

Journaling and Journal Summaries

“Journalling on learning, pastoral experiences and significant events in supervised field placements is a useful learning tool for students. ... journalling provides information to students about what they are learning and areas where they need further learning. In addition, the pastoral, theological and spiritual insights that students record in their journals may also offer a resource to students for use in reflection papers and class discussions.”

Beth McIsaac Bruce, “A Qualitative Research Report on the Journals of Supervised Field Education Students” A Report of the Proceedings of the 27th Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education, 2003, page 120.

Journalling provides an opportunity for intentional meditation and reflection. Many students have experienced journalling as an invaluable tool for recording their thoughts, feelings and insights during the field placement experience. It is an optional activity, although we do encourage this method (and others) that bring purposeful discipline to the action/reflection process. Journalling is usually a private activity. Yet if you care to share ideas or questions that arise in the process of journalling it is appropriate to bring a summary of these (in verbal or written form) to sessions with your learning facilitator, diaconal mentor and local committee. If you keep a journal during the field placement it is also an invaluable tool that can aid in the preparation for the mid-term and final reviews.

Purpose

- to provide opportunity for reflecting on learnings and experiences

Content

- major learnings; primary issues you are working with; current frustrations, problems, insights, successes, affirmations, questions
- noting feelings in response to above
- reflecting on your theological and spiritual values in light of your experiences
- questions that need additional reflection with your learning facilitator, diaconal mentor or local committee

Process

- make daily or weekly notations for personal use only; develop a discipline that works for you
- you might begin each journalling time by taking a moment to become quiet and still, to pray
- allow yourself the freedom to write about or draw what comes to mind without editing or judging
- observe scriptural connections, theological questions, implications for ministry, progress toward learning goals
- from your personal journal you may want to develop a brief summary (one page) highlighting patterns in behaviour and feelings, significant issues, concerns, questions, etc. to be shared with your learning facilitator, diaconal mentor or local committee