

David A. Kolb, Ph.D.

Background:

David A. Kolb

David A. Kolb is Professor of Organizational Behavior in the Weatherhead School of Management. He joined the School in 1976. Born in 1939, Kolb received his Bachelor of Arts from Knox College in 1961, his MA from Harvard in 1964 and his PhD from Harvard in 1967. Besides his work on experiential learning, David A. Kolb is also known for his contribution to thinking around organizational behaviour (1995a; 1995b). He has an interest in the nature of individual and social change, experiential learning, career development and executive and professional education.

David Kolb on experiential learning

David A. Kolb (with Roger Fry) created his famous model out of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and testing in new situations. He represented these in the famous experiential learning circle (after [Kurt Lewin](#)):

Kolb and Fry (1975) argue that the learning cycle can begin at any one of the four points - and that it should really be approached as a continuous spiral. However, it is suggested that the learning process often begins with a person carrying out a particular action and then seeing the effect of the action in this situation. Following this, the second step is to understand these effects in the particular instance so that if the same action was taken in the same circumstances it would be possible to anticipate what would follow from the action. In this pattern the third step would be understanding the general principle under which the particular instance falls.



David Kolb on learning styles

David Kolb and Roger Fry (1975: 35-6) argue that effective learning entails the possession of four different abilities (as indicated on each pole of their model): concrete experience

abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualization abilities and active experimentation abilities. Few of us can approach the 'ideal' in this respect and tend, they suggest, to develop a strength in, or orientation to, in one of the poles of each dimension. As a result they developed a learning style inventory (Kolb 1976) which was designed to place people on a line between concrete experience and abstract conceptualization; and active experimentation and reflective observation. Using this Kolb and Fry proceeded to identify four basic learning styles.

Converger, Diverger, Assimilator, and Accommodator.

Resources:

<http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>