Reflections on learning and teaching: A professional journal

A handbook for education students including guidelines, references, suggestions and pages for reflections
Reflections on learning & teaching:
A professional journal

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Introduction

A desired outcome of our teacher education program is that you have the opportunity to acquire the skills you need to be reflective - to think critically and to consider deeply, the issues and ideas you will face in your course now and in your future role as educators.

As educators ourselves, we are committed to the professional development of teacher education graduates who are skilled in ‘critical reflection on teaching practices and theories, on their own teaching and their lives, using these reflections to inform their practice’.

One way to develop reflective skills is by systematically recording and reflecting on your learning and teaching as you progress through the course. This professional journal has been produced to support this process. Some of you will already be experienced journal writers but may not have considered keeping a professional journal.

The primary focus of this professional journal is to provide a weekly medium for critical analysis through reflection on your learning and teaching; a record of your views, opinions, beliefs, ideas, and insights.

The weekly guidelines have been written by School of Education lecturers as a framework for your reflections and to assist you with the process of integrating theory and practice across the topics that you will be studying in Semester 1 and 2 this year. For instance, in Development, Learning & Teaching (EDES3406), the journal will be used to document the process of learning in this topic, to consider this process in relation to your teaching practicum experience and to reflect on connections between theory and practice.

Other staff in the School of Education may also use the journal in their topics. In addition to the pages in this journal, some staff may encourage you to add further reflections in poetry, pictures, drawings, diagrams, and so on...

As you commence your Teaching Practicum, you will be encouraged to reflect on your ‘strengths and successes’ as well as ‘areas where there is room for improvement’. Your cooperating teachers and mentors will be aware of the importance of setting aside time for you to write in your journal and will help you explore ways to reflect critically on your professional practice.

The following pages contain comments about journal writing from previous students, suggestions for journal keeping from experienced journal writers, recent references about how journals are used in higher education and how teachers use journals in the classroom with their own students. We wish you well on your journey of professional reflection!

Experience + Reflection = Growth ...
(Posner, 1989)

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