

Learning Logs



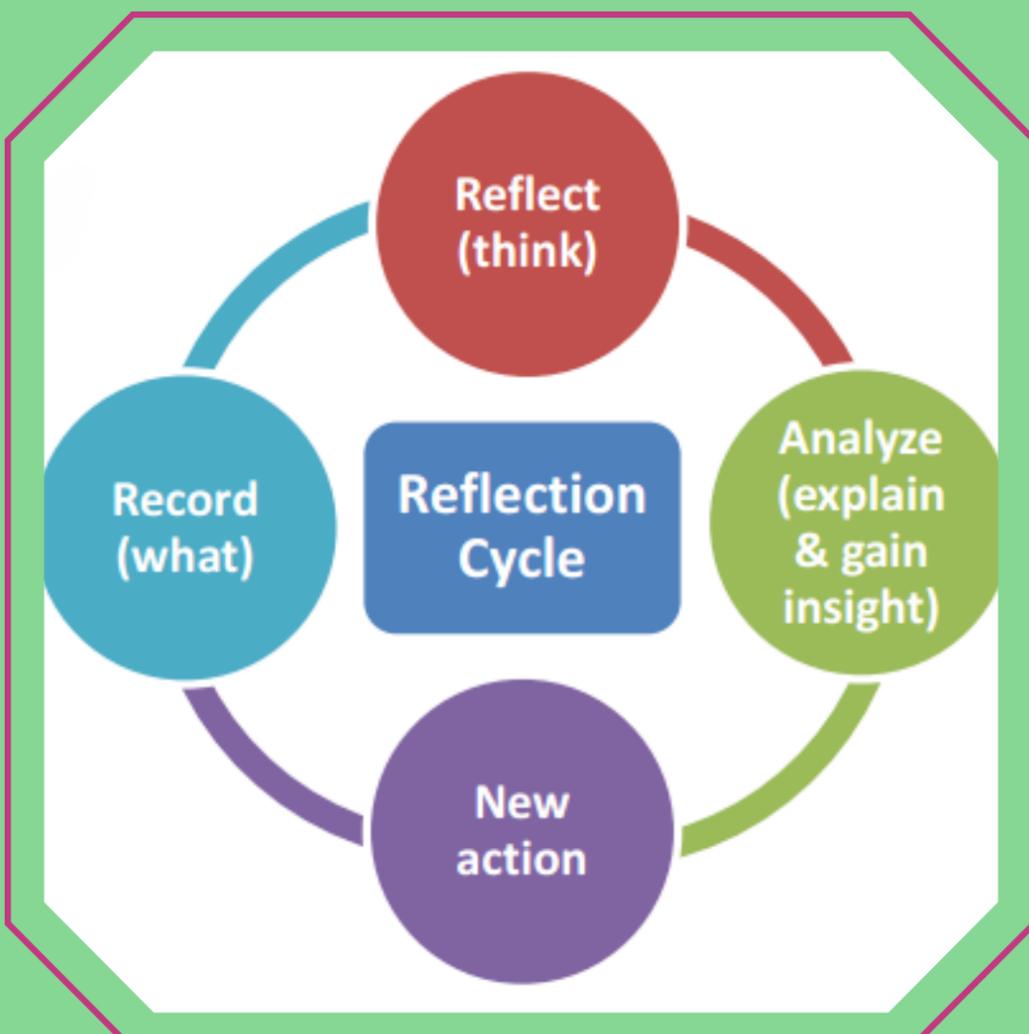
An activity to help students reflect on their learning in order to improve awareness of their learning techniques and abilities.

By Ellie Knight for PIDP 3250, September 2016

Learning logs are used as a student engagement technique to develop learner self awareness. Students reflect on their learning by responding to instructor prompts in a journal, or other format, such as a blog. After multiple entries, students look for trends in their learning, which can help them identify their most successful learning strategies, and their learning strengths and weaknesses. Students focus on their strengths as they continue their academic pursuits, and come up with solutions to address their learning issues.

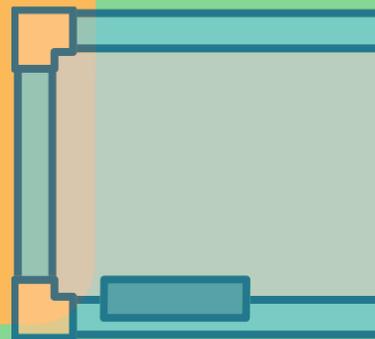
BEST PRACTICES:

- This exercise needs structure, such as guiding questions.
- Instructor needs to provide explicit prompts designed to focus reflection on desired topics.
- A handout should be provided that explains the rationale for and intended benefit of writing Learning Logs.
- The instructor must inform the student if he or she plans to read and review the logs.
- This exercise should align with the course outcomes.



ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

- Provide thought-provoking questions to guide and stimulate the learner's path of reflection.
- Give the student comprehensive directions, a rubric of expectations, and examples of work.
- Decide an appropriate format for the logs (journal, lists, mind map, notebook, blog).
- If reading the learning logs, be objective about the learner's opinions or reactions.
- Give assistance as needed when students identify that they are struggling.



ROLE OF THE LEARNER

- Self-assess the highs and lows of their learning approaches.
- Identify areas for improvement in their learning strategies, and devise and implement techniques to improve their learning or performance.
- Reflect on their personal development as the exercise progresses.
- Discuss their findings with the class, if applicable..

PROS

- Promotes metacognition, develops critical thinking skills, and encourages independent learning.
- Students are more likely to take control and ownership of their educational journey.
- Provides a pathway for students to track their academic goals.
- Reveals student's perceptions of and reactions to the course content.
- Can be used as summative assessment from the teacher and learner perspective.

CONS

- Can be time consuming to the student to prepare, and to the instructor to assess.
- May invoke a negative reaction.
- Content in log may be overly personal or inappropriate.
- Students may be reluctant to convey their feelings.



PROVINCIAL INSTRUCTOR DIPLOMA

CONCLUSIONS

Learning logs are a student engagement technique that allow the learner to reflect on their learning paths, and take ownership of their education.

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