

Kolb's Learning Cycle/Styles

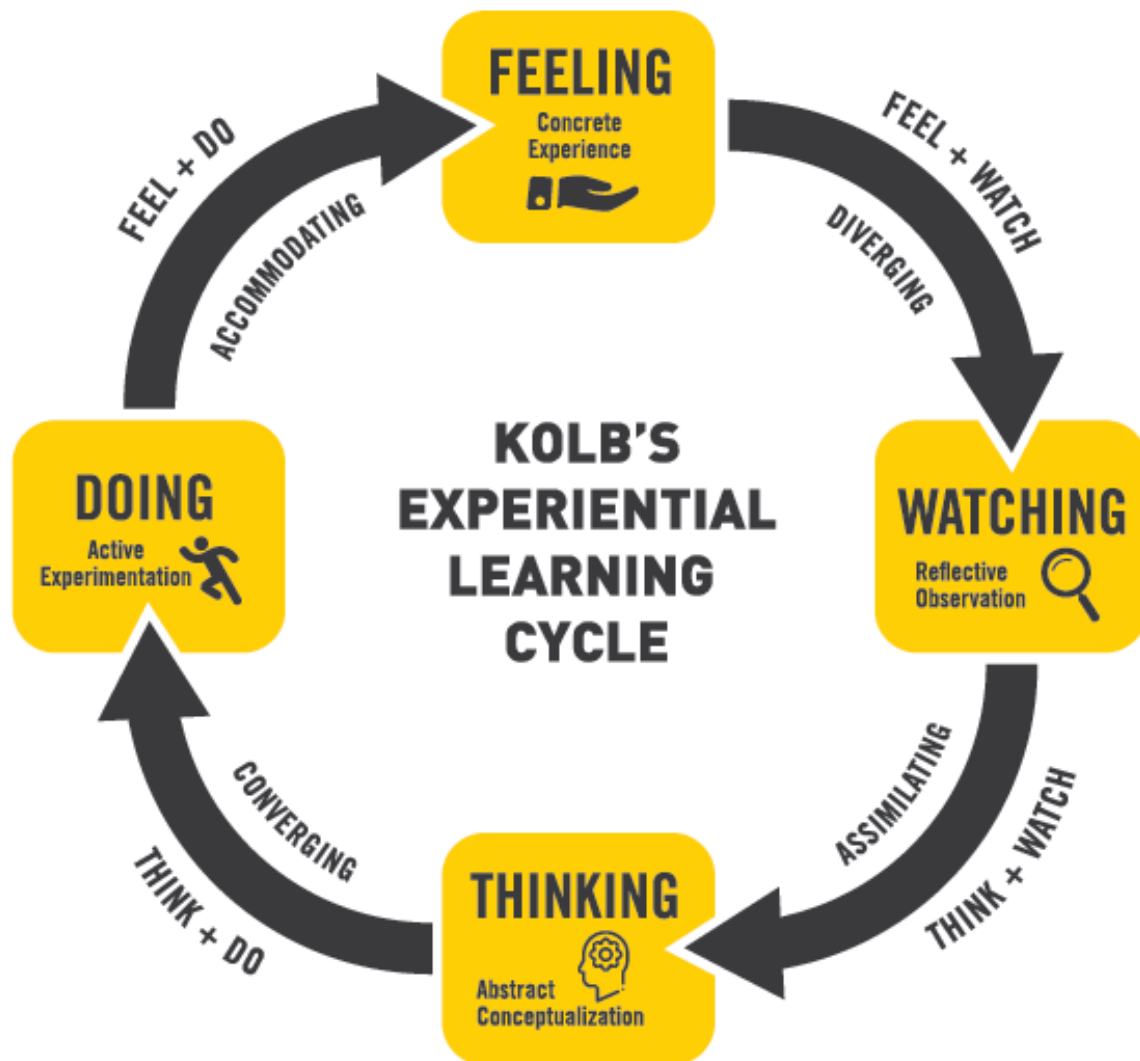


Table of Contents:

1. Learning Cycle
2. Reflective Cycle
3. Learning Styles Descriptions
4. Soccer Coaching Implications and (Age Group) [Examples](#)
5. References



1. Learning Cycle

Kolb's theory of experiential learning is commonly depicted as a four-stage learning cycle where the learner engages comprehensively in the learning process:

Concrete Experience: In this stage, the learner encounters a tangible experience. This could involve a completely new experience or a reevaluation of an existing one in light of newfound ideas.

Reflective Observation of the New Experience: Following the concrete experience, the learner takes time to contemplate the experience in the context of their existing knowledge. It's crucial to identify any inconsistencies between the experience and their understanding.

Abstract Conceptualization: Reflection leads to the generation of fresh ideas or adaptations of existing abstract concepts. Essentially, the individual learns from their experience and evolves their understanding.

Active Experimentation: The newly developed or adjusted concepts motivate the learner to engage in experimentation. They apply these ideas to their surroundings to observe the outcomes.

Effective learning occurs when an individual progresses through these four stages: experiencing a concrete situation, reflecting on it, forming abstract concepts, and applying these concepts to test hypotheses in future scenarios, which in turn create new experiences.

Kolb (1984) regards learning as a cohesive process where each stage supports and contributes to the next. One can enter this cycle at any stage and follow it in a logical sequence. Nonetheless, true and effective learning happens when a learner completes all four stages of the model. Consequently, no single stage of the cycle is efficient as an independent learning method.

This cyclical process ultimately leads to the development of progressively intricate and abstract "mental models" related to the subject matter that the learner is engaging with.



2. Reflective Cycle

Kolb's theory of learning, outlined in 1984, delineates four distinct learning styles, grounded in a four-stage learning cycle as detailed above. Kolb posits that individuals naturally gravitate toward one specific learning style, influenced by a variety of factors such as their social surroundings, educational history, or their inherent cognitive structure.

Regardless of what factors influence the selection of a learning style, the preference for a particular learning style arises from two pairs of variables or choices, as conceptualized by Kolb. He represented these as axes, each with contrasting modes at opposite ends.

Typically, Kolb's two continuums are presented as follows: the east-west axis, known as the Processing Continuum, governs how we approach a task, while the north-south axis, termed the Perception Continuum, pertains to our emotional response and how we think or feel about the task.

Kolb's assertion is that we cannot simultaneously occupy both extremes of a single axis, such as thinking and feeling. Our learning style emerges as a consequence of these two discrete decisions.

One effective way to grasp the structure of Kolb's learning styles is by envisioning a two-by-two matrix. Each learning style is a fusion of two preferred styles. This matrix also elucidates Kolb's nomenclature for the four learning styles: diverging, assimilating, converging, and accommodating.



3. Learning Styles Descriptions

Understanding an individual's (and your own) learning style allows for tailoring the learning process to align with the preferred method.

However, it's essential to recognize that everyone benefits from and requires exposure to various learning styles to varying degrees. It's a matter of appropriately emphasizing the style that best suits the given situation and an individual's learning preferences.

Below are concise explanations of the four learning styles proposed by Kolb:

Diverging (Feeling and Watching – CE/RO):

Diverging individuals possess the ability to perceive situations from diverse angles.

They tend to be sensitive and inclined to observe rather than take direct action, often gathering information and using their imagination to solve problems.

Their strength lies in their capacity to examine concrete situations from multiple viewpoints.

This learning style, known as "diverging," thrives in tasks that demand idea generation, like brainstorming.

People with a diverging style typically display a wide range of cultural interests and a penchant for gathering information.

They have an affinity for people, are imaginative and emotionally attuned, often excelling in artistic endeavors.

Collaboration is preferable for individuals with this style, as they are receptive to diverse perspectives and value personal feedback.

Assimilating (Watching and Thinking – AC/RO):

The assimilating learning preference adopts a concise and logical approach, prioritizing ideas and concepts over interpersonal interactions.

These learners require clear and well-structured explanations, valuing theoretical understanding more than practical application.

Proficient at grasping extensive information and organizing it into a coherent and rational framework.

Individuals with an assimilating learning style exhibit greater interest in abstract ideas and theories than those rooted in practical utility.

This style is particularly advantageous for information-oriented and scientific careers.

In formal learning contexts, people with this style prefer reading, attending lectures, exploring analytical models, and having ample time for contemplation.



3. Learning Styles Descriptions (Continued)

Converging (Doing and Thinking – AC/AE):

Converging learners excel in problem-solving and leverage their learning to find practical solutions.

They gravitate toward technical tasks and are less concerned with interpersonal dynamics.

These individuals excel in applying theories and ideas to real-world challenges, making decisions and resolving questions effectively.

Their preference leans heavily towards technical problem-solving rather than social or interpersonal issues, emphasizing specialist and technical abilities.

Converging learners are keen on experimenting with innovative ideas, simulations, and practical applications.

Accommodating (Doing and Feeling – CE/AE):

The Accommodating learning style is hands-on and guided by intuition, prioritizing practical experience over logical analysis.

These learners often rely on the analysis of others and favor an experiential, action-oriented approach.

They are drawn to novel challenges and experiences, enthusiastically carrying out plans.

Their decision-making often stems from instinct rather than meticulous analysis.

Individuals with this style frequently lean on others for information rather than conducting their own in-depth analysis.

This learning style is commonly found in the general population.



4. Soccer Coaching Implications and Examples

Kolb's (1984) learning stages and cycle provide valuable tools for coaches to critically assess the typical learning opportunities available to athletes and to create more tailored learning experiences.

Coaches should ensure that activities are thoughtfully designed and executed to accommodate each player's preferred learning style effectively.

Furthermore, individuals can enhance their learning effectiveness by identifying their less favored learning styles and strengthening them through the application of the experiential learning cycle.

Ideally, training activities and materials should be crafted in a manner that leverages capabilities from every stage of the experiential learning cycle, guiding athletes through the entire process sequentially.



4. Soccer Coaching Implications and **Examples** (continued)

U7 and Below:

Concrete Experience - In a U7 soccer training session, young players engage in a fun game where they take turns trying to dribble the ball around cones and into a small goal. They actively participate in the game, trying to maneuver the ball with their tiny feet.

Reflective Observation - After the game, the coach gathers the young players and encourages them to share their experiences. They talk about what they found exciting or challenging during the dribbling game and how they felt when they scored a goal or lost control of the ball.

Abstract Conceptualization - Using simple language and visuals, the coach explains basic soccer concepts like scoring goals, passing, and teamwork. They relate these concepts to the players' experiences in the dribbling game, helping the children understand the fundamental rules and objectives of soccer.

Planning Active Experimentation - Inspired by what they've learned, the young players plan for the next training session. They decide to practice their dribbling skills at home by dribbling a soft ball in their backyard. They also want to practice passing with a friend and look forward to the next session to play more fun games and learn more about soccer

U8 - U10:

Concrete Experience - During a U8-U10 soccer training session, young players participate in a dribbling drill where they navigate through cones and take shots on goal. They actively engage in the activity, feeling the ball at their feet and trying to score goals.

Reflective Observation - After the dribbling drill, the young players gather to discuss their performance. They share their successes, like successfully dribbling past a defender, and reflect on their challenges, such as losing control of the ball. They also consider how their teammates performed.

Abstract Conceptualization - The coach uses a whiteboard to explain basic soccer concepts to the players. They discuss the importance of ball control, passing, and teamwork. The coach relates these concepts to the players' experiences during the dribbling drill, helping them understand the theory behind their actions.

Planning Active Experimentation - The players, now armed with a better understanding of soccer fundamentals, plan for the next training session. They decide to practice passing and receiving skills with a focus on teamwork. They also aim to improve their dribbling skills by doing at-home drills and incorporate what they've learned into mini-games during the next practice.



4. Soccer Coaching Implications and **Examples** (continued)

U11 - U12:

Concrete Experience - In a U11-U12 soccer training session, players engage in a passing and possession drill. They actively participate in the drill, focusing on accurate passing and maintaining possession of the ball.

Reflective Observation - After the drill, players gather to discuss their performance. They share observations about their passing accuracy, how they supported their teammates, and moments when they lost possession. They also discuss what worked well and what they need to improve.

Abstract Conceptualization - The coach conducts a tactical session, explaining the importance of maintaining possession, creating passing lanes, and transitioning between offense and defense. They relate these concepts to the players' experiences in the passing and possession drill, helping the players grasp the strategic side of soccer.

Planning Active Experimentation - Inspired by the coach's guidance and their reflections, the players plan for the next training session and upcoming matches. They decide to practice passing sequences to improve their passing accuracy further. They also aim to implement the possession strategies discussed by the coach during their next game, actively experimenting with new tactics on the field

U13 and Above:

Concrete Experience - In a U13 and above soccer training session, players engage in a scrimmage that simulates a competitive match situation. They actively participate, working on advanced skills, positioning, and decision-making under game-like conditions.

Reflective Observation - Following the scrimmage, players engage in a post-match analysis with the coach. They discuss their individual and collective performance, highlighting moments of effective teamwork, well-executed skills, and areas where they can improve, such as defensive transitions or offensive creativity.

Abstract Conceptualization - The coach conducts a tactical session, delving into advanced soccer concepts like high-pressing, off-the-ball movement, and set-piece strategies. They relate these concepts to the players' experiences in the scrimmage, helping the players grasp the intricacies of team dynamics and strategy.

Planning Active Experimentation - Empowered with insights from the coach and their self-reflections, the players plan for the upcoming matches and training sessions. They decide to work on specific aspects like improving their defensive shape during counter-attacks and practicing set-piece routines. They actively experiment with these strategies during training and aim to implement them effectively in real matches



5. References

Kolb, D. A. (1976). *The Learning Style Inventory: Technical Manual*. Boston, MA: McBer.

Kolb, D.A. (1981). "Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences." In A.W. Chickering (Ed.), *The Modern American College* (pp. 232–255). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kolb, D. A., & Fry, R. (1975). "Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning." In C. Cooper (Ed.), *Studies of Group Process* (pp. 33–57). New York: Wiley.

Kolb, D. A., Rubin, I. M., & McIntyre, J. M. (1984). *Organizational Psychology: Readings on Human Behavior in Organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

