



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Academic, Industry & Digital Skills

Week 11 (Asynchronous Learning)

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Reflection Models

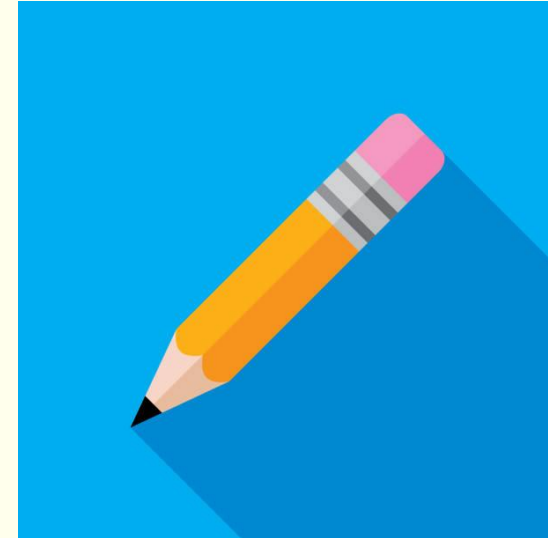
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Reflection in Academia

“It is not sufficient to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting on this experience, it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost.”

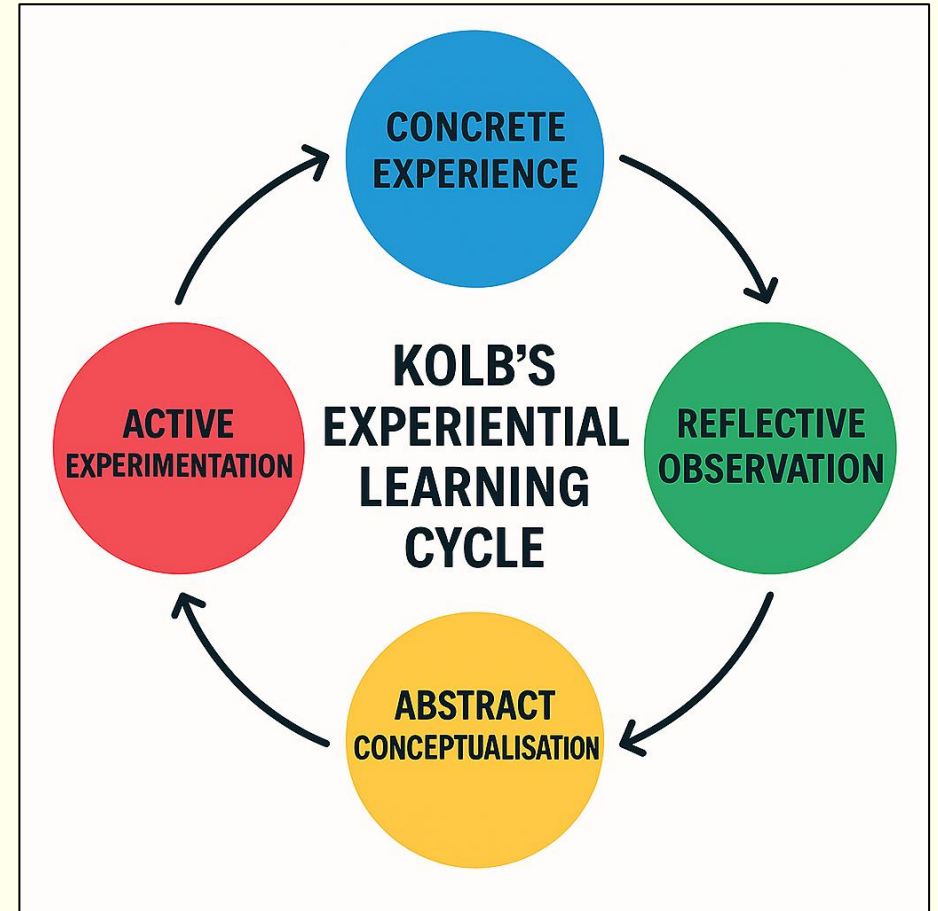
Gibbs, 1988, p.9



Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

In 1984, Kolb developed a model of learning known as *experiential learning*, which starts with a concrete experience. Learning then progresses through three further stages – reflection, analysis and experimentation.

This process results in new experiences informed by what has been learned, allowing the cycle to repeat.



The Four Stages

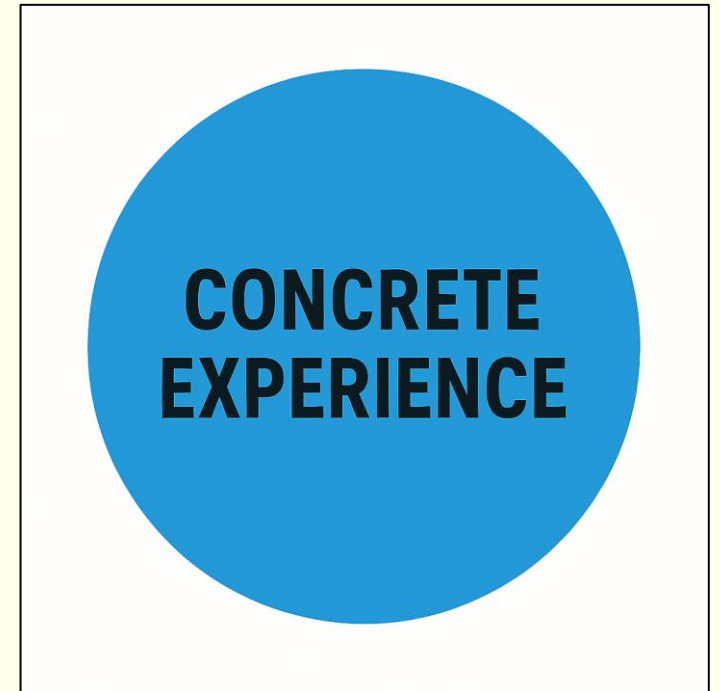
1. Concrete Experience

This is where learning begins. You engage in an activity or have a new experience.

For example, working on a team project.

You ask questions like:

- ✓ **What am I experiencing right now?**
- ✓ **What am I doing?**
- ✓ **How do I feel about this experience?**



The Four Stages (contd.)

2. Reflective Observation

After the experience, you reflect on what happened.

You ask questions like:

- ✓ **What went well?**
- What could have been better?**



The Four Stages (contd.)

3. Abstract Conceptualisation

Here, you make sense of your reflections. You form ideas, concepts or theories based on what you observed.

You ask questions like:

- ✓ **What does this experience tell me about the underlying principles?**
- ✓ **How does this relate to what I already know?**
- ✓ **Can I develop a model or rule from this?**



**ABSTRACT
CONCEPTUALISATION**

The Four Stages (contd.)

4. Active Experimentation

You apply what you have learned to new situations. This might mean trying a different strategy in your next project.

You ask questions like:

- ✓ **What will I do differently next time?**
- ✓ **How can I apply this theory in practice?**
- ✓ **What outcomes do I expect from this change?**

The cycle then repeats, creating continuous learning. This model is powerful because it connects action, reflection and theory, helping us grow both personally and professionally.



Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle: Example

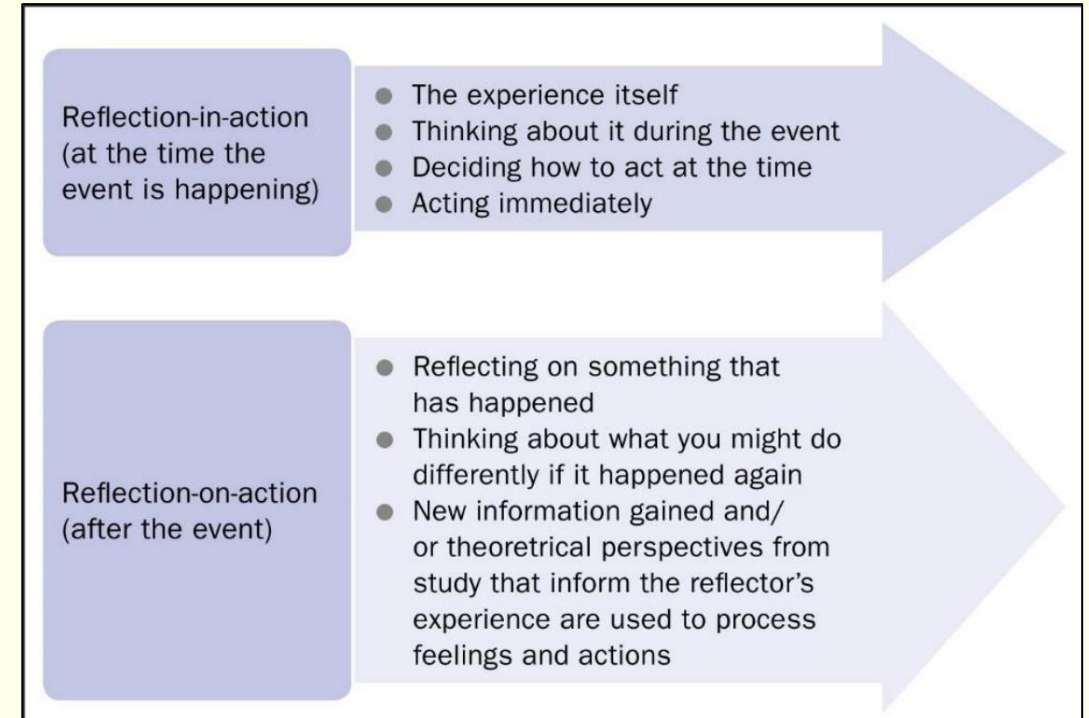
Scenario: A student delivers a presentation in class.

- ❖ **Concrete Experience:** The student gives a presentation on sustainable tourism to peers.
- ❖ **Reflective Observation:** After the presentation, the student reflects:
 - *Did I engage the audience? Was my timing effective?*
- ❖ **Abstract Conceptualisation:** The student connects observations to theory:
 - *Effective presentations require clear structure and audience interaction.*
 - Links to communication models learned in class.
- ❖ **Active Experimentation:** For the next presentation, the student plans to:
 - Use more visuals
 - Practice timing
 - Include interactive questions

Schön's Reflective Practice

Schön's Reflective Practice, often referred to as the Schön Reflective Model, is a framework that uses experience, learning, and practice to continuously enhance professional performance.

It highlights the importance of knowledge in action, reflection **in** action, and reflection **on** action, encouraging individuals to draw on both experience and tacit knowledge when responding to new situations. Through this approach, professionals gain a deeper insight into their actions, enabling them to make informed decisions and adapt their practices effectively in real time.



Reflection In-Action

This occurs **during** the activity.

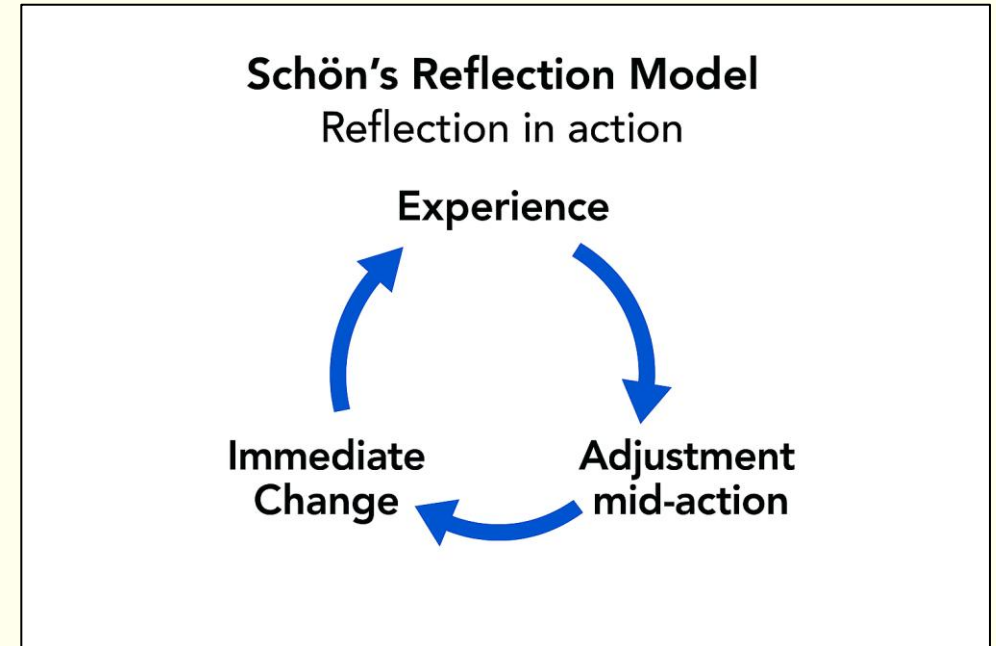
- The practitioner thinks on their feet
- Adjustments are made in real time
- Often intuitive and immediate

Example:

A lecturer notices students look confused and changes their explanation mid-lecture.

Key features:

- Happens in the moment
- Involves experimentation
- Uses tacit (unspoken) knowledge



Reflection On-Action

This occurs **after** the activity has taken place.

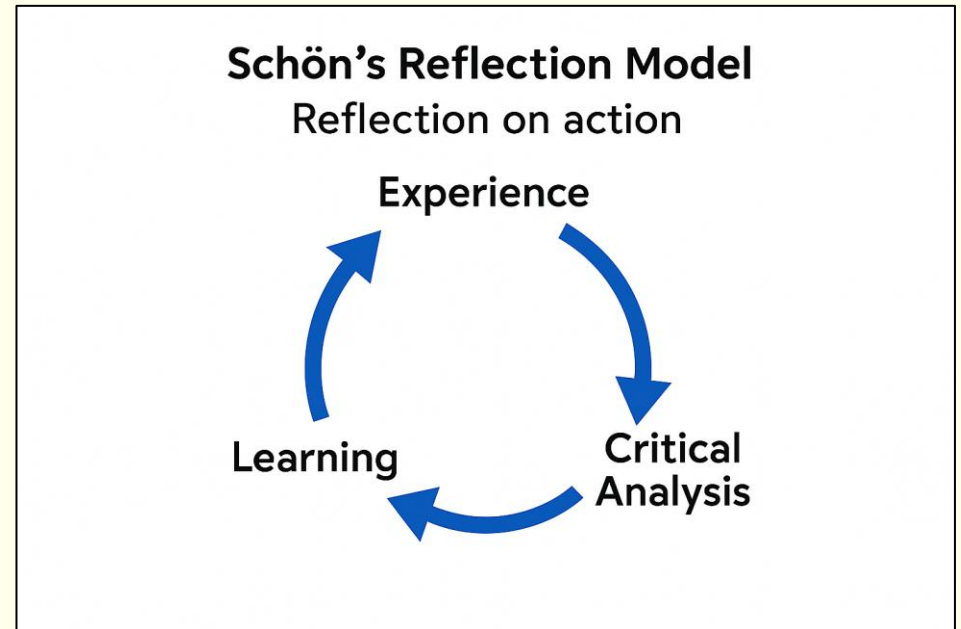
- The practitioner reviews what happened
- Considers what worked and what didn't
- Plans improvements for the future

Example:

After the lecture, the lecturer reflects on why students were confused and plans a different approach next time.

Key features:

- Retrospective
- More deliberate and structured
- Often documented (e.g. journals, supervision)



Schön's Reflective Practice: Example

Scenario: A student has multiple assignments due around the same time.

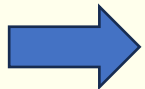
Reflection-in-Action (During the Activity)

While working on an assignment, the student notices:

- They are spending too much time on one section of the essay or project
- Their focus is slipping and progress is slow

The student immediately:

- Switches to working on another part of the assignment or a different assignment
- Takes a short break to refresh concentration
- Adjusts their plan for completing the assignment efficiently



This is **reflecting and adapting while working**, showing reflection-in-action.

Schön's Reflective Practice: Example (contd.)

Reflection-on-Action (After the Activity)

After submitting the assignments, the student reflects:

- Spending too much time on minor sections caused unnecessary stress
- Switching between tasks and taking breaks improved focus
- Better planning could have prevented last-minute pressure

They plan for future assignments to:

- Create a clear timeline for each section of the assignment
- Set realistic time limits for each part
- Include short breaks to sustain concentration

References

Kolb, D. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall.

Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books.