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LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, EXPERIENCE IS ALWAYS THE BEST TEACHER

HAZIRA MOHD NASIR

“Flying through the blue sky, learning to swim in the ocean, and returning to the earth to learn to read and write” best describes my humble experiences from twenty-five years ago—working with a Singaporean Airline company as an In-Flight Attendant or Cabin Crew, moving to a French-based shipping company adapting the French Man cultures at the heart of Marseilles city, France and ultimately serving as a senior lecturer at UiTM Di Hatiku” till today. Thus, the journey of learning keeps going on and continues ever onwards.

The tapestry of my life hangs on every wall. It has been a journey of self-discovery, personal growth, and the slow unfolding of my identity. The foundation was that learning is never confined to a classroom. And here I am..., so I decided to pen this piece of writing art depicting my perspective on these two idioms; knowledge is power, and experience is the best teacher. Let's explore!

These two aphorisms of "**knowledge is power**" and "**experience the best teacher**", some say stamen, have sparked academic debates ages ago. This is where I bring the reader in, to see the delicate and relatively intricate dance – through the power of knowledge and experience how my very own understanding of this world was developed.

The education in a fast-paced world does not remain within the four walls of the classroom. The definition of learning has changed, and knowledge has always been said to be power, but experience is the best teacher. In this article we dive into the relationship between formal education and real-world experience, and why they are so instrumental to personal and professional growth.

Indeed, the classroom setting is rapidly passing beyond the limiting realm of traditional learning and knowledge acquisition. Given the rapid change in the educational landscape from mechanical didactic (a pedagogy in the 1880s) to a dynamic and learner-centric model, the one-size-fits-all approach was dramatically transformed to encompass more variations (Srivastava, 2023).

The Power of Knowledge

There is a reason that the saying "knowledge is power" has echoed throughout time. First, knowledge is the basis on which we create our experiences of reality. It gives us the tools we need to make good decisions, solve complex problems, and even innovate in everything from business to government. So, knowledge comes from learning whether it be through formal education, books or self-study which builds our domain understanding, enables us to reason and effectively apply critical thinking.

The knowledge is organized, structured and curated in the classroom. This helps students understand the centuries-old concepts and theories. This form of formalized knowledge makes them more confident and equips students to invest their lives in various industries or get higher education. Nevertheless, knowing is one side of the coin. So yes, the traditional classroom has lost its monopoly on learning and acquiring knowledge. Education has seen a radical change in its landscape from one size fit for all to a dynamic learner-centric model which is based upon the personalization of learning.

The main issue of knowledge is that it changes all the time and grows and becomes irrelevant after a period too (Iacob & Muşuroi, 2021). Thus, the main goal of educational activities should not be teaching students specific information but developing their critical abilities and problem-solving skills which will enable them to cope with multiple challenges in the 21st-century world.

The Wisdom of Experience

As soon as we set foot out there outside the protected walls of a classroom, we face a different phase of learning which is more complex and unplanned than ever. Experience is a traditional form of learning and is one of the reported methods in life to assist practicality with the knowledge we possess. It forces us to change, face adversity, and grow.

Anything – cooking, driving, managing a team. Theoretical learning – Knowledge from a book or lecture gives you a strong footing on the subject, but until you experiment with your own hands things stay there. With doing – and, as the case may be, with succeeding or failing – you learn the ins and outs more accurately ... experience is an awesome teacher.

So, for instance, formal knowledge might help to execute a task at the workplace, but experience is what tells you how to deal with managing people or coping when dealing with unexpected issues and leading with compassion. Experience builds critical thinking skills, and resourcefulness and can be hard to learn from books only.

Combining Knowledge and Experience for Holistic Learning

It creates holistic learning where knowledge is combined with experience. Knowledge is your structure, and experience is just what adds depth to that; This develops in a mutually influencing cycle (a causal relationship). You do learn from your experiences by applying the knowledge base that you acquired, using it to shape what you learned and how you will learn next time.

In this day and age when industries quickly change, skills can become outmoded in little more than a decade, resulting in such profound shifts as the need for lifelong learning. An example: Technology I learned about programming/algorithms in school and that information would be irrelevant today but if I had learned how to learn new technologies, that still holds.

Likewise, the majority of entrepreneurs swear learning through doing is invaluable. They may begin with a background in their field, but it is often trial and error that leads to mastery. They see their failures as learning opportunities, not a hindrance to moving forward and often times it teaches them things that no business course could ever.

Adapting new ways of learning and using the technology can make a huge impact on the way students learn, helping in making them self-directed active learners with skills to adapt to the changes in rapidly growing global arena (Helwa & Helwa, 2018; Lowry et al., 1951; Dahms et al., 2020; Iacob & Muşuroi, 2021).

Lifelong Learning: The Future of Education

With the changing nature of work, lifelong learning has emerged as a school of thought. Formal education is no longer the single way to keep up with or compete in one's own field. The answer is no, they are looking for new experiences in the form of workshops, hands-on projects or real-world challenges.

This move reflects an expansion of education outside the confines of a classroom. It occurs in the workplace, in the community, traveling – all these spaces is where learning impactful to work happens. It urges people to remain inquisitive, upskill always and stay open to opportunities that will broaden their horizons.

The increasing trend of online courses, podcasts and e-tutorials has made learning more accessible than ever. It implies that people can keep studying and actively look for experiences to put their knowledge into practice.

Concluding Remarks: The Power of Knowledge and Experience Together

Knowledge, however, can only open doors and plant the seeds on which you learn to grow; experience is what allows that knowledge to metamorphose into into wisdom. They both provide us with the necessary skill set to be successful, not just in our jobs but in life. In a world of continuous learning it is not merely education but gainfulness and the fusion of experience with knowledge which truly unleashes our potential.

Conclusively, the central message is obvious: learning is not limited to inside a classroom. So, as we continue growing in our personal and professional lives, always remember – ***knowledge is power, but experience will forever be the best teacher of all.***

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