

# Campus Calgary / Open Minds

## Journalling Techniques

Journalling is a learning tool that helps students make sense of the world around them. Journals are used to write and sketch about what is personally interesting, to note observations, to imagine, to wonder, and to connect new information with prior learning.

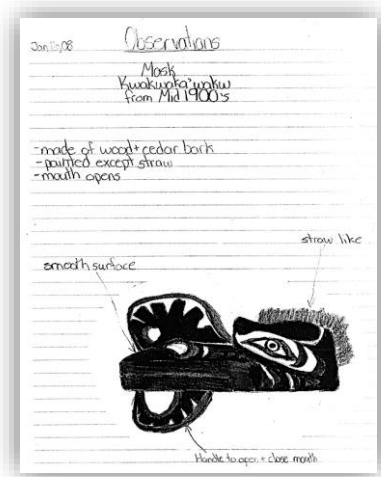
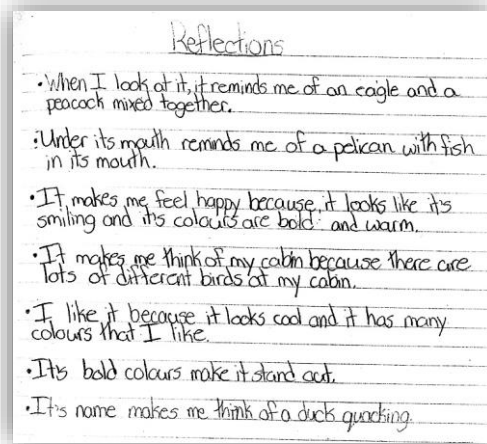
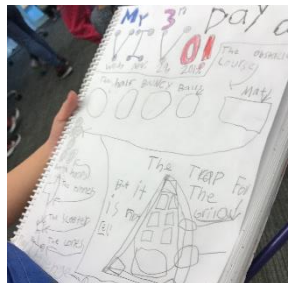
There are many different techniques that can be used to 'capture' moments in time. Here are just a few thinking routines to help get you started.

### Daily Double by William Hammond

Select a place, object, or event to carefully observe. Label the left page of a page pair, "observations." Label the right page, "reflections." On the *observations page*, record all the pertinent observations using lots of details. Describe context, physical characteristics, time sequences, interactions, temperature, airflow, quantifiable points of interest – details, details, details!

On the reflections page, record your inner perception, insights, and feelings – as well as your sense of connection or distance from the place, object, or event. In the first case, you are gathering data observed outside yourself. In the second part of the exercise, you are gathering data from inside yourself. Both are powerful sources that shape your senses of attention to, and ways of knowing something. Research on the human brain validate both of these means of perception as being equally valuable in accessing your perceptions and processing your relationships to the environment. Practice with this exercise will sharpen your perceptions and abilities to observe – and will also stimulate your potential creative connections.

Creating "artworks" in your journal is vital to developing these same skills. Often people say, "I can't draw." Actually, drawing is linked to seeing. The better you see the better you draw; the better you draw, the better you see. Drawing and "seeing" both improve with practice. You are building eye/hand-brain/mind connections. As these skills improve through use so will your creativity.



## Special Spot



Take students outside to journal. Find a special spot that they can return to on a regular basis. Students begin to look deeply and see things they may have overlooked or items that have changed. Encourage students to be reflective as well as observant. What connections are they making? What does it remind them of? Where have they seen this before? Journaling options might include:

- seasonal changes
- temperature
- recording thoughts and feelings using a variety of sketching and writing techniques as well as different mediums and tools
- sensory awareness
- focusing on what is close or what is in the distance
- what is beautiful, ugly, weird, scary, etc?
- what do you wonder?

## See / Think / Wonder / Feel



This a routine for exploring works of art and other interesting things A routine for exploring works of art and other interesting things.

- What do you see?
- What do you think about?
- What does it make you wonder?
- How does it make you feel?

### **Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?**

This routine encourages students to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. It helps stimulate curiosity and sets the stage for inquiry.

### **Application: When and where can it be used?**

Use this routine when you want students to think carefully about why something looks the way it does or is the way it is. Use the routine at the beginning of a new unit to motivate student interest or try it with an object that connects to a topic during the unit of study. Consider using the routine with an interesting object near the end of a unit to encourage students to further apply their new knowledge and ideas.

### **Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?**

Ask students to make an observation about an object – it could be an artwork, image, artifact or topic – and follow up with what they think might be going on or what they think this observation might be. Encourage students to back up their interpretation with reasons. Ask students to think about what this makes them wonder about the object or topic.

The routine works best when a student responds by using the stems together at the same time, i.e., “*I see... I think... I wonder .... I feel ...*” However, you may find that students begin by using one stem at a time, and that you need to scaffold each response with a follow up question for the next stem.

The routine works well in a group discussion but in some cases you may want to ask students to try the routine individually on paper or in their heads before sharing out as a class. Student responses to the routine can be written down and recorded so that a class chart of observations, interpretations and wonderings are listed for all to see and return to during the course of study

