

Interactive Logging

By

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I learned this note-taking method through the Ministerial Study Program of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (MSP). It's designed to facilitate personal learning by helping a mentor use written materials to instruct a student. I was assigned books to read by the MSP program, I would read them and create an interactive log of my reading, and then I would meet with my mentor to discuss what I wrote in my logging. It was a very effective means for learning from the material I was reading. My mentor was able to quickly ascertain the points he had to cover as he disciplined me through the process.

What if I sent you on a long journey and told you that you were going to have to make an accounting of your trip when you returned. If you planned to only depend on your memory soon you would learn there are many things you forgot. You might remember the major points of your trip, but you won't remember how much you spent on what day, where you stopped for the night, what you had for dinner, or who you met with and what you talked about. But if you had written down a log of every dollar you spent, every place you went, every conversation you had, then you would have little trouble reporting these details of your trip as you consulted your notes.

Interactive logging is such an account of the book that you are studying. As you begin to read through a book, you also begin to write a log of the experience you have with the book that you can then easily share with others. As you read through the text you will come across things that really make you think, portions you totally agree with, issues that you need to wrestle with, or points that you don't believe are biblically accurate. You can also make notes of questions that you have that you want to go over with your mentor during your next meeting. In some ways, these become notes for both you and the person who is discipling you. If you keep them, you can use them again and again as you bring others through the same journey that you've been through.

Interactive logging allows you to note the part of the text that has an impact on you and contains a personal note of what you agreed/disagreed/wrestled with in that passage, as well as questions that come up along the way. Then, as you go through your notes with your mentor, you'll be able to remember what you learned, what you struggled with, what questions the text raised, and they'll be able to help you better understand the concepts being raised in the book you're reading.

This logging method works great for books about God, as well as Scripture itself, sermons you're listening to, dvds that you're watching, internet sites that you're experiencing, etc. any tool you're learning through can be enhanced by this interactive logging method.

Your notes can be as extensive as you'd like them to be. It all depends on how you and your mentor are going to be using them. If you're meeting together to discuss them, then one or two words may be enough for you to remember the impact the passage had on you. If you're sending them to your mentor for them to review them before you're meeting, then you'll want your notes to be far more thorough.

Interactive log notes should be marked with many questions. The questions that you write in your log become a great launching point for the discipleship conversations that you're going to have with your mentor. If you read sections of a book and they have little impact on you then there is no need for you and your mentor to cover that material in one-on-one meetings.

Here's an example of interactive logging. Let's turn to the Book of John, and start a log of Chapter 3. Here are my interactive thoughts as I begin to go through the book:

John 3:2

Nicodemus came to visit Jesus at night! Why did he do this? Did he not want to be seen with Jesus? Was he afraid of getting caught? In order to find Jesus he had to look all over the place, right? I wonder how covert he had to be in his searching for Jesus. I know that he's a believer, because he calls Jesus "Rabbi," and says that he knows that Jesus comes from God. He also makes note that the miracles of Jesus are evidence that he comes from God.

John 3:3

What does the Kingdom of God mean?

So, being born again means that we pray to receive Christ, right? If someone doesn't pray to receive Christ are they born again?

Does someone have to pray to receive Christ? We don't see Nicodemus praying to receive Christ here – does he do it at another time? More research needed.

John 3:5

Jesus said you have to be born of water and spirit? What does he mean here? Is water being born like physically? Is born of the spirit praying to receive Christ?

John 3:8

What is Jesus getting at with his comments on the wind and the spirit? I don't get it.

John 3:13

No one has gone to heaven except the son of man? What about the angels? Aren't they in heaven? If nobody goes to heaven but the son of man, then what happened to the Israelites when they died in the OT?

John 3:14

When did Moses lift a snake in the wilderness? What was he thinking?

John 3:16-17

Everyone knows John 3:16, but 17 goes right along with it. Why don't we memorize this too?

See how this style of note taking can be a great tool in a discipling relationship!?!?