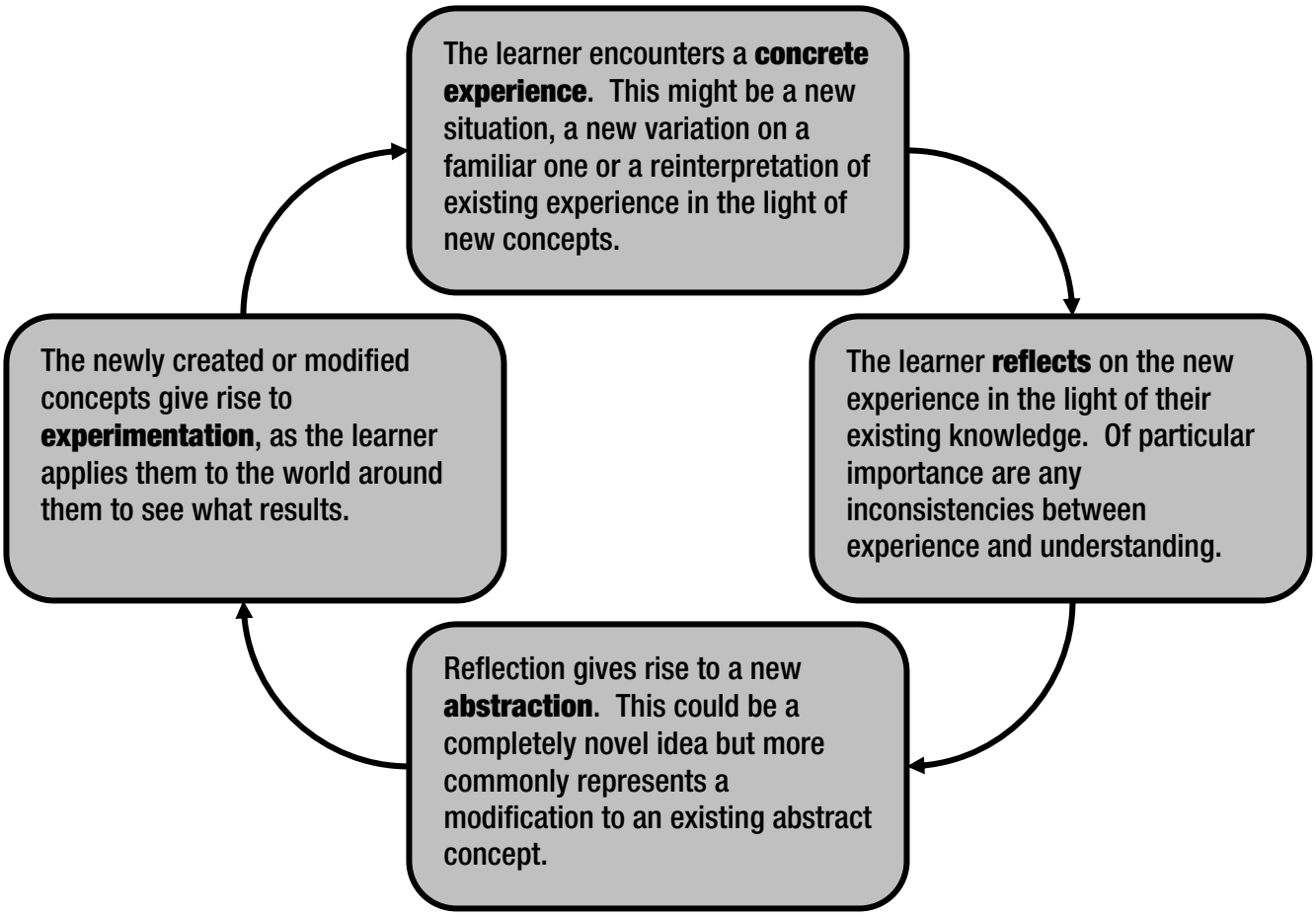
Creating Resources Using Kolb's Theory

Kolb's theory is less prescriptive that Gagné's. When designing learning resources this offers more freedom but can create more opportunities for problems to occur.

Kolb presents a cognitivist theory that echoes Gagné's view that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied flexibly in a range of situations. In Kolb's theory, the impetus for the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences. Kolb suggests that learning is a cyclical process into which the learner can 'step' at any point. The process of going through the cycle results in the formation of increasingly complex and abstract 'mental models' of whatever the learner is learning about.



Much of Kolb's theory is concerned with the learner's internal cognitive processes and it is not always obvious how each stage can be managed in the context of a learning resource. The clearest role for ILT is in the presentation of experiences (e.g. through the use of multimedia), but questioning could be used to stimulate reflection or to guide the formation of abstractions. In complex resources, 'micro worlds' can be used to offer the chance to experiment.

It is worth remembering, however, that there is no requirement for a single resource to take the learner through all the stages. The package as a whole could represent the cycle, with a particular resource only covering one stage.

How could you provide the learner with a **concrete experience**?	
How could you stimulate the learner's **reflection** on their experiences?	
Which **abstractions** do you want the learner to make? How will you guide them there?	
How can you allow the learner to **experiment** with applying their concepts to the real world?	
Where in the learning cycle are you going to **start** and **finish**?	