

A very good idea...

Reaction Letters/Memos - Reaction letters are similar to journal entries, but are assigned at regular intervals to provide an organized and consistent method for assessment and review by the student and teacher. Reaction letters can call for a wide range of student input such as thoughts about class activities, explanations of observed successes, suggestions for future involvement, feelings about individual and group participation, responses to specific texts and work in class, and responses to related topics outside of class. As in journals, students may utilize a variety of means (e.g., stories, poems, newspaper clippings, and illustrations) to convey reactions to specific themes discussed and explored in class. It can be helpful for the teacher to submit reaction papers as well, either to the class as a whole or to individual students when needed. It is also handy to place a “mailbox” or “calling board” in the room to allow students to write reaction letters or short memos to each other. Some classes use a “class book” to house all letters and memos. These memos can reinforce the aesthetic valuing concept as students learn to critique positively, asking for and giving suggestions about elements in their work. To reinforce positive and sincere feedback, the students and teacher may agree upon “guidelines” regarding these shared letters and memos.