

Dialectical Notebook

Course Type/ Level:	Any course, any level
Assignment Goals:	The Dialectical Notebook is a tried and tested Institute for Writing & Thinking Practice that works very well in an online environment. The Notebook activity invites students into a sustained written conversation about a topic, text or series of texts.
Materials to Provide Students:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Whichever texts you want students to work with. 2) A dialogical notebook in a Google doc. See this link. When setting up google documents, you will have to pay attention to the settings (students will likely be more skilled at this than many faculty!)
Technological Resources Needed:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Google Documents 2) A way for the faculty member to deliver prompts for each column over the course of three or four days (this could be via email, what's app or moodle) 3) A forum on which to share conclusions (Moodle?)
Preparatory Steps:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Put students into pairs 2) Ask them to copy the Google doc, save it with their names, and save it to a Google folder accessible by all students and the teacher.
Tasks/Activities: (Outline of the steps this activity or assignment requires)	<p>The Dialectical Notebook is divided into columns. You can have as few as three columns or as many as six. The columns can each have a specific prompt from the professor or can be more open-ended. It is recommended that the faculty member give one column per day – one prompt per day – to give students time to write.</p> <p>Here's an example:</p> <p>Column 1: Student 1 will turn to X reading and select a quote that you want to think more about. Copy the quote into column 1 and write about it – what is interesting about it? How does it relate to the text itself?</p> <p>Column 2: Student 2 will open the google doc and read what student 1</p>

	<p>wrote. This faculty member will give a particular prompt – it could be something like “imagine you are having a conversation with student 1. Agree or disagree and explain why.”</p> <p>Column 3: Student 1 reads what student 2 has written. This is where the faculty member could ask student 1 to bring in a quote from a different text.</p> <p>Column 4: The digital notebook returns to student 2 and the faculty member gives another prompt.</p> <p>If you continue on with additional columns, you can also ask students to come up with a question or to reflect on images from the text, for example.</p> <p>After the activity is completed, put the pairs into groups with other pairs – groups of six (three pairs) would work well. Give them a task to complete after reading each other’s notebooks. This could be something like: collaboratively develop three probative questions to post on the Moodle.</p>
<p>Additional Tips or Advice:</p>	<p>The dialectical notebook is very useful for sustained student conversation, for idea generation, and to get students to a place where they might have a question with which to begin an essay.</p>