

Ed. J. Kreeft Peyton and L. Reed. *Dialogue Journal Writing with Non-native English Speakers: A Handbook for Teachers*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL. 1990.

*A dialogue journal, put very simply, is a conversation between a teacher and an individual student ...” (p. 3)*

Many teachers have now heard about dialogue journals and are interested in trying them out with their classes. Reed explains that dialogue journals are particularly appropriate for ESL students who may enter a new school with extremely high anxiety levels: “Students that come to the classroom unable to speak English soon find that the journals can be a real source of comfort and satisfaction” (p. 2). Journals may also serve as a safe way for the child to ask questions about things he or she does not understand.

Very readable and practical ideas about how to implement journal writing fill the book. Helpful examples are given throughout of actual dialogue journal entries. What a dialogue journal is (and isn't) and how it varies from the basic journal format is discussed in chapter 2. This is followed in chapter 3 by a lengthy discussion of the benefits of dialogue journal writing. Then begins the application. Chapter 4 addresses the different entry levels of students: beginning, literate, and more advanced. Certainly the kinds of dialogues will change for each of these students.

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with potential problems: How does a very busy teacher find time for the dialogue? How do the children find topics to write about? Potential areas of concern relate to the reluctant and/or repetitive writer. Repetitive patterns “can become a very comfortable, safe way for a beginning writer to get something in print” (p. 72).

The book ends, quite appropriately with profiles of four students who display various experiences with print including “the defeated student who blossomed” (p. 99) and the “good student and the development of voice” (p. 100). Anyone interested in using dialogue journals will find this book a constant resource.—NK

H. Douglas Brown, Deborah S. Cohen, and Jennifer O'Day. *Challenges: A Process Approach to Academic English*. Prentice Hall Regents. 1991.

*Challenges* is designed for students about to enter or already in a university course of study where English is the medium of instruction. The book presents an integrated approach to academic reading and writing. The overall framework is reflected in the title—the knowledge being discovered in various academic fields challenges us "... to understand our environment, to utilize our resources, to take better care of our minds and bodies, and to work together as a human race for the good of all" (p. vii). The book therefore is organized around discipline-based topics such as "An Exploding Population" (Demography), "Crossing Economic Borders" (Business and Management), "Parents, Children and the Family" (Anthropology), and "Unlocking the Wondrous Mind" (Physiology). The reading selections in the various topics are culturally varied and sensitive to a multicultural population. Within each unit students are helped to develop various reading strategies such as scanning, skimming, and guessing vocabulary from context. They are shown how to interact with the text, to bring their own background knowledge to bear on their interpretation of the text. They are led through the writing process, discovering how to cluster, freewrite, revise, and edit. The book encourages group work and discussion, ways of helping students explore ideas, generate ideas, and respond to their peers' spoken and written ideas. The teacher's guide is invaluable for the instructor who has never before used some of the suggested reading and writing strategies. And, it also includes additional ideas and extension activities for teachers who are more familiar with the strategies. Although designed with the ESL student in mind, the text is also appropriate for any students not yet familiar with academic rhetorical conventions. ("ESL" occurs only on the back cover of the text.) Since the text does not offer particular grammar help for ESL students (concentrating instead on the processes and strategies of reading and writing), teachers might like to supplement this book with a grammar (such as Ann Raimes *Troublespots*, St. Martin's Press) for use during the editing stages of writing.—DM

Ed. J. Kreeft Peyton. *Students and Teachers Writing Together*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL. 1990.

This collection of articles on journal writing is of particular interest as it addresses the needs of deaf students as well as nonnative English speakers. Several concerns are raised throughout the book, including how to engage students in meaningful writing; how teachers respond to students in ways which encourage development in both writing and language skills; how to connect these skills with success in other coursework; the impact of journal writing with current theories of

curriculum design; and how student progress can be followed at both the discourse and grammatical levels.

The first article (and part I) by Bonnie Meath-Lang examines reconceptualist curriculum theory and its applicability to journal writing with deaf students and second language learners.

Part II focuses on classroom approaches, with articles on connecting journal writing to academic writing (Lauren Vanett and Donna Jurich); a model for interactive teaching of reading (Margaret Walworth); and a context for teacher/student collaboration (Lauren Vanett and Donna Jurich). Part III looks at implications for learning. Joy Kreeft Peyton focuses on acquisition of English grammatical morphology, while Tamara Lucas looks at "Personal Writing as a Classroom Genre." This section concludes with John Albertini's article on "Coherence in Deaf Students' Writing," which examines internal organization.—NK

H. Douglas Brown. *Breaking the Language Barrier*. Intercultural Press. 1991.

Doug Brown's latest book is a delight, blending theory, pedagogy, and practical guidelines for individual language learning strategies. Although the book is directed to language learners struggling to become proficient in another language, it also has valuable lessons for all language teachers. It reports research findings "... in a simple, straightforward fashion. There is no mysterious jargon, no lofty academic prose, just plain talk ... about a phenomenon that is familiar to many" (p. xii). But, this straightforward presentation reveals accurate information on the process of foreign/second language learning, both in and out of the classroom. The book is well written, with numerous examples to illustrate processes and theories. Above all, Brown presents the material with humor and true understanding of the complexity of language learning. This book is ideal for anyone learning another language—it could be used in a content-based ESL class, in which students would learn both language and about the language learning process. I would highly recommend it to my more advanced learners because it would help them understand their frustrations and triumphs. And, it would be a wonderful, enjoyable, and informative introduction to the field of language teaching for potential ESL instructors. All of us, teachers and learners alike, could benefit from reading this book and taking the various self-tests in the Appendix—of aptitude, learning style, personality, and ambiguity tolerance. —DM