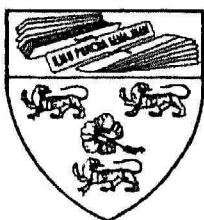


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Statement of Original Authorship

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Title of Project Paper: LEARNING ESL THROUGH DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING:

.....
A CASE STUDY OF A FORM FIVE ESL STUDENT.

.....
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I confirm that the materials contained in this Project paper are my own work. Where the works of others have been drawn upon, whether published or unpublished (such as books, articles, or non-book materials in the form of video and audio recordings, electronic publications and the internet) due acknowledgements according to appropriate academic conventions have been given. I also hereby declare that the materials contained in this Project Paper have not been published before or presented for another programme or degree in any university.

Signed: *Anjay* Date: 23.4.2001

ABSTRACT

In recent times dialogue journal writing has been used as a learning strategy to support ESL learning. It is premised on the view that learning is a collaborative venture between a teacher and a student. It adopts a social constructivist perspective that learning is facilitated by the presence of a more capable person providing assistance to the learner. Unlike the personal journal which involves private communication, dialogue journal evolves from the authenticity of partners, typically the teacher and student, engaging in an extended two-way written interaction in which there is real exchange of information. The act of interacting in writing allows one to go beyond one's thoughts, to see internalised dialogue taking shape on the page and becoming its own object of reflection and learning.

In this case study of a Form Five ESL student interacting with his teacher in writing, I sought to gain a holistic picture of dialogue journalling by exploring three questions pertaining to its contextual dimensions, its socio-psychological dimensions and the nature of language use in the journal. Data collection for this qualitative case study was accomplished through the use of a student-teacher dialogue journal, a teacher journal, three semi-structured interviews and other supporting materials which included samples of students' essays and school records. These data were systematically coded and analysed to provide a descriptive interpretation of the findings.

The insights from this study seemed to indicate that dialogue journal writing was an interesting, motivating and meaningful activity that catered to the student's affective and linguistic learning needs. In a school milieu which was

unfriendly and which also discouraged oral interaction in English, the journal provided an avenue for the student to overcome the deficits in his environment by giving him space to communicate and write freely on self-selected topics that interested him. Through this means of social interaction he was encouraged to use language to serve a multitude of functions. Language was used to orientate attitude as well as to represent self, reader, subjects or events in ways meant to influence the reader to react in specific manners. The fluid nature of language use in the journal also made it an excellent site to mediate experiences, motives and the co-construction of knowledge. By scaffolding the student's learning and by pitching instruction within his zone of proximal development, the teacher was able to promote linguistic and cognitive growth in the student. On the whole, there are sufficient grounds to suggest that dialogue journal writing can be a valuable resource to support and supplement ESL learning.

Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan penulisan dialog jurnal adalah satu aktiviti yang menarik, menggalakkan dan bermakna serta penulisan ini dapat memenuhi keperluan emosi dan pembelajaran linguistik pelajar. Dalam persekitaran sekolah yang bertentangan dan tidak menggalakkan perbualan dalam Bahasa Inggeris, jurnal ini telah memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk mengatasi kekurangan yang terdapat dalam persekitarannya. Melalui penulisan jurnal dialog, pelajar diberi ruang untuk berkomunikasi dan menulis sebarang topik yang diminatinya. Melalui interaksi sosial ini juga, didapati pelajar menggunakan bahasa untuk pelbagai fungsi. Bahasa digunakan untuk mempengaruhi sikap dan juga untuk mewakili diri sendiri, pembaca, subjek atau peristiwa supaya menimbulkan reaksi yang diingini daripada pembaca. Oleh sebab penggunaan bahasa dalam jurnal bersifat dinamik, justeru menjadikan jurnal sebagai satu tapak yang sesuai sebagai wahana untuk menyelami pengalaman, menyalurkan motif dan pembinaan pengetahuan bersama. Dengan bantuan dan bimbingan berserta halatuju pengajaran guru yang bersesuaian dengan lingkungan keupayaan pelajar, guru dapat meningkatkan perkembangan bahasa dan kognitif pelajar. Pada keseluruhannya, hasil daripada dapatan kajian ini mencadangkan agar penulisan jurnal dialog boleh menjadi satu sumber bernilai untuk menyokong dan meningkatkan lagi pembelajaran ESL.