

Integrating Experiential Learning in Teaching

The primary role for teachers when using experiential learning is to identify a situation which challenges students through problem-solving, collaboration, self-discovery and self-reflection and then guide students rather than direct the learning. The teacher assumes the role of facilitator.

1. Plan

Plan the experience by tying it to the course learning outcomes and determine what resources students will need to successfully complete the exercise (e.g. readings, worksheets, research, rubrics, etc.)

Determine the logistics as follows:

- How much time will be allotted for the students to complete the experience (a complete class session, one week or more)?
- Will students need to work outside of class? How will the experience end? What forms of assessment will you use?
- Will you use formative assessment, end of experience assessments, such as written reports or projects, self and/or peer assessments, or a combination of all?

2. Prepare

Prepare materials, rubrics and assessment tools and ensure that everything is ready before the experience begins.

3. Facilitate

As with most instructional strategies, the teacher should commence the experience. Once begun you should refrain from providing students with all of the content and information and complete answers to their questions. Instead, guide students through the process of finding and determining solutions for themselves.

4. Evaluate

The success of an experiential learning activity can be determined during discussions, reflections and a debriefing session. Debriefing, as a culminating experience, can help to reinforce and extend the learning process. In addition, make use of the assessment strategies previously planned.

Content taken from Northern Illinois University, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center facdev@niu.edu, www.niu.edu/facdev