

An analysis of experiential learning and retention rates on management trainee programs: a case of the Ritz-Carlton

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Msc Fall 2016

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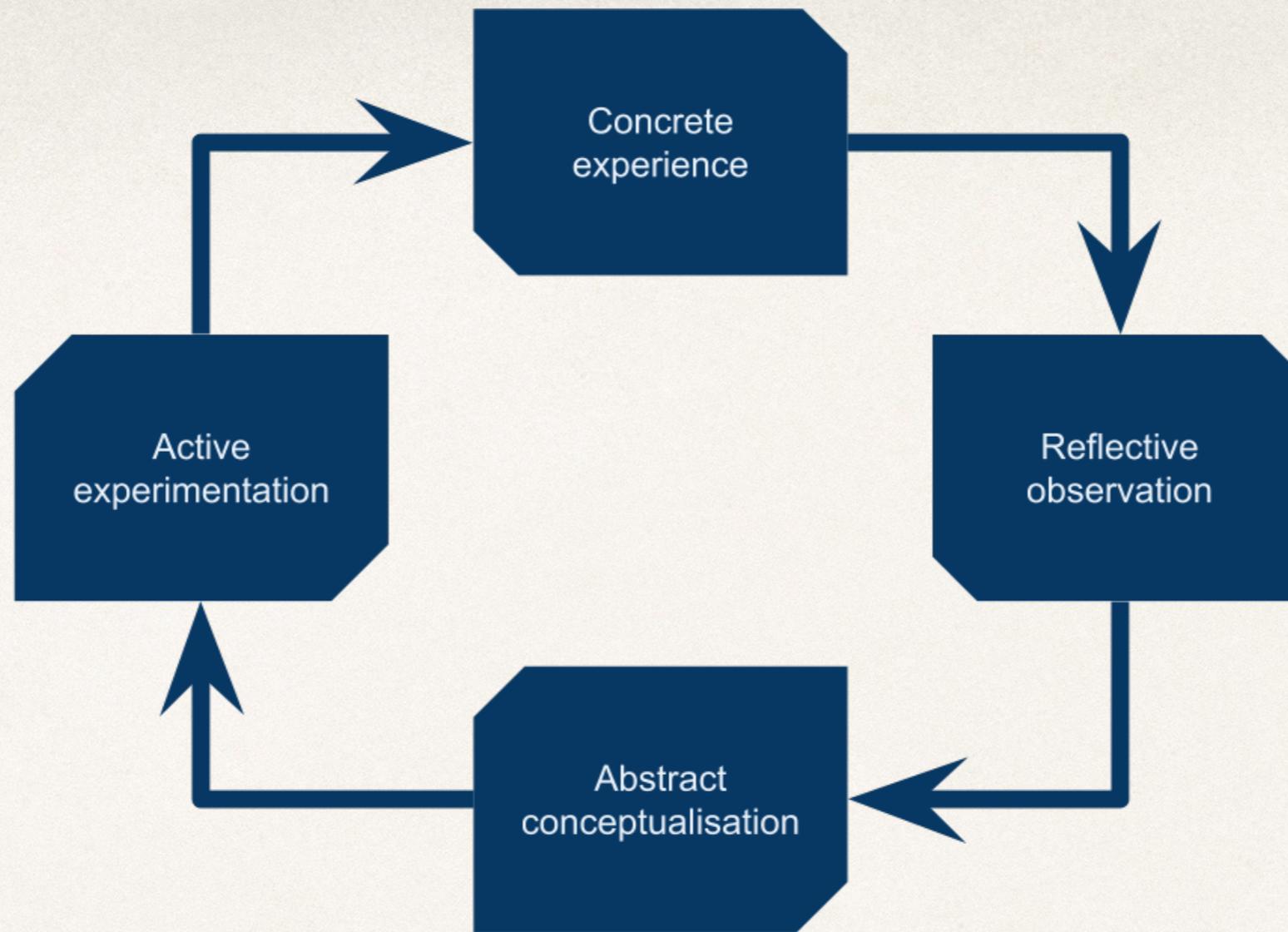
Introduction

Experiential Learning: “The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience”

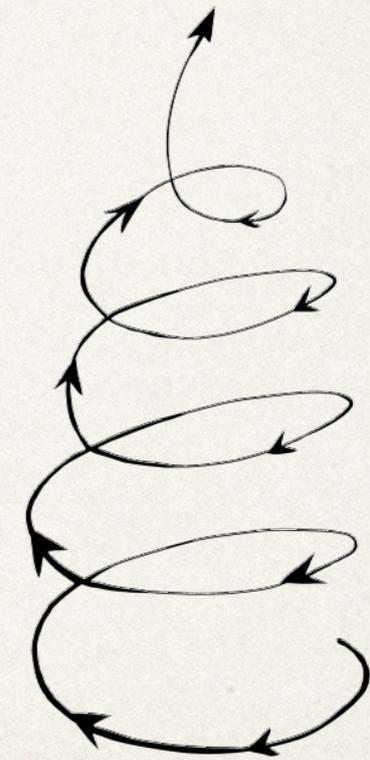
Retention rates: the ability of an organisation to keep its employees

Background information

Experiential learning



- ❖ holistic approach: experience, perception, cognition, behaviour
- ❖ can enter the circle at any stage
- ❖ not a complete and finite cycle
- ❖ when the learner is involved, the learning is optimised



Rationale

- ❖ Lack of research on management trainee programs (MIT)
- ❖ Lack of data analysing the impact of learning on the retention/ attrition of the Voyage program (or any other)
- ❖ Lack of research on the impact of other factors to the retention/ attrition
- ❖ Understanding the impact of learning on these MIT programs
- ❖ Helps The Ritz-Carlton evaluate the strengths & weaknesses of their leadership programs (Voyage) and improve them
- ❖ Identify reasons for leaving/ staying with the company after completion of the program

Aim & Objectives

Aim

To analyse experiential learning and its impact on the retention rates through management trainee programs in the case of The Ritz-Carlton.

Objectives

- To analyse elements of experiential learning offered in the MIT programs in The Ritz-Carlton
- To determine the contribution of experiential learning elements to employee retention/attrition rates within MIT programs in The Ritz-Carlton
- To establish factors beyond experiential learning contributing to retention or attrition through MIT programs in The Ritz-Carlton

Literature Review

Experiential learning cycle

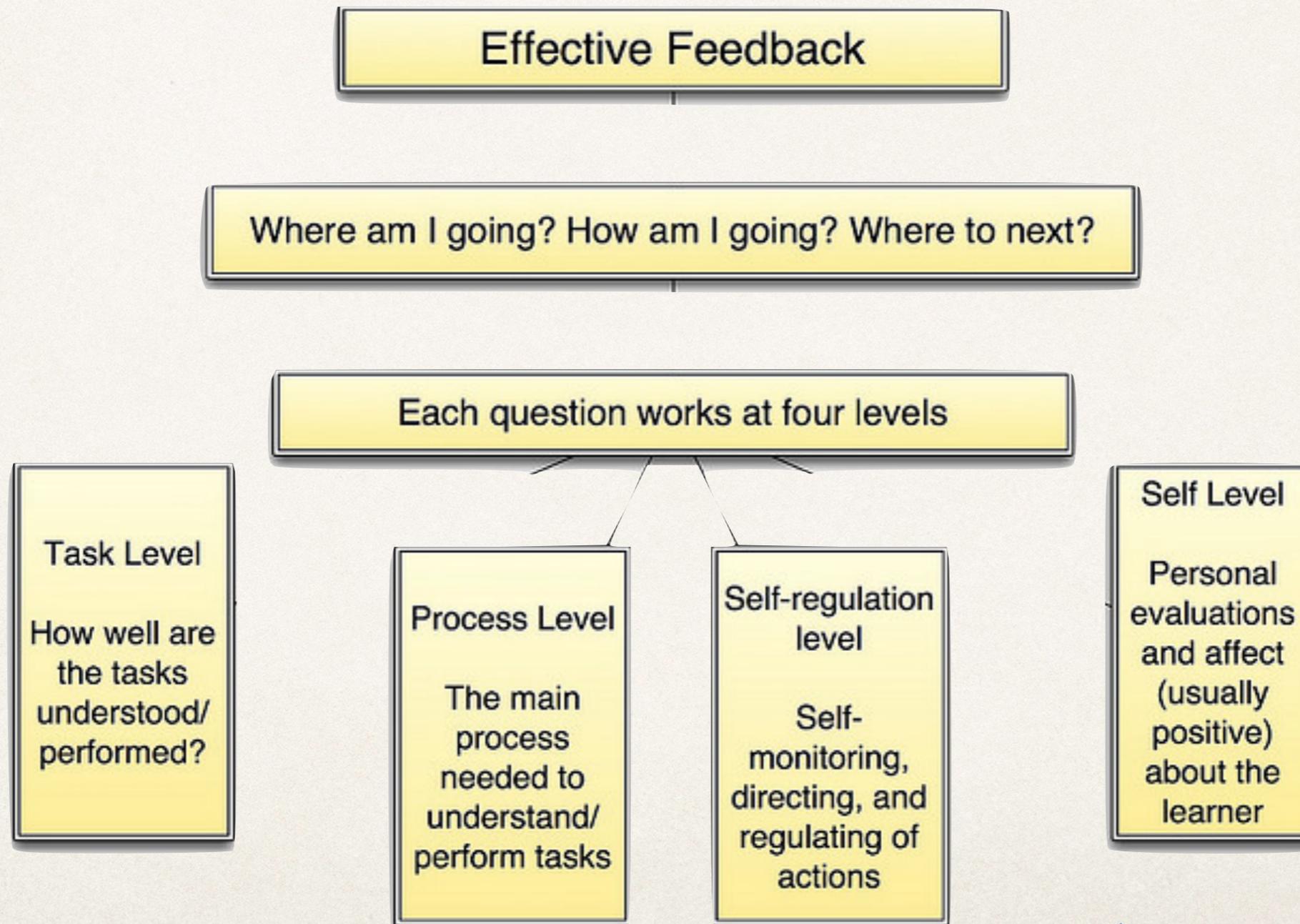
- ❖ Kolb (1984) based on Dewey, Lewin, Piaget, Jung
- ❖ Pfeiffer and Jones (1985) 5 stages of EL (experiencing - publishing - processing - generalising - applying)
- ❖ Priest (1990), Priest and Gass (1997) 6 stages of EL (experience - induce - generalise - deduce - apply - evaluate)
- ❖ Kelly (1995) 5 stages of EL (encounter - (dis)confirmation-revision - anticipation - investment)
- ❖ Greenaway (2002) 3 stages of EL (do - review - plan)
- ❖ Atherton (2002) - 'chase' the learner round the circle
- ❖ Moon (2004) built on EL cycle of Kolb: reflective learning phase, phase of learning from the actions inherent to EL, phase of learning from feedback

Critiques - Kolb's ELT

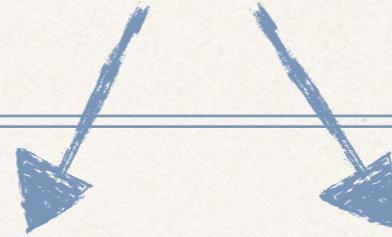
- ❖ no need for all 4 stages for learning to occur
- ❖ no consideration of cultural differences
- ❖ stages not real - can happen simultaneously
- ❖ limited empirical studies
- ❖ insufficient attention to reflection

Feedback

“information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding”



Retention rates



Attrition reasons
personal resilience
personal identity
factors
support networks
design of course
poor support
difficulty

Hughes (2007)

Integration approach
social & academic
fit (increased
interaction -
improved
retention)

(Simpson, 2003; Christie et al., 2004; Yorke, 2004)

Motivation approach
motivation to
succeed (course,
finance, personality,
life circumstances,
cognitive abilities)

Retention reasons
gender, current employment, status,
career-decision self-efficacy, career
outcome expectations

Chuang et al. (2013)

Retention reasons
high performers: intrinsic rewards
low performers: extrinsic rewards

Hausknecht et al. (2009)

Communities of practice

= Individuals sharing the same profession

- ❖ Align the individuals with the organisations - a network with old & new employees
- ❖ Learning arrives from the individual's experience through their everyday life within their communities of practice
- ❖ Interaction & perception of the communities of practice -influence the decision
- ❖ Virtual community of practice in the case of Ritz-Carlton - access to the platform with old & new Voyagers

Research Context

The Voyage Program



THE RITZ-CARLTON®

The Voyage Program



THE RITZ-CARLTON®

- ❖ 12-18 months leadership development program (full-time)
- ❖ Accounting & Finance, Food & Beverage Operations, Culinary , Human Resources, Engineering, Revenue Management, Event Planning, Rooms Operations, Event Operations, Sales & Marketing
- ❖ Combines hands-on experience with online leadership training
- ❖ In contact with other Voyagers & Marriott's senior executive managers around the world

Voyagers that successfully complete the program will transition into an entry-level management or supervisory position that's the best fit for them.

Methodology



Qualitative approach
(Snowball technique)

Semi-structured interviews

Sample: current and former
Voyagers

Credibility
explain the topic
research process discussed with research
supervisor

Confirmability
data analysed by other peers
consensus reached between researcher
and research supervisor

Dependability
data recorded and transcribed
describe changes that might affect
results

Transferability
thick description of context &
methodology
direct quotations of participants

Limitations

Difficult to reach the
Voyagers

Biased answers by
Voyagers that finished
and are currently working
for the company

Voyagers
working with the
company might refuse
participation

Starting & end dates
differ

Information
processing

Only 2 positions
offered every 1.5 years in
each hotel

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Q&A Session
