

# Dialogue Journals

Dialogue

Middle School

High school



## Intervention Overview

One way to improve teacher-student relationships is to have students write in a daily or weekly journal and then have teachers respond to their questions and responses on a consistent basis. Writing a response to every student on a daily basis may be possible for a teacher with a small class, but as a whole this would be far too time consuming with all the other responsibilities teachers have to accomplish. It is recommended that teachers respond to students once a week if possible or switch between small groups of students every 3 or so weeks. Additionally the Greater Good Science Center (n.d.) provides some recommendations of how to respond to students [here](#).

Because the nature of dialogue journaling may encourage students to share more personal concerns with you, it is important to seek appropriate help for serious student concerns. One teacher shared that if a student wrote about something that required the additional help of a school counselor, she would first talk to the student to make sure she understood the situation correctly and then let them know she needed to approach a counselor about the situation. She also offered to go with the student to visit the school counselor (Gonzalez, 2016). While it is important to remind students of the confidentiality of their journals within the classroom to allow them to be more open and comfortable with the activity, be wise in responding to student concerns and seeking appropriate help when necessary.

## Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	Upper Elementary - 12th
Materials:	Notebook, writing utensil
Duration:	3-5 minutes daily or weekly

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**Implementation:**

1. Keep journals in a designated spot in the classroom.
  2. Decide what topic or question you would like students to address and write in on the board at the front of the classroom.
  3. Have students grab their journal when they walk in and write for 3-4 minutes.
  4. At the end of the class, students return journals to designated spot.
  5. Let students know how often you plan to respond, especially if you cannot respond to each student on a daily or weekly basis.
  6. Write short responses to students with feedback or follow up questions.
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### Does it work?

Dialogue journals can be an effective tool to improve behavior and relationships of disruptive students. In a small study, the students in a behavioral intervention class were instructed to journal daily, however the teacher specifically responded to two particularly difficult students in the class over the course of the semester. These students improved classroom behavior and social skills, had more positive interactions with the teacher and improved student-teacher relationships (Anderson et al., 2011). A larger study of sixth grade students found that, in students with behavioral concerns, communication and social skills were improved, along with classroom participation (Regan et al., 2005).

Dialogue journals also are beneficial in allowing introverted or ESL students to communicate with the teacher in a manner they are more comfortable with. Jones(1991) shares the story of an advanced ESL student from Mexico who felt that writing was an easier way for her to communicate with her teacher, because she sometimes felt nervous and unsure of herself when speaking. Dialogue journals also allow quiet students to share concerns with the teacher they may not express otherwise (Gonzalez, 2016). While teachers may not establish a close friendship with all students, Jones(1991) asserts that they “rarely fail. . .to expand and deepen communication. . .[and] enable both parties to view each other with new understanding and respect” (p.104).

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