

# THE VALUE OF WORK AS IT RELATES TO YOUR EDUCATION

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Some individuals today question the value of either a work experience or practicum as an important element in a learner's education. However, they should understand "all genuine education comes about through experience" (John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 1938, pg.13).

To expand on this point, Kolb and Kolb (2005) examined the works of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Carl Jung. They then developed six general propositions of experiential learning theory (i.e., learning by doing):

1. "Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcome" (p.194).
2. "Learning is relearning" (p.194).
3. "Learning requires a resolution of dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world." In other words, learners must move between "opposing modes of reflection and action and feeling and thinking" (p.194).
4. Learning is holistic (not just a mental exercise).
5. Learning involves interactions between learners and their environment.
6. Learning is constructivist in nature.

From the above six general propositions laid out by Kolb and Kolb, one can conclude that people learn from active experience.

In 2005, George D. Koh et al wrote a book titled *Student Success in College*. The authors studied twenty institutions in the United States that clearly demonstrated that their students achieved outstanding national outcomes on the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) national survey. They discovered, among other things, that internships and other experiential learning activities are plentiful at these colleges. They noted that these experiences provide real opportunities for students to apply knowledge and gain real world experience. They went on to say "encouraging and even requiring students to participate in experiential activities such as internships, practica, and field placements so that students gain experience in applying what they are learning to real-life situations" (p.240).

This is but a brief snapshot of the views of leading educators demonstrating their understanding of the role work experience plays as a valuable contributor to student learning.

## References

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. New York: Collier Books.

Koh, G.D. et al (2005). *Student Success in College – Creating Conditions That Matter*. Jossey-Bass, 236-240.

Kolb, A.Y. & Kolb, D.A. (2005). *Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education*. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 4(2), 193-212.