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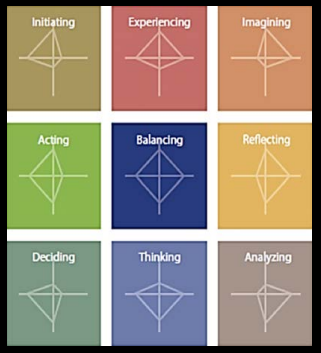


HOW DO THEY LEARN? THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PREFERENCES OF COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS

KASEE L. SMITH

RYANNA MEACHAM

NEED FOR RESEARCH

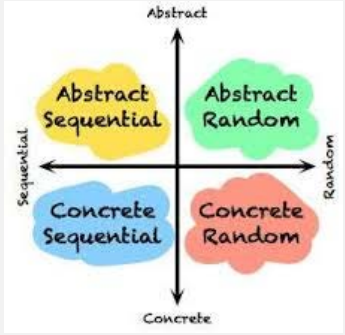
- Post-secondary students benefit from experiential learning activities in their educational programs (Kuh, ; Kolb, 2016).

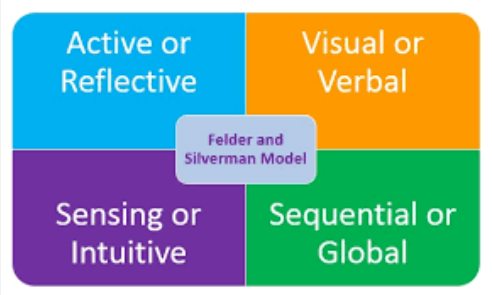
- Every student has different preferences for bringing in and transforming information (Sousa, 2011).

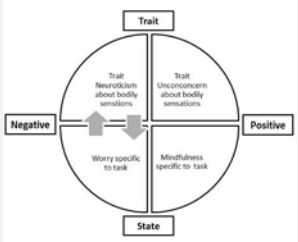
NEED FOR RESEARCH

- Learning Styles
  - There are many conversations about “learning styles”
    - 6 common instruments for assessing learning style

      (*Hawk & Shah, 2007*)







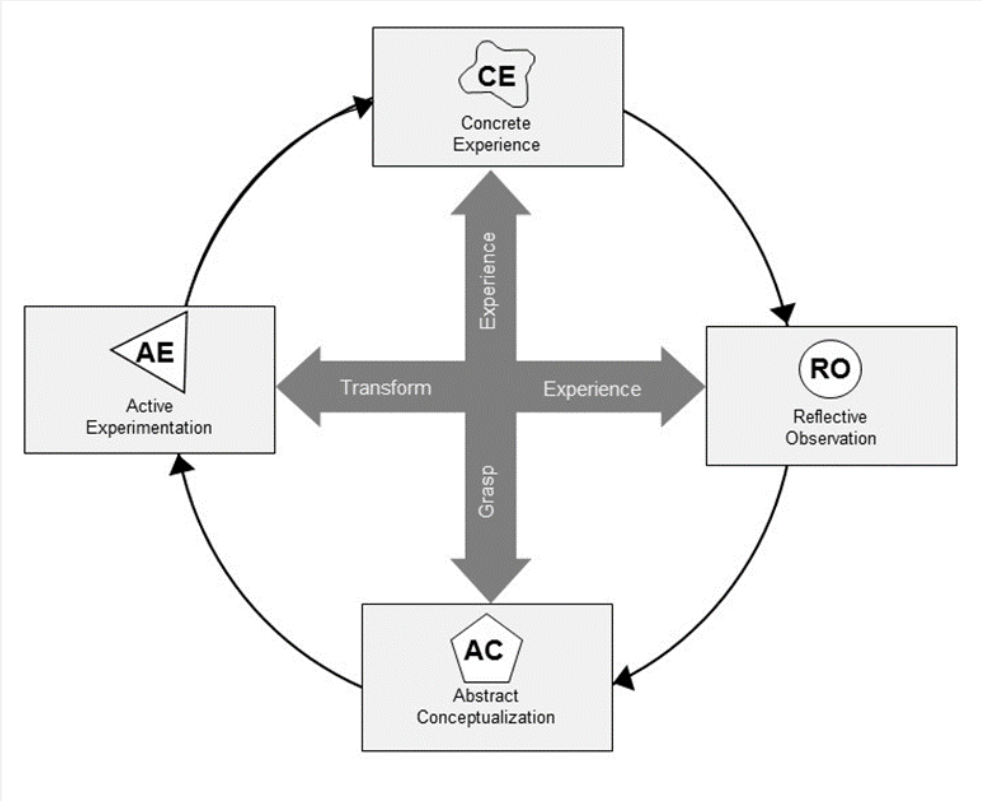
NEED FOR RESEARCH

Learning **Preference**

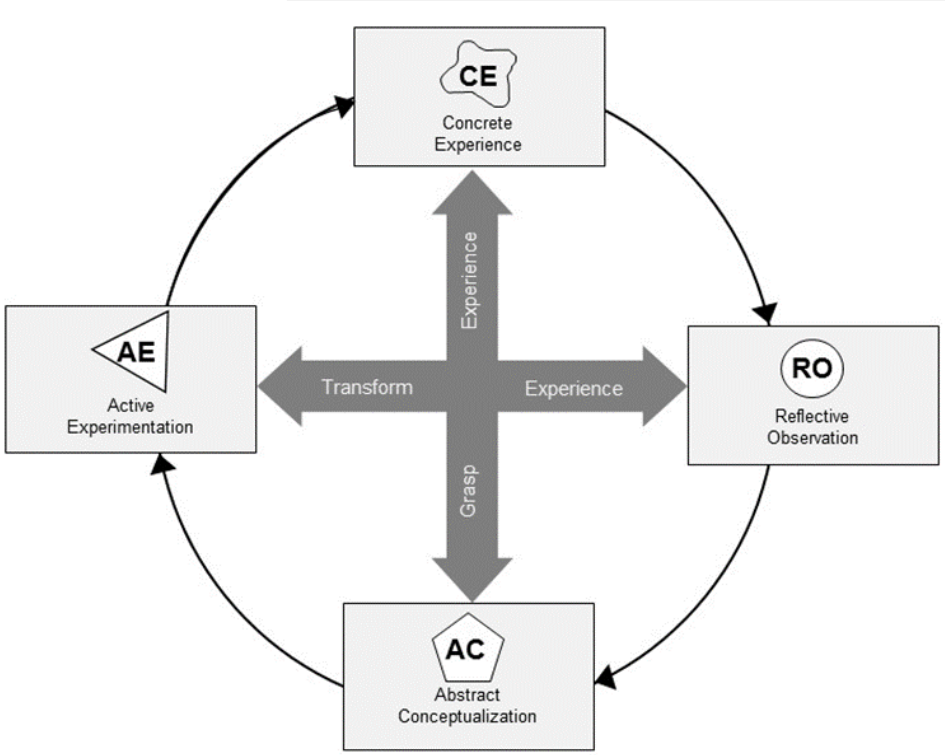
- The preferred alignment for bringing in and processing information *(Sousa, 2011)*

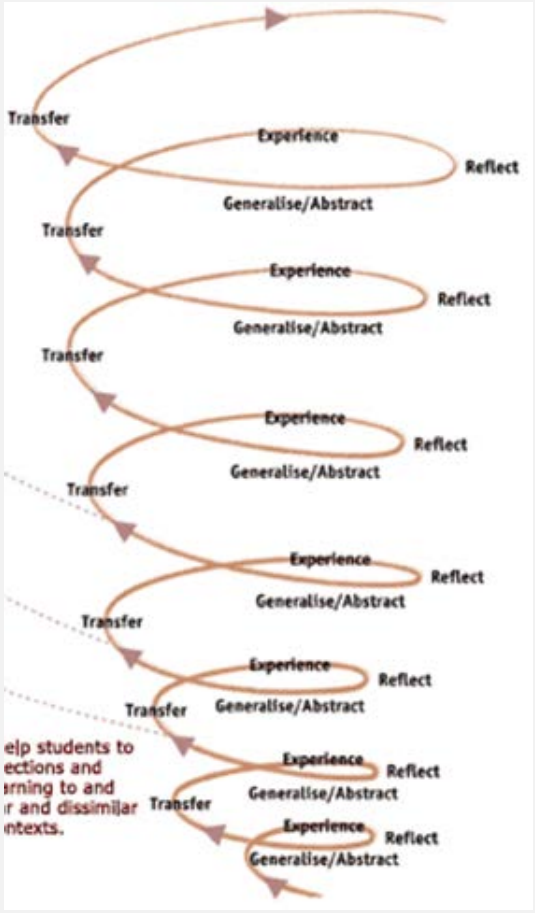
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Kolb proposed a method for assessing learning preference in alignment with experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984, 2016).



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK





PURPOSE

Describe KLSI learning preferences scores for College of Agriculture students

METHODS

- Population
  - Convenience sample of all students enrolled in a total of 10 agriculture courses at two separate land grant institutions between 2015 & 2018 (*n* = 279)
    - Students represented 14 different majors & 6 academic departments
    - 100% response rate (results limited to this population)

METHODS

- Descriptive survey
  - Demographic information
  - Kolb's Learning Style Inventory
    - 12-items
      - Forced choice items with all four components
    - Previous reliability estimates between $\alpha = 0.82$ and $\alpha = 0.86$
    - Post hoc reliability for this sample between $\alpha = 0.81$ and $\alpha = 0.92$

LET'S TRY ONE TOGETHER

- When I learn…

A. I get involved

B. I like to observe

C. I evaluate things

D. I like to be active

KLSI

- When I learn…

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B. I like to observe

C. I evaluate things

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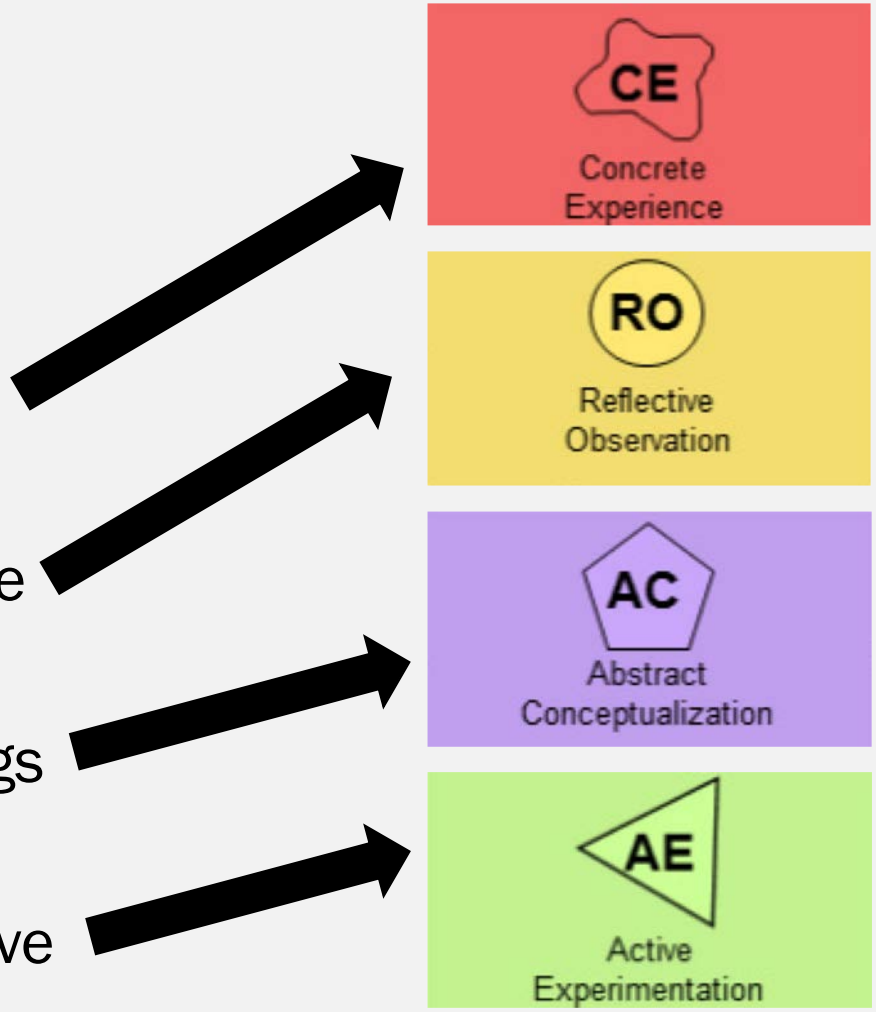
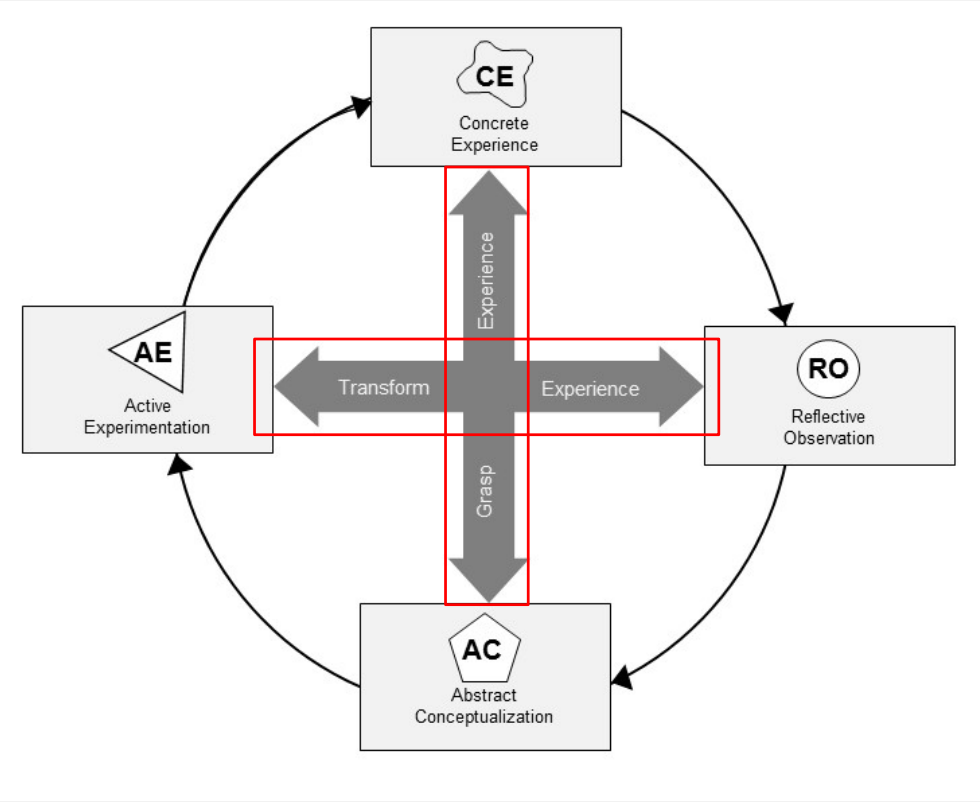


KLSI

- Scores 12-48 for each component
- Scores ±36 for each dimension
  - Grasping
    - Bring in knowledge
    - Through CE or AC
  - Transforming
    - Process knowledge
    - Through AE or RO



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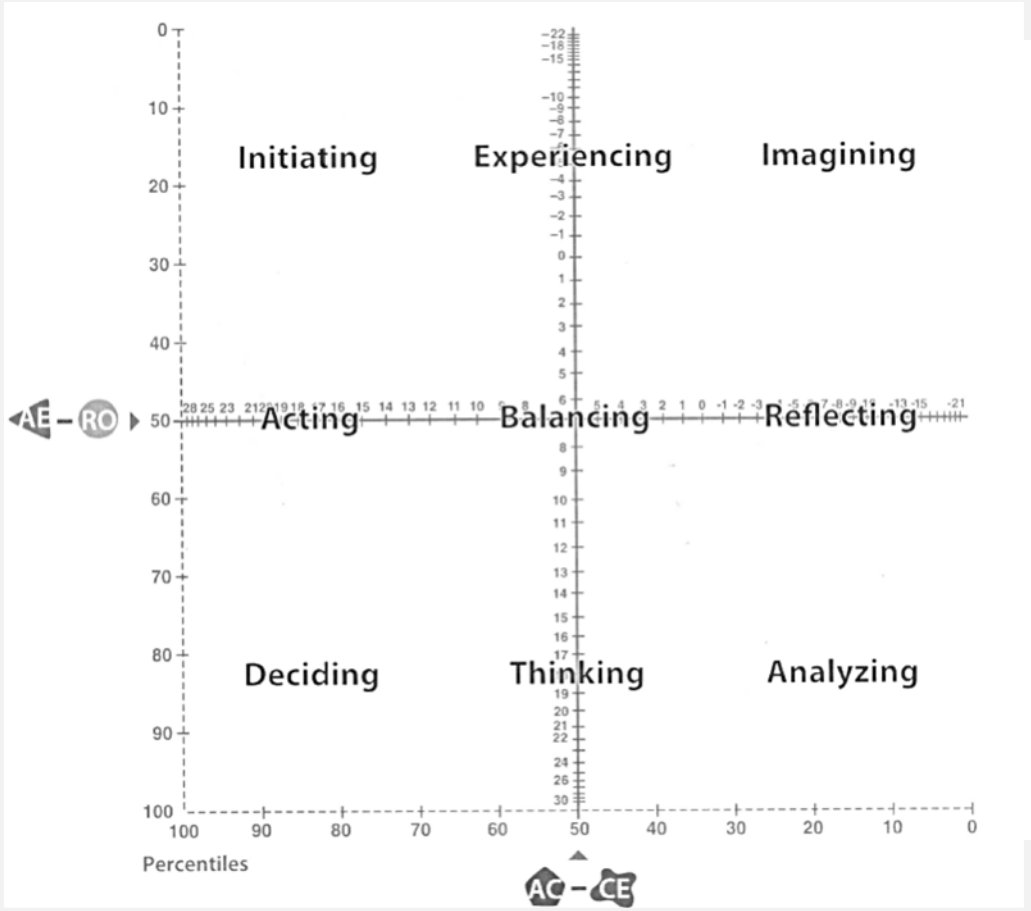
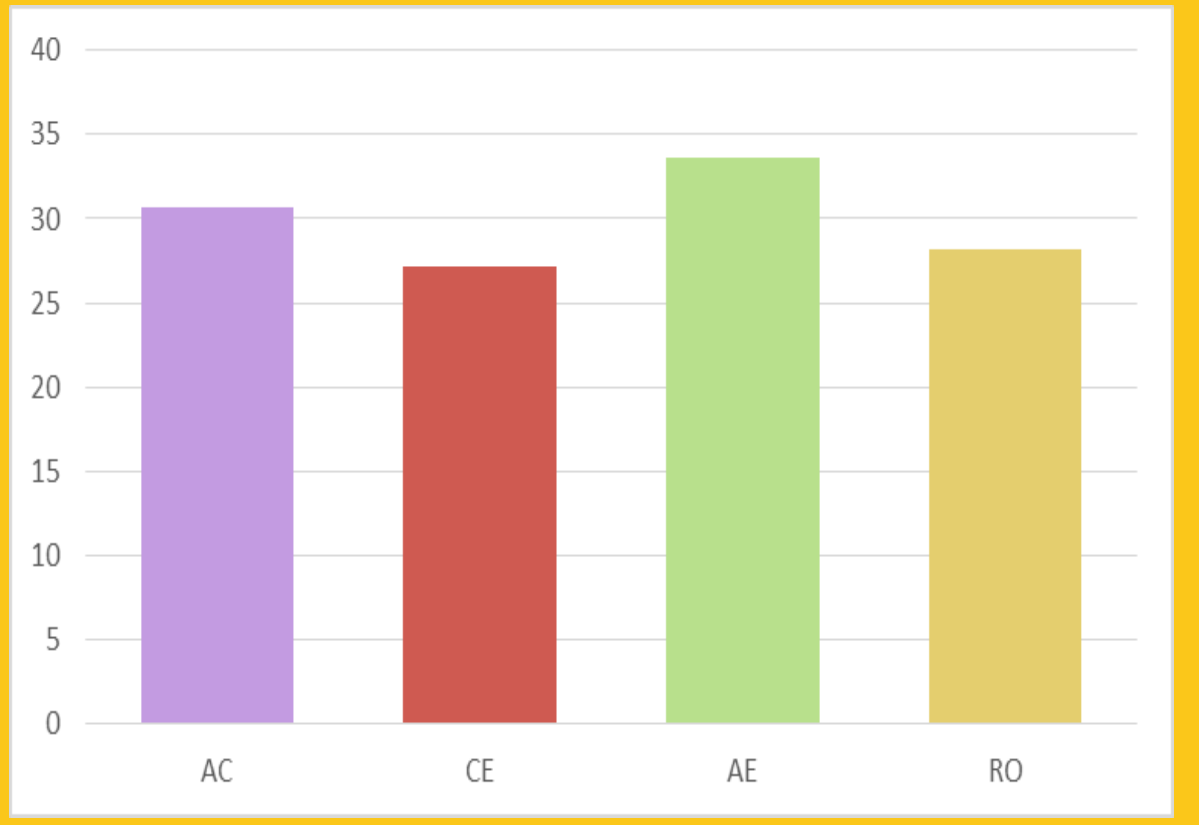


METHODS

- Distribution
  - Paper versions of instrument were distributed to each student enrolled in the selected classes
- Analysis
  - Paper versions were entered into Excel spreadsheet
  - Analyzed with SPSS v 23

FINDINGS

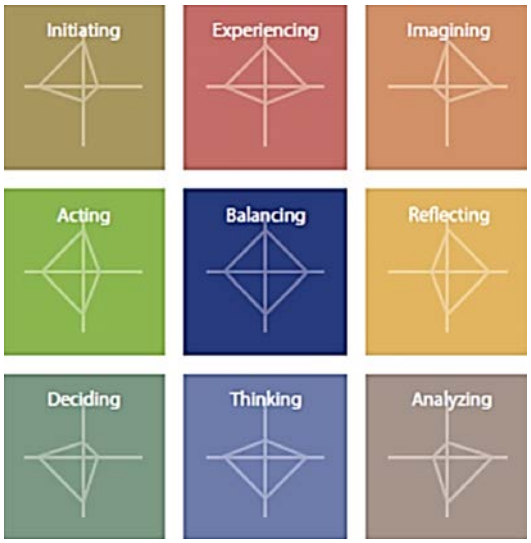
KLSI AREA SCORES

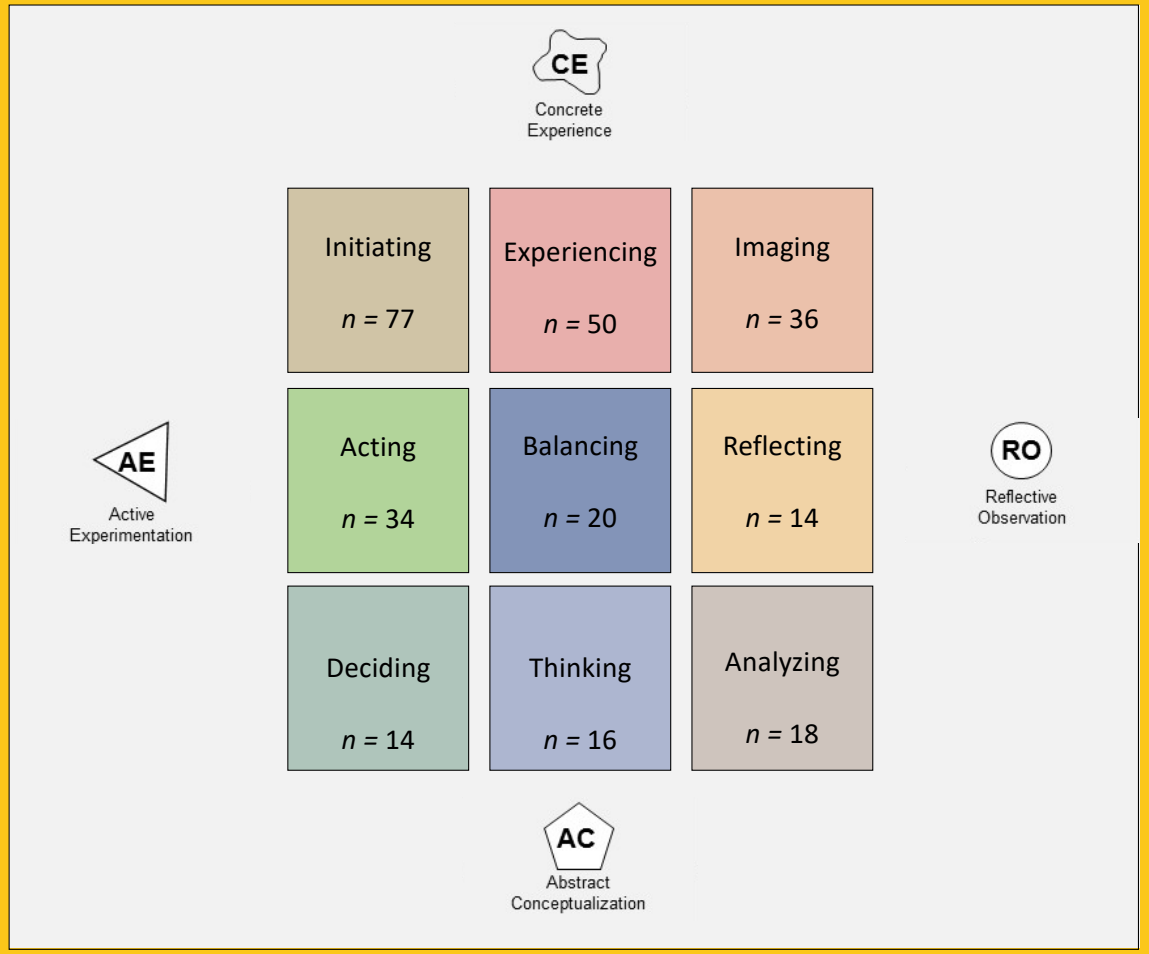


Abstract Conceptualization- *M* = 30.7(8.6)
Concrete Experience- *M* = 27.1(7.0)
Active Experimentation- *M* = 33.6(8.3)
Reflective Observation- *M* = 28.2(7.1)

FINDINGS

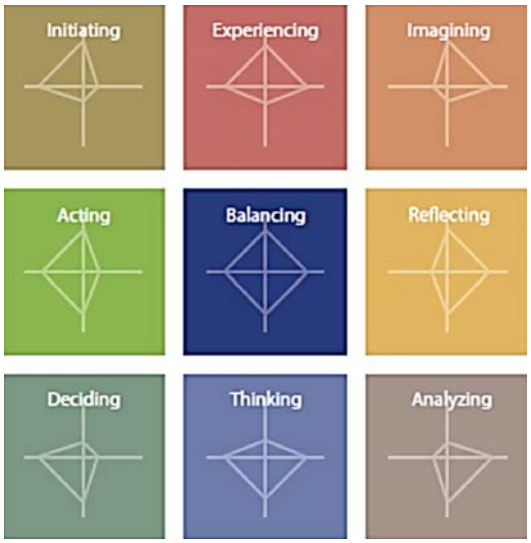
STUDENT LEARNING STYLES

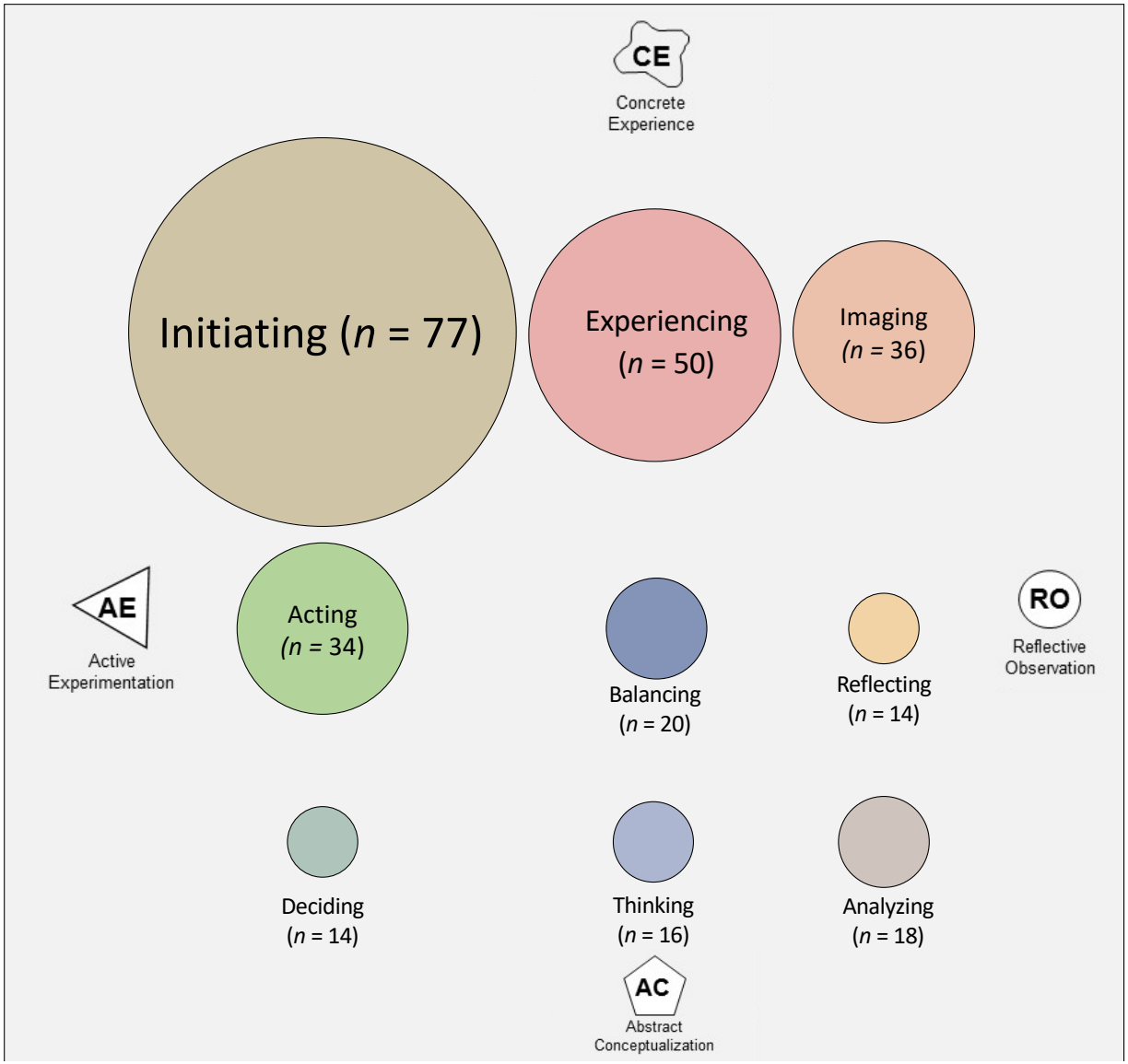




FINDINGS

STUDENT LEARNING STYLES





WHAT THIS MEANS FOR INSTRUCTORS

- Students as a group included all learning preferences
  - Instruction should include all four components of experiential learning theory
  - To think about:
    - Are all four stages of ELT expressed in your current courses?
    - How can we vary instruction to include a focus on ELT?

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR INSTRUCTORS

- More students preferred to bring in information through concrete experience
  - This is similar to Kolb's findings for the general population and for younger adults (18-25)
  - To think about:
    - How can you increase the amount of instruction that allows for grasping through concrete experience?
    - This is backward from most traditional instruction

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR INSTRUCTORS

- More students preferred to transform information through active experimentation
  - Assimilation my be easier when applied to new situations
  - To think about:
    - Is there enough active experimentation in course instruction and assignments to help students assimilate abstract concepts?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct longitudinal examination to track learning preferences over time
- Compare results with other populations
- Examine how ELT is currently expressed in College of Agriculture courses


University of Idaho
THANK YOU