

## Using Reflection to Promote Student Engagement

<http://www.gvsu.edu/idel/>  
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### Considerations:

#### What role will the journal play?

--Is it to be mostly a record of responses to reading(s)? to lecture(s) to assignment(s)? A collection place for all class writings? Some combination of all of the above?

#### What is the payoff to students?

-- Students are more likely to engage with journaling or if it will help them write a paper, participate in discussions, pass an exam, or earn a letter grade.

#### How will the instructor provide journal feedback or comments to the student?

--Students will take the journal more seriously if they receive regular feedback. Blackboard journals provide the opportunity to respond with private comments/feedback, and the Grade center even allow for audio or video comments.

### *Reasons to use electronic Reflective Journals as it relates to the 7 Principles of Good Practice:*

1. **Student-Faculty contact.** E-journaling can provide a “voice” to those who are reluctant to share ideas with peers in class.
2. **Active Learning.** E-journaling can help students to better reflect critically on content and aid in the synthesis of new information.
3. **Prompt Feedback.** Faculty can easily reply to postings (typed responses or video/audio).
4. **Time on Task.** Most students and faculty can type faster than they can write long hand. It’s also easier to read an electronic journal.
5. **High Expectations.** E-journaling provides an environment for faculty to show that they are genuinely concerned about their student’s learning.
6. **Respect Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning.** E-journaling may be a new way of learning and offers a broad range of interpretation.
7. **Reciprocity and Cooperation among Students.** Cooperation and respect can be nurtured and encouraged through instructor journal responses.

Journaling can be an effective way to encourage students to reflect on their learning, engage with the course material, and make connections with content and real-life application. It's a strategy that can work with any course or any discipline.

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### Strategies:

Find opportunities in the course to use a journal in place of a discussion board to encourage personal application of content.

3 column approach – Ask students to identify a specific activity that they focused over the last few weeks (discussion board postings, a specific assignment, readings, an assessment...etc.), then reflect on the material learned. The three columns include: What happened? How do I feel about it? What did I learn?

Encourage students to use their journals to generate questions about course content, readings, major assignments, research projects, upcoming exams...etc. Especially use the journal at mid-semester point or to address muddiest point concerns or as a general check-in opportunity.

Early in the research paper process, require students to post citations to research articles and include library databases being used and ask them to share how these resources fit with their research topics to assure they are using appropriate resources.

### Technology:

Blackboard has a private journal tool as well as the online assignment submission function. You might even consider giving students choice on whether they want to use video in place of a written journal. Panopto video assignments are an easy way to collect video submissions which can also remain private from other students. See [gvsu.edu/elearn](http://gvsu.edu/elearn) for Blackboard and Panopto assistance.

### References:

A. W. Chickering and A. F. Gamson, *Applying the Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).

Moon, J. A. *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development*. Routledge, New York. 2006.

Phipps, J. J. (2005). E-journaling: Achieving interactive education online. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, 28(1), 62.