

The book will be of greatest value to those from the UK, however the material addresses issues that are impacting HE financial management practice globally. The authors succeed in developing material that is both comprehensive for a general reader, and detailed in important areas of interest for the finance professional. ♣

Moon, J. (2006) *Learning journals: A handbook for reflective practice and professional development* (2nd Edition). London: RoutledgeFalmer. Price: £23.99 Pages: 208 (soft cover).

Reviewed by John Loughran, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, Monash University.

Learning journals: A handbook for reflective practice and professional development authored by Jennifer A. Moon has been written for teachers and students in higher education who are interested in developing and refining their skills and understandings of journaling. The book has 13 chapters that take the reader through the background to journal writing and the processes associated with its use. The book offers a range of different ways of developing, maintaining, using and assessing journals as well as a resource section with instructions for reflective exercises, reflective writing, and reflective accounts.

The book is written in a plain language with a reader friendly style and is structured in such a way as to allow the chapters to flow smoothly from one to another but also as “stand alone” or out of sequence readings. Overall the chapters are “relatively self-contained, and, in particular, that applies to the more practical approaches of the last few chapters. The cost of self-containment is a little bit more repetition than there would otherwise be” (p. vii).

In her background chapter, Moon offers a brief overview of journals, their style, content and structure. In so doing, she gives the reader brief glimpses of a number of issues about journaling as she attempts to place the what, how and why of journaling in context and to make links with the notion of reflection and the place of learning; she uses the term learning journal as opposed to diary or “log” because of her explicit link to reflection and reflective practices.

The ideas briefly offered in the background are built upon (see chapters 2 – 5) as she outlines in more detail her views about student learning through journal writing and the conditions that might be helpful in fostering that learning. Each chapter closes with a ‘Thinkpoint’ designed to leave “the reader with something about which to think. The quotations are selected for their illustration of the rich experience of journal-writing” (p. 15). In many ways, what Moon does in these opening chapters is attempt to establish a place for learning journals as an important tool for thinking about learning. She does this by drawing on examples across a range of fields which eventually leads to a consideration of issues related to quality and depth in reflection and learning in journals. Because of the nature of this section of the book, there is a certain tension between an academic ex-

pectation of the content (discussion and critique of issues, arguments and ideas drawn from academic literature that illustrate the subtleties associated with differences in conceptualizations and interpretations) and that of helpful summaries, tips and practices that might make the processes of learning and reflection more concrete and accessible. However, as these opening chapters eventually flow into an outline of the uses of learning journals, a practical handbook style of presentation begins to stand out more clearly and the book begins to adopt a structure and a feel that is straight forward and, no doubt, informative and helpful for those looking to know more about the what and how of a learning journal.

Chapter 6 delves into the use and applicability of learning journals in higher education. In this chapter Moon illustrates a diverse range of settings in which learning journals might be useful and in so doing sets up a helpful distinction that she expands upon in Chapter 7 where she discusses journals in professional education and professional development. Chapter 7 then describes the use of journals with the intention of developing the “self as a professional ... improv[ing] practice by making the link between theory and practice ... a focus on professional empowerment ... support[ing] elements of educational programmes ... [and closes with] one specific example of a journal used in a multi-professional manner with professionals from a number of different professions” (p. 71).

Chapter 8 offers an overview of the use of learning journals for personal development. Moon does not see any “sharp lines” between personal and professional development but sees that in making a distinction “a wealth of approaches and styles beyond the professional development literature” (p. 81) become apparent. She closes the chapter by briefly discussing the use of journals to support creativity and in exploring spirituality and again illustrates the diverse range of situations and approaches to journaling that exist.

Chapter 9 on starting to write a learning journal delves into ideas about the necessary structure and purpose of a journal and Moon does this by using (mostly) formal education as a context. She unpacks issues about the purpose of a given task, appropriate “fit” with the design of a course as well as notions of integration. She also considers the demands associated with managing journal writing and issues of monitoring and assessment. Inevitably then she raises important issues around trust and ethics associated with journal writing in an educational program and does so in very helpful ways. This chapter closes with a reminder about purpose and value as she notes that “journal-writing activities may have a good chance of evolving positively but the project may also grow stale and the writing and the management of it may become a chore. This may be the time to put journals aside ... or redesign the whole approach ... [because] ‘the process of journal keeping must be enjoyable if it is to work well’” (p. 106).

Chapter 10 ventures into ideas and issues around assessing journals and reflective writing. In this case, Moon means assessment to be “the review of a journal by others in order determine whether or not it is adequate for the pur-

poses set or to grade it” and appropriately reminds the reader that “adequacy or grade will be judged against a set of criteria that should have been set in advance, and which should be known by the writers of the journals” (p. 107). Moon covers some very interesting ground in this chapter as she illustrates how important it is to be aware of the difficulties that can be created when a learning task is to be assessed. In many ways, although this chapter maintains the practical handbook approach to journaling, it also offers a reminder of the need to be sensitive to the interplay teaching, learning and assessment and how the politics and ethics of learning need to be apprehended and responded to appropriately.

Chapter 11 draws the links between journal writing and story and is interesting in the way that it moves across the narrative landscape unpacking understandings of episodes and events to make sense of stories. The chapter explores the world of fiction in story and how that links to journal writing but still draws the reader back to the importance of learning and how purpose in learning matters in shaping not only what is done through story, but also why.

The final two chapters are examples of journals and activities to enhance learning from them. A most extensive range of ideas are touched upon briefly and offers a feast of opportunities for ways of thinking about the use of journaling. These chapters then flow nicely into the Resources section of the book. The materials in the resource section include instructions for exercises on depth and quality of reflection, a generic framework for reflective writing followed by three resource exercise sets.

In reading this book, it appears to me as though Moon set out set to create a text that would offer a practical guide to journal writing. She was keen to ensure that learning and reflection would be seen as central to the purpose of journaling in ways that would give added value to the ideas, procedures and activities associated with journaling. For any teacher or student of higher education seeking a helpful resource or handbook on learning journals, this would certainly be one to keep close at hand. ♣

Fraser, J. W. (2006). *Preparing America's teachers: A history*. New York: Teachers College Press-Columbia University. Pages 288. Price: 33.95 USD (paper)

Reviewed by Ted Christou, Doctoral Candidate, Queen's University.

Preparing America's teachers: A history is a well crafted book that looks back at the preparation of teachers in the United States since the American Revolution. The text seeks to unpack the question – wittily invoked by David Labaree, quoted to open the book – of why teacher education, like the late Rodney Dangerfield, gets no respect. James Fraser explores how this situation evolved historically, as well as what we, presently, can do to improve it.

The book is an institutional history, moving chronologically through American history and examining the schools and structures that were established for