Sense of Place and Cognition

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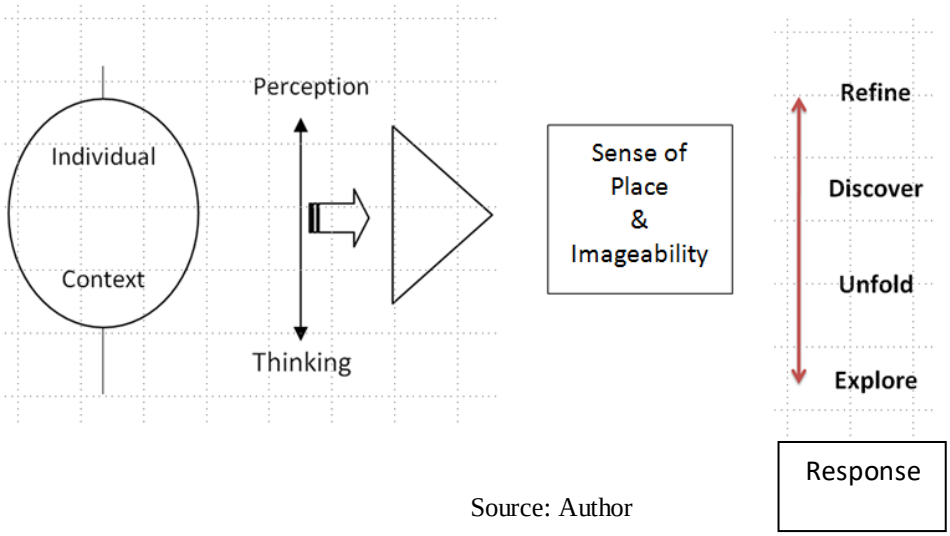
Fig. 1 Ideation Illustration 1



Source: Author

1 IMAGEABILITY

With respect to built environment, when you observe a building, you are able to see and identify the building. Your perception helps to establish a linkage with the external world. To perceive the built environment in this way, requires that you posses concepts. This could be broadly described as ways of thinking, understanding and assimilating about the world. At this point we are discussing about the human ability to decode inputs from sensation followed by perception into tangible mental images, that help us to establish a interactive link with our surroundings and guide us in our activities.

Fig. 2 Imageability Aspects

Source: Author

From the view point of perceiving and reflecting on built environment, the ability to comprehend, recognise and experience spaces in terms of spatial quality, functionality and form is quite important. The transmission and transaction of learning in this area could be preliminarily understood by correlating it with learning theories. This overall act relates to how knowledge is being organised in a person, how it is likely to be retrieved and aplied for resolving spatial issues related to habitat design when given an oppurtunity.

2 INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY

The basis for formation of credible insight with respect to a built environment by an individual could be reviewed by initially realising the ability in terms of appraising the built environment the individual is in contact with. The way a person is able to comprehend, recognize and experience spaces and relate it to its spatial function and quality. The awareness and understanding of the emotive expression that's induced in them is quite critical to initiate an approach for transmission and transaction in the studio as well with the peripheral subjects which add consistency to the imaginative simulations.

A proper understanding of the Kolb Experiential Learning Theory would shed light into the human intellectual response system of approaching learning, interpretation, evolution of personalized program and so on. Further retrieval of already acquired inputs to practical applications in a wider context would be drastically based on individual - independent appraisal and valuing mechanism.

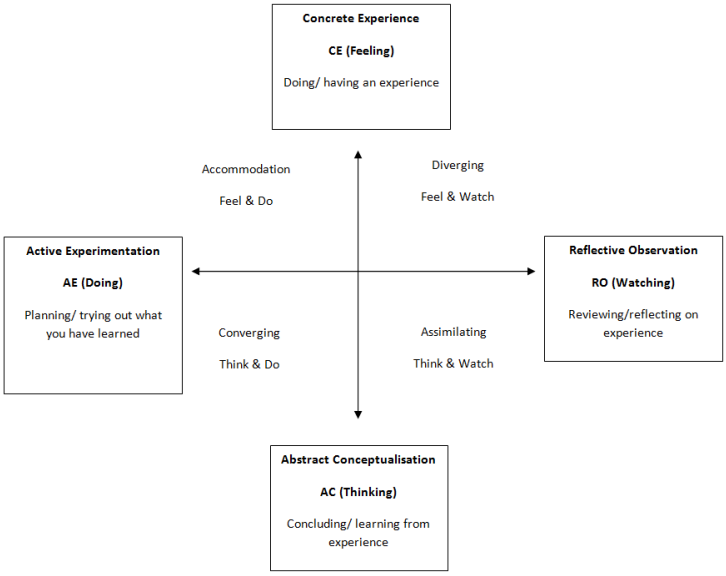
David A. Kolb, published a remarkable book entitled Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development. The fundamentals of his theory are grounded based on similar research work such as: The Lewinian Experiential Learning Model, Dewey's Model of Experiential Learning, Piaget's Model of Learning and Cognitive Development and so on.

> In Kolb's opinion, the learning process can be reduced to two primary bipolar dimensions (i.e. dimensions with two poles or extremes), incorporating the four learning modes. One of these dimensions has concrete experience at one pole and abstract conceptualisation at the other, and the other dimension consists of active experimentation at one pole and reflective observation at the other (1 p. 136).

A rational basis is always required to correlate – explain of how people perceive the various dimensions that contribute to the space – making and resultant architectural realm. People tend to have preferred appraisal styles which help them in evolving better cognition patterns while interacting with the external world.

The cycle comprises four different stages of learning from experience and can be entered at any point but all stages must be followed in sequence for successful learning to take place. The Learning Cycle suggests that it is not sufficient to have an experience in order to learn. It is necessary to reflect on the experience to make generalisations and formulate concepts which can then be applied to new situations. This learning must then be tested out in new situations. The learner must make the link between the theory and action by planning, acting out, reflecting and relating it back to the theory.

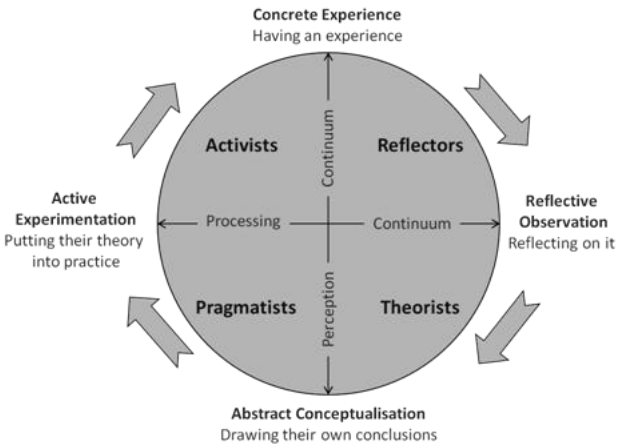
Fig. 3 Experiential Learning Cycle



Source: Illustration based on David A Kolb Theory

The propositions were further developed by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford, based upon the work of Kolb, and they identified four distinct learning styles or preferences: Activist, Theorist; Pragmatist and Reflector. These are the cognition patterns exhibited by individuals while engaged in developing a better understanding of the world around them.

Fig. 4 Classification of Learning Styles



Source: Illustration based on Peter Honey and Alan Mumford Theory

The cognition patterns could be related to architectural learning by the individual as follows:

Table 1 Learning Styles and Architecture Pedagogy

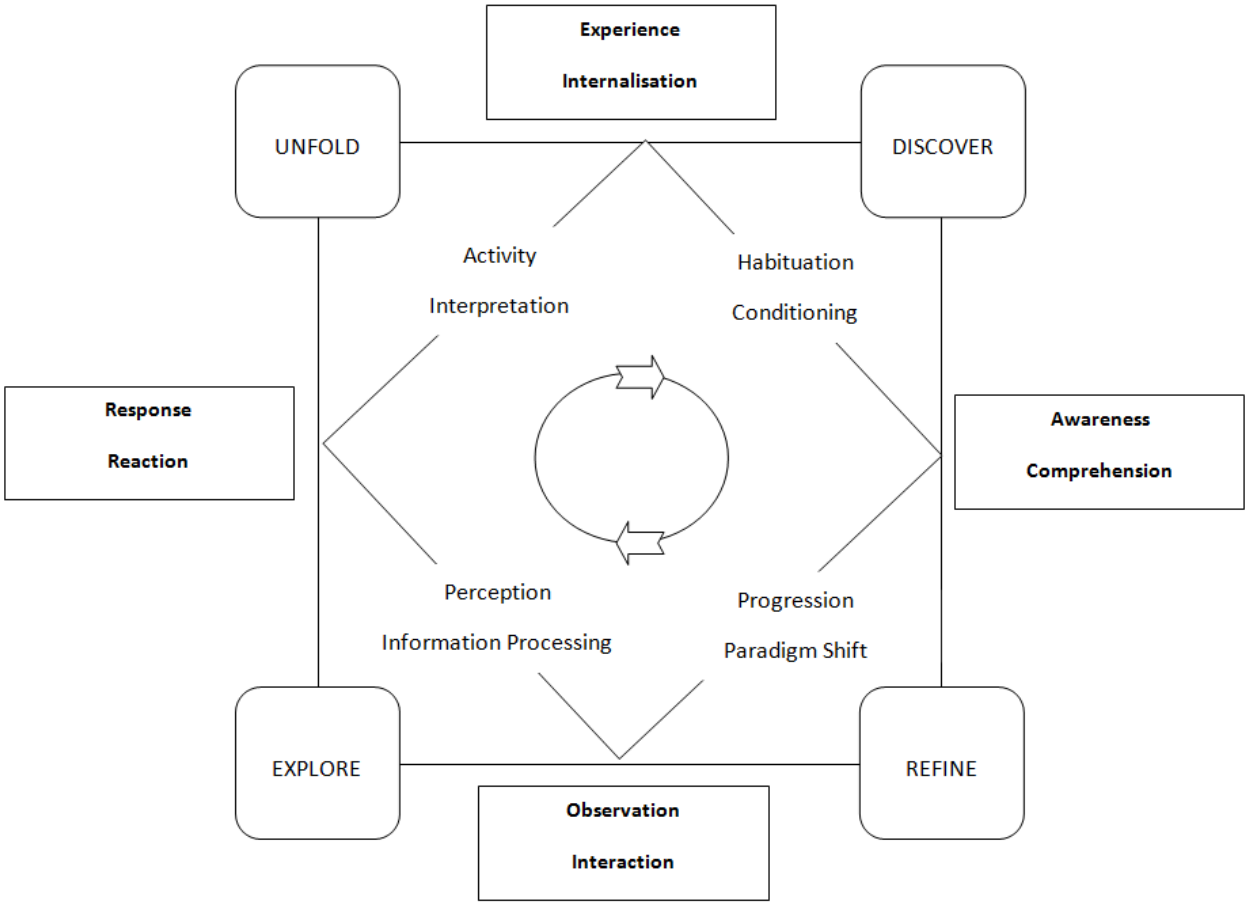
Kolb	Honey and Alan Mumford	Architectural Appraisal Linkage Sense of Place & Cognition
Accommodator	Activist	• These people develop cognition about built environment by direct interaction; physical contact and activity based appraisal. • They prefer experiencing built environment, analysing facts, applying finding in similar circumstances, drawing conclusion and so on. • They indulge in explorative study; often don't follow a defined line of investigation. • Prefer to learn through experience and self exposure rather than guided transition of knowledge.
Diverger	Reflector	• These people develop cognition about built environment by observing and thinking about the built realm. • They raise questions in order to constructively work towards proper answers and assessment. • This approach leads them to collect data and logically analyse the built realm under review. • Prefer to learn by indulging in lot of interactive communications with designers, users and professionals. Thereby evolving better perception about their acts; resultant spatial morphology and functionality.

Assimilator	Theorist	• These people develop cognition about built environment by probing the theories and concepts that form the basis of the built realm. • They review the models, concepts and facts behind the overall ideation and execution. • Prefer to develop a broad understanding of the scenario; choose to move from the macro level to micro level details. • Prefer to learn through rational approaches via logical steps keeping alive the explorative and inquisitive mind. These acts would definitely lead to better understanding of built realm and provide new directives.
Converger	Pragmatist	• These people develop cognition about built environment by searching for facts, so that these findings can have immediate or refined applicability in resolving contextual issues. • They pursue an action research approach in reviewing the built realm under examination. • Prefer to develop a better understanding of the contextual issues based on proper analysis of precedents and also apply innovative thought process to bring about pioneering approaches. • Prefer to develop better understanding by indulging in rigorous pursuit with more focus on practicability and application rather than theorisation. • They prefer to work by themselves, thinking carefully and acting independently.

Source: Author

3 NEW DIRECTIVES

Fig. 5 Human Cognition and Induced Activity Illustration Theory



Source: Author

In order to bring about better clarity and understanding to the phenomenon of meaning formation with respect to sense of place and cognition, based on available literature a new premise is put forward. New theoretical ideation is constituted by four stages of information processing: Exploration, Unfoldment, Discovery and Refinement have been derived based on precedent studies of teaching and learning theories.

> Evolutionary compulsion forces human beings to establish a system of relationships between the physical body and the human mind's mental perceptions, which enable us to experience the world and our existence. These relationships provide us with our sense of wellbeing, our sense of belonging, and our deeper sense of who we are. Through the physical and the visual aspects of human perception, the body managed humankind's earliest interactions with the world (2).

As illustrated the new theorisation intends to map the human activity sequences during the act of cognition. The understanding of human cognition and induced activity helps us to logically approach the process of learning and understand the various activities involved at respective stages. The overall process is cyclic, interconnected and progressive as indicated in the illustration, paving way for self realisation and development of understanding about the specific contextual issue at hand. It is configured in such a manner that it is rational and in order, the new proposition has universal application irrespective of discipline.

From the perspective of architecture the overall process relating to sense of place making and evolution of imageability is simplified using this proposition, by explicitly describing the process involved and activities associated at each stage. These activities collectively bring about the concept of sense of place in an individual while exploring landscapes of human habitation.

Bibliography

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