

ACE Practical Portfolio

Report

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Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	2
<u>Kolb's Reflective Model</u>	2
<u>Reflection on Time Management</u>	3
<u>Reflection on CV writing</u>	5
<u>Reflection on Cover Letter Writing</u>	6
<u>Reflection on Public Speaking and Giving Presentation</u>	6
<u>Conclusion</u>	7
<u>Reference List</u>	8

Introduction

National debates have prominently upsurge regarding the tactics applied in making graduates and students ready for college life and career. The implication of such eagerness can never be overlooked. Making the career fully ready indicates primary skills that include central academic skills and the capability of applying those skills in real-life circumstances and

function within the workspace and daily tasks, employability skills such as critical thinking and problem solving that impart a decisive role in career aspect and job-specific technical skills for developing a distinctive career pathway (Cotronei-Baird, 2020). Numerous studies deliberate such skills as important to enable students in joining a consistent career path that provides growth opportunities as well as family-sustaining compensation. Academic skills involve such concepts, which allow students to properly hone career-ready skills. However, employability skills enable students to appropriately utilise their academics in the work context and hence career development. In this report, through Kolb's reflective model, various skills have been critically reviewed and reflected.

Kolb's Reflective Model

The application of Kolb's reflective model in learning facilitates the proper transformation of experience into knowledge to happen. Focusing on each new level of experience, as a learner, I became capable of integrating new observations with my current understanding. Ideally, learners have the opportunity of passing through each phase of learning.

Concrete Experience- With this phase, Kolb's reflective cycle commences. This could be either an entirely new experience or any reimagined experience, which already occurred. In this phase, learners engage in the task or activity and this is never enough for learners to just watch it or read about it (Idris, Din and Tajuddin, 2020). For acquiring new knowledge, learners should actively engage in tasks.

Reflective Observation- After an engagement in concrete experience, the learner steps back for reflecting on their task. This phase in the learning cycle enables learners in asking queries and discussing their experiences with others. As discussed by Wickam (2018), communication is important in this stage because this facilitates the learners in identifying any discrepancies between their experience and understanding. A good vocabulary allows for proper review of occurred incidents.

Abstract Conceptualization- The next stage of this reflective learning cycle is making sense of all events. During this stage, I attempted to draw inferences from my experience by reflecting on prior gained knowledge using ideas that I am familiar with or discussing theories with peers. In this phase, the learners move from reflective observation towards abstract conceptualisation while they initiate classifying concepts and drawing inferences on occurred incidents. This involves proper interpretation of the experience and further making comparisons with the current understanding of the concepts.

Active Experimentation- In this reflective cycle, this stage is all about testing. The learners return to participate in the task, this time with the target of applying their inferences to new experiences (Omar *et al.*, 2022). They are capable of making predictions, analysing tasks and making plans for developed knowledge in the future. By facilitating learners in putting their knowledge into practice and hence showing the way this is relevant in their lives, this is assured that the information has been retained for the future.

Reflection on Time Management

Concrete Experience- Talking about my experience in time management, this is essential to reveal that since my school days I have been very poor in time management. In most stances, I could not finish my exam paper for which I used to get average marks only depending on my answered questions. However, while engaging in this coursework I have decided to develop my time management skills to perfection such that I can finish all my assigned tasks within the deadline. I have realised my drawbacks in prioritising tasks for which I used to lag behind and hence could finish tasks on time.

Reflective Observation- I feel upset about my poor time management skill that is affecting my progress in academics. Poor time management is such a downside that could eventually bring adverse consequences to an individual's career (Jurthe, 2021). I have a bad habit of moving forward to another task without properly finishing the on-process task. While engaging in discussion with my peers I have realised the essentiality of the following timetable. This will facilitate me in assigning a specific time for a specific task, such that I can end one task at a time. Using time management tools would be effective in finishing tasks.

Abstract Conceptualization- While engaging in this phase I have realised the usage of some theories and frameworks that will facilitate the development of my time management skills. I preferred 4 Ds of time management, which entails doing, deferring, delegating and deleting. Prioritising do, this is essential to work on those tasks which only take short time to finish. Quickly accomplishing such tasks will develop a momentum of working and progress to large projects (Robinson, 2018). Focusing on delay or defer, I must temporarily pause a task which does not require to be done right away and hence schedule while having enough scope. Capitalising on delegation will help me in reassigning all essential tasks to somebody else who can do the same appropriately. Finally, by dropping or deleting, I must remove unnecessary tasks from my schedule and hence move forward.



Figure 1: 4D's of Time Management Framework

(Source: Robinson, 2018)

Active Experimentation- My approach towards time management has been inappropriate, which I have learnt in due coursework through following the 4D's of time management. Rather than feeling worried about all tasks done concurrently, I would like to prioritise tasks according to urgency and importance. I will first do the tasks that are important and urgent. I can delay certain tasks that seem important but not urgent. This would be best to delegate all non-important but urgent tasks. I have realised that there would be no issue in dropping or deleting non-important and not urgent tasks.

Reflection on CV writing

Concrete Experience- In regards to CV writing, I have realised various flaws in due process of making a proper one. This is worth mentioning that poor formatting makes a CV unclear and uneasy to read which is a prominent turn-off to employers (Chong and Clohisey, 2021). Moreover, in my previous CV, I have made numerous spelling errors as well as bad grammar. In addition, the CV was too long and the e-mail address I put in was not formal. Such issues in CV foremost bring bad impression on the employer's mind and reduce the chances of further interviewing that candidate to select for the job.

Reflective Observation- This is important to keep the CV concise such that this can be quickly absorbed by the interviewers (Scott *et al.*, 2019). While consulting with my peers I have acknowledged that confusing layout must be avoided and I need to be aware of using various sizes and fonts. In addition, another thing I have known while CV writing is that gaps in employment history are most common as well as rarely a problem as long as they are explained.

Abstract Conceptualization- During this stage, I was thinking that excelling to perfection is the most viable solution. I must focus on communicating my values with no persuasion and employers will take notice. I necessitate being attentive to the appropriate usage of grammar and vocabulary. To catch the interest of readers for a short time of around 15 seconds, I have strategized to use the thesaurus and hence find out some new synonyms to use in my CV. I would let my personality shine through my CV such that the hiring manager gets a taste of my character. For this, I must include some key attributes and character traits such as language skills, interpersonal skills, etc. This is crucial to put on the right words targeting jobs.

Active Experimentation- After this reflective learning through this coursework, I must engage in writing a new CV for my future interviews. This time, I would follow an eye-catching format and make the entire CV as concise and clear as much as possible. In addition, I must highlight my significant accomplishments over the years and list a few key employability skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, conflict management etc., which would draw employers' attention and increase the possibility of being hired. In precise, I would use my CV as a marketing tool.

Reflection on Cover Letter Writing

Concrete Experience- While writing the cover letter I have recognised certain mistakes in my approach. This is the fact that unavoidably I often become overly formal. Another get-out that I have done in previous cover letter writing is saying too much. Unless this is entirely relevant to the job for which I am applying, this is better to leave out thorough detailing.

Reflective Observation- This is worth mentioning that being overly formal depends on the type of employment I am seeking to apply for. Contrarily being too much informal could bring in a fatal mischance. Using a stock cover letter, being very jokey, too personal or extremely casual might even send the message that the candidate is not that serious about employment and as a result perhaps not the correct person for filling the vacant position (Lunga, 2020).

Abstract Conceptualization- While discussing my drawbacks with my peers with intention of gaining more knowledge about cover letter writing, I knew proofreading is necessary. As I am such a person who writes cover letters directing in the e-mail, a different strategy must be considered. In addition, this is essential to be constant in formatting and greeting the hiring manager (Bortot, 2021). I must focus on reiterating my enthusiasm and thank the reader.

Active Experimentation- After learning so much about cover letter writing, I would focus on not making the previous mistakes again. Next time, in the salutation, I must greet the hiring manager by name or by department name, which will work positively if hired. The cover letter format for being appropriate in a professional style that matches my CV. I must close my cover letter with a clear call for essential action.

Reflection on Public Speaking and Giving Presentation

Concrete Experience- For thriving in the dynamic and competitive employment market, this is essential for the applicants to be a good public speakers and give top-notch presentations. However, in this regard, I have been considered weak. During my previous presentation, I failed in properly tailor the message to the audience. Another drawback is unconsciously eyes scurry from one person to another, precisely darting around the room with no pause in actually seeing the recipients of the message (Ivanova *et al.*, 2020). Not rehearsing must result in poor performance.

Reflective Observation- I have now realised that making eye contact with the audience is essential to drive their attention toward my presentation topic. Proficient presenters do some rehearsal before the final presentation. Talking with my peers, I came to know that my energy is very low while giving the presentation.

Abstract Conceptualization- I have applied the strategy of rehearsing alone standing in front of the mirror. This is essential to smile sincerely, speak expressively, move naturally, crank up the energy level and enjoy the moment.

Active Experimentation- In my next public presentation, apart from proficiently delivering the speech with a high level of confidence, this is essential to make the presentation concise and understandable to the audience. For connecting visually, I would maintain eye contact for at least of 2-3 seconds for each person or at times long enough for completing the full phrase or sentence on necessity.

Conclusion

While drawing the implications this is earnest to notify that both academic and employability skills are essential for progressing in personal and career paths. Academic skills prepare academicians for post-college careers and education. Such skills enable students in pursuing high learning with no remediation. Most often employers use huge written communication in intricate employability skills and hence arises the necessity to be sufficiently equipped for developing, analysing and applying those materials academically in the workspace. Recollection or memorization of ideas that have been taught does never equate to learning as no values are added to the learners. Applying Kolb's reflective model, this has been acknowledged that something should be generated from experience to define it as learning. The development of skills in time management, CV writing, cover letter writing and most importantly public speaking or giving presentations will prominently opportune in proceeding further in terms of academics and career.

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