

Good example of critical thinking on learning and experience

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



According to chapter six of “ Adult learning: Linking theory and practice” by Merriam & Bierema (2013), learning is defined as the ongoing refinement of practice and the emerging knowledge that is gained in the practice of a particular action. Learning and experience are interlinked in that one’s experience is a learning process and, on the other hand, learning creates experience. The more a person is learned, the more he or she is experienced and vice versa. Learning takes place in either formal or informal sectors of life. It is more pronounced in the adults because of the continued engagement in activities; whether in public, private or other professionals in the daily life. Adult learning just like in kids means reflecting upon experiences and assigning meanings out of the experiences one goes through. The more a person is experienced in a particular activity or area of work, the more a person becomes an expert in the area due continual learning and experiences. Learning and skills are, therefore, like a two sided coin. The two are intertwined.

Theory and practice are linked in that theoretical learning instills skills and knowledge in an individual that are later implemented through work. It requires memorization and understanding for intended results to be achieved. Transformative learning, which is very much embedded in the everyday life experiences, causes right thinking human beings to question life assumptions and the general life. In chapter six, it is brought to light that learning is stimulated when our earlier life experiences fail to explain the present happenings or situations. In transformative learning, reflective experience is essential because it helps in relating habitual events and actions to be taken in a given situation. In the process, the mind grows or

rather knowledge is acquired. Transformative learning allows for accommodation of real life experiences through change of meaning of experience.

Adult learning in colleges is enhanced through the development of prior learning portfolios as it allows for reflection and learns from both professional and personal experiences. Reflection gives the mind time to reorganize and meditate upon an issue and in the process, confidence and capacity to assign new meaning to experience is developed. It promotes learning as it is linked directly to experience. In some cases, experiential learning is practiced for adults. It enables individuals to learn by use of instructional strategies and other familiar programs that make learning easy as real life. The programs are used by adult educators in helping their clients learn with more ease. The point is that, the experiential programs and strategies aid training. The programs are made of real life experiences as learning is made accessible from experience. Learning takes place through the transformation of events. Experience, therefore, aids learning. Effective learning happens when there are four kinds of abilities namely: reflection observation ability, active experimentation ability, concrete experiment ability and abstract conceptualization ability. The abilities facilitate learning from different aspects of life activities and events.

Reflective learning is widely employed in adult education as it allows the subject to meditate or reflect on in their experience or training and in the process, learning does take place efficiently. It is profound in professional education systems. It is widely thought that the more an individual engages in reflective practice, the most expert the person becomes. It is an indication

on learning has taken place. It is occurring, as a result of reflecting on the previous experiences or work; thus experience and learning are related. In a community for instance, newcomers learn from the engagements they have with their seniors who mastery of the community organization. Mastery occurs, as a result, of the organization of the community of practice. The interaction with the community facilitates one to conceptualize the practice, procedures and jargon used if there is. It is a demonstration of learning from experience of others already in the system who are well versed, unlike the newcomers. According to cognitive apprenticeship that is an instructional strategy, learning takes place in a given context about the tools used and social interactions between the educator and the apprentice. Cognitive learning is not always skill based; it can as well be dealing with other life activities such as dealing with grief spiritual matters.

In conclusion, learning is what goes on in our daily lives, as a result of shared activities or history. Learning takes place anywhere and anytime. It can take place in a formal setting such as in school or college or the informal activities at home, in the course of adventure and so on. Human beings are ever involved skills that are learning potentials. Experiences lead to new knowledge and the cycles go on and on. The reverse is also true. One, therefore, cannot talk of education without talking of experience or vice versa. Reflective learning as widely used by adult educators helps in learning by reflecting and meditating on one's experience. Practice of a particular skill enhances learning as practice does better than theory. On the same note, theoretical skills acquired in a particular field are sharpened through

practice. To this end, therefore, experience and learning are directly connected.

Reference

Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2013). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (ISBN: 978-1-118-13057-5)