

THE EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION



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Effective learning takes place when a learner progresses through a cycle of 4 stages known as the Kolb's learning cycle.

Using Kolb's learning cycle (1984), the learners were being asked the 5W1H (What, Where, When, Who, Why and How) questions of what a platypus is, where a platypus can be found, why a platypus is different from a duck etc., to build upon the learners' prior knowledge. Next, they went on to find words that apply the 'y says e' rule and underline them. Lastly, they worked in groups of 2 or 3 to plan and write the newspaper article. I was encouraging and praised learners whenever they

showed effort in the group discussion. Based on the concrete experiences, I will be able to predict the performance of the learners.

In the reflection observation stage, the learners were asked to reflect on their performance, what the contributing factors were, any difficulties they encountered, and how they could improve upon to be able to eventually write the newspaper article. The feedback given was that they were having difficulties identifying the words which had 'y says e'. They had trouble coming up with ideas on what to write for the newspaper article.

In the abstract conceptualisation stage, I will come



out with solutions to bridge the gap between where the learners are and the desired outcomes. Applying Fleming's VARK (2014), I will use a song accompanied with gross motor movements to teach the spelling rule of 'y says e' to cater to learners with multimodal preference – kinesthetic and auditory. For visual learners, I will use different font sizes and different marker colours to teach the concept. To provide scaffolding, I will supplement teaching of the concept with the use of worksheets. I will use the worksheets to cater to read/write learners where they get to read the concept on paper and fill in the blanks provided to show understanding. In the presentation stage, I will show a video of what a platypus is to cater to kinesthetic learners whereby the learners build concrete experiences through simulation.

Learning would greatly be enhanced if the learners can be immersed in the environment whereby they get to see living platypuses, have first-hand experience through the 5 senses to build prior knowledge. I will also design comprehension questions to bridge the gap between the learners' knowledge and the expected writing task. Using Bloom's Taxonomy (2002) to develop critical thinking skills, questions will be designed like "Who are Dino and Dongo?" to "Give examples of the accomplishment of Dino and Dongo" to "What changes would you make to solve the problem of hunting of platypuses?" so that lower order to higher order thinking skills can be developed sequentially. During the deconstruction stage leading to the writing task where learners are asked to brainstorm to write a story, I will facilitate the discussion with a mindmap of a platypus using the 5W1H questions done on a flipchart.

This scaffolding technique would make it easier for them to articulate their thoughts in writing using the 5W1H framework. I pads will also be given to allow them to research and contribute to the mindmap as

a group. Using social constructivism as a learning philosophy (Berkeley Graduate School), I think that this would be a better approach to help them formulate solutions to help the platypus in captivity. They would also have engaged in active learning where they seek out answers to solve the problems of platypus in captivity. At the same time, I will use the social reform perspective of TPI (2014) where I encourage learners to think consciously about the plight of platypuses and subconsciously take social action to change society for the well-being of platypuses through their own research and projects.

In the active experimentation stage, before the start of the next lesson, I will apply those strategies and tools mentioned in the abstract conceptualisation stage and see for myself in the concrete experience stage whether students have met the desired outcomes of the lesson. In conclusion, every learner is different, and we should be mindful of the different learning styles of every learner though according to Leite, Svinicki and Shi (2010), catering to a learner's learning style does not lead to better learning. In my opinion, effective learning will only come about when teaching and presentation of materials is in a multimodal way to cater to the different learners, more so for dyslexic learners who require brain stimulation through a multisensory approach.

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