

A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STRATEGIES IN CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Human life is constantly shaped by the various experiences that we acquire during our lifetime. It has become very important to see or look into that children not only learn but how do they learn. In 2010, UNESCO had stated that Experiential Learning as one of the teaching strategies for 21st Century. Experiential learning has changed, the century old approach of teachers-talk, students listen to an interactive one where learning happens in a social context. The present study was aimed to find out the awareness of teachers towards experiential learning, the level of implementation in daily teaching learning transactions and also challenges faced in it. Using descriptive survey method, data was collected using a researcher made questionnaire from 168 teachers across different teaching level from primary to higher education, affiliated to different boards of education. The study has shown that teachers had varied level of awareness about experiential learning, extent of implementation and in the challenges faced.

Keywords: *Experiential learning, Awareness, Implementation of experiential learning strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

"Give the students something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results."

~John Dewey

Human life is constantly shaped by the various experiences that we acquire during our lifetime. Hence, it is rightly said that learning is a lifelong process. The aim and objective of learning has also undergone many changes over the years. With the rapid changes happening through globalisation, it has become very important to see or look into that children not only learn but how do they learn. In 2010, UNESCO had stated that Experiential Learning as one of the teaching strategies for 21st Century. (Teaching and Learning for a sustainable future, UNESCO 2010). Even NEP (2020) envisages that, “Pedagogy must evolve to make

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education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable”

Experiential learning encourages development of higher order thinking skills through diverse ways of sense training, reflective processes and creative engagement. One of the prerequisites of implementation of experiential learning is committed teachers and innovative teaching strategies. Teachers’ interest, expertise and experience in experiential learning approach is very crucial in successful implementation of this approach. A teacher needs to enable student’s acquisition and mastery of the concepts; should augment student’s strategies and competencies for discovery and learning; and also promote positive learning related values, qualities and beliefs in students. (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012,).

The concept of Experiential learning popularised by Kolb (1984) defines learning as a process of creating knowledge through transformation of experiences. Girvan *et al* (2016) has carried out a study on experiential learning in professional development of teacher, in which it was concluded that professional practices of teachers had changed for the benefits of the learners. Abu-Assab (2015) has stated that teachers found that experiential learning aided in enhancing various skills of students like cognitive, social, higher order thinking skills etc. Pongračić and Marinac (2021) has pointed out that teachers recognize the importance of experiential learning but still do not conduct interactive learning approaches on a regular basis. Wurdinger and Allison (2017) have indicated that classroom structure, class size, lack of resources as the obstacles for using experiential approaches in classrooms. Widyastuti *et al* (2019) has said that even though there is difference between teacher’s perception of experiential learning and its actual implementation, they expressed interest in execution of these strategies. The present study was aimed to find out the awareness of teachers towards experiential learning, the level of implementation in daily teaching learning transactions and also challenges faced.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

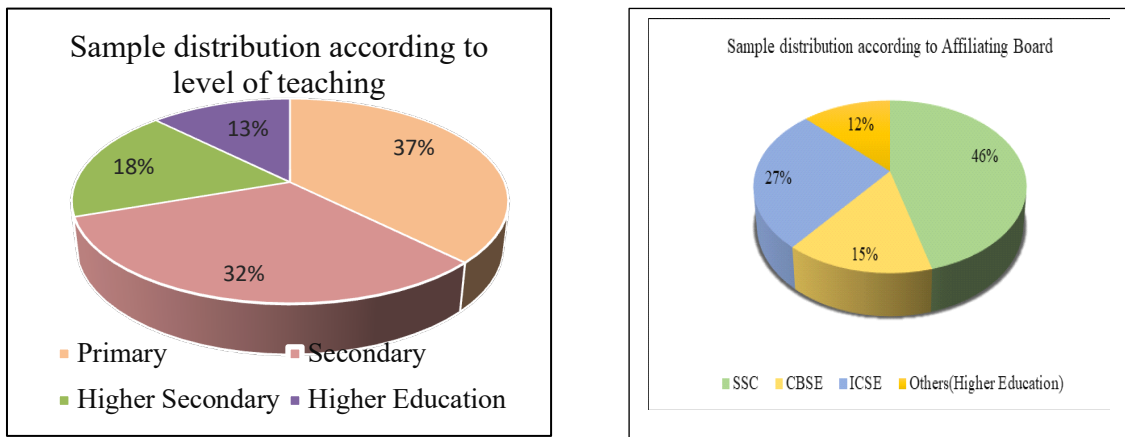
1. To find out the level of awareness of teachers about experiential learning
2. To find out the level of awareness of teachers about experiential learning with respect to a
 - a. Teaching sector
 - b. Affiliating Board
3. To find out the extent of implementation of experiential learning strategies in classroom.
4. To find out the extent of implementation of experiential learning strategies in classroom with respect to

- a. Teaching sector
 - b. Affiliating Board
5. To analyse the challenges faced in implementation of experiential learning strategies in classroom

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted using Descriptive survey method. The researcher has used Random Sampling Method to select the sample. The sample consisted of 168 teachers across different teaching level from primary to higher education, affiliated to different boards of education. A researcher made questionnaire was used, which contained both positive and negative statements intended to check teacher's awareness, their attitude and challenges towards implementation of experiential learning strategies. In addition to this, details of personal information like teaching level, years of experience was also collected. The demographic representation is shown in below: The data collected was analysed using appropriate statistical measures.

Figure 1. Sample distribution

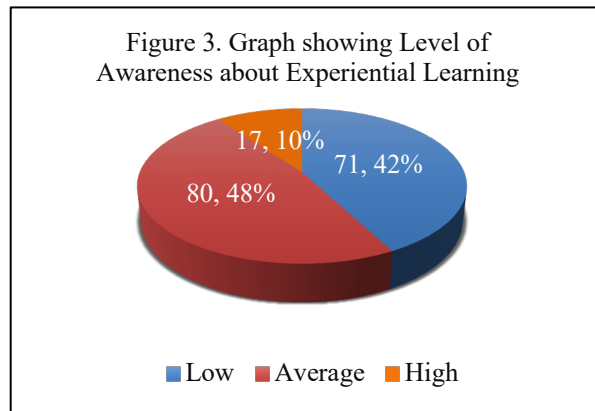


FINDINGS

1. To find out the level of awareness of teachers about experiential learning

The results indicated that teachers had varied level of awareness about experiential learning. As shown in the Figure 3, 42% of teachers showed low level of awareness whereas 48% of teachers had average level of awareness and only 10% of teachers showed high level of awareness about experiential learning. Even though teachers might be using experiential learning strategies, they lack specific knowledge about the steps in experiential learning, its

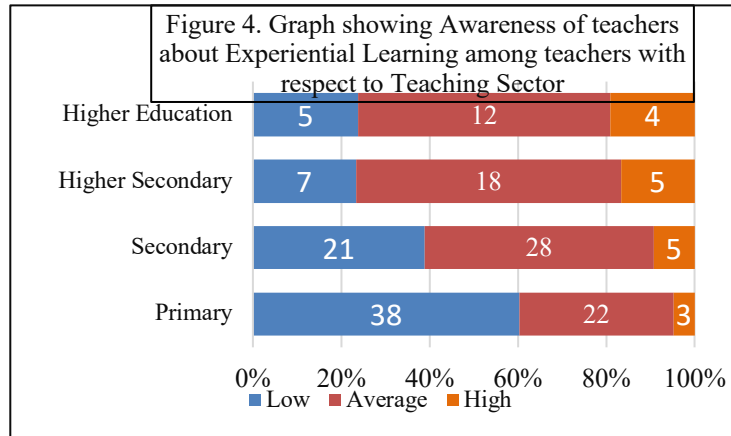
characterises and learning styles related to it. In a student centric way of learning it is highly necessary that teacher's level of awareness about experiential learning should be improved.



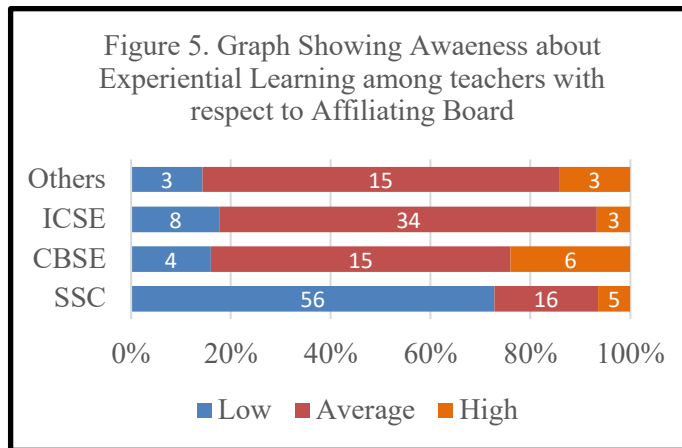
2a. To find out the level of awareness of teachers about experiential learning with respect to Teaching Sector

As shown in figure 4, the level of awareness of teachers about experiential learning showed a great variation with respect to different sectors. The percentage of teachers with low level of awareness was maximum in primary sector (60.3%) followed by Secondary (38.33%), Higher Secondary (33.3%) and Higher Education (23.8%). The percentage of teachers with high level of awareness was maximum in higher education sector (19.05%) followed by Higher Secondary, (16.67%), Secondary (9.26%) and least was in primary (4.8%).

It can be inferred that primary teachers lacked very much in awareness about Experiential learning compared to teachers at other teaching sectors. This may be due to lack of exposure of primary teachers to various teaching strategies and appropriate ways of implementing it. This is a matter of grave concern as children at primary level learn mostly from concrete experiences. On the other hand, teachers at Higher Secondary level and Higher Education level were more qualified and may have got the chances to develop awareness about experiential learning through the diverse learning strategies used in graduate or post graduate level.



2b. To find out the level of awareness of teachers about experiential learning with respect to Affiliating Board



As per figure 5, the level of awareness of teachers about experiential learning showed a great variation with respect to Affiliating Boards.

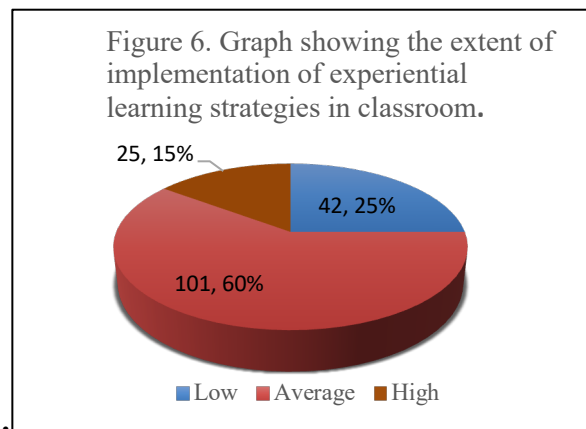
The percentage of teachers with low level of awareness was maximum in SSC board (72.72%) followed by ICSE (17.78%), CBSE (16%) and Others(Higher Education) (14.29%). The percentage of teachers with high level of awareness was maximum in CBSE (24%) followed by Others (Higher Education), (14.29%), ICSE (6.66 %) and least was in SSC board (6.5%).

It can be inferred that teachers of SSC board lacked severely in the level of awareness about Experiential learning compared to their counterparts in CBSE, ICSE and other boards. This may be attributed to the traditional teaching strategies followed by many SSC board schools. CBSE board has been offering free training in experiential teaching through DIKSHA platform (Indian Express, July 1,2020).

3.To find out the extent of implementation of experiential learning strategies in classroom.

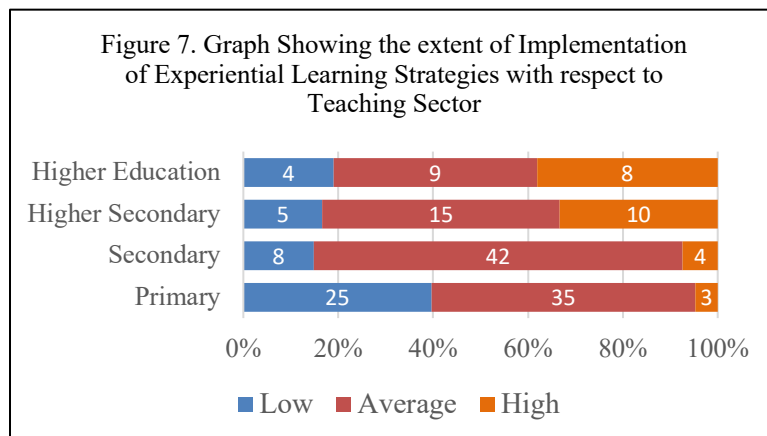
The results indicated that teachers differed in the level of implementation of Experiential Learning Strategies in classroom.

As shown in the figure 6, 25% of teachers showed low scores with respect to level of implementation of Experiential Learning Strategies whereas majority of 60% of teachers had average level of scores and only 15% of teachers showed high level of implementation of strategies.



It is to be noted that majority of teachers believed in implementing the various strategies related to Experiential learning like conducting experiments, conducting field visits, role playing etc. Teachers also shared the opinion that Experiential learning took into consideration the individual differences among students and also initiated the child into the scientific enquiry process.

3a. To find out the extent of implementation of experiential learning strategies in classroom with respect to Teaching Sector

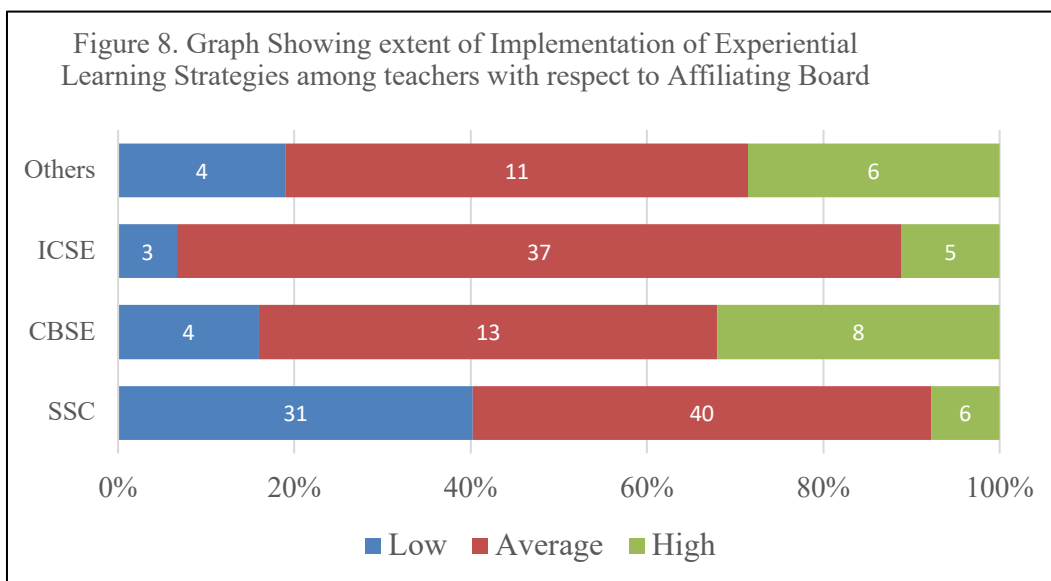


From figure 7, it could be noted that there exists a greater variation in the extent of implementation of Experiential Learning Strategies among teachers with respect to Teaching Sector.

The percentage of teachers with low level of extent of implementation was maximum in primary sector (39.68%) followed by Higher Education (19.05%) Higher Secondary (16.67) and Secondary sector (14.81). The percentage of teachers with high level of extent of implementation was maximum in Higher Education sector (38.09%) followed by Higher Secondary, (33.33%), Secondary (7.41%) and least was in primary (4.8%).

The fact that proportion of primary teachers with low level of implementation across all the teaching sectors may be attributed to lack of awareness of primary teachers about experiential learning strategies. Likewise, comparatively the higher level of scores shown by teachers in Higher Education and Higher Secondary owes to the higher level of awareness about these strategies possessed by the teachers.

3b. To find out the extent of implementation of experiential learning strategies in classroom with respect to Affiliating Board

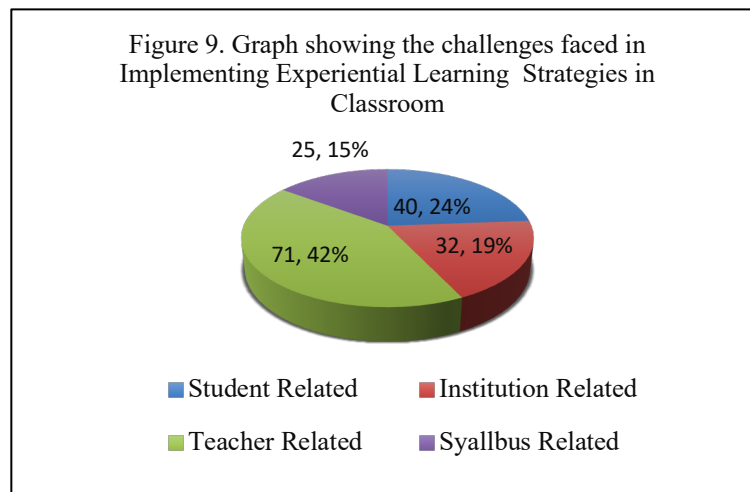


The percentage of teachers with low level of implementation of Experiential learning is maximum in SSC board (40.26%) followed by Others (Higher Education) (19.04%), CBSE (16%) and ICSE (6.67%). The percentage of teachers with high level of implementation of Experiential Learning Strategies are maximum in CBSE (32%) followed by Others (Higher Education), (28.57%), ICSE (11.11%) and least was in SSC board (7.79%)

Experiential learning has been given prime importance in CBSE and ICSE curriculum; teachers and students are aware of it. This explains the high level of scores shown by teachers of these boards. Teachers are also given periodic training through workshops/online mode in various experiential learning strategies, which makes it easy for teachers to adapt and adopt these strategies.

4. To analyse the challenges faced in implementation of experiential learning strategies in classroom

From Fig 9, it can be seen that for the challenges faced in Teacher Related problems were 42% followed by Student Related (24%), Institution Related (19%), Syllabus Related (15%) problems. It can be seen that teachers faced problems in lack of training in experiential learning strategies, difficulties in class management. Teachers are of the opinion that experiential learning resources are expensive, time consuming and difficult to implement. Student related problems as perceived by teachers include lack of interest by students to move out of the normal rote learning system, traditional examination system which fails to take into consideration of the skills of experiential learning., etc. Vastness of the syllabus and lack of textbooks also acts as deterrents in implementing experiential learning strategies.



CONCLUSION

With the rapidly varying employment scene and the global ecosystem, it is becoming more and more crucial that children not only learn, but also learn how to learn.

NEP (2020) envisions teachers as ones who truly shape the future of children and there by building future of the nation. In order to maintain quality of teachers it is imperative that

teachers should have required subject proficiency. Hence it would be a welcome move to keep graduation as the eligibility for teachers even at primary level.

The study has highlighted the need for the teachers to develop awareness about steps in experiential learning, providing various learning experiences to students. Regular workshops, in-service training programs in hybrid mode should be conducted by SCERT so that all teachers are benefitted. Continuous Professional Development of teachers at all levels should be urgently looked into. Senior teachers can act as resource

persons or mentors for new recruits so that they can seamlessly adjust to the nuances of experiential learning. Institutions should provide facilities for gaining concrete experiences for students and teachers by means of hands-on training, visits to industries, farms, etc..

To conclude, experiential learning is regarded as the future of learning. From increased creativity to problem -solving prospects, experiential learning is the most comprehensive strategy for lifelong learning and realisation of full potential of an individual.

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