

# Keeping a Dissertation Journal



A process for self Development  
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# Why Journal?

- Writing down your thoughts and feelings is a therapeutic activity.
- Journaling can be a process to help you get in touch with your yearnings, find resolve for problems, and deal with personal issues.
- Journaling can help ease your discomfort, overcome your fears, and record your successes and challenges.
- You can express yourself in a completely safe, protected, and secure environment.



# Write Away...

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Indecision
- Problems
- Unfinished Business
- Confusion
- Writer's Block
- Procrastination



# Benefits

- Writing can flow without self-consciousness or inhibition.
- Reveal your thought processes and mental habits.
- Improve your memory.
- Provides a context for healing and growth.
- Provide tangible evidence of mental processes.



# More Benefits

- Tools for growth through critical reflection.
- Help make meaning out of what you are experiencing and reading.
- Help articulate connections between new information and what you know.



# Journal writing is Metaphysical

- A philosophy wherein your thoughts have an impact on your life and the universe.
- Deals with principles of reality transcending those of any particular science
- Allows you to have a level of control over your destiny
- Proof comes from personal experiences.



*You already have your poetry. If you want to write it down, here is your notebook." --Pablo Neruda*

- What is your poetry? What kinds of things do you want to be writing about in your notebook/journal?
- What insights can you use from your journal writing for your dissertation writing?



# Purpose

- Track Personal/Professional and Educational Growth
- Reflect on how you think about events.
- Reflect on how you interpret and understand:
  - The literature review
  - The problem you are investigating
  - The support you are getting
  - Your reaction to feedback





# Literature Entry

- After reading a journal article what did you get from it?
- *literature log* –
  - Record your responses to readings
  - How does this support your study?
  - How does this refute your study?
- critical co-reading and co-writing.



# Reflection Entry

- Feelings about events.
- Questioning what, why, and how you do things and asking what, why, and how others do things
- Seeking alternatives
- Asking “what if...?”
- Consider consequences
- Are you spending enough time on your dissertation?



# Theoretical Entry

- Research Entries into your topic areas
- Make meaning of the observations and experiences related to your profession and goals.
- Theories put things known into a system so that meaning is provided... the “Why?”
- Theories put things known into a system so that meaning is provided.




# Insight Entries

- Develop metacognitive strategies - how do you know what you know?
- What type of researcher are you?
- How do you function at your best?
- What drives you to succeed?
- What prevents you from succeeding?
- What type of support do you need?
- How are you maintaining a balanced life?



# Creative Entry

- White spaces or “out of the box”
- Looking beyond the obvious.
- ***Thinking that creates new ideas.***
- Imagination plays a key role in this mode of thinking.
- What would it be like if I tried to,...?"



*"I never think when I write. Nobody can do two things at the same time and do them both well." -- Don Marquis*

- This will help you remember to write fast, to start writing and keep writing and to outsmart that inner critic!

### Online journal

- <http://www.camdevelopment.com/mpd.htm>



# Some quotes

- An unexamined life is not a life worth living (Plato).
- Reflect upon your present blessings - of which you have many - not on your past misfortunes, of which you have some (Dickens).
- Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow (Ronald Osborn).
- Vision is not enough, it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must step up the stairs (Vaclav Havel).



# Getting Started

- What are your greatest strengths in putting together a quality dissertation?
- What behavior(s) do you wish to change?
- What barriers do you face?
- What can support you in making this change?
- Assess your time management skills
- Make a plan you can stick with.





# Goals

- "The end must justify the means."
- *Examine and recognize personal values.*
- *Identify, gather, and use relevant information.*
- *Understand and use an effective strategy for converting information and desires into action.*



# Short Term Goal

- What can you accomplish immediately?
- What can you accomplish within this month?
- When do you plan to complete your dissertation?
- What type of relationship do you need/want from your committee?



# Long Term Goal

- **Conceivable** -- capable of being put into words
- **Believable** -- to you
- **Achievable** – you have the strength, energy and time to accomplish it
- **Measurable** -- time and accomplishment outcomes
- **Desirable** -- wanted



# Achieving your goal

- List the steps that will enable you to reach the goal in as much detail as possible.
- What is the necessary course work, training, reading, actions, and preparation to meet the goal.
- What can get in the way of obtaining your goal? How will you deal with this?



# Be Flexible

C H A N G E

*A bend in the road is not the  
end of the road, unless you fail  
to make the turn.*