

## Our Thoughts on Learning

### Comparison between Academic Learning and Experiential Learning.

**Academic Learning:** The process of acquiring information through the study of a subject without the need of direct experience.

**Experiential Learning:** The process of acquiring knowledge through reflection on personal experience.

In order to gain knowledge from an experience:

1. The learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience;
2. The learner must be able to reflect on the experience;
3. The learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualise the experience;
4. The learner must possess decision making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience.

Creating an experiential learning environment can be challenging for educators who have been taught through traditional classroom techniques. Identifying activities which allow learners to understand and absorb concepts can be a new and daunting experience. In traditional classrooms where lectures with slides and power-point presentations are standard, educators need to be creative to engage students, get them out of their seats and involved in the experience. However by providing direct experience in addition to standard written and visual materials learners with different learning styles can be accommodated.

**Action Learning.** Action learning is done in conjunction with others in small groups wherein the participants study their own actions and experience in order to improve performance (gain knowledge). It has been stated that people had to be aware of their lack of relevant knowledge and be prepared to explore their area of ignorance, with suitable questions and help from other people in similar positions.

This was put into analytical form in the formula **L=P+Q+R**

Where L is Learning, P is programming or programmed knowledge with simulations, Q is questioning to create insight into what people see feel or hear and R is reflecting on the answers to the questions.

#### **Q is the cornerstone of the method and uses;**

\*closed questions; Who, what.

\*objective questions; How much or how many.

\*relative questions; Where, when.

\*open questions; Why, how.

More and more organisations have recognised the critical importance of the action learning coach in the process; someone who has the authority and responsibility of creating the space and time for the group to learn at the individual and group level. Action learning team coaches focus exclusively on helping team members to enquire, reflect and learn from their emerging experiences while explicitly refraining from any involvement in the contents of the problem. Without the coach, team members often leap from the initial problem statement to some form of brainstorming which they assume will reveal or produce a viable solution. These suggested solutions typically provoke objections, doubts, concerns, or reservations from other team members who advocate their own preferred solutions. Self-managed teams tend to split or fragment rather than develop or evolve into a cohesive and high-performing team.

**Co-operative Learning.**

This is an approach to organising classroom activities into academic and social experiences. Students must work in groups to complete tasks collectively. Unlike individual learning. Students learning co-operatively capitalise on one another's resources and skills (asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work etc). Furthermore the teachers role changes from giving information to facilitating students learning.

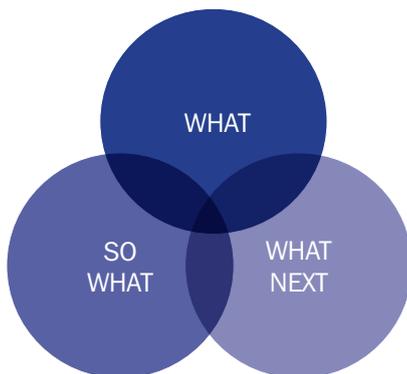
**Integrative Learning.**

This is a movement towards integrated lessons helping students make connections across curricula. It comes in many varieties: connecting skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences, applying skills and practices in various settings, utilising diverse and even contradictory points of view and understanding issues and positions contextually. I believe that this approach can be at the centre of the objective of IBIBS to produce graduates with a holistic understanding of banking and finance.

**Reflective Practice.**

The process of reflecting on experience and learning through reflection is a part of many learning methods. It is worthwhile to analyse the process. Reflective practice has been defined as "the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in the process of continuous learning". This is one of the defining characteristics of professional practice. It has been described as an unstructured approach directing understanding and learning, a self regulated process commonly used in health and teaching professions but applicable to all professions.

There are a number of ways in which the model has been formulated but for our purposes a simple reflection loop which poses three questions will suffice. The loop is represented:



What poses the question to be reflected upon;

So what represents the process of reflection;

What next represents the course of action following the reflection.

Reflective practice can help an individual develop personally. It allow professionals to continually update their skills and knowledge and consider ways to interact with their colleagues.