

Applying Kolb's Learning Cycle to Competency-Based Residency Education

Karen Schultz, MD, program director, Family Medicine, Laura McEwen, PhD, director, Assessment and Evaluation, Postgraduate Medical Education, and Jane Griffiths, MD, evaluation director, Family Medicine, Queen's University

In his 1984 book *Experiential Learning*, David Kolb describes the role of experience in learning.¹ Kolb's Learning Cycle is a conceptual model that frames learning as an active process engaged in by adults as they grasp and transform experience into learning and development through action and reflection.² According to the model, learners' understandings deepen and broaden through an iterative process, supported by teaching actions and assessment processes.



Competency-based residency education can be enhanced by deliberately incorporating teaching and assessment strategies that facilitate adult learning. Kolb's Learning Cycle of experiential learning involving iterative cycles of concrete experiences, reflection, concept formulation, and active controlled experimentation is one such facilitative model. Deliberately aligning teaching and assessment activities with phases of this learning cycle serves to focus teaching and assessment efforts in a meaningful way.

References:

1. Kolb DA. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.; 1984.
2. Bransford JD, Brown AL, Cocking RR, eds. *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School: Expanded Edition*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 2001.

Corresponding author: karen.schultz@dfm.queensu.ca