
**Publication type:** Journal article  

**Aim/objectives:** To examine developments in experiential learning in the context of higher education  

**Geographic focus:** United States  

**Methods:** Longitudinal case studies  

**Key findings:** This article examines the learning interface between the individual styles of students and the institutional environment, illustrated through a “learning space framework.” Through this examination, principles are presented for the enhancement of experiential learning in higher education, along with suggestions for implementation. This implementation is holistic in its coverage, considering development across curriculum, faculties, students, administration, staff and resources, coordinated around an institution-wide vision of learning. Alternatively, fragmented approaches would fail to create the synergies required to achieve broad change.  

**Lessons for adaptive learning:** If these findings can be applied in the context of collective learning within complex social-ecological systems, adaptive learning “spaces” need broad coverage along with a coordinated vision. The issue with much learning in the natural resource and sustainability space is that it is, at best, often fragmented and lacks continuity. Where there is an institutional approach to learning (for example, within disaster management), this learning tends to be confined within narrowly defined boundaries of operational and strategic management efficiency. If adaptive learning is to be effective within a broader vision of sustainability and resilience, a more holistic and contiguous matching of learning needs and types are required.  

**Keywords:** Curriculum development, experiential learning, institutions, higher education, change