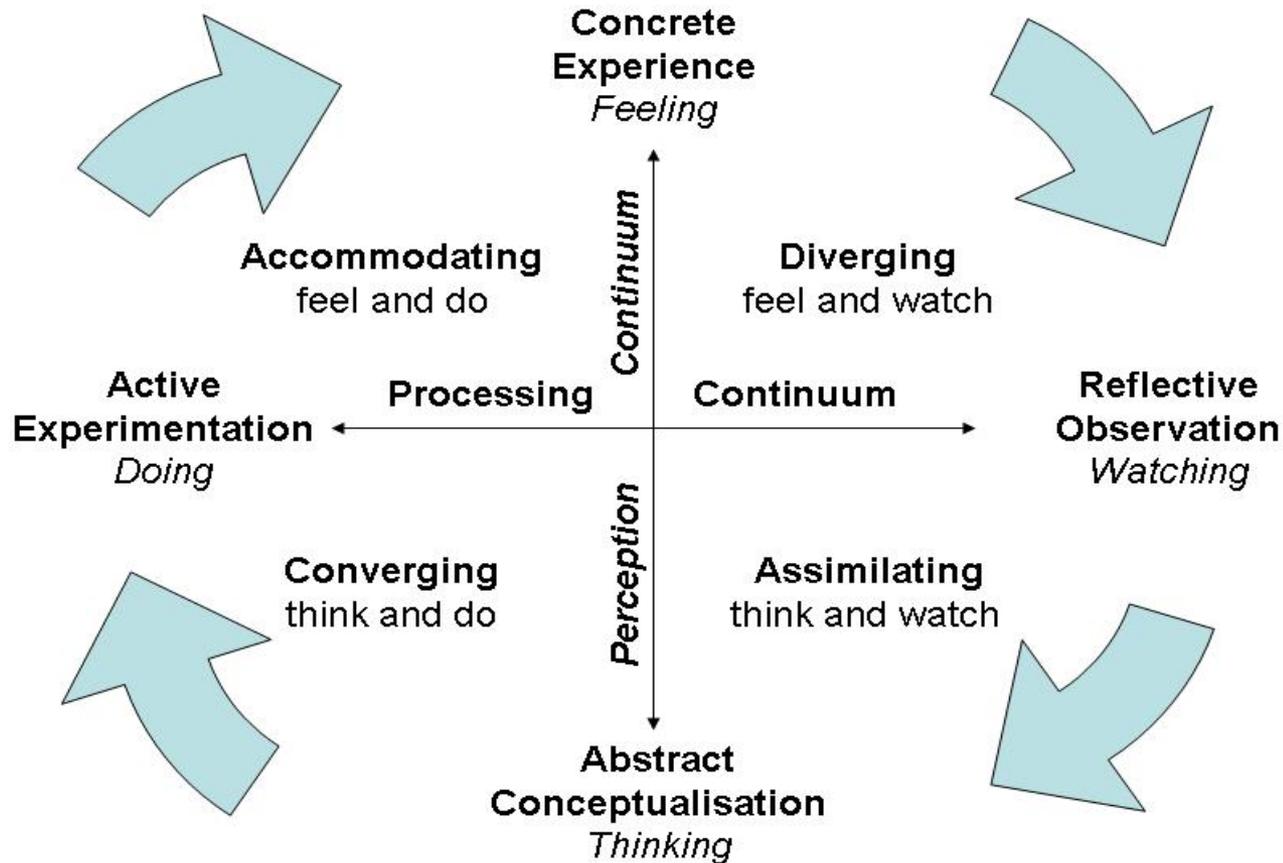


Experiential Learning Principles

- Emphasis is on how learning can be applied
- Relates to participant goals
- Relates to participants past experiences
- Encourages debate and challenges ideas
- Respect for the opinions of participants
- Encourages all participants to be a resource for the instructor and the group
- Treat participants like adults
- Gives the participants elements of control

Kolb's Learning Model



Kolb's Learning Styles

- David Kolb's in his work “Experiential Learning : Experience as the Source of Learning and Development” (1984) theorized that four combinations of perceiving and processing determine four learning styles that make up a learning cycle.
- According to Kolb, the learning cycle involves four processes that must be present for learning to occur.
- Kolb theorized that the four combinations of perceiving and processing determine one of four learning styles of how people prefer to learn. Kolb believes that learning styles are not fixed personality traits, but relatively stable patterns of behavior that is based on their background and experiences. Thus, they can be thought of more as learning preferences, rather than styles.

1. Diverging (concrete, reflective)

- Emphasizes the innovative and imaginative approach to doing things.
- Views concrete situations from many perspectives and adapts by observation rather than by action.
- Interested in people and tends to be feeling-oriented.
- Likes such activities as cooperative groups and brainstorming.

2. Assimilating (abstract, reflective)

- Pulls a number of different observations and thoughts into an integrated whole.
- Likes to reason inductively and create models and theories.
- Likes to design projects and experiments.

3. Converging (abstract, active)

- Emphasizes the practical application of ideas and solving problems.
- Likes decision-making, problem-solving, and the practicable application of ideas.
- Prefers technical problems over interpersonal issues.

4. Accommodating (concrete, active)

- Uses trial and error rather than thought and reflection.
- Good at adapting to changing circumstances; solves problems in an intuitive, trial-and-error manner, such as discovery learning.
- Also tends to be at ease with people.

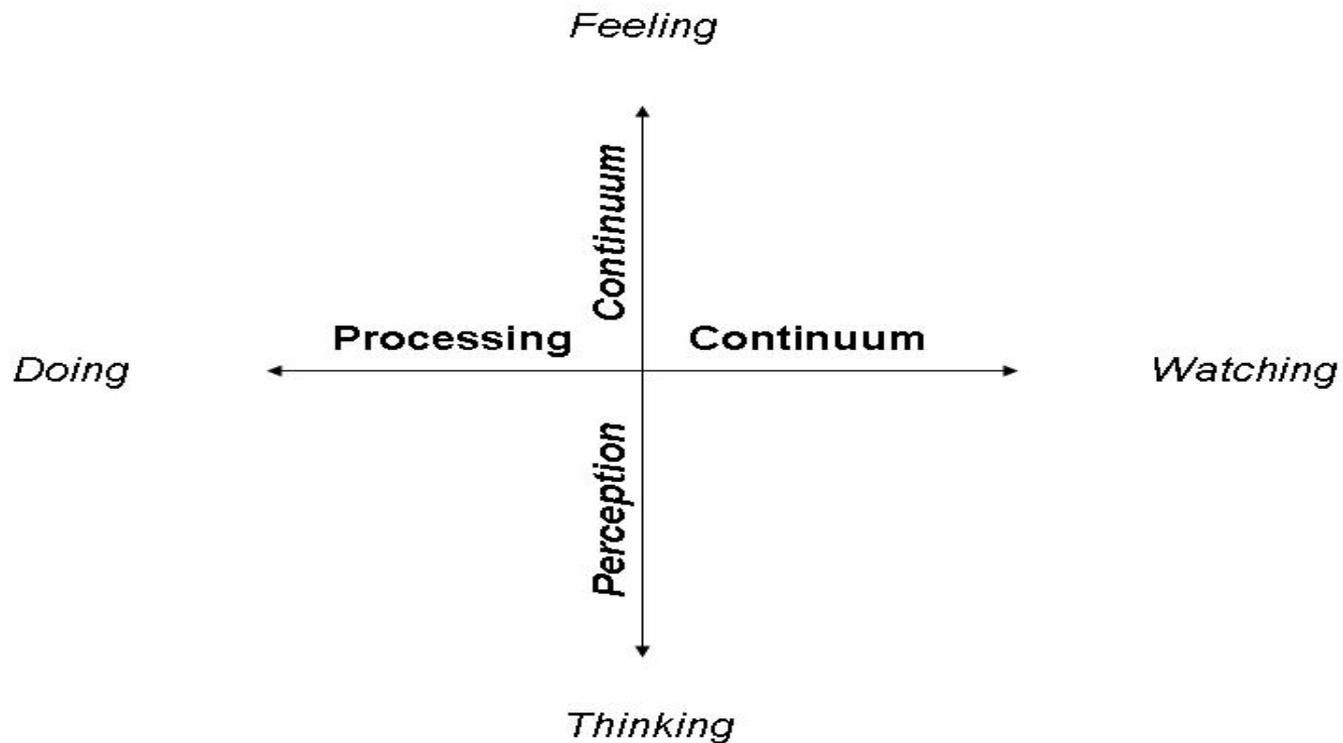
- While VAK may have popularized learning styles, David Kolb, Professor of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University, is credited with launching the learning styles movement in the early seventies and is perhaps one of the most influential learning models developed.
- According to Kolb (1984, 41), "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it."

Kolb's six main characteristics of experiential learning

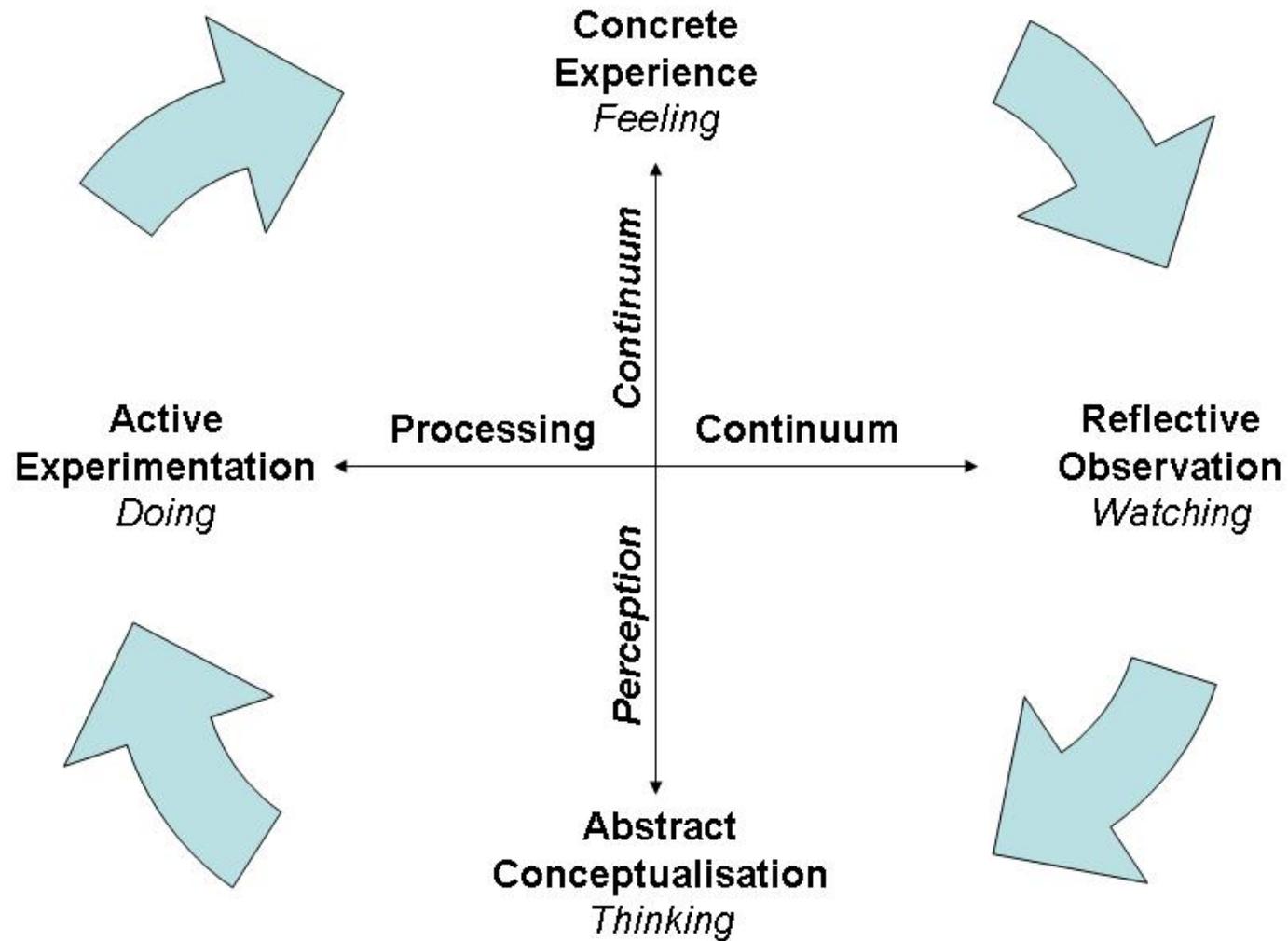
1. Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes
2. Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience
3. Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between opposing modes of adaptation to the world (learning is by its very nature full of tension)
4. Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world
5. Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment
6. Learning is the process of creating knowledge that is the result of the transaction between social knowledge and personal knowledge

- Kolb's learning theory sets out four distinct learning styles, which are based on a four-stage learning cycle.
- In this respect, Kolb's model differs from others since it offers both a way to understand individual learning styles, which he named the "Learning Styles Inventory" (LSI), and also an explanation of a cycle of "experiential learning" that applies to all learners.

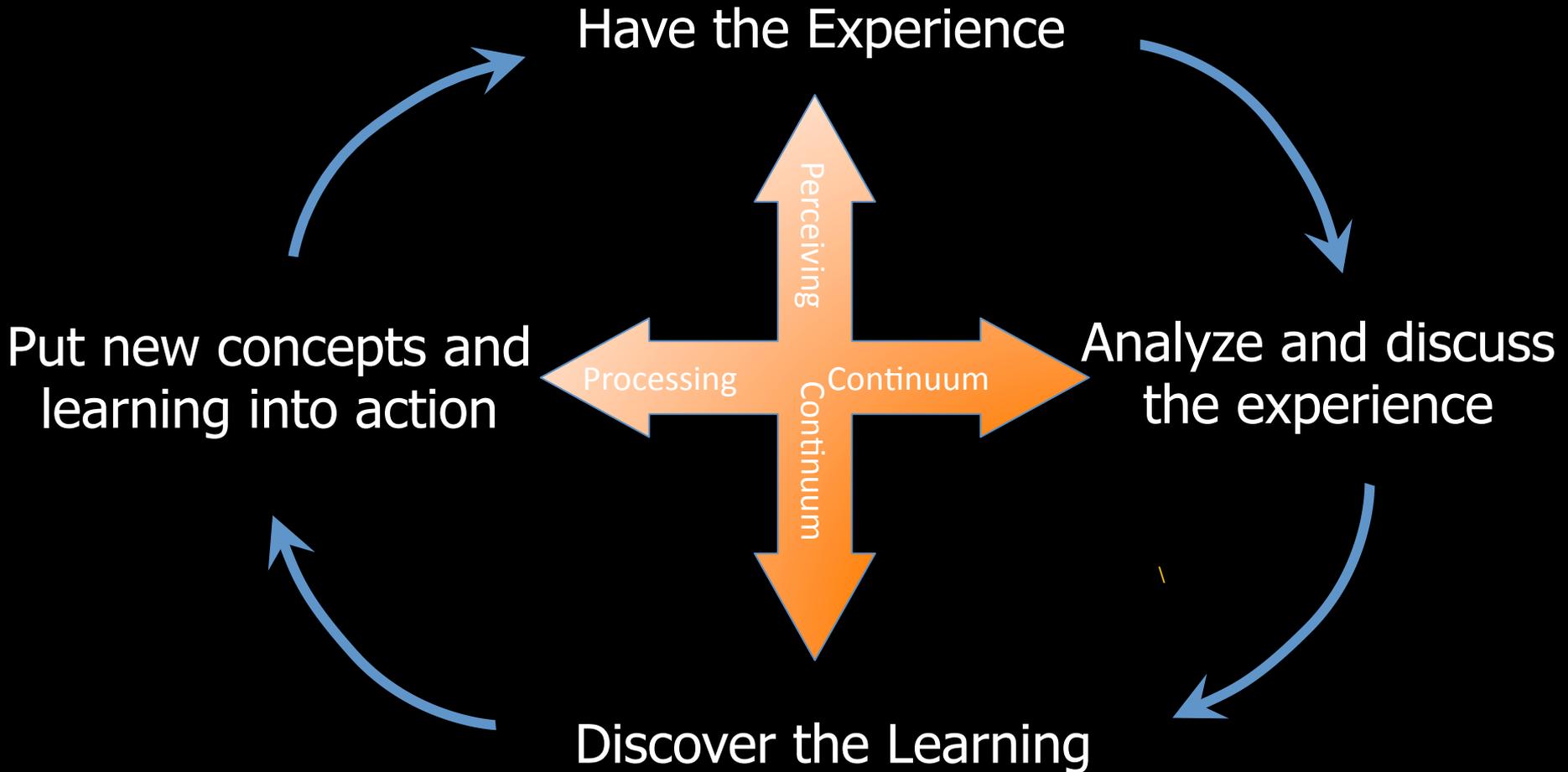
Kolb's learning model is based on two continuums that form a quadrant:
Processing Continuum: Our approach to a task, such as preferring to learn by doing or watching.
Perception Continuum: Our emotional response, such as preferring to learn by thinking or feeling



Kolb's Learning Cycle



Application of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



The Learning Cycle

- This matrix provides a learning cycle that involves four processes that must be present for learning to occur.
- Note that this part of Kolb's model is more useful in that rather than trying to pinpoint a learning style, he provides a model learning program.

- **Concrete experience (feeling):** Learning from specific experiences and relating to people. Sensitive to other's feelings.
- **Reflective observation (watching):** Observing before making a judgement by viewing the environment from different perspectives. Looks for the meaning of things.
- **Abstract conceptualization (thinking):** Logical analysis of ideas and acting on intellectual understanding of a situation.
- **Active experimentation (doing):** Ability to get things done by influencing people and events through action. Includes risk-taking.

** Depending upon the situation or environment, the learners may enter the learning cycle at any point and will best learn the new task if they practice all four modes.*

A few examples:

- **Learning to ride a bicycle:**
 - Reflective observation - Thinking about riding and watching another person ride a bike.
 - Abstract conceptualization - Understanding the theory and having a clear grasp of the biking concept.
 - Concrete experience - Receiving practical tips and techniques from a biking expert.
 - Active experimentation - Leaping on the bike and have a go at it.
- **Learning a software program:**
 - Active experimentation - Jumping in and doing it.
 - Reflective observation - Thinking about what you just performed.
 - Abstract conceptualization - Reading the manual to get a clearer grasp on what was performed.
 - Concrete experience - Using the help feature to get some expert tips.
- **Learning to coach:**
 - Concrete experience - Having a coach guide you in coaching someone else.
 - Active experimentation - Using your people skills with what you have learned to achieve your own coaching style.
 - Reflective observation - Observing how other people coach.
 - Abstract conceptualization - Reading articles to find out the pros and cons of different methods.
- **Learning algebra:**
 - Abstract conceptualization - Listening to explanations on what it is.
 - Concrete experience - Going step-by-step through an equation.
 - Active experimentation - Practicing.
 - Reflective observation - Recording your thoughts about algebraic equations in a learning log.

Learning Styles

