

Eriberto Salgado

Brigette Rabie

UWP 1

5 December 2019

Word Count: 127

Process Memo

In this draft, I have improved my writing from context to diction. A key main point that I implemented was the answer to my research question, “How does journaling help college students achieve academic success?” I did this by providing an example of how journaling can be seen on a regular day of class. I am not sure if this is enough or if I am on the right track to conclude the research. Another thing my paper may lack is proper citation. I noticed that I repeated the authors name a lot. Do I introduce a new source with the article title and author credentials? If I were to make more changes to my research paper I would rephrase some sentences and decrease the word count.

Word Count: 1849

Student Journaling: Journaling’s Potential in Achieving Academic Success

Abstract

This paper discusses how the journaling practice can help college students achieve academic success through researching the effects on literature, freshman college transition, and a survey among UC Davis students. In this case, journaling is not about a profession in journalism, but as a personal reflection that serves different meanings to different individuals. A primary research involving a survey was conducted on 31 random UC Davis students on their

experiences with journaling. The results show that most students whom journal, does show academic improvement. This paper also defines beneficial factors from journaling and a discussion on why students are restrained from performing this practice.

Introduction

As an insightful individual, I seek opportunities that contribute to discovering my full potential. A method I found was to journal my thoughts and daily activities in a written journal. By journaling, I have experienced improvement in self-understanding, and looking back it has increased my knowledge as well. I was unaware of journaling potentials, but without a doubt, I can say that journaling has been academically and mentally beneficial. There are interesting studies presenting facts that I never realized from journaling. Many questions raised such as how can journaling implement in school? Can journaling improve grades? What is the most efficient journal method? Critical studies on journaling does not only claim effects on one's mentality, but also in the academic process.

Writing is an important tool that college students will need for college and future careers. It can be fairly easy to fall into a writer's block and be stuck for hours trying to figure out what to write next. Journaling is suggested to overcome writer's block because it creates “new insights, reflections, and ideas” (Hiemstra 2001, p.25). A diverse perspective can influence your creative writing and become a quick thinker. The fact that journaling is a stress-free zone to note thoughts, is shown to improve perspective. Journaling is also proven to decrease anxiety levels through journaling that can distress students when writing. In the article, “Blogging a journal-changing students' writing skills and perceptions” Lin et al (2014), conducts a writing test among two groups, an experimental group that blogs (EG) and a control group that journals

traditionally on a notebook (CG). Their results conclude that EG wrote more than the CG because “the EG experienced significantly less anxiety than the CG” (Lin, et al 2014, p.426). Students that feel less anxiety to write show a decrease of overwhelming feelings and an increase in word count. Journaling provides a space to write as much as you want and your preferred pace without any stress. Thus, eliminating anxiety and avoiding writer's block is capable of improving their academic performance.

Journaling is also shown to be a method for a smooth transition into a new environment. Transitioning into college can start off rough, but journaling can contribute focus to their classes. The article "Reflective Journal Writing and the First-Year Experience" by Michele C Everett (2013) studies how reflective journaling can help a first-year seminar class transition to college and reach student success. Everett's method was to assign a weekly “electronic blackboard” for the class to journal about anything they wanted. Some of the benefits that Everett (2013) discovered were “well-being,” “social engagement” and “self-discovery.” These three features are encouraged to prepare college freshman of any distraction that can impact their grades.

Although journaling can impact academic improvement, it is important to acknowledge why people do not practice this now. There are many reasons why a student wouldn't journal, but there are some common theories. A common restraint that prevent students from journaling is “students have difficulty writing and expressing their thoughts on paper” (Page et al 2014, p.7). It can be frustrating to begin a new writing tool or generally a new habit because it is abnormal. Writing just may not be for everyone and people express themselves in different ways. Journaling is said to have “little to no consistency” of reflection and mostly description about events (Dyment et al.) After all, journaling can be in the form of a video, but first the individual

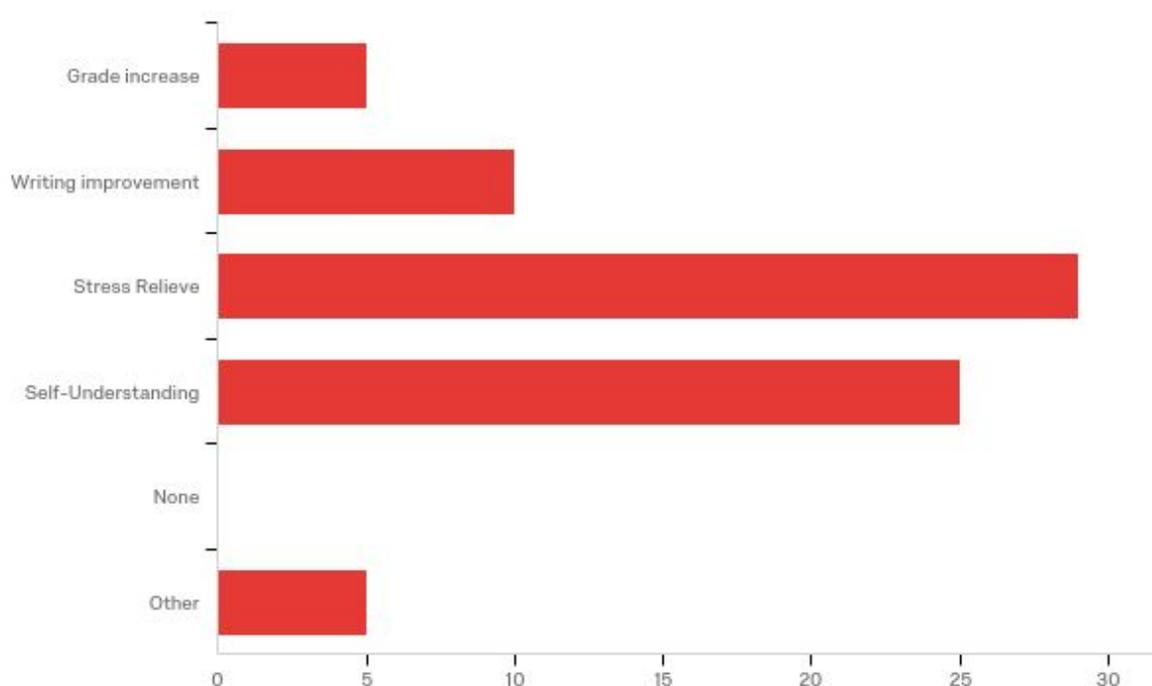
would need to discover that preference. Another common argument on why people do not journal is due to “time constraints” (Page et al 2014, p.7). For instance, Page et al (2014) reason that, “The school day is packed full with lessons, assemblies and other special events and it is therefore understandable that keeping student journals can slip off the radar” (p.7). Compared to a high schooler, college students have less time and flexibility for hobbies of their interest. There is so much worrying about homework and studying that students wouldn't want to waste time for something they don't know they would like.

Methods

In order to collect the most diverse and accurate data, surveys among UC Davis college students will be conducted. The survey will be anonymous in order to receive the most participation in this sensitive practice. Limitations and biases were important to keep in mind throughout the survey process. To prevent bias, data will be collected from a variety of students in different majors. Although I aim for diverse results, I do expect a limited amount of participants. It is difficult to estimate the amount of students that currently journal, so I will create questions regarding those who have journaled in the past. I decided to keep the survey anonymous because journaling can be extremely private. The surveys were then distributed on the UC Davis social media platform Wildfire. In this platform, I specifically asked for “those who journal or have journaled in the past” to voluntarily complete this survey. I didn't include students without this experience because this research requires analysis on how journaling has impacted their academics.

Results

In this primary research, there were a total of 31 UC Davis students that completed the survey. 48.39% were Freshman followed by 22.58% of Juniors. Currently, 54.84% of students journal, 41.94% sometimes journals and 3.23% do not journal anymore. Most people use a bullet journal(a type of note-taking that consists of pages full of bullet points to create creative organizers such as to-do lists, long term goals, calendars, a budget, etc.) as their method of journaling. Most students journal a moderate amount for 1-2 days a week. There were multiple benefits that the participants have noticed:



The top 3 benefits that they claim to have experienced were stress-relieve, self-understanding, and writing improvement. On a range of “No impact/Waste of my time” (1) to “Life Changing” (5), 48.39% chose a 4. If students had the time to do anything, most students claim they would implement journaling into their days whereas 6.45% state maybe. 90.32% believe that journaling can be a tool others can use for academic improvement.

This survey also consisted of free response questions that broaden the perspectives on journaling. The participants were asked to define how they would define journaling, they responded, “Any physical form of expression (drawing, writing, bullet points) on paper,” “Writing down thoughts, reflections, or ideas about your daily life,” and “Logging written or typed notes, or drawings to record daily experiences, prayers, or wishes.” They were also asked “Why do/don't you journal?” Some responses were, “It’s fun and a stress reliever,” “It helps me understand my emotions better and what triggers certain moods” and “I find it relaxing, but setting aside the time to do it is difficult in the midst of collegiate chaos (quarter system makes any time not spent studying feel misused, sometimes).”

Discussion

First off, it was important to analyze how current journaling affects the student before assuming its role in academic performance. There were many statements about students’ self-reflection, but no clear details on how this may look like in a class or assignment. Many students define journaling as a “form of expression,” others say that “it’s fun and a stress reliever.” Self-reflection is a method to learn in-depth, thus allowing a perspective on the things they can improve on. With this in mind, inheriting a habit of self-reflection and critical thinking is important in situations such as a writer's block. Hiemstra (2001) affirms that journaling is a technique to “writing quickly, allowing words to fall freely from the subconscious, dating journal entries, using different writing or recording techniques to enhance a feeling of creativity” (p.25). We all try to avoid writer's block, especially in college when workload is high. Picking up the pace in college can save a lot of stress and journaling is one way to do that.

College students schedules are always full with studies and classes, causing time-constraints and less time for hobbies. If college students had sufficient time to do anything they want, 93.55% say they would implement journaling in their day. As Page et al previously stated, “The school day is packed full with lessons, assemblies and other special events” (p.7). Students that currently journal are being held back from this practice and eventually could end up losing the habit. It is shown that 54.84% of students currently journal, but 41.94% sometimes journals and 3.23% do not journal anymore. As you can see, students may not have journaled as much anymore due to the college's overwhelming and time-consuming workload. One student answered, “setting aside the time to do it is difficult in the midst of collegiate chaos (quarter system makes any time not spent studying feel misused, sometimes).” Another student also claims “I stopped having time for it this quarter though because of my high unit amount.” This explains why students mostly journal for 1-2 days a week for a moderate amount of time. Based on previous examples, journaling has potential to improve academic performance, but there simply is not much time to fully inherit this practice.

There are numerous ways people can consider journaling as an academic tool. From the results, journaling can be in the form of a video, poetry or a bullet journal. A bullet journal (most popular method from the primary research). A student that utilizes bullet journals claims, “I like being able to go over what’s happened in the past. Seeing how I felt about something and how it resulted, reflecting, it’s eye opening.” The participant uses journaling to reflect on previous events and understand why the actions made. This can apply into the scenario of completing a midterm or an upcoming final exam that you want to improve on. For instance, an individual can write journal entries on their assignments by creating a “pros and cons” or “to improve and

mastered” list. College workloads can be overwhelming to keep up with, thus this list can help with keeping track of your goals. Through journaling, college students are highly capable of improving their academics.

Conclusion

This research paper has explored the effects of journaling and how it is implemented into student academics. Clearly there is a relationship between journaling and academic success. In this primary research, the participants have reported that they can improve academically, but they are mainly intrigued with the self-understanding values. With the given limitations, there is more research required to estimate its success rate, but there is enough information to recommend students to journal if they seek to improve their education while gaining self-awareness.

References

- Dyment, Janet E, and Timothy S O'Connell. "Assessing the Quality of Reflection in Student Journals: A Review of the Research." *Teaching in Higher Education* 16.1 (2011): 81-97. Web.
- Everett, Michele C. "Reflective Journal Writing and the First-Year Experience." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 25.2 (2013): 213-222. Web.
- Hiemstra, Roger. "Uses and Benefits of Journal Writing." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 90 (2001): 19. Web.
- Lin, Ming Huei, Ji-Jhen Li, Po Yi Hung, and Hui-Wen Huang. "Blogging a Journal: Changing Students' Writing Skills and Perceptions." *Elt Journal* 68.4 (2014): 422-31. Web.
- Page, Shaileigh, and Julie Clarke. "Feeling Your Way to Success through Journaling." *Australian Primary Mathematics Classroom* 19.1 (2014): 3-8. Web.

Appendix A

<https://ql.tc/nOesDk>