

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

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Abstract

Presented here is a sample lesson plan that utilizes journal writing to enhance students' understanding of Philippine History. This innovative approach aims to engage students in a more captivating and effective manner, fostering their concept development. By incorporating a "communications triangle" encompassing reading, writing, and discussing, teachers can stimulate natural language interaction among students, thereby promoting linguistic growth. It is worth noting that while schools currently prioritize subjects like English, Science, and Mathematics, seminars and trainings in these areas are more prevalent. Consequently, subjects like history receive less attention, with infrequent opportunities for professional development. As a result, teachers may not yet be aware of innovative teaching methods specifically tailored to Philippine History. By emphasizing journal writing, this approach seeks to overcome these limitations and offer a fresh and engaging educational experience for students.

Keywords: Teaching, Philippine History, Journal Writing, Instruction, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Throughout the researcher's twelve years of experience teaching Philippine History, she has frequently encountered students who exhibit a lack of motivation and independence in their learning. These students often rely heavily on the teacher's lectures or textbooks, potentially due to limited access to educational materials. Taking notes during lectures is uncommon, and when students do attempt to do so, their notes are often disorganized, misspelled, and incomplete.

Another factor that adversely affects students' performance in the classroom is the scarcity of instructional materials, particularly textbooks

and reading resources. As a result, traditional teaching methods such as lecturing fail to engage students effectively, leading to boredom and disengagement. This lack of support for the subject of MAKABAYAN, in comparison to English, Science, and Mathematics, highlights a broader issue within the Department of Education. History education faces challenges due to a lack of innovative approaches and strategies, as well as a failure by some teachers to recognize the importance of teaching Philippine History. Even in national settings, where training primarily focuses on English, Mathematics, and Science, the significance of MAKABAYAN is often overlooked. It is crucial to acknowledge that MAKABAYAN plays a vital role in shaping well-rounded, independent, and self-directed learners.

The majority of teachers aspire to be efficient and effective in their teaching practices. In pursuit of this goal, they seek new strategies, methodologies, and techniques that can motivate their students and make the subject matter more exciting. While journal writing is commonly utilized by English teachers at the tertiary level to develop students' spelling and writing skills, it remains largely untapped by history teachers. The researcher believes that journal writing could be equally beneficial for secondary students studying Philippine History.

A journal serves as a personal record, chronicling events, memories, and daily experiences. In the context of history education, it can be used to document learning activities and help students become responsible learners who understand how to learn. This colloquium aims to shed light on the usefulness of journal writing as a technique in history classes.

Journal writing aligns with the principles of metacognition and constructivism as a learning strategy. It involves individuals recording their experiences, speculations, observations, evaluations of weekly classes, reflections on what they have learned, and identification of areas that require improvement. Entries in a journal are written in an informal and free-flowing manner. Throughout history and across diverse cultures, journals have been utilized for various purposes. Peasants, princesses, scientists, and philosophers have all kept journals. These records served as tools for recording scientific observations, cultural events, religious experiences, societal developments, political protests, and personal reflections. Renowned thinkers, inventors, and artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Einstein, maintained journals to capture their ideas, insights, and experiences. In tenth-century Japan, court ladies created well-documented diary-like forms called "pillow books," incorporating factual accounts, dreams, fantasies, and poetry. Travel diaries, considered a separate genre, were also popular within the Japanese tradition and often featured poetry.

In contrast to its earlier Japanese predecessors, the western travel diary primarily focuses on narrating factual experiences and observations

made by the traveler. During the European Renaissance, privileged young men often wrote such chronicles while embarking on continental tours. Francis Bacon, in his essay "Of travel," actually provided instructions to these men on how to write travel diaries, encouraging them to observe and document details such as "the courts of princes, the courts of justice, the churches and monasteries, the walls and fortifications of cities and towns..." According to Thomas Mallon, as cited by Bradey, the earliest travel diaries were initially driven by geography rather than sentimental reasons, resembling ship's logs, household accounts, and commonplace books. The personal journal, a later development drawing from various diary types, emerged as a specific genre of writing. This form of journal writing places emphasis on the self, particularly in relation to other people, events, and ideas. Entries in personal journals are characterized by immediacy and self-reflection. A well-known early example of this type of journal is Samuel Pepys' diary, written between 1660-1669, known for its optimism, concise character sketches, love of gossip, and attention to small details.

Bradey mentions that in the nineteenth century, French diaries, referred to as "journals in time," evolved toward greater intensity, self-preoccupation, confession, and passion. These journals, which emerged around the time of the French Revolution, often challenged traditional values, established literary forms, governments, and even gender dynamics. Influential historical figures such as explorers Lewis, Clark, and John Wesley Powell have greatly influenced contemporary journal writing in North America. Writers like Gilbert White, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Anne Frank, Margaret Mead, and Aldo Leopold have also left their mark on modern journal writing. It was only in the early 1960s that researchers recognized the educational value of journal writing. Since then, trips and experiential learning activities have been documented in journals. The researcher noticed that instructors also use journal writing to facilitate student reflection on self-discovery, group dynamics, professional development, sense of place, academic theory, and factual information such as weather conditions, group activities, flora, fauna, times, and locations.

According to the authors of the National Standards for History, chronological thinking is the "heart of historical reasoning." One effective way for students to grasp the role and significance of temporal order, historical causation, and change and continuity is through the use of journal assignments. Specifically, text review journal writing prompts students to use the chronological timeline in their textbooks as a foundation for analyzing primary and secondary source materials encountered in their readings, research, and class lectures. Students are encouraged to place the items they encounter in these other sources onto the timeline, allowing them to establish temporal order and compare different historical accounts and interpretations they come across during their research and classroom discussions.

Kerka and Hiemstra describe various types of journals used by adults participating in educational programs. The benefits of engaging in journal writing include providing tangible evidence of mental processes, offering a safe space to practice writing without restrictions, facilitating the articulation of connections between new information and prior knowledge, and creating meaning. Examples of diaries used by adults in both formal and informal learning settings include dream logs, autobiographies, spiritual journals, theory logs, and interactive reading diaries. The aforementioned discussion illustrates the evolution of journal usage as a record-keeping tool that can be employed by students to familiarize themselves with historical events.

Sample Lesson Plan

A Sample Lesson Plan in Philippine History for First Year High School Using the Traditional Method

I. Objectives

- 1.To discuss how Magellan discovered the Philippines.
- 2.Answer the questions of what was read?
- 3.To trace the route that Magellan took in coming to the Philippines using the map.

II. Subject Matter:

Topics: The Discovery of the Philippines by Magellan

Battle at Mactan

Reference: **Philippine History and Government by Aurora Santiago, et al., pp. 86-89.**

Materials: **Map, Chart, and pictures**

III. Procedure

A. Review

What triggered the Europeans to search further outside the boundaries of their horizon? What is the treaty of Tordesillas.

B. Motivation

A picture is shown to the class. What can you say about this

Picture? When do you think happened? Who are the people shown in this picture?

C. Presentation

Discussion about Magellan's discovery of the Philippines and ensuring that the students will read silently the topic on pages 86-88.

D. Discussion

1. Who is Ferdinand Magellan?
2. Why did the King of Portugal discourage Magellan's voyage to the east?
3. Why did the King of Spain support Magellan's travel to the east?
4. What were the different ships that went Magellan on his voyage to the east?
5. Trace Magellan's route on the map.

E. Generalization

Describe how Magellan discovered the Philippines.

IV. Evaluation

Direction: Write the correct answer on the space provided.

1. Why was he permitted to lead an expedition?
2. What is the nationality of Magellan? How come to that it was Spain who supported his voyage?
3. What are the apprehensions of the King of Portugal?
4. How many ships comprise Magellan's entourage?

V. Assignment

Narrate how Magellan died in Mactan.

The Need

Students should be able to express themselves or to communicate. This skill is not only useful in the English subject but in all subjects, History among them. The teacher has to employ an approach or a method which would enhance this skill, and journal writing can be answer.

As an effective means of communication, student journals have demonstrated their simplicity and efficacy. For instance, a secondary school teacher implements the following approach: beginning with an oral reading of a passage from Literature, the teacher then prompts journal writing about the passage, followed by voluntary sharing of journal entries by students. Notably, both the teacher and the students engage in writing about the passage during the journaling process. To model a critical response and encourage students to share their own thoughts, the teacher initiates by sharing his or her journal entry. Consequently, this technique enables students to practice listening, speaking, engaging in group discussions, as well as reading and writing critically, thus fostering the ability to recognize and evaluate their opinions and beliefs.

Likewise, a college instructor has devised a communication method consisting of the following steps: initiating a 15-minute focused free writing session for a pre-discussion journal entry based on the day's reading, dividing the class into small groups with appointed group leaders, assigning a focused topic, question, or task for discussion of the reading within the small groups, reconvening for a class discussion where students share the highlights of their group discussions, and concluding the class with a second focused free writing session for a post-discussion journal entry to expand on their initial responses. By incorporating journal writing as support for the course reading, complemented by group discussions, the students develop various communication skills, as they write about ideas derived from their reading materials.

The strategies can certainly be adopted in the teaching of History. In fact, journal writing will enable the students to widen their concepts about historical facts and at the same time develop their communicative competence through writing. The lesson plan presented in the succeeding page manifests how the journal approach could be used in teaching history. It can be gleaned from the lesson plan that the teaching-learning process is already student-centered. In this case, the students are given the opportunity to learn how to learn.

The teacher is a facilitator of learner in this approach. She ceases from being a mere provider of information. In this approach, the students should have a prior knowledge. Before the journal writing activity, the teacher should let the students read the subject matter or bring with them textbook or a reference material that could help them in writing their journal. Student may as well use electronic sources of information.

For example in the proposed lesson plan, the teacher may give guide questions to his/her students. These guide questions will serve as the guide for the students in writing their journal. Below are samples of guide questions on the topics: Discovery of the Philippines by Magellan and the Battle in Mactan.

Sample Questions on Journal Writing for First Year High School

Topic: The Discovery of the Philippines by Magellan the Battle of Mactan

Procedure: Entries in the Journal or Guide Questions:

First Day:

1. Who is Ferdinand Magellan?
2. Who helped him in his expedition?
3. What are his objectives I his voyage?
4. When did it start?

5. How did he travel?
6. When did he reach the Philippines?
7. What is the first island that he landed?

Second Day:

1. Describe his expedition in the different islands of the Philippines?
2. Was he successful in his voyage? Why?
3. Who is Lapu-lapu?
4. Why did Lapu-lapu oppose Magellan's presence in Mactan

Third Day:

1. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of Magellan's discovery of the Philippines?
2. What is your reaction regarding the effect of evangelization to the Filipino culture?

Students will write their answer in the journal and present it to the class. Students should take notes regarding the authenticity of each presentation.

A general rubric is provided for the journal entries.

The teacher may rate the students output using rubric. A sample of rubric scale is presented below.

Sample Rubric

Scale

Excellent 4	Very Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
The student completes the task with no major errors	The student completes the task with only a few major errors and some minor errors	The student completes the task with some major errors and many minor errors	The student fails to complete the task
The student demonstrates a full understanding of the concepts	The student demonstrates an understanding of the concepts	The student has difficulty in understanding the concepts	The student has no understanding of the concepts

In this activity, the student is spared from being simply a receiver of information, but s/he is given the responsibility to get the details and write basic ideas related to the subject matter based on his reading. Thus, it also helps develop the habit of reading.

Results and Discussion

Degree of Implementation

It is crucial for high school students to possess well-developed writing skills at their academic level. Furthermore, they should demonstrate the ability to effectively convey their ideas, form opinions, provide reactions, and make judgments based on their readings. Journal writing serves as an excellent strategy to enhance these skills. To assess the effectiveness of this teaching approach, the researcher, currently pursuing a master's degree at the University of Eastern Philippines, implemented the journal writing method in teaching Philippine History at Allen National High School (ANHS) in Allen, Northern Samar. While journal writing serves multiple purposes and applications, these can be consolidated within a single comprehensive student notebook. For instance, a History-class notebook can be structured similarly to a book, consisting of a preface, body chapters, and a glossary.

A “dialogue journal” 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- chapter. A “content area journal” or subject journal, whose primary purpose is to help students’ identity 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, not only students write about topics of personal concern, but they also deserve a mature writer’s methods. For example, when the teacher makes comparison to support his/her comment, students might later try the method themselves. In adopting methods such as comparison, analogy, description, and argumentation, then, students come to write more communicatively and gradually, more formally. With dialogue journal-as-preface, students could write brief notes about their state-of-the-class perspectives. They could question and comment, as well as answer questions and comments that the teacher gives. By keeping a literary journal, (a written record of personal responses to passages from literature), students read actively, responding throughout their reading, not just at the end and responding immediately and fully.

A subject journal, a record of written responses to expository texts, could serve as the glossary of a student notebook. For history- class notebook, and genre studies, just as they write responses to passages from literature in the journal. In section B, they could make a personalized dictionary of literary, linguistic, and historical terms for investigation. In section C, they could make a personalized stylebook of rhetorical, grammatical, and mechanical concerns, regarding their formal papers. By keeping section A, responses to background readings, students read effectively, searching for the main ideas suggested in expository texts and evaluating the ideas. For example, after writing an entry in the literary journal about a chapter from a novel such as “animal farm” the students could write parallel entries in the subject journal in response to a biographical portrait of George Orwell, historical article on the rise of communism in Russia, and an article on the fable as an literary genre. Or, in conjunction with Orwell’s “1984” they could write parallel entries in response to a historical article on World War I and an article on the utopia/dystopia genre. Alongside an entry, the teacher would write open-ended questions suggestive of ideas and evidence in the expository text, thereby directing the students’ attention back to the textual ideas and evidence that either confirm or contradict the students’ assertions about the text. By keeping Section B, a personalized dictionary of important terms, students clarify concepts. For a history-class notebook, they could define historical terms such as expedition, treaty and many more. By keeping Section C, a personalized stylebook, students track their progress on the understanding of historical concepts thereby enriching their vocabulary.

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 students’ vocabulary in the different subjects. This is a different subject. This is mostly and used in the teaching of english subject in which word-building is emphasized to expand a students to understand and expand historical concepts. This can be done perhaps by letting them express freely their ideas about historial 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, expressing feelings, and writing focused arguments. 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 and its Implementation

Teaching innovations conceived 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 are attuned to journal writing than others. Those who are not will look at journal writing as a difficult activity.
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.

Implication to Education

Positive Implications

Writing which is a form of communicating is quite difficult for student to do. But this can be made interesting and pleasing task once the student gets used from teacher's point of view, one of the best things about daily journal writing is that it can take so many forms. Teachers can use journal writing to meet specific goals, or the purpose can be wide open. Some teachers check journal writing and work on polishing skill; other use journals as the one "uncorrected" form of writing that students begin whether their writing. Others leave decisions about the direction and flow of student journals up to the students' concept in History need to be understood very well by a student.

The historical events likewise need to be assimilated and discussed. Through journal writing, this can be done. The teacher will encourage the students to be independent and critical readers as they put into writing in their own words the historical facts. They are encouraging to give their own opinions and views about what they have read, thereby widening their vocabulary and self-expression.

As cited by Anderson, journal writing also can improve students' writing, enhance critical thinking skills, encourage observational skills, and develop creative skills. Journal writing helps students develop their writing skill as they encourage to "experiment with writing, to experience, perhaps for the first time, writing that may be highly personal, relatively unstructured, speculative, uninhibited, tentative, in process, in flux". As a result of this freedom and success, students often take pride in their journals. From historical perspective, journals can help students develop intimate connections with the past as they learn to observe and record patterns and processes in the world.

One of the most recognized uses of journal is to help facilitate reflection, a critical component of the experiential education cycle. Through journals, students can record a concrete experience, reflect on, and record their observations about the historical events and experience, integrate the observation into abstract concepts or theories, and use the theories to make decisions or solve problems that bugling our society. Writing helps students to construct their own knowledge by allowing them to express connections between new information and knowledge they already have.

Negative implications

Regardless of the plentiful benefits associated with the journal writing, its crux of weakness lies on the several major concerns identified in the literature which include the following.

1. The overuse of journals, which results in the students' feeling of being "journaled to death" and that, journal are "pointless ritual wrapped in meaningless words" as quoted by Shor.
2. Students write what they think what please the instructor in order to get a good grade.
3. Misuse of journals, in which students attack other students or make inappropriate comments about other students, teachers or authorities in school.
4. Starting to write something consumes quite a a time-thinking of how to begin, how ideas are to be organized, and analyzing what is read.
5. Teachers need expertise in developing the writing skills and should possess the art of questioning to guide the students and keep them started and ready to write.

Conclusions

In journal writing, the students can enhance the development of their communicative skills through writing in their own words based from what they have read from a historical passage. Their speaking skills will also be developed, through their own opinions/citations, views, or

judgements. 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 journal 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 in order to write his/her journal. Although journal writing cannot be considered the best method in developing a formation of concepts 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 using rubrics. This activity is common to teachers in Philippine History.

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 student's journal writing skills, the teacher can offer training-workshops. Educators who include journals in 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 teacher's attitudes towards these innovations must be done in order 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 "journaled to death", the history teachers must coordinate journal writing assignments with other instructors who asks students to write journals to ensure they are not

overused. Teachers within the same departments or institutions may consider allowing students to keep a single journal for several 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 may be conducted by the proponent. To make it possible, it should be supported and endorsed by the School Division Superintendent and financial assistance be requested to be charged to the Special Education Fund (SEF) to fund the program. A further study should be conducted on the use of journal writing using a wider scope involving more respondents. From the study, ways for improving the use of the approach can be identified.

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