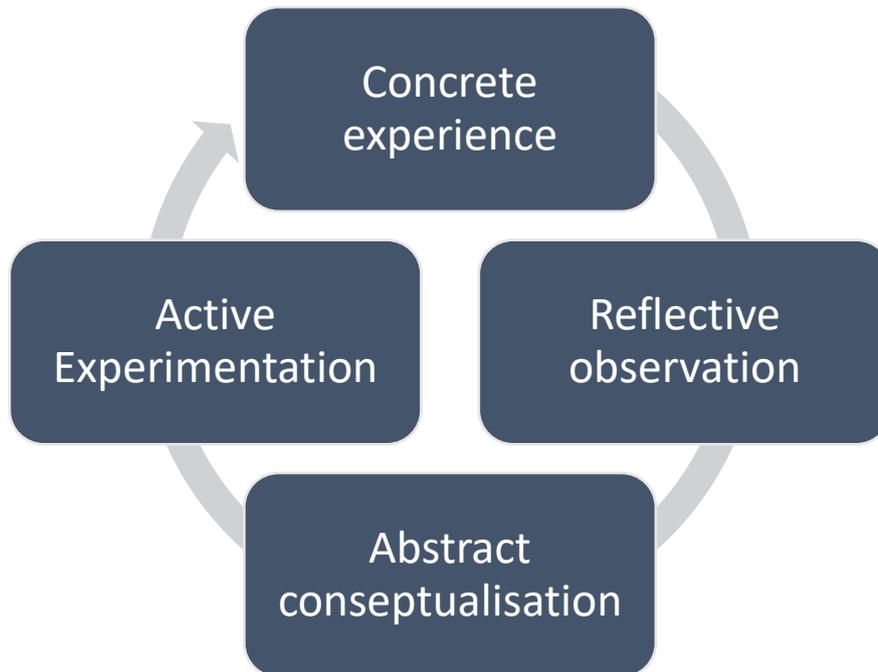


## Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984)



Kolb's experiential learning cycle is founded on the idea that an individual would learn through discovery and by experiencing something for themselves. If an individual has encountered something new, they then need to make sense of it. For many students this means something that has happened in a workplace setting, or something within your course that you need to investigate further. There are four key elements to this model. Although you can start at any point in the cycle, it is often easiest to start by thinking about a concrete experience. If you complete the cycle, you can then put your learning into practice in a new concrete experience. Then continue to analyse your experience by continuing around the cycle repeatedly, becoming a true reflective practitioner. For a reflective assignment you may limit this to one cycle only.

### Concrete Experience

Basically, learning by doing, you need to be part of the event.

- What was this experience?
- What happened?
- What was your role?

## Reflective Observation

Taking a step back from the event and thinking deeply about what happened. Can you put this into context by talking to others?

- Thinking about the experience and what happened, why do you think it unfolded as it did?
- Can you write a diary or learning log entry to consider this event at the time and do you interpret it differently later on?
- What are other people's perspectives?
- If you have a mentor, did you discuss this with them, what is their perspective?
- What did others who were there at the time say?
- How does this all relate to your own understanding?

## Abstract Conceptualisation

The ability to make sense of what has happened and put this into context of other experiences and learning.

- What do you already know about this type of event/experience?
- What have you read about this topic?
- What new information can you find in the academic literature?
- What do your professional guidelines or legislation say about this type of event?
- How does your experience relate to these different strands of information?

## Active Experimentation

At this point you can consider how this experience has shaped your knowledge and how this might affect your future practice.

- What do you now understand about the experience you had?
- What would you do if confronted by the same experience now?
- How will you put your learning into practice in future?
- Will this experience change your future practice?

For more detail see:

[Kolb, D. \(2015\) Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.](#)