

BNL, Mini-Semester, 2011

Mike Stegman

Dialectical Notebook, Double-Entry Notebook, Research Log, Dialogue Journal

As you respond to your reading, conduct observations, or do research, the double-entry notebook engages you in interpreting, judging, speculating, restating, and asking questions as a way of encouraging meaning making from the start.

Maintain a conversational atmosphere between you and the text or observation.

Set up:

- ✓ Opposing pages: left side for collecting material from texts or observations, right side for interpreting or exploring their possible significances
- ✓ Log: Immediately after reading: a quickly written response using the questions below in the right hand column. Reread the text, taking notes collecting quotations, etc. Another quickly done response now with the notes as a way to reshape this response.
- ✓ Log, variation: Take notes in the field and allow for reflective writing after the information or observations have been collected. Use question below as a guide.

How to do it

NOTES from the Source	RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ On the left page, collect direct quotations paraphrases, and summaries of key ideas that you cull from the source✓ Or collect specific field observations. What exactly are you seeing? Etc.✓ Collect material that's relevant to your project, but also write down passages, facts, and claims from the source that you find surprising or puzzling or that generates an emotional response.✓ Make sure you write down this material carefully and accurately.✓ Include the page number (if a published source) to the left of the borrowed material or idea and complete bibliographic information at the top of the page.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ On the right page, think through writing about what strikes you about what you see on the left page. This may be somewhat messy, but it is likely to be more focused than you think at first.✓ Whenever the writing stalls, look left and find something else to respond to.✓ Some questions to keep in mind:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What strikes me about this?2. What are my first thoughts when I consider this? And then what? And then?3. What does this make me think about or remember?4. How would I qualify or challenge this author's claim? In what ways do I agree with it?5. What else have I read or heard that connects with this?6. How do I feel about this?7. What seems most convincing? Least convincing?8. Does it change my thinking about the topic? How?9. What other research possibilities does it suggest?10. If this is a field observation: Is what I'm seeing "typical"; does it challenge my assumptions; are there patterns of behavior that I'm observing?

Adapted from Anne E. Berthoff's *Forming Thinking Writing* (second edition, 1988) and Bruce Ballenger's *Beyond Note Cards* (1999).