



David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory – Forty Years Later

By: Laz Simeon , TLX Faculty Facilitator

Next year will mark the 40th anniversary of the publication of David Kolb's theory of experiential learning. I first encountered Kolb's work when, as a student at an alternative high school in south-central Etobicoke, one of my teachers introduced Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (the famed LSI) in one of our classes. It was hot off the press at the time.

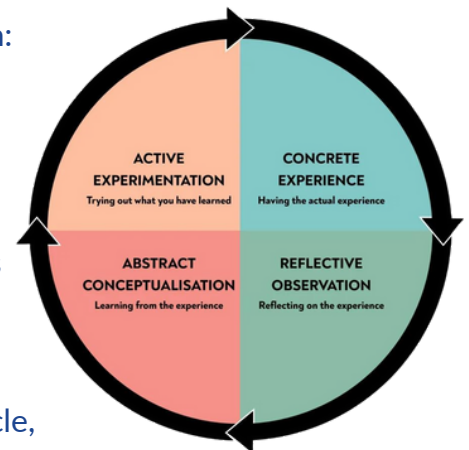
Kolb's theory describes how **four stages** influence the way that people learn:

A) **Concrete Experience:** being involved in the world.

B) **Observation and Reflection:** thinking about these experiences.

C) **Abstract Conceptualization:** drawing conclusions from these experiences and generalizing, constructing new theories or building on existing ones.

D) **Active Experimentation:** testing these theories and using them to solve problems and direct future action. A person can start at any stage of the cycle, but successful learning is accomplished only when the full cycle is completed.



Kolb also asserts (and herein lies the controversy) that people adhere to “learning styles,” meaning that they are more comfortable at some of the stages of the learning cycle than at others. Learners, he posits, can be categorized as convergers, divergers, assimilators, and accommodators. Of course, today notions of “learning styles” have been pretty much debunked. Some also say that Kolb arrived at his conclusions with not a whole lot of empirical evidence. Anyone who's ever done the LSI will tell you that you can complete the survey two different times and have two different results, so how reliably does it measure what it purports to measure?

Despite these critiques, Kolb's ideas have helped set the foundation for much of the thinking around teaching and learning in higher education that we take for granted now. Ideas such as active learning, reflective practice, and the importance of internships and cooperative education derive, in some way, from Kolb's experiential learning theory.

To find out more and to check out some of the eye-catching ways Kolb's theory has been graphically rendered, visit this site: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html/>

Coming Up Next At TLX:



Coming Up
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TLX!

Cool Edtech Tools: Miro (November 22): This workshop will explore the different ways you can use Miro, an online whiteboard, to collaborate and connect with students online or in-class. [Register here.](#)

Coordinator Collective (November 22): Welcome to the monthly meeting space for all things program coordinator related. Are you a new coordinator or a seasoned expert in the academic advising space? Come join us for monthly drop-in chats where coordinators can join together to share best practices and learn from each other's successes and struggles so we can be even more supportive for our students. [Register here.](#)

UDL Certificate, Cohort 1 & 2: Action & Expression (November 22): [Registration closed.](#)

UDL Certificate, Cohort 2: Action & Expression: (November 24): [Registration closed.](#)

Academic Integrity Community of Practice Meeting Space (November 27): Welcome to the Academic Integrity Community of Practice meeting space. We would like to invite you to join us to share stories, anecdotes, suggestions, and offer support as we navigate the ever-changing world of academic integrity issues. Each month we will have a different presenter and topic for discussion. The ultimate intention of this community of practice is to prevent harm to students. [Register here.](#)

One size fits none: using educational technology tools to support UDL (November 28th): This workshop will explore the different educational technologies that support a Universal Design for Learning approach to teaching. [Register here.](#)

Enhancing your Learning Materials for Digital Accessibility (December 4): Join us for this session where we will learn about the importance of creating accessible documents, explore tools and guidelines to make our documents accessible, and have time to work on our documents together with the support of the TLX. This is meant to be a time to work together on our learning materials. Feel free to come to 1 or all 3 sessions scheduled this semester to work on your materials and get support from our team. Come for the full 2 hours or for a bit! [Register here.](#)

The Plus One Approach to Images

Welcome to **The Plus One Approach** for making your course representative and inclusive.

My name is **Anna Bartosik** and I am seconded to the TLX as an Associate. My home department is the school of ESL and Immigrant Education in CPLS, where I work as a professor and an instructional designer. Today, I'd like to kick off a series of posts aimed at providing inspiration rather than overwhelming those who aspire to create more inclusive courses. I'll be approaching this approach through the lens of instructional design, showcasing how we can craft more inclusive and engaging learning experiences.



Anna Bartosik, TLX Associate

This week, I'm sharing some image resources I've curated for my course design and development work.

I believe that changing images in our course shells, our slide presentations, and in course materials is an easy step to begin making changes to representation. Images convey so much more than what we can describe, and they may prompt our thinking: **how do the images we use in courses represent learners in the classroom? Which learners are not included? Who is represented well?**

We can draw on the UDL framework's multiple means of representation principle, activist design to unpack our positionality and biases, and cognitive learning theories such as dual coding theory to support the addition of inclusive and representative images in course resources.

Below you'll find links to collections of images, most of them community-sourced. All are free but have different guidelines for attribution. Be sure to check and if in doubt, it is always best to cite the source and not edit.

Images of Empowerment- This is a free library celebrating women's lives from 13 countries around the world.

Obesity Action Coalition- Free images of people of different weights and sizes portrayed positively in various settings.

Gender Spectrum Collection- A stock photo library featuring images of trans and non-binary models. Please be sure to read the guidelines for use, especially for topics such as "sexual health, crime, violence, and mental health." All photos taken by Zackary Drucker and Alyza Enriquez.

Women of Colour in Tech- These images are under a Creative Commons Attribution license, which means you may copy, distribute and display them as long as you attribute #WOCinTechChat or wocintechchat.com.

Health Education Media Library- This is an open-access media repository, hosted at The University of Western Libraries. These images were community-sourced, and the project was prompted because of a lack of representation of diverse populations in both patients and healthcare providers. It is under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial license, which means the images can be shared and adapted, but you must give appropriate credit, link to the license, and indicate if any changes were made.

Age-Positive Image Library- This is a free library which shows people over 50 to challenge stereotypes of older ages.

I hope you enjoy exploring these resources and making one change to your practice!

Next time, I'll be sharing some ways to use colour.



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About TLX

The Teaching and Learning Exchange (TLX) serves as a 'one-stop-shop' for all full-time and contract faculty at GBC in support of their teaching and learning-related needs. We aspire to create a community of excellence in teaching and learning by fostering partnerships with and among faculty. We model innovative, evidence-informed practices and open spaces for risk-taking and experimentation so that George Brown learners are immersed in transformative learning experiences led by innovative and adaptive faculty.



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Coach's Corner

As many of the amazing faculty whom I work with on a regular basis know, I'm an avid tennis player and fan. So, imagine my excitement as I settled in on my couch last night to watch the finals of the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) tour from Torino, Italy. And imagine my disappointment as I discovered that I had failed to hit the "record" button. But the popcorn was hot and buttered, and my time carved out, so I channel surfed until I found the Grey Cup game. It was already almost half-time, and the Alouettes were down 10 points. Obviously, I was cheering for the underdogs. I quickly learned from the commentary that few experts gave the Alouettes a fighting chance to win, and that even the "I should have retired by now" quarterback Cody Fajardo endearingly called them his "band of misfit toys". What ensued was one of the most exciting come from behind wins I had witnessed in any sporting event. So, what was it that brought this perhaps less skilled and less talented team that nobody believed could win to success? During the post-match interview, Fajardo attributed the win to a tight group of players being closely bonded, able to bounce back from adversity, believing in themselves, and completing a huge task one step at a time. So, today's Coach's Corner questions are about teamwork, resilience and motivation? How do you support the learners in your learning spaces that come to you "less skilled" than you would prefer, the ones that others may have written off, or who may even have lost belief in themselves to be successful? How do you build connections between them to support one another through "failures". And how do you scaffold your learning so that daunting tasks seem manageable, if they are faced one step at a time? Good questions to ask ourselves as the time clock on this semester is running down.



Nicki Monahan, TLX Faculty Facilitator