

Genre Study in Journaling: The Usefulness of Informality



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We need to trust the imagination more, to come to terms with the way in which the imagination works actively to help us understand what we've read...Students' writing and testimonies show that literary journals tap the energy and excitement of the imagination and add a whole new dimension to what we teachers think of as reading and literary discourse (Tashlik 178).

Much of the writing found in academic settings is prescriptive, formal, and careful to adhere to one format or another. We, students once ourselves and now educators, have taken great strides to foster the perfect verse, stanza or paragraph. We have spent hours on minute details such as spelling, punctuation, tone and sentence structure.

Most educators would agree that our students must possess the necessary skills in order to effectively communicate in academic discourse and be productive lifelong literacy learners. Yet, we need to ask ourselves if we have utilized all possible means in strengthening our students' writing and reading skills? An ideal way to enhance our students' literacy skills is by use of the journal.

Through the use of the journal students are able to relax and let go of all the rules and regulations surrounding formal writing. Seemingly counterproductive to developing students' literacy skills, the journal actually takes the students' proficiency to a whole new level. The journal allows the students a safe space to write out their thinking, experiences, questions, predictions, uninhibited by the mechanics of writing.

What is a Journal?

When researching the use of the journals in classroom settings, I found the terminology of journal, diary, log and writer's notebook are often used interchangeably, making it difficult to pinpoint one type of writing from another. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines journal as: "a record of current transactions," "an account of day-to-day events," or "a record of experiences, ideas, or reflections kept regularly for private use." However, a log is defined as "a regular or systematic record of incidents or observations" and a diary is defined as "a book in which one keeps a daily record of events and experiences."

Randy Bomer makes the distinction for us between a writer's notebook and a journal: "A writer's notebook...is different from a journal, in that its purpose is to serve the writer as he moves towards a more invested, reader-based writing project" (61). A writer's notebook is ideally utilized to inspire future writing pieces. However, the journal is not necessarily meant for the purposes of producing something else later.

Donald C. Stewart called the journal the "Birthplace of an Authentic Voice" (Autry 1), and Richard Marius provides a definition by stating the reasons for keeping a journal: "You will

learn how to observe things that happen to you, how to sort out the unimportant, how to put your observations into words, and perhaps how to make sense of your life" (1). The journal has tremendous possibilities in an English class, but also in many areas of life. The journal allows a space for students to think out their questions, discoveries, fears, etc. There are many different types of journals, such as math journals, science journals and art journals, but for our interests we will stick to what would be beneficial in an English classroom. The types of journals that are typically used in an English classroom are personal journals, dialogue journals, and reader-response journals. Later, this genre study will provide examples of all three and demonstrate how they are used.

Journals for an English Class

Personal journals allow students to openly write about their feelings, opinions or expressions of things that they are personally interested in. Teachers need to be sensitive to this type of journal and only have students share their journaling if they are comfortable doing so. Also with personal journals, teachers need to think if and how they would grade a personal journal. Grading a personal journal could discourage an authenticity that might otherwise occur if a student did not feel the pressure of a grade.

Dialogue Journals are journals that read like a conversation. Usually this conversation is between a teacher and student but can be between classmates also. The two comment on each other's journaling as if in conversation. Teachers can encourage students to express themselves in "thoughtful and informal ways" (Instructional Strategies Online). Remember, if this type of journal is used, it is imperative to provide feedback as soon as possible. Students expect and need almost instant reinforcement or feedback.

Reading-response journals are utilized to capture student responses to their reading. This journal is also used to keep track of student reading. The entries in this type of journal could be letters to characters, questions, comparisons, evaluations, predictions and comments on author's style or tone. (Instructional Strategies Online).

As you can see, journals provide opportunities for various forms of writing. The idea of using journals in a classroom is fairly new. However, people have been writing in journals for different reasons for thousands of years.

History of the Journal

Journals date as far back as 56AD in China. Journals were written and then archived as historical documents. During the tenth century, the Heian court ladies kept journals known as pillow books to record "factual accounts as well as dreams, other fantasies and poetry" (Lowenstein 87). Later travel diaries were written usually by wealthy men to record the places that they had visited. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, European travel diaries, "some published in their diary form, supplied much of the existing information about distant places. These diaries functioned as map supplements to places no one else had explored" (Lowenstein 89). Later the European explorers recorded their findings and experiences in the New World. During several wars such as the French and Indian Wars, and the American Revolution, soldiers, physicians in the Army, and civilians kept war diaries. And during the American Revolution, American prisoners of war kept diaries "despite punishment if they were found" (90).

Spiritual diaries surfaced as early as the sixteenth century and were used throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a means of confession to God for sins. Those utilizing the journal for a confessional means were the religious sects of the day: the Puritans, Quakers, Methodists and the Calvinists. The spiritual journal became a "diary born out of crisis, a diarist's struggle to control what may seem out of control" (90). Later the personal diary evolved out of a

combination of earlier diaries. The personal diary "emphasizes the self, often in relationship to other people, events, ideas, and religions" (Lowenstein 92).

Around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "textbooks began to recommend journals or notebooks as memory aids, scrapbooks, or simply as writing practice" (Autry 1). The use of the journal as a writing tool in the classroom is "traceable to the 1965 publication of Gordon Rohmann's "Pre-writing: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process." Basing his conclusions on a study at Michigan State, Rohmann recommends the journal along with meditating and forming analogies as techniques for invention" (8).

For generations, people from all cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds have been recording daily tidbits, questions, responses, and reflections on the experiences and the problems they face each day. The journal has served many purposes: to inform, to reveal, and to escape. While the journal should contain certain components, it has no set structure, and no requirements regarding mechanics are involved. It can be directed to an audience or not. The journal is simply a means of exploration and self-reflection. From a teacher's standpoint the journal represents the discussion I might not have had with my students, or as Ken Autry states: "the collection of the journals, my weekly pound of flesh" (8).

Journals in a Classroom

The journal's uninhibited style has many benefits for the classroom, especially an English classroom. For an English teacher who is programmed to correct grammar, letting go of the mechanics of writing can be somewhat daunting. Incomplete sentences, spelling errors, and random capitalization beg for correction. However, the journal can help students in a variety of ways. Journals

- help them gain fluency
- help them observe, reflect and document personal experience
- help them contain a storehouse of ideas that can later be used for other projects
- help them converse openly and deeply on what they have read or are reading

Christopher Burnham, contributing writer to *The Journal Book*, wrote, "My earliest experiments with journals originated in my belief in the relationship between good writing and psychological development... Keeping a journal provides students opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills while also encouraging self-awareness and psychological growth" (148). With the journal, students are able to go back days even weeks later and in a metacognitive way, think about what they were thinking. They literally see within the chronology of the entries a growth and a depth in their responses.

Nancie Atwell, another contributing writer to *The Journal Book*, wrote of her use of dialogue journals in a classroom:

The dialogue journals between my kids and me confirmed my hunches. Over each of the last two years we've exchanged thousands of pages of letters. In our correspondence we've gone far beyond plot synopses and traditional teachers' manual issues of genre, theme and character, to give accounts of our processes as writers, to suggest revisions in what we've read, to see connections between a published author's work and our own writing, to see connections between books and our own lives. We've taught each other (159).

As Atwell points out, the journal affords the teacher another opportunity to show students something more about themselves or a text. On the other hand, the journal also provides another op-

portunity for the teacher to learn something from the student that might not have occurred in class room discussion.

Journals are not just meant for the classroom. The student does not need to receive an assignment in order to journal. The journal can be an extension of the classroom and a therapeutic place for students to sort out other situations within their lives. With that said, let's explore how to introduce the journal to your classroom.

Using Genre Study to Teach Journaling

One of the most effective ways to introduce journals in your classroom is by conducting a genre study. A genre study is an in depth study of a particular genre--that is, a study on a type of composition that is part of a particular genre or category because of similarities in form, style, or subject matter. For example, fiction is a type of genre because all fictional texts are not true. And non-fiction is a type of genre because all texts considered non-fiction are true accounts. Newspaper articles are in the genre of newspaper articles, poems are in the genre of poetry and so forth. Respected author and educator Randy Bomer emphasizes the effectiveness of teaching by use of genre in *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle & High School*. Bomer states:

Genre, an oft-overlooked cuing system in reading, constrains our prediction, lays down our track for our reading...Genres are conventions, and that means they are social--socially defined and socially learned. Every community of people determines which kinds of writing count in that community. Helping students learn how to learn about different genres of writing empowers them to find a way of writing that counts in the different communities they will move through in their lives (117-119).

Students come equipped with a genre sense already from past experiences. For example, they recognize a recipe as a recipe and a newspaper article as a newspaper article because they have seen this type of text all throughout their lives. Students recognize a particular genre because of the genre's distinct characteristics. Therefore, teaching the journal through a genre study works wonderfully. Bomer posits genre as the "basic tool for a literate imagination, the fundamental shaping force" (116).

There are critical steps to be taken when teaching genre. With each step we should scaffold the students' understanding to ensure their mastery of the genre. This mastery is evident when the student is able to comfortably create his or her own version of the genre.

Scaffolding Steps to Take When Teaching Genre

Step One

Conducting a genre study with your students requires certain steps. Each step scaffolds a level of understanding to ensure the students' mastery of the genre. Charles R. Cooper lays out the steps for teaching genre in his piece, "What We Know about Genres, and How It Can Help Us Assign and Evaluate Writing." Following Cooper's first step, I introduce the genre of journals to my class by asking if anyone has ever kept a diary or known of someone who has, or if anyone had ever read a diary. I then give students several different types of journal texts to read and reread. I begin my genre study with *The Diary of Anne Frank*, followed by a student response to a book, an excerpt from *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and an example of a student to teacher dialogue journal. It is important to have the students read and reread various examples.

Lesson #1:

Take several class periods, at least three 45 minutes classes for this lesson.

- To launch my genre study I announce to my students that we are starting a genre study of journals. I explain to my students that they will be reading four different types of journals and answering some questions after they have read each text. I tell my students the first one we will approach is *The Diary of Anne Frank*. I then ask students what they know about World War II and the Holocaust. This genre study is intended for eleventh graders and it should be safe to assume that they have some background knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust. Then I hand out copies of excerpts from *The Diary of Anne Frank* with a brief history of the book. Before the students set off on their own, I read the brief history that comes before the excerpts out loud and answer any questions that students may have regarding the text. I use the following text:

Anne Frank

Anne Frank, born on June 12, 1929, was a German-Jewish teenager who was forced to go into hiding during the Holocaust. She and her family, along with four others, spent 25 months during World War II in an annex of rooms above her father's office in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

After being betrayed to the Nazis, Anne, her family, and the others living with them were arrested and deported to Nazi concentration camps. In March of 1945, nine months after she was arrested, Anne Frank died of typhus at Bergen-Belsen. She was fifteen years old. Her diary, saved during the war by one of the family's helpers, Miep Gies, was first published in 1947. Today, her diary has been translated into 67 languages and is one of the most widely read books in the world.

Then I break students into groups of three or four to read and discuss the texts.

Then, students answer the following questions when they have finished reading each text:

- What personal observations were made in the journal?
- What questions does this text raise?
- What speculations or observations did the writer make?
- What evidence of self-awareness did the writer have?
- What other technique, such as stylistic features, did the writer use to develop meaning?

First Journal Example: Excerpts from Anne Frank's Diary

On the Deportations

"Our many Jewish friends and acquaintances are being taken away in droves. The Gestapo is treating them very roughly and transporting them in cattle cars to Westerbork, the big camp in Drenthe to which they're sending all the Jews....If it's that bad in Holland, what must it be like in those faraway and uncivilized places where the Germans are sending them? We assume that most of them are being murdered. The English radio says they're being gassed." - October 9, 1942

On Nazi Punishment of Resisters

"Have you ever heard the term 'hostages'? That's the latest punishment for saboteurs. It's the most horrible thing you can imagine. Leading citizens--innocent people--are taken prisoner to await their execution. If the Gestapo can't find the saboteur, they simply grab five hostages and line them up against the wall. You read the announcements of their death in the paper, where they're referred to as 'fatal accidents.'" - October 9, 1942

"All college students are being asked to sign an official statement to the effect that they 'sympathize with the Germans and approve of the New Order.' Eighty percent have decided to obey the dictates of their conscience, but the penalty will be severe. Any student refusing to sign will be sent to a German labor camp." - May 18, 1943

On Writing and Her Diary

"Mr. Bolkestein, the Cabinet Minister, speaking on the Dutch broadcast from London, said that after the war a collection would be made of diaries and letters dealing with the war. Of course, everyone pounced on my diary." - March 29, 1944

"When I write, I can shake off all my cares." - April 5, 1944

Describing her Despair

"I've reached the point where I hardly care whether I live or die. The world will keep on turning without me, and I can't do anything to change events anyway. I'll just let matters take their course and concentrate on studying and hope that everything will be all right in the end." - February 3, 1944

"...but the minute I was alone I knew I was going to cry my eyes out. I slid to the floor in my nightgown and began by saying my prayers, very fervently. Then I drew my knees to my chest, lay my head on my arms and cried, all huddled up on the bare floor. A loud sob brought me back down to earth..." - April 5, 1944

On Her Old Country, Germany

"Fine specimens of humanity, those Germans, and to think I'm actually one of them! No, that's not true, Hitler took away our nationality long ago. And besides, there are no greater enemies on earth than the Germans and Jews." - October 9, 1942

On Still Believing

"It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.

It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more" - July 15, 1944 (annefrank.com)

- After students have responded to Anne Frank's diary excerpts, I have them answer the questions provided before moving onto the next journal example.

Second Journal Example: Student Response Journal

Next, I hand out copies of a student journal response to the book *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls. I selected this journal entry for the purposes of my students. When students see real, authentic entries that look similar to their own responses, they may not feel overwhelmed or intimidated by other published journal responses. Cooper

emphasizes the need to give accessible and relevant texts to allow students to effectively acquire knowledge of the genre and to effectively analyze the genre.

Sample Student Journal Response to *The Glass Castle*:

I thought that this chapter was sad yet very cute. When the little girl got burnt I wonder how old she was and why she wanted hot-dogs that early. But then once she reached the hospital and said she was three years old cooking hot-dogs because her mom thinks that she is mature enough to handle it I then realized her mother is a moron. Or maybe she just didn't know what her daughter was doing. Little kids like to think that they can eat crazy things at crazy times. I feel bad for the little girl because her favorite pink colored dress burned along with her. I am glad she lived but then again I wonder if it would be better if she did die because she would be 75% safer than at home. I don't like her parents. They shouldn't have kids. They are bad parents. None of the kids in the family are safe at any time. They should be taken away. Like the little boy Brian cracked his head opened and all they do is wrap it around a couple times with some gauze. Then Lori got stung in the leg by a scorpion. Like I know that you can't save your kids from everything but some things that are obvious you can stop. Is Brian older or younger than this little girl because I have no clue. From the text I assume he is. I think that all the kids sound adorable. I think that it is true that the ugliest people have the cutest kids. I think that what is going to happen next is that the little girl comes home and makes more hotdogs because the parents are morons.

- After the students have read *The Glass Castle* journal entry, I ask them to discuss their findings and answer the aforementioned questions.

Third Example of Journal: The Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Next, I hand out excerpts from *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, by Jeff Kinney. (See Appendix A). I selected this type of journal because of its stylish features and the animated illustrations that accompany the journal. I want my students to know that this is one more way to enhance their understanding of a text or personal experience and it also affords me, the teacher, another opportunity to see that growth. Doodling can further inspire the imagination. Again after they have finished reading the text, I would have them answer the questions and discuss their findings.

Fourth Journal Example: The Dialogue Journal

Finally, I hand out copies of a student journal that shows a dialogue between a student and the teacher (See Appendix B). After students read through the journal entries, I have them answer the same questions about the text.

Finding Characteristics

Mini-Lesson #2:

Next, I have students look over their answers to the questions to the four journal examples. I hand out a sheet of notebook paper to each group and ask students to look at all their answers and find similarities within the four journal examples. Then I have

students use a sheet of paper to create a list of common characteristics that they found in the journal examples. I give them about 7-10 minutes to compile a list before we go over their list on an overhead together. Then I hand out my list of characteristics. With list in hand, I ask students to begin taking their findings from the readings and putting them into the different categories. Together we would go over this as a group and I would help them fill in the gaps that they may have missed. My list is as follows:

JOURNALS SHOULD CONTAIN THESE CHARACTERISTICS:

- ✓ personal observations
- ✓ questioning
- ✓ speculations or predictions
- ✓ evidence of self-awareness
- ✓ connections between personal experience and new information
- ✓ stylistic features

(Instructional Strategies Online)

Time to Write

Now that students have read through the journal examples and have compiled a list of journal characteristics, they should have a good sense of what a journal is and I tell them it is time for them to write! It is important to have students journaling everyday so that when the study is over, they will have numerous entries to reflect back on and see how their writing has evolved.

As teachers, it is important for you to consider what you will grade and how you will grade it. Personally, I do not grade a personal journal except for its length. I might encourage students to add more to their entries. You might question, "Is quantity more important than quality?" and I would reply, "No." However, I agree with O.T. Kent in his piece "Student Journals and the Goals of Philosophy." He writes, "If a student pursues a topic far enough, a breakthrough in his thinking is more likely to follow (Kent 271). If there is a journal assignment such as a response to a text, I use a rubric to grade the entries.

A rubric is important for several reasons:

~A rubric works as a scoring guide that assesses a student's performance by a list of criteria rather than just a single score.

~A rubric informs students by which criteria their work will be judged.

Students who worry about getting a letter grade or numerical grade that reflects the "right" answer might not freely and openly express their true feelings. Also students might not freely write if they are concerned with their spelling or grammar. This is where a rubric can be most beneficial. Students are more able to express themselves when their responses are based on effort, thoughtfulness, completion, creativity, curiosity, and making connections between the past and the present, than if they were being graded in a traditional method. Also, the teacher can provide feedback to the student by writing comments and asking questions along the margin. In the case of a dialogue journal, students can ask specific questions directly to the teacher and the teacher can directly offer advice. After several entries, students are able to evaluate their own growth based on these criteria by seeing the questions that they raised, what personal connections they made with the text, etc. (Facing History). I have provided a journal rubric in Appendix C.

Step Three

The third step is choosing a topic. This step really depends on what type of journal you choose to use. I have chosen the two examples of the personal journal, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and also two examples of reader's response journal entries. If you decide to use a personal journal for your class, then the students may need a prompt to get them started. Refer to Appendix D for a list of Journal Prompts. There are several approaches to journals. You can follow one or you may choose to mix it up as I have done. The website "Facing History and Ourselves" provides a host of approaches to journaling:

Teacher-selected prompts: This approach is simply a prompt from the teacher that generates a journal response.

Dual-entry format: Students create a 'T' chart in their journals. On one side they provide what the text says. On the other side they provide their reaction to that text.

"Lifted line" responses: This approach means "lifting" a quote from a text and having the students respond to it. The quote could be guided with a specific question such as: "What technique is the author using here to inform the reader that something is going to happen? Why is this quote important to the theme of isolation?"

Brainstorming: Students can use their journals for brainstorming ideas for other projects or responses to text.

Freewriting: Freewriting is an open, unstructured form of writing. Many students enjoy the informality of freewriting and are able to reel in important elements from the text on their own. Other students need a structure to guide them and keep them focused.

Creative writing: Students could use their journals for a space for creative writing. For example, students could write poems or short stories in response to other works or journal prompts.

Drawings, charts and webs: Students can express their ideas or thoughts through symbols, concept maps, Venn diagrams and other charts to record information.

Note-taking: Students can use their journals to record notes from other assignments.

Vocabulary: Students can use their journals to record definitions to words that may have not known before.

K-W-L charts: Have students monitor their learning with a K-W-L chart in their journals. The K-W-L is a three column chart. The first column "K" stands for what students already know about a topic. The second column, "W," stands for what they want to know. And, "L," the third column, is where they record what they have learned.

Interviews: Students could conduct interviews with family members, elderly, or other professionals on certain topics or themes being covered in the class and record them in their journals (Facing History).

Fourth Step

This step involves the teacher designing a set of activities to use as guided intervention activities in class. I have provided three different activities to help you get the ball rolling!

Mini-Lesson #3:

A Personal Journal Activity

- Write the following journal prompt on an overhead, Elmo or chalkboard:

"I get frustrated when..."

- Tell students to date their journal entries. Give them ten minutes to respond to the prompt.

Dated journal entries allow you to track their progress so always remind the students to date their entries. You might use this journal prompt when students have just arrived in class as a way to help them settle. I call it Bell Work. Allow the students ample time to finish their responses. Do not make them feel rushed. Set the mood with some light music in the background. Write in your own journal while the students are writing in theirs. as a way to model what you expect.

After about 10 minutes, ask the students if anyone feels comfortable sharing. Remember to be sensitive to students' feelings. At a recent Teachers of English conference, guest speaker Deb Appleman advised teachers to be careful when asking students to share something. She advised teachers not to assume that their students lives were in "sharable shape" (Appleman). As a teacher, I cannot assume that my students want to or will share their lives with me and I need to respect their right to privacy. I want them to feel that this journal is a safe space. Usually, it is best for you the teacher to share first and open the class up.

Mini-Lesson #4:

Writing Off the Literature Activity for a Reader Response Journal

For this activity, I use a poem or a quote from a book and have students directly respond to the text without any questions or prompts from the teacher. It is an authentic response to the text, without any teacher direction. I read the text also and model responding in my own journal on an Elmo or overhead. For this activity I have chosen the poem "Still I Rise," by Maya Angelou. You could use any text that you felt would effectively evoke a response. Instead of reading the poem out loud to the students, I would play the YouTube video of Maya Angelou reading her poem for the students. Maya's voice provides an authenticity that simply cannot be duplicated. However, if you did not have access to the video, you could just read it aloud.

- Hand out copies of "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou. (Appendix E)
- Play the video of Angelou reading her poem:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ0&NR=1>.
- Give students ten minutes to respond.

After 10 minutes, ask if anyone feels comfortable sharing. I wait to see if anyone would like to share, but then I share my own journal entry. (See Appendix F for my own response to the poem.)

Fifth & Sixth Step

I have combined the fifth and sixth steps for our purposes of journal writing. These two steps are referred to by Cooper as the "Planning" and "Revising" steps. These two steps require students to get together in small groups, read over each other's reader response journal entries and then suggest ideas for revision. This is the planning stage. Cooper posits, "Students can collaborate to develop it from the features list, but whereas the features list is descriptive, the criteria list is qualitative" (49). The teacher may have to guide the students in showing them how to advise their peers. I would remind the students to use their list of components in analyzing their peers' entries. A list of Peer Review Questions should be given to students to help guide the reviewer and the writer (See Appendix G).

Mini-Lesson #5: Point of View

To improve student writing, I give a lesson on Point of View. This lesson works particularly well with a personal journal entry. Tell students before they write that they will be sharing these entries with another peer.

- Ask students to open their journals and provide a paragraph about their morning using the first person point of view. Remind students that first person is from their perspective only. Remember to model the activity in your journal on an overhead as well.

Example:

This morning I woke up too early. I just woke up, mad that I had beat the alarm. I rolled out of bed anyways and trudged downstairs to start the morning ritual by making a pot of coffee.

I then ask students if any one would like to share. As students share, I ask the other students to listen carefully for any shift in point of view.

- Then I ask students to switch their paragraphs with another student. After they have read their peers' entry I ask them to re-write the paragraph using the third person point of view. I would remind students that this point of view resembles the fly-on-the-wall perspective. Again I would model what I expected from my students on an overhead.

Example:

Madeleine continued to lie entangled in the pink comforter, despite her mother's pleas to get up and get ready for school. "It's quarter to seven! Come on! You're going to make me laaaate!", shouted her mother. Still, Madeleine did not budge. Five more minutes passed and finally Mrs. Plummer returned to the room again, hands on hips and shouted, "I said, GET UP NOW!"

Reflection

Reflection is Cooper's seventh step in teaching a genre study. This is a time when I ask students to look back over the course of several entries to see the difference between preliminary entries and the current more developed entries. It is important for students to see how they have evolved over the course of their journaling. Cooper also suggests having the students answer the following questions as they reflect over their work:

- Explain how you solved certain problems within your entries?
- What influence did other journal entries have on your own?
- Explain what you are most pleased with in your journal?
- What do you wish you had more time to work on? (49).

Final Step- Writer's Portfolio

The final step to wrap up the Genre Study is creating a Writer's Portfolio. Students select pieces that they feel comfortable sharing and then put them together in a portfolio. This portfolio reflects the writer's mastery of the genre. Students also can help one another in the selection process for the group portfolio. A group portfolio is a collection of the class journal entries. Each student provides an entry for the Group Portfolio. This portfolio could be kept in the class for other classes to observe or placed in the school library for a broader audience. If students were comfortable sharing with an even wider audience, have them submit their journal entries to LiveJournal.com. LiveJournal.com is an "online journaling community, where people from around the world share stories, discuss topics and keep in touch with friends. It's a free service that you can use for meeting people and creating bonds through writing and sharing" (LiveJournal).

There are many beneficial reasons to include journals in a classroom curriculum. Teaching journals by way of a Genre Study introduces students to a genre that may sustain them throughout their lives. The personal journal allows an outlet for students to express their feelings, fears, frustrations, etc and a space to sort out uncertainties. A literary journal affords students a space for deeper thinking and writing development. Additionally, journals provide a safe space for students to openly reflect, question, and think about the many different texts and experiences that come into their lives.

Suggested Resources for Teachers

Teaching Writing in middle and Secondary Schools: Theory, Research, and Practice, Soven, Margot.

The Writing Life, Dillard, Annie.

Writing Down the Bones, Goldberg, Natalie.

Bird by Bird, Lamott, Anne.

How Writers Write, Lloyd, Pamela.

Clearing the Way: Working with Teenage Writers, Romano, Tom.

A Writer's Notebook, Unlocking the Writer Within You, Fletcher, Rob.

The Art of Teaching Writing, Calkins, Lucy McCormick

A Writer Teaches Writing, Donald Murray.

TEN TOUCHSTONE TEXTS FOR ADOLESCENTS

1. *Go Ask Alice*. Anonymous
2. *The Princess Diaries*. Cabot, Meg.
3. *It Happened to Nancy*. Anonymous.
4. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. Frank, Anne.
5. *Don't you Dare Read This, Mrs. Dunphrey*. Haddix, Margaret.
6. *Flowers for Algernon*. Keyes, Daniel.

7. *So Much to Tell You*. Marsden, John.
8. *Sloppy Firsts*. McCafferty Megan.
9. *The Year of Secret Assignments*. Moriarty, Jaclyn.
10. *Risking Love*. Orgel, Doris.

Appendix C

	6	5	4	3	2	1
Effort	Evidence of outstanding effort to use your journal as a tool for exploration, reflection, questioning.	Evidence of good effort to use journal as a tool for exploration, reflection and questioning.	Evidence of adequate effort to use journal as a tool for exploration, reflection and questioning.	Evidence of minimal effort to use journal as a tool for exploration, reflection and questioning.	Little to no evidence of effort to use journal as a tool for exploration, reflection and questioning.	No effort evident of using journal as a tool for exploration, reflection and questioning.
Thoughtfulness and Completion	Thoroughly and completely develops an idea or topic. Exhibits continual deep thinking. Does not summarize a text.	Develops the idea or topic fully. Most entries demonstrate deeper thinking with out summarizing.	Develops an idea or topic adequately. Some entries demonstrate deeper thinking. Some summarizing.	Develops an idea or topic briefly. Some deep thinking demonstrated by more summarizing.	Development is incomplete and there is heavy reliance on summary.	There is no development or evidence of deep thinking. All summary
Creativity	Journal is stylistic and remarkably creative. Brilliantly uses stylish features to enhance entry. Creatively engages reader.	Journal is interesting and uses stylish features to enhance some entries. Reader is engaged.	Journal engages reader adequately. Some stylish features are present.	Journal engages reader minimally. Some stylish features are present, however do not exhibit much effort.	Journal does not adequately engage reader. Only one or two stylish features accompany entries.	Journal is hard to follow. No attempt to use any stylish features.
Makes connections between past and present	Journal brilliantly makes connections between past experiences to present experiences.	Journal makes several well developed connections between the past and present.	Journal adequately makes some connections between the past and the present.	Journal attempts to make at least two connections between past experiences and present.	Journal attempts at least one connection between past experiences and present.	No attempt to make connections between past experiences and present is evident.

	6	5	4	3	2	1	

Appendix D

Journal Prompts

1. Overall what kind of feeling did you have after reading a few paragraphs of this work? After reading half the book? After finishing it?
2. What do you feel is the most important word, phrase, passage, or paragraph in this work?
3. Do you think the title of the book is appropriate? Is it important? Explain.
4. From whose point of view is the story told? Why do you think the author chose that point of view?
5. Describe your favorite character and tell why you made that choice.
6. Describe the character you like the least. What do you dislike about the character?
7. Does anyone in the work remind you of someone you know? Explain.
8. If you could be a character in this book, who would you be and why?
9. Write an imaginary conversation that you have with a character or with the author of the book.
10. Do any incidents, ideas or actions in the work remind you of something that happened to you? Explain.

(Bump).

Appendix E

"And Still I Rise," Maya Angelou
You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

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Peer Review Questions:

Author: _____

Reviewer: _____

1. Has the author demonstrated effort in his/her journal to use the journal as a tool to explore, reflect and question? What suggestions could you provide for your peer in this area?
2. Does the journal feel complete? Does the writer thoroughly develop ideas or topics? What suggestions could you offer your peer in this area?
3. Is the journal creative? Does the journal captivate you and are the stylish features appealing and enhance your understanding of the entries? Any suggestions for your peer in this area?
4. Does the journal effectively make connections between the past and the present? Any suggestions for your peer in this area?