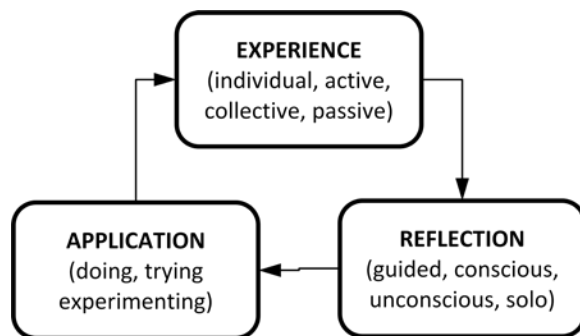


## HOW DOES EE WORK? (A)

### LEARNING CYCLES

Experiential education (EE) is philosophically grounded in experiential learning (EL), which recognizes that **reflection on lived experience** is critical to learning. While many authors have posited complex models to explain the ongoing cycle of EL, a simple one is presented below.



These three steps have been broken up once each to provide four, five, and six step cycles as discussed in “further resources.” For example, the last step of application can be divided into integration and continuation (and so on).

### CYCLE STEPS

**Experience** encompasses all of one’s senses, perceptions, and beliefs. It includes everything people engage in and how they engage with the world. It stimulates the mind, body and spirit, usually simultaneously. It is encountered while participating in activities, sitting quietly in calm contemplation, and the moments in between. All of human learning is experience-based, but it becomes experiential when reflection is added.

**Reflection** means to consider the meaning of an experience by careful thought. Reflection can occur in partner dialogues, in group discussions, and in solo contemplations. It can be conscious or unconscious. However, EL seeks to bring intentional awareness to mindfully considering

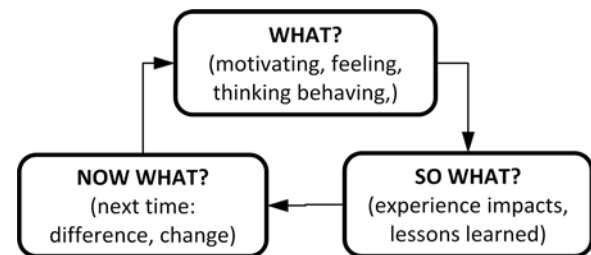
experiences and what these mean to clients. One value of intentional reflection is avoiding a negative element of EL that Dewey called “mis-educative.” Biases or stereotypes are examples of how reflections can become mis-educative.

**Application** uses learning generated during reflection for clients to behave differently in the next experience that will be newly reflected on. It is an opportunity to test the trustworthiness, validity, reliability, and truth of recent learning.

### CYCLE FACILITATION

Facilitating reflection accelerates and cements learning. It creates an intentional awareness of the need to change and the desire to transform.

Sophisticated methods of facilitating reflection through EL are discussed in “further resources.” However, one fundamental tool to employ first is asking three questions to mirror the EL cycle.



**What?** What happened? What was sensed, felt or thought? The first question assists clients to understand an experience’s content or context.

**So what?** So what did this impact do to the group, task, or you? So what was learned? The second question helps clients to decipher the meaning of their experience.

**Now what?** Now what will you do differently? The third question aids clients to envision how they can practice another way to make change.

*Christian Itin & Simon Priest*