

RETHINKING KOLB'S CYCLE

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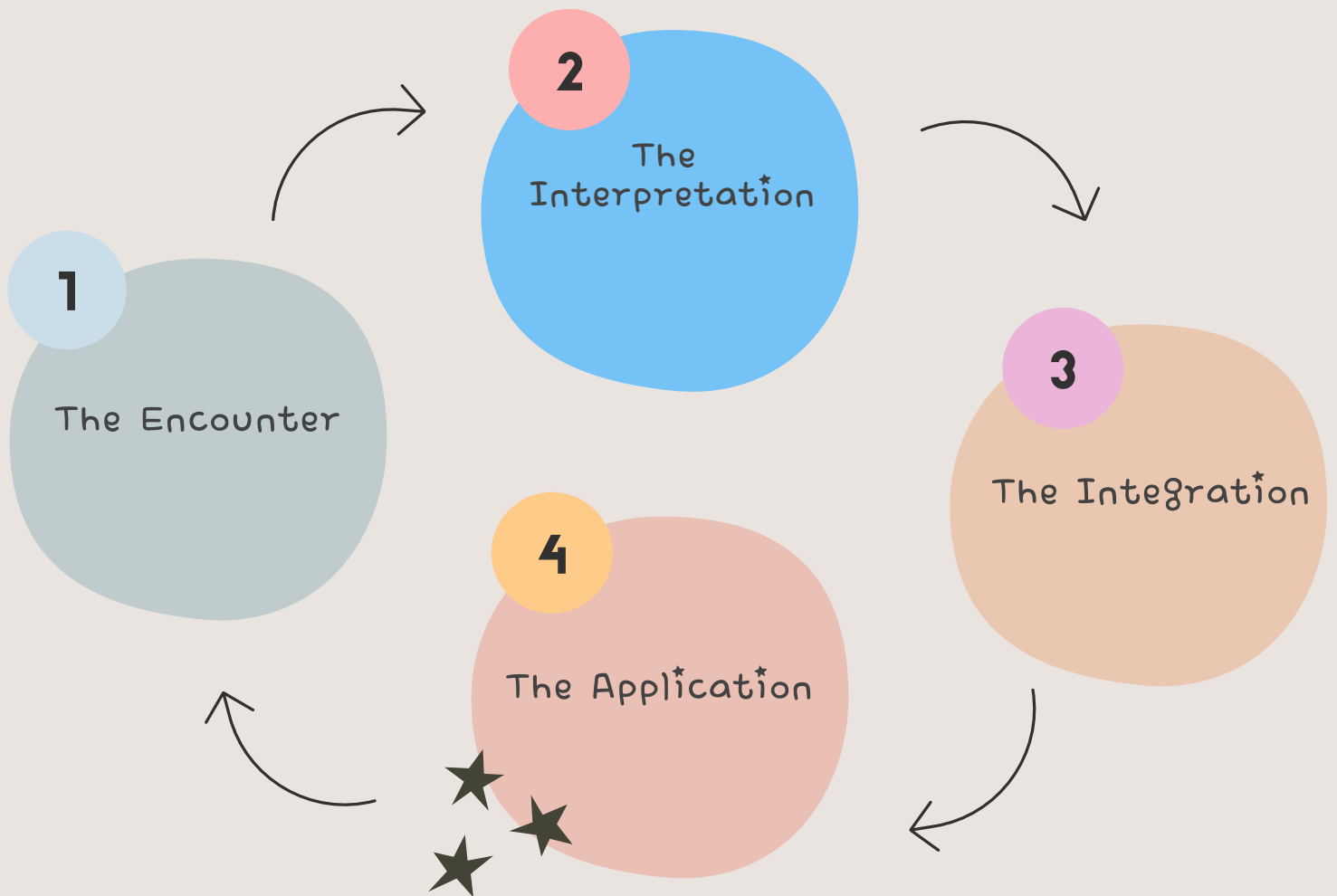


INTRODUCTION

My Learning Philosophy

Learning happens when new information connects to who we are - our identity, background, emotions, and curiosity. Each stage builds on prior knowledge while considering how socioeconomic factors and personal experience shape understanding. Learning is both conscious construction and unconscious processing.

Rethinking Kolb's Cycle



STAGE 1

THE ENCOUNTER

What it is: The learner is introduced to a topic, problem, or situation that grabs attention through personal relevance, emotional connection, or unfamiliarity. It activates curiosity and sets the stage for interest-led learning.

LEARNING THEORIES CONNECTED:

- **Constructivism** (activating prior knowledge)
- **Connectivism** (networked info and real-world media)
- **Social Cognitivism** (motivation through relevance and self-efficacy)



OUTCOME:

Curiosity is triggered. Learners begin to care about what they're learning because it connects to their identity, goals, or emotions.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Learner-generated questions
- Visible interest or emotional response
- Statements of personal relevance
- Intent to explore further



ACTIVITIES:

1. Real-world case study (news story, documentary clip)
2. Job posting or career path analysis linked to topic
3. Value driven debate or poll
4. Museum visit or performance review with prompt
5. Problem introduction with incomplete information
6. AI generated vs human written analysis comparison



STAGE 2

THE INTERPRETATION

What it is: Learners reflect on how they responded to the encounter. They begin interpreting what the experience means to them by considering past knowledge, social messages, personal values, or identity.

LEARNING THEORIES:

- **Transformative learning theory** (identity shift and belief reflection)
- **Humanism** (focus on meaning-making)
- **Cognitive Psychology** (self-explanation, schema adjustment)



Learners become aware of how personal experience, background, and beliefs shape understanding. They begin to think critically about what they thought they knew.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Reflection that shows perspective change
- Identification of bias or assumptions
- Connection made between prior knowledge and new ideas
- Organized thought process or personal framework



ACTIVITIES:

1. Guided journaling on belief/identity impact
2. Peer-to-peer dialogue with structured prompts
3. Role reversal discussion or think-pair-share
4. Image based story reconstruction and meaning assignment
5. Critical review of media or messaging around the topic
6. Comparison chart (before/after interpretation)



STAGE 3

THE INTEGRATION

What it is: The learner organizes and connects new information into a working framework or mental model. They mix prior knowledge, emotional insight, and new content to form a clearer understanding or personal theory.

LEARNING THEORIES CONNECTED:

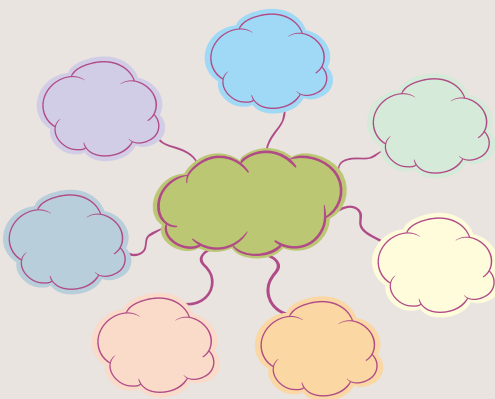
- **Constructivism** (building knowledge)
- **Cognitivism** (mental model formation, info processing)
- **Behaviorism** (pattern recognition through repetition)

OUTCOME:

Learners form a coherent understanding of the topic. They are able to describe, define, or explain what they now believe and why.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Visual representation (map, chart, diagram)
- Verbal articulation of understanding
- Creation of new concept or framework
- Application to hypothetical situations



ACTIVITIES:

1. Concept map creation
2. Visual metaphor poster or slide
3. Group construction of “rules” or “laws” of the topic
4. Timeline or flowchart of process/theory
5. Infographic summarizing key takeaways
6. “Teach-back” explanation video

STAGE 4

THE APPLICATION

What it is: The learner applies their new understanding to a new task, challenge, or real-world scenario. This stage involves testing what was learned through practice, discussion, or implementation.

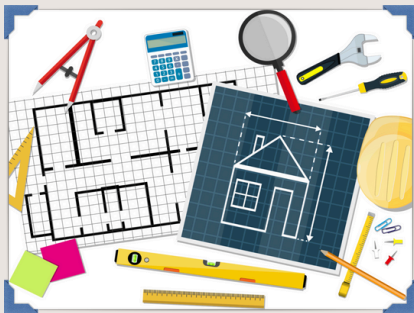
LEARNING THEORIES:

- **Andragogy** (adult application in real-world context)
- **Social Learning Theory** (peer modeling and feedback)
- **Behaviorism** (learning through practice and correction)



OUTCOME:

Learners test, revise, or reinforce what they've learned. They begin to see the real-world impact of their learning and feel ownership over it.



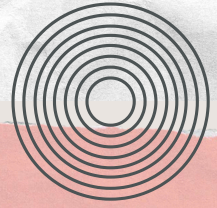
ACTIVITIES:

1. Project-based learning task (design a solution, proposal, or intervention)
2. Real-world job simulation or mock scenario
3. Internship or field placement reflection and action plan
4. Presentation to external audience (e.g., class, peers, LinkedIn)
5. "Apply It" scenario test with changing conditions
6. Feedback loop (revise and resubmit after peer/mentor review)

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:

- Successful completion of project or task
- Product or performance
- Peer/mentor feedback
- Adaptation or revision after testing

SUMMARY



01

My version of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle reimagines each stage to reflect what we now know about how adults learn, think, and grow over time. It also recognizes that learning is as a lifelong process — something we return to again and again. With each return, we engage at deeper levels, shaped by our changing identities, work/life experiences, emotional growth, and social realities. Modern learners want context, relevance, and return on investment. They ask: What can I do with this knowledge? Will this help me find a job or make meaning of my life? My cycle meets those needs by blending real world application, reflection, and personal development.

02

My four stages work with how the brain actually learns. The Encounter stage uses emotional engagement because feelings help memory stick. Interpretation connects to personal identity because learning that matters to who you are lasts longer. Integration uses multiple ways of processing (visual, creative, analytical), because people think differently. Application happens in real settings because that's where learning gets tested and improved.

This model keeps Kolb's core idea that experience teaches, but it recognizes what modern learners need: practical outcomes, personal relevance, and multiple chances to practice. It works with natural learning processes like repetition, productive struggle, and emotional connection while addressing real student concerns about career preparation and financial return on education.

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