

Series Foreword

Journal writing is not something new. Personal journals have been around for centuries, maybe even for as long as humans have been writing. In the fields of composition and language education, there was a flurry of interest in journal writing as a pedagogical tool for literacy and language learners in the latter part of the twentieth century, and more recently journals have been viewed as a means of scaffolding reflective teaching and encouraging reflectivity in research processes. As a result, some educators may ask, “What more do we need to know?” Those likely to raise this question are probably not thinking of the explosive growth of reflective writing enabled by social networking on the Web, the blogs, and other interactive e-vehicles for reflection on experiences in our literate, “real,” and virtual lives. Language and other educators who have used journal writing in their classrooms and perhaps their own professional lives, and have a been-there, done-that attitude toward it, would do well to look anew at the well-established concept of the journal. This revisiting of journal writing from a 21st century perspective, informed by relevant earlier literature, is exactly what Christine Pearson Casanave guides us through in this first book-length treatment of the use of journal writing in the contexts of language learning, pre- and in-service teaching, and research.

Anyone familiar with Casanave’s earlier contribution, *Controversies in Second Language Writing* (2004) to this University of Michigan Press teacher reference series will know what to expect from this author: a presentation style that engages readers, whether novice or experienced educators, with complex issues in a highly accessible way. Casanave brings to her discussion her own experiences as a journal writer in her roles

as language learner, language instructor, teacher educator, and former student and current professional academic researcher, in addition to her knowledge of a wealth of findings with first and second language participants. Although an unabashed journal writing proponent and life-long journal writer herself, she does not assume her readers will automatically agree with her stance or immediately see the potential value of journal use for language students of all proficiency levels and for instructors and researchers of all degrees of expertise. Casanave walks us through not just the whys (and possible why nots) but also the hows of journal use for our students and for ourselves as academics.

Those who have never attempted to use journals in their classes and their own lives, as well as others who have used it with mixed results, will probably be tempted to try it in at least some of the venues Casanave provides guidance for. Those already committed to journal writing will very likely find in this book new reasons for expanding and enhancing their use of journals.

Reference

Casanave, C. P. (2004). *Controversies in second language writing: Dilemmas and decisions in research and instruction*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Diane Belcher
Georgia State University

Jun Liu
University of Arizona