

LEARNING JOURNAL

I strongly encourage you to keep a learning journal throughout your studies at UEA. This is a kind of diary which you maintain (perhaps spending 15-30 minutes on it each day) and which is a record of what you have learnt and what you think about it. As it grows, your learning journal can enable you to see your progress and can also be something you refer to at later points in your studies. Much research into learning strategies suggests that people who keep a learning journal tend to be more effective learners than people who do not.

You might find it helpful to structure your journal entries around the following questions.

What have I learnt today? Why?

Here perhaps choose one thing, so you can go into a little depth. (There's a parallel here with good, critical work, which normally focuses on a few things in a lot of detail, rather than discussing a lot of things superficially. It's not about 'how much you know', but is about 'what you do with what you know'.)

What do I think (How do I feel) about what I've learnt? Why?

Some possible responses here are 'I knew that already'; 'that's different from what I thought; 'I didn't understand any of that'; 'that was really interesting/boring', etc etc.

Reflecting on your response to what you've encountered can help you understand what you are interested in, what your strengths and weaknesses might be, and what you might be able to do to help yourself learn more effectively.

How does what I've learnt today connect with what I previously thought/ knew?

Here you are making connections with your past learning. You're not an 'empty glass' waiting to be 'filled' with knowledge: you are bringing your past experience and ideas to what you are now encountering, and this will affect your response to it.

What could I do/ do I need to do next with what I've learnt today? Why? How could I do it?

Here you are being encouraged to take responsibility for your own learning, by identifying your own learning wants and needs. It's not possible to learn everything about everything, so you need to make choices. It's your education, not your tutor's. Thinking about 'what to do next' helps you to keep seeing 'what you have done today' as part of an ongoing process, not as the 'end'.