

# Enrichment of Teaching Philippine History using Journal Writing Approach in the Secondary Schools

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## **ABSTRACT**

Students can improve their conversational abilities by writing in their journals. based on what they have read from a historical text in their own words Through their own opinions/citations, perspectives, or judgments, their speaking skills will also be improved. They will also be able to broaden their vocabulary by constructing and developing historical topics through writing.

Students in the first year become autonomous learners as they write their journals on their own, and they will be able to use their metacognitive abilities to their learning, as journal writing skills must be mastered before it can be done. When the student encounters a new historical event or passage, he or she should utilize metacognition to write his or her journal.

Although journal writing cannot be considered the finest approach for developing historical conceptions, it does have limits. Beginning to write something takes time, especially for beginners and people with limited writing skills. The theme or writing composition activity in English inspired the development of a journal writing technique. However, in the realm of social sciences, this is a novel method.

Journal writing is not widely employed by teachers in Philippine history classes. They will, however, employ the journal-writing strategy if given the chance. As a result, students are empowered to take charge of their education.

The rubric is used to judge journals as a learning motivation. History of the Philippines. This is a frequent activity used by teachers.

**Keywords:** *Philippine History, philosophy, Journal writing*

## **1. Introduction**

In the twelve years of the researcher's experience in teaching Philippine History, she has oftentimes

encountered students who lack initiative and independence to learn. The students either rely on the teacher's exposition or on books. This could be due to lack of books and they are not accustomed to taking down notes during the lectures. If they ever have one, they do it haphazardly and in most cases words in their notes are misspelled and have incomplete ideas.

Another problem that seems to affect the students' performance in the classroom is the lack of instructional materials. They lack textbooks and other reading materials. So, the teacher talks and lectures which are not effective today and do not attract their attention. Thus, they find the class either boring or tedious and lose track of the subject matter. The lack of textbooks is a manifestation that the Department of Education lacks support to MAKABAYAN compared to English, Science and Mathematics.

Teaching history suffers several setbacks because of lack of innovations in terms of discovering new approaches and strategies in teaching the subject. Other teachers also fail to acknowledge the importance of teaching Philippine History. This is true even in the national setting, where the primary focus of trainings is on English, Mathematics and Science. They think that the core subject areas are the only ones vital to the learner's development. They neglect the fact that MAKABAYAN also plays a very important role in molding the learners into well-rounded, highly independent and self-directed learners.

This is clearly imbued in the philosophy of the 2002 curriculum that "the ideal Filipino learners are empowered learners, who are competent in learning how to study and have life who are makabayan (patriotic), makatao (mindful of humanity), maka-kalikasan (respectful of nature) and maka-Diyos (Godly)." Functional literacy, thus becomes the essential ability for lifelong learning in a dynamically changing world.

The 2002 Curriculum envisioned that the ideal teacher is not an authoritarian instructor but a trustworthy facilitator or manager of the learning process who enables the learners to become active constructors of meaning and not passive recipients of information."

Majority of the teachers always dream of becoming efficient and effective. To achieve this end, they try to look for new strategies, methodologies and techniques of teaching that would best motivate their students to learn and that would make them treat the subject matter more exciting than before.

Teachers in the tertiary level in English use journal to help the students become familiar with correct spelling and in writing composition. However, a teacher in History does not use it at all. The researcher thought it could help secondary students the same.

A journal is a record, chronology or register of events, memories and daily happenings. In history it is best used to keep records of what transpire during the learning activity.

Thus, the use of journal could be a step towards helping students in Philippine History to be responsible and to learn how to learn. This colloquium therefore attempts to shed light on how this technique used of writing useful in history classes.

### **Historical Background**

Journal writing is a learning strategy rooted in the theories of metacognition and constructivism. In a strict sense, a journal is an individual record of one's experience during a class, his/her speculations and observations. It may also contain the student's evaluation of each week's class. A review of what one has learned, or problem areas may likewise be included in the journal. Entries in journal are written informally or freely.

For centuries and in many diverse cultures, journals have been kept by peasants and princes for a variety of purposes. For some, journals were tools for recording scientific observations, questions, and data. For others, journal writing was a way to record important culture events, religious experiences, societal developments, or political protest. Still some used journal as a vehicle for self-analysis and introspection."

The great thinkers and creative geniuses throughout history kept journals. Writers, inventors and scientists recorded their on-the-spot report of ideas, insights and

experiences. Some of the earliest journal writers included the Greeks and Romans, women of 10th-century Japan, and "enlightened" individuals during the Renaissance. It was said that Leonardo da Vinci's notebook was filled with sketches and plans for his works of art. Einstein kept journals about observations and new ideas generated from his laboratory activities.

A well-documented diary-like form created in tenth century Japan was the pillow book, so named because it was placed in the bed chamber or perhaps in drawers of wooden pillows. Written primarily by Heian court ladies, these records incorporated factual accounts, dreams, fantasies, and poetry. Plutschow notes that in Japan the diary has long been understood and respected as a way of recording history. Within this tradition is the travel diary, categorized by Japanese critics as a separate genre from the other forms then used. These travel diaries were, in good part, comprised of poetry."

In contrast to its earlier Japanese ancestors, the western travel diary is primarily a narrative emphasizing the factual, i.e., what the traveler has done and seen. During the European Renaissance such chronicles were often written by privileged young men taking continental tours. In his essay "of Travel," Francis Bacon actually instructed these men on writing travel diaries, encouraging observation of "the courts of princes, the courts of justice, the churches and monasteries, the walls and fortifications of cities and towns." Thomas Mallon notes as cited by Bradey "the earliest travel diaries were kept less for reasons of sentiment than geography... The ship's log-like the household account and the commonplace book is one of the forms to which the diary probably owes its murky start". Evolving much later, but derived from a combination of earlier diary types, is the personal journal. This specific genre of writing emphasizes the self, often in relationship with other people, events, and ideas. Entries were characterized by immediacy and self-reflection. Samuel Pepys' diary, written between 1660 - 1669, is a well-known early example. Among the hallmark's of Pepys' diary are optimism, concise character sketches, love of gossip, and enjoyment of small detail."

Brady mentioned that in the nineteenth century French diaries, known as "journals in time," were developed was toward greater intensity, self-preoccupation, confession, and passion. Emerging around the time of the French Revolution, the journal

in time often questioned traditional values, existing literary forms, government, and even the relationship between the sexes.

Among the greatest historical influences contemporary journal writing in North America have been the recorded accounts of explorers such as Lewis, Clark and John Wesley Powell. Writers such as Gilbert White, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Anne Frank, Margaret Mead, and Aldo Leopold have also an impact on modern journal writing. It was not until the early 1960's that researchers recognized the value of Journal writing in educational setting. Since then, the trips, and expeditionary learning activities were recorded in journals. '

The researcher observed that the instructors also used. Journal writing to help students reflect on self-discovery, dynamics, professional development, sense of place, and academic theory, as well as to record such factual information as weather conditions, activities of group members, flora, fauna, times, and locations.

The authors of the National Standards for History call chronological thinking the "heart of historical reasoning. One way for students to identify the role and importance of temporal order, historical causation, as well as change and continuity is for history instructors to build this mental scaffolding. The type of journal assignment that appears best suited for this task is a text review. Text review journal writing encourages students to use the chronological timeline in the textbook as a baseline for other primary and secondary source materials they encounter in the readings, research, and class lectures. Students should place the items they come across in these other sources on the timeline. This allows them to establish temporal order and to compare and contrast the varying historical accounts and interpretations they encounter during the course of their research and classroom discussion.

Kerka and Hiemstra describe various types of journals used by people participating in adult education programs. Benefits derived from this writing may include being able to see tangible evidence of mental processes, having a safe place to practice writing without restrictions of form, enabling the articulation of connections between new information and what they already know, and making meaning. Types of diaries adults use in both formal learning situations and informal include dream logs, autobiographies,

spiritual journals, theory logs, diaries. and interactive reading.

Indeed, the foregoing presentation showed the evolution of the use of journals in keeping records, but which could be used by the students familiarize themselves historical events.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### Degree of Implementation

High school students should have developed their writing skills in their level. More so, they should be able to express their ideas and form opinions, give reactions and judgments to what they have read. One way to enhance these skills is by letting them write, and journal writing is one good strategy. To determine the effectiveness of this teaching strategy, the researcher who is currently pursuing her master's degree in the University of Eastern Philippines had implemented the journal writing approach in teaching Philippine History in her school, Allen National High School (ANHS), Allen, Northern Samar.

Although there are several purposes and therefore, uses for journal writing. These uses could be incorporated in one compact student notebook. A History-class notebook, for example, could be modeled after a book; it could be divided into a preface, a body of chapters, and a glossary. A "dialogue whose primary purpose is to foster communicativeness in students, could serve as the preface. A "literary journal," whose primary purpose is to foster thoughtfulness in students, could serve as the body-of chapters. A "content area journal," or subject journal, whose primary purpose is to help students identify and clarify troublesome terms and concepts, could serve as the glossary.

By keeping a dialogue journal, a "conversation in print" with the teacher, students develop from self-expressive writers to expressively communicative writers. Dialogue-journal writing bridges the gap between diary writing and report writing. Like diary writing, it is personal, informal, direct, and succinct. Yet, at the same time, by using a dialogue journal, students automatically apprentice themselves to the teacher, a mature writer- that is, not only students write about topics of personal concern, but they also observe a mature writer's methods. For example, when the teacher makes a comparison to support his/her comment, students might later try the method themselves. In adopting methods such as comparison,

analogy, description, and then, students come to write more communicatively and, gradually, more formally.

### **Progress in the Field**

Journal writing is one of the teaching approaches which a teacher can find challenging yet effective particularly in the development of the student's vocabulary in the different subjects. This is mostly used in the teaching of English subject in which word-building emphasized to expand a student's vocabulary.

In teaching Philippine History, there is a need for students to understand and expand historical concepts. This can best be done perhaps by letting them express freely their ideas about historical facts that they read. Through journal writing they will be able to enhance their concept development particularly on History. To reiterate Stacy Walker, "Journal writing can benefit students by enhancing reflection, facilitating critical thought, feelings, and writing focused arguments." expressing

In the Division of Northern Samar, out of 15 teachers 12 of the teachers were hesitant to use journal writing because they claimed that they lack trainings and seminars on journal writing. However, they alleged that given the chance to attend training, they would not hesitate to use this approach.

### **Pressing Problems in the Use of Journal Implementation**

Teaching innovations are conceived in order to improve students' performance. While previously tried methods and techniques have been proven not so effective, innovators continue to discover more effective ones. However, just like any other method, Journal writing would meet pressing problems, as mentioned hereunder:

1. Students' lack of vocabulary to express ideas and opinions. Students with poor communication skills will find difficulty in writing their journal. This requires an ample time to develop their skills first before the development of historical concepts.
2. Individual differences among students. Because of individual differences, one student may feel more likely at home with journal writing than the other. Those who attuned to journal writing will further develop their writing skills, but those who are not will look at journal writing as a difficult activity. are

3. Teachers' Acceptance of Innovations. Some teachers may welcome innovative strategies while others may be hesitant and will remain to embrace the traditional methods. They may consider new approaches as taxing and tedious especially in rating the journal.
4. A survey conducted by the researcher showed that most, if not all of the teachers in the field have not yet employed journal writing as a teaching approach especially in History subject. The lack of knowledge on the use of this approach may discourage them from using it.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

From the preceding presentations, the following conclusions are deduced on the use of journal writing approach:

In journal writing, the students can enhance the development of their communicative skills through writing. in their own words based on what they have read from a historical passage. Their speaking skills will also be developed, through their own opinions/citations, views, or judgments. They will also be able to expand their vocabulary thereby formulating the historical concepts they learn and elaborate through writing.

Students in the first year become independent learners as they work on their own by writing their journals and they will be able to use their metacognitive skills in learning, since journal writing skills should be learned before it can be done. Every time the student meets a new historical event or passage, s/he should use his/her metacognition to write his/her journal.

Although journal writing cannot be considered the best method in developing a formation of concepts in history, it has also its limitations. Starting to write something takes time especially for beginners and those who do not possess enough skills in writing. The use of journal writing approach originated from the theme or writing composition activity in English. But this is a new approach in the field of Social Sciences.

The use of journal writing approach by teachers in Philippine History teachers is not extensively used. However, given the opportunity they will be willing to use journal-writing approach.

Thus, the students are empowered to be responsible in their learning.

Journals as a motivation of learning are graded by the of rubric. Philippine History. This activity is common to teachers in use.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. The teacher should first enrich the journal writing skills of the students. Once their writing skills are developed, they will find it easier to formulate concepts related to Philippine History. A guide question should always be a part of the preliminary activity before the actual journal writing.
2. The teacher must always be ready with his/her own journal to be shared and discussed with the students before the students present their own. S/he should collect and rate the journal to encourage the students to do repeatedly this academic exercise.

Certain methods do not work equally well with all students due to individual differences. Teachers should be updated with different techniques and methods to cater to individual differences in learning. Or for journal writing to be more effective and to further enhance the students' journal writing skills, the teacher can offer training workshops. Educators who include journals in the curriculum would be wise to offer students formal and informal training in journal writing.

Educators may also consider giving students loose guidelines in journal writing to help focus their writing and to prevent waste of time.

Proper orientation on new innovations and close monitoring of teachers' attitudes towards these innovations must be done to minimize, if not eradicate negative manifestations among teachers whenever new innovations are introduced in the field.

To prevent the overuse of journals, which results in the students' feeling of being "journalled to death", the history teachers must coordinate journal writing assignments with other instructors who ask students to write journals to ensure they are not overused. Teachers within the same department or institution may consider allowing students to keep a single journal for a number of classes or ask students to reflect in other ways. This could be an avenue to the realization of the so-called across subject integration.

To prevent journal writing as a means of attacking a teacher or the institution, providing time for journal

writing and modeling good journal writing behaviors should be created. If an educator is supportive of the journal writing process, keeps a daily journal, and helps to facilitate reflective activities, then students may have more positive experiences with journal writing.

A seminar maybe conducted by the proponent. To make it possible, it should be supported and endorsed by the Schools Division Superintended and financial assistance be requested to be charged to the Special Education Fund (SEF) to fund the program.

A further study should be journal writing using a conducted on the use of wider scope and involving more respondents. From this study, ways for improving the use of the approach can be identified.

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