



Teacher Tip of the Week

Journal Writing Every Day! It Works!

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 skills; others use journals as the one "uncorrected" form of writing that students produce. It is often times used as a bell ringer activity each day. Some teachers provide prompts to help students begin their writing. Others leave decisions about the direction and flow of student journals up to the students.



Journal writing is an incredibly flexible instructional tool, useful across the entire curriculum. While often used as a class startup activity, it is used primarily to give students an opportunity to speculate on paper, confident that their ideas, observations, emotions, and writing will be accepted without criticism.

Benefits of Journals

The potential benefits of journal writing are many, including opportunities to:

- Sort out experiences, solve problems and consider varying perspectives.
- Examine relationships with others and the world.
- Reflect on personal values, goals, and ideals.
- Summarize ideas, experience and opinions before and after instruction.
- Witness his academic and personal growth by reading past entries.

By reading journal entries, teachers get to know students'

- *anxieties*
- *problems*
- *excitements*
- *joys*

and with this information, make plans tailored

for their students.

Student Privacy

- Students should be cautioned to remove extremely personal entries from their journals whether they are kept in the classroom or not.
- Entries the student regards personal, but that wouldn't devastate their lives if they fell into the wrong hands, can be folded and stapled closed. Teachers can assure students they will not read stapled pages and that the condition of the stapled paper would prove it had not been disturbed.
- Students should be protected from having other students read their journals by secure storage.

Should you read journals?

Whether the teacher should read journals is debatable. On one hand, the teacher may wish to provide privacy so the student will have maximum freedom for expressing emotions.

On the other, reading entries and making an occasional comment on an entry helps establish a personal relationship. It also allows the teacher to use the journal for start up activities which must occasionally be monitored to assure participation. This is particularly important for academic journal topics and the use of journals for an start up activity.

Negative Aspects of Journals

Use of journals does have two possible negatives however: These include:

- * The potential for the teacher to hurt students' feelings with criticism.
- *Remedy: Avoiding the hurt feelings is simple--just don't criticize.*
- *The loss of instructional time needed to teach course material.

Continued on next page...



Ideas to Share

SURPRISE!

Pick out a surprise activity, such as an extra recess or a small treat, then write "SURPRISE" on the chalkboard. Throughout the day, if the class gets noisy or students are out of their seats without permission, erase a letter starting at the end of the word. Add missing letters when everyone is behaving well. If the complete word is intact at the end of the day, students get the surprise.



Helpful Website for Teachers

<http://www.mrnussbaum.com/gamescode.htm>

A website of the best educational games on the Internet!



The New Teacher Support Program

Journal Writing Every Day! Teachers Say It Works! Cont...

Remedy: Instructional time can be conserved by simply limiting journal writing to five or ten minutes a period.

A more interesting approach to conserving time, however, is to assign journal topics relating to the instructional topic of the day.

For example, you could ask students to write a definition of a concept at the beginning of the period and at the end of the period to describe how their concept had changed.

Academic Journals

Curriculum oriented journal entries have the advantage of causing students to relate personally to the topic before instruction begins. Asking for a summary of learning or for a question or two the student still has at the end of the period causes the student to process and organize his or her thoughts about the material covered.



“THE GREATEST SIGN OF SUCCESS FOR A TEACHER . . . IS TO BE ABLE TO SAY, ‘THE CHILDREN ARE NOW WORKING AS IF I DID

NOT EXIST.’”

—MARIA MONTESSORI

WRITING PROMPTS

Many teachers are more comfortable providing a daily prompt for students than they are letting them write freely. A prompt might be a sentence to complete, a question to respond to, or a quote to explain. Below are some teacher-tested prompts guaranteed to motivate your young journal writers!

If I were the teacher, I would...

If I could give one piece of advice to any person in history, that advice would be...

Describe a dream that you had recently. Provide as many details as possible.

The best lesson my grandparent (or parent or any relative) ever taught me was...

Tell five things you'd like to do on your next birthday.

Imagine a friend of yours is considering whether to take steroids. What would you tell that friend to persuade him or her not to do that?

In 20 years, I will be...

Tell about an event in your life that has caused a change in you.

I was most angry when...

If you could design one room in a house to suit only your needs, what would it look like? (Challenge kids to be as fanciful as they like. For example, would someone have a desk made of chocolate?)

Describe your perfect vacation.

My worst mistake was...

[for high-school students.] Do you believe in love at first sight?

If you and your best friend could have a free limo for 24 hours, where would you go and what would you do?

You have the freedom to travel to any city or country in the world. Where would you go and why?

What would you do if you were president of the United States?

You have an extra \$100,000 to give away; you cannot spend it on yourself. What would you do with the money?

The qualities that make a best friend are...

If you were an insect, what kind would you be and why?

Describe your room at home in detail. What are you proudest of and why?

[using a current local controversy] Do you agree with the decision? Why? Would you change if anything? What?

GREAT WEBSITE FOR WRITING PROMPTS:

<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html>



MEET THE PRINCIPALS: Stan Moss

School: [Lakeview Elementary School](#)

How long have you been a principal at this school? [Prior to this year I was principal at Carroll Oakland for 9 years and principal at Davis Middle School \(Hampton, VA\) for one-half year.](#)

Colleges and universities attended: [TTU, MTSU, George Washington University and William and Mary](#)

Special interests and hobbies: [My hobby is bass fishing. I enjoy getting on the lake and trying to find the best way to put fish in the boat. This past summer I caught an 8 lb. large mouth bass on Old Hickory Lake. This fish was the biggest one of the summer.](#)

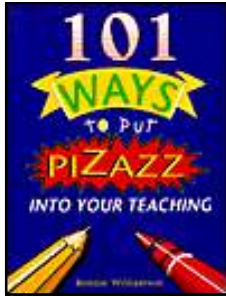
Who or what inspires you each day as you do your job and why?

[Watching our teachers teach in Wilson County](#)

If you had not gone into education, what type of job would you have chosen: [I would have worked in the field chemistry. I grew to love this field after having an inspiring teacher in 10th grade chemistry and 11th grade advanced chemistry.](#)

What is the favorite part of your job: [Greeting students, parents, and teachers as they enter the school each day.](#)

Suggested Reading for Teachers



101 Ways to Put Pizazz into Your Teaching by Bonnie Williamson

An unusual 26-chapter book filled with novel ways to provide you with a break from textbook teaching and put smiles on your students' faces. Hundreds of ideas and illustrations, 50 Timely Tips and a Teacher's Resource section packed with charts, graphs, calendars and pages to photocopy.

Bonnie Williamson has been a K-6 teacher for 30 years and taught students in both inner city and suburban schools. She has been a mentor and workshop presenter to teachers. Williamson has worked with youngsters from all economic levels and a variety of cultures in several states. She is the author of six books for teachers and parents.



RUTH CARDWELL

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL EDUCATION

The best advice I have would be to encourage new teachers to avoid the teachers' lounge. Although new teachers need support, the teachers' lounge is very seldom the place to receive helpful mentoring. When there are teacher frustrations and attitude issues, they often erupt in the teachers' lounge and when that happens it affects everyone's morale.

Search out teachers who have good attitudes, good student interaction and are too busy to sit in the lounge. Those are the teachers worth listening to.

New Teacher Support Group Participants



JULIE HENDERSON WEST ELEMENTARY 3RD GRADE

WHY DID YOU

BECOME A TEACHER?

"I've always wanted to be a teacher. From the time I was in 5th grade and was picked to help out in a 1st grade classroom, I realized that I really loved helping children learn. I want them to love learning as much as I do."—Julie Henderson



ABBY POWELL WILSON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I chose to teach because I love children and I love my subject. After my first year of teaching, I left. I did not intend to return to a full time classroom, but I did take on an after-school program for at risk students. The children who were given up on are the children who brought me back to the full time classroom. I teach now because I know I make a difference, and I still love my subject and my kids!—Abby Powell



Annual Wilson County Textbook Fair!

This year's textbook faire will be held on November 29th at the Ag Center from 3-6PM.

This year's adoption is for K - 12 Social Studies books.

All teachers and administrators are invited.

See the books, materials and software available and talk with other teachers as well as with the knowledgeable textbook representatives about the new Social Studies series.

Refreshments will be served. Prizes will be given!

Don't miss this event!



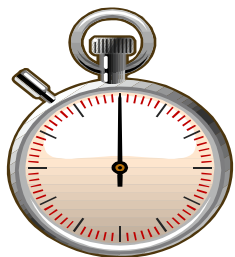
GOOD TEACHING: THE TOP TEN REQUIREMENTS

1—Good teaching is as much about passion as it is about reason. It's about not only motivating students to learn, but teaching them how to learn, and doing so in a manner that is relevant, meaningful, and memorable. It's about caring for your craft, having a passion for it, and conveying that passion to everyone, most importantly to your students.

Time Management Tips for Teachers

Continued from last week...

8. **Purchase an accordion binder to house notes from all meetings. This way you will have a slot for minutes or handouts from the following meetings: faculty, department, professional development, union, recertification, and more—and a quick and easy way to retrieve them when needed.**



9. **Colored file folders make it easier to find worksheets, test sheets, memos, and**

other paperwork. Assign a different color to each subject. Then just reach for the right color instead of fumbling through labeled folders in your file drawer.

10. **Deal with a piece of paper or a request only once and at once, if possible. Make a decision and take action right away whenever you can.**

Continued next week.....

Need a Laugh?

off the mark

by Mark Parisi

www.offthemark.com



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It is the policy of the Wilson County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.