

Defining the Difference Between Skills, Strategies and Process

Skill	Strategy
A skill is the acquired ability to automatically and unconsciously apply of multiple strategies to accomplish a goal.	A strategy is a conscious use of discrete parts or subcomponents of a skill to improve performance.
Skills are product-oriented observable behaviors such as answers to questions, answers on tests, or product production.	Strategies are process-oriented, cognitive processes, which are generally thought to be unobservable.
Skill instruction stresses repeated practice in applying skills until they become habitual responses to particular tasks.	Strategy instruction requires the user to practice it alone and in combination with other skills to achieve mastery of the skill.
Skill Examples	Strategy Examples
Reading	Self-correct
	Using decoding/phonics
	Make and confirm predictions
Multiplication	The lattice method of multiplying
	Skip counting
	Repeated addition
Experimentation	Posing Questions
	Stating an hypothesis
	Trial & error
Research	Creating a thesis statement
	Note taking
	Citing sources
Creativity	Fluency
	Flexibility
	Elaboration
Critical Reasoning	Comparing/contrasting
	Categorizing
	Evaluating
Problem Solving	Defining the problem
	Working backwards
	Drawing conclusions
Self-Regulation	Planning
	Organizing
	Monitoring
	Self-Questioning

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Process

How a learner practices the strategy or skill. Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle* suggest we learn strategies and can put to practice skills in four ways:

- **Concrete Process:** Doing it
- **Reflective Process:** Thinking about it
- **Abstract Process:** Talking about it
- **Active Process:** Trying something new with it

Effective practice and evidence would suggest that using all or most of the four processes during the learning will allow for greater retention of knowledge. Any one of these processes can be done through a style, such as Gardner's Multiple Intelligences or Sternberg's Successful Intelligences, or a modality, such as visual, auditory or kinesthetic.

EXAMPLE:

- Concrete Process:
 - Verbal/Linguistic: reading the directions from the text
 - Creative: Design a new way to do the activity
 - Auditory: Listen to a podcast of the directions
- Reflective Process:
 - Logical/Mathematical: sequence (step-by-step) what you did
 - Practical: Define when you might use this strategy
 - Visual: Draw a graphic of how you came to the answer
- Abstract Process:
 - Interpersonal: In a group, discuss the outcome of the actions of each character
 - Analytical: Detail the effect the character's actions had on other characters
 - Kinesthetic: Role play a scene the best describes the character's actions
- Active Process:
 - Musical/Rhythmic: Create a song that will help you remember the formula
 - Creative: Elaborate on the formula to describe when it might be the most useful
 - Visual: Diagram, in the simplest form, the formula

*Learning Theories Knowledgebase (2012, May). Experiential Learning (Kolb) at Learning-Theories.com.