

Introduction

David Kolb theorized about learning styles and experiential learning which are at the cornerstone of learning loops and cycles.

The theory has four distinct learning styles:

- **Concrete experience (related to feeling)**
- **Reflective observation (watching)**
- **Abstract conceptualization (thinking)**
- **Active experimentation (doing)**

Credit: Ewen Le Borgne

<https://km4meu.wordpress.com/2010/03/08/learning-cycle-basics-and-more-taking-stock/>

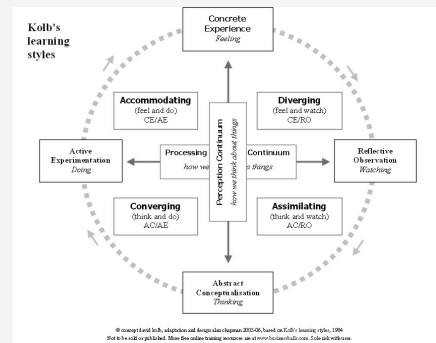
Four Learning Styles

Kolb contends that every person uses the four learning styles in different ways depending on their progression on a maturity path that spans acquisition (of basic abilities and cognitive structures), specialization (towards a specific learning style) and ultimately integration (where other learning styles are also expressed / used in work and personal life). But he also contends that we cannot use two styles simultaneously so we opt for either doing or watching and then either for thinking or feeling.. At the intersection of these two dialectical sets of choices, Kolb places his theory of preferred learning styles, as shown in the table

Theory of Preferred Learning Styles

	Doing (Active Experimentation – AE)	Watching (Reflective Observation – RO)
Feeling (Concrete Experience – CE)	Accommodating (CE/AE) , i.e. hands-on, intuitive, relying on others' information, group-work focused...	Diverging (CE/RO) , i.e. making links between different approaches, interested in brainstorming. Emotional, group work-focused...
Thinking (Abstract Conceptualization – AC)	Converging (AC/AE) , i.e. with a practical focus, interested in technical problems/solutions, specialist/technological applications...	Assimilating (AC/RO) , i.e. logical, concise, interested in readings, lectures, analytical models...

Gelb Learning Styles



Peter Honey & Alan Mumford Elaboration

Gelb model has been elaborated on by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford. They relabeled the four preferred learning styles to use some labels that are more familiar to us:

Stage 1: 'Having an Experience', and Style 1- Activists: 'here and now', gregarious, seek challenge and immediate experience, open-minded, bored with implementation.

Stage 2: 'Reviewing the Experience' and Style 2- Reflectors: 'stand back', gather data, ponder and analyze, delay reaching conclusions, listen before speaking, thoughtful.

Stage 3: 'Concluding from the Experience' and Style 3- Theorists : think things through in logical steps, assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories, rationally objective, reject subjectivity and flippancy.

Stage 4: 'Planning the next steps' and Style 4- Pragmatists (style 4): seek and try out new ideas, practical, down-to-earth, enjoy problem solving and decision-making quickly, bored with long discussions.