

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory and Kolb's Learning Cycle Explained - no fluff, no filler, just facts.

By Lyndsay Swinton

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory and Kolb's Learning Cycle are the two key models in current use relating to adult learning and development. Knowing your own and your team's learning style allows you to grow and develop more effectively, building skills and experience, allowing you to meet your life goals.

Kolb's experiential learning theory builds on the work of Rogers, Jung and Piaget, and was first published in 1984. Kolb's experiential theory also links with Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Honey and [Mumford Learning Style](#).

Kolb's Learning Cycle

The principle of Kolb's learning cycle is that we all follow the following four stages of learning as we acquire knowledge, experience and skill. Concrete Experience provides a basis for Reflective Observation. These observations can be distilled in to Abstract Concepts, which are then Actively tested with Experimentation. Concrete Experience of the experiments start over the Learning Cycle.

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory

People tend to have a preferred learning style, so will learn more effectively if they have access to learning resources that utilize their preferred learning style. People will tend to be frustrated, affecting their ability to learn, if the only learning opportunities available to them do not allow them to use their preferred learning style. For example, an "Accommodating" learning style need to get their hands on experience quickly, so will rebel against instructions and rules.

- Diverging
 - combination of Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation
 - Feeling and Watching

- Like to gather information, good at brainstorming, interested in people, see different perspectives, prefer group work, open minded.
- Assimilating
 - combination of Abstract Conceptualization and Reflective Observation
 - Watching and Thinking
 - Concise logical approach, ideas and concepts more important than people, prefer lectures, reading, time to think
- Converging
 - combination of Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation
 - Doing and Thinking
 - Solve practical problems, prefer technical tasks, like experimenting and simulation, less interested in interpersonal issues.
- Accommodating
 - combination of Concrete Experience and Active Experimentation
 - Doing and Feeling
 - Hands on, attracted to new challenges and experiences, rely on others instead of doing own analysis, action oriented, set targets work hard in teams to achieve tasks.

Kolb's Experiential Theory In Context

Kolb's learning style links closely with [Honey and Mumfords](#).

Kolb	Honey and Mumford	Kolb
Having and Experiencing	Activists	Accommodating
Reviewing the Experience	Reflectors	Diverging
Concluding from the experience	Theorists	Assimilating
Planning the next step	Pragmatists	Converging

Kolb's experiential learning theory links with Myers-Briggs Type Indicators.

Kolb	Myers-Briggs Type Indicators
Active/Reflective	Extraversion and Introversion

Concrete Experience/Abstract Conceptualization	Thinking and Feeling
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You can make use of Kolb's Learning Style Inventory and Kolb's Learning Cycle when you consider adult learning and development. Knowing your own and your team's learning style mean you can develop and achieve effective [personal development plans](#), allowing you to meet your life [goals](#).

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