

TEACHING WRITING IN CAMBODIA:

The Educational and Interpersonal Benefits of Dialogue Journal Writing

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the educational and interpersonal benefits of dialogue journal writing within the Cambodian context.

The research plan involved, first, a thorough survey of the literature on journal writing, which then provided the theoretical framework for the construction of hypotheses. These hypotheses asserted that dialogue journal writing brings about educational as well as interpersonal benefits. In educational terms, this task enables learners to attain proficiency in speaking, reading and writing, gain functional competence, and develop critical thinking skills. In interpersonal terms, dialogue journal writing helps in the development of the relationship between the teacher and the learner and offers a source of cultural information.

The next stage involved assigning and collecting the journals and then analysing them to check for the presence of particular features which were asserted to bring about the benefits as stated in the hypotheses.

The writer conducted her research with a class of Cambodian students at Phnom Penh University. Within the journals of the eighteen learners, most of these features were discovered, thus supporting the hypotheses that journal writing offers particular educational and interpersonal benefits. Where the features were absent or variant, explanations for this based on the culture of the learners, the conditions of the country during the period of the study, and the culture of the teacher were offered.

Finally, the writing in the dialogue journals of the subjects provided strong evidence that dialogue journal writing offers learners a scope for genuine student-teacher communication and for personal communication and mutual understanding between each individual student and teacher.

CONTENTS

Title Page -----	i
Acknowledgements -----	ii
Abstract -----	iii
Table of Contents -----	iv

CHAPTER 1: THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.	Background to the Research-----	1
	1.1 Introduction to Aspects of Teaching Writing-----	3
	1.2 Issues Raised in Exploratory Studies-----	4
	1.2.1 Interaction-----	4
	1.2.2 "Good Journals"-----	4
	1.2.3 Cognitive Styles and Learning Styles-----	5
	1.3 Chapter Summary-----	6

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THE THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY

2.	Outline of the Chapter-----	7
	2.1 Critical Review of Approaches to Teaching Writing-----	7
	2.1.1 Focus on Form-----	8
	2.1.2 Focus on the Writer-----	16
	2.1.3 Focus on the Content-----	21
	2.1.4 Focus on the Reader-----	25
	2.1.5 Summary of Writing Approaches-----	27

2.2	Journal Writing -----	28
2.2.1	History of Journal Writing -----	28
2.2.2	Journals in Language Teaching -----	31
2.2.3	Dialogue Journals -----	32
2.2.4	Benefits of Dialogue Journal Writing -----	35
2.2.5	Dialogue Journal Writing in Non-English Speaking Environments -----	51
2.3	Issues Concerning Dialogue Journal Use in ESL and EFL Situations and Guidelines for their Use -----	52
2.4	Cognitive Style and Learning Style -----	56
2.5	The Influence of Cognitive Style on Response to Journal Writing -----	61
2.6	Cambodian Culture and its Influence on Learners -----	63
2.6.1	Roles of Learners and Teachers -----	64
2.6.2	Oral vs. Written Tradition -----	66
2.6.3	Value of Education and Learning -----	67
2.7	Chapter Summary -----	68
 CHAPTER 3: THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY		
3.	Outline of the Chapter -----	69
3.1	Introduction to the Study -----	69
3.2	The Pilot Study -----	69
3.2.1	Description of the Pilot -----	69
3.2.2	Findings -----	70
3.3	Research Questions -----	71
3.3.1	Specific Hypotheses -----	71
3.4	The Samples -----	71
3.4.1	Factors Influencing Choice of the Sample -----	72
3.5	The Journal Assignment -----	72

3.6	An Overview of the Research Methods -----	74
3.6.1	Procedure for Data Analysis -----	75
3.6.2	Scope of the Study -----	77
3.7	Limitations of the Present Study -----	77
3.8	Chapter Summary -----	79
CHAPTER 4: THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY		
4	Outline of the Chapter -----	80
4.1	Educational Benefits -----	81
4.1.1	Speaking Skills -----	82
4.1.2	Reading Skills -----	83
4.1.3	Writing Skills -----	85
4.1.4	Functional Proficiency -----	88
4.1.5	Critical Thinking Skills -----	99
4.2	Interpersonal Benefits -----	101
4.2.1	Sharing Personal Information -----	102
4.2.2	Seeking Advice, Sharing Problems and Expressing Grief -----	103
4.2.3	Exchanging Cultural Information -----	109
4.3	Conclusions -----	111
CHAPTER 5: THE INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS		
5	An Outline of the Chapter -----	114
5.1	Attainment of Speaking, Reading and Writing Skills -----	114
5.2	Acquisition of Functional Proficiency -----	118
5.3	Promotion of Critical Thinking Skills -----	124
5.4	Development of Closer Relations between the Learner and the Teacher -----	125
5.5	Sharing of Cultural Information -----	129
5.6	Chapter Summary -----	131

**CHAPTER 6: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

6	Review of Study -----	133
6.1	Recommendations Concerning Dialogue Journals and Research -----	136
6.1.1	The Learner -----	137
6.1.2	The Teacher -----	137
6.1.3	The Dialogue Journal Assignment -----	139
6.1.4	Evaluating the Dialogue Journal and the Dialogue Journal Assignment -----	141
6.2	Conclusion -----	142
	Appendices -----	144
	Appendix 1: Handout to Students -----	145
	Appendix 2: Evaluation Checklist for Dialogue Journal Writing -----	147
	Appendix 3: Permission to Copy Journal -----	149
	Bibliography -----	150
	List of Tables	
	Table 2.1 Benefits of Dialogue Journal Writing to be Investigated in Study -----	38