

## **What is a learning journal?**

A learning journal is a collection of notes, observations, thoughts and other relevant materials built-up over a period of time and maybe a result of a period of study, learning and/or working experience. Its purpose is to enhance your learning through the process of writing and thinking about your learning experiences. Your learning journal is personal to you and will reflect your personality, preferences and experiences.

## **Why use a learning journal?**

- To provide a “live” picture of your growing understanding of a subject experience
- To demonstrate how your learning is developing
- To keep a record of your thoughts and ideas throughout your experiences
- To help you identify your strengths, areas for improvement and preferences in learning

A learning journal helps you to be **reflective** about your learning, this mean that your journal should not be a purely descriptive account of what you did but an opportunity to communicate your thinking process: how and why you did what you did, and what you know think about what you did.

## **Structuring your learning journal**

Your learning journal may be called several different things: a learning log, a fieldwork diary or personal development planner. Different subject areas may ask you to focus on different aspects of your experience and may have different formats.

A journal could be a notebook, an electronic document or sometimes recorded verbally on tape. Choose a method that works best for you!

## **What is reflective learning?**

Reflective learning is a learned process that requires time and practice. It is an active process: involving thinking through the issues yourself, asking questions and seeking out relevant information to aid your understanding.

Reflective learning works best when you think about what you are doing before, during and after your learning experience. Reflective learning is therefore not only about recognizing your something new, it is also about see reality in a new way.

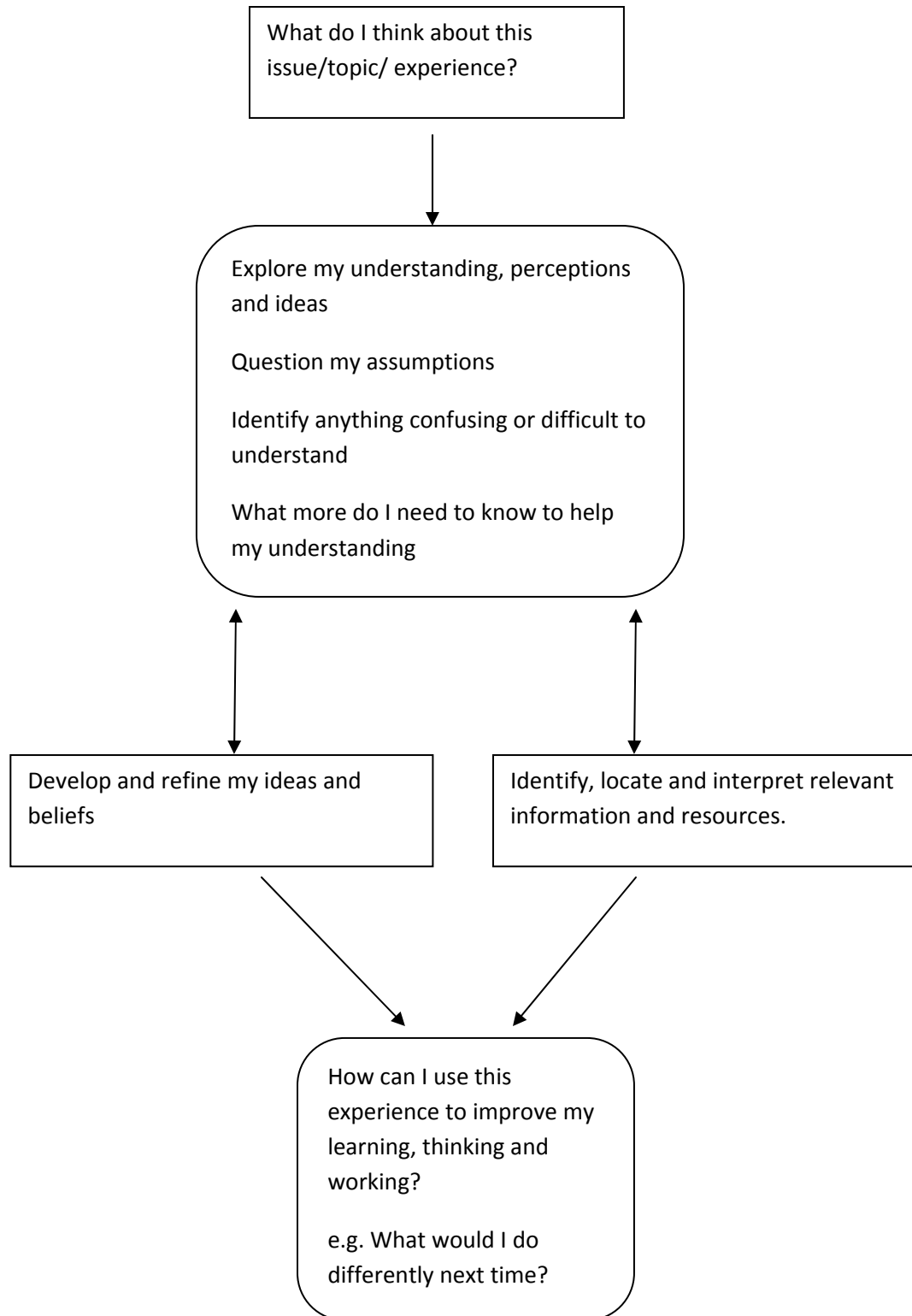
Reflection is an important skill to develop and requires you to think about how you are personally relating to what is happening in the workshop or in your work.

## **Content of your learning journal**

A learning journal should focus on your personal responses, reactions and reflections to new ideas or new ways of thinking about a subject that you have been introduced through:

- Workshops, seminars, training sessions
- Research and reading including any visual research including television, film and internet
- Conversations and discussions with other participants, your Manager, Mentor, Coach and other colleagues
- Significant experiences in the workplace

## Process of Reflective Learning



## **What should you write about?**

What you think about issues discussed at the learning event?

Any flashes of inspiration you had

What you understand so far

What you find puzzling, difficult or contradictory

How can you reach a better understanding

What do you need to know more about, and how can you go about finding out more?

What resources have helped you to understand and/or been interesting to use

How do you feel about the way you have approached the subject/topic so far

What new knowledge, skills or understanding have you gained during the process of writing your journal?

Regarding your long term development;

- Have you changed your opinions or values during the process/experience?
- How can you improve your learning, thinking and working in the future?
- Have you identified the next step for your development?

References

Study Skills Advice Sheet, University of Worcester, revised August 2007.

Free Resources @ [www.businessballs.com](http://www.businessballs.com) – Alan Chapman 2006.