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USE OF JOURNAL WRITING AS A TOOL OF LEARNING IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the importance of journal writing for school and pupil teachers. We write journals for multiple reasons induced by different motives like to capture some events or experiences, want to narrate something of significance, to retrospect our reactions or feelings in different circumstances, to develop writing skills, etc. Sometimes we write informally because of our interests, sometimes we have to write formally in a formal setting. Journals can be written in various fields according to our needs. In other words, journals can be written in many different contexts e.g., Academic or scholarly journals, which are professionally written by researchers or scholars of a single discipline or sub-discipline for a specific audience who knows the terminology of that discipline. Academic journals are focused on providing information to their audience about original research or new findings in any particular field of research. Generally, the articles of academic journals have been peer reviewed which means it is reviewed by experts of that particular field, example - Nature, Annals of Internal Medicine, African Journal of food Science etc.; its article will address journal writing in the field of school education and how it can be helpful for the professional development of a pupil teacher. When we use journal writing as a tool of learning in school education it can be beneficial for both student and pupil teacher.

KEYWORDS: *Journal writing, Reflective writing, Importance of Journal writing.*

INTRODUCTION

A journal is a record or written account of one's daily activities, learning, experiences, ideas or research kept regularly in a systematic order. Or it could be a record of one's thoughts about one's learning within a professional setting. It is written regularly over a specified duration of time. In journals, one does detailed reading, describes events, experiences and issues related to one's study or professional course and analyses or reflects on them. There are many aspects associated to journal writing in relation to learning. In reference to learning, the journal is both the place where the events or experiences are recorded as well as the forum in which they are refined and reformed. This processing aspired to recognize or make sense of happenings that results as a base for new experiences that will in turn support new learning.

USING JOURNAL WRITING TO ENHANCE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

As I mentioned before, using journal writing in the school curriculum is a kind of reflective practice. Journal writing can foster reflection and enables students to express feelings regarding their educational experiences. The format of this writing can vary depending on the student's needs and the instructor's goals. It involves taking the unprocessed raw data of experiences and engaging with it to make sense of what has happened, exploring often chaotic and confusing events and focusing on the thoughts and emotions that accompany them. Writing to reflect comprises a cyclic pattern of reflection first reflecting on experiences before or as you write, and then reflecting on the journal entries themselves at some later stage which may provide material for further reflection and writing, and so on.

The idea is that journal writing provides opportunity for teachers to use the writing process to describe and explore their own practices. The goal of reflective action in this way to allow the students the opportunity to know their conceptions and allow them to take charge of their learning. Learning through the inducement of reflection, this type of journal writing enables learners to become active participants in the learning process through active involvement and personal ownership of ideas, thus enhancing the quality of learning. Learners can develop problem-solving skill which foster the exploration of self-constructs of meaning. Reflective journal writing is viewed as a significant tool to develop student's insight into taught concepts. The journals provide a forum for pupil teacher to explore how teaching was articulated and the extent to which feedback of it enhanced the quality of the learning experience.

Reflective journal as performing two primary objectives, namely, the documentation of events and ideas for later reflection and as a process of triggering insight about teaching/learning through self - discovery. Topical issues explored extent from classroom events leading to subjective observation and prospective analysis and reassessment as well as to share insight with other learners. Good reflective writing is said when we try to question and explore every feeling, fact, idea and vulnerability regarding any event and see what we can learn from it. It should be analytical not judgemental and seeking the essence of wisdom, we can get from it.

QUESTIONS WHICH CAN HELP US IN REFLECTIVE WRITING-

- What is my learning?

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- Am I able to apply these learning in future?
- Am I completely comfortable in that situation?
- If I was uncomfortable so what were the causes of my discomfort?
- Am I responded rightly according to the situation?
- What could have been the worst-case scenario?
- Was anything escaped from my viewpoint?
- Was there anything that surprised me?
- Was there anything which I haven't been able to relate with my previous understanding?

These types of questions will help us to understand or articulate our thoughts and see a situation from every possible angle or in other words, it can give us different perspectives of seeing a situation.

How To Write?

We have known that writing a journal in the school curriculum is a kind of reflective practice for both students as well as teachers. Although it is a writing, but it doesn't mean that you will directly go on paper and write your reflective thoughts. A good reflective journal is written when you write in a systematic manner. Firstly, you must write a descriptive detail of what has happened, then analysis of that descriptive information or reflect on what has happened, then what you have learned from it or you conclude your learning outcome.

We can say that writing a reflective journal include three steps which are:

1-DESCRIBING THE EVENT

It involves detailed description of what exactly has happened like, what was going on? Who were involved? What activities takes place? Who were active? Who were passive? What have I done? What have they done? How the whole situation was? Is there anything which has been escaped from my sight? You write detail information about your whole experience.

2-ANALYSIS OR REFLECTING ON IT

Now you have to reflect on that descriptive information, you have to break down your experiences into small segments then analyse them in a way that you could take a look of it from every possible angle or you would able to see it from different perspectives. During this process, you must ask yourself questions like, what were your intentions. What were the sentiments aroused that time? What I have been perceiving? Was there anything which surprised or annoyed me? Was any prejudice of mine affecting the situation? Am I responded well according to my role? In this process you need to explore your mind that why you behaved in a certain way or things you did unconsciously, you interpret things and meet different aspects of it.

3-CONCLUSION OR LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this segment you conclude whole analysis of your experience or what you have learned from your reflective writing you did before. You write useful information which you can use by comparing it with similar or dissimilar future situations.

IMPORTANCE OF JOURNAL WRITING FOR SCHOOL/PUPILTEACHER

We can use journal writing in school curriculum, as record of school events, teacher can use it for their self-development, and he/she also can encourage journal writing among students and use it to assess the growth in understanding of students about any specific subject, it also can be used to understand student's conceptions, thus teacher can help students according to their psychological needs. Student can write it to get better understanding of their subjects, to express their ideas related to a particular thing, to articulate their thoughts, to develop writing skills because personal or dialogue journal writing focuses on meaning rather than grammatical mistakes. It encourages the free flow of thoughts and ideas. Journals are not assessed in a sense of grading unlike other school assignments. It encourages self-reflection and confidence in their writing skills. Writing itself a cathartic process it helps to release one's intense suppressed emotions like fear, anxiety, sadness, stress, anger, frustration etc. on paper. Journal writing is also a kind of writing process which gave a space to students for relieving their emotional turmoil, sometimes when they revisit their writing or reflect on it, they can find solutions of their problem.

Teacher can use it as a feedback tool of their teaching if they encourage students to write journals of their subjects to examine that they are successful in achieving their teaching-learning goal or not? If they aren't then it can also help to find out the causes of it. Through journal entries teacher can assess the academic performance of a student and give them feedback or instruction for improvement individually. Teacher should systematically introduce journal writing to their students. Sample of journal writing should be shown, the methodology should be taught to the students, and time should be set for feedback from teacher. Then it may work the we wanted, at some extent. There are other factors involved which can affect this process like, it consumes time a lot, students may take it as an extra burden on them, sometime they may feel lazy to write, they lack commitment to it because it is not their formal school work and so on. Unfortunately, it shows a contrast picture but if teacher try to inspire or motivate their students, show them a clear picture of its advantages with positive results then they could take interest in journal writing. Another way of encouraging students to write journals is to start with interesting topics or creative writing prompts e.g., inspirational people, motivational quotes, topics of their interest, gratitude journal etc. This is the way by which teacher can help students to seek positive aspects into it and inspire students to overcome their problems.

It could be a means of communication between student and teacher, a type of dialogue journal in which students write to express themselves on a topic of their interest which they want to share with someone else like their friends, class fellows or teachers. The purpose of whole schooling is the proper development of child in every aspect. For this a good assessment of the child or student is needed, journal writing can be used as a tool of assessing them. School should keep its own journal of each event organized in school premises. It is the responsibility of school management to retrospect it in a way

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that were students get benefited by those events? Were they beneficial in any form or just wasteful? What is the learning we can get from it for future reference? Each activity which takes place in school can be written on school journal and after that reflection should be done on it.

Both student and pupil teacher can be considered as a learner in teaching-learning process. There are number of benefits for which journal can be written as a learner, these include:

- To enable learner to understand their own conceptions.
- Reflective journal writing is done in a systematic framework in which pupil teachers can understand, analyse and reflect on their professional skills in a descriptive manner.
- It can help student and pupil teacher both to think creatively on any issue they are facing, using reflective or intuitive understanding.
- It provides an opportunity to those students to express their ideas, thoughts, or feelings who are not good at expressing themselves verbally, it works like a substitute to know their conceptions.
- It can help to facilitate critical thinking in both student and pupil teacher.
- Learning outcome they get from it, can help them in future situations.
- Journal writing of any particular school subject can strengthen their knowledge and understanding that subject. They will be able to identify that where the difficulty occurring, where they are lacking or stuck up.
- Learners find a systematic way (through journal writing) to evaluate their learning outcome by themselves.
- Here teacher evaluate student's writing focusing on thoughts they have conveyed not grammatical errors, and this evaluation or feedback is for learning not for grading or marking. So, student can write freely without worrying about grammatical mistakes and marks or grade.
- It helps teacher to get better understanding of their students individually. In a subject specific journal, teacher can use it to know what students have understood and what they have not, if not then where their teaching lacks.
- It can be used as a tool to enrich vocabulary, to improve writing skill and to clarify thinking. • It can encourage students to involve actively in the learning process. It helps students to relate what they have learned to what they already know.

Conclusion

We are confronted with different types of scenarios in our day-to-day interactions with society. Some instances catch our attention and most of them get neglected by us, sometimes these subtle moments create a difference and we are not even aware of it. It is okay in many ways but when it comes to a professional setting it can create a gap e.g., in the teaching-learning process, this neglecting attitude can create a learning gap. Sometimes teachers would not give proper attention to the child's behaviour or activity, sometimes they don't even think about their teaching methods (that is it good or not?), sometimes students lack attention about what they are actually learning, sometimes school management lack attention towards students (are they progressing or student?). This type of inattentiveness can affect the all-around development of the student. If journal writing is introduced to school curriculum (for school, for teachers, and for students also) not in a forcible manner but as a tool of improvement it can solve the problem of negligence at some extent.

For school curriculum, mostly reflective type of journal writing is used, because when school, students and teachers reflect on their previous learning then they will be able to use it the betterment of future learning situations or other curricular activities. So, if we reflect on our psyche, mental processes, and emotions through reflective journal writing it could bring a change or improvement in our way of perceiving things or working methods etc. What we need to do is reflect on ourselves critically putting our prejudices aside, putting our inner discomfort on paper is difficult if we have to reveal it in front of others. Therefore, we should keep it private and regularly assess ourselves through it and take learning out of it if you are a teacher. If you are a student, you can show it to your teachers and take feedback from them. Journal writing should be taken as a learning tool. Each journal is unique itself because it is subjective in nature and many learning can be taken out of one incident or one incident can be seen from different perspectives.

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