



LSLP Micro-Paper 85: Journaling

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Defining the Term

A journal is a platform, whether digital or physical (e.g., a notebook), where someone expresses their inner thoughts and feelings, records data, or documents life events, to name a few. A journal is a blank canvas: users get to decide its shape, way of use, purpose, or form. These characteristics make a journal an amazing tool to explore and to create a personal and unique extension of ourselves. In a journal, one can write, draw or type. Although some authors use indistinctively the words diary and journal, there is one major difference worth pointing out. A *diary* is a kind of report of facts related to a certain event while a *journal* contains the thoughts and feelings that result of contemplating and analyzing certain experience.

Journaling for reflective purposes is not a new practice in education. Teachers and students have resorted to journaling to write about learning experiences for a long time now. This instrument contributes to turn the typical automatic type of thinking into a transformative and critical process. Journaling, therefore, becomes an action that gives the student/writer the power to reflect, analyze, consider, and critique actions with the aim of expressing their own point of view about it, while stating a position about it. Journaling emerges as a way of expression that promotes self-reflection, individual development and evolution.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP we are constantly looking for diverse forms of research where learners find opportunities to explore [literacy](#) through critical and empowering settings. While carrying out a [critical literacy](#) study, journaling appeared as a reflexive scenario for students to reflect and keep track of their opinions and beliefs towards narrative texts. As a result of this experience the

students developed a writing process on their own, explored real world scenarios, analyzed, read, understood, questioned and used texts. Critical literacy is a broad and strong area to keep exploring at LSLP, as we continue joining efforts to grow our research lines while approaching second language learning/teaching processes from different perspectives.

Expanding Second Language Research

Critical literacy is lived across journals with reflective practices and experiences where the students encounter and analyze any type of texts and connect them with their lives while developing a reflective exercise. By using language, signs, drawings and any other means of expression, students/writers use the language to deeply examine a particular matter, to see the characteristics and connections they have.

Journaling is an empowering action for the student/writer, where they explore a particular path to cultivate their critical consciousness. Through this exercise, students own their learning processes by telling their own story, exploring different written formats, and having the power to manifest themselves in a personal and limitless way.

References

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