

Title: Student Journals as Instructional Lenses in Developing Thinking Skills
Among Teacher Education Students (A Qualitative-Quantitative Study)
Author(s): Edna Luz Raymundo-Abulon
Journal Name: Research Series
Journal Citation: No. 102
Publication Date: August 2008
Publication Type:

Abstract:

This study aimed to explore, by means of student journals, whether students are able to develop their thinking skills over the course of a semester in a Guidance and Counseling class. Specifically, the research answered the following questions: 1) What are the students' thinking skills developed through journal writing for a period of one semester according to the eleven selected thinking skills cited by McGuinness? and 2) Over time, was there a characteristic progression in the students' thinking skills in terms of the eleven selected thinking skills?

The research population included 30 college students, majoring in English, enrolled in Guidance and Counseling, a professional education subject, during the first semester of school year 2006-2007 at the Philippine Normal University.

Each entry in the journal was categorized using McGuinness's (1999) eleven thinking skills sub-headings. The categories which are assumed to be in progressive order, are: 1) collecting information; 2) sorting and analyzing information; 3) drawing conclusions from the information; 4) brainstorming on new ideas; 5) problem solving; 6) determining cause and effect; 7) evaluating options; 8) planning and setting goals; 9) monitoring progress; 10) making decisions; and 11) reflecting on one's own progress.

The qualitative analysis done in the study concurs with the findings of Garcia (2006) that the students developed some thinking skills as enumerated by McGuinness, in their journal entries.

Further examination of the categorized data showed that students were generally biased toward several thinking skills categories, such as collecting information, sorting and analyzing information, and the like; and biased against problem solving and evaluating options, for example. This could be a partial evidence pointing to the need to develop thinking skills categories that are Filipino in orientation and scope or somehow reflect our seemingly not introspective culture.

The quantitative analysis of the study revealed that time is not a significant factor to predict the progression from one thinking skill to the next. This conclusion must, however, be viewed in terms of the limited time of journal writing (one quarter only), the inability of about 30% of the students who missed to write in several sessions and that these thinking skills must

not be perceived in progressive order but rather as discrete and somehow overlapping in context.

The researcher recommended the continuous use of journal writing as part of the instructional activities in the different subject areas of Teacher Education to harness more the reflective thinking skills of future teachers. She further recommended that future researches on journal writing and thinking skills may consider the following dimensions: 1) development of thinking skills categories that are Filipino in nature and in scope, and 2) categorization of the themes elicited from the entries for inter-judge reliability testing.