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Preface

When I was in junior high, I wrote a poem without using any capital letters or punctuation. I had seen a writer, ee cummings, do so, and I noticed that people were thrilled. I thought, "Why not me?" So I experimented. My English teacher gave me an "F" and she told me that when I grew up, I could write my own poems anyway I wanted. So I did! Thanks!



"I am so tired of hearing about journals!" Pat declared angrily. "My students are burned out on journals and so am I! Why would anyone want to write an article about journals, anyway?"

"An article?" I bubbled with excitement, "I have enough here for a book!"

"Forget it! My brain has been saturated with the topic and I do not want to hear any more about journals." She persisted, "I am certainly not interested and I cannot imagine that there would be any market for such an overrated topic."

I wanted to answer Pat. I longed to suggest that perhaps she had frozen her journal curriculum and that her contempt and burnout were related to a narrow definition of "journal." But, from somewhere in my past, I still had this fear of arguing with an English teacher. The subject was closed, and for the last ten years, the matter of writing a book about journals has remained closed . . . until now.

I once heard Richard Allington mention that in U.S. schools we spend an average of \$52 per child per year on dittos. That seems like quite a bit and I wondered if those same children ever felt the joy of their personal power as writers if they had ever truly been involved in their own education. Allington went on to say that there were only three things which constantly affected achievement in reading. These were: increased amounts of actual reading and writing, the use of meaningful tasks and texts, and the teaching of specific strategies.

Therefore, when the author David McCullough once closed a symposium with a discussion of the importance that reading plays in the lives of successful people, I was delighted to hear the affirmation. He noted that this certain group of successful people had overcome many things but that they all had one thing in common: access to and interest in good books. He noted that in a recent year, 2.3 billion dollars were spent on children's books in the United States. This sounds impressive, he added, until you consider that Americans spent 4.4 billion dollars on potato chips and 50 billion dollars on diet and weight reduction.

Many educators have implemented classroom journals as a means of involving students in their own education. These teachers have seen the journal as a method to allow students to develop reflection, to explore their preferences and desires, and to link school learning with each student's life. Journals have also been employed as an aid in the assessment of a child's literacy and academic development, and to create a permanent record of breakthroughs as well as challenges that might not appear on one-time assessments.

My purpose in writing *From Daybooks to Night Logs: Journeying with Journals*, is not to

convince the reader that, in sensitive hands, journals can be influential classroom tools, they are. Rather, I have penned this volume to offer a framework of organizing journaling within the classroom.

From Daybooks to Night Logs: Journeying with Journals is organized into four sections. Each piece provides a thumbnail sketch of journal types that I have placed within that category.

In "Setting the Stage by Building Power," the teacher is offered journals that help to develop basic competencies and that will add strength to the development of fluency. Within these journals, students will sharpen observation, dexterity and stamina.

"Coming to Know" presents the teacher with journal types that assist the student in personalizing classroom learning. In this section, the student bridges from personal understandings into newly presented classroom concepts.

The segment dubbed "Making Personal Connections," offers the teacher journal types that will support a student's development towards self-understanding. These journals are used by writers for their own purposes.

"Support" addresses the teacher's role within the classroom in structuring a supportive environment. The best, but perhaps the hardest, way for teachers to encourage writing among students is to write and to share their process.

Like teaching, writing for me is a passion. In *From Daybooks to Night Books: Journeying with Journals*, I share my perspective as a writer and my insights as an educator. This book provides thumbnail descriptions of more than 20 different types of journals. With adaptation, each can be used in almost any classroom. This book reflects over 20 years of exploration and fascination with the flexibility and utility of journals in the classroom.

Within these covers, you will be introduced to variations on the old journal theme which will stimulate and revitalize your students and you. Although some could be used in conjunction with others, I recommend that you start small, that you consider your journaling goals and that you begin with the type of journal that best matches your classroom visions.

Find the journal that is right for your classroom and for your situation. Have fun! This book will ignite many classroom learning opportunities, and journals will never burn you out again!

In undertaking this serious project, I turned to those people for whom I have a great deal of respect. I give specific acknowledgment to those extraordinary professionals who have had the strenuous assignment of giving me feedback: Patricia Moriarty, Jacqueline Chee, Karen Snow, and Susan Stropko. Each shared her matchless perspective as a master educator, and her reflective attitude as a writer. I am blessed to have such good friends.

Sigmund A. Boloz
Ganado, Arizona
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