


**Personal Learning
and the MBA**

Developing a Perspective
on Life-long Learning

Today's Agenda

- Personal Learning
 - Five insights into learning
 - Your personal learning style
- Your core purpose and learning
- Self-assessment and reflection
- More getting to know each other...



**Personal Skill Learning -
What and How**

- Five critical insights
 - Knowledge acquisition and skill acquisition are different.
 - Effects of individual style differences.
 - Performance model underpinnings for personal skill learning.
 - Personal learning in complex settings.
 - Skill development as a continuous improvement process.

Reminder:
Objective of MBA Program

- As a result of successfully completing this program you will:
 - Acquire and enhance your skills as a manager
 - Become excellent "personal learners"
- Personal learning is the "meta-skill" of leader and manager development

INSIGHT ONE: Skill Learning is Different from Knowledge Acquisition

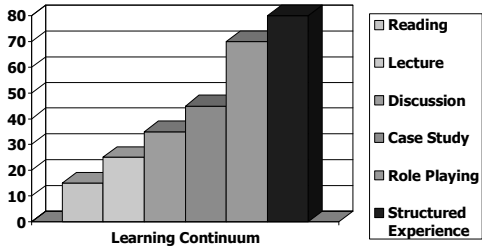
- Most historical experience in higher education is knowledge acquisition
- To be an effective manager, you must work on learning skills
- Thus, learning through experience and application critical

Performance Requires One to "Do"

- To be effective with skills, you need to be flexible enough to respond immediately, correctly, and instinctively.
 - Snowboarding over moguls
 - Driving when a truck swerves into your lane
 - Playing tennis
 - Responding when colleague gets upset with you in a meeting
 - Delegating a task to a peer or subordinate
- Success depends on Practice.



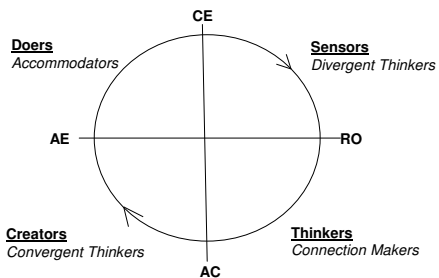
Interactive Learning Continuum



INSIGHT TWO: Emphasis on Performance in Varying Contexts Changes the Learning Model

- Learning requires reflection
- Inductive learning plays a substantial role
 - Personal experience and practice with feedback:
 - Using skill building loops
- Observational learning.
 - Choosing good role models

Kolb's Learning Cycle



Cycle Attributes

- **CE** = focus on *concrete experience*.
- **RO** = *reflection and observation* of experience.
- **AC** = *abstract conceptualization* of experience.
- **AE** = *active experimentation* with new experience.
- Cycle is continuously reoccurring for everyone.
- Direction of learning is related to our own goals and interests.
- Learning style is highly individualistic - each has strengths in overall process.

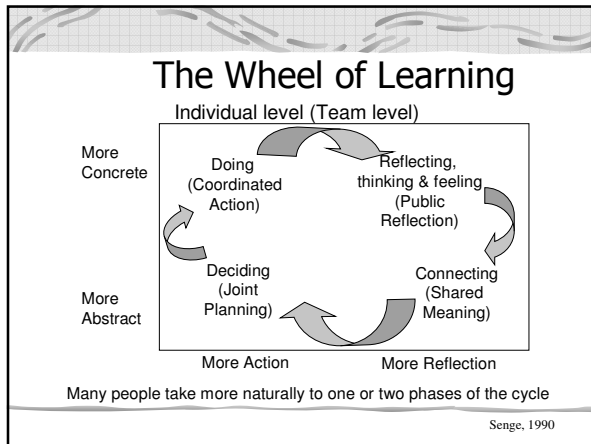
Kolb's Learning Styles

Normed on 1,933 highly educated adults aged 18-60 - Used median cutoffs.

- **CE > 14.5** Asks: what happened? Strong CE's are good in reflecting on immediate situations. Emphasize feeling (vs. thinking). Value relating to people and being involved. Good at brainstorming new ideas.
- **RO > 13.0** Asks: why did it happen? Strong RO's focus on understanding and meaning. They are concerned for "what is true" rather than "what is practical." They value patience, impartiality and thoughtful judgment. They see the "big picture" and connect it to the experience.

Kolb's Learning Styles

- **AC > 17.5** Asks: what does it mean for the future? Strong AC's focus on logic. They emphasize thinking rather than feeling. They are concerned with building models and planning for the future. They value precision, rigor and the aesthetic qualities of a neat conceptual scheme.
- **AE > 16.0** Asks: how do we best implement our plan? Strong AE's focus on influencing people and situations. They emphasize the practical. Their emphasis is on doing rather than sensemaking. They value having an impact and like to see results.



- ### Learning Styles
- **Divergent Thinkers**
 - Combines interest in experiencing and reflecting.
 - Best at brainstorming in the Reflection stage.
 - **Assimilators or Connection makers**
 - Combining an interest in reflecting and thinking.
 - Best at the Connecting stage.
 - **Convergent Thinkers or Solution finders**
 - Combining an interest in thinking and doing.
 - Best at the Deciding stage.
 - **Accommodators**
 - Combining an interest in doing and experiencing.
 - Best at Coordinated Action.

- ### Knowledge About Your Learning Style...
- Prepares you to get the most learning possible from each of your MBA courses
 - Applies to developing effective teams
 - Enhances your "life-long learning" capabilities
 - Through knowing where you are strong and where you are weak

INSIGHT THREE:
Conceptual Underpinnings of Performance

- Diagnosing causes of good (and poor) Performance
 - Performance = Motivation * Ability
 - Ability = Aptitude * Training * Resources
 - Motivation = Drive * Commitment

Managing Performance

- Antecedents and consequences can be “personal”:
 - Intentions, plans, goals
 - Skills and abilities
 - Feel good about project
- Antecedents and consequences can be “environmental”:
 - Mariners game on TV?
 - Recognized for good work by your boss
 - Parking Ticket...

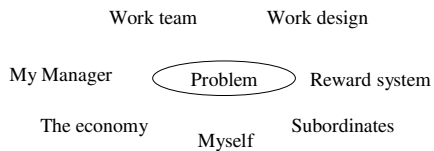
Managing Performance

- Antecedents and consequences can be “scheduled”:
 - Plan a vacation, schedule project deadlines
 - Schedule a company reward dinner
- Antecedents and consequences can be “accidental”:
 - Run across a competitor’s new product idea in WSJ
 - Boss comments favorably on how you handled the meeting
 - Parking ticket...

Purposeful Behavior

- Manage cues and consequences
 - Have clear “bigger picture” - systematic schema for choices among cues
 - Know steps which will lead us to our ends
 - Arrange to guide performance to meet our chosen ends
 - Substitute “scheduled” for accidental
 - Substitute “mechanisms” for strategy

INSIGHT FOUR: Learning From Problems in Complex Settings



Attribution Theory

- Attributing behavior to:
 - Factors outside our control (External)
 - Factors we control (Internal)
- Three factors influence External/Internal attribution:
 - Distinctiveness
 - Is an individual's behavior similar within different situations?
 - Consensus
 - Does everyone respond to a situation in the same way?
 - Consistency
 - Is an individual's behavior the same over time?

What Interferes with Correct Attribution?

- Fundamental attribution error
 - We *underestimate* the impact of environmental factors and *overestimate* the influence of personal factors in evaluating someone else's behavior
- Self-serving bias
 - When we achieve good outcomes -> internal attributions
 - But when we achieve poor outcomes -> external attributions
 - Effect is to psychologically remove "self" from situations with possible negative outcomes

Argyris' Viewpoint

- Success depends upon learning
- Most engage in "Single Loop Learning" (SLL) which is not an effective way to learn
 - Define learning too narrowly as solving an immediate problem
 - The thermostat example

Argyris' Alternative

- "Double loop Learning" (DLL)
 - The thinking thermostat example
- Learning as continuous improvement
 - Requires reflection on failure and success
- Accept problems as having multiple causality and reflect upon:
 - How your own behavior contributes to problem
 - How changing your own behavior can positively impact problem resolution

Moving to Double Loop Learning

- Argyris calls this “productive reasoning”
 - Use of valid, public data
 - Careful analysis
 - Test inferences against data
- Style:
 - Reflective and inquisitive approach to our role in a problem

Personal Learning and the MBA

- During your MBA Program, you will be put in situations which will test your limits
- Choice is yours
 - Choose to “tough through it” (SLL)
 - Choose to “grow through it” (DLL)
- Being good at DLL is likely the **single most important** skill you can develop in this program!

INSIGHT FIVE:
Skill Development and Continuous Improvement

- Intersection of two fundamental ideas
 - Continuous improvement
 - Skill mastery learning model

Long-term, Continuous Process



The MBA Journey

- Begins with self-awareness and self-reflection
- Knowing our strengths, weaknesses and core purpose enhances planning effectiveness for continuous improvement
- Developing effective professional skills is never complete
 - Personal and professional development is truly a lifelong journey
