

# Using the Kolb Learning Cycle in Service-learning

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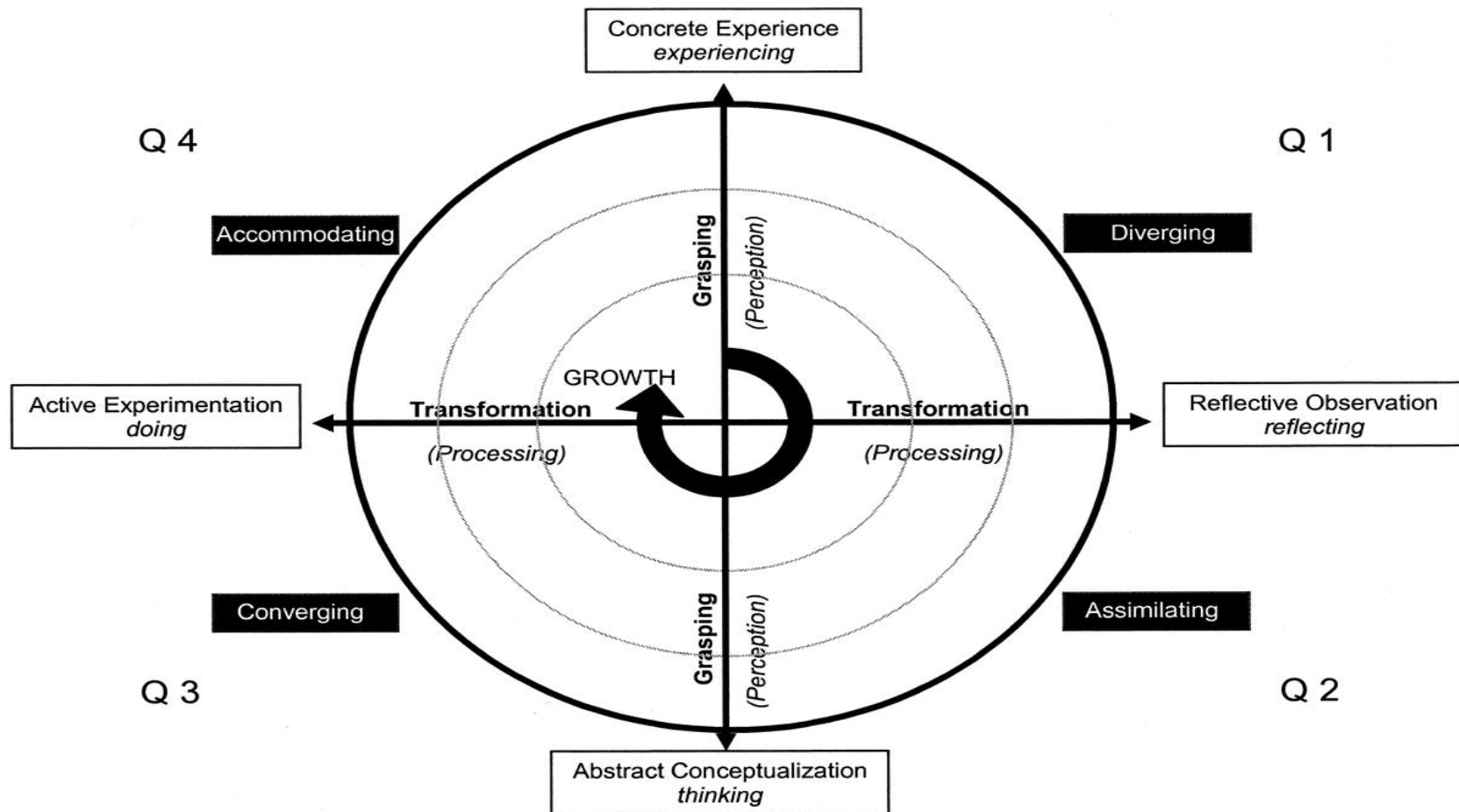
Borrowing heavily from Elizabeth Armstrong  
and Ramin Pars-Parsi

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# Kolb's Four Basic Learning Styles

Kolb, DA. Experience as the Source of Learning and Development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ Prentice Hall, 1984; 42



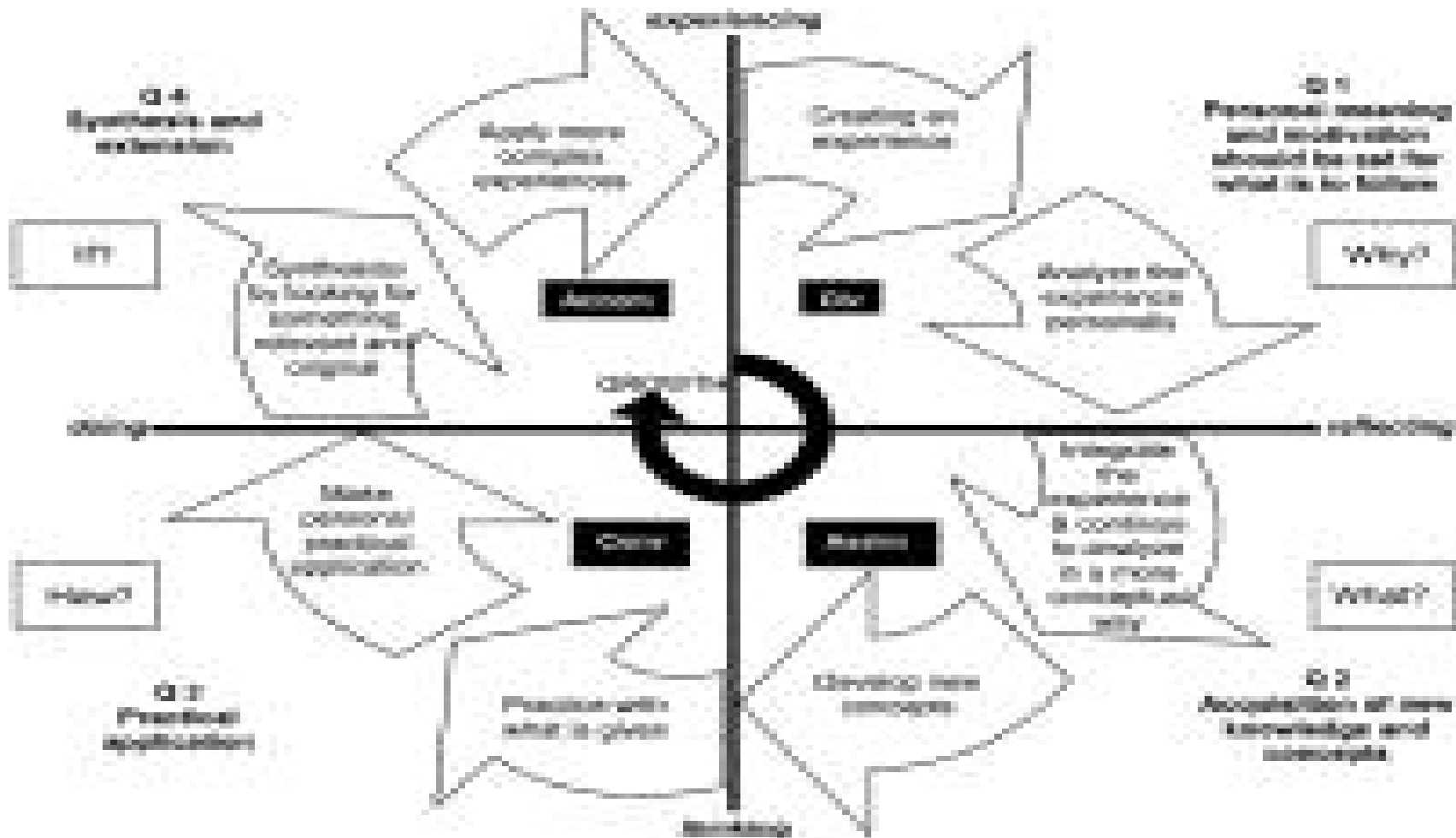
# Working through all 4 quadrants

- Learners prefer to learn by working in their own strongest style
- Teachers and educational experiences should encourage students to work through all 4 quadrants
- Learning begins in quadrant 1 and moves through the cycle

# Curriculum Planning Framework

## Armstrong and Parsa-Parsi

Academic Medicine, volume 80, No. 7, July 2005 pp680-684.



# Quadrant 1 – *WHY?*

*Personal meaning and motivation*

- What are some teaching/learning activities that accomplish this?
  - Activate prior knowledge
  - Ask for goals
  - Bio-sketches – learn about one another
  - Encourage reflection
  - Create an experience, analyze the experience for its personal meaning

# Quadrant 2 – *What?*

*Acquisition of new knowledge and concepts*

- What are some teaching/learning strategies that accomplish this?
  - Select a specific problem/issue & present data
  - Consider alternative solutions
  - Lecture
  - Journal reading
  - Observations, debriefs
  - Collect data, use data to build theory

# Quadrant 3 –*How?*

## *Practical application*

- What are some teaching/learning strategies that accomplish this?
  - Planning activities
  - Simulations
  - Role plays
  - Case discussions
  - Activities in the “real” world
  - Evaluate consequences of specific strategies and solutions

# Quadrant 4 – *If?*

*Synthesis and extension*

- What are some teaching/learning strategies that accomplish this?
  - Implementation plans
  - Plans for next steps

# Applying this to service learning

- Curriculum planning
- Faculty development
- Student reflections

# Exercise

- Consider the following student reflections
- While each reflection may suggest several learning styles, decide which learning style dominates
- Imagine a response/reflection back to the student.
  - How would you acknowledge the learning style that you identify?
  - How would you move him or her around the cycle?

# Students' reflections - 1

In participating in this experience, 2 things struck me about myself that I think will be important to be cognizant of in the future. The first is that I am very task-focused. I like getting things done. With a large ongoing project like this it is important for me to break down what needs to be done into smaller pieces that I can identify as being completed and mentally "check" off for myself to indicate progress. Psychologically, this keeps me from feeling overwhelmed and motivates me to be happy with working consistently toward a larger goal. While it is important to do this to keep my motivation high it is equally important for me not to lose sight of the larger goal that we are striving for by being bogged down in details and tasks. Also, interaction with community members became a clearly important motivator for me. While I know that there is a balance that needs to be struck between direct involvement with the community and more systems/administratively focused work in many job positions it is clear to me that my happiness is linked to the proportion of community involvement staying high. It is not just an ideal that I hold to, but also a key part of who I am, what I am good at, and what makes me happy.

# Student 1, part 2

Equally important for me to know about myself are the areas in which I really need to grow and develop in order to be most effective. First, is that I need to be more patient with the process. In many ways related to being task focused, I can become easily frustrated and disheartened when things are not moving forward as quickly as I would like them to. Building patience with the process is something that I think I can continue to work on especially if I use my commitment to quality and the importance of inclusion of many stakeholders as the motivators. I also think I need to continue to work towards trusting in ways that literature can truly be a useful guide to practical work when synthesized appropriately

# Students' reflections - 2

One pretty great thing about this project is that I find myself reflecting personally on my own attitudes and body image more throughout the day after working a shift at ---. Even though I consider myself to have a fairly positive body image, I have actually had situations since starting this practicum when I think to myself, for example, “Am I being assertive, passive or aggressive in this situation? If this real life situation were a role-play for the boys, what would be the correct way to handle this?” I know it sounds kind of silly, but spending so much time thinking about the positive messages we want to teach the students has helped to reinforce some positive traits in myself.

# Students' reflections - 3

I think that this project is challenging in the sense that there is a lot of information that I will need to collect from non-traditional sources and synthesize in order to complete my work. I am hopeful that with enough patience, time and focus I will be able to accomplish all that is required of me. Although it is difficult, I appreciate the process that I am going through because I am learning how to be resourceful and think outside of the box, which are skills that can't be taught in my traditional med school courses. It is for this reason that I am appreciative of this project and the challenges that I face. I believe that I will grow tremendously as I continue through the next couple of months.

# Students' reflections - 4

It was somewhat frustrating to realize how difficult it would be to navigate the political subtleties of this organization. There are not a few hidden landmines that may be difficult to see before stepping on them. In working with --- a collaboration of different non-profit agencies working for domestic violence victims – I have been impressed by the challenges presented by the asymmetry of different working groups. I had anticipated that the differences in perspective would present the most daunting challenges – for example, when worldviews or purposes conflict. However, those differences are often remediable by common ground and practicality. Leadership can present clear choices, elucidate conflicts, and offer reasoning that enlists the support of different partners in realizing a commonly beneficial goal.