

# Experiential Learning

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## What does experiential learning look like?

<https://facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/teaching/strategies/overview/experiential-learning>

### Experiential learning has the following elements

(Association for Experiential Education, 2007-2014):

- Experiences are carefully chosen for their learning potential (i.e. whether they provide opportunities for students to practice and deepen emergent skills, encounter novel and unpredictable situations that support new learning, or learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes).
- Throughout the experiential learning process, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, and constructing meaning, and is challenged to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for results.
- Reflection on learning during and after one's experiences is an integral component of the learning process. This reflection leads to analysis, critical thinking, and synthesis (Schon, 1983; Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993).
- Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, and/or physically, which produces a perception that the learning task is authentic.
- Relationships are developed and nurtured: learner to self, learner to others, and learner to the world at large.

### During experiential learning, the facilitators role is to:

- Select suitable experiences that meet the criteria above.
- Pose problems, set boundaries, support learners, provide suitable resource, ensure physical and emotional safety, and facilitate the learning process.
- Recognize and encourage spontaneous opportunities for learning, engagement with challenging situations, experimentation (that does not jeopardize the wellbeing of others) and discovery of solutions.
- Help the learner notice the connections between one context and another, between theory and the experience and encouraging this examination repeatedly.

# Experiential Learning Is The Future Of Learning

<https://elearningindustry.com/8-reasons-experiential-learning-future-learning>

More than a hundred years ago, Hermann Ebbinghaus formulated the learning curve, which describes the relationship between memory and time. In a nutshell, it says that, during a lecture, if your absorption rate is at 100 percent on day one, there is a 50-80 percent loss of learning from the second day onward, which is reduced to a retention rate of just 2-3 percent at the end of thirty days.

This theory is even more relevant in today's world where attention spans have come down and learning sometimes is reduced to 140 characters!

## How then can 'Experiential Learning' help overcome this situation?

We believe there are eight reasons why experiential learning is the future of learning.

### Accelerates Learning

Repetitive Learning or learning by rote has long been replaced by 'Learning by Doing.' Experiential Learning methodology uses critical thinking, problem solving and decision making to deliver a training module. This has become an established method to accelerate learning.

### Provides a Safe Learning Environment

Simulations use real life scenarios that depict several challenges, which a participant will eventually face after the course completion. It is only natural that mistakes happen during the course of learning, and using simulations is like taking kids to a playground, and getting them to have fun, try new things and learn, in a safe controlled environment.

### Bridges the Gap Between Theory and Practice

By moving beyond theory to the realm of "learning by doing," the trainee gets a first hand experience of practicing what has been taught. This plays a crucial role in retaining concepts and ideas.

### Produces Demonstrable Mindset Changes

There are very few learning methods that can have a dramatic impact on the participant's mindset. Experiential Learning is one of them. Management guru Henry Mintzberg pointed out long ago that, "Leadership, like swimming, cannot be learned by reading about it".

### Increases Engagement Levels

The high focus on collaboration and learning from each other benefits the participant as it increases engagement. On the other hand, since the participant is immediately involved in the problem solving activity or event, the level of ownership of the outcome is high.

### Delivers Exceptional Return on Investment (RoI)

Experiential learning is personal and effective in nature, influencing both feelings and emotions as well as enhancing knowledge and skills. It goes beyond classroom learning and ensures that there is high level of retention, thereby delivering exceptional RoI over a traditional learning program.

## **Provides Accurate Assessment Results**

Assessing the effectiveness of the training program in terms of the benefits to the trainees and the company is a crucial element of any learning program. Most assessments are data driven and traditional tools use tests to measure effectiveness. When it comes to experiential learning programs, it is extremely difficult to gather data, which can be used for assessments. This is where analytics come in. When combined with simulations and gamification, experiential training products become a powerhouse of data, which can be used to deliver assessments results accurately across cognitive learning, skills affect and objective results. The analytics engines in these simulations record, analyze and provide a detailed report on the participants' interaction throughout the simulation.

## **Enables Personalized Learning**

In order to enable personalized learning, every program needs to enable a journey through the following phases: Assessment, teaching and learning strategy, and curriculum choice. Experiential learning methodology is highly effective in meeting these requirements to enable personalized learning. It is a radical departure from traditional learning methods and takes the learning beyond the classroom. The participants set their own learning pace. By combining technology and simulations with experiential learning, companies are making this concept available anytime and anywhere, across multiple devices. This has introduced the concepts of flipped classroom, where the learning goes to the students and not the other way.