

Psychology and Experiential Learning (Shortened Version)

Overview of the Contribution of **Dewey, Lewin & Vygotsky** to
Experiential Learning and other Notable Theorists.

*(N.B. Notes on other theorists are incomplete and are included to help gain
understanding of how they relate to the work of Dewey, Lewin and Vygotsky).*

Contents (Full version).

Birth of Psychology	2
Learning Theories in Psychology (Definitions)	2
Structuralism (Wundt)	3
Functionalism (James, Wundt, Dewey)	3
Psychoanalysis (Freud & Defence Mechanism)	4
Behaviourism (Pavlov, Dewey , Skinner, Thorndike)	5
Gestalt Psychology (Lewin , Kolb, Argyris & Schön)	9
Cognitive Psychology (Piaget, Vygotsky)	13
Humanism (Maslow, Carl Rogers)	16

Contents (Shortened Version).

Dewey	2
Lewin	3
Vygotsky	4

Analysis of Human Learning by James & Dewey, pragmatists.

Both pragmatists: Reality must be experienced. James believed the learning experience was associations in the child's mind in response to stimulus.

- Unconditioned stimulus: James believed the learning experience was associations in the child's mind in response to stimulus. Child burns finger in flame of candle. Child learns not to put finger in flame of candle.
- Conditioned Stimulus: A whistle. A dog smells a stake, salivates and eats it. A dog smells steak at same time as whistle and salivates. A dog hears a whistle and salivates.
- Dewey was not convinced by James and analysed human learning as a response to stimulus that is a coordinated act involving the sensory and motor actions of a child and the context in which the situation occurs: Past experiences; the environment; and level of engagement.

John Dewey (1859-1952)

Deweys personal experiences

- Openly exposed as child to immigration and industrialisation, preparing him for his work with the diverse cultures that he sought out through his career.
- Gave up transcendentalism for pragmatism, experimentalism (truth is through experiments and empiricism) and instrumentalism (truth evaluated on demonstrated usefulness).
- 1884 Dewey appointed Head of Philosophy, including Psychology and Pedagogy at the University of Chicago.
- In 1896 Dewey set up an elementary school, a new laboratory for developing education and the University of Chicago.

'Theory of Learning', despite resistance, continues to influence education systems around the world today.

Informal Education for Informal Educators.

1. Education must engage with and enlarge experience as significant strand of informal education.
2. Reflection: Exploration of thinking and reflection.
3. Environment and community: Interaction and environments for learning providing a continuing framework for practice.
4. Democracy: Passion for democracy in education - a strong rationale for practice in settings in which informal educators work.

'Theory of Truth' a process or discovery that honours the experimental and creative capacities of human experience.

Quotes by Dewey.

"Going to college is not the same as getting an education". (Dewey, 1929).

Democracy: "A belief in the ability of human experience to generate the aims and methods by which further experience shall grow in ordered richness".

Kurt Lewin (1890-1947)

Influenced by his Jewish background and move to the USA from Prussia (now Poland), Lewin joined the Socialist Movement when he was interested in:

- Combatting anti-Semitism.
- Democratisation of German institution.
- Improving position of women.

'Field Theory' with roots in Gestalt Theory.

Gestalt is the 'coherent whole', with its own laws. It is a constant of the individual mind rather than reality. (Contrary to pragmatists, James and Dewey, who believed that interaction with the environment must be experienced to adapt and learn.)

Action Research.

Lewin wanted to make a difference. He coined the term 'Action Research' which embraced a form of reflection leading to change. He described it as "various forms of social action and research leading to social action.....a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action." (The Lewinian Spiral). The situation as a whole was significant, not the individual aspects, and this led to his field theory:

- 'Force Field Theory' looks at the forces that influence a situation.
- Analysis: Force that drives movement towards a goal (helping forces) or blocking movement towards a goal (hindering forces).
- Many fields of experience are significant to the whole.
- Theory expanded by John R. P. French who related it to organisational and industrial settings.
- The Lewinian Spiral: Circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action.

Leadership styles

Lewin defined cultures and management by leadership styles.

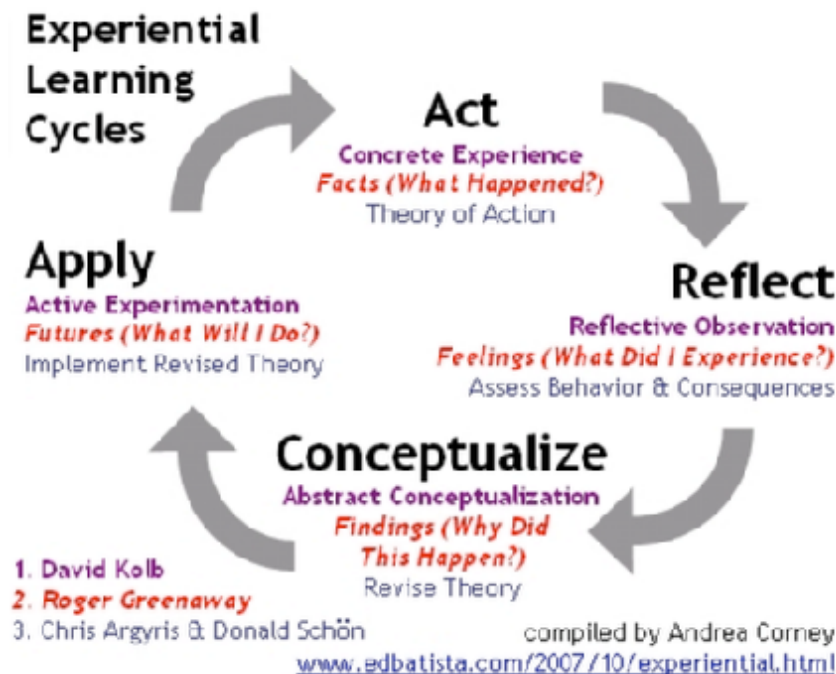
- Authoritarian
- Democratic
- Laissez-faire

Foundational Model for Change: 3-step-change model

1. Unfreezing. Convince others change is needed.
2. Changing. Confusion and transition. Convince those who have accepted the need for change to implement it with you.
3. Freezing - not refreezing as often referred to (Lewin, 1947). Take action to reinforce and support the change so it becomes a permanent way of doing business.

The Lewin/Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle (+ Greenway, Argris & Schön)

Learning cycle of experience, observation and reflection, formation and then testing of concepts. Although commonly referred to as the **Kolb Learning Cycle** this cycle was proposed by **Kurt Lewin** who got the idea from control engineering. David Kolb (1984) popularised Lewin's proposal (hence the common title).



Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)

Sociocultural Theory

Born in Russia, Vygotsky studied Law at Moscow University and completed a PhD in the Psychology of Art, influenced by the end of the Russian revolution and Marxism.

He believed that culture could be understood only through examination of the ideas and events that have shaped it (Vasta, Haith, Miller 1995). His model of human development incorporates a sociocultural approach.

Three significant factors

- Social Interaction
- Culture
- Language

Social Interaction

Vygotsky's theory stresses the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978), as he believed strongly that community plays a central role in the process of "making meaning."

- Individuals sacrifice personal goals and achievements for improvement of larger society.
- Abilities develop through social interactions with others, especially parents.
- A child's cultural development appears firstly interpsychologically (between people) and then intrapsychologically (inside the child).

Culture

"Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organised, specifically human psychological function" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90)

- Individual development is a result of his or her culture.
- Abilities of individuals represent the shared knowledge of their culture.
- Culture dictates a child's intellectual abilities.
- Thinking knowledge derived from culture.
- Tools of intellectual adapting acquired from surrounding culture (sociocultural tools).
- Cultural History approach and Social-Historical experience.

Cognitive development: Thought, language and reasoning process.

Development applies to mainly mental development, that is, thought, language and reasoning process. Vygotsky believed thought and language are initially separate systems from the beginning of life, merging at around three years of age, producing verbal thought (inner speech). Cognitive development comes from an internalisation of language:

- Social speech: External communication with other people (age 2).
- Private speech: Internal communication directed at self (age 3).
- Silent Inner speech: Private speech diminishes in its audibility until it becomes a self-regulating function (age 7).

Sociocultural approach to cognitive development

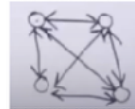
- MKO (More Knowledgeable Other) '*Beyond my reach*'.
- ZPD (Zone of Potential Development) '*What I can learn with help*'.
- ZAD (Zone of Actual Development) '*What I can learn on my own*'.
- Scaffolding (working with teacher or more advanced pupil to achieve goals).
- Thinking and Language: Private Speech.

Educational Implications of Vygotsky's theories.

- Social constructivism
 - Discovery
 - Projects
 - Problem Solving
 - Activity
- Teacher (T) as facilitator
- Assess ZPD of child
- Tasks in MKO '*Beyond my reach*'
- Provide scaffolding
 - Collaborative / Cooperative Learning
 - Guided Instruction
 - Reciprocal Teaching
 - Peer Tutoring: Student (S) to student.
 - Cognitive Apprenticeship: Teacher (T) to student.

Scaffolding

Collaborative / Cooperative



Guided Instruction



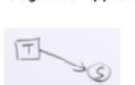
Reciprocal Teaching



Peer Tutoring



Cognitive Apprenticeship



Criticisms

Ignored the 'Value of Age'.
Ignored 'Biological Maturation'.
Does not give 'Stages of Development'.
Ignored 'Socio-Emotional' aspect.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvAQeeJo57A> (December 2019)