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An Analytical Study of Effectiveness of Experiential learning at Secondary level School

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Abstract

Experiential learning is a practical, activity-based method of teaching that focuses on learning by doing, reflecting, and experimenting. Instead of relying only on lectures or textbook theory, it helps students build knowledge and skills through direct, real-world involvement. This study explores how secondary school teachers and students apply experiential learning in their classrooms. Known for its hands-on tasks and real-life relevance, experiential learning is increasingly recognized for boosting student engagement and creating deeper understanding. This study consists of 15 secondary schools teachers and students and examine how experiential learning affects engagement and participation among secondary school students. The results indicated that experiential learning increases students' motivation and enjoyment of school, while also improving their learning skills and work ethic, leading to greater overall engagement and involvement. Participating students noted that an experiential learning model promotes teamwork and problem-solving abilities. Using a qualitative approach that includes interviews, and classroom observations, the research examines how teachers incorporate these methods, and how they believe it affects student learning. By analyzing the techniques, teacher perspectives, and results linked to experiential learning, the study aims to offer useful guidance for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers working to improve teaching practices in secondary schools.

Introduction

Over time, teachers have used various methods to make the teaching-learning process more engaging and meaningful. These include lecture-based teaching, storytelling, demonstrations, projects, role-play, and question-answer techniques, among others. Experiential learning gained formal recognition and popularity as an educational approach in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the United States, for instance, John Dewey introduced "Experiential Education," which highlighted the value of hands-on learning and real-world experiences in education (Edusourced,2023). This method has since attracted interest from researchers, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders, prompting them to consider its importance as a learner-centered approach. Accordingly, the present study seeks to examine how experiential learning is being practiced.

Rational of the study

Experiential learning is a student-centered educational method that prioritizes active, hands-on experiences as the main way to learn. It is based on the belief that people learn most effectively through doing, exploring, reflecting, and applying knowledge, rather than just passively absorbing information. The literature review shows that most studies on experiential learning have focused on higher education, while relatively few have examined its use at the secondary education. Research in this area can shed light on how experiential learning influences students' cognitive, emotional, and social growth, which may contribute to improved academic performance, stronger problem-solving abilities, and greater motivation. Exploring how experiential learning is practiced can also reveal the professional development and support secondary teachers need to apply this approach effectively in their classrooms. The results of such research can guide curriculum design by helping educators develop hands-on activities that match learning goals and standards. Moreover, this research can shape educational policy and decision-making, potentially driving changes in secondary school curricula and instructional methods. It can also lay the groundwork for future studies on experiential learning, leading to a better understanding of its long-term impact and how it can be adapted for diverse groups of students.

The significance of the study may be made clear to children through experiential learning, encouraging them to keep learning even after they leave the classroom. Students can gain valuable life skills via experiential learning. Problem-solving, critical thinking and teamwork are some of these abilities. Children's self-esteem and confidence may both be increased via experiential learning.

Review of Literature

Recent research highlights the relevance and impact of experiential learning across diverse educational settings. Mushahari (2022) found that pre-service teachers generally hold moderately to highly favorable attitudes toward experiential learning, with no significant gender differences, though implementation challenges persist. Evidence from secondary education further supports its effectiveness: Chopra (2022) reported that Class IX commerce students taught through experiential strategies showed significantly greater gains in social skills, assertiveness, facilitation, counseling skills, and overall learning outcomes compared to peers in conventional classrooms. At the primary level, Gobeil (2021) developed a framework for K-2 experiential learning and emphasized the facilitator's central role, noting positive

outcomes for both teachers and students when experiential methods are applied effectively. Complementing these findings, Gasperz and Uktolseja (2021) demonstrated how cultural resources like Maybrat Regency folklore can serve as tools for experiential learning, embedding character values such as hard work and peaceful coexistence while strengthening reading skills. Collectively, these studies suggest that experiential learning fosters positive attitudes, enhances interpersonal and academic outcomes, and can be adapted to different levels and contexts, but its success depends heavily on teacher facilitation, training, and contextual support. Recent scholarship has addressed the design, effectiveness, and perceptions of experiential learning across educational contexts. Hummel and Vermeulen (2021) systematically reviewed 31 empirical studies on implementing experiential learning in higher education teacher preparation programs, identifying how such learning environments are organized and highlighting associated design challenges. In applied classroom settings, Zapalska and Brozik (2020) demonstrated experiential learning's effectiveness in large classes by designing an auction market simulation for tourism and hospitality students, showing how activities can be tailored to Kolb's model. Aswita (2020) reviewed literature on experiential education and concluded that experiential learning and service learning models support meaningful learning and enable teachers to develop students' abilities holistically. At the undergraduate level, Noor et al. (2020) found that 120 Basic Hydraulics students in experiential learning groups reported satisfactory, meaningful learning experiences and stronger connections between theory and practice compared to conventional instruction. Collectively, these studies indicate that experiential learning can be systematically designed, adapted for large classes, and perceived positively by students, though effective implementation requires careful structuring and alignment with learning models. Research across educational levels has documented the effects of experiential learning on values, skills, and academic outcomes. Biswal (2019) found that value-integrated experiential learning improved Grade IX science students' value perception and elicited positive reactions to the pedagogy, though gains were not uniform across all values. In higher education, Renaud (2019) showed that graduate-level experiential learning is effectively demonstrated through portfolios when reflection links experiences to theory and application. At the secondary level, Voukelatou (2019) reported that experiential learning in an Athens school enhanced students' knowledge, social skills, and attitudes while supporting cultural heritage. Similarly, Morant (2017) provided empirical evidence from a Spanish business school that experiential strategies improve undergraduates' comprehension of theory and academic performance. Broader reviews support these findings: Bhardwaj (2014) concluded that experiential and active methods improve learning from pre-

primary through professional education, while Woods (2011) found that experiential activities in graduate programs can increase social awareness and engagement. Together, these studies suggest that experiential learning fosters cognitive development, social skills, value formation, and academic achievement across contexts, though outcomes depend on design, reflection, and implementation quality.

Research questions

- What is experiential learning?
- How do practice experiential learning?

Objective of the study

1. To understand the concept of experiential learning.
2. To explore the different practices of experiential learning.

Method

The research study adopted an exploratory case study methodology involving qualitative paradigm to answer the proposed research questions. This design is well-suited for capturing the depth and complexity of experiences, practices, and perspectives associated with experiential learning in the specific context of secondary education. It emphasizes in-depth exploration and description rather than statistical analysis, making it particularly useful for gaining insights into the nuanced aspects of teaching and learning methods in this setting.

Population and sample

All the teachers and students of Baleswar secondary Schools constitute the population of this study. The sample of the present study constitutes 15 secondary schools (consisting of 9^{th} and 10^{th} class) 15 teachers and 50 students are selected by using purposive sampling method.

Tools and techniques

Interview

The investigator will be collected the data by using interview schedule in Oder to explore the conception of the experiential learning, identify the subject suited best for experiential learning practices in secondary schools and investigate how secondary school teachers practice experiential learning. The investigator also used open end questionnaire to the students order to explore the view about experiential learning practices. These instruments facilitated the collection of data from secondary schools teachers and students.

Classroom Observations:

Direct observations were carried out in classrooms to assess how experiential learning is applied in practice. Observational data will focus on student behavior, engagement, and the teacher's interaction with the students.

Analysis

The data collected from the students and teachers was analyzed and discussed bellow.

Analysis of Teacher Interview

In order to know the secondary school teachers' conception of experiential learning, an interview was conducted with those who viewed the types of teaching methods used in classroom teaching. Maximum teachers chose to use experiential methods to teach students in the classroom. Whereas, less number of teachers chose to use storytelling methods, few numbers of teachers used demonstration methods. Then the researcher asked, are you using experiential learning? The researcher found that most of teachers use experiential learning. When the researcher asked the teacher how it is helpful, the investigator found that experiential learning helps teachers to make the classroom environment meaningful. Teachers ask and understand children's experiences at work, develop full competence in learning, engage children actively in the learning process through real-world experiences and reflections, and help children connect theoretical concepts with practical applications. It also helps to develop an interest in reading and the desire to understand his mind.

When the researcher questioned by teachers to explain what exactly that experiential learning, then the most of teachers are describe, experiential learning is about conducting learning independently and creating an atmosphere of fearlessness and excitement in the minds of children. Some of teachers think that experiential learning is about active participation, critical thinking, and problem solving. While 100% of the teachers mentioned real experience as the basic principle of experiential learning, none of the teachers mentioned the principles of active experimentation, detailed thinking, and reflective observation.

According to 100% of teachers, experiential learning is different from traditional learning methods because it involves hands-on experience. During experiential learning, teachers teach children in the classroom by showing numbers through cards, showing maps, circles, creating different types of math projects, literature projects and structures, using different colors to make letters into words, using glass balls, pendulums, etc. It is easier for teachers to use these materials in experiential learning because the textbooks provide instructions on how to use the

materials. According to 100% of teachers, the use of experiential learning materials shows a change in the student participation.

Student Interview Analysis

The majority of students express a positive sentiment toward attending school, largely driven by strong peer connections and a high baseline motivation to learn. When describing the experiential and project-based learning class, students primarily characterize it as a highly collaborative, hands-on, and creative environment that fosters independent thinking. This pedagogical approach sets the class apart from traditional subjects by replacing passive lecture-based note-taking with active, performance-based assessments, which students note significantly lowers their test anxiety and breaks the monotony of the standard school day. The scheduling of these projects during the 7th or 8th period serves an important dual purpose: it acts as a valuable space for practical, real-world skill application while simultaneously offering a structural mental decompression at the end of the school day. This high perceived value is reflected in strong project completion rates, fueled by intense intrinsic motivation, though minor delays occasionally occur due to strict semester time constraints. Furthermore, participation in this active learning style has yielded a direct, positive impact on overall student engagement. Hands-on tasks successfully mitigate chronic absenteeism and boost classroom participation, though maintaining clear instruction remains vital to prevent occasional student frustration. Beyond immediate academic engagement, the experiential framework plays a critical role in shaping students' future trajectories.. The minor constructive feedback gathered focuses primarily on requests for better resource allocation and clearer guidelines, rather than changes to the core curriculum itself.

Major findings

- Positive impact on student engagement and motivation: Experiential learning methods were found to enhance student engagement and motivation by providing hands-on experiences that directly relate to the curriculum.
- Improved learning outcomes: Teachers reported that experiential learning approaches led to improved learning outcomes among students, including deeper understanding of concepts and increased retention of information.
- Varied implementation approaches: Teachers employed a variety of experiential learning strategies, such as project-based learning, outdoor education, and field trips, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences.

- Fostering independent thinking: students characterize it as a highly collaborative, hands-on, and creative environment that fosters independent thinking.
- Reduce absenteeism: Hands-on tasks successfully mitigate chronic absenteeism and boost classroom participation
- Lower the text anxiety: By replacing passive lecture-based note-taking with active, performance-based assessments with the experiential learning pedagogy which students note significantly lowers their test anxiety and breaks the monotony of the standard school day

Overall, the study highlights the potential of experiential learning pedagogy to enhance teaching and learning in secondary schools, while also emphasizing the importance of support and training for teachers to successfully implement these methods

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