Effects of Dialogue Journals on L2 Students' Writing Fluency, Reflections, Anxiety, and Motivation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the efficacy of English dialogue journal writing (DJW) on students' writing fluency, reflections, anxiety, and intrinsic motivation, as well as the students' responses to journal writing. Forty-one 10th-grade students in Taiwan participated in this study, and each student was required to write 24 journal entries at two journal entries per week. The data included 984 students' journal entries, open-ended questions, interviews, and the results of the pre- and post-study questionnaires and the pre- and posttests on writing performance. The findings showed that the DJW project improved the students' writing fluency; writing performance on content, organization, and vocabulary; reflective awareness of writing and self-growth as learners; and intrinsic writing motivation. It also reduced their writing anxiety. The students held positive attitudes toward the project and confirmed that DJW was an important tool for self-understanding and self-growth. They indicated that DJW allowed them to consider something new; enhanced their self-confidence so that they could get along better with others; matured them through sharing their ideas, feelings, and self-perceptions; consolidated their thinking when re-reading their journals; strengthened their confidence in English writing; and gave them the chance to reflect on their daily lives. Pedagogical implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing instruction are provided.

A high command of English writing ability and skills is critical to advance college performance and academic success. Despite its importance, however, a large number of high school students in Taiwan consider English writing as arduous (Li, 1992), challenging (Wu, 2003), frightening, frustrating, and unrewarding.

Taiwanese senior high school students' English writing is generally poor in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, and language use, although they have been taught how to compose well-organized short essays which consist of two paragraphs (120-150 words) in response to a prompt in words or serial pictures since they are in Grade 9. They lack life experiences, especially mutual interaction with others, the practice of writing or recording daily observations

and experiences in English, and reflection which would assist them in exploring previous experiences to better self-understanding and self-growth.

Literature Review

Statistics from the College Entrance Examination Center (CEEC) in Taiwan in the last five years indicates that examinees' average writing score in the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE) was 6 out of 20 points (Hsu, 2005). This low score discourages and intimidates students and teachers and reveals that their English writing ability needs improvement. One of the reasons why students write poorly in terms of content and organization is their lack of practice in generating ideas and verbalizing these in English (Wu, 2003). In recent years, the writing topics from JCEE have focused more on assessing students' abilities in self-expression and idea communication. For example, one topic required students to describe their experiences of being misunderstood and how such experiences affected and enlightened them. The writing topic was designed to assess students' ability in conveying their daily experiences in English as well as their reflections on their growth through the experiences they encountered, that is, whether they were able to combine their new learning with their experiences (Martin, D'Arcy, Newton, & Parker, 1976) and make them meaningful. Another reason for students' poor English writing may be that the school curriculum has placed much emphasis on grammar correctness, which results in students not taking risks in their writing. As Martin et al. (1976) claim, when school writing is graded mainly for precision and accuracy, students are reluctant to take risks due to frequent tests; when students do not try to express ideas in their own words, take chances, or connect their own experience with new information, they are restrained from having more opportunities for growth. When students are unable to write fluently in English, they are seriously hampered when they study in universities abroad or take proficiency tests such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Cambridge ESOL Main Suite, and the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT).

In addition, motivation plays a significant role in one's success (Hurd, 2006). Intrinsic motivation is defined as the enjoyment of the engaged task or a sense of fulfillment an individual acquires from engaging something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A person's intrinsic motivation is highly related to the activity engaged in. Unfortunately, the instructor-centered curriculum is often less motivating and more stressful (Burton & Carroll, 2001) because students passively follow what they are instructed to do. Besides, traditional writing assessments are often too disheartening and may not only place students under pressure but also fail to develop their interest in writing. Many teachers consider correcting students' grammatical and mechanical errors part of their obligation (Wu, 2004) and regard themselves irresponsible if they leave students' mistakes uncorrected. However, some students view error correction as demotivating and discouraging. Teachers' red marks may distract students' attention from the message and the content (Sommers, 1982). This distraction, frustration, and discontent reduce

students' intrinsic motivation in English writing. Martin et al. (1976) discovered that students held no intrinsic interest in what was being written and considered it as homework. Similarly, in Taiwan, students regard writing as drills in which they list correct sentences that they have memorized from books or articles. Rather than gaining fun from it, most of them feel bored of writing. Their attitudes would definitely affect their English writing quality. Therefore, they need an opportunity to freely express their feelings and opinions to empower them to gain the ownership of their writing.

Furthermore, apprehensive writers tend to avoid writing and consider it to be unrewarding, and even punishing (Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981). English as a Second Language (ESL) writers might hold more negative and anxious attitudes toward writing than native language writers (Betancourt & Phinney, 1988). The teacher therefore plays an important role in facilitating the English writing process to be accomplished in a relaxed atmosphere (Matthews, 2006; Peyton, 1993a) in order to reduce students' English writing apprehension and promote their English writing efficacy. Thus, adopting a non-threatening writing activity in English writing classes for L2 student writers is essential to reducing their English writing apprehension. In addition to the lack of life experiences and an opportunity for expressing ideas, most of the time Taiwanese students write only for exams. Such a link between writing and exam may make them feel frightened when it comes to writing. Creating a writing context which is anxiety-free may encourage their willingness to explore their thinking and express their ideas.

Reflection is a general term for the activities that involve individuals' explorations of their past comprehension with a view to leading to new comprehension and gratitude (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985). Taiwanese senior high school students' reflective awareness is declining. They are swamped with such a large amount of schoolwork, numerous tests, and exams that they neither have the time to reflect on the knowledge they acquire nor are encouraged to connect what they have learned with their experiences in order to obtain insight or inspiration. Schon (1984) stated that when practitioners become so familiar with a practice that it turns into a routine, they may no longer value what they are doing and eventually feel bored or "burned out" (p. 61). The purpose of the learning process is to create meaning, which requires students to voice and reflect on what they know (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Haag, 1995). It is through constant reflection that one reaches the goal of the learning process, which is to make meaning. Interactive journal writing serves as a channel through which students can articulate and reflect on what they learn (Peyton, 1993a). Through reflective writing, students can connect their thoughts, feelings, and experiences to the learning activities implemented at school (Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997).

Dialogue journal is a written conversation between a teacher and an individual student, which is quite confidential and is an on-going writing throughout a whole semester or school year (Peyton & Reed, 1990). It is a student-centered curriculum in which students decide the writing topics (Peyton, 2000). Teachers do not evaluate/rate performance or correct errors but write and respond as a "partner" in a conversation (Peyton & Reed, 1990, p. 4). Dialogue journal writing supports the writing process by providing an authentic two-way written interaction between

writing partners, which are usually the teacher and the student (Edelsky, 1986; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993; Silva, 1990; Staton, 1988a; Urzua, 1987). Students trust and get close acquaintance with the reader/responder of dialogue journal writing, so they attend to specifics more and explain their ideas in more detail to meet their reader/responder's needs, and feel comfortable with letting out their emotions (Alexander, 2001).

Studies have been conducted to examine the efficacy of DJW on students' learning or affective factors and have found positive effects. Dialogue journals are beneficial to emergent readers and writers (Bloem, 2004). One of the benefits of DJW to L2 language learners is the development of writing fluency (Holmes & Moulton, 1997; McGrail, 1996; Peyton, 1990, 2000). Students' use of language in terms of "the number of words, T-units [Minimal Terminable Unit], cohesive ties, and rhetorical complexity" was more enhanced in their dialogue journals than in their assigned writing (Peyton & Reed, 1990, cited in Holmes & Moulton, 1995, p. 225). Students' expression of personal views and writing purpose was improved through dialogue journal writing (Carroll & Mchawala, 2001). In addition, numerous researchers have confirmed that one of the most significant benefits of DJW is the reduction of students' English writing apprehension (Holmes, 1994; Jones, 1991; Lucas, 1990; Peyton, Staton, Richardson, & Wolfram, 1990; Staton, 1988b) in that DJW increases students' writing confidence. Therefore, they are more willing to take risks to write. With the reduction of writing apprehension, students take the challenge to write more and frequently, thus improving their writing skills (Holmes & Moulton, 1995). One of the participants in Holmes and Moulton's (1995) study reported that his reduced apprehension about the organization/pattern in writing encouraged him to take greater risks with his writing. Alexander (2001) discovered that dialogue journal recorded ESL students' writing development, which fostered the students' writing confidence. Hsu (2006) conducted a 16-week study to investigate the effects of dialogue journal writing and guided journal writing on the writing proficiency and writing apprehension of EFL senior high school students in Taiwan. Two classes of 10th-grade students in National Kangshan Senior High School in Kaohsiung County participated in the study with one class designated as the dialogue journal group and the other the guided writing group. The study findings showed that both groups made improvement in their writing proficiency, and both groups' writing apprehension was also reduced at the end of the study. However, the dialogue journal writing was found more significantly effective in reducing students' writing apprehension. Except for Hsu's study, research on the effect of dialogue journal writing on students' writing apprehension has rarely been conducted.

Moreover, the benefits of DJW to L2 language learners include the development of motivation (Holmes & Moulton, 1997; Lucas, 1990; Peyton et al., 1990; Trites, 2001) and reflective awareness of new experiences and emerging knowledge (Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997; Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, & Perry, 1992; Carroll & Mchawala, 2001; Jonassen, 1994; Jonassen et al., 1995; Peyton, 1993a; Trites, 2001). Earlier studies have shown that dialogue journal writing is helpful in enhancing students' writing motivation, especially that of reluctant and slow student writers (Lucas, 1990; Peyton et al., 1990; Staton, 1987). However,

few studies have explored dialogue journal writing from students' perspectives. One of the few studies, which was conducted by Holmes and Moulton (1997), investigated the perspectives of second-language university students on dialogue journal writing as a strategy for learning English. Twenty-one students in an urban southwestern U.S. university took part in the study. The data were collected from the students' dialogue journal entries and interviews. After keeping dialogue journals for 15 weeks, students reported that their writing fluency and motivation were both promoted. One student noted that she was at first intimidated by writing, but she developed her passion for writing because of dialogue journals. Another student concluded that journals reduced her fear of writing and motivated her to write more. In addition, students in Trites' (2001) study enjoyed sharing with their teacher and peers their ideas, and built strong rapport with them in writing their dialogue journals.

In terms of reflective awareness, Carroll and Mchawala's (2001) study showed that ESL students' awareness of academic writing conventions, as well as an understanding of others' and their own views, was effectively facilitated through dialogue journal writing. In addition, Trites (2001) found that when ESL students evaluated their L1 and L2 learning processes in dialogue journal writing, they developed awareness of their weaknesses and strengths in language learning, achieved autonomy, understood more about similar and different cultural backgrounds, and improved their reflective thinking.

Research Questions

Although DJW has been shown to play a significant role in enhancing students' English writing fluency, motivation, and reflective awareness, and reducing English writing anxiety in the previous studies, the participants in those studies are usually ESL young children or adults. Little attention has been given to the effects of DJW on EFL higher-level senior high school students' English writing fluency or reflections on English writing and self-growth. In addition, little research has been conducted to survey EFL students' intrinsic English writing motivation, writing anxiety before and after DJW, or their responses to DJW. Therefore, this study examines the efficacy of incorporating DJW into high school students' English writing curriculum on students' English writing competency, fluency, and reflections, as well as their English writing anxiety and motivation. Specifically, the following research questions are explored:

1. Is there any significant difference in the students' English writing performance in terms of content, organization, and vocabulary before and after the DJW project?
2. Is there any significant difference in the students' length of writing before and after the DJW project?
3. What are the students' reflections on English writing and self-growth before and after the DJW project?
4. Is there any change in the students' English writing anxiety before and after the DJW project?

5. Is there any change in the students' intrinsic motivation on English writing before and after the DJW project?
6. What are the students' responses to the DJW project?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 41 10th-grade students (i.e., first-year senior high school students) in one class in the National Sun Yet-san University affiliated Guoguang Laboratory School. There were five classes in the 10th-grade at the school, and the chosen class (Monographic Study Class) was more advanced based on its performance in the Basic Competence Test—The National Joint Senior High School Entrance Exam in Taiwan. The participants' entrance scores ranged from the highest of 278 to the lowest of 246, with an average of 255, and the possible range of scores 0-300 (the sum) on the Basic Competence Test.

Instruments

The Pre- and Posttests

The pre- and posttests of the English Writing Competence in terms of content, organization, and vocabulary were designed to examine the participants' writing proficiency. The writing prompts, A GOOD FRIEND and A "LITTLE" LIE for the pretest and posttest respectively, were adopted from the section "What Would You Do?" in *Studio Classroom*—an English learning magazine edited by Dr. Doris Brougham, Nov., 2005 and June, 2006 respectively. The duration of each exam was 50 minutes. The Chinese translation for both topics was also provided because the focus was on writing performance rather than on reading comprehension.

In the pre- and posttests, the students were required to provide reasons and examples to support their solutions to the problems described in the prompts. They were not allowed to use dictionaries or discuss with one another. Samples of one student's pre- and posttests with the scores are presented in Appendix A.

Scoring Rubric

The scoring rubric consists of content, organization, and vocabulary. Each aspect has a maximum score of eight points; therefore, the total score for each test is 24 points (see Appendix C). For the evaluation, a training session was conducted before the raters blind scored the essays. They scored five sample student essays independently utilizing the scoring rubric and compared and discussed their scores to standardize their scoring. Two independent raters rated the essays using the scoring rubric. The inter-rater reliability was 0.97.

Questionnaires

Pre- and post-study questionnaires were administered in the study. The pre-study questionnaire has two parts. The 27 items in the first part are organized in a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The first part is divided into three sections. The first section, which includes items 1–7, aims to explore students' reflections on their English writing performance and their self-development. The second section, which has 12 items (8–19), investigates the intensity of the students' English writing anxiety. The third section, which has eight items (20–27), examines the students' intrinsic motivation in English writing. The second part of the pre-study questionnaire, which includes two open-ended questions, inquire on students' awareness of their writing strengths, weaknesses, and their methods of dealing with writing problems.

The post-study questionnaire (see Appendix C) involves three parts, with the first part identical to that in the pre-study questionnaire. The second part contains two sections. The first provides three open-ended questions, with the first two the same as the ones provided in the pre-study questionnaire, and the third adapted from the work of Sandman (1993). They require the students to reflect on the aspects they have improved on or those that need improving. Section 2 in this part has two open-ended questions that require the students to reflect on their self-growth through the exchange of dialogue journals and situational reading and writing tasks. The third part, divided into three sections, aims to investigate students' responses to the DJW project after its implementation. The 21 items in Sections 1 and 2 are organized in a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Section 1, which has the first 10 items, examines the students' fondness for the DJW project. Section 2, which has the next 11 items (11–21), explores the students' feelings toward their writing ability, anxiety, and motivation through self-evaluation after the DJW project. Section 3, which includes three open-ended questions, asks the students to share their thoughts about keeping English dialogue journals and the importance of keeping a dialogue journal as a means for self-growth. The students were allowed to respond to the open-ended questions in their L1—Chinese, to express their thoughts freely.

After drafting items in the Likert scale and open-ended questions for both questionnaires, the researchers submitted them to three professors in the TESOL program for them to evaluate the items to examine whether the scope of those items and open-ended questions matched the study focus—the validity of the questionnaire scope. Subsequently, the researchers revised the questionnaires based on the professors' evaluation and suggestions. In addition, all the pre- and post-study questionnaires were coded in numbers before the study to allow the researchers to identify responses from the participants after the study.

Follow-up Interviews

To further examine the participants' reactions to the DJW project, the researchers conducted follow-up interviews with six participants. Two of the students with higher scores, two with intermediate scores, and two with lower scores on the posttest were selected to represent students of high, intermediate, and low writing

proficiency, respectively. Six questions in the interview were selected from the items in Sections 1 and 2 in Part 3 of the post-study questionnaire.

The Participants' Journal Entries

The participants were each required to write 24 journal entries during the study. They had to write two journal entries per week, which were submitted to the researchers (instructors). The entries include two types. One was a free topic writing task that required the students to write freely. The students were encouraged to write their experiences or observations, and their reflections in or outside class; they were also encouraged to connect their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with the learning activities they were engaged in. The students worked on free topic writing entries at home.

The other type of journal entries was a situational reading and writing task that required the students to write their entries based on the situation described in the short passage. It was designed to stimulate and induce students to think more extensively and critically. The topics were adapted from the serial section "What Would You Do?" of the monthly magazine *Studio Classroom*. The participants were asked to read each entry, give their personal way of handling the situation, and respond to an additional question prepared by the researchers, which is "Why would you do it that way?" The activity of assigned situational reading and writing task was held in class for the researchers to answer their questions. The researchers discussed the questions with the students in order to develop a sense of community in the classroom (Holmes & Moulton, 1995; Kim, 2005; Lucas, 1990; Peyton, 1988; Reed, 1993).

At the end of the DJW project, 984 journal entries were collected, and specific entries were selected for discussion. In addition, the students' first and last two journal entries, including the free-topic writing and situational reading and writing, were collected to investigate the students' writing length after the implementation of the DJW project. samples of one student's journal entries have been provided (refer to Appendix D).

Procedures

The study was conducted for 14 weeks. In the beginning of the semester, the students were asked to take a pretest in one 50-minute class period before the DJW project. They were then given 20 minutes to answer the pre-study questionnaire on their writing reflections, anxiety, and motivation anonymously. After a brief introduction on the general purpose of the study and on the guidelines about what needs to be accomplished for the following 12 weeks, the students participated in the DJW project. They wrote dialogue journals twice a week, one of which was accomplished at home, free topic writing, and the other in class, situational reading and writing. They were required to submit the free topic writing on Mondays to ensure that they would have more time to construct their content on weekends. Each piece of situational reading and writing held in class was finished within the class period on Mondays as well. The students were informed

that each piece of writing would not be corrected and graded for grammar. After collecting the writings, the teachers responded to both submissions based on what they wrote by showing empathy, asking questions, providing suggestions, motivating further thinking, or sharing their life experiences. The focus of the teachers' comments was on the messages the students conveyed rather than on grammatical errors. The teachers' comments were usually several sentences long. There appear to be more comments on the preliminary drafts than those on later drafts because the students needed more guidance and comments on content on the preliminary drafts, and the teachers reduced their comments on later drafts to develop independent writing.

After the DJW project, the students were asked to take a posttest for 50 minutes. Afterwards, 30 minutes were given for them to finish the post-study questionnaire anonymously. After collecting the students' journal entries, the researchers interviewed six students. Subsequently, the journal writings were blind rated by two raters with respect to the stage of the study in which they were written. Finally, the researchers gathered, computed, and analyzed the scores.

Data Analysis

The writing scores of the pre- and posttests were compared using a *t*-test to determine if there was any significant improvement in the students' writing performance after the DJW project. Word counts of the first two and last two entries were determined and then analyzed using a *t*-test. In addition, the scores on the five-point scale in both questionnaires were analyzed by a descriptive procedure and a *t*-test.

The open-ended questions in both questionnaires were generalized, and some of the students' responses were excerpted to illustrate the results. Follow-up interviews were recorded, transcribed, categorized, and analyzed by the researchers. Samples of the students' journal entries were also selected and discussed.

Results and Discussion

The students' overall English writing performance, as shown by their writing scores from the pre- and posttests, is presented in Table 1. The mean scores are 9.66 for the pretest and 17.61 for the posttest. A comparison of the mean scores of the grades between the two tests indicates a gain of 7.95. The paired *t*-test is 8.69, and the *p*-value is .00 (p < .05), which shows a significant difference. It can be concluded that the DJW project promoted the students' writing proficiency.

The students' writing proficiency in terms of content, organization, and vocabulary, as presented by their writing scores on each item between the pre- and posttests, is shown in Table 2.

The mean score of each item on the participants' posttest is higher than that on their pretest ($M = 6.22 > 3.49$ for content; $M = 5.88 > 2.93$ for organization; $M = 5.51 > 3.24$ for vocabulary). Among the three aspects of writing, the students improved the most in organization (*M* difference = 2.95), followed by content

Table 1
Comparison of the Students' Overall English Writing Proficiency Before and After the DJW Project

English writing	N	M	SD	t	p
Pre-study	41	9.66	3.44		
Post-study	41	17.61	4.39	8.69	.00*

Note: The full score is 24.   * $p < .05$

Table 2
Comparison of the Students' English Writing Proficiency in Content, Organization and Vocabulary

Writing proficiency	Pretest (N = 41)		Posttest (N = 41)		M difference	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Content	3.49	1.40	6.22	1.50	2.73	7.56	.00*
Organization	2.93	1.17	5.88	1.70	2.95	9.01	.00*
Vocabulary	3.24	1.30	5.51	1.52	2.27	7.35	.00*

Note: The full score is 24, and the discrete score of content, organization and vocabulary is 8.
       * $p < .05$

(M difference = 2.73). The results in Table 2 indicate that the DJW project led to a significant difference in their content ($t = 7.56$, $p = .00$), organization ($t = 9.01$, $p = .00$), and vocabulary ($t = 7.35$, $p = .00$). Therefore, it can be inferred that the students' writing proficiency improved in the aspects of content, organization, and vocabulary after the DJW project.

Effects of the DJW Project on the Students' Writing Fluency

Table 3 presents the effect of the DJW project on the students' writing fluency, which was determined by the participants' length of writing in the first and last two journal entries. The participants' mean score on word numbers in the last two entries exceeds that in the first two entries ($M = 214.80 > 167.98$). With the significant difference in word length between the first and last two entries ($t = 8.90$, $p = .00$), it can be inferred that the DJW project had a positive influence on the students' writing fluency.

Table 3
Comparison of the Students' Writing Fluency by Number of Words

Word number	N	M	SD	M difference	t	p
First two entries	41	167.98	67.24			
Last two entries	41	214.80	65.29	46.82	8.90	.00*

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 4

Comparison of the Students' Overall Reflective Awareness of English Writing Before and After the DJW Project

Total	N	M	SD	t	p
Before DJW	41	22.29	3.53		
After DJW	41	23.36	3.94	1.38	.18

Note: * $p > .05$

Table 5

Comparison of the Students' Overall Anxiety on English Writing Before and After the DJW Project

Total	N	M	SD	t	p
Before DJW	41	37.46	11.24		
After DJW	41	27.54	4.96	-5.29	.00*

Note: * $p < .05$

Effects of the DJW Project on the Students' Reflective Awareness of English Writing

The students' overall reflective awareness of English writing before and after the DJW project is shown in Table 4. Their mean score in overall reflective awareness of English writing after the DJW project surpasses that before the DJW project ($M = 23.36 > 22.29$); nevertheless, difference in their reflective awareness of overall English writing before and after the DJW project does not reach a significant level ($t = 1.38$, $p = .18$). The DJW project seemed to have made no significant difference in changing their overall reflective awareness of English writing between the pre-study and the post-study ($p > .05$).

Effects of the DJW Project on the Students' Writing Anxiety

Table 5 shows the effect of the DJW project on the students' writing anxiety. The participants' mean score in overall anxiety in English writing after the DJW project is lower than that before the DJW project ($M = 27.34 < 37.46$). The result also reveals a significant difference in the students' overall anxiety in English writing between the pre-study and the post-study ($t = -5.29$, $p = .00$). Hence, it can be assumed that the students' apprehension for English writing was reduced after the DJW project.

Effects of the DJW Project on the Students' Intrinsic Writing Motivation

The comparison of the students' scores on their intrinsic writing motivation in the pre- and post-study questionnaires is presented in Table 6. The mean of the participants' intrinsic motivation on English writing after the DJW project is higher than that before the DJW project ($M = 25.15 > 23.32$). Therefore, the

Table 6

Comparison of the Students' Overall Intrinsic Motivation on English Writing Before and After the DJW Project

Total	N	M	SD	t	p
Before DJW	41	23.32			
After DJW	41	25.15	2.99	2.45	.02*

Note: * $p < .05$

students' intrinsic motivation on English writing increased significantly after the implementation of the DJW project ($t = 2.45$, $p = .02$) .

Students' Responses to the DJW Project

The students' responses to the DJW project are summarized as follows. Of all the items, the four highest means came from Item 2 (*I like dialogue journals because I can decide my own writing topic*), with a mean score of 3.73; Item 5 (*I like dialogue journals because I know my idea will be respected*), with a mean score of 3.63; Item 9 (*I like dialogue journals because they, as a whole, promote my language ability*), with a mean score of 3.59; and Item 10 (*I like dialogue journals because they make writing more meaningful*), with a mean score of 3.59. In addition, 66 percent of the participants (12.20% for strongly agree and 53.66% for agree) agreed with Item 2. Fifty-six percent (12.20% for strongly agree and 43.90% for agree) agreed with Item 5. Fifty-nine percent of the participants (7.32% for strongly agree and 51.22% for agree) agreed with Item 9. Fifty-one percent (12.20% for strongly agree and 39.02% for agree) agreed with Item 10.

The students' responses to all of the items were positive; thus, it can be concluded that generally, they reacted positively to the DJW project. An average of four students (9.76%) disagreed with each of the items; in addition, none of them held a strong disagreement with any of the items.

An interesting phenomenon is that 9 out of 41 participants (21.95%) did not agree with Item 6 (*I like dialogue journals because I don't have to keep on worrying about grammar errors*), which has the highest percentage of negative results among all items. This result implies that while many of the students valued the idea of content-focused writing, some of them still wanted to have their grammar mistakes corrected.

In terms of the students' feelings toward the exchange of dialogue journals, more than half of them responded positively to Items 11 (75.61%), 12 (63.42%), 13 (60.98%), 17 (51.22%), and 18 (58.54%), suggesting that they believed that they improved in their writing and critical thinking, that they had more confidence in expressing their ideas in English, that they were able to view things in a more in-depth way, and that learning English was more meaningful. Nevertheless, less than half of the students responded positively to journal writing in terms of increasing their writing motivation (Item 19), enhancing their self-understanding (Item 16), and reducing their writing apprehension (Item 14). One possibility of the six students' disagreement with Item 14 might be that they had been confident

writers, who had little writing anxiety in the very beginning; therefore, it is likely that they did not perceive any change in their writing apprehension. Moreover, some of them had started learning English at some ESL language learning institutes when they were children. Therefore, it was easy for them to communicate with the teachers in dialogue journals.

Results of the Open-ended Questions

The students' reflections on their improvement in English writing are categorized into (a) writing organization, (b) writing fluency, (c) explicit idea expression, (d) examples giving, (e) critical thinking, (f) lower apprehension, (g) thinking pattern, and (h) grammatical ability. Ten students reported they could write more organized essays. Twelve students said they could write more fluently. Six students remarked they could now develop and express their ideas clearly in English. Five students remarked that they learned to give examples to support their topics. Another five students noted their improvement and development in critical thinking. Five students said their writing apprehension was reduced. Two students reported they could now think in English. Three students claimed that through DJW, they acquired grammatical ability. The results revealed that the DJW activities helped the students with their reflections on English writing. The following are excerpts from the students' reflections on their English writing ability:

> Regular writing improves my writing speed. *(Student 26)*
>
> In the beginning, I just wrote what I did and now, I will add why I do it. *(Student 14)*
>
> In the beginning, I always had to think in Chinese and then translated my ideas into English. Now I can think in English. *(Student 31)*
>
> I am not afraid of writing compositions now. I can at least write a passage, though there are still many mistakes. *(Student 35)*

Fourteen out of the 41 students reported the limited repertoire of their vocabulary. They generally thought that they did not possess enough vocabulary to express their ideas. Fifteen students also noted by themselves the grammatical errors they made and that they had to improve their grammar.

One of the problems the students encountered in DJW was limited vocabulary. Thirty out of 41 students said they would consult the dictionary and ask classmates or teachers when they did not know the equivalent English words for some Chinese words, but some said they would replace the words or sentences with what they knew.

More than half of the students (34 out of 41) were positive about the effect of the DJW project on their reflective awareness as humans and learners, claiming that the DJW project helped them in their people skills, schoolwork, and relationships with parents and teachers. Nineteen students claimed that through DJW, they reflected more on their people skills and hence strengthened their relationships with others. Twelve students remarked that keeping dialogue journals enhanced their reflective awareness of schoolwork. They said they would reflect on whether they had worked hard enough on their studies. Seven students commented that

through the exchange of dialogue journals, they had lively interactions with their teachers. Five students remarked that DJW contributed to their relationship with their parents. One student said that her thinking ability on different issues was sharpened. Overall, the students had positive perceptions of their self-growth as humans and learners through the exchange of dialogue journals. The study's results are in accordance with those of a previous study (Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997) which found that DJW helped L2 language learners develop reflective awareness of new experiences and emerging knowledge.

In addition, more than half of the students confirmed that the dialogue journal was an important tool for self-understanding and self-growth. Thirty-six out of the 41 students remarked that through situational reading and writing activities, they developed their self-understanding and self-growth. Some students realized their principles of handling private and public matters, some discovered that they had to make some changes, and some realized their real needs. Some students learned to view things from different perspectives, and some claimed that this activity improved their ability to cope with different situations.

Many of the students (33 out of 41) took a very positive attitude toward keeping the dialogue journals. From the students' positive feelings about the DJW project, it can be inferred that this meaning-making and non-threatening writing program improved the students' writing fluency, confidence, and motivation. The students indicated that the DJW project allowed them to consider something they had never thought of before; enhanced their self-confidence so that they could get along better with others; matured them through sharing their ideas, feelings, and self-perceptions; consolidated their thinking when re-reading their journals; strengthened their confidence in English writing; and gave them the chance to reflect on their daily lives. The following are two excerpts from the students' responses.

> It helped me understand myself, reflect on the things I did in daily life and probably think about something that might happen in the future in advance, which is helpful in facilitating self-growth. *(Student 39)*

> Situational reading and writing activity allows me to know more about myself. Every time I finished my writing, I always asked myself why I decided to do it that way and if there were any better solutions. *(Student 37)*

One student, who gave eight points out of ten to the journal writing activity, said,

> When I did this work, I had to calm myself down and thought what I had done this week. By this way, I could figure out the emotions, thoughts, and the thought of myself. It made me know more about me. In fact, I always hide my real thought behind my smile. When I don't know what to do, I seldom ask people for help. I don't know why. When I feel sad, I'll lock the door and cry in the room. When I'm angry, I'll put the anger in my mind, ...

Through writing the reflective journal, the student began to see the conflict between his inner and outer selves. It can be inferred that if he continued with his journal writing, he might be able to reconcile his inner self with his outer self.

Follow-up Interviews

In the interviews, the students' responses to DJW in promoting writing ability, self-understanding, and writing motivation, and in decreasing writing anxiety were all very positive, which support the results in the quantitative analysis. They responded positively to DJW as a tool for self-understanding.

All the six students claimed that the DJW program made English writing more meaningful. The following are excerpts of the students' responses.

> Writing something that concerns or attracts me makes writing meaningful. Through this, I surveyed myself and did more reflections. *(Sally)*

> Before, I just muddled through my English writing. Now, writing is more meaningful to me. *(Helen)*

> Now I don't write perfunctorily. It's unlike writing a composition for a test. You are writing something that concerns and interests you. *(Jean)*

The students' descriptions of their writing perfunctorily when doing the traditional product-oriented writing is consistent with the study of Martin et al. (1976), declaring that what a writer without motivation wrote was merely homework that had been done. Their positive responses to the DJW as a tool for self-understanding serve as another confirmation to Item 16 in Table 11 "I feel that I understand myself better." Moreover, the participants felt that writing was meaningful because they were not writing something dictated by others, which supports the proclamation that humans develop in knowledge and skills through acting on their natural interests (Ryan & LaGuardia, cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000).

One aspect worth noticing is that five of the students expected to have their grammar errors corrected. One of them stated, "If the mistakes were not pointed out, I was afraid that I would make the same mistakes again." Another student responding to the open-ended questions on the DJW project also complained about this no-correction journal writing. She said, "... I don't feel like writing anymore because I make no progress without error corrections. I don't want to write an article full of mistakes." These participants' concern may result from the influence of the prevalent grammar-focused pedagogy in Taiwan on their learning experiences (Wang, 2004), which emphasizes the importance of accuracy, their belief that only through direct correction can they write correct English sentences, as well as their preferences for feedback on errors so that they can improve. In order to meet L2 students' needs for error corrections, teachers can correct errors by rephrasing their ideas to make them more American like (Holmes & Moulton, 1995) and comment on recurring, persistent errors while responding to content of students' entries with positive comments.

Conclusions and Implications

The major findings of the present study can be summarized as follows. First, the DJW project was effective in promoting the students' English writing proficiency, which matches the finding of previous studies (e.g., Dolly, 1990; McCarthy, 1991;

Peyton & Seyoum, 1988). Significant differences were found in the students' writing performance in terms of content, organization, and vocabulary between the pre- and posttests. The DJW project was especially effective in guiding the students to generate more ideas, organize the ideas and transform their ideas into higher quality of written texts. The findings support those of Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini's (2005) study, which revealed that dialogue journal writing provided EFL high school students in Tehran opportunities to express their voice and helped the students gain critical self-reflective writing ability. In addition, the findings echo those of Hansen-Thomas' (2003) case study on reflective journals in a university-level EFL writing course in Hungary, which revealed that students made positive changes in their learning and resolved problems or obstructions by reflecting on their personal writing processes.

Second, the DJW project promoted the students' writing fluency, and thus they could write more. Significant differences were discovered in comparing their number of words in the first and last two journal entries. The study's findings corroborate those of previous studies that dialogue journals benefit students in developing their writing fluency (Holmes & Moulton, 1997; McGrail, 1996; Moon, 1999, 2001, 2006; Peyton, 1990; Wang, 2004).

Third, the DJW project enhanced not only the students' reflective awareness of English writing but also promoted their self-growth as human beings and learners. The study findings indicate that the students' reflective awareness of generating information, arranging ideas, giving each paragraph a topic sentence, and supporting each topic sentence with examples was positively intensified after the DJW project, all of which reached the level of significant differences. Also, with regard to the students' responses to the DJW project as a means in promoting their self-growth, the students realized more about their personality, their real needs, their strengths and weaknesses, and they learned to see things from different angles. It implies that the situational reading and writing tasks provided them with a chance to see things reflectively as well as in a more in-depth way. DJW also facilitated their interaction with their teachers and parents. In conclusion, the DJW project promoted the students' reflective awareness of English writing skills as well as self-understanding. The findings support those of previous studies, which have discovered that dialogue journals are beneficial to students' reflective practice and teacher-and-student interactive engagement (Carroll & Mchawala, 2001; English & Gillen, 2001; Peyton, 1993b, 2000; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993; Reed, 1993; Trites, 2001).

Fourth, the DJW project was effective in reducing the students' writing anxiety. The students were less afraid of expressing ideas in English, of having others read their writing, and of having their English writing evaluated. Accordingly, the DJW project effectively promoted the students' confidence in their English writing. The findings of this study support those of a number of studies which have found that through the means of keeping dialogue journals, students experience a reduction in writing apprehension (Bromley, Winters, & Schlimmer, 1994; Dewine, 1977; Holmes, 1994; Holmes & Moulton, 1997; Jones, 1991; Kelly, 1981; Lucas, 1990; Mikkelsen, 1985; Peyton et al., 1990; Popkin, 1985; Reyes, 1991; Staton, 1988b).

Fifth, the DJW project was successful in promoting the students' intrinsic motivation on English writing, particularly in their tendency to write down what they had observed, their self-perception as active writers, and their initiative in English writing, all of which reached the level of significant differences. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies (Chow, 2004; Lucas, 1990; Peyton et al., 1990; Trites, 2001). In addition, the students' writing interest was promoted and thus they were willing to take the initiative to write.

Finally, the students held positive attitudes toward the DJW project. They felt that their English writing competency, reflective awareness, and intrinsic writing motivation were increased while their writing anxiety decreased. The meaning-making, non-threatening free topic journal writing allowed the students to be willing to take more risks in expressing their ideas in English, and the situational reading and writing allowed them to reflect upon themselves and view things from different perspectives which led to their self-understanding and self-growth. The students believed that they improved their writing and critical thinking, gained more confidence in expressing their ideas in English, and enhanced their writing fluency. In addition, most considered that the project had made English writing more meaningful. English writing was no longer a daunting and fearful task but an enjoyable and fun activity.

Based on the study's findings, four pedagogical implications for English writing instruction in L2 senior high school can be derived. First, writing instructors can improve their students' English writing proficiency as well as writing fluency with DJW, a non-threatening, content-based, and interactive writing activity that encourages students to take more risks in English writing. Orem (2001) suggests that dialogue journals provide ESL learners with an opportunity to practice using the target language in meaningful and authentic contexts. In addition, since the interaction is written, they allow students to use reading and writing in "purposeful ways and provide a natural, comfortable bridge to other kinds of writing" (Peyton, 2000, p. 1).

Second, teachers can incorporate a DJW project to enhance L2 students' reflective awareness of English writing and promote their self-growth as human beings and learners. The students in this study were enthusiastic about the idea of giving examples to support their statements, and learned to reflect more on the organization of their ideas when composing in English. As Peyton (2000) indicates, through the information sharing with the teacher, students had more chances to "reflect on new experiences and emerging knowledge and to think through with another individual ideas, problems, and important choices" (p. 4). Burton and Carroll (2001) suggest that through journal writing, EFL/ESL students develop self-awareness of their learning process by reflecting on and assessing their own learning. In addition, ESL students' awareness of writing conventions, as well as their understanding of others' and their own views, can be effectively facilitated through dialogue journal writing (Carroll & Mchawala, 2001). Further, by evaluating their learning processes in dialogue journal writing, ESL students developed awareness of their weaknesses and strengths in language learning, understood more about cultural backgrounds across cultures, and enhanced their reflective thinking (Trites, 2001).

Third, it is recommended that writing instructors incorporate a DJW project in order to develop L2 students' writing confidence and reduce their writing apprehension. Since the DJW project is a correction-free and meaning-making writing activity, students' ideas and content in journals are valued, and their journals are responded to positively by the writing instructors, which will reduce students' writing apprehension. As Alexander (2001) found in her study, dialogue journals recorded ESL students' writing development, which fostered the students' writing confidence. Dialogue journal writing can be a useful tool for increasing L2 students' writing confidence and lowering their writing anxiety.

Finally, writing instructors can develop L2 students' intrinsic motivation through the incorporation of a DJW project. Since a DJW project is a writing activity that allows students to choose their own writing topics and to share what appeals to them most, they may gain a sense of autonomy, which in turn strengthens their intrinsic motivation. Trites (2001) discovered that ESL students enjoyed sharing with their teacher and peers their ideas and built strong rapport with their readers in writing dialogue journals. Therefore, writing instructors can make good use of dialogue journal writing to promote L2 students' intrinsic writing motivation.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study is limited in some aspects. First, the sample size might not be large enough to generalize the findings to all EFL students in Taiwan. Second, the dialogue writing program went on for 12 weeks, and during this period of time, the students still continued their regular English courses. Accordingly, it may be difficult to discern whether their improvement in writing performance in terms of content, organization, and vocabulary was only attributed to the DJW program, and the lack of a control group would hinder the comparison in results between groups and the justification for the students' writing improvement in the DJW program. Therefore, a larger number of participants and the addition of a control group are recommended. Furthermore, the DJW project lasted for only three months, so the short-term effects might not be indicative of any long-term gains. In addition, EFL writing teachers should also provide appropriate situational reading articles related to students' life experiences, background knowledge, and even preferences in order to maximize students' interests. With proper encouragement, the students will have more similar experiences to refer to and thus can generate more ideas in their writing, which will not only improve their writing proficiency but also lead them to reflect on their experiences. Further, studies that examine the effects of other forms of journal writing like buddy journals, subject journals, or news journals on students' writing proficiency and fluency are worth investigating. Finally, to maximize the effect of a writing project, a writing teacher may consider the students' needs. In this study, some of the students wanted the teachers to correct their grammatical errors. Therefore, it is suggested that EFL writing teachers can comment on constant and repeated errors occasionally while responding to the students' journal content with positive feedback.

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Appendix A

Samples of One Student's Pre- and Posttests

Pretest

I will tell Leah that Cara is not a good listener, and tell she what Care ever said. Though they are both my bestfriend. I don't want to break our friendship. I still tell her this things, because Cara said Leah isn't her favorite, she must have some reason. If that is true, I should help them to solve this question, then they can become the best friend again.

    If Cara hates Leah no reason, they still be friends that is not good for them. If I don't tell Lean this thing, she still think Cara is a good listener for her, but Cara thinks Leah is not her favorite person, so she won't hold Leah's secret. If this is ture, Leah is very poor.

Scores: Content: 3   Organization: 2   Vocabulary: 2
Total score: 7/24

Posttest

If I were Tom, I would go to study instead go to Internet café. Though the computer games are so interesting to me, I still would do my best not to play them. Because I lied to my parents, I could play my favorite games, but if my parents knew this thing, they not only were very angry but also didn't let me play the computer at all. I had the same situation before, in that time, I was so crazy about the computer game. I played them when I had time, even it was 5 minutes. In order to play the games, I didn't do my homework, and my grades had not been good. They were very angry and worried, so they didn't let me play the computer. In that time, I thought the game was all my life, so I lied to them that I went to the library, in fact I went to Internet café. But after I went back, they asked me where to go. I told them I really went to the libery, they told me "we knew where you went, and We also know that you lied to us, we will never stop you playing the computer," after I went to my room, I thought a lot, the game is not true, but because of them, my parents f so narrow to me, is it really good for me? So I decided to play less the computer, and studied hard. I knew one thing, if I get good grades, my parents would not disagree me to play the computer.

Scores: Content: 7   Organization: 8   Vocabulary: 7
Total score: 22/24

Appendix B

Scoring Rubric
Adapted from Ferris & Hedgcock (1998), pp. 239–240

Content

Level	Score	Features
Excellent	8	Superior understanding of topic and writing context; valuable central purpose defined and supported with sound generalizations and substantial, specific, and relevant details; rich, distinctive content that is original, perceptive, and/or persuasive; strong reader interest
Good	6	Accurate grasp of topic and writing context; worthwhile central purpose clearly defined and supported with sound generalizations and relevant details; substantial reader interest.
Fair	4	Acceptable but cursory understanding of topic and writing context; routine purpose supported with adequate generalizations and relevant details; suitable but predictable content that is somewhat sketchy or overly general; occasional repetitive or irrelevant material; one or two unsound generalizations; average reader interest
Poor	2	Little or no grasp of the topic or writing context; central purpose not apparent, weak

Organization

Level	Score	Features
Excellent	8	Exceptionally clear plan connected to purpose; plan developed with consistent attention to proportion, emphasis, logical order, flow, and synthesis of ideas; paragraph(s) coherent, unified, and effectively developed; striking title, introduction, and conclusion
Good	6	Clear plan related to purpose; plan developed with proportion, emphasis, logical order, and synthesis of ideas; paragraph(s) coherent, unified, and adequately developed; smooth transitions between/within paragraphs; effective title, introduction, and conclusion
Fair	4	Conventional plan apparent but routinely presented; paragraph(s) adequately unified and coherent, but minimally effective in development; one or two weak topic sentences; transitions between/within paragraphs apparent but abrupt, mechanical, or monotonous; routine title, introduction, and conclusion
Poor	2	Plan not apparent, inappropriate, undeveloped, or developed with irrelevance, redundancy, inconsistency, or inattention to logical progression; paragraph(s) incoherent, underdeveloped, or not unified; transitions between/within paragraphs unclear, ineffective, or nonexistent; weak or ineffective title, introduction, and conclusion

Vocabulary

Level	Score	Features
Excellent	8	Vocabulary distinctive; fresh, precise, concrete, economical, and idiomatic word choice
Good	6	Clear, accurate, and idiomatic vocabulary; minor errors in word form and occasional weaknesses in word choice
Fair	4	Satisfactory vocabulary; generally accurate, appropriate, and idiomatic word choice, though occasionally predictable, wordy, or imprecise; limited vocabulary; clarity weakened by errors in S-V and pronoun agreement, point of view, word forms
Poor	2	Vocabulary unpredictable, inappropriate, non-idiomatic, and/or inaccurate word choice that distracts the reader or obscures content; numerous word form errors

Total score: /24

Appendix C

Post-study questionnaire on students' English writing reflections, apprehension, motivation, and students' responses to the Dialogue Journal Writing (DJW) Project

Dear students,

The purpose of the questionnaire is to explore senior high school students' English writing affective factors. The questionnaire is for the use of the study, and thus your responses will not be graded. Please feel free to answer any of the questions. Thank you for your participation.

PART I
Please circle the number that matches your situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Section I — Reflections on English writing

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I will generate sufficient information before writing.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	I will give examples to support my argument when writing.	5	4	3	2	1
3	I will arrange the ideas from the most important to the least important.	5	4	3	2	1
4	My writing has a clear introduction, body and conclusion.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I will give each paragraph a topic sentence when writing.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	In my writing, each of the topic sentence in each paragraph will be supported by supporting ideas	5	4	3	2	1
7.	My writing always has a specific topic.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix C (continued)

Section II — English writing anxiety

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	I avoid writing in English	5	4	3	2	1
9.	I am afraid of having my English writing evaluated.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition in English.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	I am afraid that I can't express my ideas clearly in English when writing.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	I am afraid of having others read my writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	I am nervous about writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	I don't feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas when writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	I think writing in English boring.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	When I hand in an English composition, I know I'm going to do it poorly.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	I have trouble organizing my ideas in an English composition.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	I don't think I write as well in English as others.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	I am not good at writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix C (continued)

Section III — Intrinsic writing motivation

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20.	I want to write down what I observe in my daily life in English.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	I want to keep a diary in English.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	When I have a question in writing, I will actively ask teachers for help.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	I write my English composition carefully.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	I think I am an active writer.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	If teachers do not assign any English composition assignment, I will actively do it.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	I enjoy writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	When I get my English composition back, I will correct my mistakes.	5	4	3	2	1

PART II: Open-ended Questions

Section I — Reflections on English writing

1. What are your strengths and weaknesses in English writing? What experiences have led you to believe that you have the strengths and weaknesses?

2. What do you do when you have trouble in English writing?

3. What have you learned this semester about your English writing ability? Please illustrate in what aspects your English writing has improved and in what aspects it still needs improvement.

Appendix C (continued)

Section II — Reflections on self-growth after the DJW project

1. Through the exchange of English dialogue journals, in what ways do you think your reflections as individuals have improved? (e.g., your schoolwork, people skills, your relationship with families or teachers) Please give illustrations.

2. Do you think the situational reading and writing develop your self-understanding and self-growth? Please illustrate.

PART III
Please circle the number that matches your situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Section I — My responses to the DJW project

No. Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I like dialogue journals because I can express my ideas at ease.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I like dialogue journals because I can decide my own English writing topic.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I like dialogue journals because I can focus more on my English writing content.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I like dialogue journals because my English writing content will not be criticized.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I like dialogue journals because I know my idea will be respected.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I like dialogue journals because I don't have to keep on worrying about grammar errors.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I like dialogue journals because they help me understand my thinking better.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I like dialogue journals because they promote my English writing motivation.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix C (continued)

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	I like dialogue journals because they, as a whole, promote my language ability.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	I like dialogue journals because they make English writing more meaningful.	5	4	3	2	1

Section II — Through the exchange of dialogue journals

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11.	I feel my English writing ability has improved.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	I feel more confident in my ability to express my ideas in English.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	I feel my critical thinking ability has improved.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	I feel that my English writing apprehension is lowered.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	I feel that I have a more lively interaction with the teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	I feel that I understand myself better.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	I feel that I can view things in a more in-depth way.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	I feel that learning English is becoming more meaningful.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	I feel that I enjoy English writing more.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	I feel that I can write more fluently.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	I feel that as a whole, my language ability has improved.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix C (continued)

Section III — Students' responses to keeping dialogue journals

1. How did you initially feel when you began dialogue journal writing compared to how you feel now?

2. Which part of dialogue journal writing program do you like better? The free-topic English writing or the situational reading and English writing? Explain.

3. If you could rate the importance of keeping a dialogue journal during your life, where would you place it on a scale from 1–10 as a means or a tool for personal evolution or self-understanding? Explain.

Appendix D

Samples of one student's first and last journal entries

To dear teacher:

Feb 26th is the first day of this new semester. In this morning, we participated at the opening ceremony and took the whole school cleanup.

The campus was very dirty because it was lack of cleaning for a long time. Though our responsibility for cleaning was to clean the outside area, but it was just having a few trash. So we had an extra time to help another classmates in their responsibility. After our 30 people's efforts, all of the falling leaves became to 41 packs of big rubbish at last.

Though there was a little bit toil, but after finishing sweeping all of us feel that there is a honor for our fulfillment, and also we took a picture for commenorating our cooperation. Also it made us more sonsolidation in this cleaning activity. (Student B)

March 4th, 2007
Teacher's comment:

Wow! I'm so proud of you. You helped others with their cleanup. You collected 41 bags of rubbish. That's really something. You must have been all worn out. I can't believe you took pictures. You really know how to enjoy life.

Last Friday, our school held an outdoor bazaar served the guaduated students and the achievement of school clubs.

Our class sold the Guan-Dong foods and Dong-Gud tea. In the morning, we prepared the materials and setted in our booth. Then we started the selling at noon and sold well. In the other side, our guy of comic club have dreo some book markers to sold. We also made periodical to display our art works. But my drawing didn't be collected in periodical. (The chief of the association forgot to take it into the periodical, so I was a bit angry at that.) At afternoon, the Jump Go Jungle party was stared, many singles and dancers showed their ability. It was very splendid. After the outdoor bazaar ended. It was a night party held in the gym. But I must left for the English class at night. So I can't attend the night party. It's a pity. I hope I can attend along the whole course next year. (Student B)

Teacher's comment:
How could she/he be so forgetful? You had all the reason to feel angry. 6/13