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An educational lesson that offers the student or learner opportunities to perform, share, analyze, connect, and apply new information is experiential learning. The experiential learning process is a fundamental approach to enhance students' critical thinking about content and engagement with the content in order to maximize learning beyond the classroom.

The presence of educational technologies is shifting students from consumers of information to engaged knowledge inventors. Educators are working to develop best teaching practices that distinguish between the advantages and disadvantages of educational technology tools as compared to traditional tools. The inclusion of experiential learning opportunities will assist educators in using easily accessible devices to enhance student performance and educational outcomes.

Experiences and education are not mutually inclusive. Educative opportunities do not necessarily produce educative experiences. Miseducative experiences can result for any number of reasons including improper use of technology. John Dewey, a philosopher and education reformer of the early 20th century, identified miseducative experiences as experiences that halt or mislead the development of future experiences. Merely providing experiences does not produce learning because educational outcomes depend on the quality of the experience, including guidance and feedback. This entry discusses theories of experiential learning developed by John Dewey, Carl Rogers, and David Kolb. It then discusses implementing experiential learning in the context of Everett Rogers's theory of diffusion of innovations.

John Dewey's Experiential Learning

Dewey took a progressive approach to the design and implementation of experiential opportunities in education. Implementing experiences in the learning process include the genuine embodied life experiences of the student. All experiences should include opportunities for student contact and communication because human experiences are decisively social. Students will have more opportunities to engage the educational content and increased opportunities to learn how the content can be applicable to real-life scenarios when educators incorporate experiential learning. Experiential learning can be constructed by the progression students undergo and the contexts involved. Education should enhance student learning from one stage of development to the next. For experiential learning results to occur, student experiences should be contained in the lesson.

The principle of continuity refers to understanding that the future should be accounted for in each phase of the educational progression. Each experience impacts the quality of future potential experiences. As stated by Dewey, education should not only supply students with content knowledge but also with a model for how to function as a citizen. Continuity exists in each student due to previous experiences affecting future experiences.

Student attitudes, feelings, and beliefs toward educational technology tools are formed from an initial experience. Educators should ensure that initial experience is positive, engaging, and related to practical examples in order for students to develop a positive continuity toward educational technology tools. According to Dewey, the principle of continuity is required for learning to be considered experiential. However, more than just the principle of continuity is needed for an educational environment to be experiential.

Carl Rogers's Experiential Learning

Carl Rogers was a psychologist in the mid-20th century and a staunch believer in student-centered learning. He supported the principle that experiential learning was parallel to student transformation and development. Rogers argued experiential learning opportunities are more significant when accompanied by cognitive forms of education. Rogers suggested using students' feelings and emotions in their educational process. Learning is enhanced when the educator has an understanding of a student's frame of mind during the teaching and learning process.

An experiential learning environment should provide students an opportunity to connect abstract views to previous knowledge. Educators should be continually aware of whether students are demonstrating signs of profound or robust feelings toward the learning process. When students perceive educational risks as minimal, educators can underscore students' experiences in an engaged approach and learning can progress. Knowledge, contemporary or longstanding, has negligible value until the knowledge is linked with real-life scenarios.

It is important for educators to understand the context of students' experiences and how this relates to what they are learning. Because applicability to the student is fundamental for learning, student experiences should be at the heart of a lesson. It is important to motivate students to be open to learning new knowledge. According to Rogers, it is vital that the new knowledge is pertinent and connected to present student experiences.

David Kolb's Experiential Learning

Experience is the core function in the learning process. Kolb built upon Dewey's research and work in his own research on experiential learning theory published in 1984. There are six elements in Kolb's experiential learning theory:

1. Learning is process and not a product.
2. Each phase of learning is in effect relearning.
3. Learning necessitates the resolution of contradictions between disputed contrasting methods of

modification to the world.

4. Learning is a holistic progression of acclimatization that includes more than minimal cognition.
5. Learning occurs from synergistic connections between the student and the student's experiences.
6. Learning is the process of producing knowledge.

The summation of Kolb's experiential learning theory is that learning is the progression of transactions between new knowledge and a student's current personalized knowledge.

The four aspects of Kolb's experiential learning model are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. First, Kolb says that educators should provide students specific experiences to learn the technology by focusing on students' feelings and perceptions. Second, educators should provide students opportunities to reflect on their experience in order to examine the connotation of educational technology. Third, educators should connect or think about how learning with the technology could be applied to other scenarios. Lastly, active experimentation involves actually doing or experimenting with the technology. Kolb's work provides educators a road map of teaching and learning opportunities with advanced educational technologies.

The roles of divergent knowledge, assimilative knowledge, accommodative knowledge, and convergent knowledge in the experiential learning process are present in Kolb's experiential learning theory. Kolb suggests that apprehension is concrete understanding and comprehension is abstract understanding. He goes on to add that intention is reflection and extension is action. Divergent knowledge occurs when an experience is produced during apprehension and remodeled throughout intention, such as through students brain-storming after they participate in a contextual learning experience. Assimilative knowledge results from an experience understood amid comprehension and refurbished within intention. Students oriented with assimilative knowledge favor readings, analysis, and opportunities to individually reflect on the content. Accommodative knowledge results from an experience earned in apprehension and renovated through extension. Allowing students to work with other students to set goals and accomplish assignments are examples of addressing students' accommodative knowledge characteristic. Convergent knowledge occurs when an experience is procured through comprehension and converted through extension. Students will recall knowledge acquired from using educational technologies more sustainably when students have opportunities to actively experience the technology and connect it to practical applications.

Implementing Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is an aspect in Everett Rogers's theory of diffusion of innovations. An experimental demonstration is employed to assess the success of an innovation in practical environments. An exemplary

demonstration is implemented to persuade potential adopters, and thus, should be performed in a venue that offers large public observation. Incorporating demonstrations as an experiential learning strategy can assist students in adopting evolving technology devices and services. Technology would be the innovation that students diffuse through selected communication channels over a period of time to the students' social system or contextual environment. The diffusion of the technology would offer opportunities to include Kolb's concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation in the individual student's learning process.

Students will not be able to form favorable attitudes toward educational technology teaching tools as an innovation if they do not understand the innovation's function. According to Rogers's theory of diffusion of innovations, consideration of a new idea does not go beyond the knowledge function if an individual does not define the information as relevant to one's situation or if sufficient knowledge is not obtained to become adequately informed so that persuasion can then take place. For a student to be able to move on to the persuasion stage of Rogers's innovation-decision process, which is a more psychologically involved stage where the student is seeking information about the new idea, that student must have a clear understanding of how pervasive technology tools can be used to improve personal learning. Rogers proposed that experiential learning practices can provide opportunities for students to best learn the technology and how the technology is beneficial in educational contexts, and thus, potentially lead to student acceptance and adoption.

Using educational technologies in the classroom in practical ways provides students an experiential learning environment. Educators can utilize their social interaction and communication with students and the interaction and communication among students, as well as students' interaction with content, to foster more experiential learning opportunities to materialize.

See also [Affective Factors in Learning, Instruction, and Technology](#); [Conditions of Learning: Gagné's Nine Events of Instruction](#); [Cultural Considerations in Technology-Enhanced Learning and Instruction](#); [Internet: Impact and Potential for Learning and Instruction](#); [Neurologically Based Learning and Instruction](#); [Personalized Learning and Instruction](#); [Technology-Facilitated Experiential Learning](#)

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Further Readings

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