

KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STYLE: INTRODUCING EFFECTIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Abstract

Teacher education is an inseparable educational institution in the education system. Effective learning depends on effective teaching. The main purpose of teacher education is focused on the impartment of training to the teachers so that they can help students to achieved desired outcomes. Teacher competencies and proficiency is very important for improvement and development in education system. Researcher focused on improvement of teacher techniques and development. In this study the researcher shall be introducing Kolb's experiential learning theory (ELT) in teacher education programme. The researcher has further developed a framework on the basis of KOLB's ELT so that a teacher can use and apply it successfully for teaching purpose. This instructional design will help teachers to understand different kinds of learners and their learning styles. Furthermore, it shall enable the learner to follow this instructional design and be involved in active learning.

Keywords: Teacher education, KOLB experiential learning Theory, Teacher competencies and techniques

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is regarded as an important aspect in education system. It provides all types of training programme to the teachers, educators, administrators and so on to achieving desired outcomes. Recently teaching techniques have emerged as an increasingly important topic in teacher education programme and training. According to National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)-Teacher education is a programme or a research course to teach lower-level education (primary) to higher education. KOLB experiential learning is one of the influential theories in teacher education. According to KOLB, experience is the source of learning and development (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1984). As the American psychologist Bruner stated earlier in his theory that children learn through discovery, Kolb also expressed that a person would learn most effectively through discovery and experience. As a result, his theory is known as experiential learning theory. The theory presents a way of structuring and sequencing the curriculum and indicates, in particular how a session, or a whole course, may be taught to improve student learning (Healey & Jenkins, 2000). This experiential learning cycle is basically important for teacher training techniques and instructional process to provide better learning improvements. Each and every cycle of this theory is associated with independent learning styles of learner and meets various demands of learner's learning. A learner is the main pillar of the education system. Every learner is different from another learner based on his/her personal and academic qualities. A teacher's role is to provide a sound instructional design that facilitates effective learning for every learner. Here the researcher wants to explore improvement of teacher techniques on the basis of this instructional design in order to improve learner proficiency and competency.

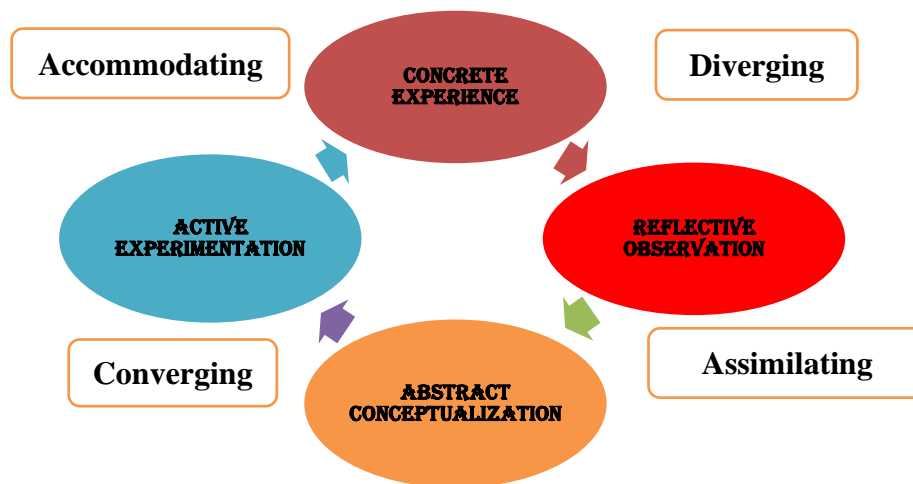
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH BY KOLB

There are many psychologists who emphasize that learning is based on experience and/or an individual's interaction with environment. According to John Dewey, learning must be grounded in experience. Kolb experiential learning is based on concepts developed by some renounced psychologists like Bruner, Kurt Lewin, Piaget. Kolb's (1984) ELT asserted that, "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." (p. 38). Kolb experiential learning is generally represented by

four stages which determine the learner's progress on the basis of these stages. Based on the four elements of his model, Kolb stated that effective learning entails the possession of four different abilities. They are concrete experience abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualization abilities and active experimentation abilities.

There are two primary axes that lie behind the cycle: an 'abstract-concrete' dimension (AC-CE) and an 'active-reflective' (AE-RO) dimension. These reflect the two main dimensions to the learning process which correspond to the two major different ways by which we learn: the first is how we perceive or grasp new information or experience, and the second is how we process or transform what we perceive (Smith and Kolb 1986).

The four stages are presented here in diagram: -



Kolb experiential learning cycle

The diagram above represents the four stages that Kolb claims must be fulfilled in order for learning to take place.

Concrete Experience—doing/having new experiences

Reflective Observation—reviewing/reflecting on performance in the activity.

Abstract Conceptualization—learning from experience

Active Experimentation—application/try out.

The core of Kolb's four-stage model is a simple description of the learning cycle which shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences (Healey & Jenkins, 2000).

ELT posits that learning style is not a fixed psychological trait but a dynamic state resulting from synergistic transactions between the person and the environment. This dynamic state arises from an individual's preferential resolution of the dual dialectics of experiencing/conceptualizing and acting/reflecting (David & Ylice, 2013)

We know that every learner is unique and different from another learner. An individual learner has unique learning styles and learns in a different way than other learners. But recent research shows that active learning or experience-based learning is more effective than other styles of learning because it enables a learner to learn through first-hand experience, and not merely theoretically but rather practically. Here the teacher can play a vital role to provide effective teaching. A teacher should ideally design his instructional

procedure to maximize the learner's optimal learning. Kolb experiential learning creates a baseline for the teacher to develop instructional design according to an individual learner's need and learning styles. Teachers may take the four stages of Kolb's learning theory as a guideline/principle. Mentioned below are some related studies on learner's learning, teacher techniques and Kolb experiential theory.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

McCarthy Mary (2010), developed a research paper entitled "Experiential Learning Theory: From Theory to Practice". Here researcher want to develop experiential learning theory and linking to practice in the classroom. Here the researcher used The Learning Style Inventory (LSI), as an instrument to assess the individual learning styles of four types of learners based on their approach to obtain knowledge- Diverger, Assimilator, Converger, and Accommodator. The result indicates that class level and cultural background can influence learning style preference and it is the instructional environment that encourages learning through experience.

Healey Mick & Jenkins Alan, (2007), conducted research entitled as "Kolb's experiential learning theory and its application in Geography in higher education". In this research the researcher wanted to find out the main feature of Kolb's experiential learning theory and the researcher describes and assesses some ways in which the theory could be applied in geography in higher education. Here the researcher used Kolb's 4 stage model as a simple description of a learning cycle that shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts. Results indicate that the central features are relatively easy to grasp and that can be readily applied to an individual session by one teacher or to a degree program taught by many and it legitimates the wide variety of teaching methods that have now been developed by geographers and also gives us theoretical and practical pointers for improvement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

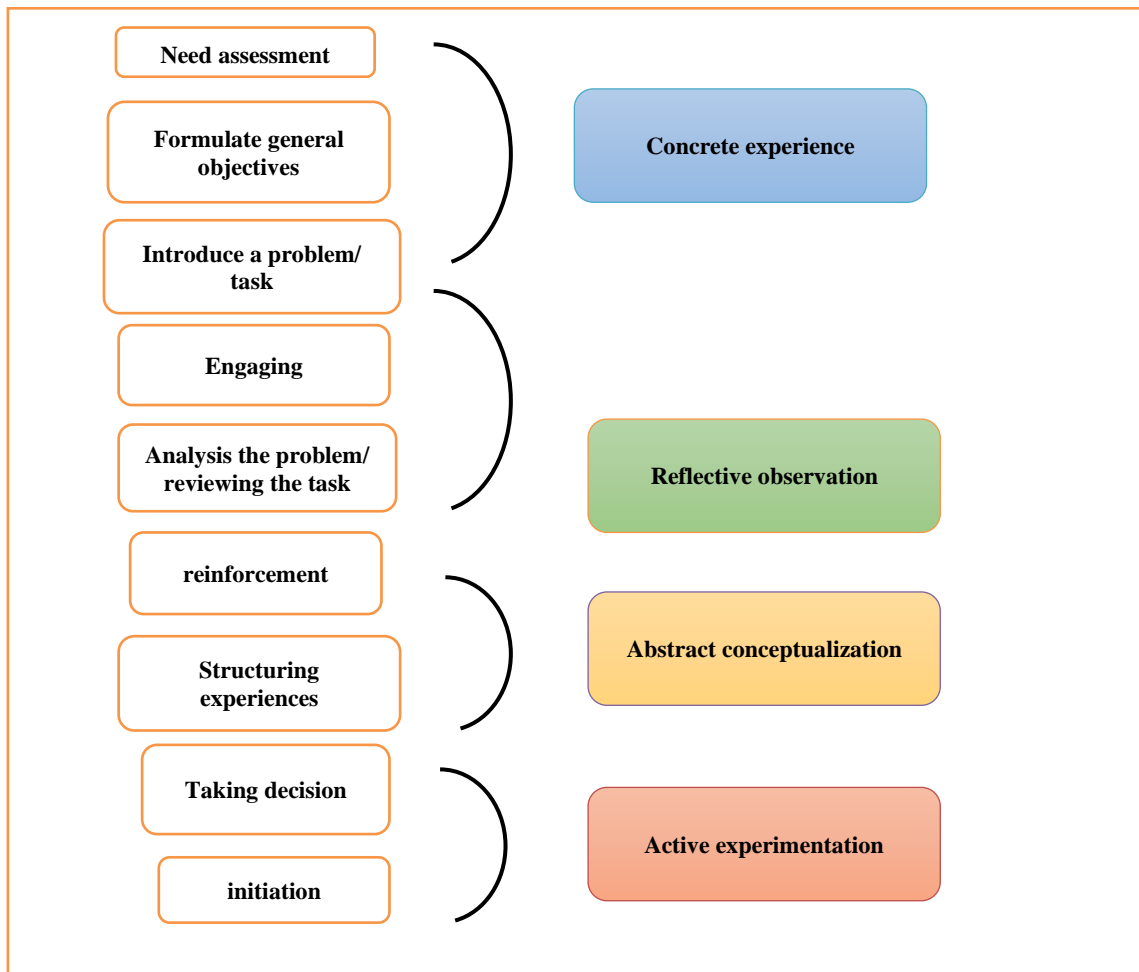
The above studies revealed that Kolb experiential learning style highly impacts a learner's learning. His theory claims that learner can learn on the basis of these four stages of learning. Teacher takes these four stages as guiding principles to design his instructional method and provide better opportunity for learner to learn. Here the researcher has developed an instructional design on the basis of Kolb's experiential learning to provide effective learning to the learners.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to develop instructional design as teaching techniques with respect to Kolb's experiential learning.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH IN TEACHING TECHNIQUES

In this study researcher includes stages of Kolb's experiential learning to design the instructional design.



RESEARCHER DEVELOPED INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON KOLB'S ELT

Need assessment: first task of a teacher is to assess the needs of the students.

Formulate general objectives: next step of a teacher is to formulate general objectives. Set the learning goals which are followed by other steps of instructional design.

Introduce a problem/task: teacher provides a task/ problem to the students and looks forward to what learner feels about the situation.

Engaging: student should actively involve in the learning process and gather experiences from it.

Analysis the problem/reviewing the task: students observe and feel what they learn or gather experiences and break down the experience in small parts to foster learning.

Reinforcement: reviewing the task reinforced the learner to think inductively.

Structuring experiences: students create a structure in mind how to apply it to another similar situation.

Taking decision: students take decision on the basis of previous experiences.

Initiation: students initiate and plan how he/she has learned from situation.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher has tried to draw a framework for the teachers. On the basis of this instructional design a teacher should be able to provide a systematic and effective instruction to the students so that they can learn easily and be actively involved in the process of learning. Various research studies conclude that Kolb's ELT is an adequate and helpful tool for active learners and research studies also shows that it can be a most effective and important guiding principles for the teachers. Teachers can systematically guide the learners, help them to analyse the current situation and encourage the students to think in a way so that they can apply it to another situation. It helps to develop abstract thinking that is based on reflection of a previous situation. The researcher has expressed his view and proven to a conclusion that this framework can be applied to various learning situations and fields.

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