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Sameer Abuzandah
Kansas State University

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Learning by Doing

Sameer Abuzandah

Creating an effective curriculum is important in order to make learning meaningful to students. In order for a curriculum to be effective, the objectives, learning activities, and assessments should be smoothly integrated with each other. Learning by Doing is an educational approach that makes use of engaging learning activities that are tailored to the needs and interests of the learners. In the same way, teachers who utilize the Learning by Doing approach motivate students to learn by stimulating their curiosity. This paper will discuss the important aspects of an effective curriculum. In particular, this paper will explore how the Learning By Doing approach has the capacity to develop critical thinking and analytical skills among learners.

What is a Curriculum?

Curriculum refers to a set of learning experiences that are created in order for students to achieve the objectives of a whole range of lessons. In order for a curriculum to be effective, there should be a smooth integration of the lesson's objectives, learning experiences, and assessment tools (Doll, 1993). Because of its capacity to organize learning activities in order to maximize the learning potential of students in school, curriculum development is one of the most important tasks that educational leaders need to accomplish in schools (Dewey, 1938).

There are many factors that curriculum administrators should consider when coming up with an effective curriculum for learners. For one, curriculum development should consider the social relevance of lessons on the context of the learners. Defined as the significant experiences and situations that a student is in, the context of students should be focused on to ensure that each lesson will have a significant impact on learners (Wiggins &

McTighe, 2005). Thus, social issues should be carefully discussed as part of the affective objectives of lessons. Aside from social forces, the political status of a country also affects the way curricula are developed. Similar to what my classmate shared, educational programs that the present administration is implementing should be followed across all cities. In connection to the thought of Fixico (2003) being able to integrate the context of students to real-life events involves seeing the interconnectedness of all objects in the universe. In order to make meaning with one's learning, it is important to visualize the connection among concepts and ideas. These connections will be the basis in forming big ideas that will be incorporated in the curriculum of lessons.

Many learning approaches are employed by teachers in the classroom. Two of the most utilized approaches are the traditional and the constructivist approach. In the traditional approach, also called direct instruction, teachers lead the learning process in class (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). On the other hand, constructive instruction, or the learning by doing design, empowers students to take charge of their own learning. Both approaches, though different in nature, can utilize the different curriculum frameworks to ensure that the interaction among the objectives, activities, and assessment tools are pointing to the same direction.

Learning by Doing Curriculum

Constructive Instruction, or the Learning by Doing curriculum, is a teaching approach that allows learners to make meaningful learning experiences through engaging activities. The students are given opportunities to collaborate with their classmates through group activities. The students are given authentic tasks that transform abstract ideas into realistic lessons (Murphy, 2017). The teacher's role in the Learning by Doing curriculum is to motivate the students to learn by stimulating their curiosity. He also guides the students as they actively share their

insights and learnings with the class. On the other hand, the students in the classroom are given the freedom to develop their own understanding of concepts. They participate in class activities and monitor their own progress. In a study conducted by Hackathorn et al (2011) the researchers found out that the use of engaging instructional approaches, such as demonstrations, group work, experiments, and active observation techniques, resulted to better academic performance as compared to students who were only exposed to direct instruction.

The classroom environment in Learning by Doing curriculum is marked by engaged and active learners. The class atmosphere is lively because the students are allowed to interact with their classmates as they work on authentic tasks (Fitzsimons, 2014). The curriculum follows an interdisciplinary approach, which ensures the holistic development of the learners. Assessment is done through authentic tasks, which are meant to be applied in real-life contexts (Murphy, 2017). In a study conducted by Aguado (2018) majority of his students were able to gain practical knowledge regarding the fundamentals of research because of his use of the Learning by Doing teaching approach. In emphasizing the skills of data collection and the utilization of software materials, he incorporated a variety of engaging assignments and learning exercises that made the students practice their research and analytical skills.

One of the curriculum frameworks that exemplify the use of a learning by doing approach is Understanding by Design (UBD). UBD is a curriculum framework that enables educators to formulate engaging learning activities based on the objectives of each lesson. Known as the Backward Design, this teaching framework begins with thinking about big ideas or the objectives, such as understanding social issues that students can apply in the real-world setting (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). After writing down the lesson's desired results, educators will proceed with identifying evidences of learning, which are in the form of authentic tasks.

These tasks are able to measure how students are able to apply their learnings to real-world situations. Finally, the learning plan will be designed in accordance with the lesson's objectives and types of assessment designed for the class. In this part, the educators will design interactive activities that will develop critical thinking, teamwork, and analytical skills among the students.

The Learning by Doing approach is effective in stimulating the natural curiosity of learners. The students in this approach develop critical thinking skills as well as the creativity in expressing themselves well (Hackathorn et al, 2011). However, this approach lacks structure that may inhibit students from learning about the value of following specific rules in class. Also, lessons may not be finished on time because learning depends on the pace of the students. In addition, the study conducted by Yuan et al (2018) stated that the learning by doing approach failed to bring a structure to the classes that were implemented in a study that they conducted.

Conclusion

Curriculum refers to learning experiences that are created in order for students to achieve the objectives of lessons. Creating an effective curriculum is important in order to make learning meaningful to students. In order for a curriculum to be effective, the objectives, learning activities, and assessments should be smoothly integrated with each other. The Learning by Doing approach is a teaching methodology that makes use of engaging learning experiences. Activities under this approach develop critical thinking among students. This approach can also utilize developmentally appropriate practices, which carefully consider the context of students. Based on my personal experience, I appreciate the beauty of the Learning by Doing approach because it made me look forward to each activity that my teachers prepared for the class. In the same way, I am aware that the presence of interactive and engaging activities in class helped me to become more attuned to my own personal learning.

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