

TEACHING JOURNAL SUGGESTIONS



PHYSICAL FORM

The physical, or cyberspace form of the journal is up to you: notebook, laptop, tablet, smart phone (camera, recorder, video, etc.). Paper or digital, keep jotting down mental or written observations and ideas before, during and immediately following a teaching experience or even when you're relaxing, walking, driving (mental notes), and you happen to think of an interesting or possibly important point to explore. Then you can record things more carefully later in your favorite spot: coffee shop, campus nook, apartment, or other friendly environment. Regularly place revised journal items in some type of log, portfolio, or folder. From time to time, I will ask you to take out an item to give to me or to use in class discussion.

CONTENTS

☞ Include thoughts and remembrances of your own language and subject-matter learning and teaching such as:

- Past language-learning experiences in and outside the U.S., in and outside school
- Other learning experiences on the job, at school, at home
- How did your past teachers teach (L1, L2, math, science, etc.)? What did you like or dislike about the way they taught? How do you think these experiences might influence your teaching?
- Explore your own beliefs about teaching approaches, methods, techniques by thinking about them, trying out ideas, summarizing/commenting on class notes, group interaction, journal articles, books, internet sites

☞ What are you getting to know about the context of your teaching situation?

- Your students' interests, hobbies, language-learning proficiency/abilities, background knowledge, social/cultural perspectives
- Classroom, school, community, and home media and materials resources in terms of whiteboards/blackboards, books, photocopying, overhead machines, computer media, VCRs, CD/tape recorders, etc.
- Interactions with colleagues, staff, administrators, tutors, parents, friends, and relatives

☞ Explore the current teaching experiences of yourself and others:

- Quickly written descriptions of classroom or tutorial interaction
- Tally sheets, transcripts, sketches, coding, snapshots, audio, video, anecdotal records
- Summaries and reflections on conversations and interactions with students and others
- Drafts of lesson plan ideas, lists of alternative possibilities for the next day's teaching
- Stream-of-consciousness writing (to let ideas flow, jog remembrances of past interaction)
- Reflective process teaching: prepare a lesson, teach it, review or remember what happened, reflect on and analyze how things went, decide what you learned from the teaching experience, what you want to continue doing, changes or new ideas for next time

☞ Periodic (every week or two) write-ups/drafts, short essays, longer journal entries about what you've learned concerning teaching beliefs, strategies and methodology, your overall teaching context, a case study of a particular student you are working with, your complete formulation of a useful lesson plan, thematic unit, design for a course