



Your Passport to Professionalism: Module 10

Job and Career

Step 1—Learn

Introduction

We all have in our lives an older weird uncle, aunt, or neighbor who have very strong yet very inaccurate opinions about many things. We don't often take their advice. Conversely, we all know people that seem wiser than their years would indicate. Maybe you are one of them if people tend to seek your counsel. It is reflection and perspective that develop wisdom, not just the piling up of more experience with age.

Journaling about your experience is an important step in becoming wise. You need to be articulate about what you learn. Students completing internships for academic credit are almost always required by their professor to “reflect” through journaling. Arguably, the best method for a robust experiential reflection journal is the four phase model developed by David Kolb. It is used by many universities for demonstrating learning outcomes based on internships and jobs of adults and is a basis for lifelong learning.



The learning and journaling model is composed of the four elements:

1. Concrete Experience
2. Observation and reflection on that experience
3. Formulation of abstract concepts based on the reflection
4. Testing and experimenting with the new concepts in new environments.

The following templates and models will make it easy for you to incorporate the four element model in your journals.



Weekly/bi-weekly Internship Journals

Journaling is an important step in synthesizing academic and personal growth. The following four sections, based on David Kolb's model of experiential learning, provide a framework to discuss learning content. Use the following outline headings for your journals and reports.

Your Assignment: Use the template below to craft your journal. *For a weekly/bi-weekly journal write one paragraph for each of the four sections.* Label each section as you go along. See sample below.

Section 1: Concrete Experience

Tell the story of what you **did** (what **behaviors** and **actions** you took) using terms such as the following:

I met	I said	I tried
I attended	I taught	I traced
I saw	I listed	I recorded
I drafted	I felt _____ and reacted by	I calculated
I designed	I coordinated	I promoted
I purchased	I modified	I programmed
I forecasted	I convinced	I reviewed
I collected	I avoided	I studied

Section 2: Reflection/Observation

Explain what you **learned** from what you did using terms such as:

I learned that	I discerned	I distinguished
I detected	I perceived	I wondered about
I noticed	I viewed	I spotted
I found that	I discovered	I grasped
I imagined	I heeded	I neglected to see
I observed	I acknowledge	I recognized

Section 3: Academic Concepts

What do you **understand** from what you learned including theories, principles, general concepts, models, systems, insights? Describe the concepts you explored using terms such as:

It is logical that	Another metaphor is	Research indicates
It is apparent that	It is similar to	An analysis explains that
The concept of	Experts agree that	This idea means that
The principle of	Authorities speculate	A synthesis of this data
This model is	Prior explanations include	Dr. X (author) indicates that
This parallels	This is integrated into	Separating this issue from

Section 4: Future Application

This section explores how you can **use, transfer and apply** what you learned to the future. How can you apply this? Describe how you can act differently in other situations using terms such as:

New approaches would be	An improvement would be	Logical steps include
Applying this concept is	A slightly similar way to	Another way to analyze
A different plan would be	Next time I will	Expected new outcomes are
Practicing this includes	The new situation would	A combined approach is
A better way of doing this is	A new way of thinking is to	I would use Dr. X's way of
This could be applied in	There are a variety of ways	New feelings would occur if

Section 5 (for 8 page journals typically assigned for a comprehensive reflection on an internship) General Comments:

Please share your ideas on things that might have made your experience better. What else would you like to know or do to improve the experience?

Please see the example below to write your journals and send copies to your supervisor and your professor/internship supervisor.

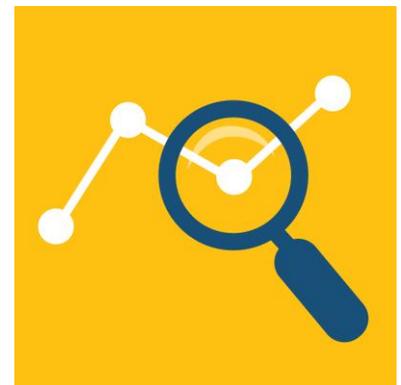
Sample Bi-weekly Journal Entry

Concrete Experience (highlighted words indicate behaviors and actions)

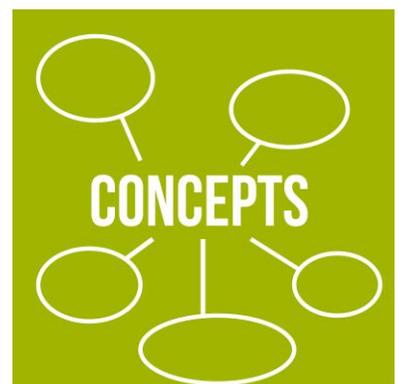
Last week I **attended** the District Manager staff meeting. It started early in the morning on Saturday April 2, so I **set my alarm** early to be sure I got there. When I arrived I **made** a name tag, got coffee and **sat down**. I sat with my supervisor and the department administrator. **We talked** a little, then the meeting started. There was a formal agenda which we closely followed. The District Manager ran the meeting and kept track of allotted time. The format was to introduce an agenda item, discuss it, then decide who had action items and what would be the deadlines. The secretary **served** as the **note-taker**. It was pretty comfortable. However, I did not like it when my supervisor had to **sell our idea for improving safety** based on an appeal to emotions. I always prefer **taking** a “rational” approach. But this was emotional.

**Observations/Reflections (italicized words indicate what you observed)**

I noticed that the District Manager tended to dominate the conversation which made it difficult for others to contribute. **It bothered me** because **I tend to** be shy about expressing my opinion in public and this adds stress. **I found that** even though things got done, it was not a free discussion. **I hate it** when people start discussing things that are off-target and waste time, so the fact that we stuck to the agenda was comfortable for me. **I neglected** to see that others sometimes need to process information in a circular way, and trying to keep them “on track” makes them frustrated so they end up talking even more. As a detailed-type of person **I observed that** I am very task focused. **I began to grasp** how communication can be a problem when the boss needs to get group consensus on an idea or project but doesn’t allow much discussion.

**Generalizations and Principles (italicized words indicate concepts, theories, models, systems, metaphors)**

I found it helpful to categorize communication styles when evaluating business interactions. **I thought** the **four-styles matrix** that I found on Google was a good way to analyze communication styles I observed in the meeting.¹ The District Manager was the Controller type, two managers are Promoters, the administrator and I are Analyzers and there were no Supporters. What I noticed is that the different types create natural areas of conflict as well as synergy. As long as the leader respects others’ style they can make good progress on the business’ goals. Although **the research** on these styles is not strong, there certainly is **face-validity**. Understanding styles has been used



¹ <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/four-effective-styles-communication-workplace-15280.html>

effectively in team-building. Work assignments and tasks can be adapted based on style and interest.

Future Application (italicized words indicate how you will use, apply, and transfer your learning)

After attending this meeting and analyzing communication types, I will try to *implement* a new approach to meeting management in my student organization. Using my Analyzer style, *I will organize* our agendas differently and assign different people to run parts of the meeting based on their particular style. *I will suggest* we start our next meeting with a 5-minute opening problem solving exercise such as SWOT analysis or brainstorming to clarify each other's issues and identify possible antagonism early on. *In my next* meeting experience *I will ask* each member to take the style inventory and then try to make suggestions for assignments and tasks based on the results.

If you are assigned to write a final journal report for your internship: The main difference between weekly and final journal reports is length and depth. A final report is an expanded Journal assignment in which you combine and reflect upon all your journal entries or internship activities to make an 8 page final report @ 2 pages per learning mode (see additional assignment description below):

1. Concrete experience
2. Reflective Observation
3. Abstract Concepts
4. Experimentation

