

Experiential Learning: The Future Of 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 by technology and learning sometimes is reduced to 140 characters!

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

Here are some reasons why experiential learning is effective:

- **Accelerates Learning:** Repetitive intellectual learning has long been replaced by "Learning by Doing."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 to present challenges, which a participant will eventually get to "experience" after or during the course completion. It is only natural that mistakes happen during the course of learning. Using simulations is like taking kids to a playground and getting them to have fun and try new things in a safe environment.
- **Bridges the Gap Between Theory and Practice:** By moving beyond theory to the realm of "learning by doing," the participant gets a first hand experience of practicing what has been taught. This plays a crucial role in retaining concepts or ideas and discovering solutions.
- **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 events, 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 behaviors, 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.
- **Enables Personalized Learning:** To empower personalized learning, every program needs to enable a journey through the following phases: Exposure to emotional involvement with repetition, teaching and learning experiences 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 emotional engagement and simulations with experiential learning, practical application in life becomes transformational mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. This delivery has introduced the concepts of flipped classroom, where the learning goes to the students and not the other way!