

Doing - practice; trial and error

Feedback - seeing results; other people's reactions

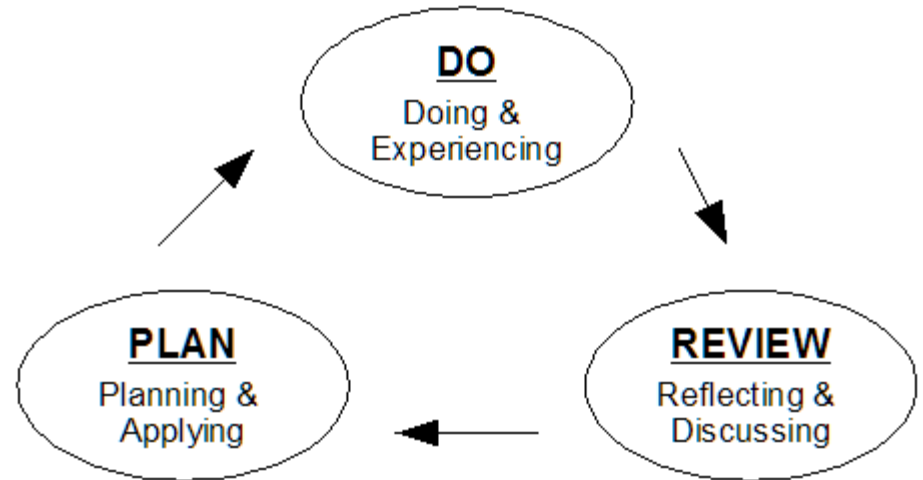
Digesting - making sense of it; gaining ownership

Ripple on a Pond



Too Complex? ...It Doesn't Need To Be!

A simple three-stage learning cycle you can use in your classroom!



Or you could even simplify it to this-



The MAIN THING IS...

- That you recognize the need for
 - **1. Active Student Experiences**
 - less-structured but meaningful
 - learner centered and engaging
 - **2. Review Questions and Reflections**
 - vital stage that allows discussion
 - answers must be theirs, not yours
-

THE MAIN THING IS...

INSTEAD OF AN INSTRUCTOR
COVERING COURSE CONTENT

WE ALLOW STUDENTS TO
UNCOVER IT THEMSELVES!

- ...Because **THAT** creates ownership!
-

What are “active student experiences?”

- Learning a physical activity
- Games
- Role play / charades
- Teaching others
- Field Trips and Outings
- Debates
- Creating something new and relevant

More
examples
on your
handout!

Think back with me...

- COULD YOU EVER SUCCESSFULLY EDUCATE SOMEONE ABOUT WHAT **KISSING** IS JUST BY DESCRIBING IT?



Let's Consider Another Example...

- THINK OF YOUR CLASSROOM...
 - What is one topic / skill / lesson that you have delivered as theoretical or **“told” information**?
 - How might you transform that lesson into an experiential activity and **engage your students**?
-

Let's Consider Another Example...

■ NURSING SCHOOL STUDENT

- Taking patient vital signs?
- Changing Sheets on an occupied bed?

** Many professional programs have developed a "SEE ONE, DO ONE, TEACH ONE" model*

Want YOUR WORLD Examples?

- **English class** – vocabulary word list

- workbook and sentences?

OR...

- **charades!**

- **letter to editor about a chosen topic and using some in context!**



Want YOUR WORLD Examples?

- **Science Class** – periodic table of elements
 - worksheets and repetition?
 - OR
 - **paired “last man standing” game!**
 - **students group selves as elements!**
-

Want YOUR WORLD Examples?

- **History Class** – World War II unit

- lecture notes with PowerPoint?

OR...

- **debating reparations / internment!**

- **drawing a cartoon or writing a song to review events or their impact!**

Want YOUR WORLD Examples?

- **Math Class** – area of a circle

- **What ideas can YOU think of?**

(We will share ideas in 10 minutes...)

Remember to keep the activity short to allow for adequate reflection, since students can miss insights with too much complexity

Now, it's your turn!

- **Objective?**
- **Group size?**
- **Materials?**
- **Pre-Activity / Prep?**
- **Description of activity...**
- **Skills / Insight Desired?**



Now, it's your turn!

- Consider a lesson that you have taught is the past that could be replaced with a more memorable and fun “experiential activity”



(you have 20 minutes)

Now, it's your turn!

■ IN YOUR PAIRS...

1. Share your lesson idea with partner
 2. Give one suggestion to “enhance” idea
 3. Give one extra idea for experiential lesson on same topic that is completely new
-

Remember to leave time for part two!

- Every experience must be “debriefed” and reflected on for students to take meaning away from the activity
 - Role of teacher is to ask questions only
(Students provide answers and insights)
-

What are some Reflective Questions?

Lower-Level Discussions can begin with:

- What did you do?
 - How did you feel?
 - What was most difficult? Easiest?
 - If you could do it again, what would you change?
-

What are some Reflective Questions?

Higher-Level Discussions can begin with:

- What did you learn about _____
 - What problems or issues did you experience?
 - What did you learn about yourself?
 - How can you apply this lesson to _____?
-

What problems might I encounter?

- Outcomes are sometimes difficult to measure
 - Requires more planning time
 - Takes up more class time than telling!
 - Can be difficult to bite tongue and let them make personal discoveries
 - If intended conclusions aren't reached, you will need to design another activity for it...
-

What rewards might I encounter?

- Promoting long-term real learning
 - Creating a more fun classroom environment
 - Engaging students who are normally bored
 - Helping students self-assess progress
 - Providing real-world examples of skills
 - Watching HA-HA moments become A-HA's
-

Experiential Learning

Just to review...

- Instead of driving your student “horses” to perform or remember what they aren’t really invested in understanding, NOW you can...
 1. *Supply a fun experiential vehicle for them to use*
 2. *Give them the keys... and let them drive*
 3. *Prepare a safe road to travel on and reflective questions to help them recognize destination*
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Sean Glaze is an author and entertaining team building speaker who inspires people to have fun laughing together so they can have more success working together.

As the founder of [Great Results Teambuilding](#), Sean has been inspiring rapid teamwork and developing team leaders for over 20 years.

He delivers interactive events and entertaining keynotes for clients interested in increasing their competitive advantage by building a more engaged and connected TEAM.



Stay in Touch!

If I can ever be of service to your school or organization with a training workshop, team building event, or interactive speaking engagement, contact me at:

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