

- Read Genesee & Upshur (1996), pp. 118-127.
- Read Peyton, J.K. (1993) The development of beginning writers: Six student profiles. In Peyton, J.K. and Staton, J. (eds). Dialogue journals in the multilingual classroom: Building language fluency and writing skills through written interaction. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp. 47-89.

### 1. U Cha

From U Cha's journal, two obvious developments are revealed.

First of all, U Cha has went through a gradually improvement in his development of thoughts in his writing. At first, he wrote simple, dispersed topics such as "*What latitude in longitud help the men?*", "*Why the coban coming to U.S*", "*I live in Brazil seven year in five in Koreia. I firty in Koreia. I have five year. I go to Brazil. I come to U.S.*" Then, the writings of U Cha tended to become more concrete and logical. He became more mature to express his thoughts and tell stories by providing more detailed descriptions and the sentences were organized in a more coherent way: "*I know and I read that scientist was stunding about dolphins language. Last year when I was in Brazil I was in the beach and I saw a dophin dead on the sand and when I touch the skin is like sofet and then when I eat the lunch and I go to see the dolphin some birds was eating the dolphin.*"

Secondly, a progress in acquisition of grammatical forms can also be perceived in his journal. The development can be divided into three phases. At the beginning, U Cha could only use several simple present and unmarked verb forms while several months later, he could use may past tense forms and had the intention to make shift between past and present tense. Finally, his use of past and present verbs was consistently correct and was able to use more complex verb constructions such as negative, subjective, perfective, with relative ease. Excerpts are shown below:

Phase 1: "*I like plants, but my grandma love plants she have in garden plants and flow.*"

*"In what age you start work? How mann year you live in Los Angeles?"*

Phase 2: *“I never read about Fahrenheit until I come to U.S., the first time I come I saw a film of doctor and they find that 1 monkey had a fever and when he got the fever his body temperature was 115 F but I thought they was talking about 115 C but now I know the different of Celsuis and Fahrenheit.”*

Phase 3: *“Saturday my Karate teacher was fighting with 5 student and one of them almost got his arm broke.”*

*“I didn’t know how to put the ing in the words because you didn’t teach me.”*

## 2. Michael

Same with U Cha, a progress in handling grammar rules can be seen in his journals. At the early stage, Michael demonstrated meanings by listing words in spite of their grammatical functions and the information carried in the journal was barely understandable. Sentences were like, *“What are we learning. Today what P.E is. I like play Baceball. Next week P.E is what.”* However, this situation gets much better five months later. Michael dedicated his journal with an intention to use both present and pass tense, and demonstrated a well knowledge of the usage of interrogative words compared to his early journals. As can be seen as followed,

*“Mrs. Reed what did you mean about the valentines. You said we have to bring the valentines. Did we have to made the valemynes for our classroom? I didn’t know what are you talking.”*

*“Mrs. Reed I know what is the valentine but I don't know what I have to do and the valentine is we have to give the gards to someone and I have to buy the cards but I can’t the cards that is the problems.”*

Another development is the level of understandability of his text. At the beginning, the text is difficult to decipher because of the misuse of verbs and aberrant sentence structure, etc., such as what has mentioned before, *“What are we learning. Today what P.E is. I like play Baceball. Next week P.E is what.”* While later on, Michael began writing extended, coherent text and intended to develop his own writing style (attempt to use humor in his journal), which made him more capable to express himself. In the journal he wrote: *“Jenny is going to get the 7<sup>th</sup> journal and she write too much like she eat too much. Oh! I am just joking you Mrs. Reed forgive me Mrs. Reed please.”*, *“I guess we going to have a very happy Easter party. You going to be a fat teacher in the school because you got alut of choldate and you have to eat all of them.”*

## 3. Andy

Andy has achieved two obvious language developments in his writing. One is word choice and the other is language form. Andy is an English learner who has problems expressing himself clearly, in his early writing, he consulted his Korean-English dictionary to select the word he wanted to use in his journal with little concern about its appropriateness. This is revealed in sentences like, *“Today Steve gone( took) my eraser.”*, *“Today in the morning I am stupid, because I am gone home key (I left my key at home).”* This situation gets smoothed later with the help of Mrs. Reed’s modeling and textual interaction. Andy began to write with an awareness of the appropriateness of his word choice. *“I like this (his Spring Festival picture) because very, very and very happy. (Oh! Sorry Mrs. Reed. This sentence wrong. I want tell you ‘fun’ but I forgot so I want change ‘happy’ to ‘fun’.”*

The other development is the language form. At first, Andy used entangled language forms with little knowledge of person pronoun and punctuation. *“Today P.E. time was fun and its fun.”*, *“Today is Halloween mask is color my mask is cute mouse the a performer. Todey William is wear a tearful face. For what reason I don’t.”* However, Andy became clarified in this issue and began to use correct person pronoun and punctuation. *“Today I am very happy because Miss V-said ‘do you want to go Disneyland?’ (I don’t know that spelling. I think you know that. That is children ground. You got it? I think you know now.) so I said ‘yes!’ and mom said too “yes”. So I am very, very and very happy so, so much.”*

#### 4. Laura

As an international student with limited English proficiency, Laura was at first reluctant to write in English. Her seldom wrote her entries, and she did, it was constructed with short, few and simple sentences. *“Ms Reed I like dis room and I like you BeKes you are a good teshir and teach my English. I like evryBety.”*, *“ Ms Reed I like read the book, bekes book teaching English good, And learning every thing.”* However in the end, Laura became an enthusiastic writer with strong motivations and felt much freer to express herself. Her entries turned to be longer, covering more and more topics in her life. *“Today I am so happy because yesterday my father sad he was going to by a new washengmashin then yesterday he came with a new car a beg new car is a Honda and shd has the radio. Leticia like to talk about me yesterday she sad every thing about my diat to the boy I don’t like that...”*

Another change is the switch in her self-concept. Laura at first was shy, less self-confident and insecure of the new English learning and living environment. She worried about many daily-

based things and expressed her anxiousness in her early entries. *“Ms Reed I thek my frinds han (don’t) likeit Itali maybey because not have big bileg (buildings?).” “Ms Reed maybe I ave problems wyt my hair because me don’t look good and my mother donth beylivet, so thek meaybie is not wors problem.”* However, Laura became more confident and opened- up. She became more and more willing to share things about herself, her family, self- concerns and school activities. In her journal, Laura revealed her internalized confidence. *“I am happy cas now I spich more and I can write more wors. Explain everything special to you... I thing wen I am beg I am going to be very good reading girl donth you think so?”*

## 5. Su Kyong

At first, Su’s entries were very short with unmarked punctuations and almost no right spellings which made her message very difficult to decipher. As can be seen in one of her journal, *“Im Sunday curing the hare Im so sad Im quaing I no like Im so qllaing.”* In addition, she interacted very little with Mrs. Reed who tried so hard to motivate her to respond. She just ignored Mrs. Reed questions:

*Su Kyong: today lynch tim Im daning so fun lola to and Janny to going.*

*Reed: Yes! It is fun to dance at noon! Were there any others from our class there? Today you read and we tape recorded your reading. Was it fun?*

*Su Kyong: Im Sunday curing the hare Im so sad Im quaing I no like Im so qllaing.*

However, later on, although Su Kyong’s English proficiency level improved very slowly, she became more communicative and responsive based on her limited English knowledge and even raised questions to Mrs. Reed.

*Su Kyong: satraday I want to the Disneyland is so fun. I riyng the car and alplane and cups and the rikit is so scar and we come to hom at 9:00 oclock...*

*Reed: You really had a fun weekend. Did you like the rocket ride best of all?*

*Su Kyong: Yes miss reed. I uke that rocket. Is so scar and is fun I like that rocket and I like bravethe car Do you want there? And how many Do you want ther?*

Secondly, although there was little evidence of Su Kyong’s improvement in her mastery of grammatical forms, her spelling got a little bit better, for example, from *liek* and *lick* to *like*; from *lilo*, and *littl* to *little*; from *flaend* to *fliend*.

The journal exercise in this classroom was in fact undertaken as an instructional device. How might you use it as an 'assessment' practice that would help both you as a teacher and the students themselves?

Journals are written-version conversations between teachers and students. They carry many instructional implications that teachers can draw from to know their students better and conduct future instructional plans. First, journals provide feedback of students concerning their learning (what do they learn in class? Do they fully understand what they've learned? How well can they handle it?). Secondly, journals act as a tunnel between teachers and students to offer them more opportunity to know each other better, to express their interests, feelings, opinions or even doubts. Many SLLs are less confident and do not feel free to express their feelings openly in class, but journals offer the opportunity to open their heart and let their voices heard. In this way, teachers are able to observe more aspects concerning students' situation which are difficult to be assessed in classroom.