



# Learning Styles and Preferences of Entrepreneurs

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# Aims

- To evaluate the preferred learning modes for UK small businesses
- To reflect on the use of learning styles and their use in the delivery of skills to small businesses
- To examine the current delivery systems of trainers to explore alternative ways of engaging with this very important group

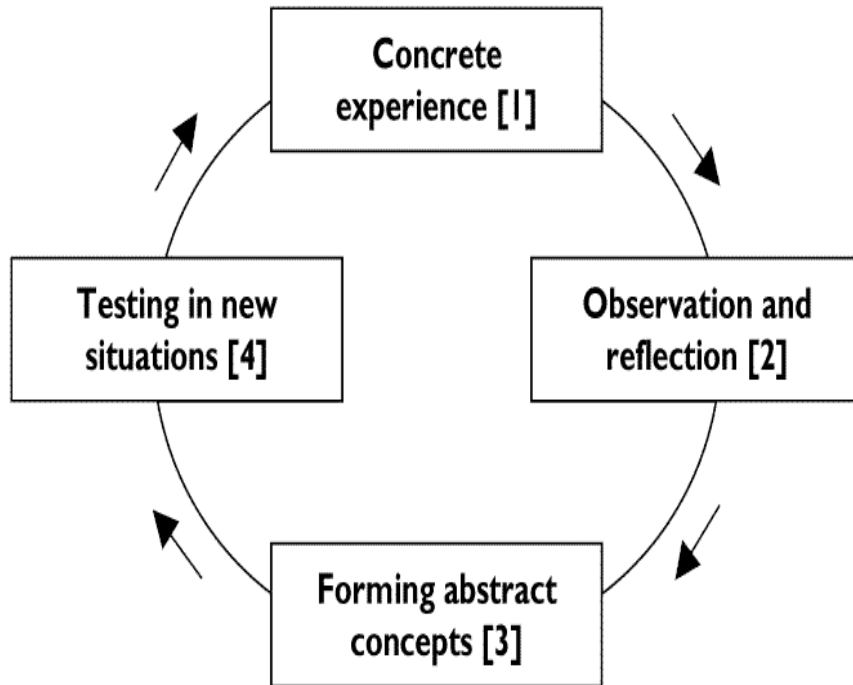
# Background - CIM adult learners

- The case study CIM SMIP/A&D exam has no formal syllabus but relies on learning from the other modules. MA courses also make extensive use of case studies for group work learning & assessment
- Some students find the lack of a formal structure difficult and their needs have to be managed - Leenders, Erskine & Leenders (1997)
- Similar to Micro Enterprises?

# Background - Micro Enterprises

- Micro Enterprises are an important sector
- External and Internal factors affect all
- Self-Concept, Perceived or Real Barriers
- How Micro Enterprises market themselves
- Skill Acquisition & previous experiences
- How they want to learn
- Educators' delivery systems

# 1. Using Kolb's Learning Cycle today

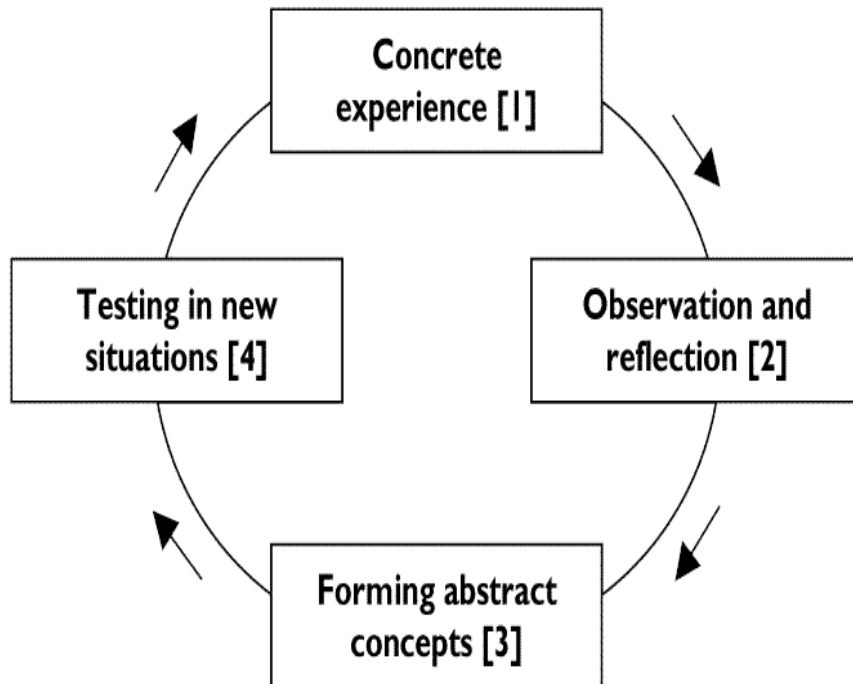


Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Source: <http://infed.org/biblio/b-explrm.htm>

- Group discussion - what are your personal learning preferences?
- Questionnaire
- Please use the post-it notes and place them on the flip charts around the room

## 2. Using Kolb's Learning Cycle today

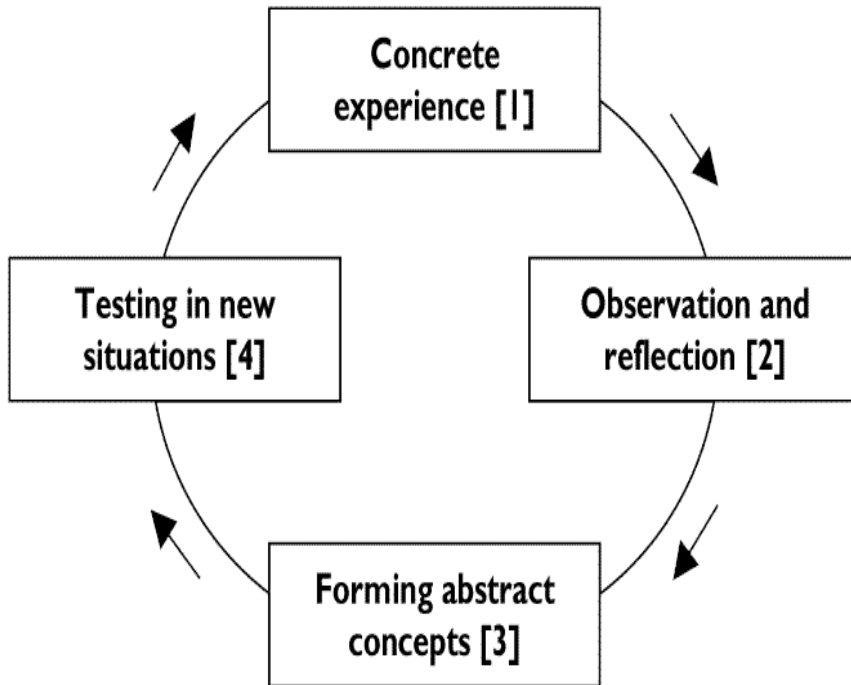


Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

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- Group discussion - please reflect on the use of learning styles and their use in the delivery of skills to small businesses
- Please use the post-it notes and place them on the flip charts around the room

# 3. Using Kolb's Learning Cycle today



Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Source: <http://infed.org/biblio/b-explrm.htm>

- Group discussion -  
What kind of activities would you want to engage in to learn new skills as an owner of a small business e.g.  
Formal lectures
- Please use the post-it notes and place them on the flip charts around the room

# Teaching to Learning Styles-Kolb's Learning Style Model

- **Converger**
- Decision-making, problem-solving, hands-on work
- **Diverger**
- Cooperative groups, brainstorming
- **Assimilator**
- Model/theory creation
- Design projects/experiments
- **Accommodator**
- Discovery learning Activities, projects



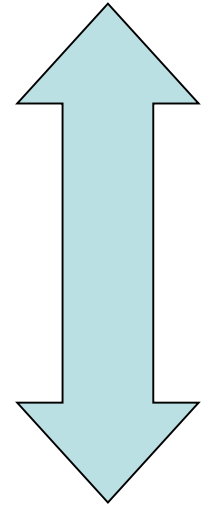
# Preferred modes of learning for postgraduate modules

■ Cohort asked to rank preferences, where 1 = most preferred and 8 = least preferred

■ Ranking:

1. lectures, with some help from tutor
2. working on past exam papers
3. question & answer sessions in seminars
4. seminar exercises & group discussion
5. group analysis of case studies
6. private study (journals/textbooks)
7. individual analysis of case studies
8. internet research & learning

Greater interaction



Less interaction

# Preferred modes of learning for UK part-time postgraduate students

- Students tend to prefer group study and informal network support amongst peers for most learning
- Blended learning is a popular mode with weekend or block study at university, assisting work/life/study balances
- A focus group survey revealed that only one out of 9 PG students had accessed publishers' websites or resources
- Educational podcasts were also not used by 80% but Internet research & learning is used because it is convenient rather than a desired learning method
- Textbooks are still an important resource

# Preferred modes of learning for Micro Enterprises

- Informal delivery of materials, question and discussion forums, sectoral approach (Cromie, 1987)
- Want a successful learning experience tailored to their needs, (Kirby, 1990)
- Project based courses (McMullan and Boberg, 1991)
- Choice of where, when etc (Tomecko, 1998)
- 'Hands - on' approach (Vinten, 2000)

# Potential Conclusions of research

- Reinforces the importance of Kolb's learning cycle, combining reflection with experimentation and abstractness with concreteness
- Can educators deliver skills to meet customers' preferences for training?
- Would Micro Entrepreneurs invest in more training if it met their needs?

# Recommendations - A new way forward?

- Be more innovative and creative
- Re-think
- Re-invent
- Changes in mind set of Micro Enterprises
- Contribution to new knowledge via new research in 2010

# Summary

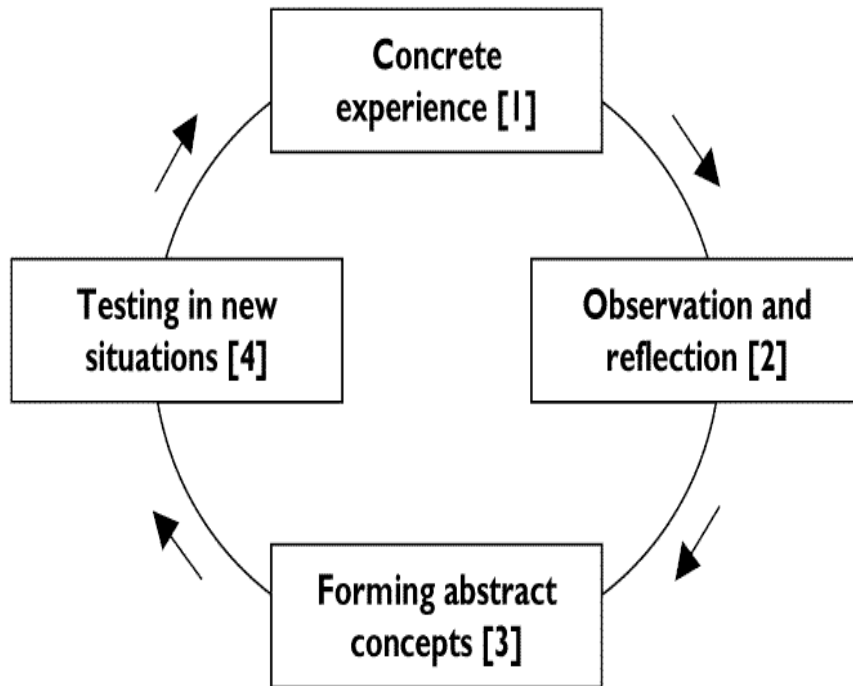
- Review of workshop discussion
- How can educators be more effective in delivering learning to micro-enterprises & SMEs?

# Thank you for taking part

■ Any questions?

# 1. Using Kolb's Learning Cycle today

## - Outcomes of workshop



Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

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# Outcomes of today's workshop

- Group discussion - What kind of activities would you want to engage in to learn new skills as an owner of a small business?