

ISSN : 2278 - 6864
UGC CARE Listed Periodically

शिक्षण आणि समाज Education and Society

Since 1977

The Quarterly dedicated to the policy of "Education for Social Development and Social
Development through Education"

Vol:47, Issue:01, No.:03, January - March : 2023



Indian Institute of Education

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INDEX

- 1 GREEN MARKETING: REVIEW PAPER ON THE LITERATURE TO ANALYZE TACTICS AND TOOLS
- 2 INTERNET OF THINGS USING & DEVELOPMENT OF 5G NETWORK
- 3 आदिम जनजाति : बिरहोर
- 4 NATURAL TEA CULTIVATION IN TINGKHOONG: ITS PROBLEMS AND FUTURE POTENTIALITIES
- 5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EXPORT-ORIENTED UNITS IN TAMIL NADU AND KARNATAKA STATE
- 6 AWARENESS OF THE EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF ONLINE LEARNING IN SCIENCE
- 7 अधिगम शिक्षण में खिलौनों की सार्थकता
- 8 THE PRE AND POST COVID-19 SCENARIO OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES IN CHHATTISGARH
- 9 "बैंकयार्ड कुक्कुट इकाई वितरण योजना का हितग्राहियों के आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक विकास में योगदान"
(छ.ग. राज्य के राजनांदगांव जिले के विशेष संदर्भ में)
- 10 REVIEW PAPER ON MARKETING STRATEGY & CSR WITH SOCIALISM IN THE PANDEMIC ERA
- 11 IMPACT OF BEHAVIORAL BIASES ON INDIVIDUAL DECISION MAKING - A STUDY
- 12 IMAGES OF THE ABSURD MAN: A STUDY OF GIRISH KARNAD'S *TUGLAQ* AND SAMUEL BECKETT'S *ENDGAME*
- 13 RESEARCH REPORT ON DNA SEEDS
- 14 THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS FARMING OCCUPATION AMONG RURAL YOUTH IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT
- 15 A PEDAGOGICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE LISTENING SKILLS OF INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED ESL/EFL LEARNERS
- 16 EFFECT OF YOGIC PRACTICES WITH KAYAKALPAM ON BODY MASS INDEX AND STRESS AMONG HYPERTENSIVE AGED WOMEN
- 17 A STUDY ON THE CONFLICTING TESTIMONIES OF WITNESSES REFLECTIVE ON STATE OF MIND ITS PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES
- 18 A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACTS OF ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN TELANGANA STATE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- 19 GRAPHIC LEARNING MATERIALS: AN INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY FOR LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY
- 20 TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
- 21 PROTECTION OF FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020
- 22 INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION: THE ROLE OF INDIA INDUSTRIAL LAND BANK
- 23 SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
- 24 GENDER MARGINALISATION AMONG CHILDREN IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR
- 25 ROLE OF ECO LIFE SKILL APPROACH FOR ENHANCING PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- 26 STRATEGIES ON GREEN EDUCATION TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN STUDENTS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL
- 27 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOME ENVIRONMENT AND STUDY HABITS OF UPPER PRIMARY STUDENTS
- 28 **GAME -BASED APPROACH IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**
- 29 SOWING SEEDS FOR SUSTAINABLE WORLD THROUGH SCIENCE INFOTAINMENT
- 30 TRANSACTION OF INFUSED EE CONCEPTS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN KERALA: RHETORIC VS REALITY

GAME –BASED APPROACH IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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Abstract

One of the strengths of game-based approach is its recognized capacity to capture the attention of students and ensure their full motivation. The motivating approach of games turns the learning process into something dynamic and interesting, whose appeal is maintained as students progress to achieve objectives. Learning through games allows students to experiment in non-threatening scenarios and acquire knowledge through practice and social interaction both with the environment and their peers. So the experiential learning and interaction are the pillars upon which the game-based approach stands. Game Based approach in Experiential Learning takes advantage to create a fun, motivating, and interactive virtual learning environment that promotes education and learning.

Experiential learning theory has long inspired educators and game designers to incorporate Experiential Learning as important component of game based learning to create an immersive learning environment. Experiential Game Based learning is however focused more on education, learning and training while keeping the element of fun, entertainment, engagement alive and immersive. The paper focuses of game based approach in experiential learning for competency development of learner.

Keywords: Game based approach, experiential learning,

Introduction

Game-based elements are the essential feature that learners find important for a good learning experience. Game- based Learning approach is a specific form of experiential learning for pupils learning outcome. Experiential learning particularly, is well suited to developing competences for learners in educational settings. Using games for learning does not include only for playing a game. On the contrary, players make new experiences during game play. It is essential for the success of learning that a game-play phase is flanked by both an input and output phase as well as a thorough debriefing. The games give players to maximise their enjoyment of the game play and establish the right learning experience.

Game-based learning allows learners to evaluate their newly made experiences through reflective observation and ideally leads to abstract conceptualisation, and the transfer of in-game experiences to other relevant areas. Finally, games also allow central element in any learning theory through experimentation. Players can actively experiment with various techniques and modify their behaviour to shifting settings by playing a game multiple times.

Game- Based Learning Approach

Games have been employed as a teaching and learning tool for centuries. In the middle ages, Chess was used to teach strategic thinking as far back in the middle Ages. The core concept behind game-based learning is teaching through repetition, failure and the accomplishment of goals. The player starts slow and gains skill until they are able to fully navigate the most difficult levels. Game-based learning's basic idea is that learning occurs via practice, failure, and achieving objectives. The player starts out slowly and develops their skills until they can successfully complete the most challenging levels.

Games are planned and designed well and offer enough difficulty to keep it challenging while still being easy enough for the player to win. Game-based learning takes this same concept and applies it to teaching a curriculum. Students strive towards a goal, choosing actions and experiencing the consequences of those making decisions and then dealing with the results of those decisions.

They proactively learn and practice the proper methods. As a result, active learning replaces passive learning.

Facilitation of the Game Experience based on Kolb's four phrases of experiential learning cycle:

Experiential learning is the process of making meaning from direct or firsthand experience. "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984). Based on the theories of John Dewey and Jean Piaget, David A. Kolb popularised the concept of experiential learning. His work on experiential learning has contributed greatly to the philosophy of experiential education.

Learning through experience is typically contrasted with didactic learning since it involves reflection on actual experience. Instead of studying from others' lectures or textbooks, this learning technique encourages pupils to engage directly with the subject matter. A few learning methods that are connected to experiential learning are action learning, adventure learning, free choice learning, cooperative learning, and service learning. Experiential learning focuses on the learning process of the individual. Going to the zoo and learning about animals by observation and engagement with the surroundings there as opposed to reading about them in a book is an example of experiential learning. Instead of learning from others experiences or reading about them, conducts experiments and develops discoveries using knowledge they have personally acquired.

American educational theorist David Kolb claims that knowledge is continuously acquired through both individual and contextual experiences. He claims that the following skills are necessary in order to learn from an experience:

1. The learner needs to take an active part in the experience.
2. The learner needs to be able to think back on the encounter.
3. The learner must conceptualize the experience using analytical skills.
4. In order to apply the fresh insights gained from the experience, the learner must have the ability to make decisions and solve problems.

With Kolb's four cycle of experiential learning, the learners have been given the opportunity to facilitate the Game play from these capacities.

1. Concrete experience (Feeling)–Activation Game phase

A fresh situational experience has been in concrete experience. This can either be a completely new experience or experience that already happened. In this phase, each learner engages in an activity or task. Experience is something that players can activate through games. Games provide concrete experience for application of knowledge to game situations. The use of applied knowledge in game decisions can be practised in real-world settings through gaming. Players must actively participate in the game in order to learn new things.

2. Reflective Observation (Observing) – Onboarding game phase

The learner reflects on the new experience in light of their prior knowledge in this phase. The learner has the opportunity to ask questions and talk with others about the experience at this phase of the learning cycle. The players are observing, recalling and reflecting of emotions and behaviours during game play. Games provide opportunities for reflective observation for the outcome of activities and actions. During this phase, player deploys the game scenario -rules, roles, procedures, scoring, goals etc.

3. Abstract conceptualization (Thinking) – Scaffolding phase

The learner makes an effort to extrapolate meaning from the experience by thinking back on prior knowledge and using concepts they are already familiar with. This involves interpreting the experience and making comparisons to their current understanding on the concept. In this phase the players are engaged in playing games. They are comprehending and interpreting the reasons behind the choices and actions made during play and extrapolating them to describe individual or group behaviours. Abstract conceptualization occurs in games as a result of participants attempting to determine the aims and overall goals of the game.

4. Active experimentation (Doing). - Endgame phase

This stage in the cycle is the testing stage. Learners return to participating in a task, this time with the goal of applying their conclusions to new experiences. They are able to make predictions, analyse tasks and make plans for the acquired knowledge in the future. In this phase, players are experimenting and applying insights and new behaviors in game play and real life. Games incorporate Active Experimentation in the form of turns, actions, and activity cycles.

Experiential learning based games:

Students can benefit from experiential learning games by:

Concentration: They are less likely to get bored and lose interest in learning as students who are actively participating in the game.

Learn differently : Students actively participate in the learning process are more emotionally attached, which allows them to engage with the game material in a fresh and exciting way.

Faster learning: Deep problem-solving and critical thinking are necessary when learning thoroughly especially when learning for the first time. These procedures improve student involvement, hasten learning, and increase retention of information.

Games are adventures. They also involve active experiences. The player must take action for the game to advance. Furthermore, there are two main ways that games can serve as aids for experiential learning: They are,

1. Authentic experience

Most obviously, there is the potential for what academics refer to as authentic experience. The capacity of a game to provide players with an actual scenario in which one acquires and uses abilities typically in a scenario is referred to as an authentic experience.

2. Role-play / Narrative

Games can also enhance experiential learning since they encourage players to see themselves participating in an experience. In a role-playing sense, narrative experiences require the players to assume the persona of the character. When creating games with a social impact, such a relationship is frequently employed. It is useful as a teaching tool. Games that require players to act consistently in character in order to accomplish a task-based simulation or role-playing game are examples of experiential games. The appeal of these "open-ended sandboxes" is that they allow users to try new things. In physical role-play, children have been observed to use real objects to create imaginary situations in which they role-played and formulated rules that surfaced naturally during their play (Berk, 1995).

Conclusion

Games are created with the intention of making players feel good, and they work best and are most interesting and engaging when players experience the state of flow. Games provide players with an ideal experience when they enter a state of emotional and psychological immersion and become so engrossed in the game's activities that nothing else seems to matter to them. By bringing it to a close, game-based learning, it promotes progressive learning through experience.

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