

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

(BMSW4001_LON)

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Introduction

Reflective writing has become a key component of reflective practice and is the core of concepts learned from experience. It is claimed in the reflective practice literature that reflective writing can develop the writer's critical thinking and analytical abilities, promote his cognitive development, enable creativity and unique connections to be established between different information, and contribute to new perspectives, allows improvement and ability to develop to solve issues. (Jasper, 2005)

This is a structured academic report that contains my reflections on learning academic topics using a recognized reflection model. I chose a few topics from the previous terminology and considered my experience and any learning I did outside the classroom, reflecting how they helped me. I will also analyze public literature related to specific topics I have discussed, and use feedback from class activities.

Models of Reflection

There are many models which can be used to guide reflection. It can be noticed, many common themes are shared by these models. Each model takes a slightly different approach but they all cover similar stages. The main difference is the number of steps included and how in-depth their creators have chosen to be. Different people will be drawn to different models depending on their preferences. (Cambridge, 2020)

The most popular models are:

ERA Cycle

Driscoll's What Model

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Gibb's Reflective Cycle

I am going to use Kolb's model to reflect on four topics I have studied recently. These topics are:

1. **SWOT Analysis**
2. **PDP (Personal Development Plan)**
3. **PowerPoint Presentation**
4. **Public Speaking**

Kolb's experiential learning

This learning theory was developed by David A. Kolb in 1984. ELT (Kolb's experiential learning Theory) is where an individual's abilities and occupation necessities can be evaluated in a similar language that its commensurability can be estimated. (Simms, 1983) The learning cycle fundamentally incorporates four phases, in particular:

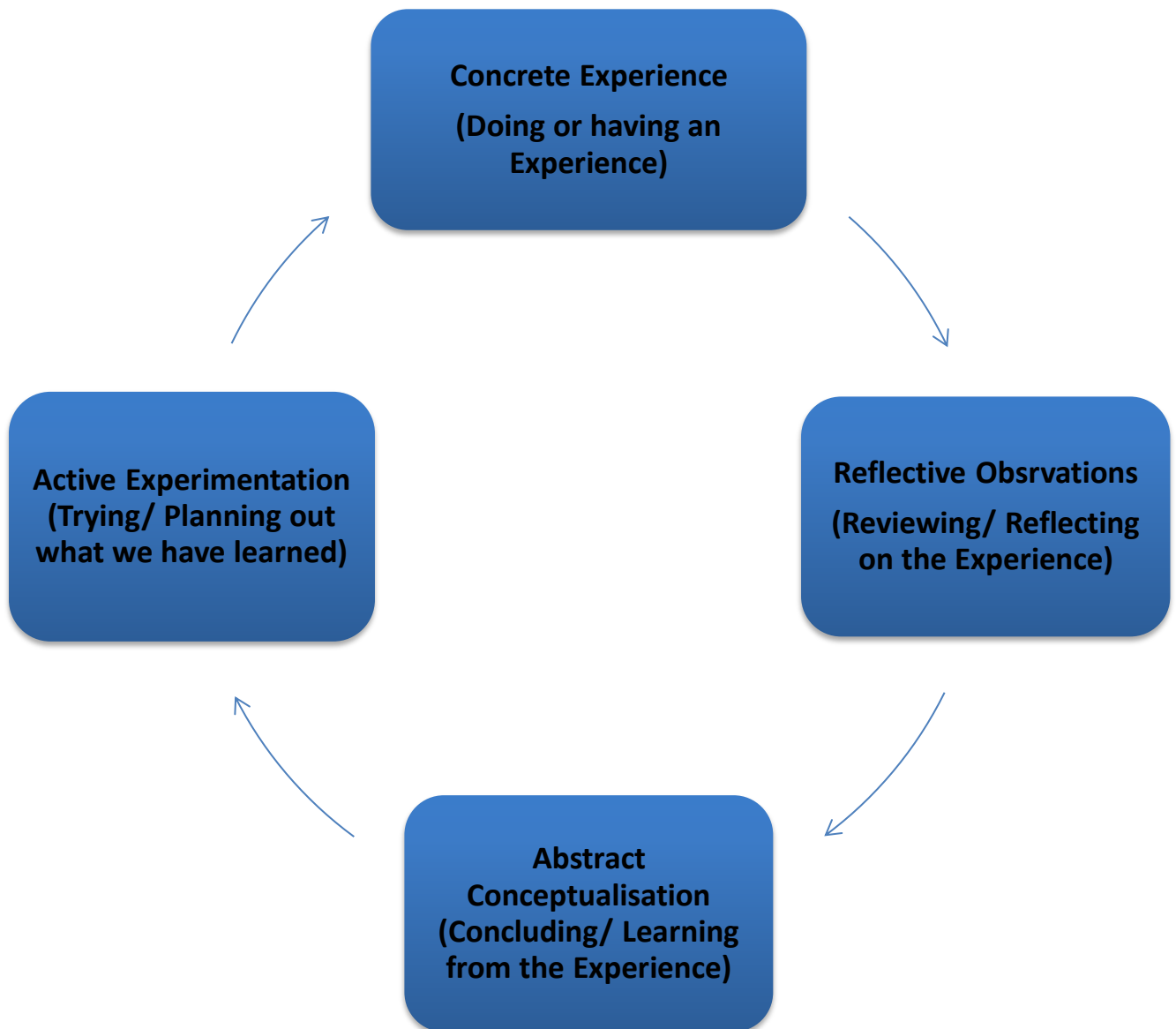
Concrete experience

Reflective observation

Abstract conceptualization

Active experimentation

As students steadily complete the learning cycle, they can see viable learning. Students can likewise enter the cycle at any phase of the cycle in a legitimate arrangement. Concrete experience is the first stage. Students will experience new encounters or rethink existing ones. At that point enter the following stage, reflective observation, where students reflect on their encounters from personal perspectives. After that is abstract conceptualization, students structure groundbreaking thoughts or alter existing theoretical thoughts dependent on the appearance in the reflection and perception stage. The last stage, the active experimentation stage is the place the student applies the novel plans to his environmental factors to check whether there are any alterations in the following appearance of the experience. This subsequent experience turns into the solid experience for the start of the following cycle, starting at the main stage. This cycle can occur over a short or long time.



Kolb's 'Experiential Learning Cycle' (1984)

1. SWOT Analysis

 Strengths • Job Experience • Creativity • Computer and technology skills	 Weaknesses • Depression • Lack of educational qualification
 Opportunities • New job or business • Study further	 Threats • Lack of funding for business • Hard to focus (Motivation) because of study break

My SWOT Analysis

- Stage 1 (Concrete Experience): The first time I ever heard about the SWOT analysis was from the lecturer. Before that, I did not have any idea about this model. I heard and read, experts/ scholars often advice to identify our strengths and weakness, so they can be magnified and minimise respectively to plan for the future. But I never came across just a simple but well-constructed model. In our class, we were asked by our lecturer to instantly write down some strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and it had been a while that I looked at myself to identify these.
- Stage 2 (Reflective Observations): Rest of the lesson on that day I kept on thinking about this fascinating model and wondered if I could apply this model early enough, my life could have been more constructive and organised. I knew my weaknesses back of my mind but probably it is human nature to avoid harsh reality. After coming

back home, I watched a few videos and read a few articles to know about this analysis more and tried to compare these to my situations.

- Stage 3 (Abstract Conceptualisation): I understood this model can be utilized consistently, for a day or even in a year on an individual's social, business, profession or even in personal life.
- Stage 4 (Active Experimentation): Since my first introduction to SWOT I am trying to use it for any planning, confirming strategy, decision making and forecasting in my business. Not only that, but I have also been implementing this model to get rid of the personal weaknesses I have. So far, my life is much organised than before as a result of this analysis.

2. PDP (Personal Development Plan)

My Challenges	Why would I like to improve them?	What are my plans to improve?	What resources do I need to improve the skills?	Target Time
Quit Smoking	Smoking is reducing my stamina, it is very harmful and expensive	I have to develop a mindset to focus on my target. I can not give up	Meditation Exercise, Healthy food NHS help	30 th June 2020
Qualification on Digital Marketing	To improve my business in the digital world	My IT skills	I need a budget of £200-£300 and a computer with good specifications. I have made contact with some IT schools	1 st December 2020
Academic qualification	To obtain a new job or start a new business	I have enrolled myself to study Health and Social care (Hons) in a University	Attend lectures regularly and study hard	1 st June 2022

My Development Plan (PDP)

Stage 1 (Concrete Experience): I was asked to do an exercise in one of the very early classes of my University days. It was 'Creating a PDP' (Personal Development Plan) instantly. I was aware of this kind of plan model but never done it on paper. In my business life recently. The closest thing I ever did was creating a business plan. It has similarity with PDP, especially, the forecasting and target parts.

Stage 2 (Reflective Observations): I was aware of my long time goals since I restarted my study in this University but PDP gave me a realisation that planning in real life is not about the only long term and it is not about financial or materialistic, we can even plan to improve our health or moral too by creating a short term (3 months to 1 year) plan too.

Stage 3 (Abstract Conceptualisation): In every sector in our lives we need to have proper planning and we have to be focused and carry out our tasks to achieve that certain goal. Now and then we have to tick our checklist too to measure our growth/ improvement and readjust our vision if necessary.

Stage 4 (Active Experimentation): Since the COVID 19 pandemic started, my business has been suffering a lot. It will be unlikely to hit the target this year, as per as my business is a concern. Therefore, I have made PDP in June'20 and created a fresh list of challenges and adjusted the previous set up goals. I have been monitoring my development closely to make sure I am on the right track or not. I have already reached target which I set up a couple of months ago; quit smoking. Hopefully, I will be able to accomplish other long term goals too.

3. Presentation and Public Speaking

Public speaking is a delicate aptitude that requires superb relational abilities, excitement communication skills, enthusiasm and the capacity to draw in with a crowd of people.

Public speakers possess this social skill, public speaking which makes them able to speak to a gathering. Introductions run from addressing a group of workers to a huge crowd at a public meeting or occasion. (Anon., 2019)

Stage 1 (Concrete Experience): I consider myself a friendly person. As a child, I used to be a very shy and introvert person. I trained up myself to overcome this social anxiety. Even though I became very confident in one to one conversation in a friendly and informal atmosphere. But I was not quite confident addressing a group of people to speak or making a formal presentation. As this topic is part of our study module, I started to learn about these, I became aware of all the ins and out of the formal speaking and presentation to a group or crowd. Also, this was the first time I started to learn about PowerPoint presentation even though I came across of this in my school days.

Stage 2 (Reflective Observations): I realised that making a public speech is not always being opened up and having a friendly conversation. I need to have a firm understanding of effective communication, understand the mood of the crowd interpret my thoughts in a formal and constructive language. On the other hand online presentation (such as Excel, Powerpoint) my words, pictures, data should be precisely chosen and to the point.

Stage 3 (Abstract Conceptualisation): It needs practice, in-depth knowledge of the topic, communication skill to be a good public speaker and a good presenter. Online presentation needs a certain amount of creativity and IT skills too.

Stage 4 (Active Experimentation): Recently, I made a speech to my colleagues to explain my company's vision and target of the company under the global pandemic circumstances. I used my recently learnt Powerpoint presentation skills on one of my assignments and got merit marks from the lecturers.

4. Academic Writing

Academic writing refers to a style of articulation that specialists use to characterise the scholarly limits of their controls and explicit specialized

topics. Attributes of scholastic composing incorporate a proper tone, utilization of the third-individual instead of first-individual viewpoint (generally), a reasonable spotlight on the examination issue under scrutiny, and exact word decision. Like authority dialects embraced in different callings, for example, law or medication, scholastic composing is intended to pass on concurred significance about complex thoughts or ideas for a gathering of insightful specialists. (California, 2020) (Ivanič, 1998)

Stage 1 (Concrete Experience): I grew up in Dhaka, Bangladesh. I moved to the UK in 2005. Even though English was not my first language, I had an IELTS score of 7. Growing up watching Hollywood movies gave me confidence in my speaking and understanding the language. But after starting the University course in London and learning about Academic Writing my confidence in writing in English got a bit shaken up. I came across with a new conception of writing which I was not familiar with before.

Stage 2 (Reflective Observations): I began to see the difference between informal daily life's language, Hollywood movies slangs and terms are prohibited when we write a report or journal. Here, I need to explain a topic in a formal language with accurate authenticity, terminology, have to give appropriate credits to other scholars. Academic writing should be analytical, critical and on occasions argumentative too.

Stage 3 (Abstract Conceptualisation): I have spoken to my lectures, followed their instruction, watch videos, read many scholar's journals and books and practised.

Stage 4 (Active Experimentation): On the last University term, I wrote 2 academic reports. One was quite good, according to my lecturer and others got just pass marks. I received critical feedback for both reports and tried to identify the errors I made to improve.

Conclusion

The way toward thinking profoundly includes time and requires some critical analysis yet prompts more prominent knowledge about ourselves – our beliefs, motives, convictions and intentions.

Accordingly, we can distinguish approaches to improve our academic skills, improve our examination propensities and addition more noteworthy knowledge into the subjects we are studying. Therefore, this report had a closer look at my approach and my reflections on learning academic topics using Kolb's reflection model and explained various stages to portrait my journey in the world academic study.

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Appendix:

<u>ACE</u> <u>Week 1</u>	
<u>Time Management</u>	
<u>The Eisenhower Method</u>	
Urgent	Not urgent
Finishing assign	Exercise
Important Submit	Getting Read for
Submitting Project	next term (Buy Books)
Health checkup (Critical)	
Prepare Food	Watching TV
Responding	Social media
Not Important to Emails (Social)	

Personal Development Plan

(Dewan Ashrafi)

	Short-Term Time Frame What do I want to accomplish in the next three to six months?	Mid-Term Time Frame What do I want to accomplish in the next six months to two years?	Long-Term Time Frame What do I want to accomplish in the next two to three years?
Section 1 - My Goals What are my overall goals that I want to accomplish in this time period? <i>Example: become a Student Affairs Officer; learn computer graphics</i>	Quit smoking	Qualification on Digital marketing	opening a Nursery in my area
Section 2 - Skills and Knowledge to be Learned What specifically do I need to learn? What project do I need to work on? <i>Example: Student advising; Banner; Dreamweaver; develop a procedures manual</i>	Meditation ~~Vid~~ Vid/inspirational Videos/Blogs	Basic IT skills	First Aid Health & Social Degree understanding laws & regulations
Section 3 - Next Steps How am I going to acquire the skills and knowledge? How am I going to do this project? <i>Example: take Dreamweaver class; do an informational interview; set up a project outline</i>	NHS Helpline Nicotine patch etc Cutting Down	contacted several online schools	Already enrolled in Health & Social Care (Horn)

Adapted from: <http://www.hr.ucdavis.edu/sdps/forms/IDP%20Final%2010.14.11.pdf>

	Short-Term Time Frame What do I want to accomplish in the next three to six months?	Mid-Term Time Frame What do I want to accomplish in the next six months to two years?	Long-Term Time Frame What do I want to accomplish in the next two to three years?
Section 4 - Resources What resources do I need? <i>Example: free time; funding</i>	I have to be busy with other things, Books, family etc	A good laptop, £200-£300	Certificate Knowledge Budget of 15-20k
Section 5 - Time Schedule What is my time schedule?	1st April to 30th Jun 20	1st April to 8 July 20	By Sep 2022
When will I start?	1st Apr 20	April 20	Started on Feb 20
When do I expect to finish?	30th Jun 20	July 20 20	Aug 2022
Section 6 - Completion When have I completed each step?	☐ _____ Date ☐ _____ Date ☐ _____ Date	☐ _____ Date ☐ _____ Date ☐ _____ Date	☒ Feb 2020 Date ☐ _____ Date ☐ _____ Date

Adapted from: <http://www.hr.ucdavis.edu/sdps/forms/IDP%20Final%2010.14.11.pdf>

<u>SWOT Analysis</u>	
<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weakness</u>
Creative Passionate Non-Judgmental	Depressed Lack of educational Qualification Pessimism
<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>
New Job / Business Study further Entrepreneur	~~Can~~ Lack of funding Hard to be focused (Study Break)

ACE
Employability

Top 5 Skills

Communication (verbal & written)

Time Management

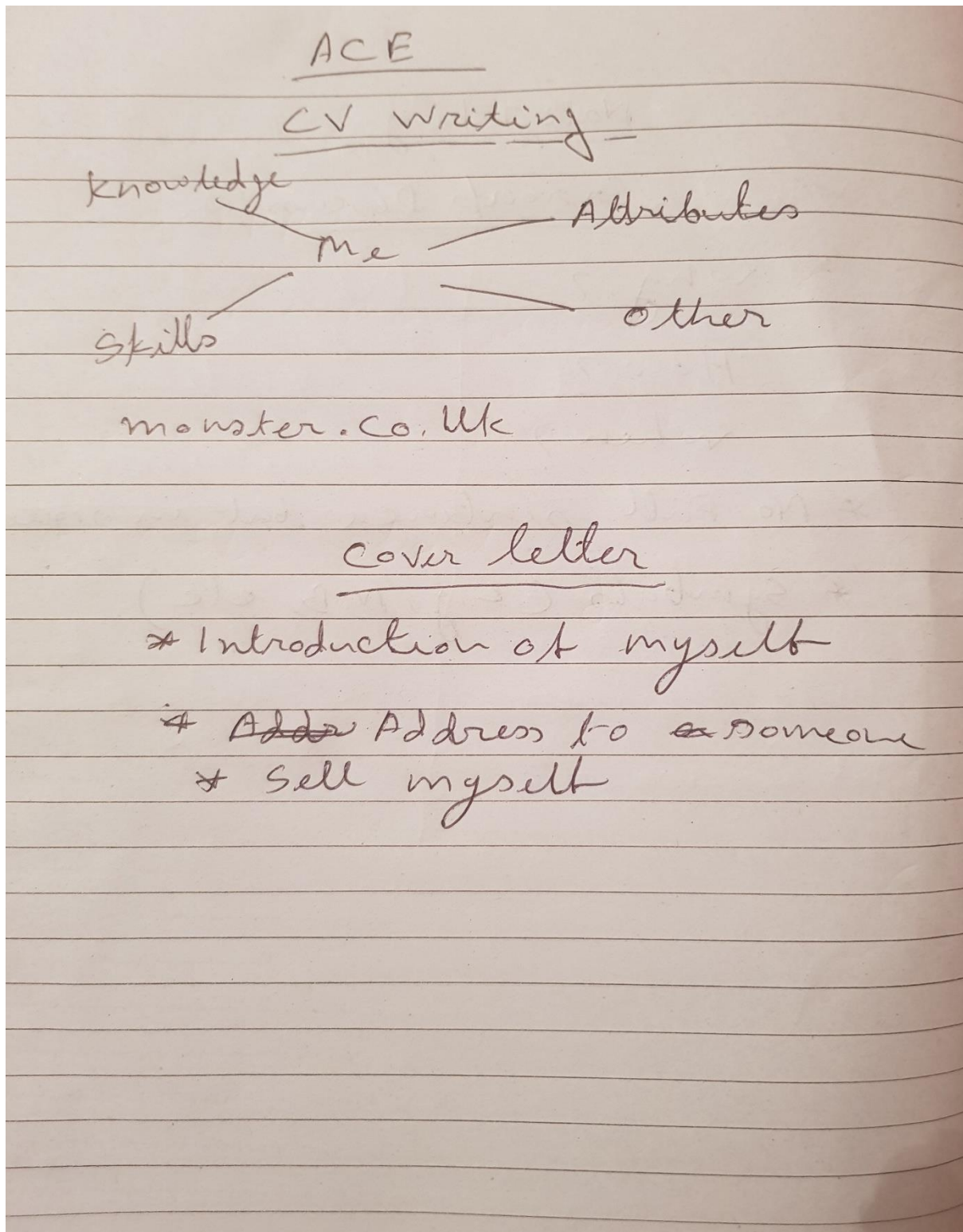
Motivation

Analytical

Plan

Flexibility

Not 1



ACE

Reflective writing

Assignment → 4-5 topics
iss using

Cribbs 'Reflective Cycle'

Kolb's 'Experimental Cycle'

Driscoll's Model

* Looking Back at something (idea or event)

* Analyze

* Meant for me

⇒ only 1st Person (unlike Academic)

⇒ other relevant sources
can be used

Conclusions → Personal Action
Plan