

Your Story – Our Story

A Learning Resource for Teachers & Practitioners

The following activities have been put together to accompany the four videos made by Storyopolis as part of the creative journaling project, Your Story - Our Story.



Resources Sheet 1:

Introduction to Your Story – Our Story & Creative Journaling

Exercise 1: What's on your mind?

Ask students to take 3 minutes to write down what's on their mind at this moment in time. They could use the brain template (attached), or they could draw their own brain and fill it in, or they could make a 'mind map'. They can write words, phrases, sentences, doodles, draw pictures; whatever they prefer.

Take a few minutes to see if anybody is happy to share / show what's on their mind.

A famous artist called Anthony Gormley said "Art is the means by which we communicate what it feels like to be alive."

Discuss:

What does he mean? How does it feel to be alive?

He also said 'Art is not necessarily ... about communicating "good things".'

What do you think he meant?

Touch on the idea of art being a way of sharing what is inside our minds; of getting the 'inside' onto the 'outside'. Make the point that this could be through other things than visual art. Art can also include writing, music, dance, film... Ask students to think of examples of artists communicating how it feels to be alive, e.g. through the lyrics of a song

Creative Activity: *Required materials: paper, pen, scissors, glue, any art materials to hand*

Ask students to make a portrait using the material they have created in the 'What's on your mind?' activity. They can cut out and rearrange what they have done. They can rip up and scrunch up things, they can re-write things bigger or smaller. Encourage students to think about the inside / outside concept and communicating 'what it feels like to be alive.'



Exercise 2: Writing Our Fears

As a group, choose a topic that concerns everybody e.g. climate change; isolation, Covid. Ask students to spend 3 minutes writing about how the chosen topic makes them feel. Explain that they will not have to show anybody this piece of writing. They are writing for themselves.

Next: imagine somebody you care about comes to them and says- 'I'm worried about (the chosen topic)'. It could be a younger sibling. A friend. Just someone they care about.

What would the student say to them?
Spend another 3 minutes writing it down. Again, no one will see this.

"Because paper has more patience than people"
- Anne Frank

Ask students to compare the two pieces of writing. Are they different? If so, how? Why?

The point of this exercise is to remind ourselves that the voice we use to speak to ourselves can be powerful, but that we can try to influence it. We can be kind and caring to ourselves in the words that we use to talk to ourselves, and this can help to improve our wellbeing.

Further discussion: Is there anything discussed **in terms of the topic chosen** that could be considered a way forward – something that offers hope?

- as an individual
- as a community

(I.e. if you are discussing climate change, try and leave the exercise with a sense of hope. Look at what is working. Do any of the students' assumptions need to be challenged? What are the positives we can focus on?)

Notes for Practitioners: Journaling and wellbeing

Keeping a journal can help us to:

- manage stress
- clarify thoughts
- prioritise
- track our mental health by helping us to recognise triggers and unhealthy patterns
- identify automatic negative thoughts that we might have

"In the journal ... I do not just express myself more openly than I could to any person; I create myself" - Susan Sontag

When encouraging young people to keep a diary or journal or even just with the 'What's on your mind' exercise above, it may be worth considering how as a practitioner you can help students to identify and address any of these issues if they are brought up in conversation.

If students are keeping their diaries private, it's really important that they are actually able to do so. Discuss with students how they might do this.



Links & info for Practitioners:

Automatic Thoughts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMIU-Uo8cZU> Dan Siegel: The Purpose of the Teenage Brain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gw9GrgNcYcg>

Diaries:

The Diary of a Young Girl - Anne Frank

Diary of a Young Naturalist - Dara McAnulty: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RouNh5qt0_g

Diary of a Syrian Refugee: <https://muslimyouthmusings.com/diary-of-a-syrian-refugee/>

Your Mood Journal – Fearne Cotton

Wreck This Journal – Keri Smith

Diary of a Wimpy Kid – Jeff Kinney

“In the diary you find proof that in situations which today would seem unbearable, you lived, looked around and wrote down observations, that this right hand moved then as it does today” - Franz Kafka.



Resources Sheet 2

Creative Journaling: Words

Exercise 1: 'Tuning In' Poem

Ask students to sit in a comfortable position and 'tune in' to their surroundings, before writing down what it is they can sense, including:

- sight
- sound
- smell
- touch
- taste

Encourage students to bring in similes, metaphors etc if they want to. Students can turn then their writing into a poem by beginning each line with 'It was...' or 'There was...' (or even something like 'What if there was...?')

(Example): 13th April 2021

What if there was the classroom like a box full of people.

What if there was the sound of pens scraping.

What if there was the smell of disinfectant from the hallway (etc)

Exercise 2: Free Writing

Take 3 minutes to free write. Write about anything you want. You do not have to show anyone what you have written. Free writing can be good for exploring your own personal truths and views. If there is a paper shredder, students can then shred it in the shredder when they are finished.

*Me again, allow me to pick up where I left off
The biggest phenomenon and I'm Picasso with the pen
- Little Simz*



Links & info for Practitioners:

- Links to graffiti fonts: <https://www.1001fonts.com/graffiti-fonts.html>
- **Hip hop** is a way of seeing, celebrating, experiencing, understanding, confronting, and commenting on life. Hip-Hop believes that people can take control of their lives through self-knowledge and self-expression:

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/mediaand-interactives/media/hip-hop/hip-hop-a-culture-of-vision-and-voice/>

- Join Stormzy, international footballer Eniola Aluko (They Don't Teach This) and [#MerkyBooks](#) authors Chelsea Kwakye & Ore Ogunbiyi (Taking Up Space) and Derek Owusu (That Reminds Me) in a wide-ranging discussion on finding your voice and using it:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqiHNKzOH8A>

"Everybody's voice is individual to them.. even if you're saying the same thing you can be saying it in different ways that are personal to you. And I think without it, honestly, we can't change the world.. that sounds like a really grand big statement but it's true.. I think if you look at the people who've actually changed the world at different points in their life - whether they're young, whether they're old - they've done it by saying something that's real to them.. that's made everybody else around them think."

- Eniola Aluko, (Footballer, academic and author of *They Don't Teach This*)



Resources Sheet 3

Creative Journaling: Word Sketching & Mark Making

Exercise 1: Sequential Images

'Sequential art' is defined as an art form that uses images in a particular order for the purpose of telling a story, for example in a comic strip or a children's book.

In groups, ask students to choose **a story from today's news**. They will then decide as a group how to re-tell their chosen story. They can be as literal or as abstract as they like in their re-creation of the narrative. They should consider carefully how they wish to communicate the story. Will it be funny? Sad? Serious? How will the materials / techniques they choose help to achieve this effect?

1. all students stand in a line next to each other and each student strikes a 'pose' that tells part of the story (5 minutes)
2. using the materials provided (big paper, pens, whatever other materials are available) students create a series of images that retell the story (15 minutes)

Discuss:

Can groups guess which of today's news stories the other groups have chosen to represent? Which group told the story most literally, and the most abstractly?

Exercise 2: Doodle it out!

Get doodling! Did you know that doodling can actually help students to concentrate, process emotions, and even to remember more of what is being said? Give students a 2 minute doodling break. If they need some ideas, they could try:

- turning a shape into an animal
- doodle around a word or phrase that comes to mind
- listen to a song and doodle along to it
- patterns such as on this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQPvIzLSe_Q&t=10s



Links for Practitioners:

Creative Mapping Video (NAWR) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IPxPYwg4ws

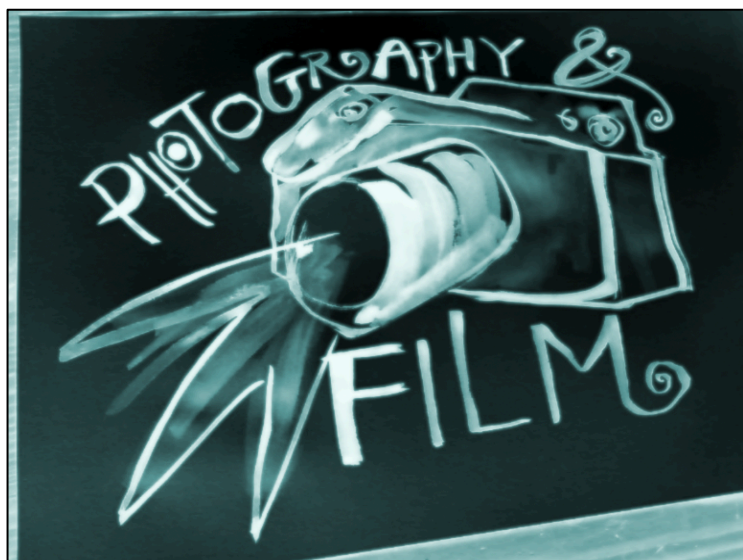
Creative Videos by Nicky Arscott / Ennyn CIC:

Lockdown Plant Journal 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gc0l0C7pZfo&t=126s>

Lockdown Plant Journal 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uYYBry9pHI&t=276s>

Lockdown Plant Journal 3: English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-PwqvDm1Hk&t=132s>

Cymraeg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVAmT16mrw&t=44s>



Resources Sheet 4

Creative Journaling: Photography & Film

Exercise 1: Routine

Here are some synonyms for the word 'routine.' Ask students to decide which one best describes their daily routine:

Habit

Regime

Formula

Rut

Procedure

Pattern

Drill

Treadmill

Groove

Plan

Grind

Or something different?

Discuss:

The benefits of routines (they can make you feel more secure and able to cope with stressful events; they can help life run a little more smoothly; they help boost time management skills, self regulation, can help us with nutrition, hygiene, sleep & healthy lifestyle choices)

Are there downsides to having a routine? How does it feel when you don't stick to your routine?



Routines can indicate what is important to you / your family.

Discuss:

What is the most important part of your routine?

How is it linked with your identity?

Take a look at this photography exhibition of everyday things, called 'Magic in the Mundane' – which photos do you like and why?

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2019/dec/18/magic-in-the-mundane-photographers-everyday-gems-in-pictures>

Creative Activity:

Each student to take a photo for a class exhibition called 'Magic in the Mundane' based on photographs taken during school time (using class i-pads if necessary).

Links for Practitioners:

Digital 'stitching' and mental health through fine art photography:

<https://www.walesartsreview.org/video-of-the-week-suzie-larke-unseen/?fbclid=IwAR3-qSDOzLvpsay1FFnHp3UTN2Sn5jLrraHfZLJ7VdlavEsFEp0Bxe79FE>

Show & Tell – An exhibition of mindful photography skills by children aged 10-18

<https://www.thephotographymovement.com/exhibition/>

Cool ideas for creative photography and filming:

<https://www.lucypurrrington.com/tutorials>