COURSE NOTEBOOK

Writing in the Margins

Getting the Most from Professional Books

JUNE 18, 2019 // 7:15PM EST

Led by
Gail Boushey

The DailyCAFE | Coaching Series

LIVE
MONTHLY
MEMBER BENEFIT

Hello and welcome,

My name is Gail and I write in books!

There: I said it, and I hope that before this session is over, you will be writing in books as well. This may sound crazy, but I think it just may be the most fun, entertaining activity I do on a daily basis. Really—because I aggressively write, underline, draw, question, and chat with the author, all the while understanding what I am reading more deeply than I did when I left books in the same pristine condition in which I had found them.

When I pick up a book after I have added my notes, I get excited all over again to see the synthesized thoughts I left on each page. Here's the thing: I remember more about what the author said than ever before.

Grab a pen and let's start writing in the margins.

Gail

Getting ready for June coaching

Do this before Tuesday

Please take time to reflect and answer the following questions before our session on Tuesday.

Do you write in your books? Why or why not? If you do, what kinds of things do you write?

Do you write in some kinds of books but not in others?

Do you enjoy reading what others have written in the margins of old books? Does it add or distract from your reading experience?

What we will discover during June coaching

- Overcoming the fear of writing in books
- The purpose for writing in books
- A name for writing in text
- Examples of types of notes
- Practice note taking with an excerpt from the soon-to-be-published second edition of *The CAFE Book*

Coaching Series
JUNE 2019

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Overcoming the Fear of Writing in Books

The purposes of writing in books:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Marginalia

In the New York Times Magazine article "What I Really Want Is Someone Rolling Around in the Text" (published March 4, 2011), Sam Anderson talks about his love for writing thoughts in the margins of books, called "marginalia," and questions how this can be done in digital media:

> One day in college I was trawling the library for a good book to read when I found a book called "How to Read a Book." I tried to read it, but must have been doing something wrong, because it struck me as old-fashioned and dull, and I could get through only a tiny chunk of it. That chunk, however, contained a statement that changed my reading life forever. The author argued that you didn't truly own a book (spiritually, intellectually) until you had marked it up.
>
> This hit home for me—it spoke to the little scribal monk who lives deep in the scriptorium of my soul—and I quickly adopted the habit of marginalia: underlining memorable lines, writing keywords in blank spaces, jotting important page numbers inside of back covers. It was addictive, and useful; I liked being able to glance back through, say, "Great Expectations," and discovering all of its great sentences already cued up for me. (Chapter 4, underlined: "I remember Mr. Hubble as a tough high-shouldered stooping old man, of a sawdusty fragrance, with his legs extraordinarily wide apart: so that in my short days I always saw some miles of open country between them when I met him coming up the lane.") This wasn't exactly radical behavior—marking up books, I'm pretty sure, is one of the Seven Undying Cornerstones of Highly Effective College Studying. But it quickly began to feel, for me, like something more intense: a way to not just passively read but also to fully enter a text, to collaborate with it, to mingle with an author on some kind of primary textual plane.

How to capture thinking in text

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What's your favorite way to capture your thoughts?

Note taking

Here are some ways of noting your engagement with a text. You may change your method, depending on your purpose for reading:

NOTES	REMINDER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

Note taking in text

Excerpt from *The CAFE Book*, second edition, due out in the fall of 2019.

Our time with children is precious so we need every minute to be purposeful and meaningful, including the time spent assessing them. Still, nothing seems to elicit passionate discussions, from staff rooms to district offices, like the topic of assessment. If we aren't careful, we can lose our focus in debates about which single assessment is most accurate instead of focusing on how to gather the most useful information about our students from a variety of assessments. To help with this, we find it useful to organize our evaluative thinking around two questions:

What are this child's strengths as a reader?

What are this child's greatest areas of need?

Many assessments, formal and informal, can answer these questions, but situations that require students to read running text while maintaining meaning seem to answer them most effectively. Here, as students read the passage, we begin to frame our thinking around the assessment itself while also forming theories about their strengths and needs. At the same time, we start to anticipate instructional supports that will best help our readers, specifically around the goals of Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expanding Vocabulary (CAFE). To guide our thinking, we have a CAFE Menu lying next to the assessment to help us identify skills and strategies that reflect the student's strengths and greatest areas of need. We start by looking at the four main goals of reading. Note that our CAFE Menu starts with C because, as we mentioned earlier, comprehension is the backbone of reading. When using assessments to inform our instruction, however, we start by looking at the constrained strategies, beginning with the questions "Can they read the words?" and "Are they reading a good-fit book?"

Until next time!

THE DAILY CAFE

Practice taking notes in your text.
Post on social media the kinds of notes you are taking.

#TDCcoachingseries

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC

Coaching Series
JULY 2019

Using Favorite Picture Books for Strategy Instruction