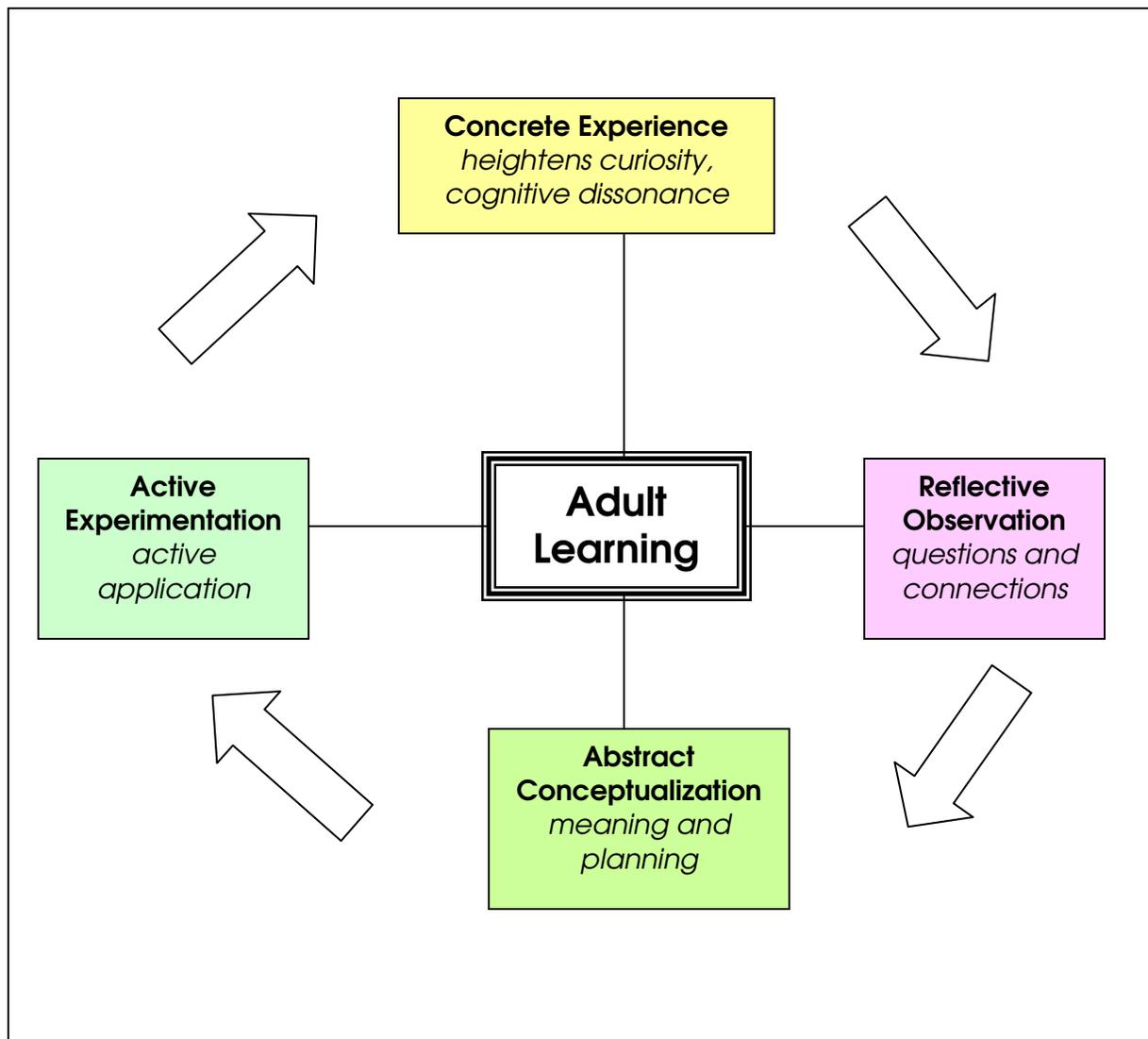


THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE¹

FOUR PHASES OF INSTRUCTION²

- the learning cycle repeats through the learning experience
- the 4 phases overlap and the cycle can start at any phase but should go through all phases
- different adult learners (and instructors) tend to prefer different phases of the learning cycle
- so it is important for instructors to facilitate learning experiences that include *all 4* phases



¹ "Model of reflective thought and action," in Merriam, S.B. & Caffarella, R.S. (1999). *Learning in Adulthood*, 2nd Ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p.225.

² Adapted from Eisele, G.R. (2000). *Great Beginnings Workshop for CCV Instructors curriculum*, p.9-10.

The Experiential Learning Cycle: 4 phases

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE PHASES

PHASE	BENEFITS	<i>An example: building</i>
Concrete Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can activate the learning process. • Facilitates “tuning in” and curiosity • Creates cognitive dissonance by challenging what learners know or expect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch “this old house” or others demonstrating building - look at a building book - share a story of when you built something - look at plans, handle tools and materials
<p><u>Strategies:</u> doing a brief hand-on exercise, viewing a film/video clips, demonstration, hearing a short lecture, acting out a scenario based on your own experience, presenting your view/belief in the context of hearing a range of beliefs or views, etc.</p>		
Reflective Observation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes new connections to what learners already know • Personal and active • Promotes growth and change, deepens understanding • Can be public and/or private process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consider (with others) what to build and start to draw your own ideas - ask others how they build - interview carpenters and architects
<p><u>Strategies:</u> structured discussion, brainstorming, open ended questions, writing exercises, etc.</p>		
Abstract Conceptualization and Planning for Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishes meaning and relevancy and helps to find personal meanings in a new concept(s). • Important to motivation • Usually marks the beginning of the application of knowledge phase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create a plan (with others) of what you will build - create a model out of popsicle sticks - gather more ideas based on your model and identify challenges to solve
<p><u>Strategies:</u> brainstorming, small buzz groups, whole class discussion, case studies, creating a model or structure, etc.</p>		
Active Experimentation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete application of learned concepts. • Grounds concepts in the learner’s experience and embeds them in the learner’s memory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - start to build the deck - explain to others what you are doing and why - build with others and learn how their approach can change or inform yours
<p><u>Strategies:</u> have learners teach the concept to someone else, write about the importance of the concept or its use in different circumstances or contexts, ask learners to find out what others have said about the concept and compare their understanding with the newly found one, etc.</p>		