

IDEAS 41

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 41ST INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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WHY IS EXPERIENCE NEEDED?

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We don't really believe into something unless we have seen it. We don't have the guts to explain something without sufficient knowledge about a certain matter. We can't give a valid proof without truly understanding a particular event. We can't really tell and inform other people a beautiful experience in a momentous travel unless we have immersed ourselves into that specific breathtaking place. All these don'ts and cant's cited are related or associated with what we call - experience. It might be a common question to ask what really the meaning of experience is. Anybody could give his or her own meaning about this word. An experience may mean knowledge. It can be an understanding. It can also mean evidence. It might be an involvement or observation. An experience can be an affair or occurrence. We always have a daily experience in all aspects of our lives. However, it's hard to elaborate a certain scenario, an exposure or involvement without knowledge and to a greater extent, without real experience. In our daily undertakings, we always give emphasis about the worthy moment we have totally experienced.

The acquired learning and obtained knowledge from books and teachers and professors are not perfect in some respects. They are tedious and uninteresting and not really digested, consequently, not totally absorbed. Unless they are formed, molded and shaped by the spirit of wisdom gained from experience, they are misleading and sometimes dangerous. This is not to underestimate the importance of books and other reading materials. After all, the knowledge contained in books is based on experience. But experience is endless and we must constantly modify verbatim knowledge in the light of practical experience. If we drop by and take enhancing look of these historical places like, The Great Wall of China, The Pyramids at Giza, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Taj Mahal in India, and Parthenon in Greece, what we have studied and learned about these places from the textbooks on history will take on life, color, and vividness. There can be no better way of learning the geography of different countries than actually visiting them and understanding them beforehand. To take examples of a different kind, do we not prefer an experienced doctor or a lawyer to a novice, however, highly qualified he may be? In certain walks of life like politics and education, experience is a must. It is essential. An arm chair politician is inefficient and draws a poor figure for the whole society. Likewise, a half-baked teacher is not effective and tags a dull and passive impression for the whole studentry.

A famous proverb says "Experience is the mother of wisdom". How does it guide us and how do we understand the whole package? PreserveArticles.com, an online publishing site, wrote that we know the meanings of several phrases and proverbs in a vague, general manner. Then, we personally experience the truth contained in them, we discover their real meaning, and they cease to be stale and commonplace. For example, the phrase 'fish-market' figuratively meant an extremely noisy, disorderly place. But it was only when we happened to visit a fish-market for the first time and observed the tremendous bustle and noise that prevailed there that the actual meaning of the phrase flashed across our minds with the clarity and freshness of a discovery. How often do we repeat the familiar proverb 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'? We really understand its truth only when we are deserted by our so - called friends in times of adversity. The lessons learned from experience will not be forgotten. If you tell a lie and consequently find yourself in a tight corner, you are not likely to repeat your mistake in the future. Certain unworthy and bitter experiences - failure and suffering make us realize our errors and shortcomings and thus teach us how to improve ourselves. As simple as it is, the search for truth never stops unless you experience it. The exposure is a significant factor to validate the total involvement. Experience is necessary at the right time in the right place whatever the case may be.

Questions for discussion:

1. What springs to mind when you hear the word "experience"?
2. When does an experience become a valid proof? Give an example.
3. How do we handle unworthy experiences in life? Cite a situation.
4. Why is experience needed in our life?
5. Explain "Experience is the best teacher".



THE PARADOXES OF AGE AND EXPERIENCE

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They say that with age come experience and wisdom, but is that necessarily true? In more aspects that one, it most truly is.

For instance, many companies promote their employees according to the length of time they have spent on a particular post. Companies hire individuals with a certain amount of experience in the field. Those who have spent time learning and relearning a specific discipline are assured of getting well-paying jobs and the perks that go with them. Professionals who have been in certain industries are accorded respect and earn admiration for the vast wealth of experience that they carry. Indeed, time seems to constantly be relative to experience and wisdom.

However, that might not always be the case.

There are some professionals who have spent a long time in their fields but fail to accumulate the experience necessary to make them excel. While their younger counterparts easily claim awards and adulation, those types of people seem to enjoy their comfort zone so much that they fail to see the essentials of getting ahead. Such people become so jaded with their positions that they easily lose the ambition to dream higher and strive further. In some cases, maybe it's just simple bypassing but more often than not, it's the fact that the more successful ones never lose their interest and passion in what they do in a way that makes them excel far beyond the level of their older counterparts. Experience counts, but when it is not coupled with ambition or a strong drive to succeed, it is just a number of years that do nothing at all to one's stature.

The great Abraham Lincoln once said: And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years. If we just keep counting the years without adding any relevance to those very years, all we have are numbers. Experience needs to be fueled by a genuine drive to succeed, and success does not readily come to those who close their eyes at the smallest challenges. We need to be motivated to do our utmost at all times, so our experience is well-marked with innumerable achievements and numerous accomplishments. A senior employee should not boast of the number of years he has worked for the company and scoff at the younger ones. Chances are, the younger ones have had a tremendous amount of experience working in highly-progressive companies and have accumulated much more relevant understanding of concepts and principles.

Let us not be blinded by time. Rather, let time be our background towards accumulating a wealth of experience not easily rivaled and assailed both in its intensiveness and extensiveness.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you believe that with age come experience and wisdom? Why or why not?
2. How can we successfully accumulate experience at work?
3. Why is experience necessary for a highly-responsible position in any company?
4. What experience have you had for your present job? Why do you consider them valuable?
5. If you were to choose between a job applicant who had spent a long time at work but has done nothing notable, and a younger one who shows great enthusiasm and potential, who would you choose to hire? Why?



A MOTHER'S LESSON ON EXPERIENCE AND EXPERIENCES

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Taking my cue from grammar notes on experience and experiences, I shall attempt to classify certain moments and periods in my life as either my life experiences or my life experience. It is said, and I quote directly: specific, countable moments in my life as a mother for instance, I could sufficiently cite so, "I have had many wonderful experiences as a mother." While it is also proper to take the following statement: Being a wise mother requires experience, as pointing out the use of experience in an abstract way and not something countable or specific. (<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/noncount.htm>)

Thus, my many experiences as a mother have been variously happy, playing on the range of being deliriously so to comfortably so. There have been moments in my life when my experiences have been sad, so woefully sad I couldn't find a single word to encapsulate those experiences' very essence. And then of course, there are those silly, goofy experiences when I have learned that being a mother takes infinite loads of laughter in one's heart and an intimate knowledge of what makes my kids guffaw out loud in mindless mirth. All of those experiences I shall always treasure-bar none. No amount of tears could ever make me love my children any less, nor take away the genuine pleasure I have derived from being their mother.

Now as to experience, well, simply put, it takes a lot of experience to become a mother in the fullest sense. A woman who can keep her own counsel works best, and I have to admit that I haven't completely fallen into that category yet—but I intend to come to that with time. It can be difficult to keep your mouth shut when everyone else seems to be chattering about, or to think first before taking a shot and not the other way around. It can be much easier to shoot first and ask questions later, such as a policeman would often do, but patience has to be the key that locks the mother's mouth. There is no better resolution to any impasse or quandary than the mindful consideration of other's feelings, especially of one's spouse and children. Taking a step back to study your options gives a mother the best deals, every time and all the time. Now that takes experience.

To all the mothers out there, let this simple grammar lesson be a guide to being a mother. Yes, it does take a certain amount of experience to be a great one, but cherish all the experiences you get in between. By doing so, you can never be grammatically—or personally—incorrect.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Using the writer's context on experience and experiences, talk about your own.
2. Why is it more complex to get experience and much easier to collect experiences?
3. If all jobs in the world required a certain amount of experience, how much of it should apply to your own career to be considered successful?
4. Talk about your most glorious experiences.
5. Do you believe you have enough experience to succeed in your professional career? Why or why not?



OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERIENCES

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Experiences in our daily lives often serve as a tremendous reservoir of information and guidance for how we eventually define ourselves in the future. We should never consider a single experience as being singularly influential or motivational. A single experience could inspire us more greatly than all others, but a life lived fully considers all experiences as vital and contributory to what is and what will be.

Take teaching for example. A young teacher is well-advised to seek the wisdom of those who have come before her. She should never consider a good educational background as the only passport to career success. She must never think of herself as being in a league of her own, for she is yet to fashion her own league. Instead, she must look to older, more experienced teachers who had started molding countless minds long before she stopped wearing baby diapers. She should look to older advice and older ways of teaching, for in these times of more enlightened education and the never-ending introduction of newer learning concepts, it is still the old ways that genuinely work. In order for a young teacher to become effective at her chosen profession, she needs to trust the educational system that has molded her to become what she is now.

Priests and nuns often derive stories from their day-to-day experiences and encounters with people to create more convincing settings for their advice-giving. I have often observed my favorite priestly sermons begin with amusing personal anecdotes and end with lessons on life in connection to the day's biblical gospels. I find that the more extraordinary priests are never afraid of exposing their daily grind for our daily bread. Such men of the cloth and nuns, too, have never forgotten that the choice to become servants of God had stemmed from their personal experience and experiences of finding God in the smallest of ways.

Parenthood is another arena that needs both experience and experiences to become more effective and efficient. No, we should not approach being a parent as always having to wing it, despite the modern concepts on bringing children up. Parenthood plays a delicate balance between what is right and what needs to be done. It is not some kind of specialized field where one size fits all—it is a veritable plethora of contradictions and concessions. Parents should exercise parental authority steadily but gently, firmly but lovingly. Rules are rules, but who is to say when a child would eventually commit an infraction and thereby create changes in the regulations?

Dear reader, you might be in an entirely different career path from those mentioned above. But it helps to never forget that your experiences in life and whatever experience you amass for your career ultimately shape you into what you are now and what you'll become in the future.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why is it important to take our personal experiences as a whole and not singularly when we plan our future?
2. How is experience in a career contributory to one's future in that career?
3. Is there any particular person in your field whom you admire for his/her experience in the industry? What makes this particular person special?
4. How can someone new to your field amass experience necessary to succeed? Be as specific as needed.
5. Why is relevant experience on the job often a qualification used by employers in the hiring process?



WHEN IS EXPERIENCE NOT NECESSARY?

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My son owns a statement shirt that says, “ Virgins Wanted: Experience Not Necessary”. This particular shirt never fails to elicit silent laughter in me every time my son decides to don it. Thankfully, for my peace of mind, that piece of advertisement has been nothing but, with my son not having taken any girl seriously yet. Apparently, my child did learn a painful lesson or two back in his high school days, which has reminded him about there being no immediate need to indulge in the follies of youth. His priorities now lie in building his young career. I’m praying and hoping that that stays for a long time, though.

Why does everything today always stand on the premise of “experience”? A job applicant needs ‘relevant experience for the job.’ An electoral candidate must possess at least some form of experience at leading people. A pro-active Executive needs sufficient experience at managing, directing and controlling people in order to be considered for a promotion. And of course, any type of job needs a certain amount of experience in order for an individual to be considered successful or thriving in his career. It’s all about building one’s reservoir of experience to be able to get by in an experience-driven world. Ironically, despite an undoubtedly more modern world imbued with changed perspectives on such matters as chastity and faithfulness, if there ever were such things really, women tend to be typecast as creatures who are valued based on their lack of experience —or absence thereof.

A great touch-off point for an interesting debate would be the double standards that have been applied to males and females. For most males, machismo is often demonstrated by having at least some amount of experience. But for females, even the tiniest amount of experience is considered a transgression on a woman’s purity and honor. The Philippines has kept pace with its more “enlightened” neighbors in such matters, but women who stay undefiled until they face the altar still do exist, believe me. Thank the heavens for such saving graces. Apparently, modernization or not, many women still prefer to, well, save the best for their last.

In this modern era where embryos can be produced in vitro and stem cells could just as easily serve as the fountain of youth, let us not forget the older cultures that have kept us solidly grounded and firmly principled. Let us remember that purity never goes out of fashion, no matter what. Let our youth develop their values with ancient but well-ordained concepts that will ultimately withstand time. Let us remind them, despite the danger of being labeled puritanical old-fashioned freaks, that there are still some aspects in life where EXPERIENCE IS NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is the double standard that applies to males and females being pointed out in the essay? Why is this concept essential?
2. What has modernization done to the concepts of purity and chastity? Do you honestly think that modernization has played a huge role in all those changes?
3. What is/are your own concept/s on purity before marriage?
4. Would you approve of your child getting into a “living together” arrangement? Why or why not?
5. What could be the consequences of women having “experience” before marriage? How about males?



WORK EXPERIENCE - A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

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Many people see work experience like a double-edged sword for the sole reason that there is not only that chance for a person to gain valuable on-the-job training but at the same time, it is also gaining an inside knowledge of a particular job. These are the experiences that one cannot achieve or acquire in a college or in any learning environment. It is indeed a chance for every individual to obtain an insight and knowledge into the working environment. This is very true because many universities and colleges will actually offer work experience placements as part of their course requirements. On the other hand, some people who involve themselves into a work experience have that wrong notion or understanding that they will be given a permanent work at the end, only to find out that this may not be case. More often than not, in some instances, a lot of people have experienced to be offered or given a full time permanent employment at the establishment where they were given a work placement. Whether you like it or not, this maybe an exception but it is not always the rule.

There are a lot of unemployed persons who are trying hard to integrate themselves get into the work experience programs so they could try testing the waters and find out whatever suitable job that there is for them to get themselves into. They try to find out if they would be suited to certain types of jobs or working environments. Some get employed or even have on-the-job training in private firms, in the government or even in the colleges or universities. Moreover, many governments also run the work experience programs. There are cases where employment can be unpaid for certain duration and therefore some employers take advantage of the cheap employment that they can get out of it. Then at the end of the term they will just simply reason and justify the fact that the employee was not really fit or suitable for that particular work.

We can still say or presume that it still pays to have work experience for there is a bigger chance and opportunity to stand in this competition because nowadays it can be fierce to find a new job (which is quite rewarding) right away. If you take these low-paid job opportunities, you are putting yourself at a head start over the other job seekers. Hence, you are also given this favorable chance of enjoying the experience of getting to work and interact with other professionals. This will definitely further your development because you don't just learn to get along with them but also learn from the experiences of the other employees as well. We can say too that being involved in a professional working environment will help you to understand what would be required of you by the time you have finished your degree. More so, by the time you finish your degree, you have already acquired experiences to aide you and would be ample enough to start up your career.

Another vital thing that you can learn about having work experience is the fact that it is alright to make a couple of mistakes for you lack experience. Apparently, your fellow workers will understand you being a neophyte and taking apprentice in the work that you do. This will ensure that you will not be committing the same mistakes next time. After all that has been discussed, in the end you will agree with me that work experience is like a double-edged sword.

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you view work experience? Why?
2. Do you believe that having work experience will give you the advantage of landing a job right away? Why or why not?
3. Have you experienced that opportunity to work with professionals? When and how?
4. Give another importance of having work experience. Explain your answer.
5. In your own explanation, tell us how you will decipher the title "Work Experience ? A Double-Edged Sword."



THE EXPERIENCED TRUMPING THE INEXPERIENCED

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When it comes to hiring and promoting employees to fill up vacancies, there is an inevitable result that the hiring manager will most likely prefer the experienced one to land with the job, thereby trumping the inexperienced aspirants for the said vacancy. Thus, there is this foregone conclusion that experienced employees know how to handle and know what to do even when faced with crisis. Not only that, they can also face any crossroads for that matter with confidence. As a matter of fact, they have faced the same old scenarios a dozen of times that their work would expose them to and require them to do. They are equipped with the necessary skills needed to get their job done in a facile manner. They have worked long enough to master and be an expertise in the field where they excel.

Facing crisis with confidence is an important skill for certain jobs. When face with situations which demand immediate attention, the more-experienced worker would readily face these challenges and would have learned their lessons subsequently. In this case, the saying "Experience is the best teacher" holds true and that previous crises teach valuable lessons. In addition to this, the experienced workers will have failed a few times and would easily rebound to picking up the pieces again in a very timely manner and they would still remain cool even under pressure. On the other hand, an inexperienced worker when faced with a crisis might buckle up easily under pressure allowing fear to overrule him in decision making.

When we talk about the experienced trumping the inexperienced, it would also mean that the former is more stable than the latter. Those employees who are gaining skills and experience early in their career path are not very loyal, thus making turnovers very expensive. Whereas experienced employees would rather want to remain in their respective positions and stay with the company for longer periods of time. This is so because it suits their family situations and would mean they would land in leadership positions in the company more likely. So having experienced employees would save companies their money by means of stabilizing turnover rates.

On the contrary, hiring more experienced employees rather than the less experienced has not been always the case. After all, what would be more rational with regards to finding the right person for a job that entails a complex process? A company should hire personnel for quality purposes meaning that company owners should recruit and hire for employees who are best fit for the job, with the attitudes and behaviors that you need to get the work done within your specific workplace culture. Apparently, in some positions and in some work places, the inexperienced is highly favored or valued more. Some employers would hire them simply because the less experienced employees tend to work harder to create an impression on the former. They also think outside of the box and approach problems from unique perspectives. Not only that, they have lower salaries and cost a lot less than the experienced employees.

In general, experienced or inexperienced, whether young or old, each one offers valuable contribution that employers need. The fact still remains that training the new and inexperienced employees proves to be an expensive and time-consuming process. The experienced will often be trumping the inexperienced for so many reasons, so it is very important for young professionals and career changers to do the best they can for them to gain all the experience that they need.

Questions for discussion:

1. What do you find more advantageous, an experienced or an inexperienced employee? Why is it so?
2. Do you find being an experienced worker a laborious and tedious job? Why or why not?
3. What are some of the advantages of being an experienced employee?
4. In which category are you in, an experienced or inexperienced employee? Do you find it advantageous? Justify your answer.
5. Does the foregone conclusions mentioned in being an experienced weigh more than being inexperienced? Explain your answer.



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