

3.1.4. My Emotion Journal

Brief description, and rules of the implementation of the learning activity

Children create their own Emotion Journal, where they regularly record how they feel, what caused it, and how they managed it, helping them track patterns and grow awareness. The activity is best conducted in a calm classroom setting, with individual desks or a seated circle arrangement. Keeping a regular journal supports emotional literacy and self-reflection. This activity allows children to record daily or weekly emotions, explore causes, and reflect on how they responded.

Skill focus

- **Primary Skill Focus**
 - Emotional awareness, communication and regulation
- **Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus:**
 - Empathy
 - Resilience
 - Curiosity

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	Individual or whole class (up to 25)	30 minutes (can be repeated regularly)

Proposed step by step implementation of the learning activity

1. **Introduction by the Teacher:** The teacher introduces the journal as a “special book” where children can write or draw about how they feel. It’s a private space (unless they choose to share) where they can learn to understand their emotions better.
2. **Hand Out the Templates:** Each student receives a journal sheet (paper or digital). The template may include:
 - Date
 - Emotion of the day (with emojis for non-writers)
 - What caused this emotion
 - Where they felt it in the body (head, chest, tummy, etc.)
 - What they did about it (reaction or regulation strategy)
 - Drawing space (optional, especially for younger children)
3. **Model the Process Together (First Time):** The teacher can fill out one journal entry on the board, thinking out loud: “Today is Monday. I felt... worried. Why? Because I had to speak in the teacher meeting. Where did I feel it? In my chest, it felt tight. What did I do? I took deep breaths. Now I feel calmer. I’m going to draw a cloud with my worried thoughts.”
4. **Individual Reflection Time:** Students complete their own journals quietly. Younger children may dictate their answers to the teacher or an assistant.

5. **Sharing Time (Optional):** Volunteers can share parts of their entry with the class or in pairs. The teacher reminds the class to listen with care and without judgment.
6. **Routine Creation:** The activity can be done weekly (e.g., every Friday) or spontaneously after emotionally intense moments (e.g., conflict, celebration, changes).

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

This activity is best conducted in a calm classroom setting with individual desks or seated circle arrangements. Provide students with a quiet atmosphere to reflect and write, possibly with gentle background music. For younger children, creating a journaling corner or using clipboards on a carpet can foster a more relaxed, emotionally open setting.

How does this learning activity develop this particular skill?

Keeping a regular journal supports emotional literacy and self-reflection. This activity allows children to record daily or weekly emotions, explore causes, and reflect on how they responded. It develops:

- Vocabulary for describing internal states,
- Awareness of emotional patterns and triggers,
- Ownership over regulation strategies.

With teacher guidance or prompts, the journal becomes a space for self-expression and quiet reflection. Over time, it can serve as a valuable tool for both emotional learning and mental well-being.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of this activity, students will:

- be able to build regular habits of emotional reflection
- have richer emotional vocabulary
- understand the connection between emotions and their causes and physical sensations
- be able to develop early emotional regulation strategies

Suggested use, and practical subject-related examples

A 7-year-old might write: *"I felt frustrated because I couldn't finish my puzzle. My tummy felt tight. I took a break and asked for help."*

A 10-year-old might write: *"I felt excited because I was picked for a game. My heart was beating fast, and I smiled a lot."*

When used regularly — for example, once a week or after key emotional moments — the journal becomes a powerful routine for building self-awareness and emotional vocabulary.

The teacher plays a key role in supporting the development of this skill. For instance:

- During early sessions, the teacher may offer emotion word banks, body maps, or example prompts (e.g., "Think of a time today you felt really happy or really annoyed").
- As children journal, the teacher can circulate and gently prompt deeper thinking:
- "Can you remember what happened just before that emotion started?"

- “Where else do you feel that emotion in your body?”
- “What do you usually do when you feel that way?”
- After several weeks, the teacher might encourage children to look back at past entries to notice patterns (e.g., “I often feel nervous before group work,” or “Drawing helps me calm down”).
- In a small group setting, the teacher might guide reflective sharing circles using anonymized examples from the journals (always with consent), showing how emotions are common, manageable, and shared.

By consistently modelling curiosity and respect toward emotions, the teacher fosters a safe climate where emotions are seen not as distractions, but as valuable information to understand oneself and others.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Emotion Journal template (printed or hand-drawn)
- Pencils, crayons, or markers
- Optional: emotion word bank or chart

Guiding questions

- Was it easy or hard to remember your emotions today?
- Did writing about your feelings help you understand them better?
- Do you notice any patterns in how you feel?
- How do different emotions feel in your body?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge:** Some children might struggle to identify emotions, especially if they have limited vocabulary.
Tip: The teacher can provide an emotion word bank and model examples aloud.
- **Challenge:** Some may always choose the same "easy" emotions like happy or sad.
Tip: The teacher can encourage exploring fewer common feelings, offering prompts like, "What's a time you felt proud?"

Difficulty level tailoring

- **Beginner learners (6-7 years old):** keep entries short and supported with drawings. Focus on matching feelings with basic causes ("I was happy at recess").
- **Advanced learners (8-9 years old):** encourage more detailed descriptions of what happened before, during, and after the emotion. Introduce simple body-mind connections ("My chest felt tight when I was worried").
- **Expert learners (9-10 years old):** emphasize self-reflection and emotional growth, asking how they might respond differently to strong emotions next time.

Debriefing and Reflection questions

- Was there a moment this week when journaling helped you understand your feelings better?
- Which emotion do you notice shows up often in your journal? Why might that be?
- Have you learned something new about yourself by keeping this journal?
- Is there a time when writing about your emotion helped you feel calmer?
- What do you find easy or hard about writing your emotions down?

