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Encouraging Reflective Practices in Doctoral Students through Research Journals

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Abstract

This study developed after I read numerous research journals created by my doctoral students. At times, students included considerable amounts of detail, reflecting on their research processes and their roles as researchers. At other times, the journals appeared to be a mere afterthought, seemingly completed in an evening to satisfy the requirement and get a grade. And, as with many things in the introductory qualitative research course, students expressed a need for more structured guidelines for their journals. In response, I developed a set of guidelines and prompts students could use to guide their journal entries. With this study, I discovered that the introduction of guidelines and prompts increased student reflexivity, the level of detail in their journal entries, and the length of their journals increased.

Keywords

Reflexive Journals, Qualitative Research

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This study developed after I read numerous research journals created by my doctoral students. At times, students included considerable amounts of detail, reflecting on their research processes and their roles as researchers. At other times, the journals appeared to be a mere afterthought, seemingly completed in an evening to satisfy the requirement and get a grade. And, as with many things in the introductory qualitative research course, students expressed a need for more structured guidelines for their journals. In response, I developed a set of guidelines and prompts students could use to guide their journal entries. With this study, I discovered that the introduction of guidelines and prompts increased student reflexivity, the level of detail in their journal entries, and the length of their journals increased. Keywords: Reflexive Journals, Qualitative Research

Qualitative research calls for a high degree of reflexivity (Glesne, 2006; Lichtman, 2010; Maxwell, 2013; Ortlipp, 2008). As the instruments, qualitative researchers need to critically examine their roles in the research process and how their biases and decisions may affect their data. Throughout the research process, researchers need to question their decisions. This ranges from the beginning of the study to sharing the results (Glesne, 2006). Schwandt (2007) describes reflexivity as a way for:

> …critically inspecting the entire research process including reflecting on the ways in which the fieldworker establishes a social network of informants and participants in a study; and for examining one's personal and theoretical commitments to see how they serve as resources for generating particular data, for behaving in particular ways vis-à-vis respondents and participants, and for developing particular interpretations. (p. 260)

This continual critical process of self-evaluation allows researchers to consider the influence their positionality plays in their research. A researcher's positionality influences a study's setting, the participants, the data collected, and how data are interpreted. Researchers consider their prior experiences and assumptions and how they may influence their research (Berger, 2015; Lichtman, 2010). For example, elementary teachers may be more willing to discuss their experiences with a researcher who is a former elementary teacher, making access easier. Prior experiences may also affect the interpretive lens the researcher takes to the data (Berger, 2015). A researcher with their own experiences related to their research topic might interpret data differently than a researcher with no personal connection to the topic.

Reflexivity serves as a means to enhance several areas of research studies, including data collection, analysis, and ethics and may help researchers be aware of their biases in their studies (Berger, 2015; Lichtman, 2010). By monitoring their responses to participants, and considering how their research results are presented, researchers can both identify and clarify any possible ramifications of their values, beliefs, or biases. Researchers can use reflexivity to enhance their data collection, by reflecting on certain interview questions that they may either avoid or emphasize, for example. Being aware of their own responses to the data they collect,

as they collect it, assists researchers in determining how much their reaction to the data may influence their analysis and interpretation. Engaging in reflexive practices may allow researchers to become aware of their biases and consider if and how they are affecting the way results are presented (Berger, 2015). For example, a researcher writing about workplace bullying may prioritize the victims' experiences over the aggressors' if he or she has been a victim of workplace bullying.

Reflexivity also allows researchers to consider the ethics of their work. When the researcher seeks to treat participants fairly and with compassion power issues can be more adequately addressed than if these relationships and stances are not considered (Pillow, 2003). This may also be a way to decrease "Othering," by working with participants as equals rather than positioning oneself as the research in a position of power. Reflecting on the ethics of research relationships may also encourage researchers to consider that while they may conduct the analysis and decide what to include in a final research report, they should note any potential effects this may have on or for their participants (Berger, 2015; Frisina, 2006).

Reflexive Journals

Reflexive journals serve as a way for researchers to document the methodological decisions they make throughout their studies, track their analysis process, consider their own emotions and the roles they play in the process, document insights, and consider researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers consider their reflections on data collection and analysis (Koch, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Keeping a reflexive journal throughout the research process, documenting the emergent ideas and concepts and thinking processes, serve as the beginning of data interpretation (Bazeley, 2007).

Novice researchers may experience some ambivalence and nervousness about the research process and therefore, engaging in reflexive practices may prove difficult. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) discussed how their interest in reflexivity resulted from their experiences as graduate students when they faced large amounts of data and little guidance on how to analyze it. They expressed that they felt uncertain about their roles in the research process as doctoral students and felt they lacked both the necessary methodological and theoretical tools to engage in reflexivity. This lack of exposure to reflexivity as doctoral students led them to develop interests in reflexivity.

Mauthner and Doucet's (2003) experiences illustrate that novice researchers often need more guidance than a more experienced researcher. Structure and guidelines allow novice researchers to see logical progressions in their research processes (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 2004). Novice researcher may often seek guidelines (Koch, 2004). They are often unaware of the process of research and expect it to go smoothly with few errors made along the way (Ortlipp, 2008). Boden, Kenway, and Epstein (2005) found that this belief is exacerbated when research results are presented as a result of a seemingly linear process. Reflexive journals allow the researcher to document the messiness of the qualitative research process, from data collection that does not always go as planned to the sometimes inconsistent data we may receive as we co-construct data without participants. By documenting and reflecting on what really happens when we conduct qualitative research, we can demonstrate that research does not always proceed in an orderly fashion (Ortlipp, 2008). This helps novice researchers better understand the research process and they can use their reflexive journals to modify their existing studies or document "lessons learned" which can be applied to future studies.

Even though reflexivity is an acknowledged part of qualitative research, and maintaining a reflexive journal is also a common practice in qualitative research (Etherington, 2004), there are few resources to draw on regarding the use of reflective journals (Ortlipp, 2008). According to Ortlipp (2008), novice researchers lack guidance regarding the purposes

of a reflective journal. In particular, they may have difficulties seeing the value of a journal from a methodological perspective and may not understand how the reflections captured in their journals may be used as a part of the research process.

By encouraging novice qualitative researchers to engage in reflexivity through the use of a journal, my hope was that they would become more aware of their own positionality and how it may affect their research processes, including data collection, analysis, and writing up their results. I also place considerable emphasis on conducting ethical research when teaching students about qualitative research and want them to understand that receiving approval from an institutional review board to conduct a study is merely a first step in treating participants ethically. Thus, using the concepts included in the previous paragraphs, I created a set of structured guidelines to encourage my students to engage more deeply with their research hoping that this would strengthen their research skills and increase their awareness of their role as the researcher.

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to understand how the introduction of structured guidelines and prompts might change doctoral students' research journals. Thus, this study was guided by a single research question: How, if at all, do doctoral students' reflective journals change with the introduction of structured guidelines and prompts? I expected the students would follow the prompts and topics in the guidelines, but hoped that they would feel comfortable making modifications as needed. I also expected to see more detailed journal entries; in past semesters, students expressed uncertainty about what to write about and said that because of that, their entries were often short.

Researcher Identity

Having taught an introductory course in qualitative research for a few years now, I have worked out the majority of the kinks in my readings and assignments. By no means is it perfect and I still make changes every year to include newer readings on topics or to fit the needs of a particular group of students. However, the one area where my students consistently struggle is with their research journals. When I was in graduate school, my professors gave us a brief introduction to research journals and we were expected to keep them for our qualitative research class projects. This was enough to sell me on the idea as I have always written to work through a process or difficulty; I often think on paper. For the majority of my students, a different approach was needed. Each semester, I spent a little more time going over journals with my students, showing them multiple examples and posting these examples to Blackboard. I tried to remind them to write in their journals—to document what they were doing, to remind themselves to follow up with participants, to reflect on their process—anything that related to their research project could go in the journals. A few students each semester did well and produced journals that demonstrated engagement with both the research process in general and their own projects in particular. But, many students seemed to approach their journals as afterthoughts; they were short and lacked evidence of reflection or engagement. Many included very vague, short entries. I realized that my approach was not working for all students and decided to create guidelines for their journals. The idea of this made me uncomfortable initially. How can someone tell you what to reflect on and at what point in the semester you will be ready to think about that? A few conversations with former students convinced me to give it a try. They told me that they had found it difficult to write about their research since they were not really sure where to start. And thus, this project was born.

Methods

This qualitative study relies on student journals (documents) as data sources. I chose to use journals because they were already a required part of the course, so students would not be required to spend any additional time to participate in the study and I needed to understand if introducing structured guidelines and prompts would improve their journals. To create the guidelines for the journals, I selected topics that students had frequently written about in past semesters as well as topics I felt were important for students to engage with to gain a better understanding of qualitative research, based on the literature (Glesne, 2006; Lichtman, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ortlipp, 2008; Patton, 1990; Rodgers & Cowles, 1993) and previous classes' journals. The guidelines were divided into four topics: reflection on getting access and IRB approval; tracking recruitment efforts; reflection on data collection; and reflection on data analysis (see Appendix A).

I provided both classes with examples of journals, which we also discussed in class. Verbally, I frequently reminded them to consider their roles in the research process and to consider how it may influence their research projects. In addition, the "treatment" class also had prompts to focus their journal writings. I told students that the guidelines were there to assist them if they had trouble knowing what to write about, but that they did not have to follow them strictly if they did not fit their styles or project timelines. This allowed for flexibility as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Participant Selection

I selected students for participation based on their enrollment in my introductory qualitative research methods course. All of the students were working towards their doctorates in Educational Leadership. Group A was given guidelines and prompts for their journals, organized by week. To create a "comparison" group, I chose students from the class I had the prior semester; these students are referred to as Group B. Group B originally had two more students than Group A, so I excluded the journals of two students who have since left the program, giving me equal numbers of students in my two groups, with eight in each group. This allowed for a more direct comparison of students' journals. While the idea of comparison may feel like a more quantitative approach, to understand if the structured guidelines may have produced differences in the journals, I needed to be able to see what journal entries from a class that did not have guidelines looked like and then see what differences, if any, existed between that class and the class I provided with guidelines. I wanted to know if the students wrote longer entries in their journals, suggesting that they were perhaps more engaged with them than past students appeared to be, and if the entries contained more reflection on the research process than previous students' journals had.

Students ranged from approximately 30 years old to around 60. Most are currently employed in K-12 public schools as teachers, administrators, and directors. Table 1 illustrates participant demographic information.

Table 1. *Demographics of Participants*

	Group A	Group B
Gender		
Male	2	2
Female	6	6
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	3	3
African American	3	4
Hispanic	2	1

Data Collection

Students kept their journals over the course of one semester. The journals were a part of their class research projects and counted as 10 percent of their final paper grades. For the research project, students conducted a small qualitative study as a way to practice data collection, analysis, and writing up qualitative results. Students could choose to not participate in this study, but they still needed to submit a journal to receive points for it.

Analysis

I read all journals in their entireties (Agar, 1980), looking for emergent codes and themes as I read and making notes by inserting comments into the margins. Next, I imported the documents into NVivo for coding. My initial analysis allowed me to develop a short list of emergent codes (Creswell, 2013). After I finished my initial round of coding, I referred to the guidelines I created for the journals and coded my data again to ensure I captured the topics and concepts that I requested students include in their journals. A priori codes included: reflective, data analysis, data collection, and researcher role. I used emergent and a priori codes to ensure that I not only looked for the concepts included in the guidelines, but I wanted to see if students included other items in their journals and if they did, to explore differences between these, based on whether the students had been given guidelines or not.

I then conducted queries in NVivo to see if certain codes co-occurred. I also examined my codes by group to see if one group had higher numbers of certain coded items (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This counting of codes helped me see differences between the two groups and to better determine if the journal guidelines prompted students to write in their journals more frequently and in greater depth. I was also able to see the prevalence of certain codes; if a code occurred frequently, this suggested that it should be included in the results as it captured a prominent concept in the data.

Once this process was completed, I combined codes into themes and created a matrix with columns for my codes, themes, and supporting data. This allowed me to visualize my data and to see if I had the needed data to support my conclusions. I then reread all of the journals to determine whether I had missed any important concepts in the data and to look for disconfirming evidence. I present an overall view of student journals followed by the themes that emerged from the data during the analysis process.

Validity

To establish validity for this study, I drew on data from multiple participants. I also had a colleague review my coding scheme to determine whether I stayed open to emergent ideas in the data or whether I saw what I expected. In addition, I shared my preliminary results with some of the participants to determine if they felt the paper represented their views and experiences (Creswell, 2013). I also kept my own methodological journal throughout the process to track my research process and to help establish confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethics

Since I was the professor, I held a position of power in this study. To minimize my power position as much as possible, I went over the informed consent form with my students in class, addressed any questions and concerns they had, then I left the room when it was time for them to complete the consent forms if they chose to participate. A student collected the

signed consent forms and mailed them to my office secretary; I requested that my secretary not provide the envelope to me until after I had submitted my final grades. The students knew that I would not have access to their consent forms until after grades had been submitted and I assured them that their participation in the study would in no way affect their grades; all students chose to participate. In my Institutional Review Board application, I requested the previous semester's class journals as archival data and as I was no longer a professor for those students, my position was not relevant. In addition, no student names or other identifying information are used in this study.

Results

Overall, students who adhered to the guidelines and prompts produced journals with a greater number of reflective entries; this is discussed in greater detail in the following section. Their entries also contained more detail than their peers who did not receive prompts and guidelines. Regardless of which class students were in, nearly all organized their journals by week and all students discussed their data collection and analysis processes; as two of the areas of focus in the guidelines were reflection on data collection and reflection on analysis, this was not surprising. All students also provided a brief description of their studies. Table 2 shows the average number of pages and words by group, demonstrating that the students who received guidelines and prompts wrote more in their journals than those who only had sample journals to guide their efforts.

Table 2. *Average Journal Length*

	Group A	Group B
Page Length	3.33	9.66
Number of Words	923	1563

However, page and word counts only show that the students produced longer journals, which may suggest that students included more detail and reflection in their journals than students in the previous class. To truly understand if there were differences between the class that received structured guidelines and the one that did not, a deeper exploration is necessary. Based on the data analysis, the main areas of difference between the two groups were the level of reflection, the level of detail included in journals, and focus on the research process. Each of these is detailed in the following sections.

Student Reflection

As they tracked their progress through the research process, students experienced both difficulties and successes, which emerged in their journals. Overall, students in Group A made more references to their difficulties and successes, and the emotional responses they had to these, than those in Group B. The guidelines and prompts provided to Group A did not ask students to discuss the difficulties or successes they encountered explicitly, however, many chose to journal about them.

Difficulties. Students in both groups expressed the difficulties they encountered while conducting their research projects. However, there were 15 references to difficulties in Group A's journals when compared to the four references in Group B's journals. While this can be interpreted as a negative, since they may have experienced more difficulties than Group B, it

may also be viewed as evidence that the students reflected more on the research process in their journals, and therefore, there were increased references to difficulties as they engaged in their first qualitative research projects.

While students mentioned multiple aspects of their research that caused difficulties, one common factor source of frustration was transcribing their interview recordings. One student wrote, "Just transcribed 1 recorded interview. It was laborious and tiring. It took about 4 hours to transcribe a 10 minute segment (breaks included). There has to be an easier way!" Another stated, "Transcribing is hard, qualitative is much different than quantitative. It takes time and I need to schedule time just to transcribe."

Students also felt that recruitment was a difficult process. "I have yet to interview anyone! This is frustrating that no one is getting back to me or making time to meet with me. I am starting to feel bad and I am wondering if it is my topic," said one student. "Approval has been granted and I am allowed to start collecting data, but I am having trouble finding times for others to meet with me," wrote another. Throughout their journals, students remarked on their research processes and the emotions that arose connected to the projects.

Successes. Students in Group A also had more references in their journals to excitement they felt while engaging in the research process. However, there was not as clear of a delineation between the two groups on this, which may suggest that students who expressed positive feelings about their research in their journals may have done so regardless of whether they had structured guidelines or not. A student from Group B wrote:

> I love coding…. It was hard to transcribe all the interview responses (I only had 3 but it was a lot). It was easy for me to group the responses into themes and categories; the colored pencils helped; I felt like a real researcher. Interpreting and forming conclusions from the data was interesting and fun. I hope I am headed in the right direction.

Another student in Group B wrote, "Done Done Done and Done!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! WOOHOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Loved interviewing. Such a great experience, feel like I really learned a lot through this process." A student in Group A stated, "After having written the project idea memo, I am ready and excited to research teachers' perceptions about professional development." Based on these comments, students appear to be excited about the research process based more on their experiences rather than anything related to the journal guidelines, which did not ask them specifically to reflect on their feelings.

Level of Detail

Students in Group A provided a greater number of detailed journal entries than those in Group B. Of the four journals coded for an overall "lack of detail," three belonged to Group B. The students from Group B included journal entries such as: "Week Seven: Interview, Conducted interview with Interview participant 2" and "Week Eight: Data Memo, Data analysis memo written". A more detailed entry, also from Week 8, from a student in Group A is as follows:

> Second interview complete. I am finding that both participants have similar views and opinions. While transcribing the data myself does take a long time, it allows me to really closely review the data. While transcribing, I could already find some common language used in both interviews. There are some themes emerging, but more data is needed to make this conclusion.

These two examples illustrate the differences in the level of detail between the student journals in the two groups. Overall, students in Group A had more entries resembling the latter of the two examples. Table 3 provides a comparison between the two classes, based on the number of items coded for each area of focus.

Table 3. *Number of References to Areas of Focus*

Areas of Focus	Group A	Group B	Total References
Data Collection	20	15	35
Data Analysis	12	5	17
End Product	7	9	16

Interestingly, the Group B students focused more heavily on their final products for the class, their papers and presentations, than Group A; the data show that in Group B, four students mention their final products while only two in Group A do. In addition, one student in Group B makes multiple comments about her final paper and presentation, but they are lacking in detail. One entry states, "Worked on coding and final paper."

Figure 1 gives a side-by-side comparison of the level of detail included in journals from each group. I selected representative examples from the two classes on the same topic to demonstrate how the journals differed across the two groups.

Figure 1. *Comparison of Journal Entries by Group*

Topic	**Group A**	**Group B**
Data Collection	"Focus group complete. Of the four invited teachers only two showed up. This is a little frustrating because I was hoping to get more perspectives. On the other hand, I was able to get good data and the two participants were comfortable and familiar with each other. They were able to feed off of each other's responses and offer deeper insight. I definitely see some themes emerging through the common language used by my participants."	"Interviews - seek participation from student was texting periodically throughout the class. Recorded interviews on work iPhone 4S interview. Notes collected on recorder. Students appear willing to participate."
Data Analysis	"Today I started coding and it was initially confusing. I started by revisiting my research questions and what I was trying to find out in this project. Based on the questions, I was examining teacher attitudes and how elem and secondary differed. I had to define what teachers' attitudes are and how it differed from teacher practices. So, my working definitions were --teaching practices—what teachers did --teaching attitudes—How they viewed issues (their perspectives) --teachers' attitudes about involving parents --teachers' attitudes about involving other staff/admin"	"Finishing transcribing, finding themes, working on coding. Finding ways to explain data analysis."

These examples demonstrate the varied level of detail between the two groups. The excerpt on data collection from the Group A student journal shows more consideration of and reflection on the data collection process than does the journal from a student in Group B. For example, when looking at the example from the Group B student, the focus is on the data collection tools (iPhone, recorder) and a certain participant to target for study participation. The student does mention that the participants appeared willing, but he does not detail how or why he thinks this. In comparison, the student from Group A offers greater detail about why she thinks her participants were comfortable with each other during the focus group. She also documents that only half of her participants showed up for the focus group and her reaction to that. The differences in the level of detail may offer evidence that having structured prompts and guidelines helps students engage more deeply with their research processes.

The data analysis excerpts follow a similar pattern; the excerpt from the journal from the Group A student is more detailed about how they approached analysis when contrasted with the example from a Group B journal. The student entry from Group B, while speaking to data analysis, does so in a more superficial way than the excerpt from a student journal in Group A. Based on the Group B entry, it is unclear how they found their themes, worked on their coding, or tried to explain their analysis. The entry from the student journal in Group A offers more specific details about the process: her feelings about coding, how she addressed her initial confusion about analysis, and where the process took her. Reading her entry, I saw evidence that she was reflecting about her analysis process based on the amount of detail included in the journal entry.

Reflection on the Research Process

Several of the prompts encouraged students to reflect on the research processes they were engaged in. As a result, Group A student journals contained a considerable amount of reflection as compared to Group B's journals. However, looking at the number of items coded by group only demonstrated that the students followed the guidelines and prompts. To better understand their reflection on the process, and whether journaling about it may positively affect future research, I explored the content of the relevant entries. Here, too, the Group A students exhibited a different sort of engagement with their research projects and their role in the process. Table 4 displays the topics students reflected on in their journals.

Table 4. *Number of References to Student Reflection*

Type of Student Reflection	Group A	Group B	Total References
Role as Researcher	12	5	17
Data Collection	9	5	14
Data Analysis	11	4	15

To illustrate the differences in student reflection, I selected the following two excerpts from student journals. Both examples concern student reflection on data analysis. A student in Group B wrote:

> What kind of analysis is best? What is narrative analysis? Is this something I should look at? Or do I just stick to thematic analysis? Also what is this generic

> analysis? I need more clarification about how to analyze data I want to make sure I am doing the right analysis.

In comparison, a student in Group A wrote:

> Analyzing data. I have spent a few hours coding my data. I was looking for common themes within the language of the participants. I began to notice that all participants used similar language when answering each of the questions, but I saw two distinct sections. I split my data into two sections: before PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) and after implementing PBIS. I then looked at all the answers to one question at the same time. I then began to compare the answers. When I found similarities, I would highlight or underline them in a single color using either a marker or crayon. As my coloring and highlighting began, several common themes began to emerge.

She goes on to detail her coding process, giving examples of how she decided what to code for, how she defined each code, and how she created the themes. Thus, not only was her entry more detailed than the previous example, she also demonstrated a greater amount of reflection on her process.

Students in both classes also reflected on their role as the researcher, yet again, there were more detailed reflections on this from Group A; these students also made more frequent mention of their roles in the research process. A student in Group A stated:

> I have considered my identity as the researcher in this study as I write the identity memo. Things to consider: I am a teacher in the building where I am conducting research; possible participants will not only be colleagues but friends; how will my position in the school and relationship with participants shape the data I collect?

A student from Group B discussed how his experiences as both a student and in his current position at work may impact his study. Another student in Group B reflected on her role as the researcher, writing:

> I need to work on approaching people and letting them know my purpose for observing them--not comfortable with that yet. A guy looked at me in a weird way while practicing my observations….Share with those I observe that I am a researcher.

This last excerpt shows not only some reflection on the student's role as a researcher, but also that she is beginning to see herself as a researcher. While students in Group A created journal entries that explored their role as the researcher in more depth and detail than those in Group B, both groups did reflect on their roles in the research process and the impact they may have on their research. Also evident in the reflections was the idea that they saw themselves becoming researchers, as shown in the previous excerpt.

Discussion

While several researchers recommend using reflexive journals (Glesne, 2006; Lichtman, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ortlipp, 2008), graduate students learning how to conduct research do not always keep them. These results suggest that not only are reflexive

journals useful to students as they engage in the research process but that structured guidelines and prompts increase the level of student reflection and detail in their journals. The results also suggest that students provided with structured guidelines may be more engaged in their research than those who are not; possibly, this is due to the increased reflection.

These results demonstrate that students did seem to appreciate having structure and guidance for their journals, following Cutcliffe and McKenna's (2004), Koch's (2004), and Ortlipp's (2008) recommendations that novice researchers want structure. The students in Group A showed greater reflection on their data collection, data analysis, their role as the researcher, and their overall research process when compared to students in Group B, who constructed their journals based on examples provided via Blackboard and discussed in class. The journals from Group A also showed an increase in emotional engagement in the research process as they shared the difficulties and successes they encountered along the way.

As with all research, this study has limitations. First, the two groups who participated in this study were small and therefore, the results do not generalize to the greater population. In addition, there is no way to determine what students might have included in their journals had they not been provided with a set of guidelines and prompts, so I cannot know that the guidelines made the difference between the journals of the two groups. In addition, with small groups of students in each class, there is no way to know if the groups were comparable—would certain students have produced more reflective, detailed journals anyway?

Future research should include interviews with novice researchers to capture their perspectives about the reflexive journals. While I saw differences between the two groups of student journals, this study does not consider student perspectives and whether they feel the reflexive journals contributed to their growth as researchers or the usefulness of the guidelines and prompts.

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Appendix

	reflection on approval process/getting access	**tracking recruitment efforts**	**reflection on data collection**	**reflection on data analysis**
Week One				
Week Two	X			
Week Three	X	X		
Week Four	X	X		
Week Five		X	X	
Week Six			X	
Week Seven		X	X	X
Week Eight			X	X
Week Nine		X	X	X
Week Ten			X	X
Week Eleven		X	X	X
Week Twelve				X
Week Thirteen				X
Week Fourteen				X

Week Fifteen				X

*all of these are flexible and intended as guidelines only

Week One: Create the document and decide how you want to organize it.

Week Two: approval/access process

Where are you in the process of getting a site letter?
What difficulties, if any, have you encountered and how have you dealt with them?

Week Three: approval/access process

How do you plan to treat your participants ethically?
What sorts of things could put your participants at risk and how can you minimize them?

*This should be specific to your study.

recruitment efforts

How did you gain access to your site and/or your participants?
How might your current/past job history affect recruitment?

Week Four: recruitment efforts

Track whom you have contacted and the responses you received
Consider how you are recruiting people. Are you being clear about the time commitment and what you need participants to do for your study?

Week Five: recruitment efforts

Track whom you have contacted and the responses you received
Track scheduled data collection appointments
If you haven't received any responses or participants are declining your requests, consider if you need to make any changes to your request.
Might your role be affecting recruitment efforts? If so, how?

reflection on data collection

How has the initial data collection gone?
What effect might you be having on the data collection process?

Week Six: reflection on data collection

Consider your methods of data collection. Essentially, what is working and what might you need to change?

Do you need to modify your interview questions?
Are you observing the things you need to while you are at your site?

Week Seven: recruitment efforts

Track whom you have contacted and the response you received
Track scheduled data collection appointments

reflection on data collection

Discuss whether you believe you are getting the data you need.

If you aren't, what can you change?

Week Eight: reflection on data collection

What might you do differently next time in terms of data collection? Why?

Week Nine: recruitment efforts

Track whom you have contacted and the response you received
Track scheduled data collection appointments

reflection on data collection

How might your biases or your roles as the researcher be impacting data collection?

Week Ten: reflection on data collection

Consider whether you have enough data to answer your research questions.

You may reflect on data analysis, make sense of your data
May discuss issues that have prevented you from getting the needed data and how you could minimize these in future research.

Week Eleven: recruitment efforts

Track scheduled data collection appointments

reflection on data collection

How did the data collection process go?

What did you learn?
What would you do differently next time?

Week Twelve: reflection on data analysis

How might your biases be impacting data analysis?
What themes do you see in your data?

*May include data that supports it.

Week Thirteen: reflection on data analysis

Consider how themes may be broken apart or combined.

Explain your thought process behind your decisions.

Week Fourteen: reflection on data analysis

Consider what you wrote in your researcher identity statement at the start of the semester.

Are any of your past experiences influencing the way you view your data?
If so, how might you minimize this bias?

Week Fifteen: reflection on data analysis

What did you learn from the data analysis process?
How do you view yourself as the researcher?

Author Note

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