

JOURNAL KEEPING – INTERACTIVE JOURNAL

Purpose

The journal is a tool for exploring students' inner and outer events. It encourages the expression of their inner language and new awareness emerging from current experiences. Additionally, it stimulates the linking of theory and practice through systematic comeback on daily happenings.

Several journaling styles are possible, depending on the type of learning and the target objectives.

• Link with proposed tools

The journal can be described as the link providing continuity through the phases of the integration process.

• Instructions

Journaling is a creative, exploratory process. Students are urged to express their emotions and impressions. Although spontaneous writings are not entirely orderly, meaning still comes through. Students can later take time to clarify and organize their thoughts.

The supervisor should encourage students to create an ambience conducive to spontaneous writing.

1. Deconditioning may be needed to shake off obstacles or inhibitions (e.g. lack of time or writing talent).
2. Create a conducive ambience: find a quiet place; have a special notebook and pen or pencil.
3. Relax a few minutes before beginning to write.
4. Encourage students to plumb the depths of their thoughts and emotions, even if they later remove pages of material as being too personal.
5. Encourage all forms of expression, including drawing, collage and pictures.
6. The supervision of journal keeping merits examination. The quality of the supervisor-student relationship, as well as the respect and support given the students, will affect how open they are – first to themselves and then to others.
7. Plan a time for feedback after the student has journalled.
8. Arrange a time of sharing, if appropriate, when learners can talk about difficulties they may be having, how they go about writing, and so on.

• Free-style journaling

The learner describes experiences spontaneously, allowing feelings, emotions and thoughts to come through. Here is a sample journal entry.

SAMPLE

The time has come to list the qualities of an ideal practitioner. To start with, there's this apprehension that I associate with my fear of lacking most of these qualities. But I'm relieved to see a positive comparison between the ideal practitioner and myself.

I'm starting to get some insight into this vague "fear" about my professional qualifications. I've felt this way for a few years and have made no effort to really improve the situation. I have a number of objectives I'd like to achieve in record time. I'm tackling all of them at the same time without ever achieving any of them. I'm looking for the right environment for taking this big step. But is there such a place?

• Journalling worksheet

THE LEARNER EXPLORES A LEARNING SITUATION

Name _____ Date _____

Facts	Observations	Emotional reactions	Reflections	Actions to undertake

• **Journal-guide**

This journal has two parts. The first is the narrative, an account of events as perceived by the learner. A narrative is more spontaneity than analysis. It describes the writer's perception of a real-life situation and expresses first impressions and feelings.

The second part is the retrospective, which is one phase of reflection. This reflective approach centres on understanding, meaning and hypothesizing about events and leads to probing exploration.

Journal keeping is a two-step process. The *narrative* should be written on a regular basis (e.g. 15 minutes a day). The *retrospective* could be written at the end of the week after re-reading the *narrative* part to refresh the memory.

The learner can divide a sheet of paper in two.

<p>• Narrative (objective description of inner and outer events; identifying salient facts; expressing feelings about the event)</p>	<p>• Retrospective (comeback on the experience; explaining concepts learned through experience; generating hypotheses)</p>
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• **Self-evaluation guide**

The learner can combine the free-style journal and a self-evaluation worksheet. The worksheet tracks learning progress in case the supervisor lacks access to the journal. Use of this daily or weekly worksheet helps in producing the learning summary which educational institutions sometimes require (see next page).

• **Self-evaluation worksheet**

Name _____ Date _____

What I did	Problems encountered	Emotional reactions	What I learned (knowledge, skills, attitudes)	My learning orientation	Reflections/Guiding question