**BEST PRACTICES FOR REFLECTIVE JOURNALING**

Dyment, Janet E. (08/2010). "The Quality of Reflection in Student Journals: A Review of Limiting and Enabling Factors". *Innovative higher education* *(0742-5627)*, 35 (4), p. 233.

**Most common problems with reflective journals:**

* students write at superficial level with little engagement or critical reflection: writing only descriptive accounts with no higher order thinking
* overuse= students feel "journaled to death"
* "writing for the teacher"
* general dislike of journaling
* difficulty in assessing

**The most successful and reflective journaling includes these elements:**

1. *Clearly framed* and explained to students before they begin writing:

- What is the purpose of the journal?

- how does the journal fit into the overall program of study?

- Who will read the journal?

- What are the assessment criteria and standards?

- How much does the journal count?

- What are the specific requirements? (length, format..\_)

2. *Instruction* *on how* to write reflectively is provided to students. This can be accomplished by

- discussion of different models of reflection like Dewey's Process of Experiential Learning, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking

- provide students examples of what it means to write at each level of one of these models

- give students samples of writing (even your own)and invite students to comment on and analyse

3. *Responses and Feedback*:

- equitable, transparent assessment

-identify what students have missed or overlooked in their journal entries

- use of questions, problems and further reflections to creating meaningful exchange of ideas

4. *Grades as Motivator:*

- reward students who right more deeply and critically with higher grades

5. *Trustworthy Reader:*

-safe and trusting space

- authentic interactions

6. *Timeliness:*

- reflection in anticipation of events

- reflection in the midst of action

- reflection after events

- regular journaling to develop the habit

7. *Structure:*

- prompts for writing, especially for younger/inexperienced students