



## **Pedagogy – John Loftus © 2005**

To begin developing soft skills and preparing foundations for a learning organisation, it is useful to explore the way that different communication theories and technologies can be applied to enhance the acquisition, sharing, and application of knowledge – both explicit and tacit. An example of the way that different learning and teaching theories can be used to formulate a generic communication model is shown in figure 1. This model is designed to integrate the early work of many authors and more recent developments by: David Kolb (2005), Bernice McCarthy (2005), and David Lazear (2004).

This rich generic communication model, shown in figure 1, recognises positions where:

- Every person has a unique set of attributes and a favoured mix of learning stages – along two continuums from *observing* to *doing*, and from *knowing* to *being*. Individual preferences around each continuum broadly define a comfort zone.
- Learning is strong in the comfort zone and can be enhanced by extending beyond the comfort zone into less favoured mixes of learning stages.
- Facilitators can provide support by guiding learners through four generic phases (quadrants) of a learning cycle – *motivating, informing, coaching, and exploring*.
- Learning can be further enhanced through each quadrant by engaging multiple intelligences associated with different parts of the brain.

David Kolb's two continuums represent preferential learning stages. David describes each continuum from “reflective observation” to “active experimentation”, and from “abstract conceptualisation” to “concrete experience”. The generic communication model, in figure 1, interprets David's labels as: *observing* to *doing*; and *knowing* to *being*.

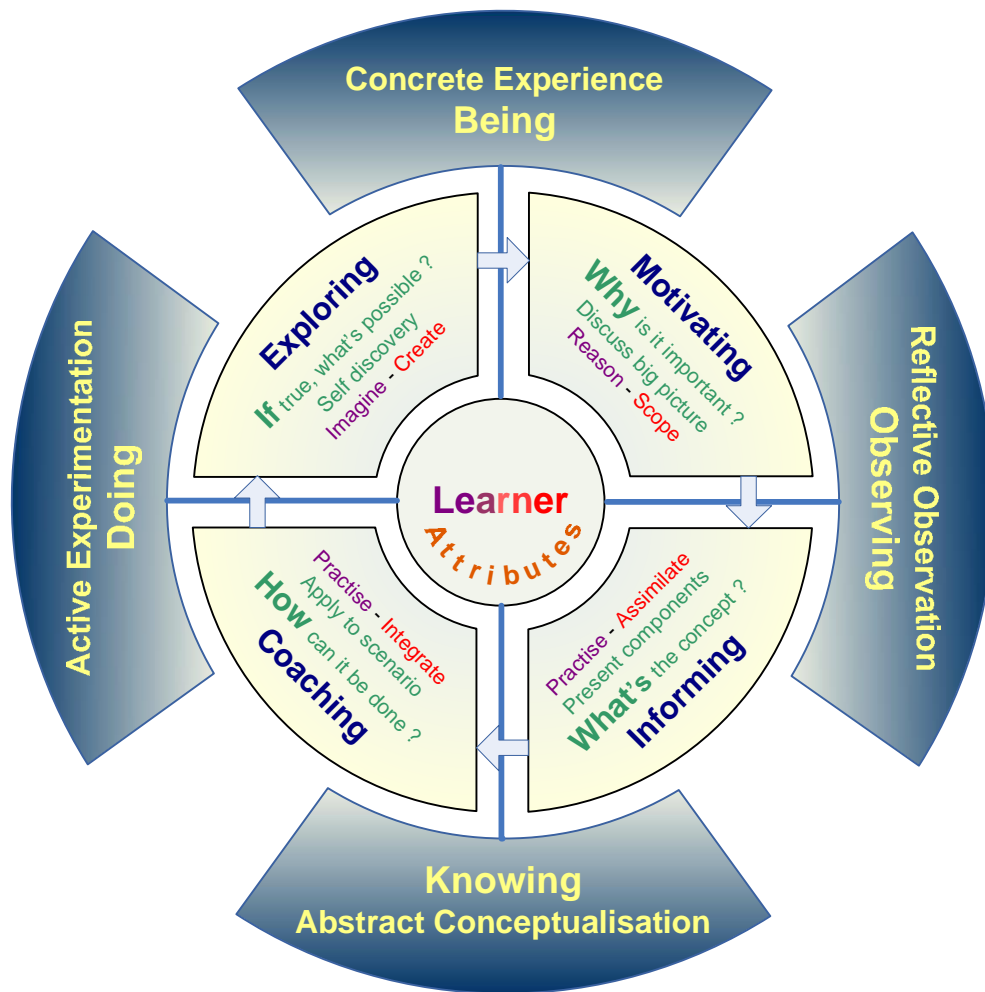
An individual may shift along each axis in response to different circumstances and in response to a desire to extend or enrich a learning experience.

Bernice McCarthy's system is built on four phases of learning. Each phase reveals strategies that managers, teachers, and learners can use to engage and extend individual learning comfort zones – broadly defined by David Kolb's learning stages.

David Lazear's description of multiple intelligences can be applied to each learning quadrant. An understanding of a learner's intelligence strengths can guide communication strategies to take advantage of those strengths while developing latent intelligences.

Colour codes on the rich generic communication model reflect opportunities to employ different combinations of brain power – *left, right, anterior, and posterior*.

Generic communication model for managing learning and teaching



John Loftus

Based on: David Kolb's stages of learning  
Bernice McCarthy's 4MAT system and  
David Lazear's teaching for multiple intelligences

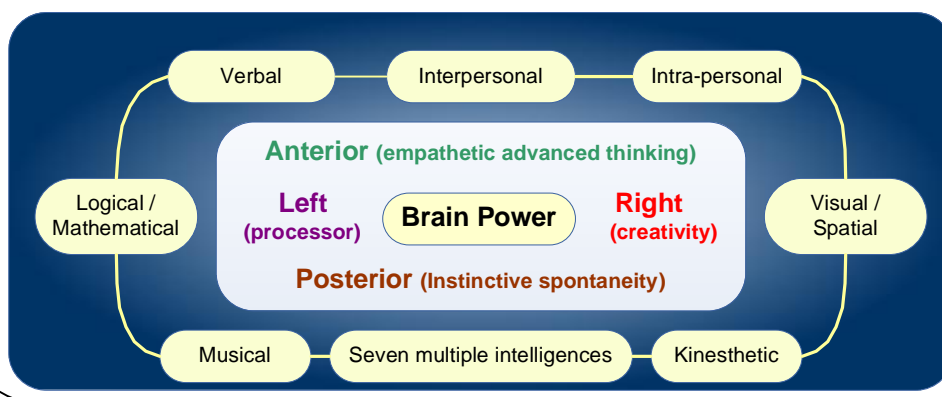


Figure 1: Generic Communication Model – © John Loftus 2005

In the *motivating* quadrant, the focus question is *why?* This quadrant is attractive to people who like to see the *big picture* and prefer to learn through concrete experience and observation. In order to stimulate learning, multiple intelligences can be engaged simultaneously. For example, left brain intelligences can be engaged by focusing on logical reasons *why* the proposed subject is important. Right brain intelligences can be engaged by graphically visualising the scope of the subject being addressed. Anterior intelligences can be engaged through interpersonal discussion around the reasoning and scoping of the subject. Posterior intelligences can be engaged by using physical models that provide kinaesthetic concrete experience of the subject or by employing inspirational *motivating* music with different elements of the subject. These are just some examples that illustrate strategies used by experienced teachers in a classroom, by producers of cinema films, by authors of books, and by motivational leaders in society and business.

In the *informing* quadrant, the focus question is **what?** This quadrant is attractive to people who like to penetrate the detailed elements of a subject, and prefer to learn through observation and abstract conceptualisation. Again, learning can be stimulated through simultaneous engagement of multiple intelligences.

In the *motivating* and *informing* quadrants, teachers and managers generally take a more active role, while learners are generally at the observation stage. This *observing* hemisphere reflects an instructive mode or instructivism – where learners observe and assimilate information. Observation can occur in many ways: directly in classrooms and workplaces; through broadcast radio and television; and indirectly by reading documented case studies, or engaging in simulations.

In the *coaching* and *exploring* quadrants, learners take on more active roles, while teachers and managers provide general guidance and coaching. This active *doing* hemisphere reflects a constructive mode or constructivism – where learners are able to integrate components, construct their learning, and discover new opportunities.

Different combinations of each element of the generic communication model can be used as foundations for a learning organisation, and as a guide to leadership behaviours that are suited to different contingent circumstances.

## References

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