



ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

ACE Practical Portofolio



Name: Marinela Krasteva

Student id: 2110937

Module code: BMSW4001

Lecturer name: Sylvia Hoffmann

Word count: 2269

JANUARY 4, 2022

Contents:

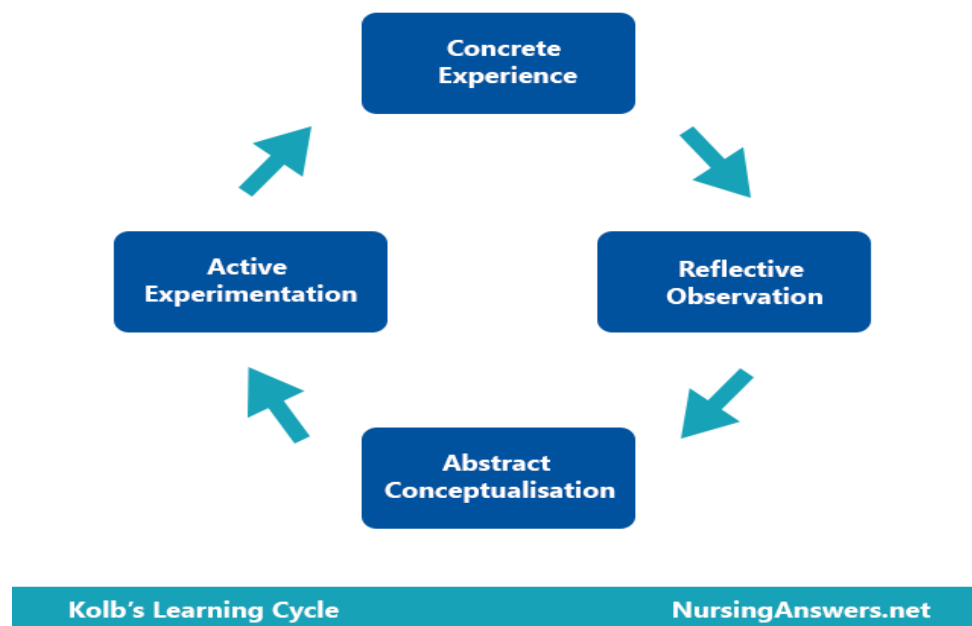
- **Introduction..... p. 2**
- **Kolb reflective cycle (1984) p. 2**
- **Paraphrasing..... p. 3**
- **Academic writing..... p. 4**
- **Summarising..... p. 5**
- **Public speaking and giving presentation..... p. 6**
- **Reflection on my presentation..... p. 7**
- **Conclusion..... p. 8**
- **References..... p. 9**
- **Appendix..... p. 11**

- **Introduction**

A model of reflection is a well-defined method from which individuals are able to benefit, and that is assisting them be aware of their personal knowledge and studying approaches. Moreover, thoughtful thinking lets individuals to connect their new information to their prior experience and employ new tactics to their daily tasks. Furthermore, the Kolb reflective cycle model of reflection that is based on learning from experience and is established on people's experiences, that are reviewed, examined, and assessed systematically. In this report will be discussed the Kolb reflective model and how this model can be applied to different topics as paraphrasing, academic writing, summarising and public speaking in order to improve an individual knowledge and create new experiences. Moreover, personal experiences and examples will be present in this report.

- **The Kolb reflective cycle**

David Kolb published his reflective cycle model in 1984. According to Kolb (1984) the process of development is created through the conversion of experience. Kolb model is characterized by four different techniques as concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation, in which the learner must go through all of them to create new experiences.



Concrete experience refers to a new situation that an individual come across with or a reinterpretation of a current knowledge. (McLeod. 2017)

Reflective observation checks if are any contradictions among the new experience and the knowledge. (McLeod, 2017)

Abstract conceptualisation refers to the stage where an individual reflected on a new concept or understood from their own experience. (McLeod, 2017)

Active experimentation is when an individual uses their new knowledge in practice to see what will occur. (McLeod, 2017)

- **Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing is a three phases approach where the original information from a text in written in a different way through rewording, rearranging, and rechecking that the new text keeps the meaning of the original text. (Coullie, 2020). Furthermore, Chi and Nguyen (2017) state that paraphrasing is an essential intellectual skill in the academic writing that involves greater reasoning and superior proficiency in writing. Also, Hirvela and Du (2013). claim that

paraphrasing is not reducing the size of a text, and this represent the distinction between the paraphrasing and summarising.

Fisk and Hurst (2003) claim that paraphrasing is a great tool to improve knowledge among students as it incorporates all the styles of communication as listening, reading, and writing, which contribute to a greater interpretation of a text. Moreover, according to King (2007) the capacity to rephrase key ideas from a textbook represents the understanding method that is needed when reading. Thus, great understanding is reached when a student progress from their actual knowledge to utilizing the textbook that was read, blended with their earlier experience in order to create understanding.

Additionally, paraphrasing helped me with my essays and reports writing, as it assisted me in avoiding plagiarism, understand a source good enough to write it in my own words and to avoid using direct quotations repeatedly. Moreover, the Kolb reflective cycle helped me understand how to correctly paraphrase by following the four steps characteristics to this learning model.

Concrete experience:

When I first come across paraphrasing, I didn't completely understand how to use it and I only tried to copy word by word and use synonyms to make it different from the original text.

Reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation:

These steps helped me to observe my mistakes, by using critical thinking. When I was changing word by word and use synonyms, lead me to a major mistake. Not only that I was doing plagiarism but as well I was writing a text without meaning, as using any type of synonym that I encountered was changing the meaning of the original text that I read.

Active experimentation:

Through activities in the classes and changing ideas between colleagues I understood how to correctly paraphrase a text and keep the original meaning of a text I read.

- **Academic writing**

Academic writing refers to the formal writing style that is utilized in universities, which students are expected to make use of when they create scholarship materials such as essays and reports. (Sheffield, n.d.) When using academic writing a student is required to follow

some mandatory characteristics such as a formal tone, avoid slangs, use a precise language, use the third person instead of first person, research academic materials and cite the sources they use in a proper manner. Furthermore, academic writing involves writers to connect with appropriate materials for the university, suggesting that students should illustrate important discoveries and theories, while avoiding using too much direct quotation, in order to support their perspectives. (Coullie,2020)

In addition, from academic writing I learned how to write formal letters, essays and reports in a correct way. This also helped me improve my knowledge and to think critically.

Furthermore, to understand academic writing and use it properly I utilized the four steps of the Kolb learning cycle as well.

Concrete experience:

As a non-native English speaker, academic writing was difficult at first for me. For example, some of the parts of the English grammar made me confused.

Reflective observation:

This step helped me to observe differences between my native language and English. An example would be the utilization of capitalisation (months, cities), commas that are utilised in a different way.

Abstract conceptualization:

With this step I understood, that instead of thinking first in my native language and after translating the words in English, I should think and write in English.

Active experimentation:

The explanations of the lessons and different activities done in class helped me understand better academic writing. Also, researching and writing different types of paragraphs and essays in my spare time helped me a lot in improving my academic writing.

- **Summarising**

Efficient summarising is based on understanding and the skill to differentiate amongst the main ideas and later to communicate the writer words briefly. (Coullie, 2020). Thus, summarising means to describe an original idea of an author in a shorter and more brief structure. In order to create an efficient summary a student should follow specific actions as skimming a text to pick up a general idea, focus on the key points, write notes about what he understands and recheck that he covered the main points. Furthermore, according to Leopold et al., (2015) argues that summarising is a strategy that might be possibly useful in the development of understanding the studying material and building complex plans. Moreover, according to Goldman (2012), recognising the main idea of a text and summarising it is considered to be helpful in enhancing the literacy of the students. Also, according to Marzec-Stawiarska (2016), summarising is a difficult intellectual ability that will improve in time, and which is closely associated with the authors educational capability and learning competences. Additionally, high-level experience let learners to utilize additional linguistic descriptions in summaries which result in more efficient summarising. (Yasuda, 2015).

As well, summarising assisted me to understand exactly how to determinate the important points of a text and find reliable ideas to support them. Besides, after using the Kolb's learning model I realised that learning how to perfectly summarise, assisted me in reducing my mental load, while I was enhancing my motivation and increased my engagement in the class.

- **Public speaking and giving presentation**

Public speaking is the practice of producing a speech in front of an audience which needs to be persuaded by the speaker words and fascinated by their meaning. (Nikitina, 2011). According to Clokie and Fourie (2016), public speaking and giving presentations are individual exchangeable skills which can boost the chances of employability. Furthermore, the skill of public speaking has various benefits as personal and professional ones.

The personal benefits of public speaking are the improved self-confidence, enhanced communication skills and organisational skills, and diminished anxiety when speaking in front of others. While the professional benefits are opportunities for career development, help with gaining leadership skills and increase productivity.

Moreover, oral presentations and public speaking are an essential experience for each student from UK universities, as many universities use presentations as a method of knowledge evaluation. However, evidence is showing that most of the students suffer from fear of speaking in public. (Russell and Topham, 2012)

Additionally, while giving my presentation I experienced some of the symptoms described as fear of public speaking. Firstly, when I started speaking, I was feeling quite overwhelmed and concerned about sitting in front of audience, especially that I hate being in centre of attention. Secondly, my throat was dryer than ever, and my hands were constantly sweating. Thirdly, because of my emotions and the fact that I am not native speaker, I was afraid that I will forget what I have to say or that I will make mistakes.

In order to overcome my fear of public speaking I decided to apply the Kolb learning cycle.

Concrete experience:

Public speaking and giving oral presentations are something new to me, so this might be the cause of my fear.

Reflective observation:

The fact that I am not a native speaker and that I feel insecure while talking in front of public might affect my university experience, my interaction in class and my motivation.

Abstract conceptualization:

This step helped me to realize that I can overcome my fear if I practice much more before giving an oral presentation. For example, presenting in front of my family or friends, finding more about breathing techniques or presenting in front of my colleagues.

Active experimentation:

While having my oral presentation I found out what are the things that are affecting me while giving a speech and the things that I must work on. And, that I need to review the Kolb learning cycle, after I experiment more in the class and in the workplace by interacting more with my peers and my work colleagues.

- **Reflection to my presentation**

In my opinion my presentation went quite well. I was very nervous and at some point, I could hear my voice shaking, but managed to calm myself down. I think I spoke loud and clear. I also hope that the information I provided was detailed and understandable. Probably I could

have been more confident. I do not quite remember well my body language; was I over excited and moved a lot? This is perhaps for you to judge. Usually I am quite funny, so I was thinking to include a joke at some point, but my nerves were too much and this could have gone wrong. There are many things to improve and work on-body language, eye contact, slow and understandable talking etc. Therefore, this is why at this age I am back at the University!

Thank you!

- **Conclusion**

To conclude, for an individual to improve their knowledge and to create new experiences should be aware of the models of reflection as the Kolb reflective cycle. Moreover, a student should be aware of the academic writing in order to progress in the personal and academic life and should be able to understand and use correctly skills as paraphrasing and summarising in order to avoid plagiarism. Furthermore, the Kolb model of learning is a great way of assessing and overcoming fears and outdated knowledge and experiences.

• References

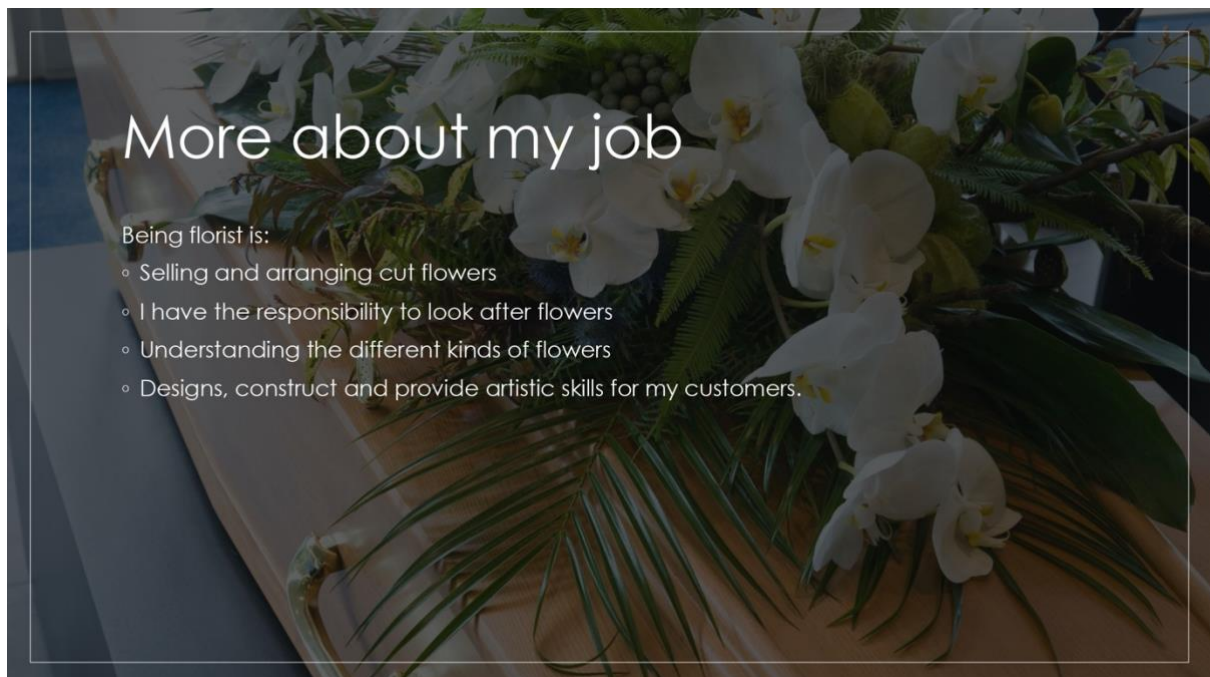
- Clokie, T.L. and Fourie, E. (2016). Graduate Employability and Communication Competence. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 79(4), pp.442–463.
- Coullie, J.L. (2020). Teaching strategies for lecturers and tutors to assist non-English mother tongue tertiary students: Summarising, paraphrasing and vocabulary enrichment. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 34(1).
- Fisk, C. & Hurst, B. (2003). Paraphrasing and comprehension, *The Reading Teacher* 57(Vol 2), 182-185.
- Goldman, S. R. (2012). Adolescent literacy: Learning and understanding content. *The Future of Children*, 22, 89–106. doi:10.1353/foc.2012.0011
- Hirvela, A., & Du, Q. (2013). 'Why am I paraphrasing?': Undergraduate ESL writers' engagement with source-based academic writing and reading. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 12(2), 87-98. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2012.11.005
- King, A., (2007). Beyond literal comprehension: A strategy to promote deep understanding of text, in S.D. McNamara (ed.). *Reading comprehension strategies: Theories, interventions and technologies*, pp. 267-290, Lawrence Erlbaum, New York.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Leopold, C., Doerner, M., Leutner, D., & Dutke, S. (2015). Effects of strategy instructions on learning from text and pictures. *Instructional Science*, 43, 345–364.
- Marzec-Stawiarska, M. (2016). The influence of summary writing on the development of reading skills in a foreign language. *System*, 59, pp.90–99.
- McLeod, S. (2017). Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle. [online] Available at: <https://midatlantic.compact.org/wp-content/uploads/large/sites/61/2021/04/Kolb-Learning-Styles-Website.pdf>.
- Na, Chi Do and Nhat Chi Mai, Nguyen Xuan (2017) Paraphrasing in Academic Writing: A Case Study of Vietnamese Learners of English. *Language Education in Asia*, 8 (1). pp. 9-24.
- Nikitina, A. (2011). *Successful Public Speaking*. Ventus Publishing.

- Russell, G. and Topham, P. (2012). The impact of social anxiety on student learning and well-being in higher education. *Journal of Mental Health*, 21(4), pp.375–385.

- Sheffield, U. of (n.d.). Academic Writing - Writing - Study Skills - 301 - SSiD - The University of Sheffield. [online] [www.sheffield.ac.uk](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/writing). Available at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/writing>.

-Yasuda, S. (2015). Exploring changes in FL writers' meaning-making choices in summary writing: A systemic functional approach. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 27, pp.105–121.

- **Appendix**





Skills for a flower arranger

The skills I need to have are:

- Ability to work precisely
- Customer service skills
- Experience in looking and arranging flowers
- good sense of colours and shapes
- Tact and empathy
- Time management
- Excellent practical skills



The skills I have

- I can look after flowers
- Customer service skills
- Focused on details
- Able to work under pressure
- Being on time
- Practical skills



The skills I need to improve for a florist

To be the perfect florist I need to work on:

- Understanding customer needs and expectations
- Experience in this department
- Working under pressure
- Communicational skills
- To get qualified

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Qualifications
Wide range of flowers
Nurturing

Weaknesses

Foreign language
Communicational skills
Competition with other florists

Opportunities

Providing a knowledge to customers
Arranging new flowers and getting experience

Threats

Allergies

References

- Cheary, Michael (2021), How to become a florist [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/how-to-become-a-florist/> (accessed 27.11.21)
- Tuttle, Carrie. eHow UK (2021), Flower Shop SWOT Analysis [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.ehow.co.uk/facts_7471998_flower-shop-swot-analysis.html (accessed 27.11.21)