

# Experiential Learning for agriculture Education:

*Theoretical Foundations and Objectives of Experiential  
Learning*

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# Outline

- ❖ Learning from Experience
- ❖ Foundational Scholars of Experiential Learning Theory
- ❖ Definition of Experiential Learning
- ❖ Experiential Learning Cycle
- ❖ Theoretical Contributors to Experiential Learning
- ❖ References

**Note:** The information in the presentation is summarized or adopted from the list of references presented in the last slide of the presentation.

# Learning from Experience

According to Cohen and Walker (1997):

1. Experience is the foundation of, and stimulus for, learning.
2. Learners actively construct their experience
3. Learning is a holistic process
4. Learning is socially and culturally constructed
5. Learning is influenced by socio-emotional context in which it occurs










# John Dewey (1859-1952)

- ❖ We do not **learn** from experience... we **learn** from reflecting on experience.”
- ❖ Education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told, but an active and constructive process.
- ❖ The real process of education should be the process of learning to think through the application of real problems.

# John Dewey (1859-1952)

- ❖ People learn *experientially*. However, some experiences are *educative* while others are *miseducative*.
- ❖ All experiences are understood to be *continuous*, that is, each experience influences each future experience.
- ❖ "Good/educative experiences " motivate, encourage, and enable students to go on to have more valuable learning experiences, whereas, "poor/mis-educative experiences" tend to lead towards a student closing off from potential positive experiences in the future.

# Foundational Scholars of Experiential Learning Theory according to Kolb

Foundational Scholars of Experiential Learning	
 <p><b>John Dewey</b> • Experiential Education</p>	 <p><b>William James</b> • Radical Empiricism • Dual Knowledge Theory</p>
 <p><b>Jean Piaget</b> • Constructivism</p>	 <p><b>Kurt Lewin</b> • Action Research • The T-Group</p>
 <p><b>Lev Vygotsky</b> • Proximal Zone of Development</p>	 <p><b>Carl Rogers</b> • Self-actualization through the Process of Experiencing</p>
 <p><b>Paulo Freire</b> • Naming Experience in Dialogue</p>	 <p><b>Carl Jung</b> • Development from Specialization to Integration</p>
 <p><b>Mary Parker Follett</b> • Learning in Relationship • Creative Experience</p>	

# Definition of Experiential Learning

## ❖ According to Kolb (1984):

- ✓ The Experiential Learning Theory is eclectic.
- ✓ Knowledge can be obtained by grasping and transforming experience.
- ✓ Reflection is a critical learning ability, by means of which it becomes possible to receive and internalize information.

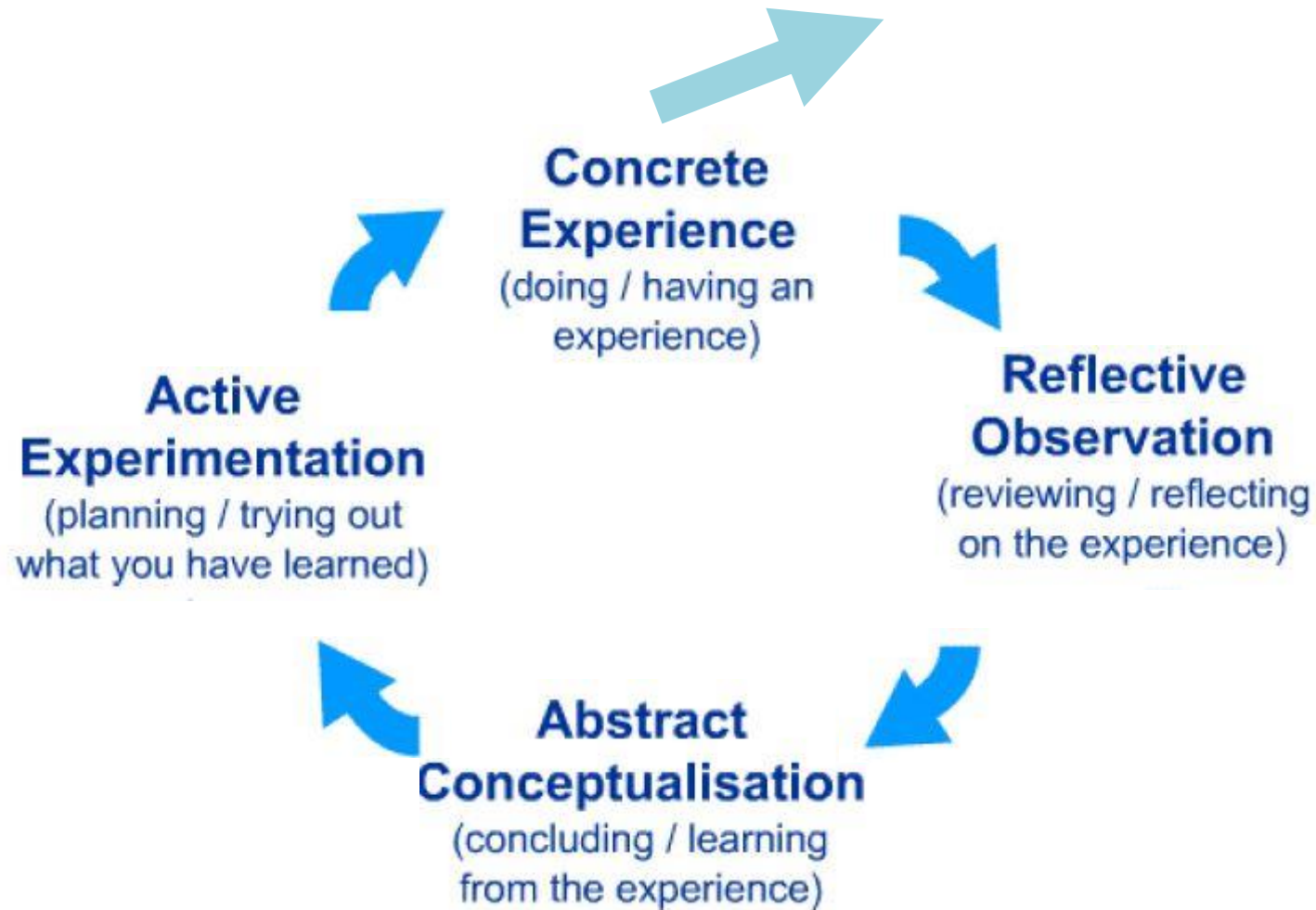
## ❖ The Experiential Learning Theory refers to the process of acquiring knowledge as a **dynamic cycle** composed of four modes of learning: experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting in a recursive manner.

# Kolb's Articulation of Experiential Learning

- ❖ Kolb's 1984 book on experiential learning is one of the more influential works linking theory to actual practice (Book Title: *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*)
- ❖ Kolb describes experiential learning as a **four-stage process**, where learners are asked to **engage themselves in a new experience, actively reflect on that experience, conceptualize that experience and integrate it with past experiences.**
- ❖ Kolb's experiential learning style theory is typically represented by a four-stage learning cycle



# Experiential Learning Cycle



# Experiential Learning Cycle

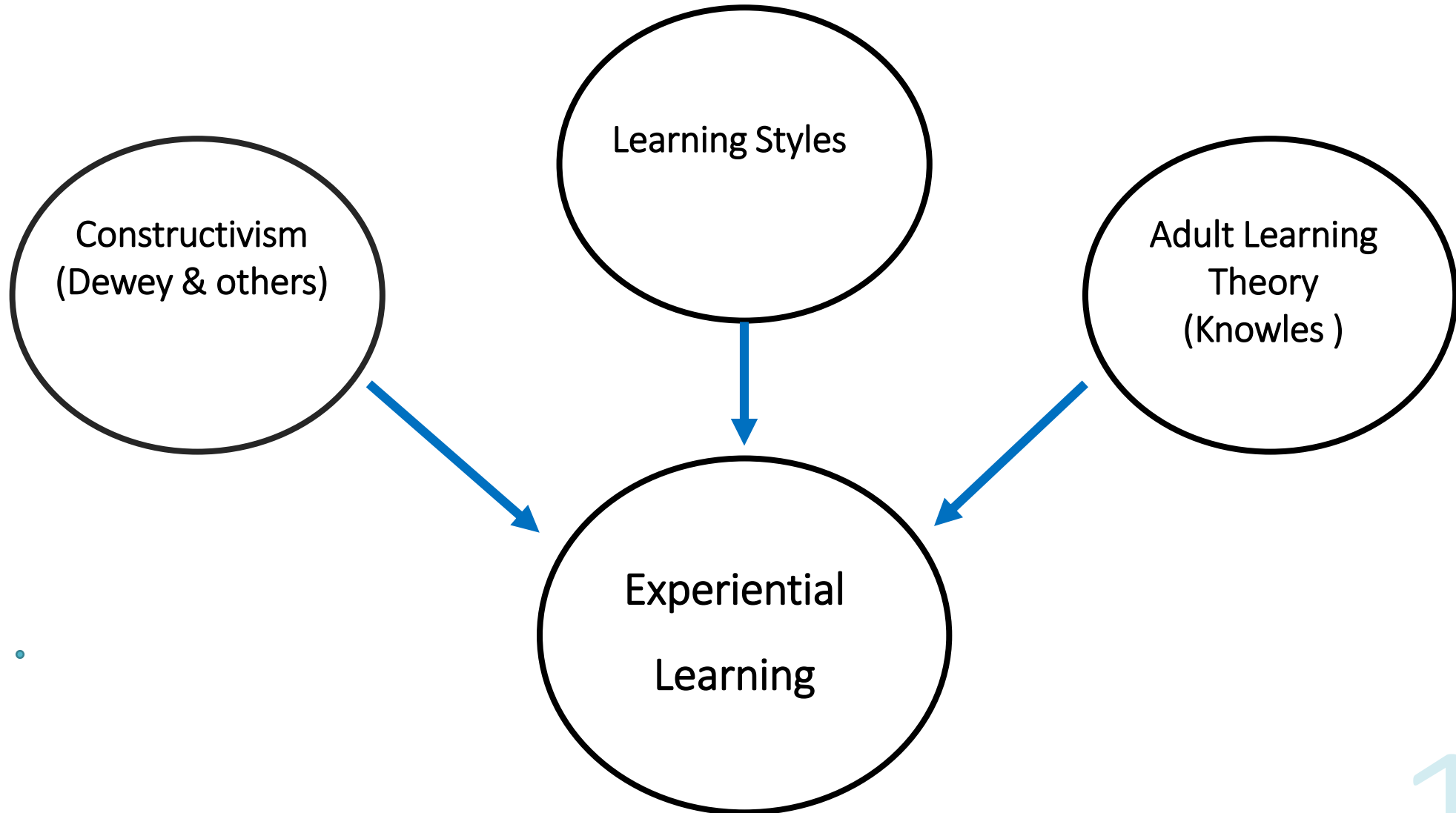
1. **Concrete Experience** - a new experience or situation is encountered, or a reinterpretation of existing experience.
2. **Reflective Observation of the New Experience** - of particular importance in this stage are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding.
3. **Abstract Conceptualization:** reflection produces a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept (the person has learned from their experience).
4. **Active Experimentation** - learners apply their “new” idea(s) to the world around them to test what happens.

# Experiential Learning Cycle

Effective learning is seen when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages:

- ❖ Having a concrete experience followed by
- ❖ Observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to
- ❖ The formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then
- ❖ Used to test a hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences.

# Theoretical Contributors to Experiential Learning



# Constructivism

- ❖ Constructivists believe that learning is an active process during which learners construct their own knowledge based on their prior knowledge.
- ❖ The teacher acts as a facilitator providing experiences which enable students to construct meaning.
- ❖ Based on the work of psychologist like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky.

# Constructivism: Five Elements of Constructivist Teaching Practice (1)

- ❖ Activating prior knowledge
- ❖ Acquiring knowledge
- ❖ Understanding knowledge
- ❖ Using knowledge
- ❖ Reflecting on knowledge

# Knowles Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy )

- ❖ Adult learners come to a learning environment with vast experience which educators can draw on as a rich resource.
- ❖ Adults expect to be involved as part of the decision on what and how they will be educated.
- ❖ Adults need to be able to experience and apply new learning.
- ❖ Adult learners need to be involved in how their learning will be evaluated.

# Learning styles

- ❖ Diverging style people
- ❖ Assimilating learning style
- ❖ Converging learning style
- ❖ Accommodating learning style



## Summary: Experiential Learning is not ...

- ❖ A particular form of learning from life experiences as compared to lecture-based learning.
- ❖ An experience in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied as compared to only reading, hearing, talking, and writing about it.
- ❖ A lesson acquired from ordinary life and work as compared to academic knowledge generated by systematic observation and analysis by experts and transmitted by authorities.

In the above views of experiential learning, the emphasis is on direct sense experience and in-context action as the primary sources of learning while minimizing the role for thinking, reflection, analysis and academic knowledge.

# Experiential Learning is ...

A **four-stage process**, where learners are asked to **engage** themselves in a new experience, actively reflect on that experience, **conceptualize** that experience **and integrate** it with past experiences in preparation for action.

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