

Extract taken from:

REFLECTION ON AND IN THE WORK PLACE

Allin, L. & Turnock, C. (2007)

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Available at:

www.practicebasedlearning.org/resources/materials/intro.htm

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Keeping a Reflective Diary

Each individual will have a different way of keeping a reflective diary. There are, however, some general points to reinforce to learners about their diary.

It should be:

- A record which is useful to you
- A cue to memory
- Honestly written
- Enjoyable to you in its production

It can be used:

- To describe key events in your practice
- To evaluate key events in your practice
- To engage in focused evaluation of recurring themes
- Reflect on what may have become habitual
- Develop and appraise action taken

Getting Started:

- Set aside time for writing
- Allow time for the sifting of thoughts and ideas
- Do not worry about style, presentation
- Remember that the aim is to facilitate reflection on practice
- Find evidence to back-up your thoughts: what evidence do I have for what I have just written?

Begin by asking:

- How do I see my role as a student on workplace placement (purposes and intentions)?
- Why did I become a student?
- What kind of practitioner do I think I am?
- What values do I believe in?
- How do I demonstrate that I am practising in a way that is consistent with relevant professional values and codes of conduct?

Reflective Questions:

The following is a set of questions that could be used to assist your thinking, perhaps when you are writing up your reflections on practice in a diary or when you are thinking back over an experience and discussing it with your work-based supervisor.

- What was I aiming for when I did that?
- What exactly did I do? How would I describe it precisely?
- Why did I choose that particular action?
- What theories/models/research informed my actions?
- What was I trying to achieve?
- What did I do next?
- What were the reasons for doing that?
- How successful was it?
- What criteria am I using to judge success?
- What alternatives were there?
- Could I have dealt with the situation any better?
- How would I do it differently next time?
- What do I feel about the whole experience?
- What knowledge/values/skills were demonstrated?
- How did the client feel about it?
- How do I know the client felt like that?
- What sense can I make of this in the light of my past experience?
- Has this changed the way in which I will do things in the future?

A Final Note

- Reflective diaries are a private record of experiences throughout placement and so it is important to use them to report thoughts, feelings and opinions rather than merely the factual events of the day. Only by reporting personal feelings following an event can experiences be built upon and improved.
- It is important to use the reflective diary to record positive experiences and achievements as well as the not so positive ones. A balanced view of what has taken place is essential.
- Reflective diaries are not just important during placement - I kept my reflective diary and think of it to be, to some extent, rather like a personal 'Record of Achievement'.