

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study documents the observations and effects of using dialogue journals to improve motivation in a fifth grade Social Studies class. A regular education teacher with the support of a Learning Support teacher used a class comprised of eight regular education students and ten Special Education students to compile information on the effects of communication through **journaling**. Located in a diverse urban-suburban- rural school district, the class included Latino, African American, Caucasian, and Indian students from middle and lower income households. The study focused on motivation, the active involvement of students as shown through both verbal and written participation both in and out of the classroom, and how dialogue journaling would help to increase the motivation to be involved. The journaling took the form of a designed booklet in which the students wrote notes for the class and discussed the notes with a parent/guardian /partner who then wrote back to the teacher. The teacher then responded to the parent/guardian/ partner's note in writing. Participating students had the opportunity to share their partner's writing in class. The results of the study imply that students who are given the opportunity to share learning with a partner and then report those conversations to the class were more attentive and involved in Social Studies lessons. The author uses the students' response journals to illustrate the changes and growth in conversation inside and outside of the classroom throughout the period of the study.