Authentic Learning: A Reflection of Bicycle Adventure

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Authentic Learning: A Reflection of Bicycle Adventure

David Ni & Gavin Ni, Franklin University

Purpose

The purpose of this showcase is to demonstrate the importance of holistic, significant, and authentic learning experience. We also intended to provide a framework to assist instructors and parents to carry out enriched, authentic adventure learning.

Background

During past three decades, many educators have turned their attention to situated cognition and started to explore strategies of authentic learning (e.g., Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Herrington, Oliver, & Reeves, 2003). The reason is that authentic learning connects practice and theory and provides learners an opportunity to apply knowledge in the real life contexts. Contextual factors enable students to deal with complex issues in reality and therefore results in higher-order thinking, like synthesis, analysis, and evaluation, and longer retention and transfer of knowledge. The Chinese idiom, “fighting only on paper”during a real war against enemy implies the importance of authentic learning, growing, and self-actualization, which makes it a case for learning analysis.

Sunday noon, 24 June, 2018, we started a four-day bike adventure from Columbus to Cleveland. We travelled total of about 200 miles, approximately 80% along the Ohio-to-Erie trail and 20% of our trip on the road. We passed through metropolitan area, suburban, farmlands, rural areas, nature preserves, Amish heritage areas, and regional and national parks. We saw the history of the Amish, canals, railroads, and environmental protection efforts as well. It was also a great opportunity for father-son bonding. David also had toured cross-country many years ago. The experience went way beyond the cycling itself, but learning, growing, and self-actualization, which makes it a case for learning analysis.

Story

Sunday noon, 24 June, 2018, we started a four-day bike adventure from Columbus to Cleveland. We travelled total of about 200 miles, approximately 80% along the Ohio-to-Erie trail and 20% of our trip on the road. We passed through metropolitan area, suburban, farmlands, rural areas, nature preserves, Amish heritage areas, and regional and national parks. We saw the history of the Amish, canals, railroads, and environmental protection efforts as well. It was also a great opportunity for father-son bonding. David also had toured cross-country many years ago. The experience went way beyond the cycling itself, but learning, growing, and self-actualization, which makes it a case for learning analysis.

A Conceptual Model for Adventure Learning

Learning happens during interactions between the individual and the environment, and interactions are embodied in formats of activity (communication, inquiry, construction, expression). Activities activate a natural intrinsic tendency to make sense of the world seeking consistency and coherence. Activities also make the idea, methodological knowledge, and thinking habit explicit. These activities are organized in a process of adventure. A conceptual model has been provided in Figure 1 to illustrate two dimensions for consideration in adventure learning.

Figure 1. Two dimensions for consideration in adventure learning: Activity dimension and adventure process dimension.

Table 1. Activity Perspective and Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Perspective Measures</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>Create a package list for the adventure process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Collect useful information from the adventure experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Create a data analysis on the adventure conditions throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inference</td>
<td>Create a narrative about the adventure experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Create a report to show the individual experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Adventure Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adventure Process Subcategory</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Extension</td>
<td>Extend the nature of the adventure activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>Sequence the procedure and stages of the adventure process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Reflect on the adventure experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Argument</td>
<td>Argument the nature of the adventure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extra Lessons Learned

- It’s the journey, not the destination.
- If you plan to do, prepare and do it. You won’t regret it.
- People are overwhelmingly nice.
- Take more pictures of the people, instead of the scenery.

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