



Teaching the Circular Economy Through Community Embedded Learning

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The Problem

Why this matters

92+ million tonnes of textile waste globally

Sportswear = fast fashion model (short lifecycle, high waste)

Up to 60% of football kits destroyed annually

Circular economy taught **conceptually**,
not operationally

20 MILLION
FOOTBALL SHIRTS
WILL BE
DESTROYED AFTER
THE WORLD CUP

SOURCE FC88





Research Aim

Introduces *Game Changers* experiential learning model for the circular economy

Embeds:

- Circular economy

- Lifecycle thinking

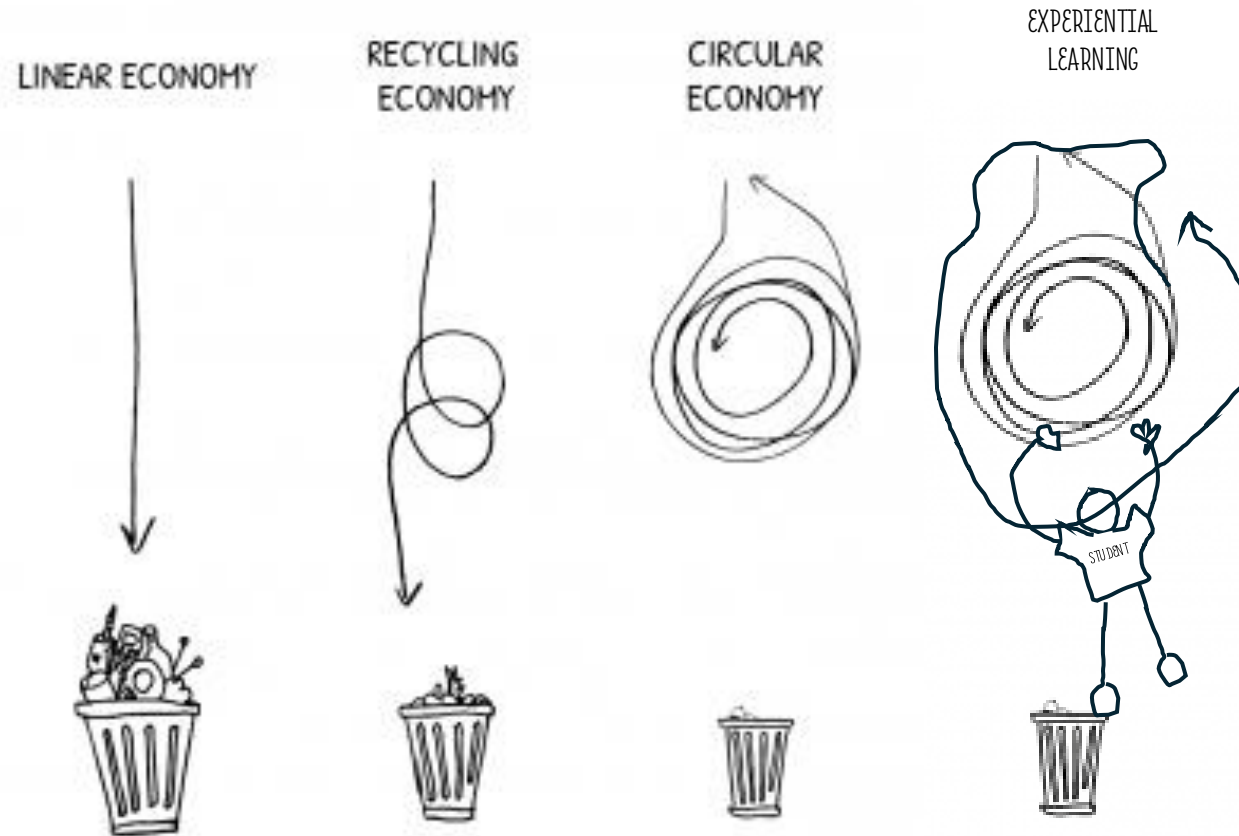
- Community engagement

- Partner Engaged Learning

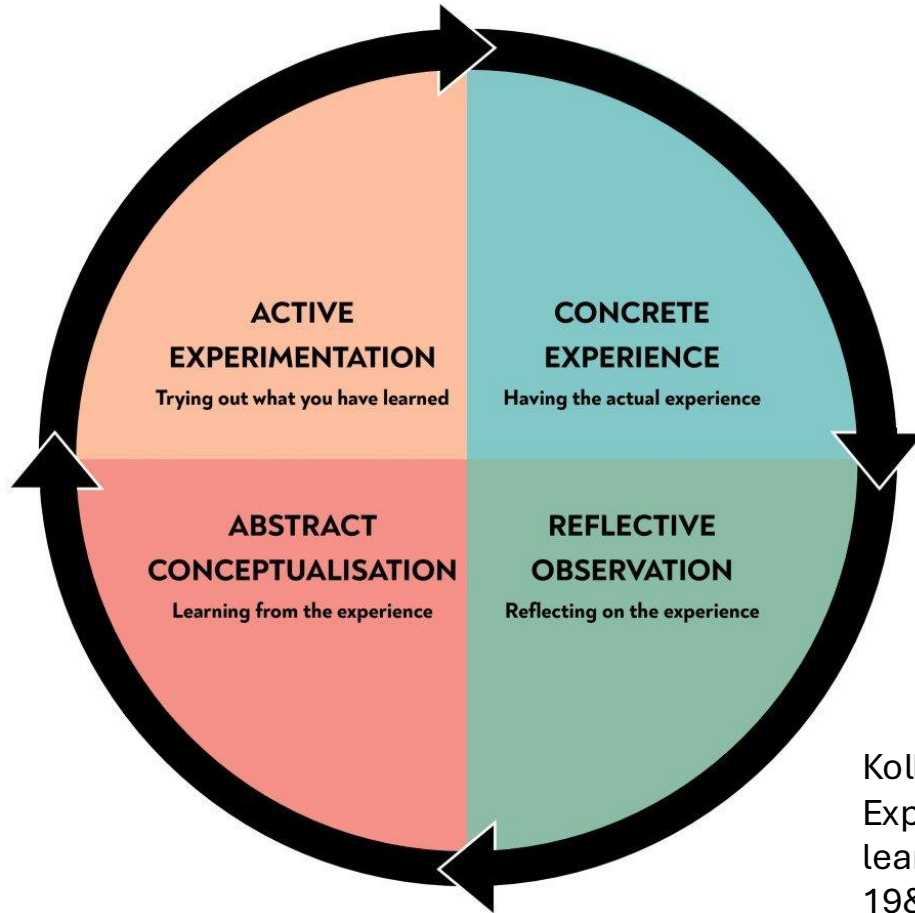
Aim:

Bridge the gap between **theory and real-world circular economy practice.**

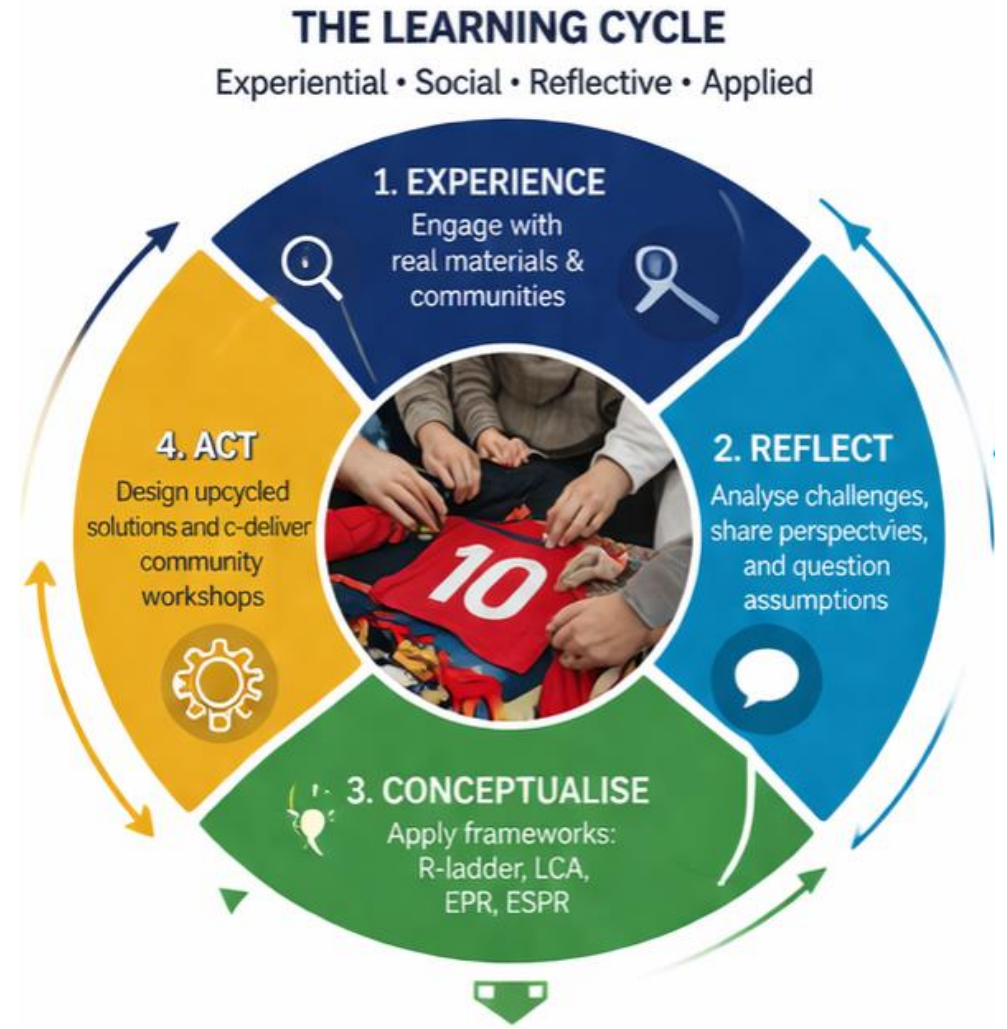
Circular economy as experiential learning



The Learning Cycle



Kolb
Experiential
learning cycle
19&&



Manchester: undergraduate OM integration

- Started as an Operations Management approach to teaching the circular economy
- Developed into stand along Sustainability in Action unit
- Focus on Partner Engaged learning pilot unit for FSE



Sustainability in Action Unit

- Circular Economy teaching
- Surplus sportswear tops from local sources
- hands on learning experience
- Community engagement
- External partners, Age Uk, Oxfam, Manchester United Foundation



THE GAME CHANGERS PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

A Material-Embedded, Community-Engaged Approach to Teaching Circular Operations Management

Bridging theory and practice through material engagement, social learning, and real-world circularity challenges.



Teaching Innovation

- **Core Idea: Material-Based Pedagogy**
- Learning through **real waste materials (surplus textiles)** Students engage with:
 - Material constraints
 - Process design
 - Circular strategies
- Abstract → Applied & Analytical → Experiential

Student feedback

- The project has **opened my eyes to the R strategies and up cycling, and it's importance in sustainable fashion and the circular economy.**
- This project has been a really good opportunity for FBT students to grow our understanding and physical skills of up cycling, considering new and exciting clothing regeneration options that focus on keeping the sustainable circular economy. **The project has contributed to changing mindsets** regarding old clothing, through inspiring ideas and tangible skills that can be taken away.



Future Development

- New module: *Sustainability in Action at University of Manchester Sept 2026*
- Deeper industry and community collaboration
- Expanded international delivery

