Chapter 7
Experiential Approach to Instruction
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Editors' Foreword

Preconditions
Content
- Any content that is related to experience

Learners
- All learners at all levels

Learning environments
- All instructional environments

Instructional development constraints
- Classroom management plan must be in place

Values (opinions about what is important
about ends (learning goals)
- Experience is an important end, as well as a means for reaching more abstract learning goals

about priorities (criteria for successful instruction)
- Effectiveness and appeal are valued over efficiency

about means (instructional methods)
- Learners should engage their own experiences in the service of learning goals
- Real world feedback is preferable
- Social constructivist approaches should be used
- Experiences should not be "too neat"

about power (to make decisions about the previous three)
- Learners should be active participants who assume much self-direction

Universal Methods
1. Frame the experience
   - Communicate objectives or goals
   - Communicate or negotiate assessment methods and criteria
   - Establish relationships (peers, teacher, community, context) and expected behavior of participants
2. Activate experience
   - Ensure authenticity in practice
   - Involve the learner in making decisions that have authentic outcomes
   - Focus on a problem
   - Challenge the students with experiences of optimal difficulty
3. Reflect on Experience
   - Facilitate deep reflection by challenging assumptions
   - Continue to build community
   - Help students to understand what happened, why, what was learned, and how to apply that learning in the future

Situational Principles
for framing the experience
- In online settings, take special note of building community and negotiation tasks.

- When using pairings (for example, a learner with a real-world counterpart), establish an appropriate social structure.
- In many situations, such as novel experiences or where failure presents ethical issues, experiential learning can and should include some didactic instruction, particularly in framing the experience.
- In games, role plays, simulations, or microworlds, set clear expectations, rules, and climate.
- When using role plays or simulations for building empathy, be careful to attend to ethical concerns.

for activating prior experience
- When there are multiple learners in a classroom, use classroom discussion to activate prior experience.
- When there are multiple learners (in a classroom or online), use discussion boards.
- When the learners have previous experience that is directly relevant to the topic, they may create stories to activate and reflect on that experience.
- When learners cannot reflect due to linguistic or psychological limitations, digital stories may be used

for activating new experience
- When time allows for extending the learning to new experiences, it should build on prior learning and experience.
- When skills are not desirable to practice in the field (risky, impractical), games, simulations, or role plays should be chosen.
- When trying to help learners find out about and experience cultures, simulations and role plays are particularly powerful.
- If a desired game or simulation is not available, it should only be used when sufficient development time is available.
- When self-concept and/or interdependence are important outcomes, use outdoor experiential learning.
- When instruction can or must be done at the learner's workplace, use action learning.
- When instruction can or must be done in a workplace, use work-based learning where university resources permit.
- In skills learning, teacher as coach may be a particularly appropriate teacher role for demonstration and practice.
- When instructional time allows and the learners are capable of acting autonomously, use apprenticeships, mentorships, internships, or service-learning. The structure of these methods varies depending on the characteristics of the practice environment and the objectives of the instruction.

for reflection on experience
- When a teacher may not be available (such as online learning) and the learner is prepared to engage in self-directed reflection, journals and portfolios may serve as a good means of reflecting.

for additional variable methods
- When instructional time is limited, address application of new knowledge through discussion.
- When time allows, provide another experience that builds on the previous experience as much as possible.

— CMR & ACC