Experiential Learning and its Application in College English Intensive Reading Teaching

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Abstract: *The teaching of College English intensive reading faces many thorny issues, among which the interest of student is a big one: some articles in the textbook are not that relevant to students' lives and contain grammatical points that students consider boring, therefore they do not have a strong interest. It becomes a big issue how to raise the interest of college students and enhance teaching efficiency. This article applies experiential learning theory and explains how to raise students' self-awareness accordingly, with a case study of Unit 5 Unfreezing Frozen in iEnglish book 1.*

Keywords: Experiential Learning; College English; Self-Awareness.

1. INTRODUCTION

As an English teacher in an independent college, the author primarily faces the task of instructing first and second-year students who are pursuing non-English majors. These students exhibit a wide range of English proficiency levels. When presented with the same course material, some students display a strong enthusiasm for learning, while others appear fatigued and struggle to stay engaged, even to the point of feeling drowsy during class. This situation becomes particularly pronounced during the period of online teaching necessitated by the pandemic. The inability to interact with students face-to-face has contributed to a lack of focus and difficulty in maintaining their attention. Consequently, finding ways to enhance students' learning interest and helping them discover their own self-awareness in the process of learning becomes an issue worthy of exploration.

In addressing this challenge, one approach is to adopt the perspective of experiential learning theory. Experiential learning theory places a strong emphasis on the role of experiences and emotional factors in the learning process. It provides learners with opportunities to nurture their curiosity, satisfy their need for exploration, and engage in creative thinking, thereby improving both the effectiveness of their learning and their overall interest in the subject matter. Within this theoretical framework, various methods rooted in thinking education can be employed. These include problem-solving, heuristic learning, reflection, evaluation, and role-playing. By utilizing these techniques, students' active participation and inquiry-based interests can be stimulated, leading to an enhancement of their self-awareness and self-management skills.

To be more specific, in the context of English teaching, targeted multimedia instruction can be employed to great effect. By integrating audio, visual, and interactive elements, students can gain a more intuitive understanding of the content and emotional nuances present in the texts they study.

When it comes to audio elements, incorporating authentic recordings of native speakers can significantly enhance students' listening comprehension skills. Hearing the natural flow of spoken English, intonation patterns, and pronunciation variations allows students to develop a more accurate ear for the language. Moreover, by listening to diverse accents and speech styles, students become more adaptable and attuned to different English-speaking contexts.

Visual elements play a crucial role in reinforcing students' understanding of written texts. Engaging visuals, such as images, videos, and infographics, can provide contextual clues and support comprehension. For instance, when studying a literary work or a news article, visual aids can help students visualize the settings, characters, and events, making the text more vivid and memorable. Furthermore, visual representations can assist in explaining complex grammatical structures, vocabulary usage, and idiomatic expressions, making them more accessible and comprehensible.

Interactive elements, such as interactive exercises, quizzes, and simulations, enable students to actively engage with the language and apply their knowledge in a practical context. Through interactive activities, students can practice grammar rules, expand their vocabulary, and develop language skills in a dynamic and engaging manner.

For example, interactive grammar exercises can provide immediate feedback, allowing students to identify and correct their mistakes, reinforcing their learning in real-time. Similarly, language simulations and role-playing activities create opportunities for students to use English in authentic communication scenarios, encouraging active participation, collaboration, and problem-solving.

The utilization of multimedia in English teaching not only facilitates comprehension but also fosters creative thinking and effective emotional communication. Analyzing and discussing audiovisual materials, such as movies, TV shows, or advertisements, allows students to explore different perspectives, interpret visual cues, and critically reflect on the emotions conveyed. This cultivates their ability to analyze and express their own thoughts and feelings in English. Moreover, multimedia instruction encourages students to shift their attention towards more abstract aspects of the language, such as form and style. By observing and analyzing various texts, students can discern different writing styles, rhetorical devices, and literary techniques. They can explore how authors employ language to convey meaning, evoke emotions, and create a specific atmosphere. This deeper understanding of form and style empowers students to apply similar techniques in their own writing, enabling them to express themselves more creatively and effectively. Engaging students in activities like role-playing and group discussions further aids in the development of their language skills while simultaneously igniting their enthusiasm for learning and breaking through any stagnation they may experience. Role-playing allows students to step into different roles and practice language in contextualized situations. It enhances their speaking and listening skills, as well as their ability to negotiate meaning and express opinions. Group discussions, on the other hand, promote critical thinking, active participation, and collaborative problem-solving. Students can share ideas, debate various topics, and learn from each other's perspectives, fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment.

By implementing these strategies, teachers can create an immersive learning environment that fosters students' active participation, critical thinking, and self-reflection. Encouraging self-discovery and self-awareness in students not only enhances their motivation to learn but also equips them with essential life-long learning skills that extend beyond the confines of the English classroom. Additionally, the adoption of innovative teaching approaches and the integration of technology can help bridge the gap between online and face-to-face instruction, enabling teachers to effectively engage with their students and create meaningful learning experiences.

It is important to note that the challenges faced in English teaching in independent college universities are multifaceted. Factors such as students' varying levels of English proficiency, the limitations of online teaching, and the need to cultivate students' intrinsic motivation and self-awareness all contribute to the complexity of this issue. However, by embracing experiential learning theory and employing diverse instructional methods, teachers can create an inclusive and stimulating learning environment that inspires students to actively engage in the process of learning English, ultimately leading to improved outcomes and a deeper appreciation for the language.

2. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY

David A. Kolb is a prominent figure in the field of experiential learning. As a renowned psychologist and educator, he published a book in 1984 titled "Experiential learning:Experience as the Source of Learning and Development", in which he formally presented the theory of experiential learning.

According to Kolb's theory, experiential learning encompasses the comprehensive integration of various aspects such as experience, perception, cognition, and behavior throughout the learning process. This approach emphasizes learner engagement and proactiveness, aiming to facilitate learners in exploring, discovering, and acquiring new knowledge and skills through their own actions, experiences, and reflections within real-world environments. Through continuous reflection and practice, learners are encouraged to critically examine and update their knowledge and perspectives.

What sets experiential learning theory apart is its synthesis of different approaches, including behaviorism, cognitive psychology, and psychodynamics, emphasizing the holistic and integrated nature of the learning process. Unlike some behaviorist approaches that focus solely on cognitive aspects or neglect individual experiences and subjective encounters, experiential learning theory emphasizes the balance between emotions and cognition in the learning process. It recognizes the interdependence of learners' emotions and cognition, highlighting that they cannot be studied in isolation.

Experiential learning theory advocates for learners to engage in various forms of learning, including bodily experiences, emotional encounters, perceptual judgments, concept formation, and behavioral practices, in order to

achieve optimal learning outcomes and satisfaction. This approach recognizes that individuals have diverse learning styles and preferences, and it aims to provide learners with a range of opportunities to actively participate in their own learning process.

Bodily experiences play a significant role in experiential learning. By involving the body in the learning process, learners can acquire knowledge and skills through physical actions and sensations. For example, in language learning, learners can engage in role-plays, language games, and real-life simulations, which allow them to use language in practical contexts. These activities not only enhance their linguistic abilities but also develop their confidence in using the language effectively. By physically experiencing the language, learners can internalize its usage and cultural nuances more effectively.

Emotional encounters are also essential in experiential learning. Emotions have a powerful impact on memory, motivation, and overall learning outcomes. When learners are emotionally engaged in the learning process, they are more likely to retain information and have a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Teachers can create a positive and supportive learning environment that encourages emotional connections to the content. This can be achieved through storytelling, real-life examples, and discussions that elicit personal experiences and perspectives. By tapping into learners' emotions, educators can foster a sense of empathy, connection, and relevance, making the learning experience more meaningful and memorable.

Perceptual judgments involve learners' ability to observe, analyze, and make sense of their surroundings. Experiential learning encourages learners to develop their perceptual skills by actively engaging with their environment. For instance, in science or art classes, learners can conduct experiments, observe natural phenomena, or create visual representations. These activities sharpen their observational skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. By making perceptual judgments, learners can connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, enabling them to grasp complex concepts and develop a deeper appreciation for the subject matter.

Concept formation is another vital aspect of experiential learning. Learners actively construct knowledge by organizing information into meaningful frameworks and mental models. Experiential learning provides opportunities for learners to engage in activities that support concept formation. For instance, in mathematics, learners can participate in hands-on activities, puzzles, and problem-solving tasks to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. By actively manipulating objects and exploring patterns, learners can internalize abstract concepts and develop a solid foundation for further learning.

Behavioral practices are integral to experiential learning as they encourage learners to apply knowledge in real-life contexts. Through practical application, learners not only reinforce their understanding but also develop essential skills and competencies. For example, in vocational training or internships, learners can engage in authentic work experiences, applying their theoretical knowledge in real-world situations. This hands-on approach not only enhances their practical skills but also cultivates a sense of responsibility, adaptability, and professionalism.

By embracing experiential learning theory in English teaching, educators can create a dynamic and immersive learning environment. This approach encourages students to actively participate in experiential activities, such as role-playing, simulations, real-life scenarios, and problem-solving tasks. Through these experiences, students can apply their knowledge, reflect on their actions, and make connections between theory and practice, thereby deepening their understanding and enhancing their language skills.

Furthermore, incorporating technology and multimedia resources can enhance the experiential learning process. Interactive language learning software, virtual reality simulations, and online collaborative platforms can provide students with engaging and authentic language experiences, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective.

Kolb (1984:30) pointed out that to achieve effective experiential learning, learners must possess four abilities: 1) the ability to engage in concrete experiences, namely being able to fully participate in new experiences with an open and unbiased attitude; 2) the ability for reflective observation, being able to observe and reflect on one's experiences from multiple perspectives; 3) the ability for abstract conceptualization, being able to integrate observed results with personal theories in a logical manner to create new concepts; 4) the ability for active experimentation, being able to utilize personal theories to make decisions and solve problems. [1]

Experiential learning theory provides a flexible theoretical framework for teacher learning. Roberts (1998) pointed out that experiential teacher learning involves various components, such as experiencing, reflecting and discussing, acquiring public knowledge, and engaging in practical activities. Throughout this learning process, teachers can extract their personal knowledge and experiences through observations and reflections on actual experiences. Additionally, the abstract theories obtained through reading and formal learning can support this process of conceptualization.

In experiential teacher learning, teachers need to deepen their teaching knowledge and skills by understanding and interpreting concrete experiences. While practical experience is invaluable, it is equally important for teachers to engage with abstract theories that underpin their pedagogical practices. By combining practical experience with theoretical understanding, teachers can gain a more comprehensive perspective on their teaching methods and make informed decisions about their instructional strategies.

Abstract theories provide researchers with the necessary professional vocabulary and theoretical support, which can help teachers better comprehend and articulate their specific teaching experiences. Through theoretical frameworks, teachers can analyze and interpret their practical encounters, identifying patterns, underlying principles, and potential areas for improvement. Theories provide a lens through which teachers can view their teaching practices from a broader perspective, enabling them to make sense of complex classroom dynamics and student interactions. Moreover, abstract theories offer conceptual frameworks that help teachers connect their experiences to larger educational principles and research findings. For example, theories of learning, such as constructivism or sociocultural theory, can shed light on how students acquire knowledge and engage in the learning process. By understanding these theories, teachers can align their teaching strategies with evidence-based practices, incorporating instructional techniques that promote active engagement, collaboration, and meaningful learning experiences for their students.

Abstract theories also facilitate critical reflection, allowing teachers to question and challenge their existing assumptions and beliefs about teaching. When teachers encounter new or challenging situations in their classrooms, theoretical knowledge provides a foundation for analysis and evaluation. Teachers can draw on theoretical frameworks to examine the underlying causes of certain behaviors or learning difficulties, helping them develop targeted interventions and instructional approaches to address these issues effectively. Furthermore, abstract theories foster a sense of professional identity and continuous growth among teachers. By engaging with current educational research and theoretical discourses, teachers become part of a larger professional community. They are exposed to diverse perspectives, innovative ideas, and ongoing debates within the field of education. This exposure stimulates intellectual curiosity and encourages teachers to stay informed about emerging practices, research findings, and educational trends. As teachers deepen their theoretical knowledge, they become better equipped to adapt to evolving educational contexts and meet the needs of a diverse student population.

It is important to note that the integration of theory and practice in teacher learning is not a one-way process. Teachers' practical experiences also inform and challenge existing theories, contributing to the ongoing development and refinement of educational frameworks. The reciprocal relationship between theory and practice creates a dynamic and iterative process of professional growth, where teachers continuously reflect on their experiences, refine their pedagogical approaches, and contribute to the advancement of educational knowledge.

Experiential teacher learning requires a balanced integration of practical experiences and abstract theories. While concrete experiences provide the foundation for teachers' professional growth, abstract theories offer a conceptual framework for understanding and interpreting these experiences. By engaging with theoretical knowledge, teachers can enhance their analytical and interpretive abilities, make informed instructional decisions, and contribute to the ongoing development of educational theory and practice. The combination of practical experience and theoretical understanding empowers teachers to be reflective, adaptive, and effective in their pedagogical practices, ultimately benefiting their students and the broader educational community.

However, Roberts also emphasized that relying solely on experiences and abstract theories does not lead to effective learning. In the process of experiential teacher learning, teachers also need to reflect on and analyze these experiences, supporting activities such as narrating, sharing, and discussing the process of conceptualizing personal theories. Through such communication and interaction, teachers can gain a deeper understanding of their personal experiences, leading to the renewal of their teaching knowledge and practical skills.

The theory of experiential teacher learning provides educational researchers with a fresh framework for

contemplation, contributing to the development of more effective teaching methods and programs. By becoming direct participants in their own learning, teachers can gain deeper insights into the limitations and issues of the curriculum. Simultaneously, they can improve their teaching efficiency and capabilities, thereby better serving the development and growth of their students.

Experiential learning ultimately aims to cultivate students' self-directed learning abilities. Regarding self-directed learning, Zimmerman, a representative of the social cognitive perspective in the 1990s, synthesized various viewpoints and proposed a relatively systematic theoretical framework for self-directed learning research. The framework is presented in the table below [2]:

Scientific Questions	Psychological Dimensions	Task Conditions	Essence of Autonomy	Processes of Autonomy
Why Learn	Motivation	Choosing to Engage	Intrinsic or Self-Generated	Self-goal efficacy, values, attributions, etc.
How to Learn	Methods	Choosing Methods	Planned or Automated	Strategy use, relaxation, etc.
When to Learn	Time	Controlling Time Limits	Scheduled and Efficient	Time planning and management
What to Learn	Learning Outcomes	Controlling Learning Outcomes	Self-awareness of Outcomes	Self-monitoring, judgment, behavioral control, willpower
Where to Learn	Environment	Controlling Physical Environment	Adapting to Environmental Constraints	Choosing and organizing learning environments
With Whom to Learn	Sociality	Controlling Social Environment	Adapting to Environmental Constraints	Selecting role models, seeking help

3. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENTS' SELF-AWARENESS: A CASE STUDY

According to Kolb [3], experiential learning consists of four stages. The following analysis will be based on the specific teaching activities of Unit 5 "Unfreezing Frozen" in iEnglish Book1:

In this unit's teaching, the author divides the entire teaching process into several stages. Firstly, the author designs an introductory activity where students are asked to choose their favorite movie and deliver a brief presentation. This aims to stimulate students' interest and motivation for learning. Next, students are required to watch a video titled "What Makes a Good Film" and take notes. Throughout the viewing process, the author guides the students to summarize the essential elements of a good film, such as scriptwriting, acting, sound effects, visuals, and more. This helps students gain a deeper understanding of the core elements involved in film production. Subsequently, students are also asked to watch a video on "What makes us cry in a film" and engage in a content dictation exercise. This activity further enhances students' comprehension of the emotional experience conveyed in films, while also improving their listening and reading skills.

By incorporating the specific theme of movies, students are given the autonomy to select their preferred films and fully participate in the experiential learning activities. Through personal engagement and firsthand experiences, they acquire knowledge and insights, completing the initial stage of experiential learning.

Next, the students move on to the second step of experiential learning: observations and reflections. This refers to learners examining their personal experiences from multiple perspectives and reflecting on their own learning while sharing insights with others. This stage includes understanding the content of the text. Students analyzed the meaning of the title "Unfreezing Frozen" by dissecting the root words. By expanding on words such as "freeze," "froze," "frozen," "unfreeze," "thaw," students related these terms to their own experiences, understanding the relationship between "melting ice and snow" and "problem-solving," thereby grasping the meaning of the title.

The next stage of the experiential learning process involves analyzing the movie. Recognizing the limitations of class time, it may not be feasible to screen the entire film. Instead, students are provided with the film's English synopsis and description to gain a basic understanding of the plot, characters, and themes. This condensed

overview serves as a foundation for further analysis and discussion.

Building on the elements of a good film discussed earlier in the course, students are encouraged to analyze the strengths and merits of the movie. They delve deeper into the narrative structure, character development, cinematography, sound design, and other cinematic aspects. Through this analysis, students engage in the third step of experiential learning—forming abstract concepts and generalizations.

During this stage, learners interpret, summarize, and distill their experiences with the movie, extracting key elements and identifying overarching themes. They engage in critical thinking, evaluating the effectiveness of the storytelling techniques employed in the film and reflecting upon their emotional responses to specific scenes or moments. By examining the movie through a critical lens, students gain a deeper understanding of the artistic choices made by the filmmakers and the impact these choices have on the audience.

To facilitate this analysis and encourage collaborative learning, students participate in group discussions. Working in small groups, they share their interpretations, insights, and observations about the movie. These discussions provide an opportunity for students to engage in intellectual discourse, exchange ideas, and challenge one another's perspectives. Peer assistance enhances their understanding of the text as they benefit from diverse viewpoints and gain new insights from their classmates.

The multimodal approach of incorporating audio, video, and text in the analysis process further enhances student engagement and understanding. While the movie itself may not be screened in its entirety, students can still explore audiovisual elements through selected clips or scenes. By incorporating auditory and visual stimulation, the learning experience becomes more immersive and evokes a deeper emotional resonance. Engaging multiple senses can enhance memory retention and facilitate a more profound connection to the movie's themes and messages.

During group discussions, students are granted a broader space for reflection and freedom of thought. They have the opportunity to express their opinions, articulate their interpretations, and explore different perspectives. This open and supportive environment fosters critical thinking, creativity, and the development of communication skills. Students learn to listen actively, respect diverse viewpoints, and constructively challenge ideas.

In addition to the immediate benefits of the group discussions, this stage of analysis also allows students to form general concepts and theories. Through their collective reflections, students distill their individual experiences into broader understandings of storytelling, film aesthetics, and cinematic techniques. They develop a more comprehensive appreciation of the movie as a work of art and gain insights that extend beyond the specific film being analyzed. These conceptual understandings can be applied to future encounters with movies or other narrative forms, enhancing their analytical skills and enriching their overall cultural literacy. For example, when analyzing what makes the movie good, some students may notice a difference in the plot compared to other films. However, they struggle to articulate exactly what makes it good. On the other hand, more intellectually active students may draw connections to other Disney princess movies, pointing out the classic trope of "princesses being saved by princes," where females are portrayed as vulnerable and in need of rescue, while males are depicted as powerful with the ability to save others. In contrast, the movie being discussed features two princess sisters who progress from suspicion and distrust to mutual love, simultaneously overcoming their inner fears. The prince merely serves as a peripheral and negative figure. Through such discussions, students understand the underlying message of the movie, the meaning of the title, why the story was challenging to write, and how it ultimately became a beloved tale among fans.

In the last stage, the students move on to the fourth step of experiential learning: testing implications of concepts in new situations. Learners apply the new theories in practical contexts, testing the accuracy and validity of the concepts and theories. Following the movie teaching activities described above, students transition to analyzing the theme song. "Let It Go" is a widely popular song that won the Best Original Song at the 86th Academy Awards due to its unique style and exceptional performance. Researchers aim to spark students' interest and encourage them to explore the relationship between the song, the movie, and the protagonist's growth, understanding why it has become a classic. Additionally, the author assigns tasks for students to search for multiple versions of Chinese translations, and in some cases, even seeks out Classical Chinese versions circulating online. Through this process, students learn to compare and contrast different translation versions, enhancing their ability to accurately understand the cultural connotations of the lyrics. Furthermore, the author attempts to guide students in making connections between the story and the song, transferring the concept of a "good story" to a "good song" for deeper

analysis and appreciation. Through this activity, researchers can assess whether students truly comprehend and master the methods and ideas of experiential learning.

This teaching approach helps stimulate students' interest and motivation for learning, allowing them to discover and acquire knowledge through authentic experiences and self-directed choices. By focusing on students' emotions and cognition, this teaching approach also helps students explore and enhance their self-awareness and motivation, resulting in improved learning outcomes and increased engagement. It delves deeper into students' potential and individual qualities.

4. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND SELF-PERCEPTION

In the process of experiential learning, how can students improve their self-perception?

Self-perception refers to an individual's awareness (i.e., perception, understanding, and evaluation) of their current physical and mental state. The self-perception theory proposed by Bem in 1972 suggests that individuals come to know their attitudes, emotions, and internal states through their own behavior and the situations in which it occurs. It shares similar patterns and mechanisms with interpersonal perception, such as stereotyping and projection. It stems from the individual's evaluation, norms, and regulations of the external social environment rather than from the individual themselves. Research indicates that self-perception begins with individuals' recognition of their physical performance and later extends to their personality traits, with the accuracy of self-perception increasing with age. A strong sense of self-perception helps individuals accurately understand their abilities, thereby improving their effectiveness in activities, the level of strategy organization, and their ability to regulate themselves accurately, ultimately establishing a positive self-image. [4]

Education is a crucial stage in an individual's growth and development, and a key turning point is the transition from relying on others for control to self-control. When a person acquires necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities through external control and gains the capacity for independent thinking and action, education needs to focus on promoting individuals' self-educational abilities. The importance of independent thinking and self-action throughout one's life journey is self-evident. If a person's personality development remains dependent on others in an immature state, it becomes challenging to make rational, independent decisions about one's own life, which can have negative consequences on personal growth and life outcomes. Therefore, the transition from external education to self-education is an important stage that every individual should experience. As parents and teachers gradually step away from the students' lives, they must gradually develop their own abilities for thinking, decision-making, and taking action, continuously updating, adjusting, and improving themselves. This capacity for self-education is the key to determining an individual's achievements, success, and fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social interactions. The ultimate goal of education is to cultivate individuals who are independent, capable of independent thinking and self-action. The transition from external education to self-education is a crucial aspect of successful education. Only through self-education can individuals truly achieve comprehensive development in their thinking, emotions, intellect, and personality and embark on the life they desire.

An essential condition for self-perception is the effectiveness of self-awareness. Self-awareness is a genuine state of self-attention. The key to determining the effectiveness of self-perception lies in the authenticity and accuracy of understanding self-information. When self-information is authentic and accurate, we can evaluate ourselves correctly and act appropriately. Therefore, the authenticity and accuracy of self-information are important factors in determining the effectiveness of self-perception. However, self-perception is often influenced by various factors, and one significant factor is attribution. Attribution is the interpretation individuals make regarding the causes of their behavior or thoughts, and different people may have different explanations for the same behavior, thought, or emotion. For example, when faced with success, some people may attribute it to their own efforts, intelligence, or internal factors, while others may attribute it to luck or external factors. Regarding failure, some individuals may attribute it to external conditions, while others may attribute it to their own shortcomings. These different attribution styles reflect different personality states of inferiority and confidence. To enhance the effectiveness of self-perception, individuals need to overcome feelings of inferiority or arrogance, have a clear and objective understanding of themselves, and make accurate evaluations. Having a correct understanding of oneself can not only help individuals better identify their strengths, weaknesses, and potential but also enable them to better control their behavior and emotions, reducing erroneous judgments and emotional fluctuations caused by incorrect attributions. Therefore, improving the effectiveness of self-perception is of great significance to personal growth and development. It involves various aspects of self-cognition and interpersonal relationships, requiring us to continually strengthen self-reflection in our daily lives, earnestly evaluate our actions, thoughts, and emotions

according to the correct standards, and become proactive individuals who possess both confidence and humility.

In experiential learning, learners are placed in a central position where they actively engage in practice and reflection. These two aspects complement each other and organically integrate to enhance knowledge acquisition and skill development. In other words, experiential learning involves learners actively and fully participating in the learning process, utilizing diverse teaching media to stimulate their senses, such as touch, hearing, and vision. It encourages learners to engage in practical experiences and reflections, willingly and wholeheartedly immersing themselves in the learning process.

During this process, students feel a sense of control over their learning. For example, in the first step of "finding a favorite movie," students are not restricted to specific types, content, or themes of movies. They are given a high degree of freedom, allowing them to exercise their subjective initiative in making choices. When they select a movie they genuinely enjoy, they will have profound insights and plenty of ideas to share. In this step, they feel a sense of control. In contrast, in traditional instructional methods, teachers may talk about and analyze the advantages and characteristics of a particular movie. If students have not seen or appreciated that movie, they may develop resistance or simply passively absorb the information. Even if they do not resist, it will be challenging for them to explore their self-awareness by conducting an in-depth analysis.

Experiential learning breaks free from the constraints of traditional classrooms and adopts an active and interactive approach that encourages students to explore and engage. It allows students to complete the course by fully utilizing their self-awareness. As mentioned earlier, the crucial turning point in education is the transition from external control to self-control. Traditional lectures are entirely teacher-controlled, where students need to follow the teacher's pace passively. However, in experiential learning, the first step is to enable students to exercise "self-control." They can choose which materials to read in advance, which movies to watch, and how much they want to contribute during discussions. It is entirely determined by their own reading comprehension and experiential speed, allowing them to progress at their own pace. With this self-control and the aid of multimedia and other effective learning tools, students do not attribute their failure to understand the subject matter to the course or the teacher. The team collaboration aspect of experiential learning provides students with a sense of companionship during the learning process, reminding them that they are not alone in the journey. Furthermore, as the course content is not presented all at once, it provides students with ample space for independent thinking and active engagement with the material. When students watch the initial part of a movie, for example, they are introduced to characters, settings, and initial plot developments. This creates a foundation upon which students can speculate and make predictions about the upcoming events and narrative arcs. Engaging in this process of anticipation and prediction requires students to draw upon their prior knowledge, draw connections, and use their imagination.

As the movie progresses and students witness more plot points and character developments, they continuously compare them with their own internal expectations. They analyze how the story is unfolding, whether it aligns with their predictions, and how the characters' actions and decisions contribute to the overall narrative. This ongoing process of comparing and evaluating helps students develop critical thinking skills, as they assess the coherence, consistency, and believability of the story. Moreover, this active engagement with the course content fosters a sense of ownership over the learning experience. As students speculate, predict, and analyze, they become active participants rather than passive recipients of information. This sense of agency promotes a deeper level of engagement and investment in the learning process. Students feel a personal connection to the material, as their thoughts, ideas, and interpretations are continuously shaping their understanding of the content.

In this process of active engagement and reflection, students also enhance their self-awareness. As they compare their predictions with the actual plot developments, students gain insights into their own thinking processes, biases, and assumptions. They become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in analyzing narratives and making predictions. This self-awareness not only benefits their understanding of the course content but also cultivates metacognitive skills that can be applied to other areas of learning and critical thinking. Furthermore, the process of speculating, predicting, and reflecting on the course content encourages students to embrace ambiguity and uncertainty. As they encounter unexpected plot twists or narrative turns, students learn to adapt their thinking and revise their predictions. This flexibility in thinking is a valuable skill in navigating real-world situations that are often complex and unpredictable. Students develop resilience and an openness to new perspectives, as they recognize that their initial expectations may need to be revised based on new information.

Additionally, the opportunity for independent thinking and reflection allows students to develop their own unique

interpretations and perspectives. As they engage in discussions and share their thoughts with peers, they contribute to a diverse and dynamic learning community. The exchange of ideas and perspectives enriches the learning experience for everyone involved, as students learn to appreciate different viewpoints and challenge their own assumptions.

The presentation of course content in a non-linear manner, such as through a movie or other sequential materials, provides students with the space for independent thinking, active engagement, and speculation. As students anticipate and compare their predictions with actual plot developments, they enhance their critical thinking skills and develop a deeper sense of ownership over the learning process. This process also promotes self-awareness as students reflect on their thinking processes and adapt their predictions based on new information. Moreover, by embracing ambiguity and engaging in independent thinking, students develop resilience, flexibility, and a willingness to consider diverse perspectives. Overall, this approach fosters a dynamic and intellectually stimulating learning environment where students actively construct knowledge and meaning.

Self-awareness is an integral part of a healthy personality. Self-analysis allows us to understand ourselves clearly, manage and utilize our strengths, develop self-improvement plans, unleash our potential, and effectively arrange situations that allow us to realize our potential, enabling us to move towards growth and competence.

Through experiential learning, we can learn valuable lessons from failed attempts and engage in self-reflection. It allows individuals to break free from a state of confusion and restlessness, reconnect with aspects of themselves that they were not previously proficient in, and construct a calm and clear self-awareness. With this newfound self-awareness, they can engage in various forms of thinking and learning activities.

5. CONCLUSION:

Experiential learning theory, proposed in the 1980s, is a new approach to learning that emphasizes acquiring knowledge, skills, and experiences through hands-on practice and engagement. In today's digital era, experiential learning theory remains highly relevant, particularly in university English classrooms. Through experiential learning, students can personally experience the joys and challenges of English learning, gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural nuances and significance of language. Additionally, experiential learning enhances students' self-awareness and self-motivation, laying a solid foundation for their future development.

In university English teaching, various forms of experiential learning, such as English speech contests, intonation training, and group discussions, can help students better comprehend fundamental aspects of English, including pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, while also familiarizing themselves with English culture and common knowledge. Through practice, experience, and reflection, students not only gain a deeper understanding of learning methods and techniques but also enhance their self-management and self-control abilities, preparing them well for future learning and work.

In conclusion, experiential learning has become an integral part of contemporary English education, significantly improving the quality and effectiveness of university English teaching while profoundly impacting students' growth and development. With the continuous development of information technology, experiential learning will become more diverse, flexible, and personalized, providing students with comprehensive and enriching English learning experiences, continuously supporting their growth and progress.

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