

**2 Credit Experience Journal Template**Student Name: John Smith

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**Instructions**

1. Please select a Journal topic from the website to which you have relevant knowledge and experience gained to sufficiently respond to each component of Kolb's model for each subtopic.
2. Each section of Kolb's model should be a minimum of 150 words.
3. Students are required to include a biography of at least 500 words describing themselves and their personal and professional experience.
4. Be sure to include your journal supporting documentation that validates your personal/professional experience with the journal topic you are writing.
5. Once the Journal and biography is completed please log into your student website and submit your Journal to PLA

**Autobiography (500 words minimum)**

My name is John Smith. I grew up with five brothers and five sisters and I was second from the youngest. I started working odd jobs with my father and with friends when I became a teenager. I worked as a farmhand, a construction worker, a landscaper, and even an inspector for indoor sprinkler systems. Through these jobs I learned the meaning of work ethic and the need for manual labor in today's society. This experience has allowed me to understand other's experiences from a more worldly perspective and has also allowed me to relate more effectively with others. Throughout my teenage years I would go with my father to purchase and sell items such as livestock, appliances, vehicles, and old farm equipment. I would observe the way he handled himself and overtime I learned the art of negotiation and the value of a dollar from a more adult point of view.

I moved to Arizona in 2003. It did not take long for me to find my way. Within 5 months I was the top salesperson at my new job, and I made a lot of new friends. I learned how to manage my money more effectively and also learned about corporate America. I was able to use my 10-step sales process that I developed over time. This method proved to be a success and after only five months on the floor I was promoted to a manager position. My sales process was approved by training and over my nine-year tenure with the company I have trained new employees, managers, and even entire locations. I have worked on multiple specialty projects; I love what I do and who I work for. My manager role has taught me a lot. I have learned how to coach to budgets, goals, and personal goals. I have learned that my role is to motivate and encourage my team to excel even if they do not want to do so on their own. Not everyone is motivated to help their company grow so I am there to hold them accountable to themselves and their employer.

I put my education on hold for many years while I pursued a career and focused on my personal life. I decided in 2010 that I would restart my path toward my bachelor's degree and began classes at University of Phoenix full time. It was a struggle to balance life and school at first, but I gained momentum near the end of 2010. My goal is to be finished with my degree by December of 2013. This is why I am writing these essays. I have a lot of life experiences and believe that they have made me a better person and a stronger leader at work.

On a personal level, my wife and I met in 2004 and started dating in 2006. We had our first child in April of 2010, and our son was born in 2012. I enjoy my family more than anything else in my life. Parenting is challenging but very rewarding. It can sometimes be difficult to be a nurturing available parent when there are so many other things on my plate, but I know how important my time and structure is for them. I believe that I have successfully found a balance between career and family and I enjoy both aspects of my life.

When completing your Life Experience Journal in the sections below, use the following descriptions of each of the four elements of Kolb's model as a guide for what should be included in your responses. These should be written in the first person, so these elements will translate the learning you've gained from your experiences into knowledge.

### Kolb's Model

The University uses Kolb's model to transform experiences into knowledge. Below is a brief description of each of the four elements of Kolb's Model. Please make sure you respond to each section for each of the subtopics:

- **Description of Concrete Experience:** Concrete experience represents your personal participation with the people, places, activities, and events of an experience. You should describe your involvement relative to the experience, demonstrating the opportunity for learning.
- **Reflections:** Reflections represent a student's thinking and processing relative to the experience
- **Generalizations, Principles and Theories:** Generalizations, Principles, and Theories are constructs that organize and guide academic learning. A typical college course is built around several such generalizations, principles, and/or theories
- **Testing and Application:** Testing and Application represent situations in which the new learning can be used.

**EXPERIENCE JOURNAL TOPIC:** Parenting

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**SUBTOPIC 1:** Discuss the development of parenting skills**Description of Concrete Experience** (approx. 150 words):

The development of parenting skills for me has been a very rapid process. Before I became a father, life was much easier and now that I am a father of three and soon to be four little girls my wife and I have a huge responsibility as parents to raise our children correctly. I understand that eventually children are going to grow up and make their own choices just like I did, but it is also important to allow your children to do those things sometimes. I feel that if you tell your child no so many times that human instinct kicks in and the child wants to rebel and do the exact opposite of my decision. I went through a stage like this while I was growing up and now that I am a parent I feel like I understand that part of growing up and I want my children to be open with me; especially when they make mistakes or mess up. As a parent I want my children to be able to trust me and have enough faith in me to know what I teach them is for their benefit and not mine. I know it is hard to understand as a teenager, but as an adult looking back it is easy to see the silly mistakes that could easily have been avoided if children would have listened to their parent's advice.

**Reflections** (approx. 150 words):

When I became a father, I had to think back to the things my parents taught me and hopefully the same concepts would help my children because at the time that is all I really knew. Unfortunately, there is not an instruction manual for parents and even if there was a manual, I can tell you by experience that every child is different and in most situations, you experience brand new situations every day. When thinking back on the methods that I have used to raise my children so far, I have noticed some things that I would change or some areas where I could have made better decisions, but that is part of being a parent. There is no perfect parent and I believe that a parent can try everything to help their children, but it is ultimately the choice of the children and their use of free agency. When reflecting on parenting skills a parent should remember that there is only so much he or she can do.

**Generalizations, Principles and Theories** (approx. 150 words):

As a parent it is hard to teach your children to do their best and to be a good role model especially with the peer pressure all around them. Developing parental skills come with being a parent as long as you learn from your mistakes then you will be fine. In my experience parenting takes a whole lot of learning and guidance.

When I met my wife, she already had two daughters from a previous marriage and as I mentioned previously the third daughter is mine and my wife is pregnant with our fourth daughter. I personally call them my daughters because they call me dad and I have known them since the time they were 1 ½ and 3 years old and they rarely even see their biological father. The current ages of my children are 7, 5, & 3 years old and my wife will be having another baby in just about three months as well.

**Testing and Application** (approx. 150 words):

I have found through my experience in parenting that parenting will never end until you run out of time on this earth. Truly understanding my children and what they really need is going to be the biggest test and application because they can easily tell me all of the things that they want in life, but as a parent I need to figure out what they honestly need; spiritually, emotionally, & physically. Even though my children have not hit their teenage years and have not yet had hormonal experiences they are still plenty irritable from time to time and it is up to me to help comfort them during these times of need. When I can gain the trust of my children life is much easier because my children listen to me and they know what I am telling them to do is going to be in their best interest. The real test is to understand how to read my children's behavior to see if they are listening to me or if they are pulling away from the situation.

**SUBTOPIC 2:** Discuss parental values and attitudes that accompany stages in the development of the child.

**Description of Concrete Experience** (approx. 150 words):

I have found that parenting can bring out a lot of different emotions in a person some of these emotions are good and some of them are negative and at times hurtful. It is honestly a very hard commitment to raise and teach a child let alone four children. As a parent there are tons of things that go through my mind everyday not only to teach my children but to make sure they live in a healthy and stable setting. Many parents, including myself, think about many big picture items including bills, food, sports, children, pets, and much more. We have a lot of responsibility as parents which brings out our true attitudes in life. Many times as a father I find myself stressed out about the bills and sometimes how I am going to continue and provide for my family. Often time's life as an adult becomes so overwhelming that I lose my temper and take out my frustrations on the kids without even realizing why I just blew up. My kids didn't do anything personal to me and it was my choice to bring them into this world and provide for each of their needs. As your children learn and grow it is very important to practice self control because with each stage of life your children will remember certain things you taught them as a parent whether it is good or bad.

**Reflections** (approx. 150 words):

Looking back to the way I have chosen to raise my children so far I am happy to say that I have very little regret as far as teaching my children right from wrong, manners, how to be a good person, and so on. I know that nobody is perfect by any means, but when I am around my children I sure try to be. I feel a huge responsibility lies upon my back and in order for my children to continue practicing good morals and values throughout their lives I need to personally do everything that I can to show by example what kind of person I want them to be. Parents would be very hypocritical if they said one thing to their children but never led by example or followed through on commitments.

**Generalizations, Principles and Theories** (approx. 150 words):

One of my theories regarding parenting values and attitudes during the different stages of childhood growth is that no matter how hard things get with your children they can always be worse. Another theory is the personal knowledge that I have gained from my personal growth experience from an infant into an adult. I can personally relate to my children the older they get because of the things that I went through as a child as well. I understand that my children might not even recognize the changes that they are going through; however, as a parent I do understand what changes are occurring and I can be there to help assist my children through the hard times and also the good times. Another very important aspect of parenting is to set ground rules and other rules for your children to follow. As you and your children follow these rules you begin to show your children what it means to work hard, show respect, and at times

discipline is also a part of this process. Even though my children have disliked me at times for saying no to some of their requests my children are able to forgive and forget very quickly because they understand that I am only looking out for their best interests. One of the last principles that I have tried to instill into my children is the benefits of hard work. There is no substitution on this earth for hard work, even if children are born into a family with a good amount of money hard work is still a very necessary principle for children to learn in order to be successful later in life.

**Testing and Application** (approx. 150 words):

While applying the principles and theories that I have just previously explained it primarily shows to my each of my children that I love them and that no matter what, even when times get hard they can always trust in me as their father to support and encourage them. While testing many of these principles throughout the last couple of years it has come to my attention that the principles that have been most successful are the principles that I practice consistency with. Many times, parents can become inconsistent with the punishments or rewards that we give to our children. I believe that whether we know what we are doing or not the children realize this principle and that is why it is more than necessary to set rules and stick to them and as you do this order between parents and children will continue to grow and strengthen.

**SUBTOPIC 3:** Analyze methods of effective guidance.**Description of Concrete Experience** (approx. 150 words):

Analyzing methods of effective guidance is a tough task for parents to accomplish because there are so many different ways to guide yourself and your kids through the parenting process. One important aspect of guidance as a parent is to realize that you never know everything. Children must work with the parents to help guide each other in the right directions whether it is for rewards or punishment the principles are the same. One method that I like to use is to take a moment before I react and breath. This allows me to think and analyze the situation before I react inappropriately and escalate a minor situation into a full catastrophe. I have the tendency to jump to conclusions before even listening to the entire story from my children because I am the dad and I feel like I know what is best for this family. The most effective guidance for me is all the family support that my wife and children give to the entire family because as we guide each other day to day we also help one another grow stronger and succeed. One method that I personally would never use is to talk down to my children. This does nothing but hurt their self-esteem and creates negative feelings towards their parents.

**Reflections** (approx. 150 words):

Each and every one of my children has a very unique and different personality, and because of that each one of them need to be treated differently. I do not mean to favor one child over the other, but I do mean that my children all learn in different ways. For instance, my oldest daughter is very smart, observant, and creative. She is on honor roll and has an endless supply of friends and when I ask her to do something, she will do it and I don't have to worry about checking to see if that task was completed. My second daughter on the other hand is also very beautiful and bright; however, she likes the attention of other people and likes to be the center of attention as well. When I ask this daughter to complete a task as simple as brushing her teeth, I have to reminder her two or three times before she will even begin this task. Both of them live in the same house and under the same set of rules; however, personality plays a huge role in effective guidance methods.

**Generalizations, Principles and Theories** (approx. 150 words):

One of the most important principle to utilize in my situation is to show patience in each of my children because even though they are all different in one way or another each of them are very special to me as their father and I only want the best for all of them. When guiding a child through there life I found is very complicated and important. No matter how hard I try to obtain my children's obedience they are still going to ultimately do what they want when a parent is not around to get them into trouble. My main job as a father is to guide them and teach them to the best of my ability. Each and every person has their agency to choose whether to do good or bad and this includes my children. There is an



old saying that you can take a horse to the watering hole, but you can't force the horse to drink. I believe that this same concept also applies with children as well.

**Testing and Application** (approx. 150 words):

Methods of effective guidance come in all types of different ways and to be honest there is not an exact science to becoming a successful and happy parent. This comes over time with a great deal of trial and error; however, when you make a mistake as a parent it is almost a positive thing because you can learn from that mistake to prepare for all of your other children that might need the same type of guidance. As a parent you will fail and you will succeed, but it is very important to never give up. I personally feel that when you give up you are not only giving up on yourself, but also on your entire family as well. So when one of your methods doesn't work pick yourself up and try again. This is the way I have always been taught and this is the method that has produced the best results for me personally.

**SUBTOPIC 4:** Discuss the role of discipline; compare and contrast discipline with punishment.

**Description of Concrete Experience** (approx. 150 words):

Discipline is not one of my favorite duties as a parent; although, it is a necessary part of the role of a parent. As my children have learned there are just some things that they simply do not do. My children know not to disrespect their mother in any way because if they do this is one situation where I will give them a spanking. I personally am not a big fan of spanking as discipline and feel that spanking is more along the lines of punishment. In my opinion discipline is something that I teach to my children and something that my children will learn from in a nonphysical manner. An example of discipline for my children is if they don't get their homework done then they cannot play with their friends. This is not punishment because my children know that this is the rule. Punishment is much more difficult for me as a father. I hate watching my children cry, but I feel that if they don't learn a lesson for the actions that they have completed then they will not think twice before repeating that action. Punishment is not always a physical statement but can be something as simple as going to bed early. Physically beating children is not good for me as a parent or the child.

**Reflections** (approx. 150 words):

I often times wonder if the things I choose to do to discipline and punish my children are effective. I personally believe they are and will often speak to my wife in regards to what we both feel is fair for our children; however, it is crucial that we stay consistent with all disciplines and punishments between both parents. As a parent I feel like discipline has produced better results for my children then punishment has because my kids tend to rebel when punishment takes place. On the other hand when I sit my children down and explain why I am disciplining each of them they in turn understand and try harder to correct their areas for improvement.

**Generalizations, Principles and Theories** (approx. 150 words):

Discipline could also be something as simple as saying please and thank you and really reflecting the mannerisms that my wife and I have taught our children. I feel that it is very crucial for my family to practice and show discipline. Two of my daughters are currently in school and if they do not practice good discipline then there are consequences that follow, not only at school, but when they return home as well. Punishment has not proven to be very effective in my previous experience with my children and my wife is also not a big fan either. Punishment is reserved in our house for times when it is really needed.

**Testing and Application** (approx. 150 words):

When I was a child my father used very physical forms of punishment on me and my siblings and I remember the feelings of hate and rebellion that I experienced and do not wish any of my children to respond in the same ways as I did. I want them to be able to turn to me if they make a mistake so together, we can fix it. I am not saying that there will not be discipline and punishment involved, but abuse will not be tolerated by me.