

## ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING BASED ON KOLB'S LEARNING DIMENSIONS

Most of us spend little time thinking about *how* we learn; we just know that we do—and haven't we been doing it for years anyway? When we *do* think about learning, we assume that everyone learns in a like manner. A common fallacy held by some university faculty is to assume that *students learn in the same way they do*. In practice, this assumption often degenerates to an unspoken feeling that "all *good* students think and learn like I do." Consequently, students with different learning styles are often dismissed as either lacking intelligence or being non-cooperative (Harb 1995). This means that most courses are usually taught in the teacher's learning style.

Educational psychologist David Kolb suggests a theory of experiential learning to provide a framework for examining some of the *many* ways in which people learn:

### Perceptions

Concrete Experience: sensing/feeling  
Abstract Conceptualization: thinking

### Processing Modes

Reflective Observation: watching  
Active Experimentation: doing

In the model below, these dimensions are presented in four quadrants. Within each quadrant are course activities (e.g., assignments) that can help facilitate learning within each of the dimensions. The learning activities shown in the oval below display *passive* activities in the center and progressively more *active* learning strategies toward the outer edge. Research suggests that students acquire more knowledge and retain it longer when more active learning strategies are employed (such as those at the outer perimeter of the oval). Teachers seeking to enhance their students' learning should consider including in their courses a mixture of active strategies that appeal to diverse ways of learning. 

### Bibliography

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