

Guidelines on Keeping a Learning Diary

1. **What I did.** The diary should start with a description of what you did. Give enough detail to indicate the magnitude of the task.
2. **When I did it.** Record the times. Avoid long sessions. They are inefficient for learning.
3. **Techniques that I learned about.** Then describe the techniques and concepts that you encountered. This should be detailed such that someone else would know exactly what you mean. It is important to put these descriptions in *your own words*. Be careful not to evaluate things outside you (assume that your diary will be published). On the other hand, self-evaluation and your feelings about your own approaches are good things to discuss. Again, remember, *include the details*.
4. **Techniques that I used.** Learning involves change. This means experimentation. And experimentation means doing things that you currently do not do. In a sense, it seems like doing things wrong. But you should suspend evaluation in order to gain mastery of techniques and concepts. Thus, it is important to take the things that you have encountered, and *use them*. This can be done in a number of ways.
 - a. Relate these techniques and concepts to problems that you have experienced in the past.
 - b. Plan applications of one or more of the techniques or concepts from your review. Set a specific time deadline. Thus, you could say, "Use non-directive interviewing for my interview with Bill on September 13," or "Apply at least six items from the PERT list in planning our project. Do by October 12." The basic idea is to force the techniques upon the cases and exercises.
4. **What I learned.** Report on your successes and failures in applying techniques. Provide details!! This is the most important part of the learning process in this course. Here again you can report on your feelings, attitudes, and behavior (being careful not to go outside yourself). This is the bottom line in the course. It should be the return that you got for your efforts. Provide evidence of mastery here.

This is necessary in order to claim learning time!!!!
5. **Report must be timely.** The entries must be made on the day on which you spend time. In other words, do not go back more than 24 hours to claim learning time. The time spent on writing the diary should be included. Also, time in class counts if you report on # 2, 3, and 4. Remember to keep sight of your objectives. The diary should relate back to the mastery chart and to any other explicit, measurable set of objectives that you have established for this course. One approach that some people use is to put the techniques and concepts in **boldface**. Another idea is to keep a histogram of the number of times that you use each technique.