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### Reflection: Theories and Approaches

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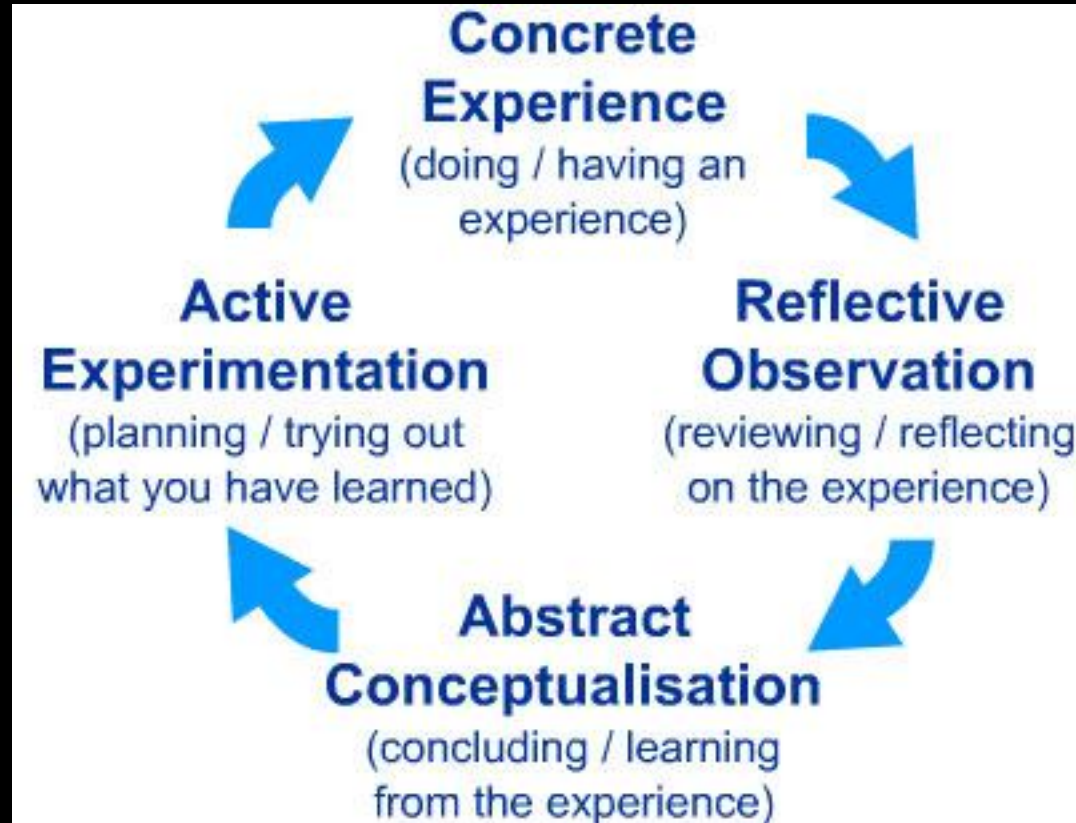
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# Reflection

Theories and Approaches

# A Theory - Kolb's Learning Cycle



(Kolb 2015)

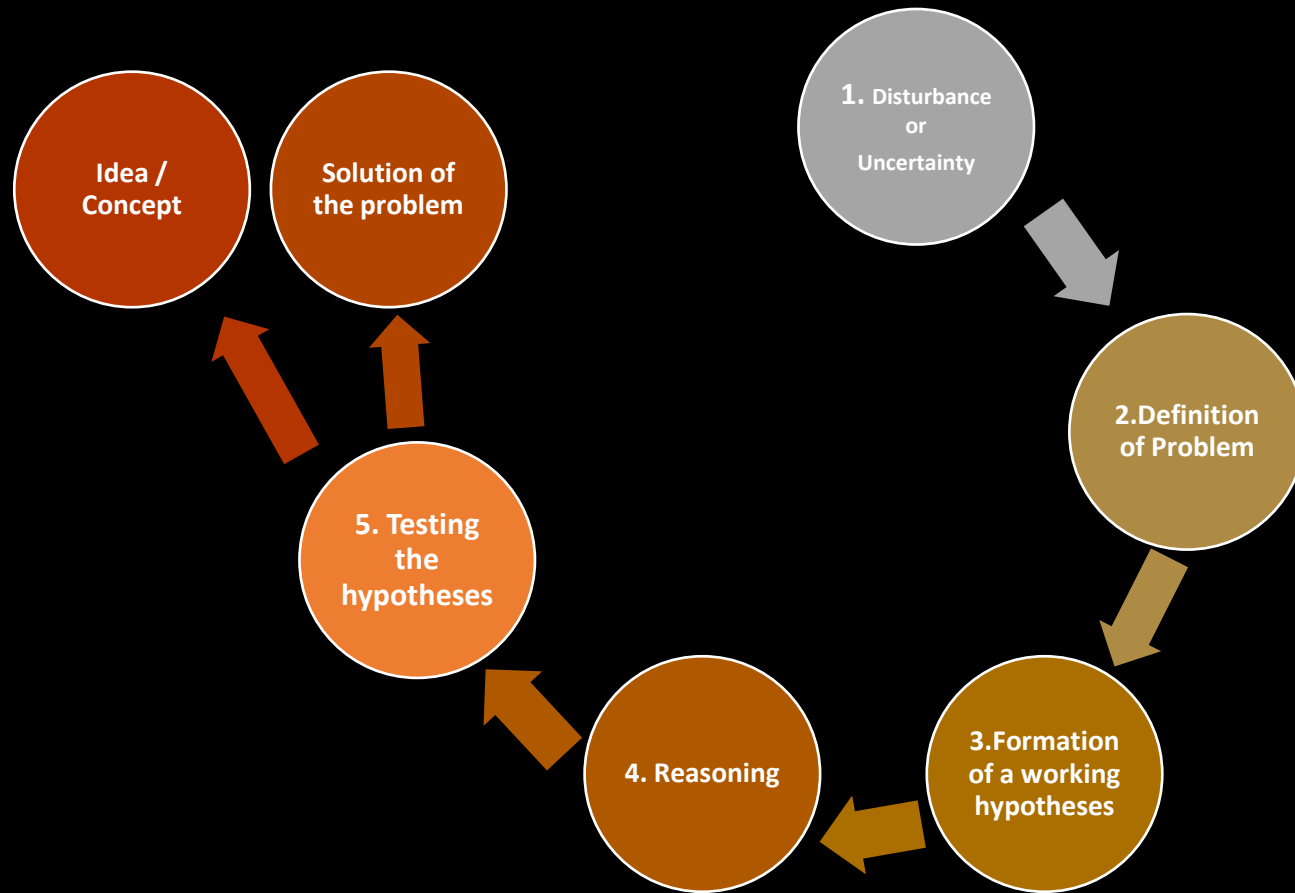
# Kolb's Learning Cycle – Points to consider....

- This model is really to help learners conceptualise learning itself as an active process
- In applying it ourselves we might ask the following questions:
  - Does this apply to every “concrete experience”?
  - Can this ever be done subconsciously or must it be conscious?
  - Do we really need to articulate the “abstract conceptualisation” or is it enough that we reflect?
  - What if I never get to “Active Experimentation”- but I have still actively reflected?

# Another theory - Dewey's Model of Reflective Thought and Practice

- Kolb's Learning Cycle emphasises reflective observation as a way to analyse and draw conclusions from an experience.
- The aim is to take this learning into new experiences, completing the cycle.

# Dewey's Model of Reflective Thought and practice



(Dewey 1989)

# Dewey's Model – Points to Consider

- Dewey's emphasis is on a “disturbance”.
- Is it possible to reflect on an experience if it not “disturb” us?
- How is this implemented in practice?
- We often ask students to reflect on “critical incidents” during their experiential learning.
- We too can do this in relation to our teaching practice.

# Contrast the Learning Cycles in Respect of these Two Models

## **Kolb**

“Having the experience”

“Reflective Observation”

“Abstract Conceptualisation”

“Active Experimentation”

“Changed Behaviour”

## **Dewey**

“Creating the disturbance”.

“Problem definition leading to a hypotheses”.

“Forming the hypotheses”.

“Testing the Hypothesis”

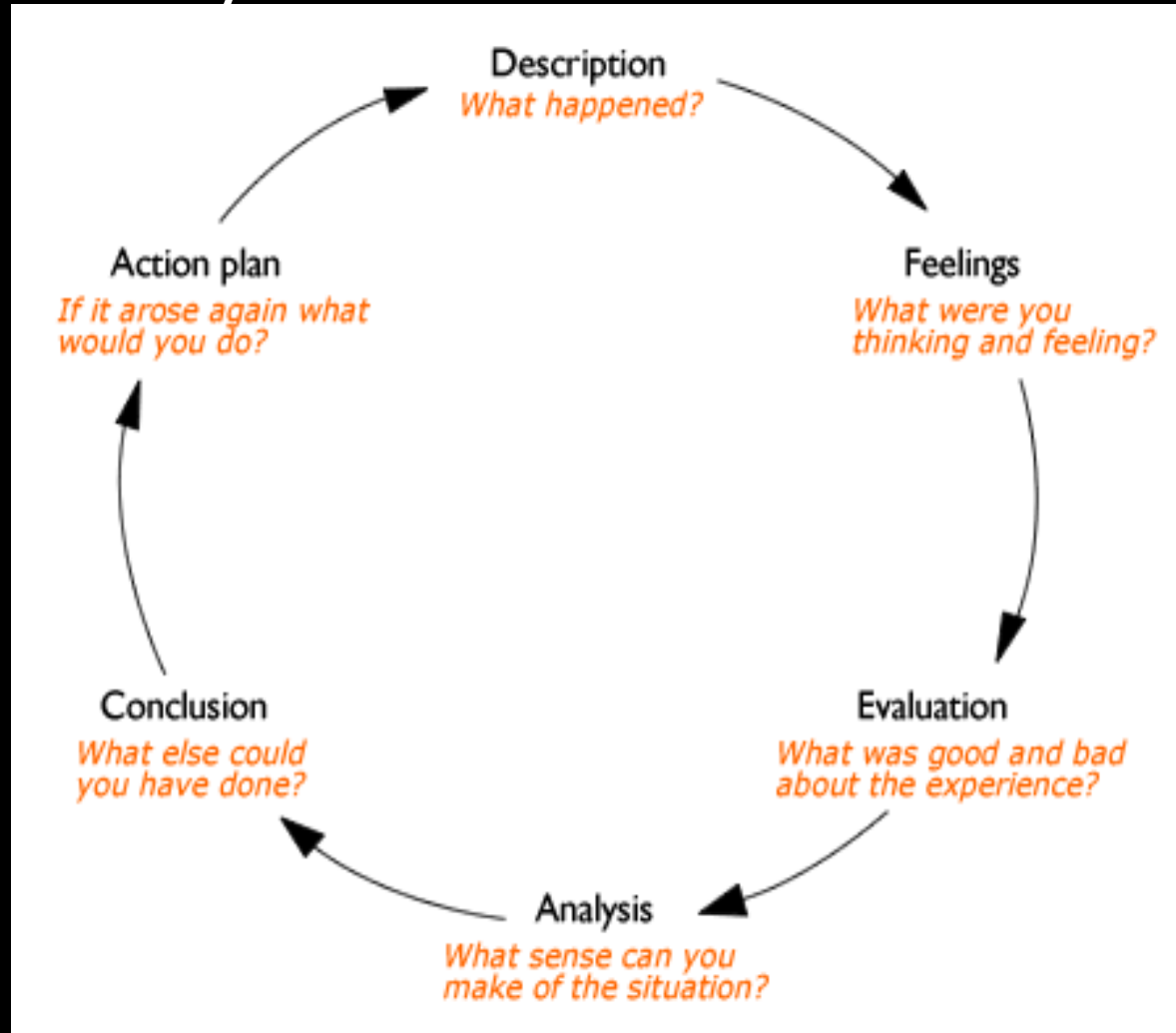
“Solution”.



# In Practice?

- Reflective process is not homogenous.
- Different approaches may be determined by discipline and scenario.
- Most find it useful to have a theoretical framework as an approach to reflection.
- May assist learners by providing a “hook” to hang it on.
- Which works best? Let's find out.

# Another Theory - Gibbs' Model of Reflection



(Gibbs 1988)

# Gibbs' Model- Points to Consider....

- This is cyclical and in that sense is similar to Kolb's learning cycle yet it contains additional elements,
  - What are they?
- What does this model require learners to do that is not explicit in Kolb?
- In what sense do you find it
  1. Helpful, and
  2. Challenging in terms of your own reflections?

# Another Theory - Rolfe's Framework for Reflective Practice

This can be simplified as comprising the following 3 Questions:

□ What?

(Describe the situation)

□ So What?

(Theory and knowledge building)

□ Now What?

(How to improve the situation)

(Rolfe 1989)

# Rolfe's summary of reflective processes

Rolfe(1989) summarises reflective processes as follows:

Questioning what, why and how one does things, and asking what, why and how others do things.

This may include:

- Seeking alternatives;
- Comparing and contrasting;
- Seeking the framework, theoretical basis or underlying rationale;
- Viewing from various perspectives;
- Keeping an open mind.

# Rolfe's Model- May Also Include:

- Asking “what if”?
- Asking for others' ideas and viewpoints.
- Considering consequences.
- Hypothesising.
- Seeking, identifying and resolving problems.
- Seeking the framework, theoretical basis and/or underlying rationale.

# Rolfe – Points to Consider....

- In what sense might this be called a “pragmatists guide to reflection”?
- What are the challenges in using this approach?
- How might you adapt it for your own use in practice?

# Another Theory - Brookfield's 4 Critical Lenses

Brookfield (2017) suggests that we employ four “critical lenses” through which to view and reflect upon our practice.

These are:

1. Our students
2. Our own view (*autobiography*)
3. Our peers
4. The various theoretical perspectives in educational literature and research



# Brookfield – Points to Consider....

- Which of the four perspectives is, in your view, the most valid, reliable, important?
- What are the pros and cons of our autobiographies as against student experiences?

# Brookfield- Which Lens is Most Valid?

- Our autobiographies are “ one of the most important sources of insight into practice to which we have access” Brookfield(2017 p31)
- Examining our own experience as learners helps us to “uncover our most deeply embedded allegiances and motivations” Brookfield(2017 p32).

# Another Theory - Peters

Peters(1991) describes a process called **DATA** that consists of 4 steps:

## 1. Describe

## 2. Analyse

## 3. Theorise

## 4. Act

- **Describe** the “incident”.
- **Analyse** the contributing factors and identify underlying beliefs, assumptions and motives.
- **Theorise** about alternative methods by taking the theory in the previous step and developing it in to a new one.
- **Act**, try out the new theory.

# Peters – Points to consider....

- Are there inherent challenges within this approach?
- Why might this approach be said to be empowering for learners?
- Is it relevant that Peters wrote in the context of “Adult and Continuing Education” or “Educating Adults”?
- How might you apply this in your own teaching and/or learning?

# Another Theory - Schön

- Schön(1983) describes 'reflecting in action' as reflecting on the incident whilst it can still benefit that situation rather than reflecting on how you would do things differently in the future.
- This process is described by Schön(1983 p68) as  
*“When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case”*.
- As well as “coping in the moment”, Schön refers to the more long-term impact on “professional mastery”.

# Schon- Points to Consider....

- This is a useful tool to use in disciplines where the professional has to react to an event at the time it occurs – rather than having the luxury of being able to think about what happened and make changes at a later time.
- Can you think of instances where this might apply?
- Could it be relevant to your own practice?

# Reflective Practice in Teaching Digital Badge

- Based on, and with thanks to, the National Forum Digital Badge on Reflective Practice in Teaching by Bronagh Heverin and