



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module 1- Growth mindset

Method 1 – Reflection journal

Case study



Module 1 – Growth Mindset

Case study - Mentoring and Structured Reflective Journal Writing for International Graduate Students

Related Method - Reflection Journal

Context and Background

Type of organisation: University-level mentoring programme

Target group: International graduate students (adult learners) adjusting to academia in a new culture

Scope: Qualitative participatory action research involving two graduate students paired with a faculty mentor; included interviews and journal analyses.

Source:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234591885_Journal_Writing_as_an_Adult_Learning_Tool_Practice_Application_Brief_No_22

Problem / Challenge Presented

International graduate students often face culture shock, difficulties with academic writing in a foreign language, and challenges navigating the tacit norms of academia.

Actions Taken / Method Applied

A structured reflective journal writing activity was integrated into a mentoring relationship between a faculty mentor and two international graduate students. Data sources included focus group interviews and analysis of selected journal entries to understand how mentoring combined with reflection aided students.

Outcomes and Results

Reflective journal writing, when coupled with mentorship, helped students de-stress, learn tacit academic norms, and engage in scholarly activities such as conference presentations and publications.



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Lessons Learned

Structured journal writing can be a powerful tool to support not just academic adaptation but also psychological adjustment for international adult learners. When paired with mentoring, reflection becomes a conduit for deeper understanding and academic participation.

Key Success Factors

Reflection was not isolated—it was embedded in a supportive mentoring relationship. Though structured, the reflective writing allowed students to freely process their experiences and challenges.

Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed

While the case description doesn't enumerate challenges, common issues likely include:

Time constraints for both mentor and mentee

Students' unfamiliarity with reflective writing practices

These were mitigated through the dual supports of structured prompts and the mentor's guidance—making reflection manageable and meaningful.

Applicability / Recommendations for Educators

Educators in adult training can adapt this model by:

Combining mentoring with reflective journaling—particularly valuable for adult learners encountering new academic or cultural environments;

Using structured reflective formats to guide learners—especially those unfamiliar with academic norms or reflective practice;

Reflection helps learners process emotions, norms, and practical challenges, paving the way for deeper integration and scholarly growth.