

Inscribing Identity: Insights for Teaching From ESL Students' Journals

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ABSTRACT Linguistic minority students in schools must acquire and operate in a second language while negotiating mainstream texts and

content areas, along with negotiating an emerging new sense of social identity. This article presents journal data from an Australian ethnographic study that explored the relationship between second-language use, textual practices in school, and the representation of identity. Such texts normally lie outside dominant school discourses, but for students they are a powerful means of negotiating identity and gaining vital language practice. For teachers journals provide critical insights into the experiences of their students and into their developing language competence.



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Academic journal article TESL Canada Journal. Inscribing Identity: Insights for Teaching from ESL Students' Journals. By Miller, Jenny. Read preview. For teachers the journals provide insights not only into the developing language competence of their ESL students, but also into their experiences, identities, feelings, needs, and perceptions. The journals thus become a means both of accessing students' voices--while scaffolding the development of language competence meaningfully--and of providing important cues for student-centered pedagogy. For students journals offer a powerful and nonthreatening means of representing and renegotiating their identities, along with a way to practice and experiment with written forms of English.