Bringing the Pedagogy of Experiential Education within the Undergraduate Classroom

Ever since Plato's interest in soul, dialogue and continuing education, experiential education has prevailed as a dominant mode of learning in Western culture. John Dewey expressed his belief that subject matter should not be learned in isolation and that education should begin with student experience and should be contextual. More recently, Paulo Freire suggested that educational praxis should combine both action and reflection as part of the educative process.

If we consider experiential education to be a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values, how can we as Teaching Assistants begin to develop classroom practices that act on these theoretical underpinnings?

This workshop will explore these issues of experiential education as a form of critical pedagogy which is a way of thinking about, negotiating and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the university and the social and material relation of the wider community and society. Its purpose is to consider how theory and practice can be employed within the undergraduate experiential education classroom as a means toward enhancing the student learning experience.

At the end of this workshop, participant will be able to:

1. Explain the concept of experiential education.
2. Discuss the various forms of experiential education.
3. Describe the pedagogical principles of experiential education.
4. Construct mini lesson plans using the pedagogical principles of experiential education.