

Learning Café
Topic: Learning Styles: Types, Activities, Materials, Games
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The Emerging Importance of Learning Styles in the Teaching Process

- The student cannot learn comprehensively in an environment where the teacher is the only “active” one and the student is “passive”. (Hawk & Shah, 2007)
- The implications of this for faculty is significant in that faculty are likely to teach only some students in a given course if they assume that all students learn the same way or that one teaching approach will connect with all students. (Hawk & Shah, 2007)
- When an individual’s learning style is known, it means that every individual can be perceived as different from others. (Kazu, 2009)
- Facilitating learning involves understanding who students are, and their learning style which contributes to effectiveness. (Blue, 2009; Kazu, 2009)

Learning Styles – Key Concepts

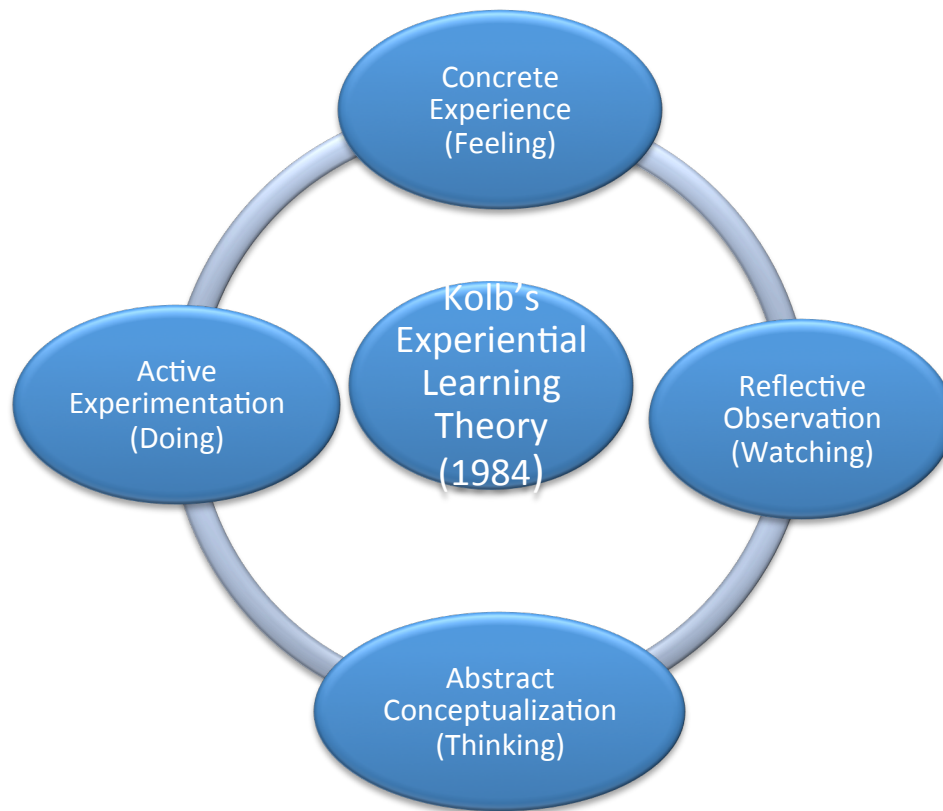
- Learning styles are more pronounced when learning new material. (Mori, 2010)
- Teaching style parallels learning style. (Mori, 2010)
- Learning styles can change over time. (Mori, 2010)
- Learning style has cognitive, affective and psychological aspects. (Kazu, 2009)

Kolb Experiential Learning Theory

- Defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” (Hawk & Shah, 2007)
- Learning is a holistic set of processes that are continuous. (Hawk & Shah, 2007)
- Learning involves transactions between the person and environment. (Mori, 2010)
- Learning style is the “generalized differences in learning orientation based on the degree to which people emphasize the four modes of the learning process.” (Hawk & Shah, 2007)

The Kolb Learning Style Inventory (LSI)

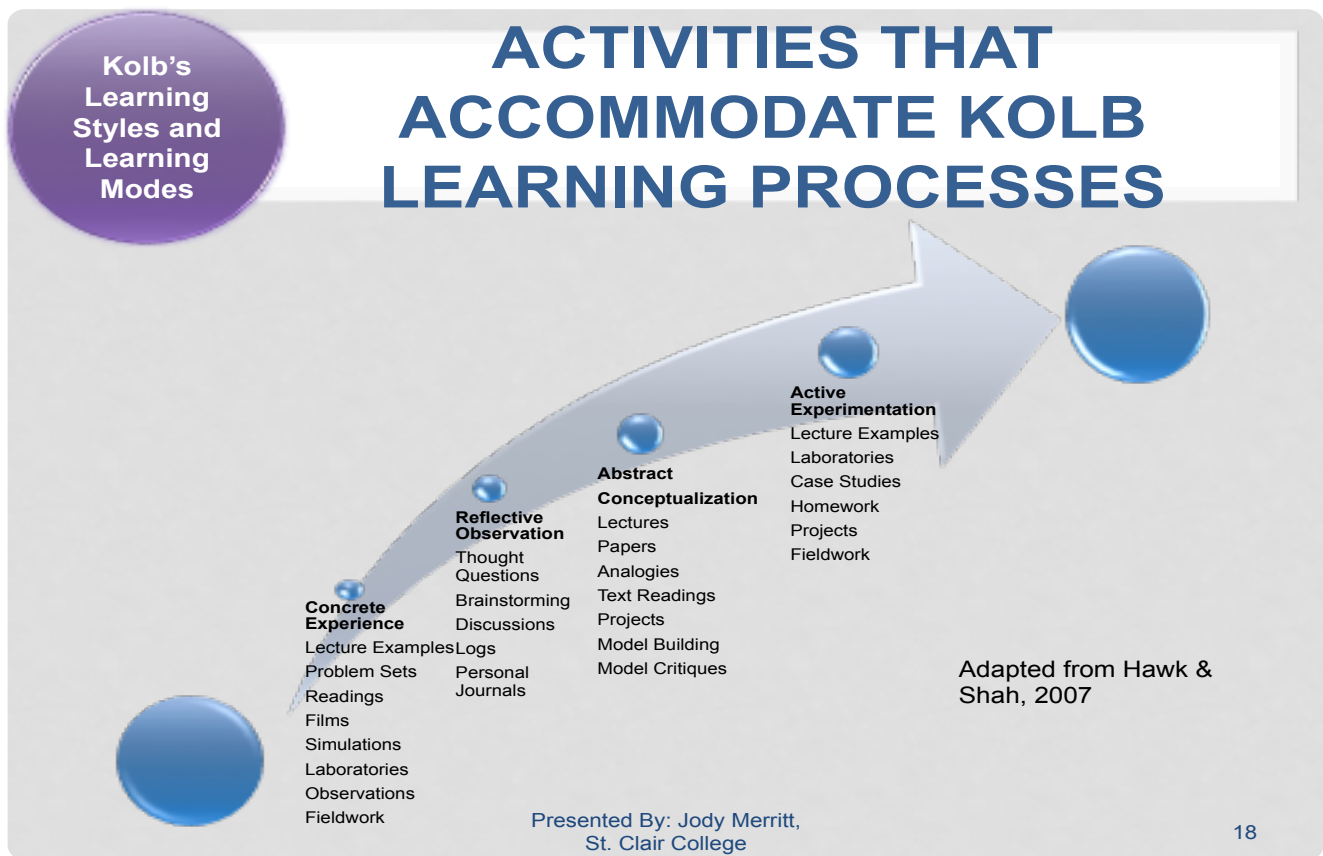
- We all have different cognitive ways and different ways to perceive and process information
- **Perception Continuum**: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile
- **Process Continuum**: experiment, conceptualize, experience, reflect
- By combining different ways of perceiving and processing what emerges is four different learning styles shown and described next (Mori, 2010)
- The Kolb LSI is a commercially available questionnaire (www.learningfromexperience.com)



Learning Styles	Learning Modes
<p>Assimilative</p> <p>Strengths: Building theoretical models Emphasis: Less on people, more on ideas/concepts</p>	<p>Abstract Conceptualization</p> <p>Focus: Logic, ideas and concepts Values: Conceptual systems/rigorous idea analysis</p>
<p>Assimilative</p> <p>Strengths: Building theoretical models Emphasis: Less on people, more on ideas/concepts</p>	<p>Reflective Observation</p> <p>Focus: Understand meaning of ideas Values: Patience, impartiality and thoughtful judgment</p>
<p>Accommodative</p> <p>Strengths: Doing and risk taking Emphasis: Adapting oneself to new situations</p>	<p>Active Experimentation</p> <p>Focus: Influencing people and changing situations Values: Ability to manipulate environments</p>
<p>Accommodative</p> <p>Strengths: Doing and risk taking Emphasis: Adapting oneself to new situations</p>	<p>Concrete Experiences</p> <p>Focus: Involved interpersonal experiences Values: Real world situations</p>

Learning Styles	Learning Modes
<p>Convergent</p> <p>Strengths: Intelligence Tests Emphasis: Problem solving/decision making</p>	<p>Active Experimentation</p> <p>Focus: Influencing people and changing situations Values: Ability to manipulate environments</p>
<p>Convergent</p> <p>Strengths: Intelligence Tests Emphasis: Problem solving/decision making</p>	<p>Abstract Conceptualization</p> <p>Focus: Logic, ideas and concepts Values: Conceptual systems/rigorous idea analysis</p>
<p>Divergent</p> <p>Strengths: Creativity and brainstorming Emphasis: Social interaction and perspective taking</p>	<p>Reflective Observation</p> <p>Focus: Understand meaning of ideas Values: Patience, impartiality and thoughtful judgment</p>
<p>Divergent</p> <p>Strengths: Creativity and brainstorming Emphasis: Social interaction and perspective taking</p>	<p>Concrete Experiences</p> <p>Focus: Involved interpersonal experiences Values: Real world situations</p>

Adapted from Kolb 1984 (Richmond & Cummings, 2005)



What A Good Teacher Knows

The more a teacher can emphasize the Kolb attributes below – the greater chance students will achieve increased levels of learning that makes a difference in real life:

- Learner independence and choice
- Intrinsic motivators and natural curiosity
- Rich, timely useable feedback
- Occasions for reflection
- Active involvement in real-world tasks
- Emphasis of higher-order abilities
- The ability to work with other people
- High challenge – low threat environments
- The opportunity for practice and reinforcement (Marchese, 2012)

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