

BMSW4001

Academic and Employability Skills

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Kolb's model of reflection	3
3. Topic 1: PUBLIC SPEAKING.....	5
4. Topic 2: EMPLOYABILITY.....	6
5. Topic 3: REPORT WRITING.....	6
6. Topic 4: ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL THINKING.....	7
7. Conclusion.....	8
8. References.....	9

1. Introduction

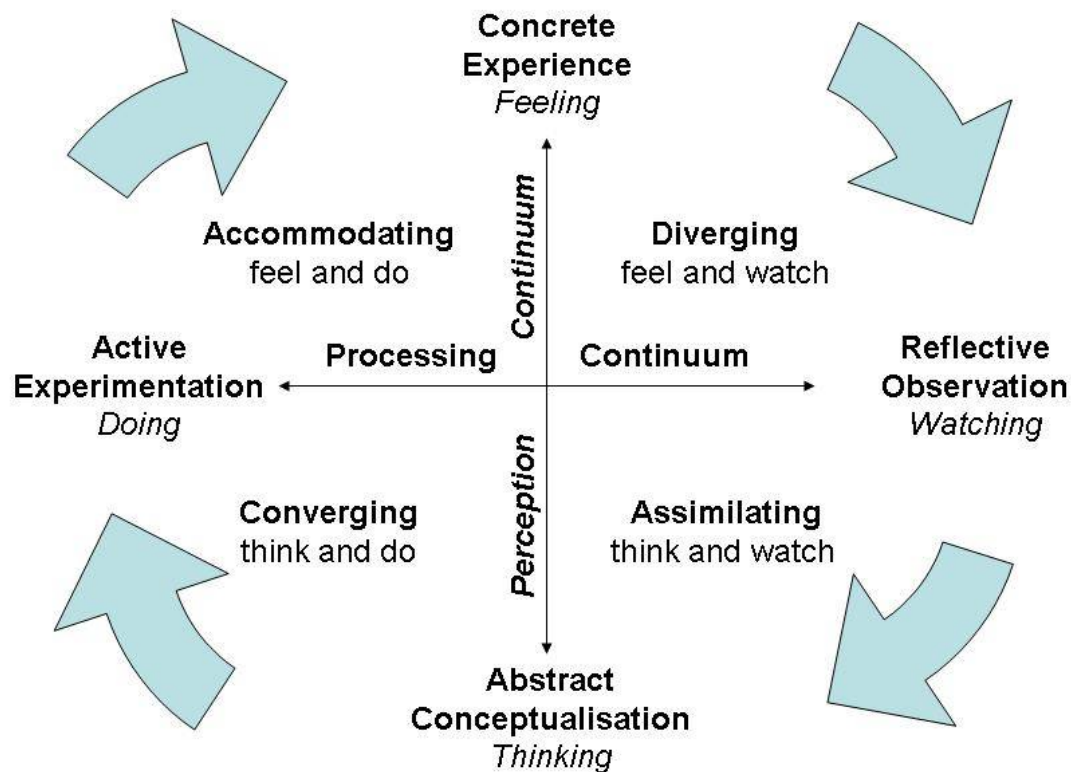
Competencies are fundamental characteristics that lead to superior performance in an individual. They have attributes, talents, abilities and features that help people to succeed. Competencies are capable of being created rather than defined in people. This expertise, which is very important in my accounting career, is primarily built through the module on academic and employability skills, which is basically a way for practitioners to learn how to enhance their professional skills, to focus on what we do and how we do them. This module is necessary for the development of professional skills in every person and I am no exception. This is because the safety of an individual in professional development lies not in the job or business for which they work, but in the abilities, knowledge and experiences they have inside themselves. (Megginson & Whitaker 2007). This highlights the need for advanced and reliable education in one's career to improve one's knowledge. This illustrates the need in one's career for advanced and reliable education to enhance one's knowledge. This thesis would explain how my technical abilities have been influenced by the Academic and Employability Skills module. In my learning analysis, I will evaluate the module critically and clarify how it has affected me positively or otherwise, define my areas of strengths and weaknesses and establish action plans to improve my strengths and remove or at least boost my weakness, and then conclude.

I will describe learning briefly. Learning is the development of information or skills that helps one to learn something new or to be able to do something that we have not done before. (Winstanley D., 2005). Learning is the creation of facts, skills and methods, and it is the process by which experience is converted to create content. (About Kolb, 1984). The transformation of information into experience, the development of skills and the capacity to put knowledge into action are also included in learning. I will also highlight what is required in all five competencies and relate it to my teaching in the module. I will speaking about 4 topics learned in the module: Public speaking, Employability, analytical and critical thinking and about report writing.

I'm going to use Kolb's model of reflection to explain my learning about these four topics.

2. KOLB'S MODEL OF REFLECTION

Kolb's reflective paradigm is referred to as "experiential learning" The basis for this model is our own information, which is then systematically evaluated, analyzed and calculated in three measures. Until this process has been fully experienced, the new experiences will form the starting point for another loop. Its methodology is based on the premise that learning is recursive. Hence his period of learning, which defines the stages of experiential learning and, above all, offers a model of training practice. It is divided into 4 sequential phases:



Kolb's model of reflection

1. Concrete Experience :

You actively and physically experience a situation, which makes you aware that in order to learn something new or improve your existing ability and practice, you need to systematically reflect. At this point, you can make a note of the specific situation and just clarify what you see, how you feel and what you think.

2. Reflective observation:

Now it is time to concentrate more thoroughly on what has happened in that situation. The following are the questions that you need to ask yourself: what worked? What's gone wrong? Why did this disease occur? Why was it that other people and I behaved the way we did?

3. Abstract conceptualisation:

The leading question for this stage leads on from the questions in the reflective observation stage: what should I have done better or differently? How can I better myself? Initially, you continue to

find new ways to deal with the problem and think up solutions to it when you face a similar situation again. Also, this is the stage where you can get a better understanding and more feedback, this is the stage where you can consult peers and literature.

4. Active experimentation:

The newly gained theoretical knowledge is now being practiced at this level. You return to your practice and test out the latest methods with your own reflections and ideas on changes as well as hypotheses. Some of them will work, others will not, but this is then the basis for the new cycle automatically. As interactions become the latest "concrete experiments" inside the active stage of experimentation

3. Topic 1: PUBLIC SPEAKING

"Public speaking (also called oratory or oration) is giving speech face to face to live audience". (Wikipedia, 2020). However, because of the evolution of public speaking, it is modernly known as any way of speaking (formally and informally) between an audience and the speaker. Historically, public speaking has been considered a part of the practice of persuasion. The act may accomplish specific purposes, including teaching, persuading and entertaining. Not only is public speaking an intrinsic skill.

In fact, *before* the ACE module, I thought that the best public speakers possessed themselves innate skills about their capacity to speak at audience. With this module I learned what I have to do to be a good public speaker, so, now I know what I have to do in term of pre-talk preparation, handouts, opening, how to speak, the body language to use during a public presentation.

This training, in the Kolb model, can be resumed so:

- Concrete experience: I thought about my first time I spoke in public in an workgroup presentation and I listened to the lecturer;
- Reflective observation: I thought about what I said during the presentation and the way I said, thinking about the lecturer attitudes;
- Abstract conceptualization: I thought about the public speaking process;
- Active experimentation: I have considered ways to improve and I tried out methods and strategies based on experiences made.

4. Topic 2: EMPLOYABILITY

What is Employability? So it is write on the Cambridge Business English Dictionary, Employability is “ the skills and abilities that allow you to be employed”. *There will no longer be jobs for life, but employability for life*” (Cambridge Business English Dictionary, 2020). Employability is, in basic terms, about being able to get and sustain satisfying jobs. Employability is a collection of abilities, skills, experience, understanding and personal characteristics that make an individual more likely to choose and secure jobs in which they can be happy and successful.

In ACE module we spoke about the employability skills as Communication, Teamwork, Problem-solving, Organization and planning, Leadership, Learning, active listening.

Before the module I thought the employability depended only by academic formation. I will explain my thoughts: for me to be employable each of us must to have an academic path finalized to the job that each of us would like to do. That was all.

With the module I understood that this is not enough: to become more employable, as employee or as professional, we have to improve our innate and the specific skills for the job we desire, especially about commercial awareness.

This topic, in the Kolb model, can be resumed so:

- Concrete experience: I thought about my first job and to my behavior, even mental, that I had in carryng out the same;
- Reflective observation: I listened what lecturer said and what the module taught through the presentations and the slides shown;
- Abstract conceptualization: I thought about the employability skills I have to improve to become a good accountant;
- Active experimentation: I’m trying to improve my skills doing what I learned while I work testing the results through questionnaire.

5.Topic 3: REPORT WRITING

Academic writing is straightforward, succinct, concentrated, coordinated and backed by proof. Its purpose is to encourage the reader's understanding. It has a formal tone and style, but it is not complicated and does not require the use of long sentences and complex words. In each subject discipline, there will be some writing conventions, terms and modes of discourse that you will get to know. There are, however, some general features of academic writing that are relevant across all disciplines.

Academic writing is designed and concentrated (demonstrates knowledge and shows an understanding of the subject), structured (is coherent, written in a logical order, and incorporates material and related points), evidenced (displays understanding of the subject area, supports views and claims with facts, and is correctly referenced), formal in tone and style (uses suitable terminology and tenses, and is simple, succinct, and balanced)

This is what I know after the ACE module. Before the module I thought that an academic writing were just a report in which I have to resume some matters in chapters without a well-defined style for sentences construction and in the general preparation of the essay.

Using the Kolb model to this topic I can resume that:

- Concrete experience: I thought about my first academic write work;
- Reflective observation: I listened to what the lecturer has explained in the online classroom and what the module taught through the online struments adopted during the lessons;
- Abstract conceptualization: I thought about how improve my performance in relation to the academic writing;
- Active experimentation: what is better than the assignment to test what I learned?

5. Topic 4: ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL THINKING

Analytical thinking is the ability to solve complex problems by analyzing data that you have accumulated and structured. Analytical thinkers can identify trends that often lead to innovative solutions between datasets. They're able to transform noisy information and data into effect. They help teams, as strategic thinkers, make informed choices based on collected data and defined goals. Analytical thinkers also assist their team to accept new concepts and to build a mentality for development.

Mental method of breaking down complex knowledge or detailed data into smaller pieces is named "critical thinking". This, in essence, demands that you use your capacity to reason. It is about becoming an active learner rather than a passive user of knowledge (Skillsyouneed.com, 2020): Independent thinkers question ideas and assumptions rigorously instead of accepting them at face value. They will also try to determine if the definitions, declarations and results represent

the whole picture and are optional.. Critical thinkers would systematically define, examine and solve problems rather than through intuition or instinct.

Before the module I thought that an analytical and critical thinker was an individual with an innate gift: an high IQ and an high capacity to solve the problem, nothing else.

With the Ace module I understood that, surely a high IQ is required, I think so, to be an analytical and critical thinker but it is needed also a specific formation on, for example, reporting, effective research, budgeting in addition to daily training on our brain (with reading something interesting for us, talking with a professional in a field we are curious about, have the habit to learn something new each and every day).

Using the Kolb model, I can say, briefly, that these are the four steps:

- Concrete experience: I thought about my way to solve a problem;
- Reflective observation: I have read all the material and the handouts lecturer give me through Moodle and on the online lessons;
- Abstract conceptualization: I thought about how improve my skills regarding the problem solving skill, relatively mostly to my analytical and critical thinking;
- Active experimentation: I try to be more analytical and critical when I find a problem during my work.

7. CONCLUSION

It is not possible to underestimate the value of this module to my professional growth. It's like an opener for the eye. As a professional, it teaches me what to do and what not to do, shows me where to develop my skills to be great in my career. In fact, I now understand that not only knowing what to do, but also knowing how best to do it to produce the greatest outcome is the foundation of the road to professional success.

Based on what I now know about goal setting, self-awareness, feedback, motivation and reflection, I am particularly pleased with my current and probably future self-improvement.

To conclude, I am better prepared now for the challenge ahead, not as a student but as a specialist, with the course in general.

8. REFERENCES

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