

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Epstein, S. (1998). *Constructive thinking: The key to emotional intelligence*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

David Kolb wrote a book about his learning theory in 1984. He said that there were two ways of grasping information: through one's concrete sensory information or through one's comprehension of abstract thought. These two ways of understanding reminded me of Seymour Epstein's 1998 theory of two minds: the emotional or experiential mind and the rational mind.

When we grasp information through our senses, we are learning through concrete experience. If we do not immediately react to this information, it is stored and may be reflected upon for a while. Ideas that may be grasped through comprehension may also be reflected upon or may be tried out in active experimentation.

The overall theory may be looked at as a cycle that begins with concrete sensory experience followed by reflection followed by an abstract theory about the experience followed by an experiment to test the theory. The theory may also be looked at as a split between a mind that reacts to experience and a mind that reacts to rational thought. Reactions to experience are often emotional. Epstein said that emotional reactions are often preceded by unconscious thoughts. The content of these thoughts can demonstrate a kind of emotional intelligence.

Kolb also postulated four learning styles from the split between two minds. Divergent learners prefer concrete experience and follow it with reflection. Assimilative learners prefer rational comprehension and follow it with reflection. Convergent learners prefer rational comprehension and follow it with active experimentation. Accommodative learners prefer concrete experience and follow it with active experimentation.

I encourage you to play with this theory as it seems to tie together several ways of looking at learning and emotional intelligence.