

Measuring the Effectiveness of an Experiential Learning Approach: A Case Study Using Project Wild

Proposal Submitted to the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver Colorado

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May 1995

Educational reform issues -- experiential learning -- 70s; back to basics--80s; partnerships, communities, school-centered--late 80s

Dewey's definition of experiential learning: continuity--one experience grows from another; learner's social environment is dependent upon interactions among his or her needs, desires, and capacities to create experiences; educative experience is a combination of past and future experiences interacting with the learners environment.

Many well-known theorists--experiential learning is successful when based on the relationships between an individual's meaningful experiences and one's beliefs, present knowledge and interaction in the learning process.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, Active Experimentation

Educator links curricula to experiences -- helping learner grasp new ideas and modify old concepts.

This report summarized educational reform 70s-90s and shows relevance and value of experiential approach (the approach used in Project WILD): active student involvement in the learning process, higher order learning vs. factual learning, and broadened and diversified teaching strategies.

In Colorado -- no designated curriculum assimilated across subjects which allow for the extensive and consistent use of experiential learning methods.

Supplementary materials seem to do this better.

Project WILD: easily integrated into subjects and skill areas

Objectives of proposal (submitted, not implemented):

1. To determine whether Project WILD is a successful experiential approach for teaching environmental science objectives.
2. To assess the differences in student learning using an activity-only experiential lesson vs. using a full-cycle learning and practices.