



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

Experiential Learning Teaching Methods

Method: Observational Journal Writing

Description: Journaling is a commonly used research method, often paired with participant observation. It can be an equally effective means of encouraging reflection and awareness in the classroom. Having students write weekly reflections that link classroom material to what they are observing in their daily life can be an effective means of encouraging students to actively reflect and participate in their learning. Journaling as a teaching method often is structured with students needing to make explicit links between what they are observing and themes discussed in class or through text.

Link to Experiential Learning: Journaling provides an opportunity for making the conversations in class, and a student's life outside of class more porous. Regular reflection on the links between classroom material and their immediate surroundings can encourage more active classroom engagement and opportunities for peer learning. It also can encourage students to reflect on the link between their education and their lives after university, and ultimately encourage reflexivity.

Facilitator Notes: Journaling as a stand-alone activity can lack rigour. It's important for journaling to be regularly submitted to an instructor to avoid the possibility of journal entries being fabricated after being ignored for the duration of a course- which would lessen the impact that journaling has on enhancing course material. Having journal entries form the foundation of a more substantial research paper or course project provides additional opportunity for linking academic discourse with real life situations.

Learn More:

<https://www.teachervision.com/writing/resource/6370.html>

<http://www.beyondthechalkboard.com/activities/my-observation-journal/>

http://www.niu.edu/facdev/_pdf/guide/assessment/reflective_journals%20and_learning_logs.pdf