

The Importance of Scribbling and Doodling

Developed By	Krista Clinton O'Neill
Suggested Length	Six 40 minute lessons
Suggested Grade Level(s)	Nine
Subject Areas	Social Studies, Language Arts, Visual Arts

Overview

This unit focuses on the importance of journaling and sketching as: a means of response to life experiences and events; an integral part of the creative process; a source of historical and sociological information; and a means of learning more about ourselves and how we learn. Because these lessons focus on introducing journals, the unit may be best suited for the beginning of the semester.

Links to Curriculum Outcomes

Students will (be expected to)

- explore and reflect on their feelings, values and attitudes (Language Arts)
- reflect on their growth as language learners and language users (Language Arts)
- explore the factors that influence one's perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs (Social Studies)
- demonstrate acceptance of self and others by considering alternative view and strategies for coping with situations which arise from conflicting values and beliefs (Social Studies)
- through their own art develop concepts and imagery based on personal ideas and experience (Visual Arts)

Links to Telling Stories: Themes / Key Words

- collage
- design
- identity

Art Works

- *Sketchbook*, Robert Harris, CAG H-7968.64-65
- *Sketchbook*, Robert Harris, CAG H-7998-3D-1
- *Sketchbook*, Robert Harris, CAG H-7998-3D-2
- *Sketchbook*, Robert Harris, CAG H-7998-3D-3
- *Notes from Sketchbook*, Robert Harris, CAG H-7994.106-107



Lesson #1: Methods & Means

Objective The purpose of the discussion in this lesson is to make students aware that journaling does not always mean keeping a written diary. The aim is to open their minds to other possibilities, therefore making journaling more attractive, especially to those students who feel restricted by journaling in its traditional form.

Materials

- chart paper
- markers

Activities

1. Begin the lesson with a brief whole class discussion of the students' experiences with journaling:
 - How many have had previous experience with keeping a journal?
 - Was this a positive or negative experience?
 - What were the benefits of keeping a journal?
 - What did they not like about the process?
2. Have students form small groups and brainstorm the many ways to journal / respond to the world around them and to their own thoughts and feelings. Ask them to focus on the means/medium and the methods. Examples may include "writing" in its various forms, including poetry, drawing, painting, collage, photography, recorded voice, and recorded video.
3. Show the students the Harris works. Discover with them that he included writing, jotting, sketching, painting, pressed flowers, letters. Look at the script of his handwriting, and discuss how handwriting itself has changed:
 - What materials did he use to express himself and to record what was happening in the world around him?
 - What aspects of journaling have remained the same?
 - What has changed?
 - Have changes made journaling more accessible to everyone? If so, is the result that more people keep a journal in some form? Why or why not?

Ideas for Assessment

Have students complete statements such as:

- My past experience with journaling has been positive / negative because...
- The journaling medium that works / I think would work for me is.. because..



Lesson #2: My Creation, My Record

Objective By giving students an opportunity to experiment with different ways to journal, this lesson will assist students in finding a method of journaling which fits their style.

Materials

As many of the following as possible:

- cassette recorder
- blank tapes
- video recorder
- blank tapes
- computer time
- paper
- construction paper
- yarn
- magazines
- scissors
- glue
- coloured pens

Activities

1. Have the class look at the referenced Harris journal and letters. Discuss what forms of writing he used:
 - What are some other forms of writing that might be used? (Examples include poetry, song writing, responding to events, describing emotions, or graffiti statements.)
 - What methods do we have today, other than pen and paper, for writing what we see, hear, or feel?

2. Have students choose three methods of journaling that they would like to try over the next three classes, choosing from their list of ideas from previous brainstorming sessions. Have the students sign up for their chosen method.
3. During the following three lessons, students will be given a quote, a question, or a topic to respond to in their chosen journaling format. Ideas can be found on the websites listed below.

Computer Option

- Journal Jar Ideas: www.omnicron.com/~fluzby/sister-share/journal.htm
- Writing Prompts/Journal Topics: www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html
- Journal Writing Ideas: www.teachers.net/lessons/posts/1492.html

Ideas for Assessment

Challenge students to use their chosen method of journaling to explain why they chose this method and how they felt about the other methods. Ask them also to discuss the likelihood that they would continue to journal independently, giving reasons for their opinion.



Lesson #3: Humankind's History through Individual Histories

Objective This lesson aims to build student awareness of how keeping a personal record of what is going on in the world around you and how you feel about events, ideas, and people, is not only an important creative and cathartic tool, but also provides society with an invaluable record of a particular place and time through the eyes of someone who is living through those events at that moment.

Materials

- *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* (Zlata Filipovic, ISBN: 0140242058)

Activities

1. With students, re-examine Harris' journals and letters from a historical viewpoint. Together, consider questions such as:
 - What do they tell you about life in the 1800s in Prince Edward Island?
 - Do you think his intention was to create a record of life around him for the sake of history?
 - Do you think these documents are simply products of his creative process?

- Would your intention for keeping a record of the events around you affect that record?
 - Would any particular kind of journal be more useful from a historical perspective, or are all types valuable for different reasons?
2. Introduce the novel *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo*. Talk with the students about this as another example of keeping a record, one written in circumstances quite different from those in which Harris found himself.
 3. Have students read for a given period of time each day, or read aloud to the class if a class set is not available.

Ideas for Assessment

Have each child respond to *Zlata's Diary* in a journal at the end of each reading. Encourage various means of recording their response (e.g., random words / phrases, poetry, sketching).



Lesson #4: Sketchin'

Objective Through study of Harris' sketchbook and work in their own sketchbooks, students will be inspired to be active observers of the life around them. They will also be encouraged to capture as much of the world around them as possible as a means of expression in itself and as a learning tool.

Materials

- Sketchbooks and drawing pencils

Activities

1. Together with students, examine Harris' sketchbook and its contents:
 - What has he taken the time to sketch?
 - What is the quality of the work contained in the sketchbook?
 - Does the level of quality remain the same, or is there improvement over time?
 - Is there evidence of Harris attempting to perfect any particular technique or method?
 - What does he choose to sketch most often?
 - Can you see evidence of his strengths and weaknesses as an artist?

2. Discuss with the students the importance of keeping a sketchbook ready at all times. Suggest some of the things that might be included in their sketchbooks e.g., buildings, doorframes, posters, friends, pets, etc. Stress that a sketchbook is a learning tool, and is also a great reference when in need of inspiration. It is through their sketchbook that students will be able to pinpoint areas in the development of their drawing skills which need improving upon.
3. Encourage students, on an ongoing basis, to use their sketchbooks as a means of recording observations and experiences.

Ideas for Assessment

Collect sketchbooks periodically. They should show evidence of frequent usage, attention to sketching / drawing skills, and keen observation skills.

Possible Extensions

As an extension to journal activities, access the website www.1000journals.com. One thousand journals have been travelling hand to hand around the world. Those who find them are to add stories and drawings and to pass them on. If you are unable to find one of these, consider creating a similar project within your school or community.

