The Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy

Experiential Teaching Approaches and Techniques to Advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on Education

Ifeolu John Koni PhD, BL.

EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES TO ADVANCE THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ON EDUCATION

Ifeolu John Koni, PhD, BL.*

Being the text of a lecture delivered on March 28, 2024, at the 2024 Academic Staff Capacity Development Programme on Modern Teaching Methods and Pedagogy held at Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

At the global level, attention has significantly shifted to quality and equitable education for all. This is underscored by the fact that quality education is listed as one of the fundamental components of the United Nations' (UN) sustainable development 2030 agenda. Goal 4 of the agenda, otherwise called SDG4, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, pursuant to Resolution 70/1, states that the world will strive to ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.[1] At the national level in Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in pursuit of its aim at producing fit- for -purpose graduates, has introduced the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) the overarching goal of which is to reflect the 21st Century realities in the existing and new disciplines and programmes in the Nigerian university system.[2]

In launching the new CCMAS, the Commission aims, inter alia, at promoting "measurable benchmark of knowledge, 21st Century skills and competencies

---

* Professor & Dean, Faculty of Law, Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria konij@run.edu.ng ; ife4law@yahoo.com

[1] THE 17 GOALS -Sustainable Development Goals – the United Nations https://sdgs.un.org.goals accessed 22 March 2022.

[2] Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, Preface- NUC CCMAS <nuc.ccmas.ng> accessed 22 March 2024.

expected to be acquired by an average graduate of each of the academic programmes for self, national, and global relevance."[3]

To achieve the above beautifully worded goals, it has become imperative for stakeholders in the education sector to seek and pursue paradigm shift from the traditional classroom instruction approach to a new, more effective teaching pedagogy consistent with the global trends in higher education, particularly at the university level. A very crucial aspect of this new approach is what is called Experiential Teaching and Learning Model (ETLM) which is the primary focus of this paper. For ease of presentation, this paper has seen divided into the following eight parts: (i) Introduction; (ii) Conceptual Definitions; (iii) Historical Perspectives.; (iv) Comparison between Traditional and Modern Methods; (v) Methods and Techniques of Experiential Model; (vi) Benefits of Experiential Pedagogy; (vii) Challenges of Application and Adaptation; and (viii) Conclusion and Recommendations

2. CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

The keywords inferable from the topic of this paper are, Experiential, Teaching, Approaches and Techniques. We shall now proceed to define them and demonstrate the context in which they are used in this paper.

2.1 Experiential Teaching and Learning

The easiest way to explain the meaning of the term "experiential teaching" is to consider these immortal words credited to Confucius (551 -479 BCE), China's most famous teacher, philosopher, and political theorist: "Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand."[4]

Let us consider two scenarios to corroborate the point being made by Confucius in the above quote.

Scenario 1 (retrieved from openoregon.pressbooks.pub/educ)

Frida decided to make her mom a special breakfast featuring "Eggs Benedict" for Mother's Day, which involved poaching some eggs as her sister had casually explained. She decided to give it a try and prepared the

_____

[3]   Ibid.

[4]   Confucious/Biography, Teachings and Facts https://www.britania.com accessed 23 March 2024.

boiling water. She cracked the eggs into the boiling salted water and peered in excitedly. Soon the pot was a swirling mess of egg white, not at all what she could serve on a plate! Frida decided to rely on her old friend YouTube. Fortunately, there were many cooks to observe. The big thing they were all doing was adding vinegar to the water. Some of them swirled the water to get a whirlpool effect. She then consulted a few recipes and planned her next attempt. This time she would not salt the water because she had learned that this affected the egg's ability to hold its shape. This time she had a plan and this time the eggs turned out beautifully!

Scenario 2 (Based on this writer's personal experience)

This writer decided to refill the cooking gas in his family house at a time his wife was not at home and could not immediately be reached on phone as she was airborne. To do this, the gas cylinder needed to be disconnected from the pipe transferring the gas content to the burner. After some fruitless efforts, he sought the assistance of a young man who struggled with the device for more than 30 minutes without success. This writer then made a telephone call to a young lady (a teenager), who once lived with his wife, for a guide on how the task could be accomplished. With a gentle press on a bottom, at the instruction of this little girl, the gas cylinder was disconnected. The girl was able to assist because she had been involved in the task of connecting and disconnecting the gas cylinder from the pipe. She learned the task through continuous experience.

With the foregoing scenarios, we can now examine some of the definitions of experiential teaching and learning.[5]

Experiential learning has been described simply as the process of learning by doing. According to the Centre for Undergraduate Excellence, Kent State University, by engaging students in hands-on experiences and reflection, they are better able to connect theories and knowledge learned in the classroom to real-world situations.[6] According to David Allen Kolb, experiential learning is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of

---

[5] It is important to state, at this juncture, that the terms "experiential teaching" and experiential "learning" are so related that they constitute a blended, interwoven process. This is the sense in which they are used in this paper.

[6] What is Experiential Learning and Why is it important? Kent State University/ Community Engaged Learning www.kent.edu.community/what-experiential learning accessed 23 March 2024.

experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming the experience.[7]

Kolb, an emeritus professor of organizational behavior at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, further described this pedagogy as "a process where knowledge results from making meaning as a result of direct experience". Experiential learning has been further described as "a cyclical process that capitalizes on the participants' experience for acquisition of knowledge.[8] This process involves setting goals, thinking, planning, experimentation, reflection, observation and review.

In what seems to be the most elaborate attempt, Simon Fraser University defines experiential learning as:

> The strategic, active engagement of students in opportunities to learn through doing, and reflection on their activities, which empowers them to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical endeavours in a multitude of settings inside and outside of the classroom.[9]

The foregoing definitions can be summed up in this apt description by the Centre for Teaching Excellence at MIAMI University, Oxford, Ohio, reproduced thus, for ease of reference:

> Experiential learning requires the active engagement of the students as well as the instructor who serves as the facilitator of the learning process. It is intended to be an active, dynamic alternative to traditional classroom that should be interactive and collaborative for those involved.[10]

_____

[7] D. Kolb, Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development, Englewood chiffs Nj: Prentice Hall https://opentextbc.ca/teachi nginadigitalage/chapter /4-4-models-for-teaching-by-doing/ accessed 23 March 2024.

[8] Experiential Learning Theory – Educational Learning Theories https://openor egon. pressbooks.pub/educationallearntheories23rdchapter/chapter-6-experiential-learning-theory-2 accessed 23 march 2024.

[9] Experiential learning: Learning by doing (2) https://opentextbookbc.ca/teaching inadigitalage accessed 23 march 2024.

[10] What is Experiential Learning? https://miamiob.edu/cte/flc-resources/experiential-learning/el-introduction/ accessed 23 march 2024.

2.2 Approaches and Techniques

The term "approach" (the plural form being approaches), according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, means "a way of dealing with a person or thing."[11] The word technique(s), on the other hand, is defined by the same Dictionary as, "a means or method of achieving one's purpose, especially skillfully".[12] It is further defined as a manner of performance. Perhaps, the thin line of distinction between these two concepts is that the latter deals with more technical matters relating to skills than the former. This observation, notwithstanding, the two can actually be taken together, and that is the approach that has been adopted in this presentation. In effect, an approach, especially when new, deals with a paradigm shift from an old order to a new one. Techniques deal with the methods and strategies that are needed to be adopted for the effective implementation of the new order. As the teaching community migrates from the orthodox instruction mode to the experiential, do-it-yourself, pedagogy, we shall, in this paper, be looking at some of the methods and strategies that can be adopted to ensure the success of this new order.

3. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

3.1 Origins and Evolution of Experiential Teaching and Learning Approach (ETLA)

The history of experiential learning can be traced back to the medieval era when university students would learn via hands-on experience in apprenticeships. As a matter of fact, it has been suggested that informal learning by the do-it-yourself approach goes back further as it is as old as the use of tools by humanities.[13]

The more formal medieval approach was regarded as a way of enabling students to acquire practical knowledge and skills necessary for their future career. Experiential learning grew further during the Renaissance as students studied a variety of subjects like Law, Engineering and Painting through hands-on-experience.

_____

[11] Della Thompson, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Curent English (9th edn, Oxford University Press, 1995) 61.

[12] Ibid 1420.

[13] The History of Experiential Learning in Higher Education https://www.edusour ced.com/what-is-work-integrated-learning/ accessed 23 March 2024.

It is important to note that this mode of learning became more formalized in Higher Education in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. An American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, John Dewey, is credited to have introduced the concept of "Experiential Education", which laid considerable emphasis on the importance of hands-on-experience and real-world experience in education. Determined to incorporate practical experiences into their educational programmes, many universities across the United States of America and Europe embraced this new order.

The popularity of experiential learning grew further in the mid-20th Century, particularly as the phenomenal rise in the industrial and technological sectors created more opportunities for students to acquire hands-on experience in different fields. At this point in time, many schools began to offer programmes specifically focused on experiential learning under the aegis of co-op programmes and internships.

 Building on the foundation laid by Dewey, David Kolb, An American organizational sociologist and educational theorist, in 1974, published a book titled, Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning,[14] in what marked the commencement of the modern Experiential Learning and Teaching Approach (ELTA). Kolb, who got his Bachelor of Arts (BA) decree from Knox College in 1961, and Master of Arts (MA) und Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Harvard University in sociology in 1964 and 1967, respectively, has done a lot of research focusing on how humans process experience. He believes that learning is a process where knowledge is gained from direct experience. His experiential learning theory has been described as "a holistic or 'meta-view' of learning that is a combination of experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour. It is noteworthy that this scholar in order to explore and continue research on the experiential learning theory, in 1981, founded the Experience Based Learning Systems (EBLS), along with his wife, Alice.

Experiential learning has, today, become an integral part of Higher Education and it is widely accepted as an effective way for students, particularly those studying professional courses like Law, Engineering, Medicine, Architecture, etc, to learn valuable and career-ready skills. Many universities in America, Europe and even Africa, now offer a range of experiential learning opportunities, including but not limited to, internship, co-op programmes,

_____

[14]   David A. Kolb and Ronald E. Fry, Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning (Case Western Reserve University Press, 1974).

project-based learning, Students Industrial Work Experience (SIWES), law clinic, moot and mock trial, as we as chambers/court attachment (for law students).

4. TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES VERSUS EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A lot of light has already been shed on the new approach in this lecture. The next question should be what are the main elements in the old order that the educational community across the globe is trying to change? It is to this question that we shall now direct our attention.

4.1 The Key Elements of the Old Order

Under the traditional teaching method, otherwise known as the conventional approach to teaching, the teachers are the controllers of the class; they take full responsibility for the learning environment. All the powers and duties are vested in the teachers. As the lecturer in-change, he/she plays the role of an instructor for the students and the decision maker with regard to what to teach and how to teach.[15] The following have been identified as the key elements of the orthodox approach:

- Classrooms are teacher-centric.
- Teachers are the main source of knowledge-they take the responsibility of knowledge dispensers, rather than being the facilitators.
- The methods of chalk and talk are highly used.
- Classrooms are regimented.
- There is lack of collaboration and group learning among students. This is because teacher gives lectures and students learn.
- The main motive of teacher is to prepare students for examinations rather than teach and make them understand the concept and syllabus.
- Consequently, students learn or study just to pass exams and obtain good grades.
- No proper alignment is seen between objectives, activities, and assessment.[16]

_____

[15] The Traditional Method of teaching and Education https://www.digitalclassroom world.com accessed 23 March 2024.
[16] Ibid

4.2 Main Features of the Experiential Model

- It involves the active engagement of the students as well as the instructor who serves as the facilitator or mentor of the learning process.
- It is interactive and collaborative for those involved - both teacher and the students.
- It is team-based and transformative.
- It encourages students to observe and reflect on their experiences and their reactions to the experience with others in the class or group.
- Students are given time in the class to process their experience and reflections, relating them to the process, dynamics, themes, challenges, and successes.
- Students are able to share how they will apply the lessons learnt through skills, values, insights, and knowledge to their future and profession.
- Students are at the centre of the learning while the instructor serves as a mentor or facilitator of the process, offering guidance on a limited basis.
- The instructor serves as an intellectual coach for collaborative students learning, skill development, and personal growth.

From the foregoing analysis, we can see the major differences between the old and the new approaches. It is equally possible to figure out, from this comparative analysis, the benefits or advantages of the new over the old order. We shall return to this shortly later. At this juncture, let us consider the main methods of the experiential approach and how it can be applied in practice.

5. METHODS AND APPLICATIONS OF THE EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH

In their book, Teaching for Experiential Learning: Five Approaches that Work, Wurdinger and Carlson,[17] stress the need to change the way in which educators conduct business in the classroom. They lament that our current educational systems lack ways to reach today's learners in relevant, meaningful ways. Through this massive work, the authors attempt to inspire and motivate students to learn while providing in-depth description into the overlapping approaches anchored on active learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, service-learning, and place-based education. Each of these approaches includes an element of student involvement and deliberate

_____

[17] Julie A. Carlson and Scott D. Wurdinger, Teaching for Experiential Learning: Five Approaches that Work, Minnesota State University, Mankato https://cornerstone. llb.mnsu.edu accessed 23 March 2024.

attempts to engage them (students) in solving problems. The primary goal of the work is to assist educators in transforming their classrooms into dynamic learning environments.

5.1 Instructors' Responsibilities

As noted earlier in this paper, the role of the instructor in experiential learning is quite different from what obtains under the conventional method. Under the new approach, students are at the centre of the learning. In other words, it is student-centred. The instructor/lecturer/teacher merely serves as an academic coach. Carlson and Wurdinger have indeed identified at least ten major responsibilities of an instructor who teaches for experiential learning in a university. They are reproduced below for emphasis:[18]

- Be willing to accept a less teacher-centric role in the classroom
- Approach the learning experience in a positive, non-dominating way.
- Identify an experience in which students will find interest and be personally committed.
- Explain the purpose of the experiential learning situation to the students.
- Share your feelings and thoughts with your students and let them know that you are learning from the experience too.
- Tie the course learning objectives to course activities and direct experience so students know what they are supposed to do.
- Provide relevant and meaningful resources to help students succeed.
- Allow students to experiment and discover solution on their own.
- Find a sense of balance between the academic and nurturing aspects of the teaching.
- Clarify students and instructor role.

5.2 Student Responsibilities

If teaching for experiential learning is largely student-centred, it means that much also is expected from the student under this approach. As noted by a writer,[19] the new approach may require that students step outside of their comfort zone to take on challenges and tasks where they are unsure of their abilities.

For the avoidance of any doubt, and for ease of reference, a list of student's responsibilities adapted from Wurdinger and Carlson, and developed by

_____

18 Ibid, 13
19 What is Experiential Learning? Centre for Teaching Excellence, Miami University, Ohio <https://miamioh.edu/cte/tls>accessed 23 March 2024.

Janet Giesen,[20] of the Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Northern Illinois University, Dekaib, Illinois, is reproduced below:

- Students will be involved in problems which are practical, social, and personal.
- Students will be allowed freedom in the classroom as long as they make headway in the learning process.
- Students will often be involved with difficult and challenging situations while discovering.
- Students will self-evaluate their own progress or success in the learning process which becomes the primary means of assessment.
- Students will learn from the learning process and become open to change. This change includes less reliance on the instructor and more on fellow peers, the development of skills to investigate and learn from an authentic experience and the ability to objectively self-evaluate one's performance.

5.3 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

This comprises four major modes of learning, namely, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. This can be represented by both tabular and circular forms.

Concrete Experience	Having the actual experience. The learner has a hand-on experience connected to the learning outcome.
Reflective Observation	The learner reflects and reviews the experience from a range of different perspectives.
Abstract Conceptualization	The learner analyses and connects the experience to previous learning and develops new ideas about the content being taught.
Active Experimentation	The learner tries out what he has learned. This is the stage of doing

According to Kolb, all four modes must be addressed for learning to be hugely effective. And as new ideas are put into action, a new cycle of experiential learning begins.

_____

[20] Janet Giesen - Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning. Instructional Design Coordinator/Northern Illinois <https://www.researchgate.net > accessed 23 March 2024.
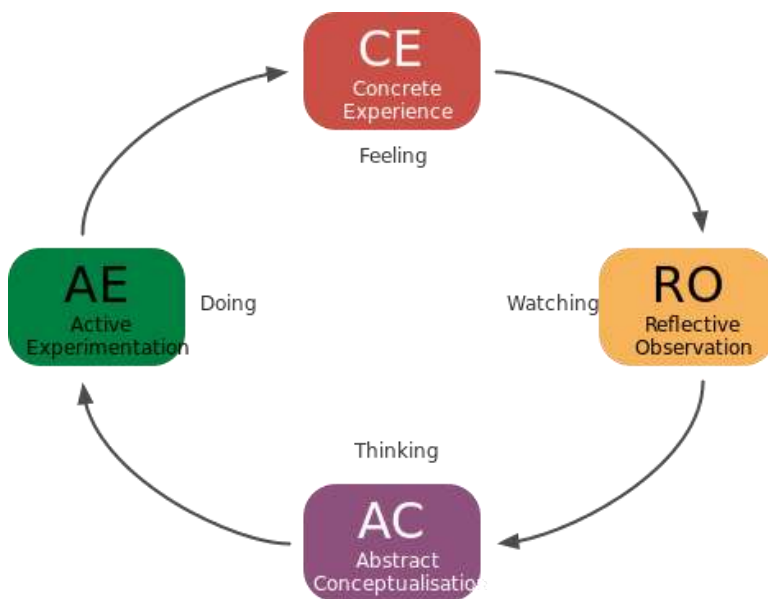
The learning model outlined by Kolb in this theory has been vividly explained in a scenario presented below, regarding a young lad learning to ride a bike:

STEP 1: Concrete Experience: gets on the bicycle and tries it out and falls.
STEP 2: Reflective Observation: watches others ride the bicycle.
STEP 3: Abstract Conceptualization: Piece thoughts together to create abstract concepts about what occurred which will serve as guides for future actions.
STEP 4: Active Experimentation: Actively test riding a bike with new information.[21]

5.4 Applications of Experiential Learning Model

In the United States, as in Nigeria, different applications of experiential education model exist within and outside the campuses of institutions of

_____

[21] Experiential Learning Theory – Educational Learning Theories <https://openo regon.pressbook.pub/educationallearningtheories> 23 March 2024.

higher learning. Some of them, like internship and Students' Industrial Work Experience (SIWES), have a more general application while others, like court and chambers attachment, teaching practice, and clinicals are discipline-specific. In the law profession, for example, it is mandatory for law students in the various Faculties and Colleges of Law to proceed on chambers' attachment for about three months before being qualified to write the LLB examination. During the one-year vocational training at the Nigerian Law School, students are also required to proceed on chambers and court attachments. Participation in these programmes is a requirement for writing the Bar Part II finals examination and for call to the Bar as barristers and solicitors of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

The whole essence of being asked to go for chambers or court attachment is to enable the students experience law in action. The legal profession, it must be acknowledged, is skilled-based. Law in the books and statutes is different from law in action. This is probably the reason why the promoters of realist jurisprudence, like Wendell Holmes and Karl Llewellyn, argue that the law in practice is what the courts say it is. In other words, to the realists, law is judge-made.[22]

In an article titled, Experiential Learning Theory, published in Theoretical Models for Teaching and Research, Ali Asiri, identifies the major examples of well-established experiential learning activities as follows.[23]

- Cooperative Education
- Internships
- Field Courses.
- Study abroad
- Service Learning
- Simulations and Gaming

5.4.1 Cooperative Education
This has been described as a structured educational strategy intended to integrate classroom studies with work-based learning related to a student's academic career goals. It provides a field-based experience that integrates theory and practice. It operates as a partnership among students, educational

_____

[22] Ifeolu J.Koni, Appreciating the Nigerian Legal System (Decision Management Consult Ltd, 2021) 25-26

[23] Ali Asiri, Experiential Learning Theory< https://opentext.wsu.edu >accessed 24 March 2024.

institutions and work sites which includes business, government, and non-profit community organizations. Students often earn credit and a grade for their cooperative experience. Thus, operation of this venture is remarkably similar to Nigeria's SIWES scheme.

5.4.2 Internships
This is closely related to cooperative education approach. It is a temporary position which may be paid or unpaid. The emphasis is on on-the-job-training, which makes it very similar to apprenticeship. Most of the interns are university students, although high school students or postgraduate students sometime participate in the programme.

5.4.3 Service Learning

It is a teaching and learning strategy which integrates community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities with emphasis on meeting community needs. Service learning is usually linked to school and college courses due to its connection to content acquisition and student development. Service learning can equally be offered and organized by community organizations.

In the law profession, the equivalent of service learning is what we call law clinic wherein clinicians who are law students offer free legal services to community as part of their training. A law clinic is a programme that provides hands-on legal experience to law students but also provides legal services to mostly indigent clients. It is usually coordinated by clinical professors and senior academics who are usually experienced lawyers and teachers. They work with the cases with law students in the university or law school. There are currently eighteen (18) active law clinics in Nigeria. [24]

5.4.4 Concept of Teaching Practice
It is a core course in preparation of teachers in Nigeria. It is usually carried out in both colleges of education, faculties of education and institutes in Nigerian universities. It is supervised for quality assurance. The main goal of teaching practice is to prepare student teachers for teaching by practical training. It has been described as a cardinal and indispensable aspect in the

---

[24] Law Clinics in Nigeria< Https://law2go.org.law-clinics >accessed 24 March 2024.

preparation of teachers for the new generation.[25] In effect, teaching practice is a form of work-integrated learning that is prescribed at a period of time when students are working in the relevant industry to receive specific in-service training in order to apply theory in practice.[26]

5.4.5 Moot Court and Mock Trials

This is another discipline- specific application of the experiential teaching and learning approach. It is peculiar only to law students. The main goal of this programme is to incorporate experiential learning techniques into the curricula of law students. Moot Courts or mock trials are usually based on hypothetical cases involving emerging or unsettled areas of law. The primary purpose of this programme is to expose law students to the nuances of court system and to enable them to learn advocacy skills. It is also intended to provide a real-life experience cum training in carrying out cutting-edge research, presenting ground-breaking argument-oral and written and contributing to the development of jurisprudence in the concerned area of laws.[27]

5.4.6 Simulations and Gaming

These are notable techniques of experiential learning because they involve direct experience. Within game interactions, several cycles are often presented to the participant. They consist of participation by the user, decision making and a period of analysis in a process which coincides largely with the experiential learning cycle outlined by Kolb. Studies have shown that simulations which shorten the debriefing period at the end of the game session can reduce their own effectiveness. What this means is that games which do not allow for appropriate reflections are less effective than those in which proper reflection occurs. It is apparent, therefore, that the reflective observation and abstract conceptualization portions of simulations and games are fatal to learning.

5.5 The Role of Digital Technology in Experiential Learning

_____

[25] Sina O. Ayelaagbe and Anneo. Bello, Teaching Practice: Tool for Quality Assurance in Preparation of Teachers for New Generation in Nigeria< https://www.global academicgroup.com> accessed 24 March 2024.

[26] For further reading, see Teaching Practice for Nigerian Teacher Development: Challenges and Merits https://www.researchgate.net accessed 24 March 2024.

[27] The Institute of Company secretaries of India, 14th All India Moot Court Competition https://.ICSI.edu > accessed 24 march 2024.

There is no doubt that the information age has become an era of knowledge, providing sound and robust feasibility for discovery, exchange of information, communication and exploration to strengthen the teaching and learning process. As rightly noted by Dalia and Chowdhury,[28] information technologies have affected every aspect of human activity and thus have a crucial role to play in the field of education and training, to transform it into an innovative form of experience. The truth is that technology engages learners and animates their imagination. It stimulates minds in ways that make a profound and lasting difference.[29] That is why technology, for many, is one of the most important new teaching strategies and learning styles introduced in the past 50 years.[30]

Technology considerations, in the context of experiential teaching and learning, can involve the following:

5.5.1 Blackboard Journals
This is a new technology which includes links to resources, multimedia as well as text. Its limitation is that it can only be viewed and commented upon by the teaching staff and not by other students in the course.[31]

5.5.2 An ePortfolio[32]
This is an evolving electronic/online resource that acts to record, store and archive the artefacts of learning and reflection for an individual learner. This is available to students and it can be used by them to include text, multimedia, images or links as part of their reflection.

5.5.3 Kaltura [33]
This is a video server which allows staff and students to upload videos they have produced and embed them into course sites. An instructor can use this device to create video assignment for students to submit i.e students can submit videos for assessment.

_____

[28] Hosneara Delia and Mostafa O. Chowdhury, 'Information technology and Teaching Method: An Assessment on the Students of Social Science Faculty and Business Faculty of University of Dhake' (2017) 7(8), Journal of Information Engineering and Application <https://www.jiste.org> accessed 24 March 2024.

[29] Ibid

[30] Ibid

[31] For more on this device, see https://elearning.uq.edu.au/guides/blogs-and-journals

[32] https://elearning.uq.edu.au/guides/blogs-eportfolio

[33] https://elearning.uq.edu.au/guides/blogs-Video-assignments

5.5.4 Digital Classrooms

Haleem, et al, define digital classrooms as the use of electronic devices or platforms such as social media, multimedia, and mobile phones to teach students.[34] Digital learning is a learning strategy which employs technology to fulfill the entire curriculum allowing students to learn quickly. The digital classroom focuses on teaching through the use of technology. In a digital classroom, students employ technological and internet-connected gadgets like laptops, tablets, chromebooks etc, instead of taking notes on what the teacher is teaching. Most of the curriculum is delivered to students online via an engaging and inter-active platform.

It is important to add that educational application and websites are employed in digital classrooms to assist students in improving their learning experience. Two critical components of a digital classroom are technology and feedback loops. The latter are essential for students to obtain real-time feedback from their teacher. Also, teachers can use feedback loops to provide feedback depending on many factors such as student, lesson, group etc. Equally used in the teaching/learning process are PPTs, video presentations, e-learning methods, online training, and other digital approaches. The relevance of technology under the new experiential pedagogy lies in the fact that classroom instruction is becoming more participatory. Students may now learn many topics on their own by using internet resources and digital classrooms. As rightly noted by Haleem et al, in schools, colour charts, graphs, and models described the finest instruction of the class. However, they are now considered old-fashioned methods of giving education. This is because under the new order, the classroom is no longer restricted to reading books, writing on the blackboard to explain chapters and concepts, and taking notes in their books.[35]

5.6 Optimizing Experiential Teaching and Learning

Cornell University, New York, has provided a ten-step guideline for optimizing experiential learning. They are reproduced below, for ease of reference:

(i)   Make it purposeful (meaningful).
(ii) Provide opportunities for reflection.
(iii) Include faculty involvement throughout the process.
(iv) Students work should be evaluated.

_____

[34]   Abid Haleem, et al, 'Understanding the Role of Digital Technologies in Education: A Review' (2022) 3 Journal of Sustainable Operations and Computers 275-285.
[35]   Ibid.

(v) It should offer or stimulate, as close as possible, a "real-world" context.

(vi) The learning should provide continual challenges for students.

(vii) Active learning is a must (doing, not observing).

(viii) The experience should include supporting resources, materials, readings.

(ix) Ample opportunity and time for learning (in class reflections).

(x) Core content/lessons should be integrated throughout the process.

6. BENEFITS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS

The new experiential teaching/learning approach has many advantages over the traditional, orthodox classroom method. They are, in fact, too many to enumerate. For our purpose in this lecture, only the major ones will be highlighted. They are as follows:

- Students often want to know how to apply theories and lessons from their courses to the "real-world". Experiential assignments give them a chance to learn-by doing, through recognizing strengths, learning from mistakes, and how to become more skillful learners. This is the basis for setting "problem questions" during law examinations, and for creating scenarios during class instructions.
- A key component of experiential teaching is the transformative learning experience which occurs with a meaningful and well-planned lesson.
- This approach enhances skill development and personal growth owing to the fact that it is student-centred.
- By participating in experiential learning, students are engaged in authentic learning experiences that position them as active participants in their learning, thereby being able to bridge the gap between theory and practice and integrate learning beyond the classroom.
- Experiential learning can increase student engagement, improve learning effectiveness and enhance work and life skills.[36]
- Experiential learning can be used to support students to undertake learning in a variety of campus-based, work-integrated and community contexts.
- Experiential learning enables students to acquire skills, knowledge, and experience outside the traditional academic classroom setting. This may

_____

[36] Experiential Learning Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation https://www.uq.edu.au/ accessed 24 March 2024.

include internship, studies abroad, field trips, field research, service-learning, among others.

- According to the Centre for Community Engaged Learning of Kent State University, USA, when students participate in experiential education, they stand the chance of gaining the following opportunities –
  (i) A better understanding of course material.
  (ii) A broader view of the world and an appreciation of community.
  (iii) Insight into their own skills, interests, passions, and values.
  (iv) Opportunities to collaborate with diverse organizations and people.
  (v) Positive professional practices and skill sets.
  (vi) The gratification of assisting in meeting community needs.
  (vii) Self-confidence and leadership skills.[37]

7. CHALLENGES OF APPLICATION AND ADAPTATION

Perhaps, the most feasible challenge associated with experiential teaching and learning model is the question of adaptability. The orthodox, traditional approach to teaching and learning dates back to the medieval era and has been with us till the advent of the experiential approach in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Even till now, many instructors, especially in the Third World, are still having difficulty migrating to the new order. It will shock some of us in this audience to hear that some of our colleagues are still dictating notes to their students in the classroom while some are still using chalk to write on the blackboard.

Another major challenge that the wholesale adoption of ELTA may face is not unconnected with its reliance on digital technology. The application of digital technology to education is itself plagued with some setbacks in certain jurisdictions. For example, it has been reported that some students come from low-income families and do not have cell phones in their homes.[38] Millions of youngsters do not have access to the internet at home, while a large number of those who do may have issues with internet connectivity. Some teachers may also face difficulty as a result of inexperience with digital technologies.

_____

[37] What is Experiential Learning and why is it important? Kent State University, Community engaged Learning https://www.kent.edu/community accessed 24 march 2024.
[38] Hallem, et al (n 34)

In a study conducted in 2011 and published in the Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences, the researchers analyzed the main challenges of experiential learning of practical courses offered in the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Tehran. The researchers found that four components were the main challenges facing the implementation of this approach in the university. These are –

(i)   Insufficient educational spaces and equipment.
(ii)   Less experienced instructors and technicians.
(iii)   Not paying attention to parallel and additional experiences.
(iv)   Inadequate class management by the instructors and technicians.[39]

Although the foregoing challenges were based on a study conducted with a limited sample of technical courses in two faculties at the University of Tehran, there is every reason to believe that the results can be replicated in many parts of the world, particularly the developing countries.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusion

Perhaps, the best way to appreciate the significance of ELTA is to ruminate over the common proverb: Experience is the best teacher. This model of teaching brings students out of the classroom, so they can put their studies into practice. It provides students with the necessary hands-on experience that prepares them for careers in their fields of study and get them sufficiently equipped for the tasks and challenges that they will face in their careers after graduating. The ELTA model, anchored on learning by doing, has become a common teaching methodology of many US universities such that Mathew Killorin,[40] a renowned American education counsellor and advisor, has advised international students studying for a bachelor's degree in US universities to note that this system of learning may be different from the educational styles they are used to back home, such as lecture or memorization. But the question is, if many universities and colleges in America and Europe are embracing this new approach to teaching and learning why should Nigeria and the rest of Africa be left behind? This question becomes germane because university education retains its relevance

---

[39]   Saeede N. Noogbabi, et al, 'A Study of Present Challenges on Experiential Learning of University Students (University of Tehran, the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Iran (2011) 15 – Social and Behavioural Science, 3522 -3530.

[40]   Matthew Killorin, What is Experiential Learning at US Universities? /Shorelight https:// shorelight.com accessed 25 March 2024.

when it exists as an integral part of a global entity. The word, "university" derives its meaning from the Latin word "universus" which means "whole, entire". A university must therefore be thought of as being sort of a world of its own, no matter its place of domicile or its geographical location. It is in the light of the foregoing that this writer will like to make the following recommendations.

8.2 Recommendations

(i) **Continuous Academic Staff Capacity for Development:** The introduction of any new teaching and learning method, such as the ELTA, calls for a paradigm shift. For as far as we can remember – in fact since the medieval era – the traditional classroom instruction methodology has been with us. To migrate to a new approach, axiomatic in the experiential learning pedagogy, will create some problem associated with adaptation. This is why it is necessary for universities and colleges in Nigeria to strive to organize workshops and seminars intended to equip members of the academic staff with the modus operandi of the ELTA. It is for this reason also that ABUAD must be commended for this characteristic trail-blazing initiative. The need for members of the academia to be exposed to modern and innovative teaching and learning methods makes it imperative for Nigerian universities to emulate this gesture.

(ii) **Amenability to Adaptation:** Adaptation problem can become almost intractable when the staff and students for whom this innovative approach is meant are not willing to cooperate due to lack of interest. For the students, they have a very limited choice in this matter since refusal to cooperate could mean failure to graduate. It is of the lecturers, particularly, the senior academics, that much is expected. We have to be very intentional about it. The lecturers, as already noted in this paper, are to serve as instructors/facilitators/mentors of the process, offering guidance, albeit, on a limited basis. The lecturer, as an instructor, serves as an intellectual coach for collaborative student teams to maximize students' learning, skill development and, personal growth. Like it is argued in law, nemo dat quod non habet, meaning, a man cannot give what he does not have. Experiential teaching and learning pedagogy is thus deemed dead on arrival where the lecturers who should serve as instructors are themselves disinterested in the scheme.

(iii) **Provision of Enabling Environment:** Like mainstream digital technologies, the application of the ELTA requires the provision of core

facilities, like stable electricity supply, internet and e-learning devices, like computer, cell-phones, tablets, etc. While many of these facilities are and can be taken for granted in a reputable university like ABUAD, access to them in most public universities in Nigeria is either awfully limited or non-existent.

(iv) **Computer Literacy for all Academic Staff:** As pointed out earlier in this paper, digital technologies are a basic component of the new experiential teaching and learning approach. To apply this new method effectively in the university, it is imperative that the lecturers who will serve as instructors and mentors are sufficiently literate in the use of computers and the internet. To guarantee this, it is strongly suggested that computer literacy and proficiency in internet use should be incorporated into the basic requirements for recruiting academic staff in all over universities and colleges.

(v) **Review of Curriculum:** The curriculum for each programme, especially at the undergraduate level, must be tailored towards effective application of the ELTA. It should now be made mandatory for all university and colleges to properly grade and allot reasonable marks to experiential learning activities like internship, teaching practice, SIWES, Chambers attachment, law clinic, etc,, where this is not already being done.. This will make students to show more interest in these activities and to take them more seriously.

(vi) **International Collaboration:** International educational, scientific and technological collaboration is the key to tackling many of humanity's challenges as it helps to foster innovative solutions to common problems. In the context of experiential teaching and learning pedagogy, it will enable Nigerian university teachers to know more about transformative learning and teaching methods needed to take education to the next level in the 21st Century. All stakeholders in the education sector must therefore make deliberate efforts to promote international cooperation between Nigerian universities

Thank you very much for your attention.