

Multimodal Reflective Journals and Life Writing: A Didactic Approach to Enhanced Learning

Dana Di Pardo Léon-Henri

ELLIADD, University of Besancon Franche-Comté, France
danaleonhenri@gmail.com

Abstract

This research investigates how self-reflection, journaling, and life writing can foster significant educational and personal growth among tertiary-level students with a focus on the tumultuous period of the Covid-19 pandemic. It explores the transformative power of these methodologies in developing metacognitive skills, soft skills, and self-regulation abilities essential for students navigating contemporary challenges exacerbated by rapid technological advancements

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and social shifts. Utilizing a multimodal approach, students engaged in reflective writing exercises incorporating text, drawings, photography, and other media forms, revealing diverse coping mechanisms and enhanced self-awareness.

The data, drawn from anonymous student journal excerpts from 2020–2021 and 2021–2022, underscores the benefits of reflective journaling in promoting emotional resilience, intercultural awareness, and improved cognitive processes. Through detailed qualitative analysis, the study illustrates the profound impact of life writing on students' self-perception, academic performance, and overall well-being. It reveals how these practices enhance students' abilities to process complex emotions and situations, fostering a deeper understanding of themselves and their environments. The findings advocate for the integration of reflective journaling and life writing into educational practices to better prepare students for the evolving demands of the global job market and personal life challenges, highlighting their role in developing a versatile, resilient, and self-aware individual.

Introduction

Technology's rapid evolution and global interconnectedness have fundamentally reshaped societies. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019 accelerated these transformations, disrupting norms and prompting profound shifts across personal, educational, and professional spheres worldwide. This crisis highlighted the critical importance of resilience and adaptability in the face of unprecedented challenges, fundamentally reshaping perspectives on work-life balance and career trajectories. Educational

institutions swiftly adapted to remote learning during the pandemic, revealing disparities in technology access and necessitating a reassessment of teaching methodologies.

For educators, these shifts significantly altered teaching and learning practices, emphasizing the shared responsibility between teachers and students in achieving common educational objectives (European Commission, 2013). Educational settings became crucial arenas for cultivating skills that foster independence and resilience. The pandemic, coupled with ongoing technological advancements, has rapidly transformed the job market (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021), necessitating the development of effective strategies to navigate personal and professional pressures. Key among these are metacognitive skills, soft skills such as communication and adaptability, and self-regulation abilities, all vital throughout an individual's lifetime.

In an increasingly interconnected world, cultural capital has gained prominence, with reflective journals and life writing serving as powerful tools for students to explore personal narratives and cultural identities. These practices not only enhance language proficiency and communication skills but also cultivate empathy and foster intercultural understanding. This paper explores how reflective journaling and life writing are pivotal in transforming tertiary education, especially in the post-pandemic era. By examining their impact on metacognitive development, acquisition of soft skills, and enhancement of self-awareness and self-regulation, this study illuminates their role in fostering holistic student growth. Through qualitative inquiry and educational theory, it underscores their pedagogical value in preparing graduates for diverse professional environments.

Contextual Framework

Technological advances and increased international mobility have provided the momentum for remarkable change on many levels in our societies. However, the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019 and 2020 abruptly halted cities and catalyzed significant social transformations marked by uncertainty, stress, and fear. Distance learning exacerbated inequalities based on technological access, reshaping global job markets with a shift to soft skills, AI-driven job replacement, and demands for flexibility, reflecting ongoing re-evaluations of societal roles (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021).

During this unprecedented worldwide event, many individuals took the time to reassess their life/work balance. Simultaneously, this occurrence bolstered world job markets. On an international scale, transformations accelerated on differing levels pertaining to professional skill requirements (shifting from hard to soft skills), diminishing job opportunities since many jobs are being replaced by technology or artificial intelligence (AI), and candidate flexibility demands (nomad status or working from home, higher wages, improved quality of life). Today, this trend continues to accelerate as the impact of the place we occupy in this world is under scrutiny and constant revaluation. Highly concerned by the global and environmental situation, tertiary-level students continue to navigate these turbulent waters. Widespread anxieties persist and remain relatively high as students wonder about looming professional career choices increasingly impacted by the influence of AI-related technologies.

Educators faced paradigm shifts in teaching methods during Covid-19, necessitating adaptability in both pre-pandemic and post-pandemic educational contexts (European Commission,

2013). This period highlighted the shared responsibility of teachers and students in achieving educational objectives, fostering independence, and resilience amid rapid technological advancements and job market volatility (Schwab, 2016; Gamota, 2020).

As societies evolve amidst technological dependencies and pandemic influences, the job landscape continues to transform (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021), necessitating skills in metacognition, soft skills, and self-regulation (Brown et al., 1983; Gray, 2016). These skills are crucial for navigating personal and professional challenges, emphasizing the need for strategic development and adaptability in an uncertain global environment. To better ascertain these skills, it is fundamental to first define, then illustrate each group.

Transversal Life Skills

Understanding how our own cognitive process functions is beneficial in understanding how others function, particularly in teamwork and social activities. Metacognitive knowledge helps individuals grasp their own and others' cognitive processes (Flavell and Wellman, 1977). Acquired formally or informally, these skills are transferable and transversal (Flavell, 1979). Metacognitive awareness allows individuals to recognize and articulate their knowledge and understanding (Brown et al., 1983). They evolve with personal and professional experience and potentially improve through social interaction and knowledge. Schraw and Dennison (1994) offer insights into techniques for assessing students' metacognitive skills, while Wenden (1998) examines their role in language learning. Oxford (2011) provides practical methods for integrating metacognitive instruction into language teaching. Classroom techniques can also enhance listening

comprehension and communication skills (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012) during debates and discussions. Reflective journals prompt students to examine their critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving approaches, fostering a heightened awareness of these cognitive abilities. A veritable superpower, this heightened awareness can be a powerful tool to improve overall communication skills.

Soft skills enable individuals to effectively interact, communicate, and eventually collaborate with others. Cherished by employers, these transversal skills include (verbal and non-verbal) communication, collaboration or teamwork, adaptability, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, empathy, leadership, time management, conflict resolution, networking, cultural awareness, and innovation or creativity. The value attributed to each of these transversal soft skills will evolve with time, since AI and technology in the workplace is undergoing constant and rapid change (Gray, 2016). During Covid-19, the need to self-isolate and remain at or work from home became a massive challenge for some, while others flourished and welcomed the opportunity. Support and guidance were often provided to individuals (students or employees) who needed to quickly adapt to and learn more about technology. Those who often flourished during this global medical crisis were the autonomous self-taught learners. Possessing these transversal soft skills clearly made the difference, as did the ability to adapt and manage one's productivity, emotions, and stress levels which brings us to the next group of significant skills.

Self or auto-regulation skills are significant since they refer to the ability to manage or control one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to better adapt to situations, while remaining focused on achieving one's desired objectives. A complex group of skills

influencing a wide range of behaviours, they involve being aware of one's own internal (emotional or psychological) states (Carver and Scheier, 1998). Emotional intelligence and regulation (feeling management and emotional responses), impulse control (resisting urges and maintaining self-control), self-discipline (setting goals and prioritizing), cognitive control (concentration and memory), stress management (relaxation and strategies to manage stress), and self-monitoring (observing and evaluating one's actions, thoughts, and behaviors, often through reflection and self-assessment) are also affected by self-regulation. These skills play a crucial role in many areas of our lives: from interpersonal relationships, academic, professional success, to overall self-development (Gross, 1998).

Reflective Journals and Life Writing

From a sociolinguistic perspective, each language learning environment is a unique context since it can serve as a forum for constructing and reconstructing or reproducing idealizations of one's own intercultural spaces (Duff, 2015). These idealizations can symbolize cultural capital. As Barnawi (2017) and McNamara (2010) postulate, English language assessment practices are social activities in transnational spaces, and the ways in which students are being assessed in social and educational contexts reflect how they are seen, positioned, and accommodated by their institutions. Their voice and concerns should therefore find a place for expression. An opportunity for enhanced learning and the construction of cultural capital, reflective journals are a means to encourage students to reflect on and renew with the pleasure of writing and expressing one's inner voice. Autobiographical writing englobes

reflective journals and life writing. A prominent French specialist in this field Philippe Lejeune has had an indelible mark on the development of autobiography pedagogy and the application of life writing in educational contexts. Lejeune (1989; 1996) presents a comprehensive overview and theoretical framework for exploring, theorizing, and understanding this genre. Self-representation, identity construction, and the zones between truth and fiction are the focus of his life's work (Lejeune, 2008; 2015). Before presenting the methodology for this study, it is important to initially understand the characteristics of life writing.

Life writing refers to the genre of literature that encompasses personal reflections, accounts, or narratives about one's own life experiences. Regardless of its form, life writing is a student-centered approach that encourages learners to develop a 'can-do' attitude, which is effective, motivating, and enjoyable for both students and teachers (Jones, 2007). Smith & Watson (1996) explore key concepts related to life writing within the context of literary theory, providing critical analysis and interpretation methods. This genre can take various forms, such as diaries, letters, (travel) journals, personal essays, vlogs, blogs, memoirs, or autobiographical novels, and it has existed across cultures. Some examples include encrypted historical archives (Whitbread, 1992) or light-hearted fun (Fielding, 2013).

Life writing and the diary share similarities in that they involve personal accounts and reflections on life experiences. However, they differ in scope and intent. A diary, often private, is typically a daily or regular record of events, thoughts, and feelings, intended for personal use. In contrast, life writing has a broader scope and often aims to explore themes and convey a deeper sense of life's meaning. While a diary tends to be spontaneous and chronological,

life writing can be more refined and destined for publication. Analysis of these forms reveals various expressions of self, including identity, intercultural communication, and reminiscence.

A dynamic mechanism and inherently multimodal, life writing invites creativity and innovation through various forms and media. Expressing insights and social interactions with others, they are windows into what makes us tick and how society functions. From diachronic or synchronic perspectives, these practical record-keeping tools also provide valuable insights into the unique cultural viewpoints or perspectives, ideologies, and philosophies on life. Building bridges of understanding between increasingly diverse populations, life writing is the articulation of lived experiences, ideas, values, and feelings (Hasebe-Ludt, 2014). Students who practice this form of literature gain a deeper perception of their own identity, while developing an inherent appreciation and heightened level of respect towards others.

Methodological Framework

This Languages for Specific Purpose (LSP) literature class for non-specialists of English¹ was composed of approximately 35 first year Master (M1) students from differing disciplines (philosophy, sociology, children's literature, etc.). The anonymous journal excerpts from this task-based multi-modal reflective life writing activity were taken from 2020–2021 and 2021–2022.

Students were encouraged to reflect and express their thoughts in English using either modern technology (computers) or traditional methods (notebooks and writing instruments). There

¹ Based on life writing as a literary genre. For full course details, refer to Di Pardo Léon-Henri (2020).

was no word limit to avoid influencing their personal investment and creativity. They were also encouraged to adopt a multi-modal approach, incorporating various media and art forms such as drawings, word clouds, paintings, photography, video, sculpture, and collage. All combinations of media were welcomed and appreciated to make their work unique and personal.

Results

Corpus A: (Autumn 2021, three of 35 students or 11% of the total number of enrolled students)

Three participating female students² M1 (Humanities) all French origin in differing fields:

Modern Literature (student referred to as [MG]), Antiquity Studies (EP), Theatre Studies (AB).

Their approach to this activity was substantially different. While all three used various techniques, such as words and paragraphs, poetry, drawings, photography, pictograms, and montage, one student decided to include paintings of her feelings in *aquarelle*. Submitted on the Moodle platform in .pdf format, hand drawn or painted artistic work was first photographed and then integrated into the .pdf document.

With black and white scribble-type drawings, MG provides a title and descriptive initial backdrop. She provides daily entries; however, on many days a drawing or short poem replaces text. Revealing a true penchant to join the rank of author, she states: ‘My very first bestseller.’ She also reveals a few marketing skills for a creative and exciting read:

² Names will be replaced by their initials to protect the student’s anonymity.

Covid Diary

My very first bestseller (without any undue ego on my part), which I will call: “*Journal d’une Exilée Covidée*”³. I promise you many epic twists and turns... I will be the only character... A full dive into what has been called the “stream of consciousness”. A scenario voluntarily reduced to a closed space, namely the four walls of my room... A sort of contemporary rewriting of Robinson Crusoe, the exotic and wild setting in less.... although with the legion of microbes that plague my inhospitable environment, one could quickly create a parallel between my room and a hostile jungle.

With a Robinson Crusoe reference, she beckons the call of adventure and employs words that intrigue (“exotic and wild”). The author’s humorous, sardonic tone is expressed with the “four walls of my room” and the Covid reference “the legion of microbes that plague my inhospitable environment.” Tinged with a strong militant undertone MG, uses humour to describe and explain her frustrations, as well as her overall stance on the vaccination program that was highly promoted and enforced at that time:

Day 2: Sunday 14th of November 2021

It seems that time passes. Slowly, but, as a matter of fact, it passes. I still don’t realize the verdict that fell yesterday morning, at 11:39 am, precisely (since it is specified on the result of my “swirling cotton swab nostril rape” test). “I keep in memory the serious and concerned features of this pharmacist, who must have been thinking: “another big anti-vax turkey who will inflate the statistics of our country in full sanitary decline... but go and get vaccinated”. And the boy is probably right, yes, I am an egoist who refuses to submit to a simple collective and citizen

³ English translation: “Diary of an Exiled Covid Victim”.

gesture, resulting from gene therapy, which would have certainly participated in saving lives and which would have been only a small step for me and a huge step for humanity. I could have felt invested with the divine mission to save the world, yes! But alas, I don't feel like a superhero, and I don't have any admissible argument to justify my unforgivable crime against humanity. So, I plead guilty, O Mister Pharmacist!

And as a punishment for this sin of civil irresponsibility, here I am (again) locked up, confined for at least seven long and interminable days, having for doubtful company, only the presence of my own microbes that I will have soon affectionate as one affectionate one's captor in the case of a severe Stockholm syndrome.

Replete with many literary devices such as simile, metaphor, alliteration, etc., her words reveal the daily dilemmas many people faced during the pandemic. She shares the rationale behind her decisions while reflecting on the cause and effect of her situation. Resolutely opinionated, MG assumes her choices and shares the collective feelings of isolation that characterised this chaotic period.

Similarly, EP establishes her intent very early in "My Diary" with a very modest, discrete, and humble:

I know that my diary is more like a story, but a diary is private, so I don't dare share all my feelings.

She continues with a structured, regular weekly installment which ironically occasionally goes against her original intentions as this entry shows:

Week one

September 27th to October 3rd

Since the beginning of the school year, I'm a little bit sad. Why? Because I really feel alone. The three years

ago, I was ... [studying the Classics]⁴ ...with three close friends. But since the start of the academic year... I'm alone here. Another person joined me in Master, but [it] is not the same, I really feel alone. For the moment, I don't have a lot of courses, but I have a lot of homework.

EP illustrates her need for coping mechanisms, self-awareness, and self-regulation in her rationalizations and to fill the imposed void. Her texts are underscored by cartoons and soft-colored or faint *aquarelle*. Sharing her love of languages, she naturally gives way to her inner voice by relating her feelings, emotions, and investment:

Today, on Wednesday, September 29th, I had my first English class, and we will work on a diary. I love to learn new languages, but I must admit that I am not very good... So, for this course, we were offered a bonus activity, where we must write our diary. Since always, I love to write, and I often try to keep a diary, but I always abandoned by laziness or forgetfulness. So, this time, I will try to keep it up all semester, and more, it will be an occasion to be better in English and to improve my grades, that is perfect!

Punctuated by colourful photos of nature, birds, flowers, and monuments, her texts reveal a natural flow and ebb. She passes from one topic or event to another like when she explains a trip to an amusement park in Rust, Germany:

On Saturday, October 2nd, I went to Europa Park. ... I fell in love with this park. So, I try to go again regularly and nearly every year. I decided to go with my best friend,

⁴ To improve overall flow, some grammatical corrections were necessary. However, every effort was taken to respect the original idea to avoid altering or interpreting the student's message.

Marianne, whom I have known since almost ten years! We had a lot of fun, but, because it was on a Saturday and the first day of Halloween decorations, there were a lot of people! We still had a good time and did all the attractions we wanted to do, and that's what matters! We came home really exhausted but happy...we don't see each other very often.

At the end of this passage, her emotions are present as she looks on the bright side (EP's dominant coping mechanism). Highly motivated and invested, she triumphantly explains that she successfully wrote every day for the full 10 weeks:

Week ten:

November 29th to December 5th

I finished my semester, and I'm so proud of myself because I did all my work and presentations on time, and my teachers were happy..., so I'm happy too! I was so glad to do this diary and I want to say that [I never] did a big work like that, and I did it – in English! When writing my words every day, I learned to think in English and not French first! Now, it's time to finish! Bye! Have a good day!

Enhanced learning, metacognitive skills development, and the reflective process involved in this activity are validated by this passage. EP shares the implicit/explicit pleasure of successfully having followed through with her initial declaration. The progression she makes is evident when she explains that she is now able to think and write without having to think about translating from her native language. A highly valuable time and learning investment in herself, this activity represents a personal achievement.

And finally, AB from Theatre Studies provided the most staggering, expansive (60 pages in all), and detailed document in this

group. Her “Dear Diary” is full of insights, illustrations, and photos or drawings of famous theatre characters, as well as colourful Japanese *kabuki* photos. A long-term survivor battling with eating disorders, AB unfailingly writes about her relationship with food, yoga, and the way she perceives herself. She details her constant bouts of anxiety and regret after “eating too much” (“she says of an apple and two biscuits”) and then purging (“the burning in my throat is the worst”). She writes about her medical team who sometimes trigger her destructive behaviour. One revealing insight into her metacognitive awareness is the passage from December 10, 2021, when AB explains:

I’m still a bit sick. I’m doing much better but still a bit sick. Sometimes I feel like I’m never going to come out of this sickness. Plus, my body feels so heavy and stiff, it’s aching. It’s like my body is always sleepy, it can’t wake or turn on. ... Worked on my opera class and did yoga. I was not efficient at all on my opera studies. BECAUSE this lesson is starting to really make me angry. I feel like I’m learning it every day but the next day everything seems to have magically (notice the humour) disappear from my head. I don’t understand how, but it happens. And it is really starting to annoy me.... So Good Night, dear diary. (I think I really like that expression “dear diary” I might use it some more).

The use of capital letters and undertones of sarcasm or quotation marks are common in her work, which is the most colourful (use of vivid and very contrasting colours) of this group.

Corpus B: (Autumn 2022, five of 35 students or 18% of the total number of enrolled students)

Four participating female students + 1 transgender student, all French origin

All five M1 (Humanities) studying Children's Literature (CA, JD, MP-T, LH, and AL-J)

Some diaries were relatively short (from six to ten pages or a very concise three pages [of one-line entries]). Four diaries were uploaded to Moodle in .pdf format. AL-J adopted a traditional approach by submitting an embossed hand-written (calligraphy style) journal containing 80 pages. Excerpts from the written production of only two of these students will be presented here.

With her title "Diary of my cumbersome thoughts" CA piques the reader's curiosity. Punctuated by differing fonts and letter styles, CA's work is as visually intriguing as her words. Sprinkled with naïve questions or statements, her texts are unique and reveal many coping mechanisms to deal with the turmoil of the times:

Thursday October 6, 2022

Hello! Sometimes, I think to myself than I shouldn't pull the skin off my fingers and drop them in the street. A scientist could pick them up and use them to make clones of myself. It would be annoying; I haven't given consent to this experiment. I wonder what it's like to have a clone of ourselves. It means someone we can send it to do the boring job for us.

Monday October 10, 2022

I still [do] not have a clone. I must admit I'm a bit disappointed.

Thursday October 20, 2022

Today I talked to AM [an Italian ERASMUS student] about pizza in Italy. So many funny gestures! She was saying, "Pizza in France is not pizza." (French gestures are weird too). AM said in France we only have maybe 10 or 20 pizzas at the most. When I said that I like "Margherita", she laughed at me. She told me that where she

comes from you can have any pizza or pasta you want.
 She's making *tiramisu* for us at the end of the semester.
 A real one. I can't wait to taste it. My clone is not getting
 any, but I still don't have one.

Unconscious nervous habits and inner conversations are her focus. Through interactions with an ERASMUS participant (AM) from Italy, AM provides clear insights into intercultural awareness, gestures, and Italian perspectives on French cuisine. Framed with humorous illustrations, the text also includes word clouds or poetry. The following is amongst the entries of mid-November:

I'm sick, I'm cold, I'm tired, I'm hungry.
 I had to eat "healthy" (because last week was not
 "healthy" (sandwich, burgers (twice).)
 I'm at the library but people are talking loudly.
 What a beautiful *haiku*!

Sounds like *ahhhh chooo!*

An illustration of metacognitive awareness and auto-regulation (taking control, eating healthier), the text illustrates rudimentary student needs and feelings. And yet, although CA appears to be ill, she takes the time to admire her "beautiful" poetic creation.

Finally, MP-T discloses painful insights, like the meticulously structured (date, title, paragraph) passages below illustrate:

October 16th, 2022, 9:15 PM

How? Much? More? Time?

Friday, I saw my psychologist and Saturday my psychiatrist, the two specialists who are supposed to be there to help me get better, but I still feel much too bad. My psychologist told me that it's normal that I feel in this kind of blurred bubble, indescribable, of unreality, as if I was living a life that wasn't mine, someone else's life. Apparently, I need to take time for myself, do things I love, go

out with friends, have fun, breathe, and that it's normal to have this fling and that it would take time. How much more time?

October 18th, 2022, 8:15 PM

Alone.

I still feel terrible about myself and my mind, I saw my psychologist and psychiatrist this week and I feel incredibly alone and misunderstood ... I just don't know what I feel. I don't know who I am or what I'm worth.

November 4th, 2022, 8:30 PM,

Thoughts. Thinking. Reflection.

I am always in my head, and it gets worse and worse. The transition between teenager and adult is scaring me. I dislike reality, I prefer to take refuge in my head, in my world but I am also ashamed. Why can't I live like everyone? At the same time, I feel safe in my head, I had the control of what happened or not.

These passages reveal a coping mechanism and the profound need to channel the chaos of her feelings through this diary. Her observations uncover the fear and apprehension associated with assuming responsibilities and becoming an adult. Taking refuge "in [her] head, in [her] world" is her attempt at an autoregulative coping strategy.

Discussion

Promoting and advocating students' reflective writing underscores its value as a beneficial practice for fostering reflection and self-management. Although there was a slight increase in participants in the second year, the participant count remains relatively low, likely since the assignment is an extra credit activity at the

graduate level where many students must prioritize their time. This activity provides a forum for students to share their inner voice and viewpoints, aligning with the conceptual framework that emphasizes personal and professional skill development in a rapidly changing society (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). Special attention must be given to the precise formulation of the activity itself to avoid directly influencing or limiting student expression, promoting metacognitive awareness (Flavell and Wellman, 1977; Brown et al., 1983) and enhancing soft skills (Gray, 2016).

To encourage a multimodal and creative dimension, every effort should embrace all forms of artistic freedom. While language correction was not the goal, as students were freed from the constraint of writing perfectly constructed texts, assessment presented a challenge. This approach provided an outlet for students to freely compose and reconnect with language, fostering self-regulation abilities (Carver and Scheier, 1998). Few grammatical errors existed; overall language quality was remarkably good for these motivated non-specialist students. Supportive, non-critical feedback was provided on an individual basis outside of classroom time to respect privacy. When applicable, students were encouraged to continue writing outside of the class and seek professional guidance if needed.

This activity supports the development of metacognitive skills, soft skills, and self-regulation, crucial for navigating the evolving job landscape (Gamota, 2020). Every effort was made to provide an unbiased, comprehensive assessment encompassing writing quality, literary techniques, expressive styles, and the multimodal aspects. Since this literature course values life writing, each participating student received a 3-point credit on their overall participation grade. They were encouraged to treasure their diary

as a historical marker of this special time in their life for future reading or sharing.

Conclusion

This genre has illustrated the firsthand benefits of soft skills building to cope with chaos during, throughout, and post-Covid. By contemplating, dealing with, and sharing their daily trials and tribulations, the students were also able to develop and strengthen their metacognitive skills. A true window into the lives of these students, this unpretentious but highly effective form of writing encapsulates a myriad of topics, perspectives, and cultural insights (for instance, Italian and French intercultural perceptions). The corpus presented here illustrates student engagement in foreign language expression, as well as the expression of their ideologies and life philosophies during an unprecedented pandemic. Revealing many traces of metacognitive awareness and enhanced learning, the corpus comprises cultural capital that provides snapshots of daily experiences, while encoding perspectives on “routine” social or cultural interactions.

Future improvements to this didactic approach may focus on encouraging greater student participation and investment. One approach might be to make it compulsory. However, that may prove counterproductive since the intention is to offer an optional activity that is intrinsically/extrinsically motivating to reflect on life, decompress, inspire, and creatively imagine. Further research studies might include AI-based tools for correction and AI-based text-to-image technology for the artistic dimension. Multimodal reflective journals that include artistic and intercultural dimensions can be applied to various plurilingual learning settings with

students of all ages (from young to adult or lifelong learners). Adaptable to all ([foreign] language) teaching environments, this didactic approach serves as an opportunity for learners to focus on and synthesize daily activities while developing their meta-cognitive, soft, and self-regulation skills. Additionally, it offers them the innovative and imaginative freedom to self-invest while encapsulating (inter)cultural capital. Finally, it encourages students to break free from their daily routine to live in the moment and reflect on the true meaning of life. Some may mistakenly call this the humdrum happenings of everyday life, while others view these precious and unique moments as part of the journey and valuable life lessons.

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