

The Role of Experiential Learning in Enhancing Education in Parenting

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Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning affects parents and children in three ways:

1. Existing thoughts and beliefs are challenged and altered.
2. Attitudes regarding parenting and family members are modified.
3. The repertoire of parenting and interaction patterns are expanded.

To be affected in these ways, parents and children must be aware of their:

1. Philosophy and Beliefs
2. Knowledge
3. Attitudes
4. Perceptions of self and social environment
5. Behavior Patterns

Principles of Experiential Learning

1. Parents and children develop an awareness of their behavior and the underlying factors that motivate their behavior.
2. Parents and children will believe more in knowledge they have discovered themselves than in knowledge presented by others.
3. Learning occurs on cognitive and affective levels, engaging parents and children in active activities.
4. Learning is more effective when it is active rather than passive.
5. Change occurs through direct experiences and through observation of others.
6. It takes more than information to change parenting philosophy, attitudes, and behavior. Underlying feelings must be acknowledged.
7. Change is evolutionary and not revolutionary. It takes time to practice and integrate new parenting patterns.
8. Behavior change will be temporary until value for the new parenting philosophy, knowledge, and attitudes is adopted.
9. Self-examination and awareness of childhood experiences is necessary for parents to change existing parenting patterns.
10. Changes in perception of oneself is necessary for changes in parenting patterns to occur.
11. Supportive, caring, and challenging learning environments create freedom to experiment with new parenting patterns.
12. It's easier to change parenting patterns in a group context than in an individual context.
13. Role-playing creates an experiential base to test new behavior patterns.

Group Events That Promote Change

Change in parenting patterns is promoted by:

1. The emotional expression of feelings – both comfort and discomfort.
2. Experiencing intense emotions, whether or not they are expressed.
3. Observing others having significant emotional experiences.
4. An increase in hope and a decrease in demoralization.
5. A decrease in self-centeredness and an increase in empathy towards others.
6. Self-disclosure of feelings, thoughts, and experiences.
7. Cognitive insight into one's own problems, behaviors, and attitudes.
8. The realization that others have similar feelings, experiences, and insights into one's problems.
9. Experimentation with a new behavior and feedback from others.
10. Others modeling the desired behavior.