



Reflective Journals

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Description:

A reflective journal is a tool that allows students to reflect on and write about progress in their learning. They can identify and reflect on successes and challenges. Teachers can gain information on what the student thinks and feels in a non-threatening way.

How could I use it?

- ★ For student reflection during a unit, topic or project.
- ★ As a quick and simple tool for student self-assessment at the end of a class.
- ★ To enable students to identify and reflect on their successes and challenges.
- ★ As a communication tool for students and teachers.
- ★ As a process to refocus a student's learning.

Why should I use it?

- ★ It is a simple process.
- ★ It promotes students' higher order thinking and enables them to reflect on what has been achieved during a lesson and where future efforts and support should be focussed in the next session.
- ★ It helps students to self-assess and to set goals for their future learning.
- ★ It engaged many of the students in their learning and gave them a sense of ownership and control.
- ★ It promotes literacy, especially if used in learning areas such as Mathematics, Arts, Science, ICT and Interpersonal Development.

When should I use it? ★ At the end of a lesson or weekly project.

How do I use it?

- ★ The teacher can make small reflective journals by cutting in half small notebooks that have been bought cheaply from an office supply store or establish an electronic file.

- ★ Give each student a half exercise book to use as their reflective journal. They can write their name and class on the cover and decorate it and bring it to every lesson.
- ★ At the end of each lesson students can be given time to write in their journal. They should write about their thoughts and feelings about the learning they have been doing in class. They can highlight their successes, raise issues and ask questions.
- ★ The journal is an informal piece of writing and students don't have to write in complete sentences if they choose not to. The journal should not be marked for spelling and grammar. The reflections are the priority.
- ★ The journal can be collected weekly by the teacher to read and gain an understanding of the students' thoughts and feelings about their learning.
- ★ The teacher can answer the students' questions, give ideas and praise or raise questions of their own in the journal, making a written conversation between the student and the teacher.
- ★ The reflective journal is particularly useful for learning when students do not traditionally see it as literacy based for example, Mathematics, Science, Arts, Physical Education, ICT and Interpersonal Development.