

Teaching Tip of the Month

May 2024

Experiential Learning is learning through experience or by doing. Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning presents four components: *Concrete Experience*, *Reflective Observation*, *Abstract Conceptualization*, and *Active Experimentation*. Each issue of Teaching Tips of the Month for spring 2024 will focus on one of these components.

Theme: Active Experimentation

The Active Experimentation phase of Experiential Learning is commonly referred to as the Apply stage. In this stage, "The learner tests the theory and applies what was learned to get feedback and create the next experience" (Institute for Experiential Learning, 2024). In this phase, the learner tries to use what they have learned from the previous phases in a new context to problem solve, make decisions, or create something new.

Tip 1: Encourage Risk Taking

Since active experimentation is the "test and apply" phase of the cycle, learners should be encouraged to take reasonable risks and given the freedom to fail and learn from their mistakes. For example, if a student is participating in a service-learning experience connected to their sociology class, they could consider which theories from their class are most relevant to an issue they are facing in the experience. After weighing the options, perhaps the student decides to use elements of two different theories and test out how this will work.

Tip 2: Revisit Previous Phases of the Cycle

As learners apply what they learned to new situations, engaging in reflection and analysis are essential to the experiential learning process. For example, if the student in the previous tip applies the combination of two theories and does not experience the desired result based on feedback and observation, they would document and reflect on what happened, analyze why it happened and adapt their strategy.

Source: Institute for Experiential Learning. (2024). What is experiential learning? <https://experientiallearninginstitute.org/what-is-experiential-learning/>.

More Info on Teaching Tips

"Teaching Tips of the Month" began as a project of Program for Active Learning in STEM (PALS) and Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES) grants. Many thanks to Ray Gonzales and Alla Webb, who served as Principal Investigators of the TIDES grants. You can view

archived Teaching Tips of the Month on [The Hub](#). We welcome feedback and invite you to submit ideas for this publication to Angela Lanier, angela.lanier@montgomerycollege.edu