

# JOURNAL ENTRIES for Student Teaching

## *What is a guided journal entry? How can reflection help us grow as a teacher?*

During your student teaching semester, reflection will become an important part of the growth process. Sometimes reflection is informal and sometimes it is more formal, such as a discussion or written entry.

Writing things down, being forced to articulate one's thoughts, has proven to be very beneficial for both personal and professional growth. Your journaling should take two formats: the personal entry and the guided entry.

The *personal* entry is where you may express things you do not necessarily want to share with anyone (including your supervisor or coop). In *this* form of journaling YOU can benefit from simply writing down your feelings. YOU will be able to see your growth over time as you re-read your various entries. Your personal journal is private.

### Example of PERSONAL journal entry:

Jan. 22, 2005

Today I was really annoyed at my coop because he told me I wasn't putting enough enthusiasm into my delivery. I am using every BIT of energy I have. After all, last night I was up until 1:30AM doing these plans, correcting HIS tests for him. What does he think I am anyway? I can't wait until he isn't in the room with me anymore so I can teach on my own!

Journaling is also a means of communication between you, your coop, and your supervisor. When you are honest and trusting, the journal is an invaluable means of expression, communication, and enlightenment. Perhaps you will combine a guided and personal journal into one for your own review, to help you reflect on your semester. Your *guided* journal information is what you will share.

The *guided* entry asks you to respond to particular things about your teaching and professional growth. Each week you are to send a *guided* journal entry to your supervisor **describing** and **discussing** your growth as a teacher. These are *not* to be lists of WHAT you taught and observed. The entries need to be your thoughts and feelings about HOW you taught, what worked, what didn't, and how you could do things differently in the latter case. We recommend that you include progress you are making on the goals you and your coop have established for you. Below are some examples and suggestions:

Example of GUIDED journal entry:

Jan. 22, 2005

Today I introduced a unit on Instruments of the Orchestra to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade general music class. I thought my plan was well timed, had the students actively listening and discussing what they heard, and used enough visuals to help visual learners. However, I did not account for the fact that I may need to redo a listening portion if there were students who did not understand. Since my examples were not long enough for the students to distinguish between some of the woodwind timbres, they were confused. I had to go back over those examples---which meant I had to rewind the tape--and the class got out of control waiting for me to find the selections. I should have planned for extra listenings and made separate tapes with each example on twice. Because of this my pacing was way off and I did not get through ½ of what I had planned, plus I spent too much time trying to get them back on track. *If I could teach this lesson again, I would.....etc.*

Now for suggestions to guide your entries:

**FIRST few weeks: (all by your mid-term)**

1. What are your concerns as you begin this semester's experience?
2. What do you think of the classes/ensembles you will teach?
3. How will you and your coop approach your classes? Specific ideas?
4. What skills are you learning from watching your coop teach?
5. How did you feel after your first teaching experience? Discuss at least one thing that seemed effective.
6. How did your first FULL lesson go? Were you nervous? Did that feeling change as the lesson progressed? Why or why not?
7. How will you learn each student's name? What is your "plan of attack"?
8. Start following 3 or 4 students in each class and write down something you have noticed about them.
9. Follow more students individually as time progresses.
10. What are your LONG term GOALS for the classes you are teaching? What do you hope the students will have learned/accomplished at the end of 4 weeks...6 weeks....a quarter? Select these and document the class' or individual student's musical progress.
11. Discuss being a music educator. How did you exemplify that idea TODAY?
12. List the *great* things from today's lessons, and at least two things you want to *improve*.
13. What progress are you making on the goals you and your coop identified for your focus?

By *mid-term or before*, your journals should follow this same format. These reflections will be artifacts for you to add to your portfolio, as well as help you in your professional

growth. You will *not* add every reflection you have logged. However, you need samples to choose from in compiling your final data.

You should make a journal entry for EVERY day, whether YOU are teaching or not. If not, be a great observer of the STUDENTS. What did you learn from observing them? What are you learning about classroom management, about personalities, about characteristics of that age student? Use every opportunity to grow professionally.

Remember, **BE SPECIFIC!** It is better to select ONE situation or ONE class and really analyze the procedures used, what the results were, rather than try to cover everything, thus making the reflection too general. Look for both positive and negative in each situation. Your coop and supervisor can only respond to what they are given. ☺

**Your journals will be collected and filed by your University Supervisor. Journal entries are to be e-mailed each Friday to the University Supervisor AND the PMTE Coordinator.**