

Dialogue Journal Writing: Students Ramp Up and Soar

...bring to the classroom extensive life experience and proficiencies...

~Joy Kreeft Peyton

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OBJECTIVES

- ELA (& ESL) Dialogue Journal
- Content Areas & CCR Standards
- Dialogue Journal Activity
- Theorists & Practitioners,
Joy Kreeft Peyton, Marjorie Frank
- Challenges
- Reflect & Apply

Overview

- first documented in ESL & Literacy
- supplemental
- non-evaluative context

Vast and Gainful Opportunities

- student centered
- collaborative writing
 - sustained written interaction

Exchange


- ideas & shared topics of interests
- extensive life experiences and proficiencies

My Esteem

- Writing Frequency = Writing Fluency
- Uniquely clear and vivid window into a student's personality, interests, strengths, needs


As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves.

... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance. ~Michael Okeshott



Life is the 'Stuff' of Poetry: Writing involves [people] with the REAL happenings of their minds and words and hearts. They MUST be able to connect their writing to their lives: to communicate with words that are created by REAL feelings--Not just by those which are comfortable for teachers to accept.

~Marjorie Frank



The Input Determines the Outpour: Experience--with self, with others, with literature, with arts--are the catalyst that ignite expression. The hearing, enjoying, sharing, trying, discussing, remembering, discovering of life and literature NATURALLY flow into writing.

~Marjorie

Frank

Dialogue Journals

Written conversations in which a learner and teacher (or other writing partner) communicate regularly

Sample B (p 3-11)

- provides writing routine for students (and instructor!)
- flexible structure allowing extensive variation
- casts a wide net for learning opportunities, objectives, requirements

Dialogue Journals

Topics for or types of writing may be specified to enhance the curriculum, and some correction may be given by the teacher, but the primary goal of the writing is communication.

*** Sample C (p 11-13)***


There is No Rivalry Between Skills and Creativity: *Good writing is based on a healthy friendship between imagination and technique. It can and must be taught without slighting either. ~Marjorie Frank*

The Tools of Writing Are Not the Writing: *The mechanical tools are necessary for effective writing, but, by themselves, do not communicate. The message is of primary importance; the structure and grammar and spelling are aide to make the message clear. Teachers and students must take care not to confuse the tools with the writing. ~Marjorie Frank*

Dialogue Journals

Learners can write about topics [as they choose on a wide range of topics and in a variety of genres and styles] that are important to them in the genres and styles matched to their needs and abilities.

- individualize (and differentiate) instruction
- unconstrained by instructor, curriculum, schedule/sequence
- insight into student interests, motivations, individuality
- student ownership
- increased confidence
- authoritative stance & voice
- students experientially learn to write better and better



When humans find approval and acceptance for telling what's in their heads and hearts and dreams...AND are given the tools to tell it precisely and fluently...THEN...

Communication satisfying to human needs flourishes

Respect for the technical skills of expression grows

Creative thinking flowers

Self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-significance bloom

~Marjorie Frank

In Response

It's Hard to Write in a Vacuum: Writing ISN'T taught by saying, "Write...", then grading what [students] already know how to do. Writing IS taught by suggesting challenging directions, presenting patterns and providing examples that open doors to original thinking and expressing.

~Marjorie Frank

In Response

The teacher writes back regularly, responding to questions and comments, introducing new topics, or asking questions. The teacher is primarily a participant in an ongoing, written conversation with the learner rather than an evaluator who corrects or comments on the quality of the learner's writing.

*** Sample C (p 11-13) ***

- guiding questions
- prompt specific and adequate detail development
- aim for deeper and clearer understanding of student's learning style and needs
- prompt making connections to
 - class content on the whole
 - text
 - activity, project, assignment, etc.—in progress or previously completed
 - soft skills

Dialogue Journal (v.)

Activity 1

- Imagine you are reading these dialogue journal entry excerpts from a student in a class you are teaching or will be teaching.
- Write in response to some of these excerpts.
- Think about useful and effective response approaches, techniques, or strategies that you can apply and what student can gain therein.

In Response

Ask guiding questions that:

- prompt specific and adequate detail development
- aim for deeper or clearer understanding of student's learning style and needs
- prompt making connections to
 - Class content on the whole
 - A text
 - An activity, project, assignment, etc-- in progress or previously completed

➤ ***MORE?***

ELA Writing Alignment

Extended contact time with learners

***Exposure Builds Taste and Quality:** The constant reading and sharing of writing--with consistent attention drawn to the writer's techniques and effective means of expression--brings students gradually to a sense of what constitutes good writing.*

~Marjorie Frank

➤ *How can dialogue journal activities help confront limited time with students—with the group or on-to-one?*

ELA Writing Alignment

Management of classes with learners of varying language, ability, and interest levels

- Deeper understand of student—individual
 - personality, needs, learning style, interests
 - provide most appropriate resources and strategies
- Class structure and Material
 - writing prompts
 - texts
 - writing projects
- Welcome students into the conversation:
ELA/full curriculum content & classroom

ELA Writing Alignment

Assessment of learner needs and progress

Insight aiding design of further lesson, exercise, assignment, etc.:

➤ formative

- common grammar and usage issues
- common proofreading issues
- common word-processing issues
- common rhetorical issues

➤ summative

- progress
- gains
- confidence

ELA Writing Alignment

Facilitation of language learning.

- sustained writing & critical thinking
- experiential learning
- one-to-one, individualized attention
- authentic purpose & audience

CCRS

Priority Standards

- **W.3.6** With guidance and support, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- **W. 10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Challenges

- *Correctness in the writing*
- *Time to respond*
- *Writing that is overly personal*

Reflection & Further Application

Activity 2

- In what content areas can you use a *dialogue journal activity* to benefit instruction and learning in your classes?
- How so?
- How might you use a *dialogue journal activity* in your classroom to help student writers develop skills and knowledge essential to college and career readiness, life long learning, and success throughout life?
- Take some time to sketch out some plans!

In Conclusion

...a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves. ... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation...

~ Michael Okeshott

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