DEWEY’S APPROACHES TO MEANINGFUL LEARNING

by:

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John Dewey, one of the great educators of the former century, created the so-called “hands-on, minds-on” approach to education. He believes that a student will learn more when he or she is active in doing actual learning experiences. Not only a person experiences real-life events but also their minds “were on”. This act implies that the learners are getting ready for possibilities that may exist thereupon. How relevant is the hands-on, minds-on approach to today’s virtual classroom? Can teachers still use this kind of approach during virtual classrooms?

The pandemic caused a lot of changes in society. However, although changes in structure, modalities, and platform of teaching are present, teaching remained the same work for many – it needs a speaker, a line for communication, and an audience. Teaching is just the same but it happens on a different platform (virtual classroom indeed). Dewey believes that his approach motivates the learners to discover for themselves through his approach. And this involves self-discovery. That is what is needed by the students today.

While “hands-on, minds-on” involved participation from students, teachers must assure that earners will follow instructions. Like for example, Arts teachers may do activities involving paints or watercolor; but they have to make sure that their students are working on their way through a virtual connection. Or a music teacher may teach a student to play guitar or flute through the internet just like Tutorial Videos from YouTube do. A Physical Education teacher may also work on emergency protocols by asking his or her students to get a doll or a dummy to perform the exercises.
It may be funny, but the students learn a lot along these happy moments with their teacher and classmates. Learning, therefore, becomes meaningful with the following:

(1) “hands-on, minds-on” experience taught them actual lessons aside from the discussions and texts;

(2) they discover for themselves things that are not known simply by reading alone; and

(3) the objective of the whole lesson is completed.

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