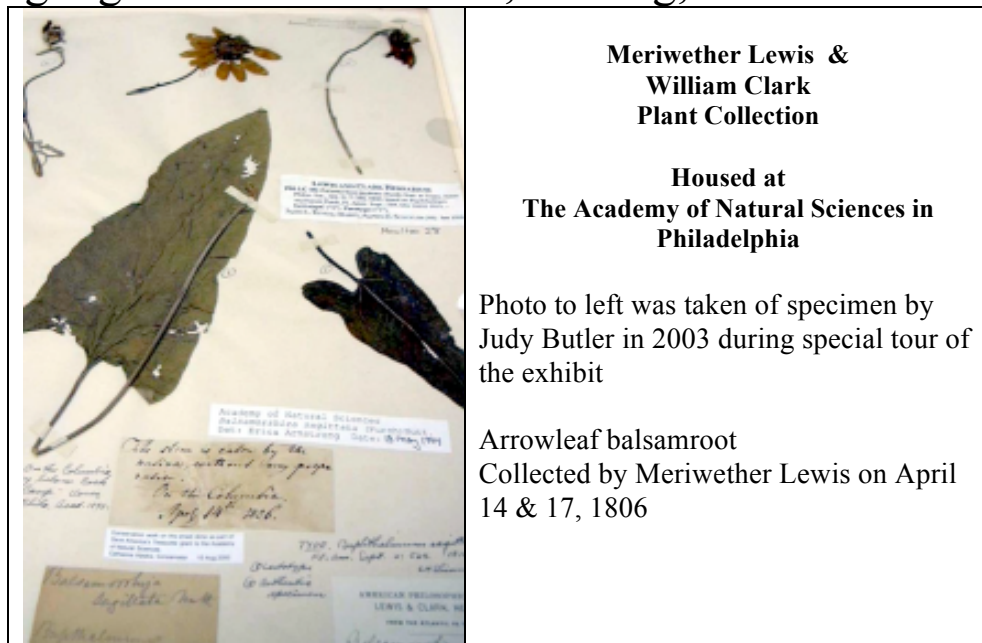


Creating Discovery Journals: Bringing together Social Studies, Writing, and Visual Arts



**Meriwether Lewis &
William Clark
Plant Collection**

**Housed at
The Academy of Natural Sciences in
Philadelphia**

Photo to left was taken of specimen by
Judy Butler in 2003 during special tour of
the exhibit

Arrowleaf balsamroot
Collected by Meriwether Lewis on April
14 & 17, 1806

Tennessee State Museum
Teacher Workshop Focused On
The River Inside Exhibit
Photographs by John Guider
October 3rd - November 30th, 2008

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For this handout and other journal materials see:
JudyButler.com and go to "Teacher Resources"
Or

<http://ReflectionsOnTheRiver.org>



Creating Discovery Journals

The focus of the session will be using primary source materials including journals, letters, and memoirs as a window to the past. We will examine the writing of prominent figures who impacted history and ordinary citizens who recorded their perspective of events.

Teachers will be given a blank journal and a handout on how to use and assess journals in the classroom. Strategies will be discussed for encouraging students to develop their own Discovery Journals. By using a variety of journaling techniques in the classroom students are encouraged to examine the historical record, understand significant issues, and look at multiple points of view. Journaling helps students to develop expressive language and improve historical thinking skills.

Introduction

The great Northwest Territories were virtually unknown in the spring of 1804 when President Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their great adventure. The “Corps of Discovery” was brought together for the purpose of finding a water route to the Pacific Ocean while documenting their observations in journals. This tradition of documenting geographic and ecological journeys has had a profound impact on our culture, education and appreciation of the beauty of our world. When Darwin sailed on the *Beagle*, he had no idea he would change the world of science as a result of the observations he recorded in his journal. Modern explorers, such as astronauts keep detailed journals of their exploration of space. It is with this spirit of discovery that this workshop will focus on journals of exploration.

Traditionally the definition of a journal was narrow--thought of as writing on paper. In written form the diary is the most frequently used format for recording personal thoughts and ideas. A journal used for instruction is similar but not the same as a diary. Only the author reads a diary. Although a journal is personal it is not always private. It is often written for others to read. Journals provide that place for students and teachers to express their ideas and thoughts that are shared with others. A journal used as part of teaching activities can be an exciting instructional tool whether in a written format or another venue. Journals can be a place to record descriptions of feelings, events, ideas, research, information, wishes, resolutions, lists, or nature.

When given time to record in a journal and provided feedback from the teacher, students can improve their communication in writing or drawing while developing analytical, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

WRITING ACTIVITY

Make a list of journals written by individuals as personal records of daily life or experiences and was later published as a book or on the Internet. Share list.

GO TO YOUR JOURNAL...

What Is A Journal: Discovery Journal, Learning Journal, And Naturalist Notebook...

- Video journal--turn on the evening news for this new type of byline
- Audio journal--take a lesson from National Public Radio, use this great medium and have students create an audio journal. Using Pod Cast technology put up on the Internet for others to download.
- Photographic journal--tell a story in pictures
- Computer journal--use text or multimedia
- Musical journal--create sheet music, songs, or lyrics
- Dance journal-- choreograph events or feelings
- Art journal/sketchbook--record artistic renderings
- Field notebook or field guidebook--track events of the natural world

WRITING ACTIVITY

Fun with words—Romance of Writing—Write 3 of your favorite words on index cards. Bring to front of room and place index cards on table. Describe the rest of this activity in your journal. More fun with words—use paint swatches to brainstorm adjectives. Describe this activity in your journal.

GO TO YOUR JOURNAL...

Choosing the journal that is right for students

Go to any bookstore or department or drug store and you will find a variety of journals available. They come in every size and shape with all kinds of paper quality. Choose journals with or without lines, with themes or sayings, with motivational thoughts inscribed on each page, or cute little drawings-- these books are available in all sorts of formats. Making their own journals including the covers and binding can be an interesting creative activity for students.

Journals Are Connections Across Time:

Examples of Historical Journals

Journals can connect students in exciting ways to the past. New national educational standards call for increased use of primary resources. The journals of people who lived one or two hundred years ago help to eliminate the barriers across time and connect students to that era by the life and thoughts of real people.

The musical group, *Indigo Girls*, sing in their album *1200 Curfews* about the impact of a special journal. Emily Saliers introduces the song called “Virginia Woolf” by telling about her librarian mother giving her the abridged journal. Emily describes the impact of reading this journal, “She became my friend through the pages. It was a connection through time of how human beings can affect each other. It was very profound and we are each a part of that.” The song lyrics capture this connection:

“They published your diary and that is how I got to know you. A key to the room of your own and a mind without end. And here is a young girl with a kind of a telephone line through time and the voice at the other end comes like a long lost friend.”

WRITING ACTIVITY: Build a timeline with hats (or other historical artifacts) then develop writing prompt around the personification of that object.

Adding human characteristics to nonliving or nonhuman objects is called personification. Write a paragraph from the point of view of one of the hats. Have students look at the day in the life of a mundane object like a hat from its perspective. This helps students develop a stronger understanding of point of view and develops creative skills in story telling.

GO TO YOUR JOURNAL...**NOTE: The guide to the history of each hat is online on Judy’s website at: [JudyButler.com](http://www.judybutler.com) in the section on Teacher Resources for this session.**

Illinois State Museum – Museum Link Art--A Matter of Style: 19th Century Furniture: Language

Activity: The Story of an Old Piano http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/art/htmls/ms_classic.html#

Purpose: students will practice writing from different points of view; that of an inanimate object.



Objective: After reading the excerpts from The Story of an Old Piano and going through the information and images about the Classical Revival style piano and its owner, the students will choose a personal object important in their lives and write a paragraph or more from the point of view of that object and its relationship to its owner.” (Piano activity from Illinois State Museum website.)

How to Encourage Creativity

Being Creative Involves Risk

London, Peter	<i>No More Secondhand Art: Awakening the Artist Within</i>	Shambhala	Boston & London	1989
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“ The original self was insatiably curious, excited about all the astonishing things and events of this world, sensuously embedded in the world and tickled pink about it.” p. 44

Make Writing Fun

Use Journals in non-traditional ways—begin with making writing fun, start with Marjorie Frank’s Stage One – Motivation: Romance of Writing.

Frank, Marjorie	<i>If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write... You've Gotta Have This Book! Revised Edition</i>	Incentive Publications, Inc	Nashville, TN	1995
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Anne Frank

One of the most widely read journals in print is the Diary of Anne Frank.

Reading the diary of someone their own age helps students understand the Jewish plight during World War II. Anne Frank describes her daily life for the two years as two families hid in an attic in Amsterdam, Holland. Only fifteen, Anne died in a concentration camp in Bergen-Belson, Germany in 1945. Read the passage as Anne describes her restricted world looking out of her window. Then read the epilogue about Anne going to the concentration camp. Ann Frank could have had no idea how many people would read her diary. Imagine hundreds of thousands of people reading your diary.

Turning Pages: Anne Frank

Excellent lesson plan as a mode for Journal lessons

<http://www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview?LPid=1019>

Turning Pages

http://www.uen.org/utahlink/lp_res/AnneFrankTurningPages.html

WRITING ACTIVITY

Students write a paragraph about what they would miss if they had to stay in a small group of rooms for 3 years and they could only move around at night. What if you had to be very still all day and you could not talk? Share writing.

GO TO YOUR JOURNAL...

HOW DO YOU EVALUATE/GIVE GRADES?

Alternative Assessment

Traditional assessment techniques such as multiple-choice tests and library research for reports may not be the most appropriate means for assessing the development of inquiry and decision-making skills. There is a need to explore and refine non-traditional assessment strategies to investigate higher order thinking skills such as: complex problem solving, Metacognition, logic strategies, and verbal/linguistic skills. Journals can be a place to begin inquiry.

Anne McCrary Sullivan "Liberating the Urge to Write," *English Journal*, November 1989, p. 57

"Your journal is like a little box where you stick all sorts of odds and ends, bits and pieces of your thinking and your daily life. You keep them there so they won't get lost, trash and treasure all jumbled together. Then, from time to time, you go back, pick and sort through what you've put in the box, see what catches your attention and shines. Those bits that shine, you can take out of the box and examine. These become the basis of future writing. The more you translate experience into language, the better you will be at it. Why? I don't know. I only know that if you let it, it will happen. So write, write, write about anything and everything. Write in the morning. Write in the afternoon. Write at night. If you do it enough, it will become so natural and spontaneous that it will almost be a reflex. And you may be surprised at how good some of that writing is."

Below are Anne McCrary Sullivan's suggestions for grading:

Journal Evaluation

1. How many entries have you made in your journal since Sept 1? (You make an entry every time you write. You might have more than one entry for some days, none at all for others.)
2. On how many dates have you written (including and since Sept 1)?
3. What is the greatest number of entries you have made on one date?
4. In how many locations have you written during this period of time? List three locations.

The Art of Detail

1. Have you written a description of a place? If so, what is the/a place you describe? Copy three sensory details from that description.
2. Have you written a description of a person? If so, copy three significant sensory details from one such description.
3. Which of the following have you described using three or more sensory details: an object, food, the weather, an event, an internal state (emotional or intellectual)? Copy details to substantiate.
4. On the basis of the above, do you believe that you are using your journal effectively to practice the art of detail? Explain.
5. What is your favorite sentence in your journal?
6. What is your favorite word in your journal?

Entries

Please copy from your journal two short entries—or parts of entries—as indicated below (short=100-300 word) Include date and location.

1. A typical entry, the kind of entry you tend to make over and over.
2. An unusual entry, the kind that stands out from the others, is a little different for some reason.

Journals As A Step Toward Alternative Assessment

- 1) Performance-use of simulation, problem-solving scenarios, and stations set up to assess specific skills.
- 2) Product-use of high level creative and critical thinking to develop visual and written products.

3) Portfolio-use of a system to collect representative work, both formative and summative, with a focus on the four C's (collecting, conferencing, choosing, and collaborating). Students are encouraged to use their journals to start pieces that they develop later for their portfolio:

- Develop academic portfolios related to all school, extracurricular, and community involvement in scientific inquiry
- Choose, edit, and evaluate work performed in school for the academic portfolio
- Write resumes, data sheets, and autobiographies for the portfolios, especially for internships and other activities related to the project

4) Personal Communication-use of video taping of public speaking samples, teacher interviews, and journal writing.

5) Observation and anecdotal records-use of teacher generated assessment including checklists, running records, narrative, other data.

Communication is about interpreting what you see around you.

Drawing and painting is about interpreting visually

Writing is about interpreting in words

INTERPERSONAL -----INTRAPERSONAL

Writing for yourself and writing for others to read.

How to encourage students to find their best venue for Journaling? A tool for differentiated instruction.

Some students are not comfortable with an exercise that involves writing in a journal. They cannot think of anything to write. So it is helpful to provide structure with specific directions. Some students do not like structure and enjoy open-ended assignments. To them precise directions are stifling and uninteresting. Teachers need to be sensitive to learning styles and adjust strategies accordingly. Journal writing is a useful tool for differentiated instruction when the classroom's environment is open to students working on different assignments.

STRUCTURED-----UNSTRUCTURED

Teacher gives specific directions
Give areas to write about

Open-ended directions:
students writes about what ever
they are interested in

**Tug-of-War Between Creativity and Writing Skills
Is There a Rivalry?**

“There is no real rivalry between skills and creativity. Good writing is based on a healthy friendship between imagination and technique. It can and must be taught without slighting either.”

“The tools are not the writing. Writing tools, mechanical or other wise, are necessary for effective writing, but by themselves, do not communicate. It is the way the tools are used by the writer that make the message clear or powerful. Teachers and students must take care not to confuse the tools with the writing.”

From Marjorie Frank's *If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write... You've Gotta Have This Book! Revised Edition.*

How do I have time for Journaling in my classroom?

Teachers often feel that the school day is already packed with too many requirements to have time for Journaling. Consider the importance of writing as a life skill and journal writing takes on greater significance. Allowing students a creative opportunity may result in improved behavior and performance in other areas. Consider a consistent time every day for journal writing.

Set Aside Time to Work on Journals in Class

Plan a class schedule that allows enough time to work on journal entries. It is very discouraging to have an idea that excites and motivates and you are unable to finish recording it.

Learn to Elaborate and use descriptions—write in places that inspire writing

Encourage students to fill each page during each writing opportunity. Discuss descriptive words that clarify. Give suggestions to improve the imagery. For teachers, the most obvious place to write journals is in the classroom. There are many places in and around the school that will add interest to the exercise. One day I took a class to the cafeteria because someone needed the room. We did a journal exercise then shared with each other. The next week the students asked to go back to the cafeteria. They responded to a different setting for their creativity. The *Hawthorne Effect* could account for this. In an experiment in production plants in World War II showed that changes in the environment caused increases in productivity.

Sponge Activities or Anchor Activities

Journaling provides a way to soak up those minutes when some students are finished but others need more time. Especially for those students who finish other activities early their journal can be a productive transition to the next structured lesson.

Writers Block—Try Short Assignments—those that would fit into a 1-inch picture frame.

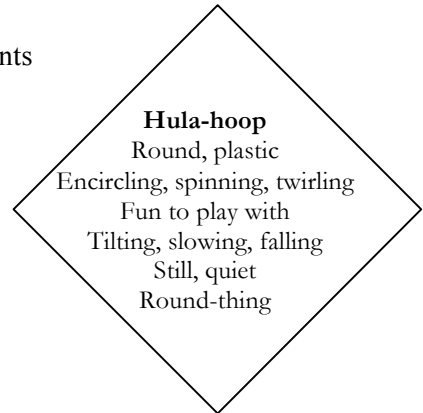
Form Anne Lamott’s book, “All I am going to do is describe...just what I can see through the one-inch picture frame.”

Lamott, Anne	<i>Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life</i>	Anchor Books	New York	1995
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Write a diamante poem as a class, partners, or alone.

A diamante poem makes the shape of a diamond and has the following elements

1. Diamante poems are shaped like a diamond, with 7 lines.
2. The words on lines 1 and 7 are opposites.
3. On lines 2 and 6, there are two adjectives that describe the nouns they are located beside.
4. Lines 3 and 5 contain “doing words.”
5. Line 4 includes four nouns that relate to the words on lines 1 and 7.
6. Each line begins with a capital letter.
7. There are commas between the words in lines 2 and 6.



WRITING ACTIVITY Small Assignments

Select a toy or replica from the past or present. Discuss how children used it and what Era from the Tennessee State Curriculum it may represent. Write a diamante poem about your toy.

You can work as a team, small group, or with a partner.

GO TO YOUR JOURNAL...

Polishing journal entries

Usually teachers do not grade the grammar or spelling in student's journals but rather encourage quantity of writing. Fluency and elaboration should be the objective rather than mechanics. On a regular basis the student can choose a journal entry to polish and make grammatical corrections. The computer provides an excellent tool for editing and embellishing selected journal entries.

Publishing Student Work

Journals can provide a place for students to write frequently then the evolution of their writing can be viewed over time. Through reflection, technical and creative writing can be judged by the writer or by another reader. You learn to play the piano by practicing. But practice doesn't make perfect if you are practicing the wrong thing. Critical feedback is essential. For the young pianist the piano teacher provides that critical ear. See the Newspaper in Education Project, Williamson County Schools.

The pressure of the performance is also important for developing writing skills. For example a recital provides the incentive to rehearse and perfect your musical craft. For journal writing the performance can be reading to the class or publishing in the school newsletter. Many opportunities are available to publish student's work, but the teacher has to be assertive and creative when looking for opportunities. For example, an elementary class in Pikeville, Tennessee had students' written and artwork published on donated grocery sacks from a local grocery. Parents and especially grandparents were very interested in getting their child's work.

Using Historical Journals in the classroom

The book, *A Passion for the Past*, was written by a high school history teacher and provides wonderful descriptions of his activities that got high school students fired up about the study of American history. A must read for history teachers.

Percoco, James	<i>A Passion for the Past</i>	Heinemann	Portsmouth, NH	1998
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The Vermont Historical Society Using Historical Journals in the Classroom

<http://www.vermonthhistory.org/educate/diaries.htm>

This site offers students the chance to research the period, read **fictional** journals and to write an online journal.

http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/our_america/index_flash.htm

Note: Be sure students understand the difference between historical fiction and the journals of real people writing in actual time period. The following site is an index on the primary sources and transcripts by year.

<http://odur.let.rug.nl/%7Eusa/D/>

White House Historical Association is a helpful site with primary document activities including a PDF document with suggestions for the diary of Abigail Adams.

www.whitehousehistory.org/04/subs/images_subs/primary_1800.pdf

Digital Classroom

Forms for analyzing documents

http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/analysis_worksheets/worksheets.html

National Endowment for the Humanities

African American Studies Toolkit: Era 1-5. American History month with lessons, websites and tools by era.

<http://creativefolk.com/toolkit/history1-5.html>

Levstik, Linda and Keith Barton	<i>Doing History: Investigating With Children in Elementary and Middle Schools (Second Edition)</i>	Lawrence Elbaum Associates, Publishers	Mahwah, New Jersey	2001
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Levstik encourages that students investigate how attitudes change over time. For example on p. 135 the activity describes how students write in simulated journals to discuss social relations, attitudes, and beliefs.

Journal Writing Exercise: The Five Senses

Locations that stimulate the five senses are conducive to good journal writing. Choose a place like a riverbank, a park, a cemetery, or next to a pond. Ask the students to sit quietly and listen to the sounds around them. Have them record what they smell, hear, see, and feel.

Use a String

Some students have difficulty delimiting the topic. They cannot focus on a subject to write about. Randall Young, a long time volunteer with the Harpeth River Environmental and Educational Project in Williamson County Schools, uses a string to focus student's attention when writing and drawing on river fieldtrips. He gives each student a length of string that they form into a circle. After the student selects a spot to place this circle, they draw what is in the circle. A variety of journal starters then can be given:

- Describe what is in the circle
- Select one item and describe it in detail
- Select an item and make up a story about how it got to this spot

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For example, an elementary class in Pikeville, Tennessee had student's written and art work published on donated grocery sacks from a local grocery. Parents and especially grandparents were very interested in getting their child's work.

Journals to evaluate other assignments

Journals can be used to evaluate other instructional procedures as students write their feelings or opinions about lessons or subjects. This feedback provides the teacher with valuable information about the student's current level and where to proceed.

Teachers get “Hooked” on Journaling

Think about keeping a personal “Teacher Learning Journal” as a place to increase your learning. Many teachers get “hooked” on Learning Journals and can't imagine what life was like before they started journaling. It is important that when your students write and you write with them. Sometime you may want to use this time for small group work or student individual conferences. But it is important for students to see you as a writer who teaches them writing.

Keeping daily journals in the classroom can document school life:

- Humorous accounts of their classrooms: *Up the Down Staircase*. Note: Logs, notes, and journals kept in your classroom become a legal record—can be subpoenaed for court cases
- Events in the classroom
- Plans for activities
- Recording class visits
- Visitors to the classroom
- Reflections about their work (Reflective Practice)

Entries should always include the date, names and affiliation of the presenters, place of activity, and any resource materials used. Entries should reflect your growth over time in developing curriculum and using innovative strategies to try in your classroom. There are no right or wrong reflections, only the ability to become more aware of one's own teaching process.

Getting Started in Your Teacher Learning Journal

Writing Exercises

1. Physical description. Write about an object for 2 minutes describing its physical characteristics without naming it. For example, write about a rubber band without calling it a rubber band. “It is a thin stretchy, beige circle made of rubber. When I pull it out it snaps back into place.” This is hard to do since the tendency is to immediately give a familiar object its name.
2. Functional description. Call the object by its name. Write about the object's use. For example, “This is a rubber band. It is used to hold things together such as rolled up map or a potato chip bag.”
3. Making connections. If something sparks your curiosity, write about that. “I wonder if rubber bands are still made of rubber or if they are now made of plastic? Who invented the rubber band? Where was the rubber harvested that made this rubber band?”
4. Symbolic description. Write about an object as a simile or metaphor. Write a simile and a then metaphor about what it is like to be a teacher. For example:

Simile (uses like or as):

“A teacher is like a rubber band because you always have to stretch.”

Metaphor:

“I am a rubber band around my students' learning.”

Examples of similes and metaphors:

- Simile "As he rose like a rocket, he fell like the stick." - Thomas Paine in 1792 describing Edmund Burke losing a debate.
- Metaphor "We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation." – Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" speech, August 28, 1963.

Self Evaluation of Personal Reflection: Metacognitive Exercise

Teachers and students go through stages of development in keeping reflective journals. For engaging in self-evaluation of your professional growth in keeping a Learning Journal consider the stages of development offered by:

Stage One

Has daily entries; entries demonstrate a thoroughness of reflection and self-awareness; the descriptions have depth and detail in the accounts; evidence of creative thinking and critical thinking about the teaching

Stage Two

Serious attempt to reflect on own work, demonstrates a range of meta-cognitive practices and provides many examples related to classroom teaching; links theory and practice; application of theoretical ideas; consideration of alternative interpretations of issues; discusses societal dilemmas and curriculum dilemmas

Stage three

Analysis conveys extensive evidence of a personal response to the issues raised in the professional development experience; teacher demonstrates personal growth and a political awareness; discusses moral and ethical criteria; describes educational goals, experiences and activities that lead to just and equitable teaching practices

References: Van Manen, M (1977) "Linking ways of knowing and ways of being", *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6, pp205 - 208
Bloom, B., Englehart, M., Furst, E., Hill, W., and Krathwohl. D. (1964) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives for the Cognitive Domain* (two vols: The Affective Domain & The Cognitive Domain). New York. David McKay

Topic Ideas For Teacher Reflective Journals

1. What did you learn today (or this week) that you could apply in your classroom next year?
2. What professional experience was new and inspiring?
3. What was exciting, interesting, or frustrating today (this week) and what will you do as a result?
4. What great ideas have you learned from your peers?
5. What places have you visited that took on a special meaning/significance for you or that already had special meaning for you that you can pass on to your students?
6. What special places near your school could you use with your students to promote writing? What are some of the barriers to using local resources? How can you overcome those barriers?
7. How can you bring the spirit of a particular local resource to you students without a field trip?
8. What stories from the past get you really excited about studying and teaching your subject?

Note: Some materials in this handout have been developed with Dr. Susan Kuner as part of our work on the US Department of Education Teaching American History grants in Tennessee. Judy has posted additional journal ideas on Reflections on the River and on her website. Check them out.

Try Blogs as a way to get more experience writing. Visit Judy's Blogs:

<http://downthenaturetrail.blogspot.com/>

<http://reflectionsontheriver.blogspot.com/>

<http://dragonflyjudy.blogspot.com/>