



Your Passport to Professionalism:

Career Reflections

Steps in this module:

1. **Learn: The 4 phase model for reflecting on your experience**
2. **Practice: Incorporate your experience into your resume**
3. **Check Your Success and complete the reflection activity**

Step 1—Learn

Introduction

It is reflection and perspective not just the addition of more experience that will help you grow wise personally and professionally. Journaling about your experience is an important step in becoming wise and you need to be able to articulate what you learned verbally and in a written manner.

Students completing internships for academic credit are almost always required by their professor to “reflect” through journaling. 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. Any student can learn from their experience by following these journaling steps:

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.

Internship Journals

Your Assignment: The following 5 sections and examples demonstrate ways in which you may begin writing about your experience. Craft your journal entries.

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: 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? **See the example below to write your journals and send copies to your supervisor or mentor for guidance and feedback.**

Journal Entry Sample

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

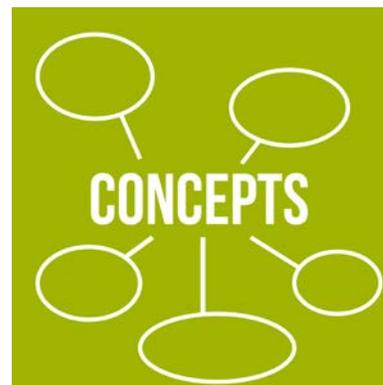


communication can be a problem when the boss needs to get group consensus on an idea or project but doesn't allow much discussion.

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 is 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 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, 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 may be 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. Visit soon with your faculty for specific instructions about your final report or project.

Step 2—Practice: Incorporate your experience into your resume

You may already have a resume since it is usually required as part of the application process for an internship or job. If you do not have one, or if it has not been reviewed by Career Services, utilize their resources for developing a quality resume.

Assignment 1:

Watch the following videos on writing a resume.

[Make Your Resume Pop](#)

[Stand Out Resumes](#)

[Keyword Search Matters](#)

Additional information:

[Resume Basics and Samples from Northwest Career Services](#)

Example - Bullets

Too often, job-seekers focus their resume on the tasks they performed in their previous experience. While it is important to provide context, the real focus should be on your impact and your skills. One of the best ways to demonstrate this on a resume is to write descriptive bullet points.

Bullet points can follow a standard format:

Action verb (in present or past tense*) **noun** [what did you do?] **additional descriptive phrases** [Where? How? How many? For whom? Etc.]

This means that you should not only list what you did in a given position, but provide additional details as to:

- Why the task was important
- Your impact within the organization
- How you performed your duties
- What skills you used or developed

Here are some examples:

- Established deadline dates for complete construction of projects and evaluated post construction to ensure compliance of requirements

The writer describes the work done and emphasizes setting and achieving goals.

- Created hands-on activities utilizing PowerPoint and Smart Board technology to increase student motivation

This bullet not only describes what was done, but also why the task was important. It demonstrates a focus on the bigger picture.

- Monitored 5,000 market hogs and 3,500 feeder cattle in a computerized environment

Take advantage of opportunities (when applicable) to quantify your experience. This bullet indicates the size of the operation and responsibility.

Assignment 2:

1. **Get a copy** of your job description electronically or in print.
2. **Highlight the skills** you used. But not just any skills. Select the higher order skills you used in this internship or job. Sure, you may have answered phones or filed paperwork, but focus on the tasks that took higher level skills such as organizing, initiating, managing, writing, researching, conflict resolution, etc. From those skills you can now describe the parts of your job/internship that demonstrate skills future employers want to see.
3. **Add your new job/internship** in your resume.
4. **Update your resume, have it reviewed by Career Services.**

Read the resume sample below:

Garfield Arbuckle

213 S. Odie Lane
Maryville, MO 64468

(555) 555-5555
lasagnalover@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To secure an entry level management position with Paw, Inc.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science Double Major: Marketing and Business Management

December 20XX

Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest), Maryville, MO

- ◆ Cumulative GPA 3.8/4.0
- ◆ Education self-funded through scholarships and part-time employment

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Publisher, Banner, OmniPage, Outlook, Internet Explorer

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Resident Assistant, Franken Hall

August 20XX - Present

Residential Life, Northwest, Maryville, MO

- ◆ Act as a peer advisor for 18-24 students; build a sense of campus community and foster relationship building between residents
- ◆ Serve as a resource person regarding the operation of the University and its services
- ◆ Plan and implement a variety of social, educational, and cultural programming
- ◆ Interpret and provide rationale for hall rules; enforce rules with consistency and fairness
- ◆ Trained to implement fire and other safety procedures set forth by the University

Student Orientation Advisement and Registration (SOAR) Leader

May 20XX - July 20XX

Northwest, Maryville, MO

- ◆ Developed creative and stimulating methods of orientation for new incoming students and families
- ◆ Collaborated on planning of summer orientation events with a team of ten other SOAR leaders
- ◆ Scheduled individual freshman students into fall trimester courses
- ◆ Interacted with various campus offices to deliver high quality customer service

Customer Representative

June 20XX - August 20XX

Apac Customer Service, Omaha, NE

- ◆ Managed personal AT&T accounts for over 100 wireless customers
- ◆ Educated customers on wireless technology utilizing effective oral and written communication skills
- ◆ Provided assistance to customers with technological questions
- ◆ Processed payments on contracts in an accurate and timely fashion

WORK EXPERIENCE

Cashier, Maryville BP Gas & Convenience; Maryville, MO

August 20XX - June 20XX

Laborer, Russell Construction; Omaha, NE

Summers 20XX - 20XX

HONORS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ American Marketing Association
- ◆ Delta Mu Delta Honor Society
- ◆ Booth College of Business Scholarship
- ◆ Regents Scholarship
- ◆ Multi-Cultural Scholarship
- ◆ Dean's List



Step 3—Check Your Success

Reflection Name Date

Check Your Success

Career Reflections

A. List at least 3 observations you have made during your internship/job that have forced you to think differently than before.

B. List at least 3 important new job skills you are developing at this internship/job.

C. After reviewing the videos and resume samples, what job functions and skills will be good to include on your resume?

Once you complete updating your resume, submit it to your supervisor, professor or Career Services for further feedback.

Tip: Do you have your FULL resume on LinkedIn yet? Always keep your LinkedIn profile current. 90% of employers use LinkedIn.