

DEVELOPING VOICE USING JOURNAL WRITING IN GRADES 7-12:  
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF  
TEACHER RESOURCES

THESIS

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By

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ABSTRACT

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OF TEACHER RESOURCES

by

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This content analysis examined readily available resources for teachers on development of students' voices using journal writing. The resources included current state-adopted textbooks, professional journal articles, and professional books. The textbooks and professional books were analyzed by the number of pages containing resources available for teachers on journal writing and voice development. The professional articles were analyzed for lessons ready for the classroom on journal writing and voice development. Analysis of the data revealed that the professional books were the richest resource for teachers, while the textbooks were the next richest resource, and the professional articles were the least rich resource.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Writing takes courage. Teaching writing takes courage. Many 7<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade students, and teachers for that matter, become very anxious when the topic of writing comes about. Where can I get information to help my students become better writers? How can I get them to appreciate the experience of discovery through writing that I have, and grow into life-long writers? Some will be Pulitzer prize winners for their writing while others will not, but the charge for teachers remains: how does one even get them to care enough to write well using their own voices?

#### History of Resources

In the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s some of the leading researchers of teaching writing, Nancie Atwell, Linda Rief, Donald Murray, Peter Elbow, and Donald Graves, wrote books about teaching writing workshop where students were taught to take ownership of their writing. (See Appendix for a list of well-known authors of this time.) Using the writing process, students were taught to be more reflective and look to their own lives as sources for writing. One of the stages of the writing process that was emphasized was prewriting—the stage of the writing process when ideas are generated to help the writer choose a topic. It is also an area for writers to experiment and have fun with writing. One of the techniques that can be used for facilitating prewriting is

journaling. Researchers discovered that when students wrote in their journal several times a week they became comfortable with the act of writing enough that their own voices came through the writing. Teacher/researcher Reggie Routman (1991) describes her observations of one young writer: “although Tara was considered one of the lowest-functioning children, ...she found her voice and grew as a reader and writer when she had lots of opportunities to write about what was important to her” (p. 195). When Peter Elbow (1981) required of his students that they write 15 pages a week, he too discovered the “writing was most fun and rewarding to read that somehow felt most ‘real.’ It had what I am now calling voice”(p. 283). Teachers attended writing projects across the country to learn this new way of teaching the writing process and helping young writers find voice. An effective way to teach this type of writing was begun by teacher/researchers such as Nancie Atwell and Linda Rief. Many teachers found the writing workshop format did indeed improve the writing of their students.

### Resources Today

What is being said today about how teachers can create the potential for authentic, risk-reduced writing using journals among their students and how will this method help create a real voice in student writing? Burke (1994) states, “In order for meaningful learning to take place, people have to interpret information and relate it to their own prior knowledge.” Students are given greater opportunities to demonstrate depth of understanding not through recall of basic facts, but through application of knowledge by exploring this prior knowledge in a journal. Donald Murray (2002) quotes writer Willa Cather in his book, “Most of the basic material a writer works with is acquired before the age of fifteen” (p. 6). Because students, especially if they are in high school, have

already acquired material, they should be ready to write with an authentic voice. Nearly twenty years have passed since the educational world's initial focus on the writing process and how to teach it. Many teachers are still enjoying the writing of their students as well as the successes of their student's writing. Teachers continue to grow professionally by attending workshops and conferences focused on the teaching of writing, but it seems necessary to now ask what textual resources are available for teachers to continue their growth, or for those teachers who did not learn about the writing workshop in the 1980s-1990s, to learn now.

This is especially important for Texas teachers. The 2002-03 state writing assessment component of the, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), will shift its focus from formal essay writing to more reflective, authentic student writing. In an effort to help prepare teachers for the many changes, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has prepared an information booklet that bridges the relationships between the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the TAKS objectives. The booklet begins with an introduction to each grade level's objectives where it states, "without practice (in writing) students cannot internalize the skills they need to become confident and competent writers. Students' writing skills can be strengthened in many ways: by keeping a journal..." (TEA, p .4).

The grade 7 TAKS writing objective 1 "tests the student's ability to produce and organize a well-developed composition in response to a prompt" (TEA, p. 10). Objective 1 further states "the student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes and in a variety of forms" (TEA, p. 10). Objective 1 section E reads students should "select and use voice and style appropriate to audience and purpose."

The grade 10 and exit level grade 11 TAKS writing objective is number 4. It measures how well a student can write “in a variety of forms, including business, personal, literary, and persuasive texts, for various audiences and purposes” (TEA, p. 53). Objective 4 further states students are expected to “write in a voice and style appropriate to audience and purpose.” While some teachers will continue to encourage reflective writing, others will need to know how they can better prepare their students for the potential of becoming life-long writers as well as better test takers.

#### Statement of the Problem

TEA is suggesting one way for teachers to prepare students for the TAKS is for teachers to become proficient in teaching and implementing journal writing and developing voice in student writing. Some teachers may not know how to help students develop a writer’s voice by using journal writing.

#### Need for the Study

What resources are available to accomplish these tasks so that middle and high school students can be successful on the TAKS? More importantly, what resources are available to help teachers prepare young writers to develop voice in writing in order to produce writing that is meaningful and effective? How do these resources address journal writing? This study analyzes the contents of educational publications written between 1998-2002 -- the top three adopted grammar/composition and literature textbooks in Texas, professional journal articles, and professional development books written on the teaching of writing -- to see what information is readily available for teachers. Examining the number of pages that have actual activities on journal writing and voice development will show what resources are available for teachers to use in the

classroom. One could assume that since every teacher is supplied a textbook with which to teach, they will be the richest source for teaching journaling and developing voice. Less predominant, but likely to be influential, are professional articles and books.

This information will be valuable to our field because it could help teachers, principals, and school districts in their selection process of recommended materials for the classroom. With current research at their disposal, teachers will be able to prepare students with the newest resources. The study could also help those that prepare these materials by showing areas where more information is needed or areas where materials need to be updated.

#### Definition of Terms

Journal. Definitions of what qualifies as a “journal” are important to establish. Some researchers refer to them as a “writer’s notebook” (Close & Ramsey, 2000; Fletcher, 1996; Murray, 2000). Others refer to this type of writing as “journal writing” (Routman 2000; Atwell 1998; Elbow, 1998). Whichever term is used, most agree for school purposes a journal is not a diary (Lindfors & Townsend, 1999).

Regie Routman (2000) suggests:

Being able to choose what to write about is critical in journal writing. Otherwise students are merely writing to complete an assignment, and quality suffers.

However, students don’t automatically choose to write about topics that are interesting to them. Making suitable choices, like everything else we want students to do well, has to be modeled and supported. (p. 239)

Even though journals are not diaries, students can be directed to choose a topic to write about as long as what they choose to write about will have relevance to the writer

(Hillcocks, 1995). Atwell (1998) and Rief (1992) supply an extensive list of what they call “writing territories” students can choose from to write about in their journals. Others suggest teachers use journals or writer’s notebooks to “guide students to the experience of a writer’s life that is, living with a conscious, reflective stance” (Close & Ramsey 2000, p. 80). Donald Murray (2000) suggests students learn to carry their notebooks around all the time looking at life like a writer.

Voice. A definition of voice is also necessary. In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade TAKS Information booklet (2002) voice is defined as follows:

To express an individual voice means that the composition engages the reader by clearly reflecting the personality of the student writer. The student’s writing sounds authentic and original and genuinely expresses the student’s own personal viewpoint. When a student responds in a highly individualistic way, his or her voice is naturally expressed. On the other hand, formulaic writing frequently prevents students from having the opportunity to express their own voice. (p. 11)

The definition in the exit level handbook is identical to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, so it will not be included.

How do researchers define voice? Donald Murray (2002) defines voice as follows:

It is the human sound that arises from a written page. Voice is rhythm and beat, inflection and emphasis, volume and pause; it is the manner in which the author speaks; it is the flow of what is spoken; it is the emotional content of writing; it is energy and force; it is the presence of an individual writer speaking to an

individual reader. Voice is the most important, the most magical and powerful element of writing. (p. 45)

Others agree voice is the human element that makes the writing exclusively the writer's piece (Routman, 2000; Rafoth, 2000; Newkirk, 1997).

For the purposes of this study, voice will be defined as the quality in the piece of writing that makes the reader believe the writer, makes the reader feel a relationship with the writer, invites the reader to read the next line or turn the page.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Children write by using personal experiences as a source of inspiration, and beliefs in the home and community (Dahl & Farnan, 1998, Routman, 2000).

Journals provide a non-threatening place encouraging students to practice their writing and write about things they know, don't know, or wonder about (Ross, 1998). Many writers emphasize the importance of regular writing times. In order to explore their worlds, students need to be able to write regularly at predictable times in the classroom (Atwell, 1998; Simmons 1996). Not only does frequent and predictable writing improve the quality of student writers, it also helps reduce some of the writing apprehension was mentioned in the first two sentences of this study (Reeves, 1997). When apprehension is reduced, the writer is more able to relax and his/her natural voice as a writer shines through (Simmons, 1996). Barry Lane (1993) believes that "finding voice is a slow process that begins with teaching students to value their own experiences and perceptions and to write them down. Students with the strongest voices often have kept journals for years" (p. 159). Peter Elbow (1998) believes "frequent and regular free writing exercises are the best way to...get voice into your words...you need to learn to get each word chosen... not by you but by the preceding word" (p. 305).

Clearly, the above research shows the importance of using journals in the classroom as a way to develop our students' voices as writers. Studies also show the important status textbooks have earned in the American classroom. In fact, textbooks serve as critical vehicles for knowledge acquisition in school and can replace teacher talk as the primary source of information (Garner, 1992, p. 53).

To date there does not seem to be a study available that has systematically looked at what is currently available to 7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers as resources to use as they prepare students to find voice in writing using journal writing. In fact, no studies were found on the topic of the teaching of the writing process and how it has changed or not changed since the 1980s. Since the teaching of writing continues to be an important topic for teachers to address in assessment and accountability, but more importantly, to prepare students to be better life-long writers and communicators, this study is necessary.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHOD

The research design of the study is a comparative content analysis of textbooks, professional organization's journal articles, and professional development books. The content analysis is a useful method when comparing publications because it can help educators, publishers, and policy makers to understand major trends in the area of teaching writing. This comparative content analysis summarizes what is readily available in the text of current literature for grades 7-12 on developing voice using journal writing.

#### Sampling Procedure

Publications written between the years of 1998-2002 were used. The researcher used a TEA report to determine the top three selling textbook publishers of grammar and literature textbooks grades 7, 10, and 11 in Texas, an on-line database to locate articles written on the subjects of journal writing and developing voice, and on-line searches of the most purchased professional books written primarily for teachers that discuss the teaching of writing.

Textbooks. Below is a table showing the top three publishers for each grade level and the total number of textbook sales for each.

Table 1

Textbook Sales Totals

Textbooks	Prentice Hall	Holt, Rinehart, and Winston	McDougal Littell	Glencoe/McGraw Hill
7 <sup>th</sup> grade grammar	73,892	72,446	67,451	
7 <sup>th</sup> grade literature	69,145	73,380	109,271	
10 <sup>th</sup> grade grammar	45,396	91,273	77,114	
10 <sup>th</sup> grade literature		95,133	77,114	78,728
11 <sup>th</sup> grade grammar	36,982		63,679	33,426
11 <sup>th</sup> grade literature	56,897	79,582	75,446	

Journal Articles. The total number of articles under the topic of journal writing or voice was determined. Then, the number of those that are theory-based articles and the number that are lessons or pieces about classroom practice were determined.

Articles were found through a database search using the keywords “journal writing” and a separate search for “voice (rhetoric)”. Then the search was narrowed to the total number of articles found with classroom lessons. A percentage was calculated based on articles useful in the classroom compared to those not useful in the classroom.

Table 2

Professional Journal Articles

Journal	Title	Author	Date
English Journal NCTE	Giving Peace a chance: Gandhi and King in the English Classroom	D. Gill	2000
English Journal NCTE	Voices in the Junior High Classroom: Lost and Found	L. Hamlin	2000
English Journal NCTE	The Value of Voice: Promoting Peace Through Teaching and Writing	C. Ruggieri	2000
Language Arts NCTE	Charcoal Clouds and Weather Writing: Inviting Science to a Middle School Language Arts Classroom	L. Franks	2001
Voices in the Middle NCTE	Holding Memories, Shaping Dreams: Chinese Children's Writers' Notebooks	M. Barbieri	1998

Professional Books. The researchers of the 1980s were the first ones selected in the professional book search because of their research and practice of the writing process. These authors were chosen if they had written another book as in the case of Donald Murray and Donald Graves, or if they had written a second edition of a previous book as in the case of Nancie Atwell and Peter Elbow. After that criterion was met, books were selected strictly by the number of pages devoted to journal writing or voice development by looking in the books' indices or tables of contents. The grade level of the book was not considered. Since the purpose of the study was to provide resources for teachers, the books that focus on elementary school could not be deleted because of their valuable information. When a school is developing a professional library for their teachers, a wide range of books will be purchased. The elementary-level books have very beneficial introductory and background information that is important for any teacher to consider when developing lessons for voice development using journal writing.

Another criterion was the amount of sales on the popular website Amazon.com. Since it is a well-visited site, it is assumed to be a good source for what teachers deem good books that teach writing.

Table 3

Professional Books Sales Totals

Publishing Company	Title	Author	Date Published	Number of sales
NCTE	Teaching Language Arts Learning through Dialogue	J. Wells & J.W. Lindfors	1999	1,039,221
NCTE	Teaching Writing from a Writer's Point of View	R. Fox & T. Hermsen	1998	674,930
NCTE	The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (and they're all hard parts)	K. Wood Ray	2001	29,521
Harcourt College Publishers	Writing to Learn	D. Murray	2002	1,011,538
Allyn and Bacon	Language Arts Activities for the Classroom	P. Tiedt, I. Tiedt, S. Tiedt	2000	749,922
Heinemann	Teacher's Guide: Helping Writers One on One	B. Rafoth	2000	337,957
Heinemann	How to Catch a Shark and Other Stories about Teaching and Learning	D. Graves	1998	222, 671
Heinemann	Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work	D. Murray	2000	105,655
Heinemann	Conversations	R. Routman	2000	35,237
Heinemann	Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process and Product	S. Harwayne	2001	21,720
Heinemann	In the Middle: New Understandings about Writing, Reading, and Learning 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition	N. Atwell	1998	5,739
Heinemann	Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide	R. Fletcher & J. Portalupi	2001	6,082
Oxford University Press	Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing	P. Elbow	2000	77,904
Oxford University Press	Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	P. Elbow	1998	28,898
International Reading Association	Going Bohemian: Activities that Engage Adolescents in the Art of Writing Well	L. Baines & A. Kunkel	1999	77,099
Prentice Hall	Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product	G. Tompkins	1999	48,461
Eighth Mountain Press	Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussion for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew	U. LeGuin	1998	8,346
Stenhouse	Nonfiction Craft Lessons: Teaching Information Writing K-8	R. Fletcher & J. Portalupi	2001	4,655

The professional books total number of pages discussing journal writing and voice was compared to the total number of pages. A percentage was also calculated.

### Measures

The qualitative part of the study is a brief description of the resource's treatment of either journal writing or the development of voice. The quantitative content analysis approach consists of descriptive statistics, i.e., the total number of pages devoted to the discussion of and/or the actual lesson ideas on how to teach journaling and voice compared to the total number of pages in the book. A percentage was calculated.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Quantitative findings of content analysis are reported through rankings and analyses of the resources examined. Qualitative findings are reported as descriptions of the content examined.

Textbooks. The study showed that Mc Dougal Littell 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades led the sales of books with a combined grammar and literature textbook total of 485,013 copies sold. (See Table 1.) The grammar book on the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level showed the journaling or writer's notebook activities are found in the index under the heading of "Working Portfolio." On the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade levels the writing activities are listed under "Write Away" and "Do It Yourself" in the front of the book in the correlation with TAAS section. The activities "Write Away" are writing prompts related to the theme of the lesson. For example, in Chapter 2 the "Write Away" states: "In ten sentences, write ten amazing facts about your life. Save your sentences in your working portfolio" (p. 36).

Voice is listed in the chapter entitled "Essential Writing Skills" under the section on revising. In a table titled "Six Traits of Effective Writing," voice is defined: "use language that is precise, powerful, and engaging" (p.314). On the next page, voice is further defined as "the way you as an individual express yourself in writing. Your voice should be honest and natural (don't try to sound like someone else), appealing to readers,

and as interesting as you are” (p. 315). There are no suggestions for teachers on encouraging students to incorporate voice into their writing. No connection is made between journal writing and how it helps to develop voice.

Table 4

Textbooks with Percentages of Journal Writing and Voice Pages in Book

Textbook	Journal pgs	Voice pgs.	Total pgs in book	Percentage of journal pgs.	Percentage of voice pgs.
Prentice Hall Grammar-7	5	3	814	.6142%	.6142%
Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Grammar-7	5	11	890	.5617%	1.235%
McDougal Littell Grammar-7	37	4	700	5.285%	.571%
McDougal Littell Literature-7	34	2	1035	3.28%	.19%
Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Literature-7	112	0	812	13.79%	0
Prentice Hall Literature-7	15	0	952	1.575%	0
Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Grammar-10	1	2	1035	.0966%	.1932%
McDougal Littell Grammar-10	30	8	719	4.17%	1.11%
Prentice Hall Grammar-10	6	1	903	.664%	.1107%
Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Literature-10	254	3	1096	23.17%	.2737%
McDougal Littell-Literature-10	49	2	1252	3.91%	.15%
Glencoe/McGraw Hill Literature- 10	95	3	1232	7.71%	.2435%
McDougal Littell Grammar- 11	29	8	714	4.06%	1.12%
Prentice Hall Grammar-11	6	6	950	.631%	.631%
Glencoe/McGraw Hill Grammar-11	68	1	930	7.3%	.01%
Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Literature-11	250	0	1284	19.47%	0
Mc Dougal Littell Literature-11	74	5	1378	5.37%	.36%
Prentice Hall Literature-11	21	2	1302	1.61%	.153%

In the literature textbooks activities to encourage journal writing/writer’s notebook writing can be found in the index under “Portfolio.” Whatever is not listed here is found under “journal,” “free writing,” and “diary entry.”

A sample 10<sup>th</sup> grade journal entry is found in the “Choices and Challenges” section after the short story “By the Waters of Babylon.” It reads: “journals of the dead: compose a series of journal entries that the dead man sitting at the window might have

left in his safe to be found by someone like John” (p. 54). An example of a freewriting activity is found in the unit on poetry where under the section “Writing your Poem” under the prewriting part it says: “Freewrite about your topic. Read over your notes you made...and begin a new freewrite” (p. 280). Voice is listed in the glossary of literary terms and the definition reads, in part, “the term voice refers to a writer’s unique use of language that allows a reader to ‘hear’ a human personality in his or her own writing...” (p. 1143). There are no suggestions on how to teach voice, nor is there a connection made between journal writing and how it develops voice.

The second most purchased publisher is Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. Their combined grammar and literature textbook sales total for 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade are 411,814. (See Table 1.) Holt 10th grammar lists a definition of journals in the “Quick Reference Handbook” which reads, in part, “ Use a special notebook or file folder to record your experiences and observations, feelings and questions....” (p. 957). There are not activities listed in the index to use a journal nor are there any teaching activities. Voice is found in Chapter 1 with a definition “...voice in writing is the unique sound and rhythm of a writer’s language. By letting your own voice show through in your writing, you make the reader know that there is a real person behind the words on the page” (p. 30).

The literature textbooks list activities to develop journal writing. Under “Portfolio Building” there are listings of page numbers with actual writer’s notebook suggestions. There are also several pages of an activity called a “Quickwrite.” These are exercises that are before a literature selection and they encourage students to express the thoughts and feelings they bring to the reading of each selection. Although Holt doesn’t

list “voice” in the index, there are several pages where “tone” is discussed in literature or writing. Once again there is no connection made in either the Holt grammar or literature books between journal writing and its facilitation of voice development.

Prentice Hall is the third ranked publisher with a total of 344,282 copies sold between the grammar and literature books 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. (See Table 1.) The grammar books list definitions of a journal and writer’s notebook, and diaries, but no teaching suggestions. Voice is found as a definition only under a heading “What are the qualities of good writing?” and it is listed as a component among a number of components.

The literature books list pages of activities under “journal,” “comparing journal,” “explorer journal,” “journal entry,” and “diary entry.” One suggested journal entry is “Write a three-paragraph factual or imaginary journal entry describing a major storm whipping through your neighborhood” (p.618). These activities are all part of sections called “Building Your Portfolio.” There is no connection made between journal writing and voice development.

The fourth ranked publisher is Glencoe/McGraw Hill with 112,154 copies sold. (See Table 1.) In the 11<sup>th</sup> grade grammar text journal writing is listed under “journal,” “journal writing,” “contents of,” “form of,” “reader-response,” and “writer’s journal.” In Unit 1-Personal Writing, there is one whole lesson on “Writing in a Journal” where definitions are given as well as suggestions for teachers on how to teach journaling to their students. A journal is defined as “ a place to record thoughts for future reference” (p. 12). Voice is listed under “voice” in the “Writing and Language Glossary” where its

definition reads “the distinctive use of language that conveys the writer’s or narrator’s personality to the reader...” (p. 900).

The 10<sup>th</sup> grade literature book lists activities under headings of “diary entries,” “free write,” “journal entry,” “quick writes,” and creative writing. In addition, at the front of the Annotated Teacher’s Edition, on pages T 58-59, there is a professional article, “How does writing enhance the study of literature?” in which journal writing is discussed in three paragraphs. Paragraph one supports journal writing because it can help students become aware of what is really on their minds. Paragraph two supports journal writing because it gives students permission to think about their lives and how that can be important to the learning in a classroom. Paragraph three supports journal writing because it can help students really think about the class work they complete or work they may not understand. Voice is discussed with one activity called “Writing to Discover One’s Own Voice” where students are invited to complete a creative writing exercise, a poem, for example. There is no link made between journal writing and voice development.

Out of the top textbook publishers, the top five textbooks containing the most information on journal writing were Holt, Rinehart, and Winston – 7<sup>th</sup> grade literature, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston – 10<sup>th</sup> grade literature, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston – 11<sup>th</sup> grade literature, Glencoe/McGraw Hill - 10<sup>th</sup> grade literature, Glencoe/McGraw Hill - 11<sup>th</sup> grade grammar. Although Holt, Rinehart, and Winston had fewer sales than McDougal Littell, their textbooks contain the most information on journal writing. Glencoe/McGraw Hill was ranked last based on the sales of books, yet it is the second

most valuable textbook resource for teachers. The majority of the schools in Texas did not adopt the textbook that has the best resources for teaching journal writing.

Journal articles. The beginning number of hits of the on-line search suggests this would be a rich resource for teachers. However, upon looking at the contents of the articles, out of the original 336 hits, 324 did not meet the criteria of the search. The articles were either written on elementary grades levels, were Master's degree theses studies, or were written from experiences with counseling, nursing, or even medical school preparation. Many of the articles were products of writing experiences in classes other than the English classroom, which is good, but not the focus of the study. There were also a number of articles written from experiences of pre-service and currently teaching teachers about their own personal experiences with journaling. Some articles contained lessons for the classroom, but they are not readily available for teachers of grades 7-12 to access unless teachers are members of an organization or have access to its publications. From this search, articles were chosen that were published by organizations likely to have teachers as members. Organizations teachers join such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) or the International Reading Association (IRA). Then from those, articles were chosen that would be readily available to teachers of grades 7-12. The search for articles discussing the development of voice produced far fewer hits -- 46 to begin -- and only two hits produced articles that could easily be used in the classroom.

Table 5

Professional Journal Articles with Descriptions

Journal	Title	Author	Date	Description
English Journal NCTE	Giving Peace a chance: Gandhi and King in the English classroom	D. Gill	2000	This is part of a unit of study called, "A curriculum of peace" where students focused on how violence and nonviolence affects their lives and recorded them in journals.
English Journal NCTE	Voices in the junior high classroom: lost and found	L. Hamlin	2000	This article describes strategies and assignments that help students understand and develop voice.
English Journal NCTE	The value of voice: promoting peace through teaching and writing	C. Ruggieri	2000	Describes how one teacher chose to incorporate a variety of writing assignments for her students; which helped them develop a voice in their writing because they could write about a topic of concern to them.
Language Arts NCTE	Charcoal clouds and weather writing: Inviting science to a middle school language arts classroom	L. Franks	2001	A cross-curricular lesson where students keep journals that helped them to learn more about themselves as learners.
Voices in the Middle NCTE	Holding memories, shaping dreams: Chinese Children's Writers' Notebooks	M. Barbieri	1998	This activity combines the use of writer's notebooks and the development of voice in classrooms of 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> graders. When the students wrote about their memories, they truly cared about the topic, which showed their true writer's voice.

NCTE, with a current membership of 75,000, had the most hits under the keywords used in the study. *The English Journal* had three articles, *Language Arts* published one article, and *Voices in the Middle* published one article. With the journals narrowed down to these three, all articles published in these journals 1998-2002 were examined to determine the total number of articles published in that time. *English Journal* published 301 articles, *Language Arts* published 229 articles, and *Voice in the Middle* published 138 articles. As Table 5 shows, one of the articles from *English Journal* could be used in the classroom as a lesson for journal writing. That's .33% of

the total articles that discussed journal writing. *Language Arts* published one article that could be used in the classroom as a lesson for journal writing, which is .44% of the total articles written. Finally, *Voices in the Middle* also published one article that could be used in the classroom, which is .72% of the total articles published. *English Journal* published two articles of lessons by teachers that helped to develop voice in young writers. That's .66% of their total articles published and .29% out of all the articles published by NCTE. Out of all the articles published by NCTE that discuss journal writing, the three chosen for this study equal .449% of all the articles published. Of the five articles listed here, none of the five made the connection that voice can be developed through journal writing.

Professional Books. Table 6 shows the results of the professional books available and how many pages of those books are devoted to activities for journal writing or voice development. The books are grouped according to publisher, and then ranked according to the number of books sold.

The first book of the table, *Teaching Language Arts: Learning Through Dialogue*, sold 1, 039,221 copies. The book is a collection of essays written by elementary school teachers who are committed to the teaching of language arts. In addition to actual lessons from the classroom, there is a section on journals in a question-and-answer section on developing writers in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The section includes ideas on how to handle parents and teachers afraid to have students keep journals.

Terry Hermsen and Robert Fox's *Teaching Writing From a Writer's Point of View* is next with 674,930 copies sold. This book is a collection of essays written by teachers who had recently attended National Writing Project's Summer Institute and the

lessons they created to teach based on that experience. Several activities are explained that could be used in the teaching of journal writing.

Table 6

Professional Books with Percentage of Journal Writing and Voice Pages in Book

Publishing Company	Title	Author & Date	# of pgs. on journal	# of pgs on voice	Total pgs. in book	% journal pgs	% voice pgs
NCTE	Teaching Language Arts Learning Through Dialogue	J Wells & J W Lindfors - 1999	17	0	335	5.0	0
NCTE	Teaching Writing From a Writer's Point of View	R Fox & T Hermsen - 1998	25	0	214	11	0
NCTE	The Writing Workshop. Working Through the Hard Parts (and they're all hard parts)	K Wood Ray - 2001	54	0	275	19	0
Harcourt College Publishers	Writing to Learn	D Murray - 2002	9	21	320	2	6
Allyn and Bacon	Language Arts Activities for the Classroom	P Tiedt, I. Tiedt, S. Tiedt - 2000	33	0	362	9	0
Heinemann	Teacher's Guide Helping Writers One on One	B Rafoth - 2000	0	15	161	0	9
Heinemann	How to Catch a Shark and Other Stories About Teaching and Learning	D Graves - 1998	134	0	134	100	0
Heinemann	Writing to Deadline The Journalist at Work	D Murray - 2000	4	28	256	1.5	1
Heinemann	Conversations	R Routman - 2000	49	13	896	5.4	1.4
Heinemann	Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process and Product	S. Harwayne - 2001	49	3	368	13	81
Heinemann	In the Middle New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition	N Atwell - 1998	21	0	546	3.8	0
Heinemann	Writing Workshop The Essential Guide	R Fletcher & J Portalupi - 2001	10	0	163	6.1	0
Oxford University Press	Everyone Can Write Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing	P. Elbow - 2000	0	81	475	0	17
Oxford University Press	Writing With Power. Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition	P Elbow - 1998	29	63	384	7	16
International Reading Association	Going Bohemian Activities that Engage Adolescents in the Art of Writing Well	L Baines & A Kunkel - 1999	14	0	169	8	0
Prentice Hall	Teaching Writing Balancing Process and Product	G Tompkins - 1999	32	0	400	8	0
Eighth Mountain Press	Steering the Craft Exercises and Discussion for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew	U LeGuin - 1998	0	30	172	0	17
Stenhouse	Nonfiction Craft Lessons. Teaching Information Writing K-8	R Fletcher & J Portalupi - 2001	0	10	148	0	6.7

The third book in the table with 29,521 copies sold is Katie Wood Ray's

*The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts).*

This book discusses writing workshop also and encourages teachers to really think about what they are doing. There are several suggestions on helping students use writer's

notebooks as well as suggested scope and sequences for teaching throughout the school year.

Donald Murray's *Writing to Learn* is the fourth book with 1,011,538 copies sold. This is a book written to you, the reader, assuming you are a writer. In other words, it is written to the student and in language they can understand. There are many activities that could be completed in the classroom for journal writing as well as ideas on developing voice.

The next book from Table 6, *Language Arts Activities for the Classroom*, shows sales of 749,922. This book is packed with actual lessons that could be used in a journal- or "commonplace book" as they call it. This book is cataloged under elementary. Fun, intriguing lessons that will help students feel comfortable with writing which will help them drop their guards and their writer's voice will automatically come through, but no pages directly address the teaching of voice.

The sixth book in Table 6 is Ben Rafoth's *Teacher's Guide: Helping Writer's One on One*. It is written for tutors in writing centers, but the information on teaching students about developing voice could easily be adapted to a classroom situation.

Book number seven, *How to Catch a Shark and Other Stories About Teaching and Learning* by Donald Graves is an inspiring collection of stories from his life. At the end of each story is an invitation to write in response to his story. Teachers should read each story first to be sure it is one for students to hear as opposed to ones written just for teachers.

*Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work*, the next book in the table by Donald Murray, with 105,655 copies sold. It is written more specifically for the journalist.

However, the sections on developing voice are valuable to students in the classroom as well.

In *Conversations*, Regie Routman revisits her original ideas about the writing workshop from her first book, *Invitations*. At the time of this study, it has sold 34,237 copies. There are many suggestions for elementary teachers on how to use journal writing in the classroom as well as discussions and ideas for helping student to develop voice. Although the book is written by an elementary level teacher, her activities and suggestions could be adapted to the secondary level as well.

The next book, *Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process and Product* by Shelley Harwayne has sold 21,720 copies. An entire chapter of the book is devoted to revising the use of the writer's notebook and suggestions to use it more effectively are given. Voice is briefly mentioned.

Nancie Atwell's second edition of, *In the Middle: New Understandings about Writing, Reading, and Learning* has sold 5,739 copies and continues to examine the best ways to conduct workshops on the middle school level. Her suggestions for writing territories are most helpful to begin the school year when students are beginning their writer's notebooks or journals.

Another book suggesting ways to improve writer's workshop has sold 6,082 copies and is written by Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi. *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide* has suggestions that have as the authors state in the introduction, "withstood the test of time," for what they believe are the best ways to get students to start writing.

The next book in the Table is Peter Elbow's *Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing* with 77,904 copies sold. One entire section of the book is devoted to speech, writing and voice. The essays tend to be long and deep in theory, but the information is valuable for teachers to help students develop voice.

In similar style to Donald Murray, Peter Elbow's second edition of *Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process* with 28,898 copies sold, speaks to the reader as though he/she is a writer. He gives several activities that writers can use to just get words on paper as well as ideas on how to develop a writer's voice.

*Going Bohemian: Activities that Engage Adolescents in the Art of Writing Well* by Lawrence Baines and Anthony Kunkel with 77,904 copies sold, has many activities that a teacher could use to teach many different parts of the English class. Section One- "Starting Out" has three activities that could be useful to add to a student's journal.

The next book in Table 6 is *Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product*, by Gail Tompkins. It has sold 48,461 copies and is full of ideas for teaching writing in grades K-8. Part two "Writing Domains" describes several different types of writing. Journal writing is a large part of this section, which includes many ideas on what students could write for journal writing in the classroom.

The next book in Table 6 selling 8,346 copies is written by Ursula LeGuin- *Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussion on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew*, contains many useful exercises for the development of voice.

The last book of Table 6 sold 4,655 copies written by Fletcher and Portalupi focuses the writing of nonfiction. *Nonfiction Craft Lessons: Teaching Information*

*Writing K-8*, discusses the use of learning logs to collect information. Voice pages are primarily revising activities used after a piece has been drafted. This book is designed to be used in the mini-lesson part of writer's workshops, so no real journal writing activities, but there are some helpful suggestions for addressing voice.

Professional books are the richest source of information for teachers. The top five professional books based on the percentage of journal writing exercises are 1) *How to Catch a Shark and Other Stories About Teaching and Learning*-Donald Graves, 2) *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*-Katie Wood Ray, 3) *Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process and Product*-Shelley Harwayne, 4) *Teaching From a Writer's Point of View*- Terry Hermsen and Robert Fox, 5) *Language Arts Activities for the Classroom*- Pamela Tiedt, Iris Tiedt, and Sidney Tiedt.

Out of these five books, numbers 2, 3, and 5 are designated elementary level books. A conclusion that may be drawn from this data is the elementary level schools devote more time to the teaching and development of journal writing, than secondary schools do. There are more researchers writing books based on experiences in the elementary classroom, however the activities in these books could be adapted to the secondary level. The books focusing on the secondary level do not have as much material for teachers who are teaching voice development through journal writing.

The top five professional books based on the percentage of developing voice pages are 1) *Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussion on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew*- Ursula LeGuin, 2) *Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*- Peter Elbow, 3) *Writing*

*With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*- Peter Elbow, 4) *Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work*- Donald Murray, 5) *Teacher's Guide: Helping Writers One on One*- Ben Rafoth.

*Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work, Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing, and Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process* make strongest link to journal writing and how it develops voice. The premise is that because the writer is writing often, and writing a lot of text when they do write, and the writer is writing on a topic of concern, their authentic voice is heard in the writing.

#### Comparison of Three Sources

Figures 1 and 2 were created to show the total percentage of material available in voice development and journal writing separately. A cumulative percentage of each resource in Figure 3 shows the total percentage of pages each resource has that a teacher could use to teach journal writing and voice development. These will show which of the three resources will best serve teachers.

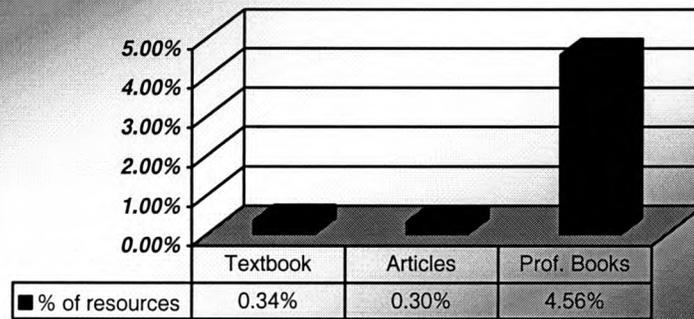
Voice Development. Figure 1 shows when a teacher is looking at the professional books, lessons on voice development will be found in 4.5% of the books. When teachers look to articles for lessons on voice development, they would find lessons in .30% of the journals. Textbooks show that a teacher could find information in .34% of the textbooks.

Journal Writing. Figure 2 shows when teachers look to professional books for lessons on journal writing, they will find information in 8.37% of the books. When teachers look to their textbooks for lesson ideas, they would find ideas in 6.06% of the books. Articles show that a teacher could find lessons in .45% of the journals.

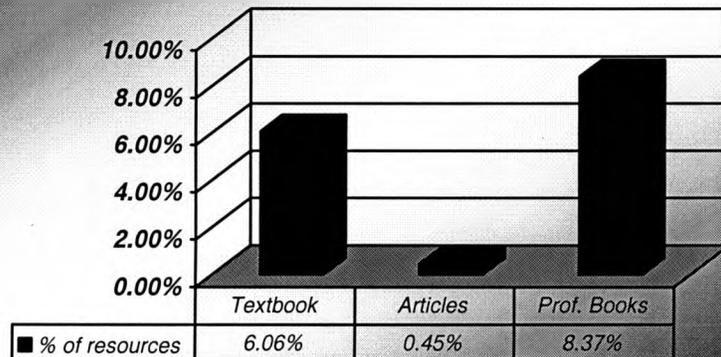
Journal Writing and Voice Development. Figure 3 shows the combined totals of journal writing and voice development in all three resources. Teachers would find activities or lessons for journal writing and voice development lessons in the professional books in 12.93% of the book. Textbooks would be somewhat helpful since 6.4% of the resources focus on journal writing and voice development. Articles would be the least beneficial to teachers – only .74% of the activities or lessons on journal writing and voice development.

The professional books stayed mostly the same in both areas of journal writing and voice development showing an equal emphasis for teacher preparation and professional development in these areas. The articles have a slightly higher percentage in the areas of journal writing than in voice development. Finally, the textbooks show the majority of their resources are found in lessons and activities in journal writing.

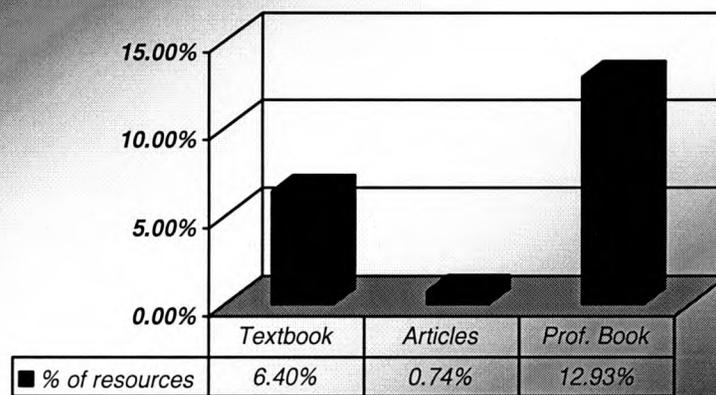
**Figure 1 Practical Applications of Voice Development**



**Figure 2 Practical Applications of Journal Writing**



**Figure 3 Combined Percentages of Resources in each Resource**



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine what resources are available for 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to prepare students to become better writers. More specifically, the purpose was to locate resources published between of 1998-2002 that teach journal writing as well lessons on how to as implement journal writing in the classroom, and how over time this helps develop a writer's voice among students. Resources included textbooks, professional journal articles, and professional books. A comparative content analysis of data was used. The data was analyzed both qualitatively, (discussing the content of the information found), as well as quantitatively, (discussing the amount of information that was found in each resource compared to the number of pages in the resource).

#### Summary of Textbooks

Journal Writing. It was assumed at the beginning of the study that since textbooks have become such an important part of a school's curriculum, they would be the most valuable resource for information. Out of the top textbook publishers, textbooks containing the most information on journal writing were

1. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston – 7<sup>th</sup> grade literature
2. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston – 10<sup>th</sup> grade literature

3. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston – 11<sup>th</sup> grade literature
4. Glencoe/McGraw Hill - 10<sup>th</sup> grade literature
5. Glencoe/McGraw Hill - 11<sup>th</sup> grade grammar

Although Holt, Rinehart, and Winston had fewer sales than McDougal Littell, their textbooks contain the most information on journal writing. Glencoe/McGraw Hill was ranked last of the sales of books, yet it is the second most valuable textbook resource for teachers. The majority of the schools in Texas did not adopt the textbook that has the best resources for teaching journal writing, obviously not an important criteria for those who selected the books.

Voice Development. None of the textbook's treatment of voice development exceeded 2% of the entire book, which is not enough to rank the books. Again, this was not an important topic for the publishers to include in their books, yet helping student's develop voice is now part of the state assessment system.

#### Summary of Professional Journal Articles

The content analysis of professional journal articles that discuss the link between journal writing and voice was expected to produce more positive results than the analysis of the textbooks. However, the majority of the articles that came up in the search were theory-based discussions searching for definitions of voice, not actual lessons structured to assist teachers as they help students develop voice in their writing.

#### Summary of Professional Books

Journal writing. Professional books are the richest resource for teachers when the percentage of material is considered. The top five professional books based on the percentage of journal writing exercises found in the book are

1. *How to Catch a Shark and Other Stories About Teaching and Learning*  
Donald Graves
2. *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (and they're all hard parts)*- Katie Wood Ray
3. *Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process and Product*- Shelley Harwayne
4. *Teaching From a Writer's Point of View*- Terry Hermsen and Robert Fox
5. *Language Arts Activities for the Classroom*- Pamela Tiedt, Iris Tiedt, and Sidney Tiedt

Out of these five books, numbers 2, 3, and 5 are designated elementary level books. So, even though the numbers show these are valuable resources, they are not readily available to the secondary teacher. It seems the elementary level schools devote much time to the teaching and development of journal writing, but the secondary schools do not. Or at least there seem to be more researchers writing books based on experiences in the elementary classroom. That is not to say that the activities in these books could not be adapted to the secondary level. They could, but the books focusing on secondary levels do not have as much material. Consequently, grades 7-12 teachers would not have the benefit of using as many books as elementary teachers do.

Voice development. The top five professional books based on the percentage of developing voice exercises or activities are

1. *Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussion on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew*- Ursula LeGuin
2. *Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*- Peter Elbow
3. *Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*- Peter Elbow
4. *Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work*- Donald Murray
5. *Teacher's Guide: Helping Writers One on One*- Ben Rafoth

Three out these books strongly link the use of journal writing and how it develops voice, the two written by Peter Elbow and the one written by Donald Murray. The

premise is that writers who write often, who write a lot, and who write on a topic of concern develop an authentic voice in their writing.

### Limitations of the Study

Because grammar and literature textbooks from the Texas state adoption list were examined, generalizations about *all* textbooks' treatments of journal writing and developing voice cannot be made. Nevertheless, Texas is the nation's largest consumer of textbooks and can be considered to have a strong influence on the publishing industry.

Just in the four publishers studied, the terms for journal writing and voice varied greatly and because of this, some of the information may have been overlooked in the study. Perhaps all publishers could agree on a common terms.

The study of the articles was done using only one on-line database and two keywords, "journal writing" and "voice (rhetoric)." Perhaps if other terms were used, more secondary articles may have been found. Again, common terms could be helpful here for future researchers. Another reason for the low number of articles focusing on practical application of lessons for journals and voice development may be that secondary teachers do not feel they have the time to write and publish.

### Conclusions

Textbook publishers need to take a more aggressive stance to integrate current knowledge about the development of voice in student writers. The top selling textbook publishing company such as McDougal Littell needs to supplement its current texts with more opportunities for students to practice journal writing. Perhaps more of textbooks should include more activities for the freewriting that Elbow speaks of and not so much

directed assignment-type writing such as prompts related to the pieces of literature contained in the textbook. Just let students write.

Professional journals should perhaps make the publication of teacher- conducted research more accessible to publication. The process of getting published is not an easy one, and could turn teachers who are doing great work away because of the complexity of the process.

Secondary teachers need to believe what they do in the classroom is worthwhile. Those using journal writing to develop voice should share with others by writing and publishing their findings.

There appears to be many elementary teacher/researchers who are writing books, but where are the secondary teacher/researchers? We need more secondary researchers to visit our schools and write books about what they see in the writing classrooms.

Although researchers say these two concepts are related to each other - journal writing and how it develops voice - there are no resources available that specifically link the two together. Barry Lane, Donald Murray, and Peter Elbow make the connection, but there doesn't seem to be a follow through in the lessons that are created. Journal writing is one of the least threatening ways for students to write. It is also one of the best ways to create a favorable atmosphere in a classroom. Finally, journal writing reduces the apprehension of writers because of its non-judgmental format.

Obviously, the teachers who helped create the TAKS felt that voice developed through journal writing is important. Journal writing tops the list of suggested activities for developing voice in the TAKS Information Booklet. Perhaps the publications of the 1980s need to be revisited and revised for the 2000s. Quality and quantity of journal

writing, and teacher assessment of journals need to be two areas considered by those writing the revised publications. Many examples of actual student journal writings showing the progression of growth from immature writers to mature writers would be most helpful for secondary teachers.

One suggestion for further study would be to conduct a case study on what teachers actually use to teach journal writing and voice development. This study shows what information is available for teachers to use, but it would be interesting to learn what strategies teachers are actually using in their classrooms. Finally, much of the material in the textbooks and professional books presented voice in the revising part of the writing process, not as journal writing, which is in the prewriting stage. A study needs to be done where students' progress is tracked throughout a school year, or some other time frame, when journal writing is used to encourage the development of voice. Such research should focus on the kinds of journal writing where students have a choice in topic and are encouraged to write frequently. Frequent writing facilitates the kind of writing that Elbow describes as generative, that is, the next word is chosen by the following word. This type of study re-establishes that journal writing does indeed facilitate the development of voice in our students' writing.

Having this knowledge now may have the same impact that publications about journal writing had on teachers in the 1980s. Those publications encouraged teachers to invite students to write about their lives and develop authentic voices.

## APPENDIX

1. Lucy McCormick Calkins
2. Barry Lane
3. Tom Romano
4. William Zinsser
5. Dan Kirby and Tom Liner
6. Toby Fulwiler
7. Ralph Fletcher
8. Georgia Heard
9. Annie Dillard
10. Natalie Goldberg

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## VITA

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