Context:
After exposing my students to online databases, I want them to experience a hardcopy of a scholarly journal. This journal exercise sparked a constructive discussion about the value of journal hardcopies, the meaning of a “scholarly” source, and the concept of an academic conversation.

Journal Assignment

Name:
Journal Title:

Assignment: Choose a journal (not a magazine or newspaper) from the shelf. Sit down in a quiet spot, look over the journal, and then answer the following questions on this sheet of paper. (You may write on the back if you run out of room.) Enjoy!

1) Describe the journal in your hands. What’s its name? Who publishes it? Who is the editor? How does it feel? What color is it? How thick are the pages? What kind of type-set and font do you see? How are the contents arranged? Do you notice a particular structure to the book?

2) Read over the “Contents Page.” Describe the titles and names you see.

3) After looking over the “Contents Page,” choose one article to read, based on the title alone. Summarize the article. What do you think of it? Why? Would you like to write an article like this one?

4) Compare your experience with the journal to past experiences with the web (particularly if you used web searches for research in the past). Which do you prefer and why?