

Learning Journal Guidance 26-27

Purpose and Value

The learning journal is a reflective tool that supports student teachers in developing their professional identity, tracking progress, and engaging in meaningful professional learning. It aligns with the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership in Wales and supports key aspects of EWC Professional Standards and Welsh Government accreditation criteria, including structured reflection, responsiveness to feedback, and professional learning.

Research shows that mentor feedback and dialogue significantly enhance the value of journal reflections, helping student teachers track growth, build confidence, and develop a professional voice.

Effective Learning Journal reflections should:

- move beyond description
- lead to action
- focus on learner experience
- grow through shared professional dialogue

Recent partnership pilot work found that structured reflection prompts supported student teachers to think more deeply about their practice, make changes to their teaching, pay greater attention to learners' experiences and develop confidence in their professional learning. The pilot also highlighted the important role mentors play in supporting reflective thinking through regular dialogue and feedback.

The Learning Journal is therefore more than a record of events. It is a shared professional learning tool that supports reflection, dialogue and ongoing development throughout placement.

How to Use the Learning Journal

Recording Reflections

- Student teachers should make regular entries within the Learning Journal throughout their placement. Mentors are expected to engage regularly with entries through comments, questions and reflective dialogue
- Wider reflections (beyond taught lessons) can be recorded daily as appropriate and

may include: conversations with parents/carers, observations of other staff, interactions with colleagues/peers, reflections on wider reading, personal targets, and planning considerations

- Reflections should focus on children's progress as well as standards of teaching
- Short, focused entries are acceptable, especially during busy periods – the emphasis is on quality of reflection, not quantity

Two-Way Dialogue

- The Learning Journal should act as a shared professional document through which student teachers and mentors engage in ongoing reflective dialogue.
- Student teachers are expected to use the journal regularly to record reflections, questions, observations and emerging professional thinking.
- Mentors are expected to engage regularly with journal entries and use them as a basis for professional discussion. This may involve asking probing questions, encouraging deeper analysis, highlighting learner experience, identifying strengths and supporting the student teacher to determine next steps.
- Reflections recorded within the Learning Journal should inform weekly reflection meetings and day-to-day professional conversations. The most effective Learning Journals are those where reflective writing and professional dialogue work together to support professional growth.

Professional Expectations for Learning Journal Use

- The Journal must be available to Class/Subject Mentors and other staff members at all times – but not accessible to pupils
- As the Journal is a professional document, although not 'formal', appropriate language must be used and staff and children should not be named
- The Learning Journal is NOT a 'To Do List' – if lists are needed, these should be kept elsewhere
- The contents of the Learning Journal should be discussed during the Weekly Reflection Meeting
- The Learning Journal will be periodically inspected by University tutors, Network Leads and Senior Mentors

The Role of the Mentor

Mentors play an important role in maximising the value of the Learning Journal. Effective mentor engagement helps student teachers move beyond description, focus on learner experience and identify meaningful next steps in their professional learning.

Mentors should:

- engage regularly with Learning Journal entries
- use questioning and feedback to encourage deeper reflection
- focus discussion on the experiences and progress of learners
- support student teachers to identify strengths, areas for development and next steps
- use Learning Journal entries as a basis for ongoing professional dialogue
- model reflective thinking and reflective writing where appropriate
- support student teachers in selecting and using reflection prompts, particularly during the early stages of placement
- scaffold reflective thinking by using prompts and questioning to move reflection beyond description
- gradually reduce support as student teachers become more confident and independent reflective practitioners

The Learning Journal is intended to be a shared professional learning tool. While student teachers are responsible for recording reflections, mentor engagement helps deepen reflective thinking and strengthen the connection between reflection, professional dialogue and improvements in practice.

*Prompts for **student- teachers and mentors** to support student-teacher reflection:*

The prompts below are designed to support reflections that:

- move beyond description
- lead to action
- focus on learner experience
- grow through shared professional dialogue

These prompts are designed to scaffold critical thinking and support transformative learning. They aim to support student teachers move beyond description to analysis, enabling meaningful professional growth.

Mentor prompts have been included as coaching questions that can be used to extend thinking, support reflective conversations and help student teachers identify next steps in their professional development.

Reflective themes	Student-teacher reflection	Mentor prompts
Noticing and reflecting	I have noticed that... I'm noticing a pattern in... I don't understand... I'm wondering whether...	What evidence supports this? What made you notice that? Is this a one off or a pattern? What might be another explanation?
Challenges and exploration	I am challenged by... I'd like to explore... I've tried...but it didn't work because...	What might be contributing to this? What could you explore next? What support or learning might help?
Learner Experience	Learners responded to the learning experience by... Evidence suggests learners experienced success, challenge or engagement when... Learners' comments, actions and responses indicated that...	What did the learners say or do to make you think this? Which learners experienced the learning differently and why? How do you know?
Strengths and progress	I felt confident when I...because... A moment that showed I'm developing was... Something I handled better this week was... I'm proud that I / the learners...	What progress have you made? What strengths are emerging? What would you have found difficult a few weeks ago that you can now do more confidently?
Action and impact	I will... so that... I'd know it was working if I saw... How will I know if the learners have benefited?	What impact did this have on learners? How do you know? What will you continue, adapt or change?
Professional Identity	I felt most like a teacher when... A strategy that boosted my confidence today was... Feedback that has influenced my thinking was... I am beginning to see myself as a teacher who...	What will you try next? What would help you feel more confident? How can we support you next step?

Examples of Learning Journals Demonstrating Effective Reflection are shown below:

Using an Enquiry-Based Display

I observed an effective display in another school where learning was centred around an overarching enquiry question. I noticed how this supported problem solving, curiosity and deeper thinking within the classroom. I would like to introduce this in my own classroom to support learners in making meaningful connections and taking greater ownership of their learning.

- I have noticed that an enquiry question helps promote deeper thinking and problem solving.
- I have noticed that learners are more engaged when learning is driven by curiosity and questioning.
- I'm noticing a pattern that my displays often focus on outcomes rather than the thinking behind learning.
- I am challenged by how to make the enquiry question accessible for all learners.
- I will introduce an overarching enquiry question display so that learners can explore ideas and make connections.
- Success for me would look like children thinking deeply, with support staff using key questions and prompts to promote this deeper learning through their role as enabling adults.
- I'd know it was working if other staff, families and visitors are able to question the children, and the display is used as a tool for ongoing reflection and deeper conversations.

Llanelli Wetlands Centre Trip

We visited Llanelli Wetlands Centre for a day of outdoor learning. In the morning, we walked around the grounds and did some bird watching. The children used binoculars in the watch tower and at the lookout points, which they really enjoyed. We also saw the flamingos, which the children thought were funny (and very smelly!). They also loved feeding the ducks using the bird food at the pond. After lunch and a bit of time to play, we went pond dipping in the afternoon. The children used nets to find different creatures in the water and were really excited to see what they could find. Before we left, one of the staff members told a story, which was a nice calm way to end the day.

I really enjoyed this trip and it reminded me how important outdoor learning is. The children were more engaged, especially during things like pond dipping where they could get stuck in. I also noticed that some children who are usually quieter in the classroom were much more confident outside. Also, the children who are usually busy took interest in the pond dipping and engaged for long periods of time. It made me realise how valuable these kinds of experiences are, not just for learning but for wellbeing too. I'd definitely like to include trips/outdoor learning in my own teaching in the future.

Caitlin was an amazing help on our trip. She took on the teacher role and supported me when I was dealing with challenging behaviour, she took the rest of the children. She was an active staff member who was able to take responsibility, lead groups of children and also delegate tasks to support staff.

WWW- What Went Well

EBI- Even Better If

Monday 6.1.25

Inset day - Cooperative learning.

During this inset day all the teaching staff received training in cooperative learning. I personally found this day really helpful. I have learnt some different strategies to group children and how to make their collaborative work more successful + purposeful.

Tuesday 7.1.25

L.O.- Can I plan a recount of my Christmas holidays?

WWW - I feel like I started this lesson off well - I activated the childrens prior knowledge about the key features of a recount. We started off by going around the the class and I asked each child to tell me one thing about their Christmas holiday that made them happy. The children were engaged and did some lovely work for me.

EBI - Next time I would like to try and have more time to live mark in order for me to be able to provide immediate feedback to the children.

19th November 2024

→ Multiplying decimals

- There was clear progression as this topic started on the 13/11/24, students became increasingly confident with the topic by the end of the session. I was happy to finish this topic.
- I used effective differentiation through carefully designed worksheets that catered to varying abilities, ensuring all students were appropriately challenged and supported in developing their skills.

→ progression
(multiplication)
BOX method (column)
(multiply decimals)

→ Differentiation
** (2 star worksheet)
*** (3 star worksheet)
1 decimal place
2 decimal places.

October 22nd, 2024

What went well

Did register and lunches.

Guided reading in carousel

First microteach with a group of 5 students on narrative story planning.

- Students worked well with the resources provided.
- Students understood what was needed to be done.
- Students were engaged.

~~Also~~ Even better if:

- Students didn't have enough time to finish their story mountain
- Next time, have more than 1 session on story mountain.
- Be prepared for student melt downs.

12.22

Gwers - Oes yr Ia
Cymuned Inuit.

6.12.22

Dechreuais y wers wrth dfin
i'r disgyblion i ddefnyddio
wefan Mentimeter. Purpos y
dosg hon oedd i weld beth
oedd y disgyblion yn gwybod
am pob yr Inuit Cyn y wers.
Dargosais fideo Inuit Uawn
ffethiau. Aeth y plant ati
i ychwanegu at y mentimeter
Rhoddais ddeflen wedi ei
wahaniaethu i'r gwaith i'r
disgyblion. Cynnwys y ddeflen
oedd ffethiau am y bobl Inuit
Purpos y wers oedd i'r
disgyblion creu dam o waith
mewn genre o eu dewis er
myn eiddo cyflwyno'r gwybodaeth
oedd ar y ddeflen mewn geiriau
e' hyn.

Wnaethom ni y mentimeter eto
ar diwedd y wers. Gwnaeth
y disgyblion ymateb yn dda i'r
gwers ac helpyd y mentimeter.

Da iawn ti am weithio ar dy
darged - hoffodd y disgyblion y

23.11.22

Mathematig - ffactorau.

Coed ffactorau

Poth i wnes i Sierhau dealltwir
 trwy asesu'n aml. Ddodol rhai
 disgyblion ddolm yn deall y
 camau ar ôl glywed ar yr
 esboniad cyntaf. Felly wrth
 ddefnyddio bodiau i-fyrn ayyb
 wnes i weld prif odd argeu
 bach fwy o gymorth.

Aerh paub ati i weithio, wnes
 i estedol gyda ambell i

unwaith
 pob unigolyn ymateb i'r poethi
 trwy ateb cwestiynau.
 Gallaf gweld wrth asesu'r
 gwaith bod y dosbarth wedi
 deall coed ffactorau.

* Cysyniad anodd unrwaith
 eto ond disgyblion wedi
 ymateb yn dda.
 Tafenni gwahaniaethol
 effeithlon.

LO: Can I ~~use~~ make my own broomstick using natural materials and work as a team?

Brief description: We are learning about 'Room on the Broom' as our class story. For this activity the children will be experiencing Room on the Broom in the outdoor setting creating broomsticks working as a team and using natural materials. Questioning - teamwork, strong materials, measuring.

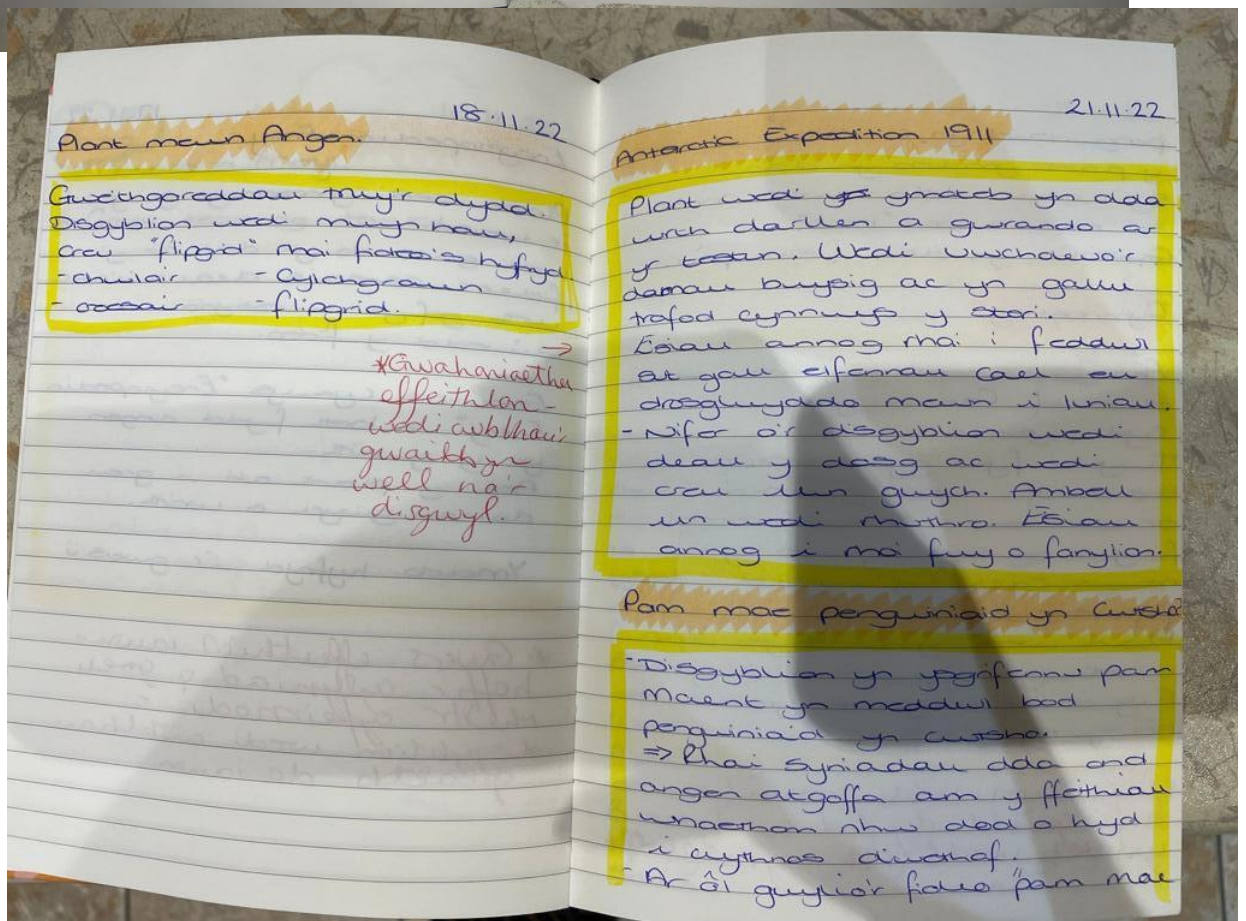
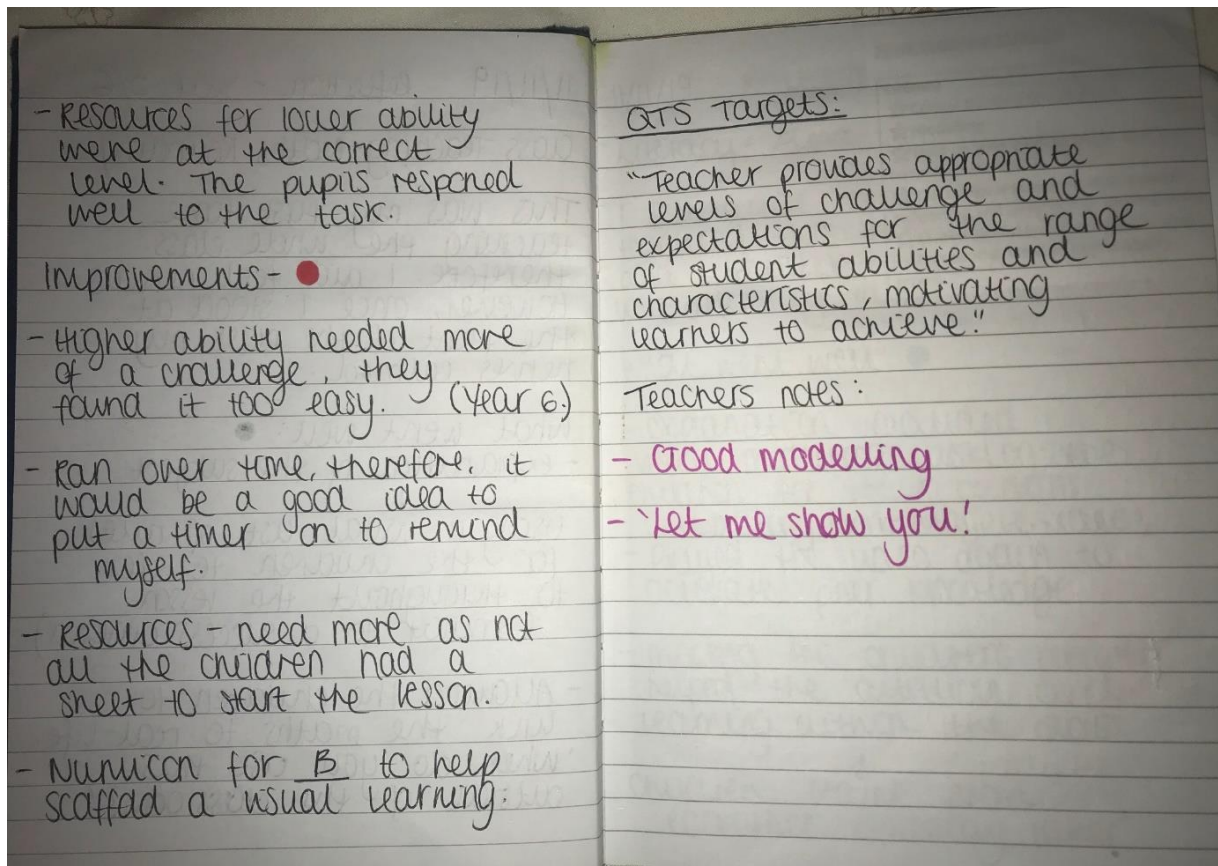
WWW	EBI
- The children were very engaged with the activity and suggested that each child should have a 'job' so that everyone has a turn. - The children answered the questions well and were able to explain how to make the broom 'strong'.	- Some children 'forgot' their jobs/roles so had to remind them. - Some took leadership and some did not participate actively so emphasised that we needed to work as a team and that it was important to do so.

The children really enjoyed the activity and said every part was their favourite.
Class mentor target:

WWW: The children were enthusiastic and engaged in the activity. You took initiative to use the locality to collect natural materials. You presented the work in a lovely pic collage. Good collaborative learning with each child having a role.

EBI: Provide the children with cards to remind them of their roles.

- Pitstop AFL strategy used to check understanding and Welsh 'thumbs'.



Gwers Sgîl.

Addolygiad ffilm "Ice Age" 5.12.22

Gwybodd y disgyblion ffilm
Ice Age ar ddaudd wythnos
diwethaf.

Dechrauon y wws wrth siarad
am y ffilm i atgoffair disgyblion
Trafedd ni am beth fydd angen
cynnwys mewn addolygiad ffilm.
Cyfeiriais at "Sgicinio ein Sgwrs"
defnyddio ei barn. Rhoddais
taflen i bob unigolyn wedi
guahanuethu fesu gallu.
Dangosais pwynt pwy'r er
mewn trafod cynnwys y gwaith.
Roedd angen hysir debarth
i enghwng brauddegau ac
i amgysio eu cife.

Y disgyblion wedi mwynhau'r
wrs yms. Cynnwys da
efallai beudai taflen eufer
wedi cynorthwyo'r gwaith

year 5's.

Improvements: ●

- This was a very independent / group task therefore it did not include a large amount of teaching.
- Towards the start/end the children get distracted. therefore, this made it difficult for me to get their attention.



possibly include some strategies to get their attention:

clapping
hands up
chant.