

The Experiences of Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension University of Cape Coast in Integrating Experiential Learning into a Curricula and Collaboration with 4H- Ghana for Positive Youth Development

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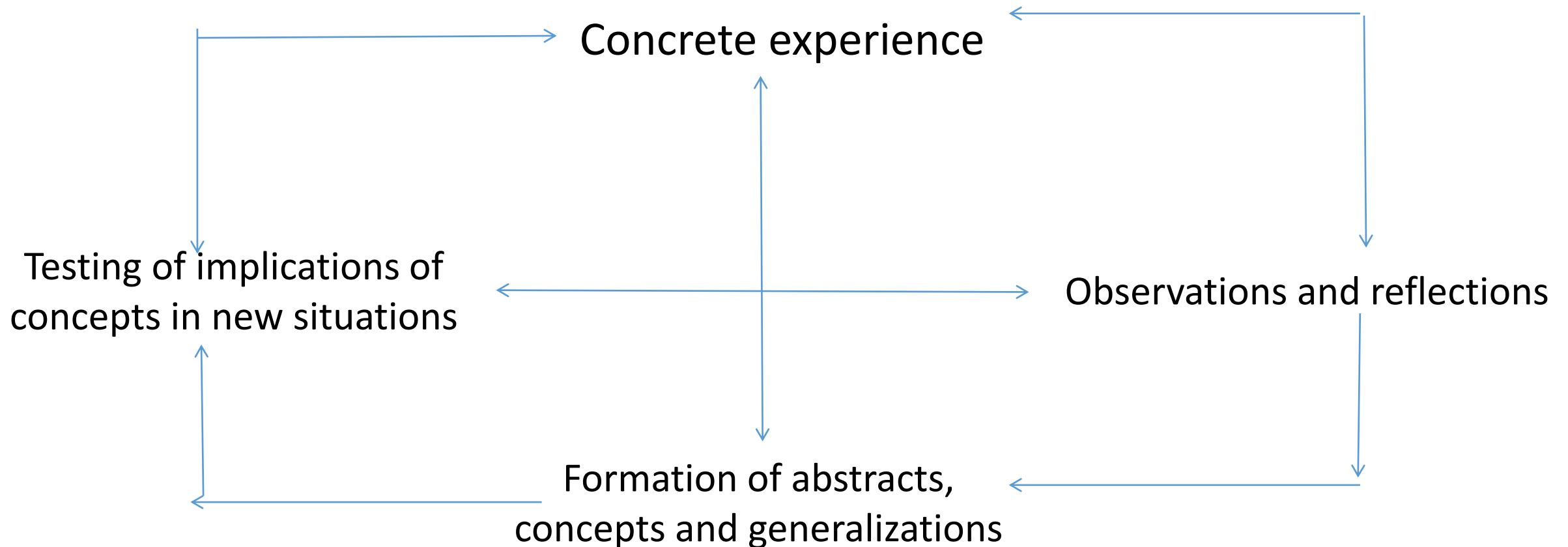
Background

- Needs of the youth and graduates
- ...High unemployment rates
- ...Practicing non agricultural professions.
-Lacking competencies to create own jobs.
- The challenge to higher agricultural training institutions is developing curriculum that is more responsive to the needs of the clients(youth and graduates).

Experiential Learning Curriculum

- Experiential learning curriculum key to acquisition of requisite competencies by students to own jobs or meet the demands of the world of work in agriculture.
- The concept of experiential learning
 - Creation of knowledge through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984)
 - providing learners with the opportunity to develop lifelong learning skills, confidence and commitment to work with other individuals (Carr and Kemmis, 1986)

Experiential Learning Cycle (David Kolb, 1984)



Experiences of Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension with Experiential Learning Curriculum

- Core elements to provide experiential learning opportunities to students:
 - Supervised Enterprise Projects (SEPs) of the B.Sc Agricultural Extension and B.Sc Agricultural Extension and Community Development curricula
 - Supervised Agribusiness Projects (SAPs) in the B.Sc. Agribusiness curriculum

Key Objectives of SEPs/SAPs

- Production/ development objective addresses the benefits of projects such as improvement in yields, quality and reduction in post-harvest losses to beneficiaries.
- The learning or research objective is to create opportunities for students to learn as they improve the situations that are are to deal with after graduation.

Operationalization of Experiential Learning

- Course work and preparation towards the SEPs/SAPs (Experiential Learning).
- Students conduct pre-SEPs/SAPs needs assessment.
- Course work and development of proposals
- Implementation of off-campus SEPs/SAPs over six months period in the communities; supervision by lecturers and field experts.
- Course work to share experiences and defend the off-campus SEPs/SAPs report

Introducing Mushroom Production as an Income Generating Activity for the Residents of Akatakyiwa in the Central Region by Cynthia Drulu-Ataafi







Achievements

- Building human resources (Youth) for community development,
- Empowering of beneficiaries,
- Transferring technologies,
- Mobilization of resources for community development,
- Creation of linkages for community development,
- Facilitating development of infrastructure,
- Creating employment and alleviation of poverty

Key Challenges

- Finance
 - Costs approximately US\$12,000 for the Department to supervise students
 - Each student spends approximately US\$1,000 on the off-campus SEP
- Ensuring sustainability of field activities after students graduate

Collaboration with 4-H Ghana

- Exploring linkages with 4-H /Youth development programme at University of Tuskegee and the Ohio State University.
- The Department has participated in experience sharing meetings participants of University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Programme, 4-H Canada members organised by 4-H Ghana.
- Formalizing an MOU to our mutual understanding.

Activities Outlined for Partnership with 4-H Ghana

- Assess the 4-H methodology in youth development work and its impact on the young people.
- Link the 4-H programming with the Universities to help disseminate research from the institution to the local communities and infuse 4H methodology into training of students.
- Collaborate with some Universities in the USA and initiate cross cultural learning experiences for students and faculty members.

Appreciation

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