

Petition Summary:

The current Sugar Labs Journal activity primarily acts as an automated diary or log system for Sugar activities. The Journal allows students to organize and evaluate past work and allows teachers to check on student progress. We propose that modifications be made to the Sugar Journal to allow for more literacy interaction and reflection by students to promote literacy learning, which the current Journal does not actively encourage.

Our proposed modifications would allow the Sugar Journal to automatically record student progress with Sugar Activities, as well as engage students in writing-to-learn methods. As shown by scholars such as Bangret-Downs, Hurley & Wilkinson (2004), writing to learn pedagogy has been increasingly utilized in schools since the 1970s because writing is a way of learning through the use of metacognitive process. A main tool for metacognitive process is reflection, which educational research has also shown to be important for student growth (Holtom & Kenworthy-U'Ren, 2006).

Therefore, the purpose of these modifications would be to encourage student reflection through meaningful journal writing. This would be executed by adding activity-specific prompt questions to the Sugar Journal. Each of the prompts would be pulled from a randomized question bank attached to the Sugar Activities used by the student. The prompt question would appear at the end of an activity session. For example, after a student finishes using a Sugar Activity like FotoToon, the student might be given the prompt, "Why did you create this comic strip? Please explain your story." For students who have yet to obtain reading and writing skills, prompts can be recorded and played audibly. In response, students would verbally state their answers and record them in the Sugar Journal using audio notes. This proposed version of the Journal activity also upholds constructionist theory, which emphasizes independent learning through exploration, while building upon previous experience and understanding.

While developers would design certain default prompts for each activity, the Journal would also allow for teachers and even students to design prompt questions and add them into a question bank. This accomplishes two important things for literacy learning. Firstly, this encourages peer review, as students can prompt other students by creating their own question prompts. Likewise, teachers can ask students to consider each other's work in a specific way. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, an important part of successfully building upon past experiences is reflection, which Journal prompts would promote.

With these modifications to the Sugar Journal, students can engage in multifaceted learning that encourages literacy skills, which are essential to educational progress and success.

Action Petitioned For: We, the undersigned, are concerned teachers who urge the leaders to act now to modify the Sugar Journal to allow for more literacy interaction and reflection with Sugar activities.

Signature Date

Printed Name

Additional Comments:
