

## Individual Learning

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## Outline

Definitions are offered for the key terms, 'learning', 'education', 'training' and 'development'. We will consider the limitations of these definitions and look at different ways of seeing 'learning'. Two popular theories of learning: Kolb et al.'s learning cycle and Honey & Mumford's learning styles will be introduced and discussed. We will apply these to personal development.

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## Session Objectives

- By the end of this session you should be able to:
- Differentiate learning, education, training and development
- Identify common ways people learn
- Say why learning is important
- Outline and apply Kolb et al's cycle to your learning
- Outline and apply Honey & Mumford's learning styles to your learning
- The aim of this session is to give you insight into learning for your benefit, and for the benefit of people you develop

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## Why is Learning Important?

- It's necessary to learn to do anything
- It's what makes us human
- Learning can help you cope with change
- It can inspire and motivate people
- Learning can help build employability

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## Definitions of Key Terms 1

•Learning: 'a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice or experience' (Bass & Vaughan 1967: 8)

•Education: 'activities which aim at developing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in all aspects of life' (Reid & Barrington 1994: 7)

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## Definitions of Key Terms 2

•Training is a: 'planned process to modify attitudes, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities' (Reid & Barrington 1994: 7)

•Development: 'the skilful provision of learning experiences in the workplace in order that performance can be improved' (Harrison 1992: 4)

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## Some Metaphors for Learning

- Building - 'foundation courses'
- Bucket - 'top-up courses', 'cramming'
- Agricultural - 'grow your own', 'hot-housing'

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## Two allegories for Training and Development

- Time to enjoy the visual feast that is my drawing!
- Why are these *inappropriate* ways of describing how training and development should be carried out?

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## How do People Learn

- By Trial and Error (and Trial and Success)
  - By Experience
  - Observation
  - Thinking and reflecting
  - By taking Risks
  - Through Accepting Help
  - By being taught (information)
  - By being instructed (more often for physical than cognitive skills)
- } We'll come back to these four

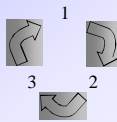
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## Single-loop and Double-loop Learning

- Single-loop Learning: 'the setting of standards and the investigation of deviations from targets'
- Can think of it as 'doing *things better*', or 'efficient learning'
- Double-loop Learning: 'questioning whether the standards and objectives are appropriate in the first instance'
- Can think of it as 'doing *better things*', or 'effective learning'

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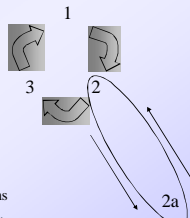
Single-loop



- 1: Scanning the environment
- 2: Comparison of this data with operating norms
- 2a: Questioning whether the norms are appropriate
- 3: Initiating Appropriate Action

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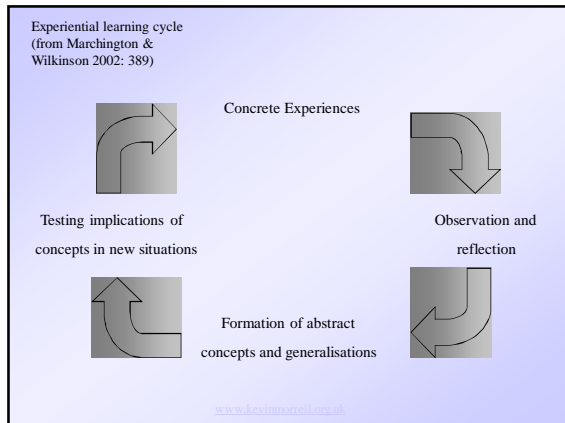
Double-loop



## The Most Important Type of Learning

- "The effectiveness of how people learn can be improved... Learning to learn is the most fundamental learning of all"
- *A Declaration on Learning* (Burgoyne et al. 1998)
- Also called 'deutero-learning'

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### Personal Development

- Think of the benefits that improvements in these areas could bring:
  - communication skills; negotiating, influencing and persuading; time management; assertiveness
- Understanding the learning process, and understanding how you learn, can help you work in these areas and more.

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### Summary

- There are many different ways of thinking about learning, and many ways in which people learn. There are also different types of learning, such as single-loop, double-loop and deuterio-learning.
- Two influential theories about learning are Kolb's experiential learning cycle and Honey and Mumford's learning styles.
- Understanding these themes can inform us as to how we can learn better, and thereby develop ourselves and others.

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