

**ACTIVISTS** want practical tasks and very little theory. They learn best from activities where:

- ✓ New experiences are emphasised;
- ✓ The focus is on the present and on doing such activities as games, problem solving simulations;
- ✓ There is a lot of action and excitement;
- ✓ They can lead and be in the limelight;
- ✓ Ideas are generated without any concern about practical constraints;
- ✓ They have to respond to a challenge and take risks;
- ✓ The central focus is on team problem-solving.

**THEORISTS** want handouts, something to take away and study. They learn best from activities where:

- ✓ The learning forms a part of a conceptual whole, such as a model for a theory;
- ✓ There is time to explore the interrelationship amongst elements;
- ✓ They can explore the theory and methodology underlying the subject under investigation;
- ✓ They are intellectually stretched;
- ✓ There is a clear and obvious purpose to the activities;
- ✓ There is a reliance on rationality and logic;
- ✓ They can analyse situations and then generalise their findings;
- ✓ They are asked to understand complex situations.

**REFLECTORS** want lots of breaks to go off and read and discuss. They learn best from activities where:

- ✓ There are opportunities to observe and consider;
- ✓ There is a strong element of passive involvement such as listening to a speaker or watching a video;
- ✓ There is time to think before having to act or contribute;
- ✓ There is opportunity for research and problems can be probed in some depth;
- ✓ They can review what was happening;
- ✓ They are asked to produce reports that carefully analyse a situation or issue;
- ✓ There is interaction with others without any risks of strong feelings coming to the fore;
- ✓ They can finalise a view without being put under pressure.

**PRAGMATISTS** want shortcuts and tips. They learn best from activities where:

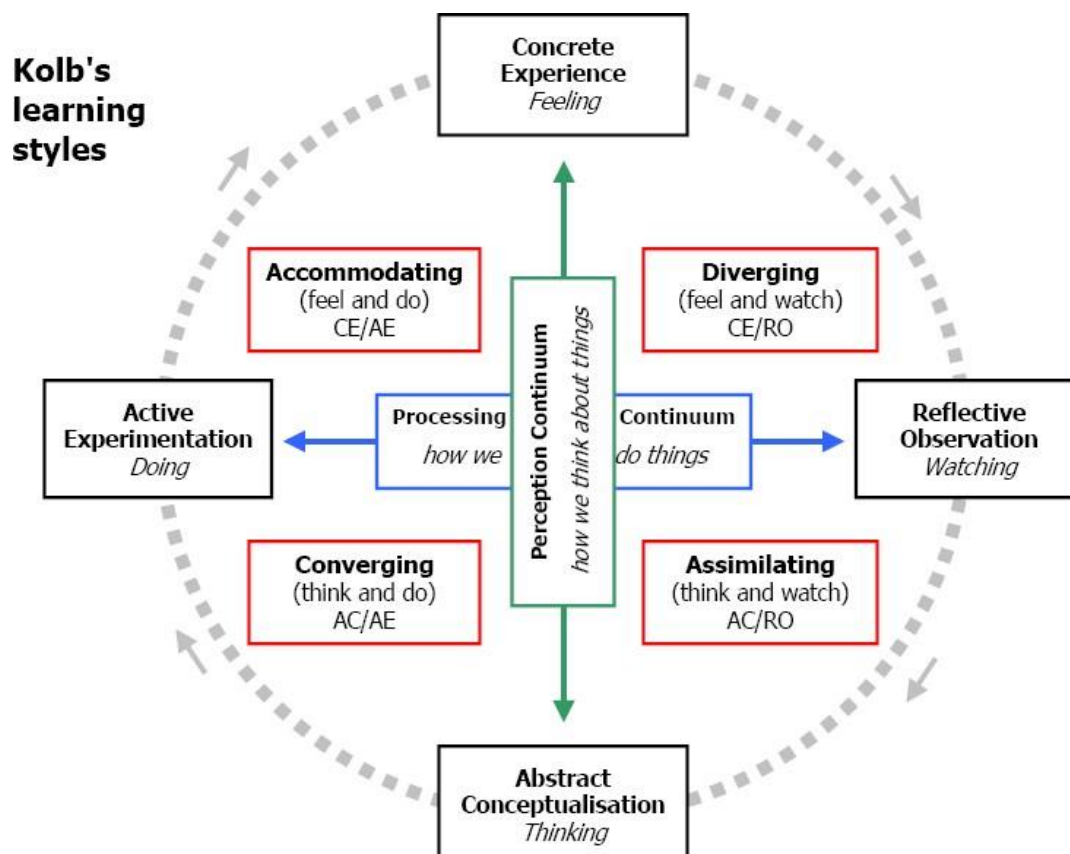
- ✓ There is a clear link back to some job-related problem;
- ✓ Material is directed towards techniques that make their work easier;
- ✓ They are able to practice what they have learned;
- ✓ They can relate to a successful role model;
- ✓ There are many opportunities to implement what has been learned;
- ✓ The relevance is obvious, and the learning is easily transferred to their jobs;
- ✓ What is done is practical such as drawing up action plans or trailing techniques or procedures.

**DIVERGERS (Concrete experienter/Reflective observer)** take experiences and think deeply about them. They diverge from a single experience to multiple possibilities. When they learn they will ask 'why' and will start from detail to logically work up to the big picture. They like working with others but like things to remain calm – they will be distressed by conflicts in the group. They like to receive constructive feedback.

**CONVERGERS (Abstract conceptualization/Active experimenter)** think about things and then try out their ideas to see if they work in practice. When they learn they will ask 'how' and will want to learn by understanding how things work in practice. They like facts and will seek to make things efficient by making small and careful changes. They prefer to work alone or independently.

**ACCOMMODATORS (Concrete experienter/Active experimenter)** have the most hands-on approach, with a strong preference for doing rather than thinking. When they learn they will ask 'what if?' and 'why not?' to support their action-first approach. They do not like routine and will take creative risks to see what happens. They learn better by themselves than with others.

**ASSIMILATORS (Abstract conceptualiser/Reflective observer)** have the most cognitive approach, preferring to think than to act. When they learn they will ask 'What is there I can know?' and like organised and structured understanding. Lectures are their preference, with demonstrations where possible, and will respect the knowledge of experts. People with this style will have a strong control need. They learn best with lectures that start from high-level concepts and work down to the detail.



© concept david kolb, adaptation and design alan chapman 2005-06, based on [Kolb's learning styles](#), 1984  
Not to be sold or published. More free online training resources are at [www.businessballs.com](http://www.businessballs.com). Sole risk with user.