

JOURNAL WRITING PATHFINDER

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To Dr. Loriene Roy

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INTRODUCTION: JOURNAL WRITING

<http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~vlibrary/pathfinders/dodson.pdf>

Journal writing has existed for centuries as a way to transmit thoughts and feelings to paper (Kerka 1). It has been used in education for decades but appears to have increased in popularity when the dialogue journal came into use in the 1980s (David 110). Teachers worldwide endorse journal writing in classrooms. Most literature published on this topic is qualitative although some empirical research has been done (Croxtton and Berger 2).

The benefits of journal writing in a classroom setting are numerous. They include:

- 1) Improvement of analytical ability
- 2) Improvement of memory
- 3) Ability to connect course concepts to life experiences
- 4) Improvement of communication skills and linguistic development

The appeal of journal writing is that its use is not limited to a specific age group, subject area, or ability. There are three types of journals commonly used in education:

- 1) Dialogue journal – in informal written conversation between a student and teacher whereby the teacher models corrects grammar and spelling through his/her response to the student. The teacher may provide journal prompts, which are questions designed to stimulate student writing.
- 2) Literary journal – a journal in which a student will record his/her responses to literature or text.
- 3) Subject journal – a multi-use journal focused on a specific subject. It can be used to record subject terminologies, responses to subject matter, or style guidelines (Cobine 1-3).

This pathfinder has been created to assist K-8 pre-service teachers at Northwest Indian College in Lummi, Washington. It is designed to help these teachers locate resources that will assist them in using journal writing as a classroom tool. This pathfinder seeks to answer questions such as: Where can I find new articles about journal writing? Can I use journal writing in an ESL classroom? Where can I find some sample journal prompts? Because this pathfinder is designed for use in a virtual library, the resources are limited to those freely accessible on the Internet and those accessible through the H.W. Wilson educational database.

I began my search for resources by using the AltaVista search engine. My first search term was "journal writing." This search resulted in many hits, but most were oriented towards personal journal writing and not education journal writing. I then refined my search to "student journal writing." I did find a few articles through this

search. Later I tried the Google search engine with the same search terms and got more relevant sources.

Next I targeted educational resource web sites. I started with the United States Department of Education. I did not find anything through their Gateway to Educational Materials. However, by searching their entire web site using the term "journal writing" I was able to find several relevant documents from ERIC Digests. I then went to the ERIC Digests website to continue the search. Next, I went to the Education World website. This was also a successful avenue.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Cobine, Gary R. "Effective Use of Student Journal Writing." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading English and Communication. Bloomington, IN. 1995. ED 378587. 11 Feb. 2001. <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed378587.html>.

Focuses on the use of journal writing as a way to facilitate the interaction between reading, writing, and oral communication in the classroom. The author discusses three types of journals: dialogue, literary, and subject. He also provides examples of how they can be used individually and in combination with each other within a single student notebook.

- 2) Croxton, Craig A. and Robert C. Berger. "Journal Writing: Does it Promote Long Term Retention of Course Concepts?" National Teaching and Learning Forum. Onyx Press in conjunction with James Rhem and Associates, Inc.: 1996. 2 Feb. 2001. <<http://www.ntlf.com/html/st/journal/htm>>.

Written by two members of the Air Force Academy, this article is one of the few empirical research articles about journal writing that is available on the Internet. The study subjects were adults, but the concepts can be applied to younger students. The researchers correlated student success in answering specific test questions with journal writing that had been done on the subjects these questions addressed. Previous studies by other researchers focused on overall test scores and not specific questions.

- 3) David, Frances. "Why You Call Me Emigrant?: Dialogue Journal Writing with Migrant Youth." Childhood Education. 60 (1983): 110-11, 114-16.

Available through the H.W.Wilson educational database, this article explores the non-evaluative character of the dialogue journal and how it lends itself to use with non-native language speakers. The author participated in a project that used dialogue journals to learn about the career/vocational goals of migrant youth.

- 4) DeCuir, Katherine. "Journals." 27 Feb. 2001. <<http://www.journals.about.com/arts/journals/msub31edu.htm>>.

This interesting web site provides many links to journal related web sites. This particular page focuses on journal writing related to education. The links to articles and web sites are diverse; they include topics such as historical journals, journal writing advice, and what materials to use. The web site can be searched for specific topics of interest.

- 5) ERIC Digests. U.S. Department of Education. 10 Feb. 2001.
<http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/index>.

This web site can be accessed at the above address or by using the *Google* search engine and entering the term "Eric Digests" in quotation marks. Articles relating to journal writing can be found in the ERIC Digests database by searching with the term "journal" or "journal writing." The results are listed with the most relevant articles first. Experts in the field of education review each digest, and every author provides a bibliography. The digests are succinct and informative articles about key issues in the education field. New articles are added on a quarterly basis.

- 6) Gambrell, Linda B. "Dialogue Journals: Reading-Writing Interaction."
The Reading Teacher. 38(1985): 512-515.

This article is also available through the H.W. Wilson educational database. Gambrell, who stresses the value of learning reading and writing simultaneously, explores the interaction of reading and writing. One method for implementing this is by using dialogue journals. She discusses the benefits and logistics of incorporating this method in the classroom.

- 7) *Google* search engine. 17 Feb. 2001. <<http://www.google.com>>.

Google is an easy to use search engine that produces relevant search results. The advanced search is the best option because it allows an "exact phrase" search as well as other word combinations. For the best results use the term "journal writing" in quotation marks in the "exact phrase" search box.

- 8) *H.W. Wilson educational database*. The H.W. Wilson Company: New York.

This database provides abstracts and full-text articles from 478 education journals, monographs, and yearbooks. It is possible to obtain full-text articles only by using this limiting option during the search process. More information about the database can be obtained at <<http://www.hwwilson.com/databases/educat.ctm>>.

- 9) Hopkins, Gary. ed.-in-chief. Education World Message Boards - Powered by WWW Threads. 10 Feb. 2001. <<http://www.educationworld.com/boards/showpost.pl?Board=curriculum&Number=2&page=0&view=collapsed&sb=5>>.

This message board was started by the editor-in-chief of Education World in response to his article "Journal Writing Every Day: Teachers Say it Really Works!" The purpose is to create a collection of journal writing prompts that can be used by educators

everywhere. The message board began on 4 June 1999 and the latest message was added on 30 January 2001.

- 10) Hopkins, Gary. ed.-in-chief. "Journal Writing Every Day: Teachers Say it Really Works!" Education World Show-and-Tell Series. 7 June 1999. 10 Feb. 2001. <http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr144.shtml>.

This is an article filled with testimonies of educators who have used various journal writing techniques in their teaching. The testimonies cover a range of age groups and subject areas. Some examples of journal writing prompts are given.

- 11) Jenkinson, Edward. "Writing Assignments, Journals, and Student Privacy." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication. Bloomington, IN. 1994. ED 365989. 19 Feb. 2001. <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed365989.html>.

Discusses how issues of student privacy came to the forefront of national education in the 1980s. These concerns voiced by parents included the use of journal writing in classrooms. The article provides examples of privacy invasion given during the Department of Education hearings that resulted. Jenkins gives advice on how teachers can avoid invading student privacy when using journal writing in the classroom.

- 12) Kerka, Sandra. "Journal Writing and Adult Learning." ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education. Columbus, OH. 1996. 27 Feb. 2001. <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed399413.html>.

The benefits and difficulties of using journal writing in adult education are discussed in this article. The author starts with a discussion of journal types, such as responsive and dialogue, and then discusses exactly how these journals help adult learners. Some difficulties are addressed such as lack of reflection and maintenance of confidentiality. Journal writing guidelines are provided for the adult learner as well as for the teachers. While this article focuses on adult learners, many of the concepts can be applied to younger students.

- 13) Peyton, Joy Kreeft. "Dialogue Journals: Interactive Writing to Develop Language and Literacy." ERIC Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics. Washington D.C. 1993. ED 354789. 11 Feb. 2001. <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed354789.html>.

The benefits of dialogue journal writing in the ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom are illustrated in this article. The author begins by defining dialogue journals and she goes on to provide a transcript of an actual dialogue journal created in a

California classroom. Benefits and drawbacks of this educational process are mentioned as well as the logistics such as material needed, writing parameters, and journal topics.

- 14) Staton, Jana. "Dialogue Journals." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. Urbana, IL. 1987. ED 284276. 17 Feb. 2001. <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed284276.html>.

This article focuses specifically on dialogue journals as a way to facilitate communication between students and teachers. The author points out that these types of journals can be used in all types of situations and that the writing style tends to be conversational.

- 15) *U.S. Department of Education* web site. 10 Feb. 2001. <<http://www.ed.gov>>.

A valuable resource with links to numerous educational resources such as statistics, curricular materials, and ERIC Digests. The web site can be searched for articles on journal writing by entering terms such as "journal writing" or "journal" into the quick search box.

This pathfinder was created using the MLA citation style.

- Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 5th ed. The Modern Language Association of America: New York, 1999.

Journal Writing: A Pathfinder

<http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~vlibrary/pathfinders/dodson.pdf>

Prepared by Heidi Dodson

Journal writing has proven to be an effective educational tool over the past few decades. Its applications are diverse; from kindergarten classes to ESL students to eight grade math classes. Journal writing itself can take many forms in order to achieve different goals. For example, a response journal can record student reactions to a piece of literature, and a dialogue journal can facilitate communication between student and teacher as well as improve the writing skills of students.

In this pathfinder I will provide information about how to access resources in journal writing. These resources focus on different journal types, the benefits they can provide, the logistics to implement journal writing, and the role of the teacher in this process as both observer and participant.

These resources are intended to serve pre-service teachers at Northwest Indian College. They will be incorporated into a virtual library and therefore are available on the Internet. The URL for each resource site is provided.

Where can I find a general introduction to journal writing in the classroom?

In order to gain a general understanding of how to use journal writing in the classroom as well as an introduction to the most common types of journals, read the following ERIC Digest. It can be accessed at
<http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed378587.html>.

Cobine, Gary R. "Effective Use of Student Journal Writing." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading English and Communication. Bloomington, IN. 1995. ED 37857.

What exactly are dialogue journals and how are they used?

Dialogue journals conversational style journals. They are popular because of their widespread applicability and the safe writing environment they provide for students. In order to understand this type of journal in more depth, read the following article by one of the original advocates of dialogue journals. It can be accessed at
<http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed284276.html>.

Staton, Jana. "Dialogue Journals." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. Urbana, IL. 1987. ED 284276.

Where can I find examples of journal prompts, or sample journal questions, to use in my classroom?

For sample journal prompts used by educators nationwide, visit the following Education World web site at the URL provided. Here you will find a message board consisting of sample prompts. Anyone can contribute prompts that they have found to be successful.

“Education World Journal Writing Response Thread”. Education World.
<<http://www.educationworld.com/boards/showpost.pl?Board=curriculum&Number=2&page=0&view=collapsed&sb=5>>.

Can I use journal writing with non-native English speakers?

One of the best journal types to use for non-native English speakers is the dialogue journal. The student-teacher interaction promotes communication and trust, and the students are not graded on grammar or spelling so they can write more freely. The following article addresses these issues and provides guidance on how to use this journal. It can be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed354789.html>.

Peyton, Joy Kreeft. "Dialogue Journals: Interactive Writing to Develop Language and Literacy." ERIC Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics. Washington DC. 1993. ED 354789.

Are there any ethical issues associated with journal writing?

Because journal writing encourages self-expression, privacy and confidentiality are of vital importance ethically and legally. For information on these issues and guidelines on how to protect student privacy, read Jenkinson's article. It can be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed365989.html>.

Jenkinson, Edward. "Writing Assignments, Journals, and Student Privacy." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication. Bloomington, IN. 1994. ED 365989.

Where can I go to find the most up-to-date articles on journal writing?

In order to keep up with the literature on this topic, periodically visit the following web sites. At each site, search for relevant journal writing articles by using the search terms "journal writing" or "student journals" in quotation marks. The ERIC Digests are updated quarterly.

ERIC Digests - Accessible at <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/index>.

U.S. Department of Education – Accessible at <<http://www.ed.gov>>.

Google search engine – Accessible at <<http://www.google.com>>.

If you have any questions about finding journal writing resources, contact Heidi Dodson at heidijas74@yahoo.com or ask a reference librarian.

ENDNOTES

- 1) Cobine, Gary R. "Effective Use of Student Journal Writing." ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading English and Communication. Bloomington, IN. 1995. ED 378587. 11 Feb. 2001. <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed378587.html>.
- 2) Croxton, Craig A. and Robert C. Berger. "Journal Writing: Does it Promote Long Term Retention of Course Concepts?" National Teaching and Learning Forum. Onyx Press in conjunction with James Rhem and Associates, Inc.: 1996. 2 Feb. 2001. <<http://www.ntlf.com/html/st/journal/htm>>.
- 3) David, Frances. "Why You Call Me Emigrant?: Dialogue Journal Writing with Migrant Youth." Childhood Education. 60 (1983): 110-11, 114-16.
- 4) Kerka, Sandra. "Journal Writing and Adult Learning." ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education. Columbus, OH. 1996. 27 Feb. 2001. <http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed399413.html>.

