



Learning How to Journal

Keeping a journal can help you take periodical reflective pauses to understand the meaning, implications, and consequences of what you are experiencing in your classroom and in your activities. We are not talking about a daily journal, but rather of a collection of occasional entries triggered by an incident, a reading, a patient, and so forth. Journaling is not only a way to record the facts that you observe and your feelings about them, but it is also an important step in becoming a reflective practitioner. As an added bonus, *your journal will also become a helpful resource when you complete your applications to professional programs.* Think of the steps of journaling as:

Do/Observe→Reflect→Understand→Articulate

Here is a possible framework for your entries. Include:

1. the cause, description and outcome of a critical incident, reading, patient encounter, etc.;
2. your feelings and perceptions of the situation;
3. actions taken by you and/or others during the situation;
4. impact on your pre-held assumptions and worldviews; and
5. changes (if any) in your future behavior and/or steps to take as a result of this experience.