Abstract

This qualitative research study documents the observed and reported experiences of a high school special education teacher and twelve of her learning support students when incorporating dialogue journals into the Language Arts classroom. Students and teacher-researcher embarked on a journey through weekly written discourse. What started out as a means to support reading strategies and student engagement, turned to a means to develop relationships of caring and nurturing in the classroom. This study also examined student engagement within the classroom and school in general. The study suggests that students need an outlet for non-academic needs within the school day. When given the opportunity to express themselves, students will respond with honesty about their emotions and experiences. This study also found that when students are given the choice to write about their own topics of interest, student engagement will increase.