ADULT LEARNING XCHANGE

18 & 19 JAN 2024

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Importance of Hands-on Learning as a Pedagogical Approach for Adult Learners

Presenters:
1) Trina Tan, Senior Lecturer, School of Sports, Health and Leisure, Republic Polytechnic

2) Noor Zakiah Zainudin, Lecturer, School of Sports, Health and Leisure, Republic Polytechnic

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Introduction

Learning is crucial for human development and knowledge acquisition.

Learning extends beyond cognition, involving emotional, social, and behavioral components.

Adapting learning theories is necessary in the dynamic educational landscape.

Diversity of learners

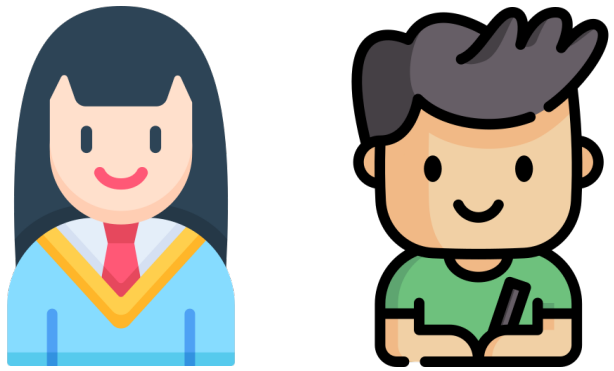
Increased usage of technology in learning

Part of the transformative impact of adult learning in shaping an adaptable and globally competitive workforce.

The Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) emphasizes hands-on learning, using activities like role-playing and simulations for deeper understanding and skill acquisition.

Method

Allocated 1 session lasting 2 hours to conduct activities that allow students to experience working with persons with dementia (PwD) and enhance their wellness. This was a collaborative effort between RP's Health Psychology module and a dementia day care centre.



RP adult learners in Health Psychology

Learning Experience was centered around the 'Dimensions of Wellness' (Hettler, 1984). Activities planned for PwD were based on the cognitive, social, and physical dimensions of wellness to enhance the overall well-being of individuals with mild to moderate dementia.

Dimensions of Well-ness / Activities	Sing-A-long	Picture Frame	Jigsaw Puzzle	Reminiscence Activity on olden days of Singapore	5 stones	Paper Flower
Physical	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cognitive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Process of Implementing activities

Consultation with Industry Partner:
Teaching team collaborated with industry partner to identify activities for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) targeting physical, cognitive, and social health domains.

E-learning on Understanding Persons with Dementia:
Utilized technology for e-learning to provide adult students with a comprehensive understanding of dementia.
Students could learn at their own pace and were encouraged to seek additional information for proactive knowledge acquisition.

Planning Activities:
Based on insights gained, adult students planned activities, including arts and crafts, dance actions to songs, and relevant reminiscence activities.

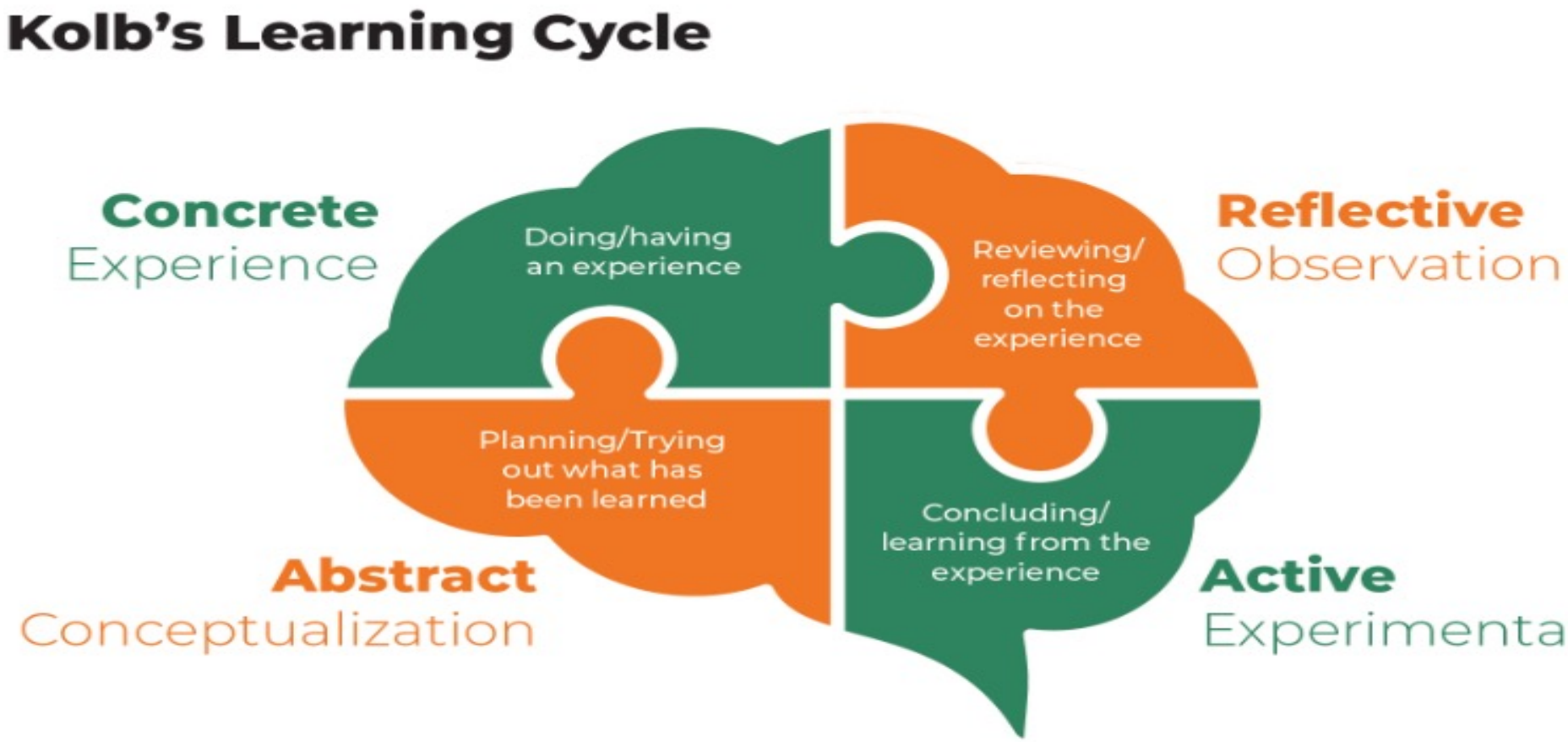
Process of Implementing activities

Risk Management:
Conducted a risk management assessment for activities to mitigate potential hazards.

Dry Run of Activities:
Crucial dry run conducted to ensure awareness among all participants, including adult students and staff, regarding how activities would be conducted and logistics preparation.

Conduct Activities & Evaluation:
Implemented activities and conducted verbal evaluations with more cognitively able PwD and staff to assess the success and impact of the activities.

Kolb’s Learning Cycle



Fewster-Thuente, L., & Batteson, T. J. (2018). Kolb's experiential learning theory as a theoretical underpinning for interprofessional education. Journal of allied health, 47(1), 3-8.

Applying Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

- Raises awareness and deepens understanding of challenges faced by PwDs.

- Empowers adult learners to engage more meaningfully with PwDs.

- Adult learners gained greater knowledge in communicating and facilitating activities for PwDs.
- Misconceptions of dementia were reduced.

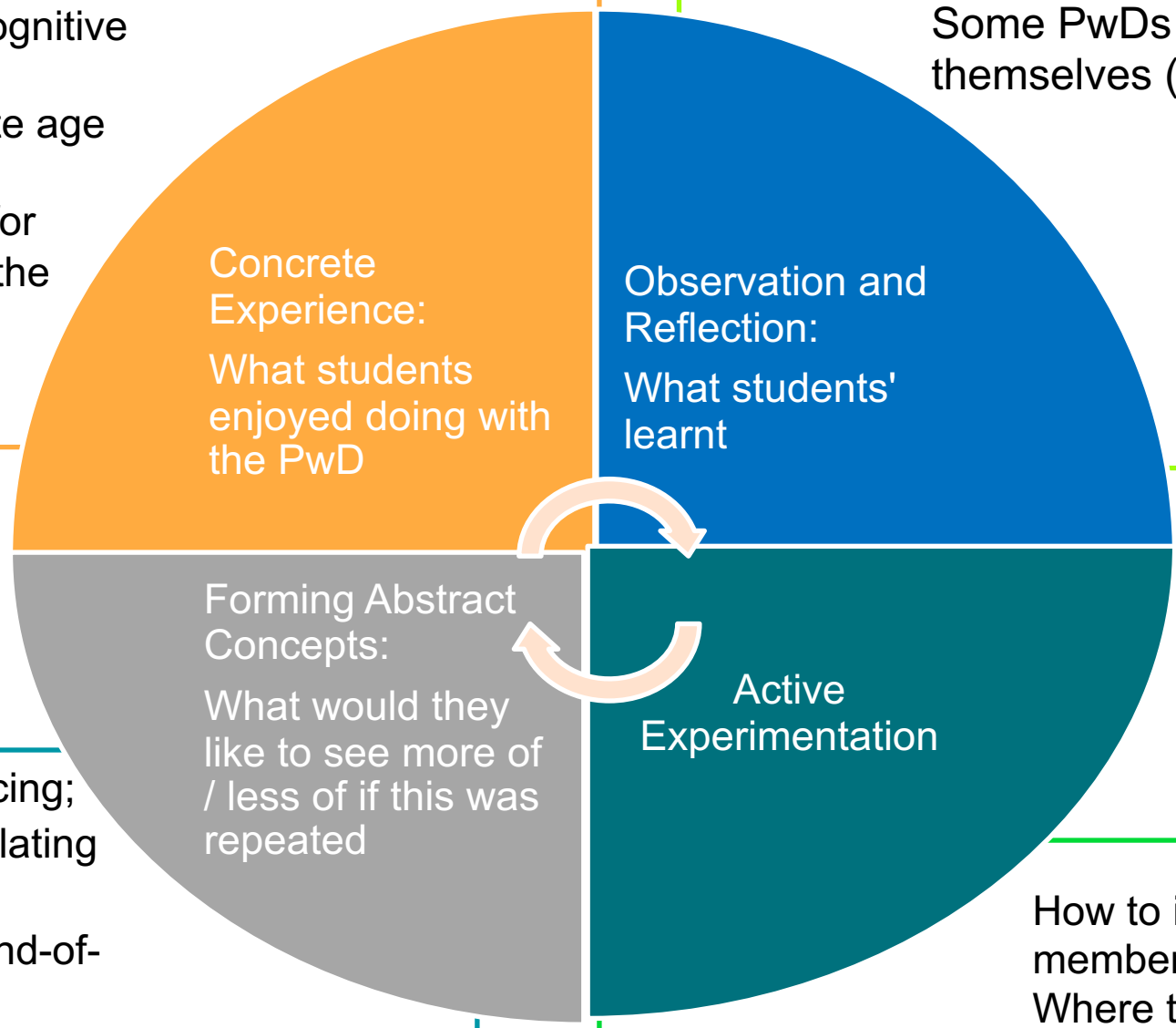
- The experiential learning provides a platform for adult learners to consolidate their existing knowledge, derive best practices that can be directly applied in their current care centres

Responses from Adult Learners after conducting activities at Dementia Day Care Centre

Engagement;
Singing, dancing with them;
Sensory activities – cognitive stimulation;
Interaction time despite age gap;
To make PwD happy for the time they were at the Centre.

Greater understanding towards behaviour of PwD;
Some PwDs are 'isolating' themselves (unable to interact);

Every day is a learning journey;
Taking care of health;
Gratitude for their family; Treasure life;
Live life to fullest;



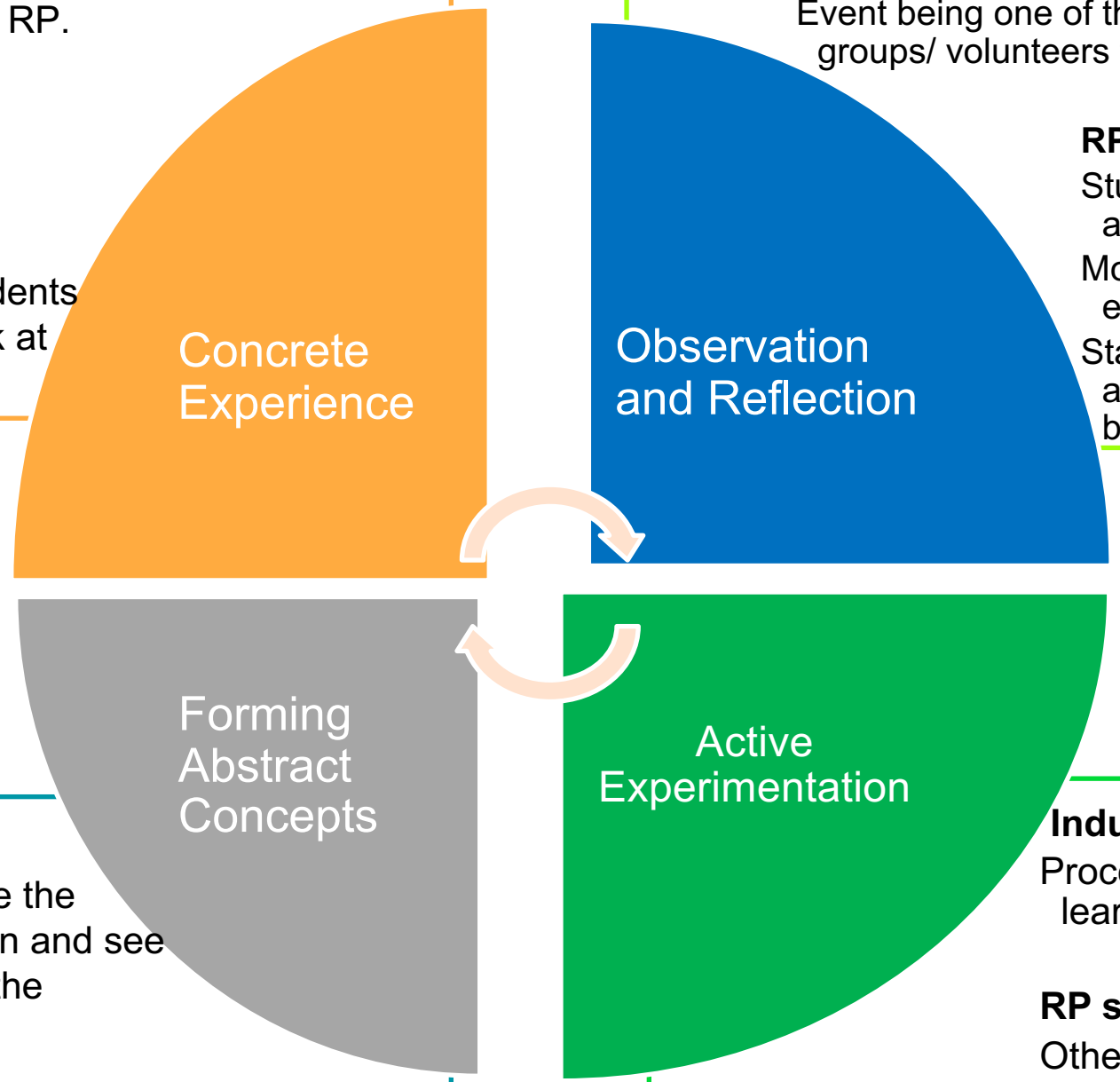
More singing and dancing;
More cognitively stimulating activities;
More information on end-of-life care;
How to manage elderl ywho are not well;
Increase in knowledge of dementia; Increase in knowledge of the differences in severity of dementia

How to interact with family members with dementia;
Where to go for more resources;
How to take care of own health and others in the family.

Meta-Responses from RP staff; Industry Partner on the collaboration

Industry partner:
Gave very positive feedback about the partnership with RP.

RP staff:
Hands-on experience was crucial in integration of information for students;
Real-life feel. Allowed students a glimpse of possible work at care centre.



Industry partner:
Students being very engaging
Event being one of the more well-organized groups/ volunteers that they have had.

RP staff:
Students' inhibitions reduced as event progressed
More inclusive learning environment
Staff (industry partner) were appreciative of something beyond the usual.

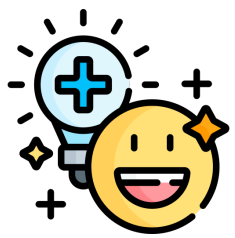
Industry Partner:
Recognised and appreciate the efforts taken to recce, plan and see through the execution of the activities planned.

RP staff:
Opportunity for event to be replicated with other industry partners & other classes of students.

Industry partner:
Process refinement in e.g. E-learning packages

RP staff:
Other e-learning platforms for more information
Importance of ensuring students time to have a dry run

Discussion



Positive Program Outcome
Both Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and adult students expressed enjoyment and interest in participating in various activities.
Adult students showed improvement in knowledge and attitudes towards PwD.

Physical and Cognitive Engagement
Activities involved both physical and cognitive elements, contributing to possible positive impact on cognitive functioning.
Engagement in novel or challenging cognitive tasks demonstrated contemporaneous cognitive stimulation

Real-world Experiences
Real-time results of activities motivated adult students, encouraging on-going learning.
Aligned with Kolb & Kolb's (2005) concept of learning through concrete experiences.

Reflective Observation
Provided an opportunity for 'reflective observation' (Kolb, 1984) after the concrete experience.

Longer-Term Implementation
Ideal for the program to continue over a more extended period to ensure knowledge retention and maximize participant benefits.
In-depth experiences foster a deeper understanding of seniors' behavior, enabling better assistance.

Success Factors
Program success attributed to enthusiasm, shared objectives, and combined efforts of industry partner and their staff; Republic Polytechnic's multi-faceted pedagogical approaches that enables experimenting.
The flexibility to combine practical hands-on facilitation with classroom theories was a key factor in successful implementation.

Conclusion

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Importance of Hands-on Learning for Adult Learners:
Fosters deeper understanding and knowledge retention.
Tailored to unique needs for adult learners to go beyond theory to apply knowledge in concrete situation.

Active Engagement in Adult Education:
Continuous application of active engagement in adult education enhances skill transferability.
Promotes a sense of empowerment as adult learners see immediate relevance and applicability (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Dynamic and Effective Pedagogical Approach:
Aligns with the principles of Adult Learning Theory.
Addresses practical needs, contributing to a more impactful and transformative educational experience.
Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes real-world experiences, accommodating diverse adult learning styles.

Scaling Up Outcomes
Outcomes from the program could be scaled up to reach a wider population working with Persons with Disabilities (PwD).
Collaboration with healthcare, community care facilities, and active aging centers could amplify program success and benefits.

Promoting Collaboration:
Sharing success stories and benefits encourages potential collaborators from various sectors to consider similar programs.
Enhances the potential for broader impact on adult learners and individuals working with PwD.

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