

The Effectiveness of an Experiential Learning (ExL) on the Students' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of 'Experiential Learning' (ExL) on the students' reading comprehension at MA Nurul Islam Pungging, Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia. The pre-experimental design was used in this study. The research samples consisted of 32 students from Class XI-IPA 2, with one representative from experimental group, chosen using a purposive sampling technique. The data were analyzed using the t-test and the analysis test was performed using the ITEMAN software. The results showed the Sig. value of (Sig. (2-tailed)) was .003, which was less than the level of significance of .05. It was determined that the null hypothesis (Ho) was 'rejected', and that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was 'accepted'. Then, it was discovered that, on average, the post-test group had a mean of 88.4, which was significantly higher than the mean of the pre-test group, which was 75.6. It has been determined that Experiential Learning (ExL) is effective in improving the students' reading comprehension. Students' academic performance may be improved if teachers are encouraged to use ExL to teach the concept of teaching approach. So, other researchers are suggested to investigate similar research by applying ExL in other methods and other English skills.

Keywords

experiential learning; reading comprehension; effectiveness



I. Introduction

A requirement for educators and students to gain a better understanding of new things come through learning. It is gained in knowledge and mastery through experience, study, or comprehension (Brown, 2007). Education and science are willing to search for innovative and effective teaching strategies that will help students develop the skills and abilities that will help them succeed in the future. The Experiential Learning (ExL) approach, which is also known as learning through action, learning by doing, learning through experience, and learning through discovery and exploration, is one of the approaches that meets this criterion because it is characterized by such characteristics as learning through action, learning by doing, learning through experience, and learning through discovery and exploration (Agsalog, 2019). When students are actively engaged in the learning process, contextual educators assert that knowledge is enhanced, and when this is combined with guidance and scaffolding from the instructor, students are able to gain a better understanding of science concepts

(Simsek & Kabapinar, 2010). The quality of the learning experience is therefore critical in progressive education settings.

An ExL approach to is a participant-centred and active approach to education that engages learners of all backgrounds and experience levels. It is successfully used in educational learning, personal development, and skill building in schools, higher education, therapy, corporate training, and other settings (Ali, 2018). According to David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, experiential learning is defined as "The process by which knowledge is created by transforming experience The combination of grasping and transforming experience results in knowledge." Learning occurs when a person moves through a cycle of four stages: (1) having a concrete experience, followed by (2) observation of and reflection on that experience, which leads to (3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions), which are then (4) used to test the hypothesis in future situations, which results in new experiences (Kolb, 1984).

When it comes to the quality of teaching and learning process, it is difficult to be applied especially during the pandemic Covid-19. Sihombing (2020) state that Covid-19 pandemic caused everyone to behave beyond normal limits as usual. The outbreak of this virus has an impact especially on the economy of a nation and Globally (Ningrum, 2020). The problems posed by the Covid-19 pandemic which have become a global problem have the potential to trigger a new social order or reconstruction (Bara, 2021). During the Covid-19 pandemic, classroom activities have been replaced by learning at home. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) on May 8, 2020, the corona virus is easily transmitted from person to person, making large gatherings risky. The classroom learning flow is the most likely to spread the virus because teachers and students in touch. Length of class learning can also increase virus risk. Students from different regions are not guaranteed protection from the corona virus at home, in their environment, or even on their way to school. The pandemic forces Indonesian policymakers to act. The Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture has begun to restrict school and university learning. The Minister of Education and Culture issued Circular No. 4 of 2020 on Education in a Coronavirus (Covid-19) Emergency, which emphasizes the use of online/distance learning to provide a learning experience without burdening students. This situation affects also at MA Nurul Islam Pungging, Mojokerto which is known as one of the Islamic Boarding Schools in Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia. The activities are limited on face-to-face learning. As a result, this condition had an impact to the students especially in reading comprehension.

Readers can combine a great deal of information from the reading text and prior knowledge they already have in order to make sense of the text due to the goal of reading is to gain knowledge (Nunan, 2003). Reading can be summed up as a process for discovering, comprehending, and experiencing the content of a text. Reading is an activity that allows us to gain access to a wide range of information. As stated by Snow (2002), the process of reading comprehension involves the exploration and construction of meanings as well as written language interaction. Reading comprehension, according to Woolley (2011, p.15), is one of the most critical aspects of reading to learn. Students must be able to build a strong understanding of the meaning in the text they read in order to complete each activity. The strategy used by the teacher must be effective because students who are good at language learning can easily comprehend English learning from those who are less intelligent.

Educators can design learning experiences that are tailored to the preferred method of learning if they know their students' learning styles. In a real classroom, students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods and styles, and they all respond to and require different kinds of stimuli (Nunan, 2003). Because of its importance in achieving learning objectives, this study investigated the ExL and its impact on students' reading comprehension. ExL is a

method of teaching that allows students to gain knowledge and skills through hands-on activities, then reflect on those activities in order to apply what they've learned in real-world contexts (Ali, 2018).

It has been shown in previous research from Efstratia (2014) that learning about ExL through PBL (Problem-based Learning) is effective because it is grounded in real-world experience. ExL helped to ensure that the learning process was a combination of both thinking and doing (Wurdinger, 2005). As a result, experiential education involves immersing students in a real-world situation and then encouraging them to reflect on what they learned as a result of their involvement in that situation. It also motivates the students to learn more effectively. Furthermore, the concept of ExL

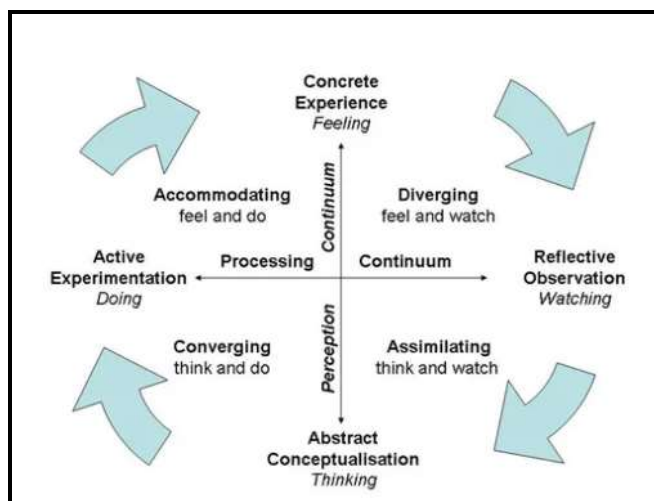


Figure 1. Kolb's Learning Theory on a Four-Stage Learning Cycle

Based on David Kolb hypothesized that the four possible combinations of perceiving and processing determine four learning styles people prefer to use when learning new information (Kolb, 1984). Kolb believes that learning styles are not fixed personality traits, but rather relatively stable patterns of behaviour that are based on a person's upbringing and life experiences rather than fixed personality traits. What is both interesting and important for group work is that different people tend to have different learning styles, and as a result, they place more emphasis on, or feel more comfortable with, certain stages of the learning cycle than others, which is both interesting and important. The experiential learning (ExL) approach encourages students to participate in a variety of activities that allow them to reflect on their learning, develop knowledge, and apply what they have learned to a new situation in their daily lives (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). It is about learning that is based on fundamental skills and then completing or acting on more complicated skills in the future, as the case may be. In order to include off-school learning activities and experiences, the teaching-learning time can be extended to include these activities and experiences, which are eventually reflected in the transfer of learning tasks into products and performances that constitute the constructed knowledge and skills resulting from these activities and experiences (Agsalog, 2019).

This study was initiated as a result of preliminary research that revealed information about the students' difficulties in comprehending and understanding reading comprehension. Then, in fact, the teacher also faced a challenge during the learning process in the classroom, as many students had greater difficulty understanding the material of reading comprehension during the pandemic era at MA Nurul Islam Pungging, Mojokerto during the period of the epidemic. As a result, the students' interest in reading texts decreases. English teachers face a difficult task in applying the experiential learning (ExL) approach on teaching reading

comprehension strategies that are both creative and innovative so that students can enjoy their learning experience. Furthermore, it was aimed to examine the effectiveness of the experiential learning approach on the students' reading comprehension skill of the eleventh-grade students at MA Nurul Islam Pungging, Mojokerto in the academic year 2020/2021.

II. Review of Literature

2.1. Experiential Learning

In Experiential Learning (ExL), is assimilated and transformed by the learner through an experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). To ensure that the learner gains relevant knowledge, this method investigates specific components such as skills, techniques, and the environment (Kolb, 2006). Each stage of the learning process is mutually supportive and feeds into the next, according to Kolb (1984). The cycle can be started at any point and completed in its logical order. However, only when all four stages of the model are completed can learning be considered successful. No single stage of the cycle can serve as a stand-alone learning tool. By going through the cycle, a learner develops increasingly complex and abstract 'mental models', or mental representations, of the material being studied. Based on a four-stage cycle, Kolb (1984) has developed four distinct learning styles. As Kolb explains, each person is born with a particular learning style preference. A person's preferred fashion sense is influenced by a variety of factors. For instance, the individual's social environment, educational experiences, or basic cognitive structure.

When it comes to ExL theories, they typically attempt to provide broadly accepted models of the learning process. Experiential Learning Theory and other traditional theories have significant differences in their overall approaches, which can be seen when comparing the two theories. In education, a new perspective has emerged that emphasizes the importance of the proper relationship between learning, work, and other life activities, as well as the creation of knowledge itself (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The experiential learning theories of Kolb (1984) and Dewey (2001) were examined for the purposes of this study in order to identify the elements that influence learning and teaching in the Life Sciences. Kolb emphasizes experiential learning as a dimensional (a choice) that aids in the process of learning, whereas Dewey adds a unique twist to inductive and deductive reasoning with his theory of induction and deduction.

2.2 Reading

For success in all educational settings, reading is the most important skill to possess (Brown, 2004). When you read, you are gaining knowledge of the text's content, comprehending it, and feeling it. The activity of reading provides us with the opportunity to investigate a great deal of information contained within the reading material. As defined by Bamford & Day (1998), reading is a process that involves the recognition and comprehension of a given word. A process of perceiving symbols written in a text that correspond to a person's spoken language is referred to as word recognition in this instance. Smith (2004) defines reading as an activity that has four characteristics, namely, that it is purposeful, selective, anticipatory, and based on comprehension, amongst other things. Nunan (2003) explains that reading is a fluent process for readers because it requires them to combine a great deal of information from the reading text with background knowledge that they already possess in order to construct meaning. Understanding is the ultimate goal of reading. If we boil it down, reading is a process in which we seek to learn about, comprehend, and feel the meaning of a piece of writing. The activity of reading provides us with the opportunity to investigate a great deal of information contained within the reading material.

2.3 Reading Comprehension

Almutairi (2018) explains that students must master reading comprehension skills in order to organize the class well. McNamara (2007) defines comprehension as the ability to understand a paragraph's ideas and their relationships. Comprehension is the process of understanding a word, sentence, or paragraph. A reader's interpretation of what the writer says is connected with what the writer says (McKee, 2012). For example, when students can understand textual information and find information related to the text. Snow (2002) defines reading comprehension as the exploration and construction of meaning through written language interaction. Woolley (2011, p.15), reading comprehension is one of the most important components of reading. In each activity, students must be able to comprehend the meaning of the text they read. Reading comprehension is a complex collaboration between readers, their interest in reading the text, their thoughts about the text, prior knowledge and text type (Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007). Reading comprehension is also defined as the student's ability to comprehend the entire text, including implied and explicit meanings, reading text types, information or knowledge contained in the text, reading goals, and reading comprehension strategies. Reading comprehension is defined as a complex task by Oakhill, Chain, & Elbro (2015, p.1). In a text, the author usually uses codes like synonyms, antonyms, and idioms that the reader must decode. It means that readers must master language in order to identify words and decode text.

III. Research Methods

The study used a pre-experimental design with a pretest-posttest design, with one group taking both the pretest and the posttest. There were two major points about the essence of the one-group pre-test and post-test design that stood out in this case. To begin with, there was no control group for comparison purposes, and only one group of participants was used. For the purposes of these points, the participants had a single condition in terms of treatments and assessments. A second step was to administer pre and post-tests to the experimental group several times during the learning activity, which was carried out during the pandemic Covid-19 era. Participants in the study were the eleventh-grade students at MA Nurul Islam Pungging, Mojokerto in the academic year 2020/2021. The sample, on the other hand, was made up of 32 students from XI-IPA 2. The group only consisted of one intact group because it used a one-group pretest-posttest design, which was purposefully chosen because the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach in teaching reading comprehension was applied. The design of the study is represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Design of the Experiential Learning (ExL) Approach

Experimental Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
	O1-XI-IPA2	X	O2-XI-IPA2

Description:

O1-XI-IPA2: Pre-test in experimental group

O2-XI-IPA2: Post-test in experiment group

X: Treatment using the ExL Approach in face-to-face class

The research data were gathered through the use of a test. In this study, the analysis test was performed using the ITEMAN software, with validity and reliability set at 5% significance. The tests consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. Because more than 0.3029, the result of all tests in this study is valid. The value of the reliability test using ITEMAN software was 0.778, indicating that the test of reliability was successful. This test was used to

assess students' cognitive ability in reading comprehension before and after using experiential learning-based teaching material. The tests used in this study were pre-test and post-test to the experiment group, respectively. The test results were analyzed using an independent t-test, where the t obtained was compared to the t table. If t obtained $>$ t table hypothesis is accepted (H_a accepted), t obtained $<$ t table hypothesis is rejected (H_0 accepted).

The SPSS Statistics 26 software was used to analyze the data descriptively and inferentially, in addition to collecting data from both the pre-test and post-test cycles. Nevertheless, before conducting a dependent t-test (paired sample test) to determine whether or not a treatment had a statistically significant effect, it is necessary to ensure that the data were normally distributed. The Kolmogorov Smirnov statistic, which can be found in SPSS Statistics 26, is used to determine the normality of data as a result of this. In cases where the level of significance was greater than 0.05, the data was considered to be normally distributed. In the following step, if the normality test yields the desired results, the paired sample test can be used to compare both the pre-test and post-test scores in order to determine whether or not the ExL approach was successful in improving the students' reading comprehension skills.

IV. Discussion

This study was conducted aimed to examine the effectiveness of the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension at MA Nurul Islam Pungging, Mojokerto in the academic year 2020/2021. The data were gathered and analyzed descriptively and inferentially with the support of SPSS Statistics 26 software after which conclusions were drawn from the results. The descriptive analysis method was used to determine the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores, among other things, during the pre-test and post-test periods. The results of the hypothesis testing procedure are determined through the use of inferential statistical analysis, which is performed in the meantime. Data from the descriptive statistical analysis conducted are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis Results of Pretest and Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	32	68	82	75.6	6.362
Post-test	32	84	94	88.4	3.882
Valid N (listwise)	32				

As shown in Table 2, the pre-test mean was 75.6 and the post-test mean was 88.4, indicating that the post-test was more precise than the pre-test means. It was discovered that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean of the group before the treatment and the mean of the group after the treatment under the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach has been completed, according to the findings. Furthermore, the standard deviation of the pre-test was 6.362, whereas the standard deviation of the post-test was 3.882 (see Table 2). The inferential test (also known as the pair sample test) can be performed after the data has been determined to be normally distributed, as described above. Due to the fact that there was only one group in the sample, it was not necessary to conduct a homogeneity test on them. In addition, the Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine the normality of the data. Experiment findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Result of Normality Test

Tests	Kolmogorov-Smirnov^a
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	Statistic	df.	Sig.
Pre-test	1.28	32	.225
Post-test	1.46	32	.156

In accordance with Table 3, the Sig. value of the pre-test was .225, whereas the Sig. value of the post-test was .156, both of which were higher than the Sig. level of .05. The Sig. value of the post-test was .156, which was higher than the Sig. level of .05. If the Sig. value was greater than .05, the data were normally distributed, which is similar to what was discovered by (Sugiono, 2015). With the help of a pair sample test, it is possible to infer that the data on the pre-test and post-test were normally distributed, as well as that the data met the criteria for hypothesis testing. In this case, a pair sample test is used to perform inferential analysis because the requirement for conducting hypothesis testing has been met. In order to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant effect of the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension, a hypothesis testing procedure was performed. Results of the study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Results of Pair Sample Test

		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval		t	df	Sig. (2tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest - posttest	8.881	6.574	1.006	7.056	12.567	7.178	32	.003

Based on the data in Table 4, it can be concluded that the Sig. value of (Sig. (2-tailed)) was .003, which was less than the level of significance of .05. It was determined that the null hypothesis (H_0) "There is no significant effect of the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension" was '*rejected*', and that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) "There is a significant effect of the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension" was '*accepted*'. Aside from that, the mean was 8.881 (St. Dev was 6.574). Using the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension in the era of pandemic Covid-19, these findings indicate that students' reading comprehension improved following treatment, as demonstrated by these findings. It could be argued, there was a statistically significant effect of the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension. After the treatment, a post-test was given to the participants. It is possible to compare the results of the post-test to the results of the pre-test in order to determine the effect of the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension.

Following the results of the descriptive analysis, it was discovered that, on average, the post-test group had a mean of 88.4, which was significantly higher than the mean of the pre-test group, which was 75.6. It is possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test mean and the pre-test mean for the group based on the results of the post-test. As a result of their participation in the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach on the students' reading comprehension, the students' reading comprehension had improved, as indicated by this result. Furthermore, the inferential analysis reveals that the Sig. value of Sig. (2-tailed) was .003, which was lower than the Sig. level of 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected (Sugiono, 2015).

According to the findings, the results of the t test demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in reading comprehension after they received treatment with ExL. According to

the findings of the study of experiential learning models published by Marin (2015) in his journal, the use of experience, particularly learning through experience, proved to be beneficial in obtaining high levels of significance in the integration of skills during the learning process. The integration of skills results in the influence of products that are produced as a result of processes that have been learned through personal experience. Experimenting with new product outcomes helps to facilitate the learning process. The students' learning products are either competencies or results that they have achieved. Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that using an experiential teaching strategy helped students achieve higher levels of success in improving the target skills. This was in accordance with the findings of Holzer and Andruct (2000) and Bohn & Schmidt (2008), who discovered that experiential teaching strategies allow students to assess their highest level of understanding and mastery of the subject matter under discussion, thereby assisting students to personalize their learning experiences.

It is becoming increasingly common in secondary schools to incorporate both experiential and theoretical learning into their curriculum. This is due to the fact that learning is made easier with the aid of personal experience. Experiential learning (ExL) emphasizes the process in which students learn by doing, and it is based on the assumption that students will more fully comprehend the material if they are actively involved in the material rather than simply listening to the lecture or reading certain material (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning (ExL) is a type of learning that emphasizes the process in which students learn by doing. The use of experiential learning-based teaching materials encourages students to take an active role in their own learning. The experience that students gain during the learning process allows them to build their own knowledge, which is beneficial to them in the long run. Experiential learning is more concerned with the process than it is with the outcome. The students are actively involved in the learning process on a daily basis. In line with the statement (Dewey, 2001), which states that when someone learns from his or her own experience, the learning becomes meaningful, this statement is correct.

Following this, the researchers concluded that there were statistically significant differences in the achievement of the students' reading comprehension using experiential teaching strategies based on their score levels when using the ExL approach, which has several advantages. Learning through the use of instructional materials has been shown to improve the learning outcomes of students. As a result, it demonstrates that positive effects of experiential learning can be generated because it has the ability to attract and challenge someone to learn, thereby generating the motivation that further influences the learning process.

V. Conclusion

The strategies used to teach reading comprehension are the teacher's efforts to achieve the learning goal. The strategies used depend on the students' and the environment's conditions. The covid-19 pandemic has changed teaching and learning, so the English teacher should be able to select appropriate strategies for students. The use of an experiential learning in teaching strategy had a significant impact on students' achievement (p-value of 0.03 is less than 0.05 level of significance). Specifically, the findings of this study revealed that incorporating an experiential learning strategy into the teaching and learning process significantly improved the students' reading comprehension skill. It can be concluded that students' performance in reading comprehension was improved as a result of the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach to the eleventh-grade students at MA Nurul Islam Pungging, Mojokerto in the academic year 2020/2021.

The following recommendations were made in light of the findings of this study, and they were considered appropriate: (1) As an instructional strategy, the Experiential Learning (ExL) approach is effective; as such, its use in teaching and learning at the senior secondary school level should be encouraged. (2) The teacher's emphasis should shift from a teacher-centred approach to teaching to a more activity-based learning strategy, such as the ExL approach, in order to improve student achievement. This is due to the fact that experiential teaching strategy improved students' achievement in reading comprehension regardless of the students' score levels; (3) Students taught with experiential learning approach have extremely high motivation, and as a result, they are encouraged or driven to study using experiential learning approach for other English skills as well as for reading comprehension.

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