

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategy: JOURNALS

Description

- Journaling is defined as a daily writing of events/happenings such as a diary.
- There are several types of journals, but two seem to have the most direct application to learning and they include:
 - reflective journaling - the learner reflects their thoughts as they are writing down their observations
 - double-entry journal - the first entry is the learner's observation, comment, connection, thought, questions or sketch about the content of the course. The second entry requires reflection and metacognitive evaluation that is side-by-side of the first entry and enhances or extends the first entry.

Guidelines

- Journals are usually written in narrative form and are more descriptive, longer, and free flowing than a log.
- They are generally used as a response to an event or experience and can connect what is being learned in one class with another class or with real life.
- Journals are subjective in nature and deal more with personal feelings, opinions or personal experiences.
- Journaling helps the instructor get to know the learner.
- Journals can also be used to require learners to write notes explaining tardiness or late homework and to help solve classroom problems.
- Instructors have the opportunity to respond personally to the learner's progress.
- Journal should include:
 - a summary of the important points
 - an argument (pro/con) about a particular point
 - notes pointing significant items of interest
 - thoughts of how to put ideas into practice
 - questions raised in the learner's mind

Strengths

- assists in gauging a learner's understanding of a specific concept
- can be used as a personal learning tool to help learners get the maximum benefit from an assignment
- assists in connecting the content of one course with another course
- improves learners' critical thinking skills
- provides various grading opportunities
- can be used in the classroom after a 10-15 minute "chunk" of lecture by:
 - writing down key ideas or concepts, connections, or questions and reflecting what is being learned
 - using groups for clarifying or discussions
 - receiving feedback from peers
 - completing a self-assessment on journal entries based on predetermined criteria

- promotes positive interaction between instructors and learners
- emphasizes the higher-order thinking skills of synthesis, application, and evaluation
- allows learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning
- demonstrates the use of more metacognitive strategies and more sophisticated cognitive strategies than learners who do not journal
- develops writers who become highly skilled at directing the course of their own learning
- induces learners to reflect and connect course content to past and present experiences
- allows learners to ask instructors questions and share thoughts that they may not have verbalized

Weaknesses/Obstacles

- requires a commitment by both instructors and learners
- requires reflective learning which is necessary for higher level thinking as described in Bloom's Taxonomy
- requires specialized teacher pre-service and professional development
- requires the instructor to assure the learner that their written materials will remain confidential and without risk of criticism
- learners may spend more time writing in their journal than reading or preparing for a test

[Instructor Guide for Assessing Journals](#)

[Teaching Guide for Journal Stems](#)

[Journal Stem Form](#)

[Double-Entry Journal Example](#)

[Double-Entry Journal Form](#)

[Reflection Page Form](#)

[Journal Form](#)

[References](#)