

THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS: TAKING IN & TRANSFORMING INFORMATION BY “GOING AROUND THE CIRCLE”

Learning occurs as a blending of two processes:

Taking in information

Transforming or processing or making meaning of that information

We learn best by

- taking in new information,
- understanding that information clearly,
- relating it to other relevant information and drawing out the principles, then
- deciding on and implementing new actions.

Taking In Information

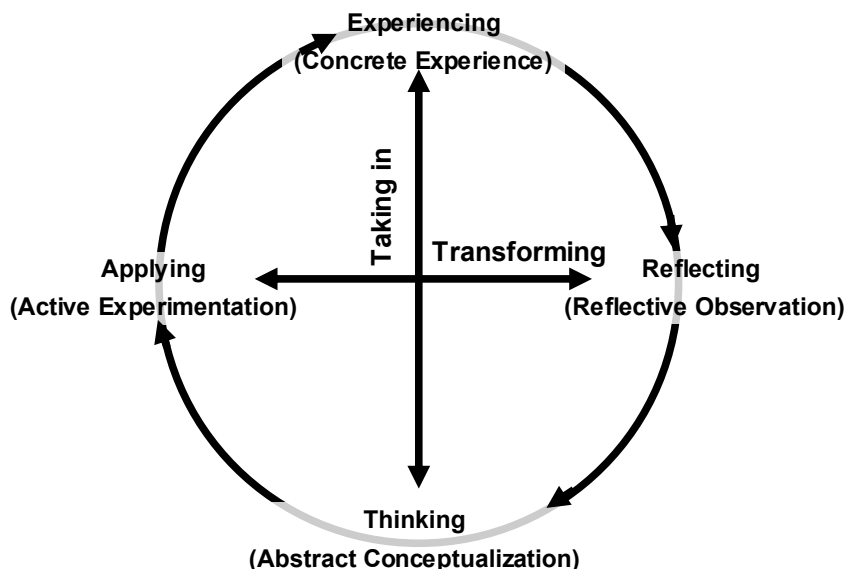
- Experiencing: take in information concretely and directly, feeling that information in a subjective and immediate way.
- Thinking: take in information abstractly through a more objective, remote mental process.

Both modes are valuable. When we do not use both modes, we increase the likelihood of missing important information.

Transforming, Processing or Making New Meaning from Information

- Reflecting: process information internally to see the big picture and ponder it in order to grasp its meaning and nuance.
- Applying: process information actively in order to test its practical application by translating it into new behaviors.

Both modes are valuable. When we do not use both modes, we may act ineffectively or too quickly because we lack adequate understanding, or we may suffer the paralysis of analysis and fail to act in a timely manner.



The four modes are: Concrete **Experiencing**, **Reflecting** & Observing, Abstract **Thinking**, and Active **Applying**. Learning involves all four modes, and the best learners go all the way around the circle.

Adapted from David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning*