

## **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR GEOGRAPHY CLASSROOM: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS OF MAHATMA JUNIOR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

*While the main focus of traditional teaching and training is knowledge transfer, it does not adequately account for each student's growth or fully explore their potential. This is so because the traditional approach to teaching a subject typically focuses on what the learner needs to learn and the most effective way for them to acquire it. People of all ages can address their own potential and growth through experiential learning. It better accommodates individual preferences, styles, strengths, and other factors. Geography Education as part of teacher education in Mumbai comes with challenges in terms of time and space. Experiential learning is a common component of geography instruction. A large element of many geography classes typically consists of field visits, group projects, and lab work. To enthuse and engage students about geography, some form of fieldwork is essential. For this reason, teacher education programs in Mumbai have created experiential learning programs to students. The outcomes of such experiences for student teachers are both affective and cognitive in terms of geography and geography education. This article discusses the development of experiential learning, its usefulness in teaching geography subject, and how effectively it has combined with Geography pedagogy. This article also investigates the rationale, practices, and evaluation of such experiences for student teachers.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

"Experiential [learning] is a concept and practice in which instructors intentionally include students in hands-on learning and focused reflection in order to expand knowledge, improve skills, and clarify values" (Association for Experiential Education, para. 2). Experiential learning is also known as learning by doing, learning through experience, learning through discovery, and learning through exploration. All of these terms are clearly defined by the following well-known maxims:

*I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand. ~ Confucius, 450 BC*

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*Tell me and I forget, Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I will learn. ~ Benjamin Franklin, 1750*

*There is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education. ~ John Dewey, 1938*

The idea of learning by experience is not new in college classrooms. The foundation for learning theories that emphasise "learning via experience or "learning by doing" has been laid by notable educational psychologists such John Dewey (1859–1952), Carl Rogers (1902–1987), and David Kolb (b. 1939). Experiential education is a notion made popular by Dewey that emphasises problem solving and critical thinking over memory and rote learning. When compared to cognitive learning, which Rogers deemed "meaningless," experiential learning was deemed "important." Kolb is well recognised for his Learning Style Inventory (LSI), which is widely used in many fields today to assist determine preferred learning styles. Kolb also emphasised that concrete learning experiences are essential to meaningful learning. The student is consequently a crucial component of experiential learning, and learning occurs (the knowledge acquired) as a result of being intimately immersed in this instructional style.

## **HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

Experiential education did not become a recognised branch of education until the 1970s, and the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) was founded in 1977. The work of John Dewey, which promoted learning through experiences, has come to be respected as a crucial tenet in formal educational settings throughout this time. In the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, Dewey urged educators to create educational curricula that would be connected to real-world experience. Many educators began to believe in the value of experience in education in the 1960s and 1970s, not just as a replacement but also as an additional advantage. David Kolb has recently assumed the initiative in favour of experiential education. Personal experience, in David Kolb's words, "gives life, texture, and subjective personal meaning to abstract abstractions." In addition, it offers "a specific, publicly acknowledged reference point for evaluating the significance and reliability of ideas generated during the learning process." Teachers must answer the question, "What is it about experience that leads to learning?" if experience is one of the foundations of learning. To answer this challenge, Kolb (1984) developed the now-commonly used model of the learning cycle, which he used to show how experience could be converted into learning. After having an experience, one must go through

a series of processes in order to learn: first, one must reflect on the experience, then one must comprehend what the new knowledge means to the learner and how it might be put to use in the future.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the role of experiential learning, its usefulness in teaching geography subject, and how effectively it has combined with Geography pedagogy.
2. To study the perception of students on experiential learning.

### **GEOGRAPHY THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

Students are motivated to work actively and pro-actively by experiential learning. The major goal of experiential learning is to give pupils opportunities to gradually find their own creativity. The following traits describe experiential teaching: Experiential education is geared toward human values and is social, local, and adaptable in both form and content. It teaches pupils how to think critically and learn. Students that receive instruction through experiential learning are more able to recognise difficulties and find solutions as well as access and process information that has been taught, experienced, or is currently being directly experienced. Active teaching techniques such as discussion, debate, games, sightseeing, field trips, competitions, and clubs are used to provide experiential learning both within and outside of the classroom. Each kind has distinct benefits and drawbacks. The instructional method used in a classroom will vary depending on the students, teachers, and other factors.

#### **Map Skills**

Map is an essential tool for geographers. Maps are very helpful while teaching. The expedition on 'Maps- Exploration and Movement' was designed to assist the students in understanding their expanding social and physical spaces and they went from near to far like they do while exploring most other concepts. Its objective was also to help students understand the reasons behind the journeys taken by people and the impact such journeys and movements have had in shaping the world around us. The students explored the various geographical features of the planet they inhabit and tried to comprehend their expanse.

#### **Fieldwork**

The cornerstone of geography education is fieldwork (Hope 2009, Day 2012). It is likely the most popular form of active learning in geography. It is significant for both physical and cultural geography across the entire discipline (Stokes, Magnier, and Weaver 2011). In

addition to research design and methods, fieldwork teaches geographic theory and content (Hupy 2011). Students with limited means and access to extracurricular, experience activities, like studying abroad, need fieldwork more than others.

Field Work Experiences allow students to explore and apply content learned in the classroom in a specified field experience away from the classroom. Field work experiences bridge educational experiences with an outside community which can range from neighborhoods and schools to anthropological dig sites and laboratory settings.

Field trips help in exploring the environment. Children may be taken out into the larger landscape to observe geographical objects, prepare brief notes, and collect specimens and so on. (b) Excursions: Excursions educate as well as entertain. Children learn by interacting with the environment. Excursions to hill stations, to geographical monuments help children to understand certain phenomena.

### **Models**

An excellent method for getting pupils interested in learning new information is a scientific show. They get a curiosity for learning that would not otherwise be generated by sitting through tedious lectures. It gives students a platform to apply their scientific knowledge and produce the greatest idea possible. Additionally, it enables them to collaborate in groups and gain knowledge from one another. They exchange ideas and work together to energise them in order to put something creative into practise.

### **Workshops and Training**

Geographic information systems are an increasingly relevant tool being used in a variety of workforces. While education on GIS is well developed at the collegiate level and in workforce training programs, Experiential learning is a trend in colleges. Students are increasingly asked to learn by tackling problems beyond the classroom, often in the context of the local community. This can mean knowing how to apply technology and quantitative data to analyze and understand a problem, and GIS is a powerful tool for place- and data-based analysis. Students get to know GIS application and its connection with geography. They gave introduction of open street mapping platform also. Emphasis was placed on learning the conceptual aspects of investigating data, from issues such as data integrity and geodatabase design to application of the scientific method in such a context. Giving students experience to

take into real-world situations is the ultimate goal. Learning GIS can improve spatial and critical thinking skills in students.

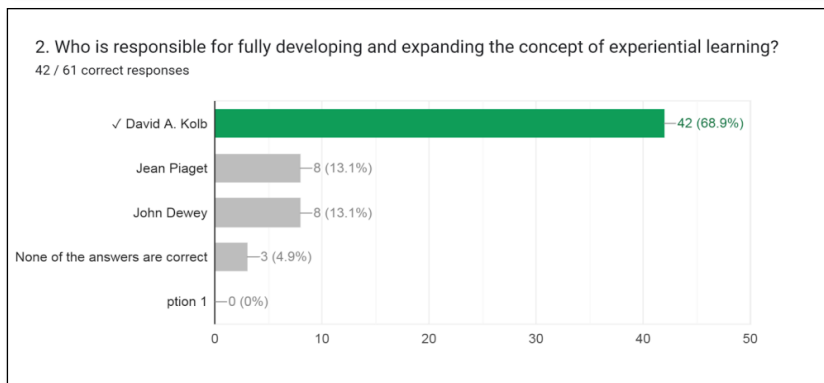
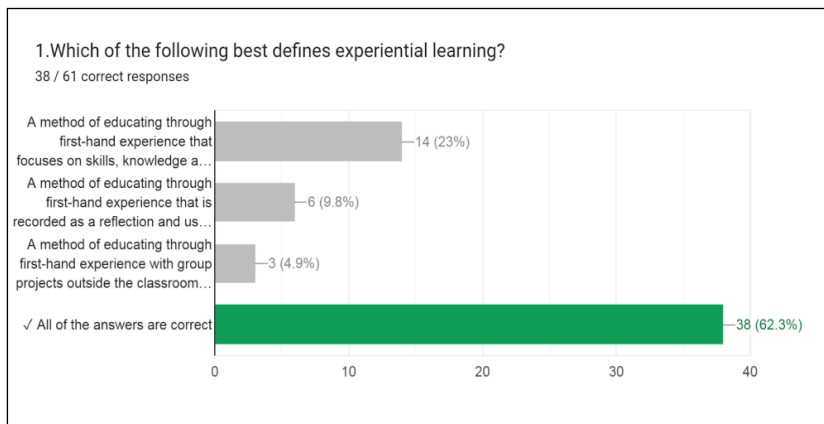
### **Presentations**

Oral presentations using teaching aids on various topics related to geography help the students to gain better understanding of the concept and develops the qualities of confidence and speaking skills. Online presentations are also another form of experiential learning.

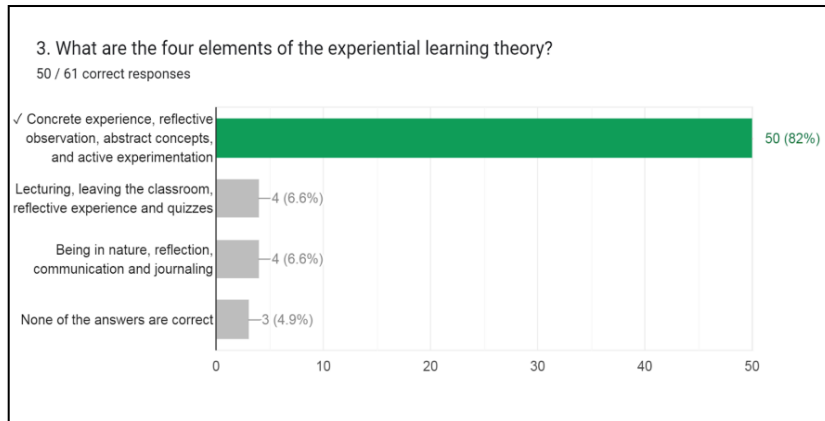
### **METHODOLOGY**

The study uses a quantitative research approach and obtains primary data from students at Mahatma Junior College of Education An Online survey was conducted using self administered questionnaire that was specifically created for the study. In addition to these sources, books and periodicals were taken into consideration for the study. 61 responses were received for the survey. The majority are in the 17 to 30 age range. There were a total of 10 questions. The questionnaire's components include questions about students' experiential learning knowledge, views, and observations. Evaluation was done electronically.

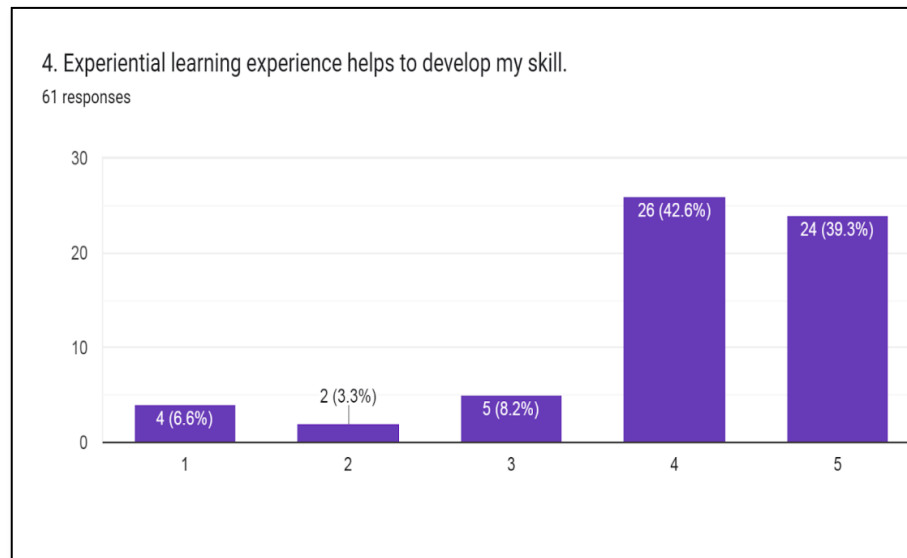
### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION**



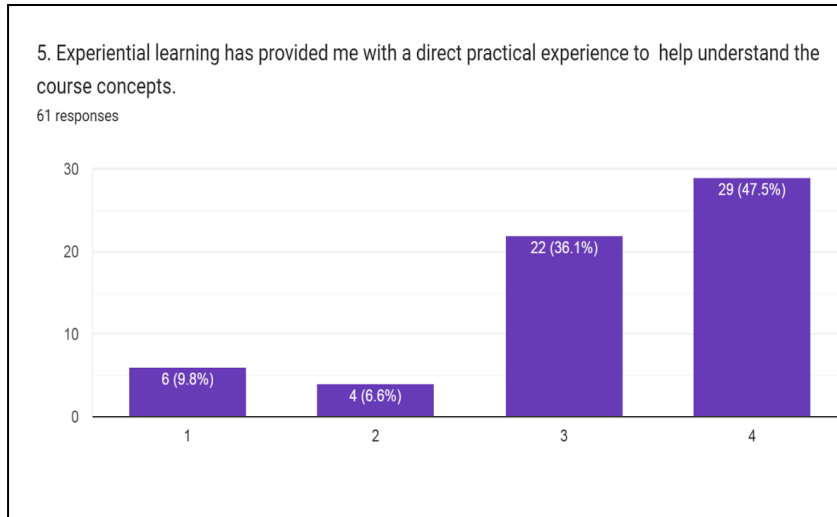
Out of 61 responses ,62.3% of students knows the definition of experiential learning,68.9% of students States that David A. Kolb is responsible for fully developing and expanding the concept of experiential learning.



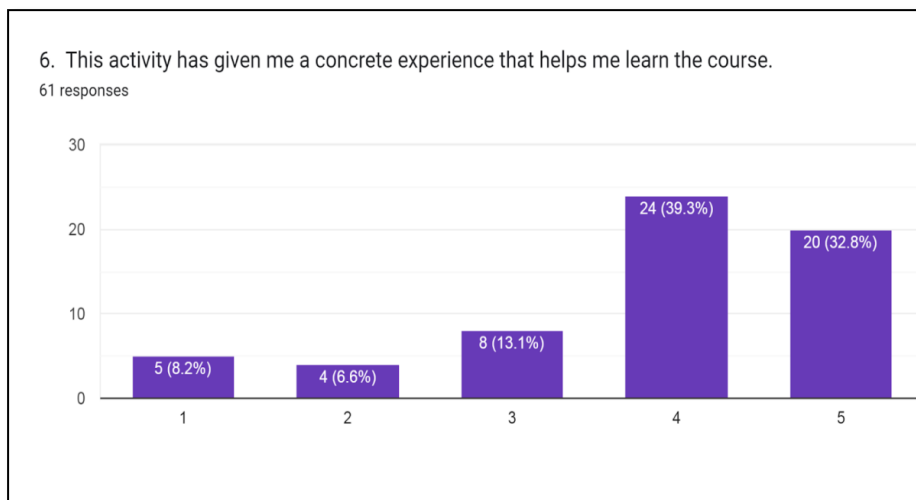
82% of the students suggests that concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract concepts and active experimentation are the four elements of the experiential learning theory.



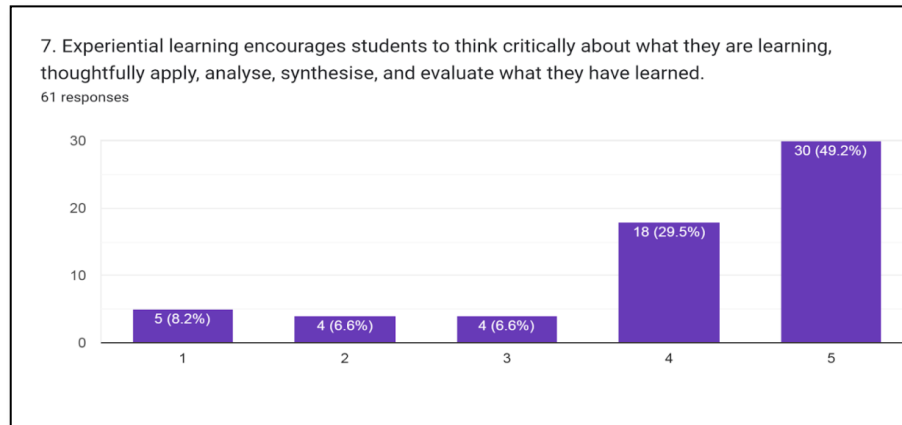
39.3% of students strongly agree,42.6% of students agrees that experiential learning experience helps to develop their skill wheras 3.3% disagree with the opinion.



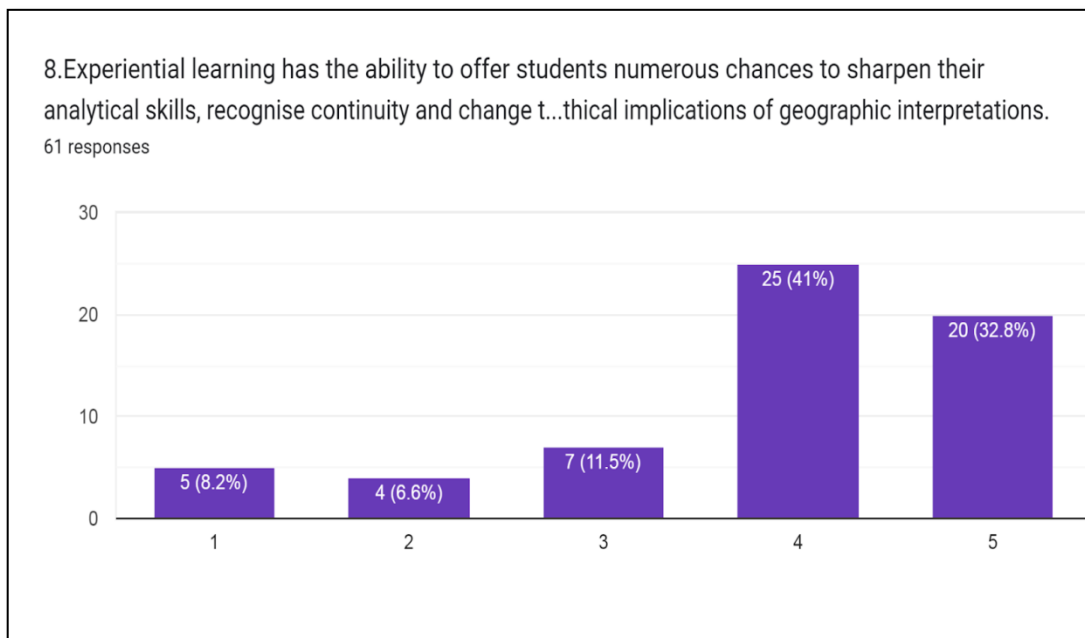
The assertion that experiential learning has given students a direct, practical experience to assist them understand the course's (geography) principles has been supported by 47.5% of students strongly agreeing and 36.1% agreeing, while 6.6 students disagree.



32.8% of students strongly agree and 39.3 % students agrees that the activities give concrete experience that helps to learn the course wheras 8.2 % of students disagrees with the opinion.



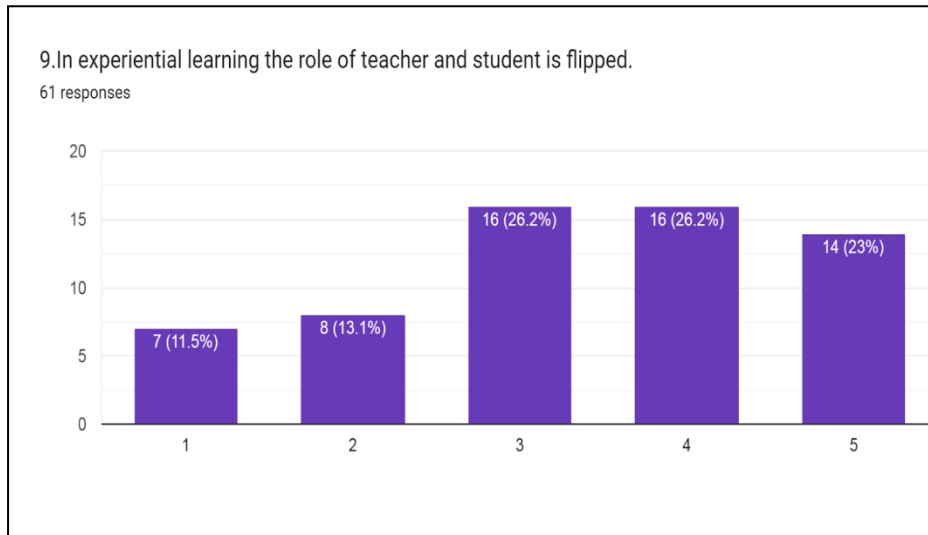
Critical thinking abilities are "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information obtained from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication. 49.2% of students strongly agree and 29.5% strongly disagree that experiential learning promotes students to think critically about what they are learning, thoughtfully apply, analyse, synthesise, and evaluate what they have learned, while 8.2% strongly disagree and 6.6% are of neutral opinion. This is due to the fact that students are actively involved in the learning process, develop their own understanding of concepts based on prior experience, and employ concepts that they have independently discovered to solve issues.



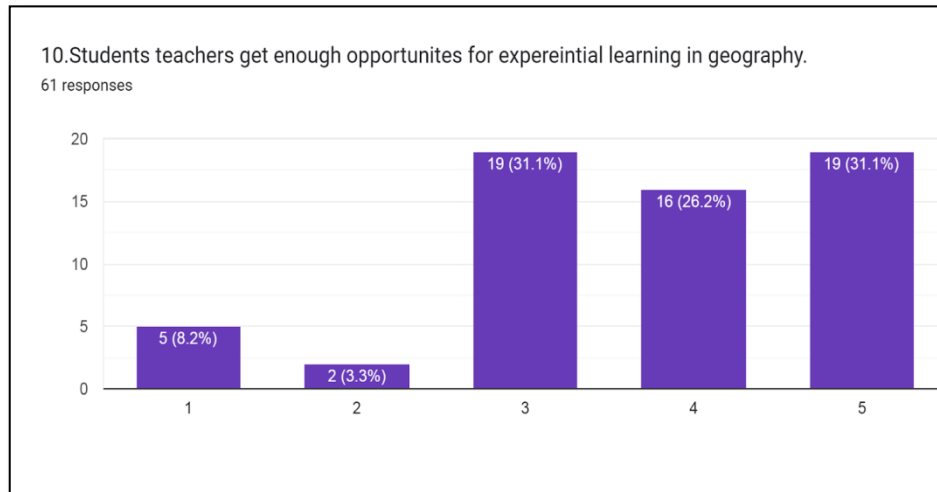
Students routinely analyse numerical facts and geographic information from a variety of sources, such as census data, images, and maps. After analysing different data sets, they must



then be able to make inferences. Students' information analysis and interpretation lead to the emergence of meaningful patterns or processes. They can then integrate their findings to form logical hypotheses. 8.2% students disagree with this statement, while 32.8% and 41% of students strongly agree that experiential learning can give students many opportunities to hone their analytical skills, recognise continuity and change over time, examine causes and effects of events, and comprehend the ethical implications of geographic interpretations.



A facilitator is a teacher who is knowledgeable about experiential learning. Involving the student in decision-making and problem-solving involves putting them at the centre of the process. Facilitating the transmission of information to the real world is another role for the teacher. Experiential learning consists of educational activities that are intended to actively engage students in learning by doing, reflecting on the process and experience, and then actively forming their own understanding. These activities can be done within or outside of the classroom. Among students, 23% strongly agree. The roles of instructor and student are flipped in experiential learning, according to 26.2% of respondents, while 26.2% are undecided.



31.1% respondents strongly agree and 26.2% agree that student teachers get enough opportunities for experiential geography whereas 3.3% disagrees and 31.1% have neutral opinion.

## CONCLUSION

With the help of the data collected by circulating questionnaires to students and these observations have been made. This study is not comprehensive or extensive, and it has covered only few dimensions – the learner’s knowledge on experiential learning, the learner’s perceptions, observation and teachers’ and students’ role in experiential learning. The word experiential means that learning and development are achieved through personally determined experience and involvement, rather than on received teaching or training, typically in group, by observation, listening, study of theory or hypothesis, or some other transfer of skills or knowledge. The expression 'hands-on' is commonly used to describe types of learning and teaching which are to a lesser or greater extent forms of experiential learning. Teachers will continue to need to be prepared for modern classrooms as long as teaching is a fluid activity, therefore teacher educators will face this difficulty. Being prepared with teaching theories or a bag full of "strategies" is insufficient for preparing student instructors. It is the responsibility of teacher educators to improve the student teachers' experiences by exposing them to both theoretical growth and extremely practical, structured, reflective, ongoing field experiences.

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