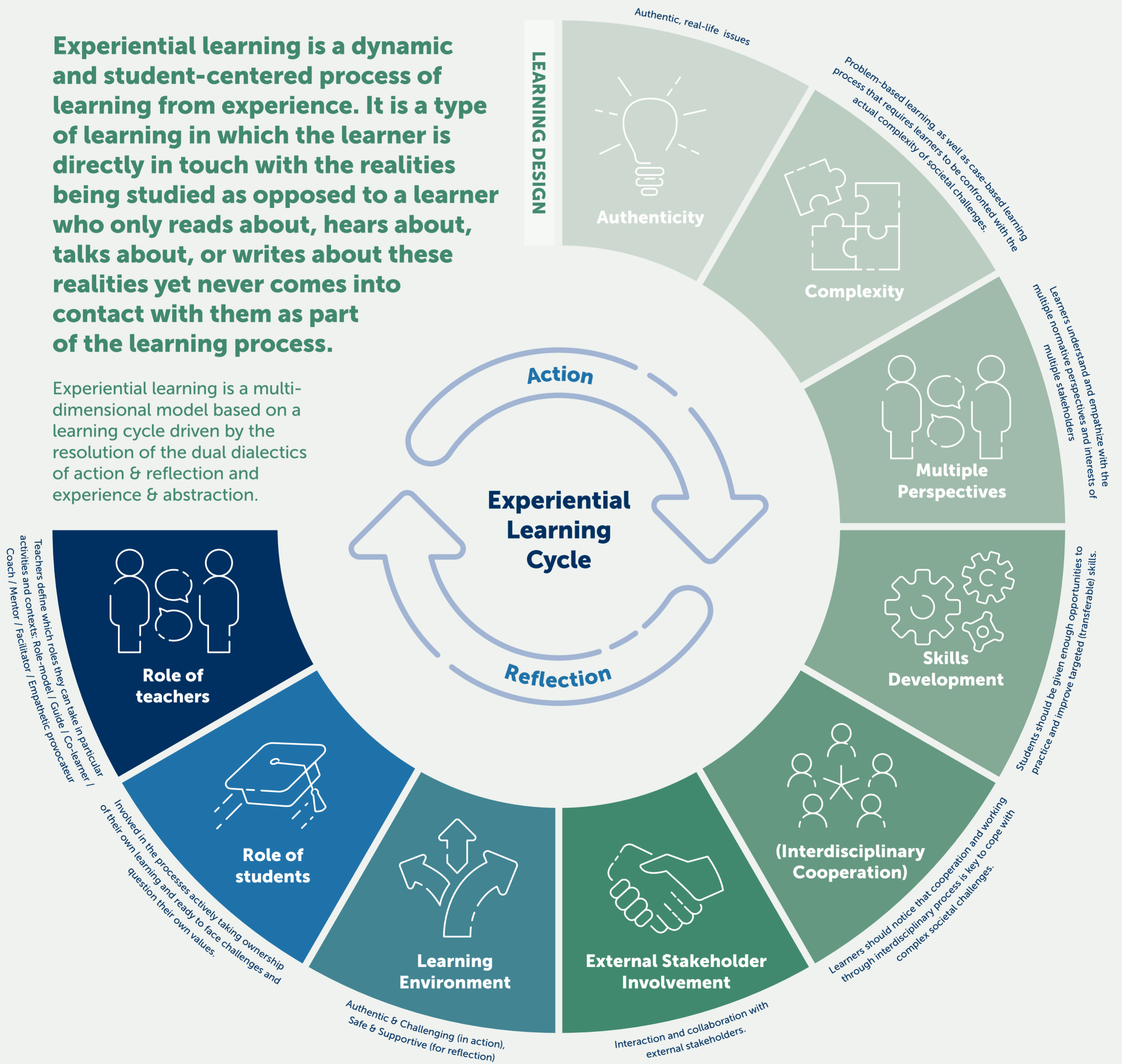# Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is a dynamic and student-centered process of learning from experience. It is a type of learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied as opposed to a learner who only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities yet never comes into contact with them as part of the learning process.

Experiential learning is a multi-dimensional model based on a learning cycle driven by the resolution of the dual dialectics of action & reflection and experience & abstraction.

LEARNING DESIGN

Action

Experiential Learning Cycle

Reflection

Authenticity

Authentic, real-life issues

Complexity

Problem-based learning, as well as case-based learning process that requires learners to be confronted with the actual complexity of societal challenges.

Multiple Perspectives

Learners understand and empathize with the multiple normative perspectives and interests of multiple stakeholders

Skills Development

Students should be given enough opportunities to practice and improve targeted (transferable) skills.

(Interdisciplinary Cooperation)

Learners should notice that cooperation and working through interdisciplinary process is key to cope with complex societal challenges.

External Stakeholder Involvement

Interaction and collaboration with external stakeholders.

Learning Environment

Authentic & Challenging (in action), Safe & Supportive (for reflection)

Role of students

Involved in the processes actively taking ownership of their own learning and ready to face challenges and question their own values.

Role of teachers

Teachers define which roles they can take in particular activities and contexts: Role-model / Guide / Co-learner / Coach / Mentor / Facilitator / Empathetic provocateur

Reflection

Reflection is a powerful process of **analyzing, reconsidering,** and **questioning** one's **experiences** and **assumptions** within a broad context of issues and academic content.

An empowering reflective practice requires individual's engagement in **cognitive**, **metacognitive** and **affective** (emotional) dimensions.

PRINCIPLES

Reflection is a continuous component of the course and the whole program

Ongoing

Reflection is a lifelong skill that has to be fostered and improved.

Fostered and guided

Reflection is only a beginning step to understanding the meaning of actions and events.

Not a mere retelling of what happened

Reflection triggers questioning one's values, beliefs and norms

Concerns doing the right things vs. doing things right

Reflection should be designed to reveal new perspectives, and raise new questions.

Poses challenging questions

Connected reflection builds bridges between content learning, personal reflections, and first-hand experiences.

Connects experience with other areas of students' learning and development

Description
What happened

Feelings
What were you thinking and feeling?

Evaluation
What was good and bad about the experience?

Analysis
What sense can you make of the situation?

Conclusion
What did you learn from the situation and what could you have done differently?

Action Plan
How will you deal with a similar situation in the future and what changes do you find appropriate?

THREE LEVELS OF REFLECTION

Reflection at this level is very basic and mostly only describes what happened during an experience or event.

Superficial Descriptive Reflection

At this level of reflection, learners take a retrospective view of what happened and begin to explore their thoughts, feelings, assumptions and gaps of knowledge as part of the process.

Medium Dialogic Reflection

This level of reflection requires learners to deeply reflect on how an experience changed/influenced their views of self, relationships, society, and so on.

Deep Critical Reflection

Reflective Activity Guide

Dimensions to reflect on

Steps for reflection	**Experience/Activity**	**Process & Procedures**	**Subject matter/Content**
Description	What happened? When and where did it happen? Who were present? What did they do/say? What did you do/say? What did you want to happen?	What does the (teamwork) process like? What was your role? What do you have to deal with in your environment? What were your assumptions about the process/teamwork/your role/others' role and what really happened?	What did you learn? (theory, concept, etc.) What were the key content and learning modes you appreciated? How has the concept(s) you have learned changed or reinforced your understanding.
Feelings Personal Level (competences, beliefs, assumptions, core qualities)	What were you feeling during and after the situation? What do you think other people were feeling about the situation? What do you feel about the situation now? What do you think other people feel about the situation now? What does this say about your personality, values, assumptions, background, beliefs, etc? Were there any feelings you had during the experience that may have impacted the experience?	How did you feel about your role? How did you feel about the teamwork process? What did the others do, how did that make you feel? Why did you feel what you felt about your role, others' roles and teamprocess as a whole? What does this say about your personality, values, assumptions, background, beliefs, etc? Were there any feelings you had during the experience that may have impacted the process and your role?	How does the concept/content relate to you personally? How has the concept(s) you have learned changed or affected your feelings?
Evaluation	What was good&bad about the experience? What went well, what did not go so well?	How was your performance within the team/as an individual? How did you and other people contribute to the situation (positively and negatively)?	How did you use the course content? Do you think you used the course content well (enough) for the experience/activity? How?
Analysis	What sense can you make of the experience? Why did things go well, why didn't they go well? What might have helped or improved things?	Could you have responded in a different way? How? Could the team have responded in a different way? How? Could the process be different? How? What knowledge, skills, and attitudes can help you (and others) understand/analyze the situation? How has this experience changed/influenced your view of self, team dynamics, relationships, society, etc?	How can the theory explain what happened? Did course content help you make sense of the experience? How? What further research/theories/models can help you make sense of the experience/activity? What does the content mean to you and the whole world? How has this experience changed/influenced your view of the course content?
Conclusion	What else could you have done? What would you change? What have you learnt? What skills would you need to handle this better? Which competences, core qualities could you use next time?	How could this have been a more positive situation for everyone involved?	What does/will this new knowledge change for you? How? What else would you like to learn about this content (theory, concept, etc.)
Action Plan	What knowledge, skills, and attitudes do you need for the changes you want to make? How will you develop the necessarry competencies? How /where can you use your new knowledge and experience? How will you adapt your actions or improve your competencies **What are the next steps that I will take for my personal & professional development - to become a force for a positive change?**	What knowledge, skills, and attitudes do you need for the next steps? How will I develop the required skills I need? **What are the next steps that I will take for my personal & professional development - to become a force for a positive change?**	What knowledge/concepts do you need for the next steps? How will you improve your (content) knowledge? **What are the next steps that I will take for my personal & professional development - to become a force for a positive change?**