



Creating Meaningful Experiences In and Out of the Classroom

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Important Quotes:

“Education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experiences”
(Dewey, 1897, p. 79).

“Learning is . . . created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984).

“All learning is experiential” (Baker, Robinson, & Kolb, 2012, p. 7).

The presence of experiences is assumed for effective teaching. Instructors should plan for and organize rich experiences prior to engaging students in the learning environment (Tyler, 1949).

The four stages of Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning cycle:

1. **Concrete Experience** – learn by experiencing a phenomenon
2. **Reflective Observation** – reflect on the experience
3. **Abstract Conceptualization** – draw conclusions about the experience
4. **Active Experimentation** – redo the experience with added knowledge

Instructors should ask deep, pertinent, timely, and relevant questions when teaching experientially.

Fundamental questions to consider when students engage in experiential learning:

1. What happened?
2. So what?
3. Now what?

Tips for teaching students through experiences:

- Allow time for students to think and respond
- Guide students through the process
- Ask additional questions versus provide correct responses

Summary

- People learn naturally through their experiences (i.e., trial and error)
- Instructors should create meaningful experiences in their learning spaces
- Experiences should be organized and situated in the context of what is being learned
- Instructors should guide students through the experiences by asking pertinent questions

For additional information about experiential learning, please contact ITLE at 405-744-1000.