

SEW-Arts Observation and Reflection Journal [DRAFT V2] APRIL 2025

Organisation: _____ Class type/name: _____

Primary Teaching Artist: _____ Date: _____

Secondary Teaching Artist: _____ ID [Office use only] _____

The SEW-Arts Observation and Reflection Journal is a tool for teaching artists to observe colleagues and support the social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) of young people through the arts.

During your Observation:

- Focus on the chosen Wellbeing Factor/s within one of these categories: Tuning In, Feeling, Connecting, or Discovering
- In the provided tables for each category, document what the teaching artist said or did and what the participants said or did (remove participant information for Education Department sites).
- Note any *opportunities* and *guidance* the teaching artist offered related to the Wellbeing Factor.
- Record observations of students' responses to the activities.
- Make notes on any other observed Wellbeing Factors and SEWB Pedagogies using the checklists provided.
- Use the 'General notes' section for any other relevant observations.

After your Observation:

- Sharing your observations with the teaching artist you observed is encouraged for mutual professional development.

For the Primary Teaching Artist

- A separate Reflection Guide provides Key Messages and Reflection Questions to help you consider your own teaching practices.

This journal supports the SEW-Arts Framework, a strength-based approach aimed at empowering young people and equipping teaching artists to intentionally promote their social and emotional wellbeing through the arts. Your thoughtful engagement with this journal will contribute to this important goal.

This guide is designed for teaching artists to observe fellow teaching artists in practice, focusing on how they help young people strengthen their social and emotional wellbeing through four key areas:

**Tuning In,
Feeling,
Connecting, and
Discovering.**

Please document your observations in the tables below.

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Tuning In	What did the teaching artist say or do related to Tuning In?	What are participants saying or doing?	Wellbeing Factor Checklist	Pedagogy Checklist
	What opportunities and guidance has the teching artist provided for young people	Record observations about students responses to teaching artists instruction / activities	What Wellbeing Factors did you observe(circle)	What pedagogies did you observe(circle)
<p>Reflecting on your emotions, thoughts, and physical responses to experiences. It involves the skills of noticing.</p> <p>For Aboriginal people, this may also include deep listening and connecting to Country, tuning into the land to understand oneself, and how others feel as part of connecting</p>	Opportunities		Self-awareness: Emotions	
	Guidance		Self-awareness: Thoughts	Relatable Teachers
			Mindfulness	Autonomy or Personal Voice
			Sensory Awareness	Process as well as Product
			Coping with criticism	Exploring Issues
			Expressing emotions	Decreasing Stereotypes
			Managing pressure	Playfulness – Balance of Seriousness & Fun
			Compassion	Reflection
			Doing what I value	Teachable Moments
			Positive body image	
			Learning from mistakes	
			Trying Something new	
			Positive peer comparison	
			Listening	
			Empathising	
Working in groups				
General notes:				

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Feeling	What did the teaching artist say or do related to Feeling ?	What are participants saying or doing?	Wellbeing Factor Checklist	Pedagogy Checklist
	What opportunities and guidance has the teching artist provided for young people	Record observations about students responses to teaching artists instruction / activities	What Wellbeing Factors did you observe(circle)	What pedagogies did you observe(circle)
Allowing emotions to flow without suppressing them. Acknowledge your emotions and expressing them in healthy ways	Opportunities		Self-awareness: Emotions	Relatable Teachers Autonomy or Personal Voice Process as well as Product Exploring Issues Decreasing Stereotypes Playfulness – Balance of Seriousness & Fun Reflection Teachable Moments
	Guidance		Self-awareness: Thoughts	
			Mindfulness	
			Sensory Awareness	
			Coping with criticism	
			Expressing emotions	
			Managing pressure	
			Compassion	
			Doing what I value	
			Positive body image	
			Learning from mistakes	
			Trying Something new	
			Positive peer comparison	
			Listening	
			Empathising	
Working in groups				
General notes:				

Discovering	What did the teaching artist say or do related to Discovering ?	What are participants saying or doing?	Wellbeing Factor Checklist	Pedagogy Checklist
	What opportunities and guidance has the teaching artist provided for young people	Record observations about students responses to teaching artists instruction / activities	What Wellbeing Factors did you observe (circle)	What pedagogies did you observe (circle)
Learning about yourself through an adaptive form of risk-taking that results in building strengths, discovering your own values, and identifying ways to be the person you want to be	<i>Opportunities</i>		Self-awareness: Emotions Self-awareness: Thoughts Mindfulness Sensory Awareness Coping with criticism Expressing emotions Managing pressure Compassion	Relatable Teachers Autonomy or Personal Voice Process as well as Product Exploring Issues
	<i>Guidance</i>		Doing what I value Positive body image Learning from mistakes Trying Something new Positive peer comparison Listening Empathising Working in groups	Decreasing Stereotypes Playfulness – Balance of Seriousness & Fun Reflection Teachable Moments
General notes:				

Connecting	What did the teaching artist say or do related to Connecting ?	What are participants saying or doing?	Wellbeing Factor Checklist	Pedagogy Checklist
	What opportunities and guidance has the teaching artist provided for young people	Record observations about students responses to teaching artists instruction / activities	What Wellbeing Factors did you observe (circle)	What pedagogies did you observe (circle)
<p>Allowing emotions to flow without suppressing them. Acknowledge your emotions and expressing them in healthy ways</p>	<p><i>Opportunities</i></p>		<p>Self-awareness: Emotions</p> <p>Self-awareness: Thoughts</p> <p>Mindfulness</p> <p>Sensory Awareness</p> <p>Coping with criticism</p> <p>Expressing emotions</p> <p>Managing pressure</p> <p>Compassion</p> <p>Doing what I value</p> <p>Positive body image</p> <p>Learning from mistakes</p> <p>Trying Something new</p> <p>Positive peer comparison</p> <p>Listening</p> <p>Empathising</p> <p>Working in groups</p>	<p>Relatable Teachers</p> <p>Autonomy or Personal Voice</p> <p>Process as well as Product</p> <p>Exploring Issues</p> <p>Decreasing Stereotypes</p> <p>Playfulness – Balance of Seriousness & Fun</p> <p>Reflection</p> <p>Teachable Moments</p>
	<p><i>Guidance</i></p>			
<p>General notes:</p>				

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In what ways do you think the teaching artist made young people feel psychologically safe?

What are your overall impressions of how the teaching artist supported and promoted young peoples social and emotional wellbeing?

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Reflection Journal

After each observation session, take time to reflect on your own teaching practice. Consider what worked well, areas for improvement, and any insights gained from the observation process.

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	Key Messages Read through these first to help with your reflection	Reflection Questions To reflect on during or after each arts session. It is important you also develop your own competencies in relation to your chosen Wellbeing Factor.	Overall thoughts about how I promoted this Wellbeing Factor	Overall thoughts about how young people responded to this Wellbeing Factor
In the Zone	Set clear goals and create a focused environment to facilitate being in the zone.	<i>How did I support young people to get 'in the zone'?</i> <i>How did I support young people to remain 'in the zone'?</i>		
	Encourage mindfulness as a valuable alternative if in the zone seems challenging.	<i>Did I provide activities that offered self-feedback... rather than relying on me for feedback?</i>		
	Provide well-pitched challenges (not too challenging and not too easy) to promote being in the zone.	<i>Are young people developing an awareness of being 'in the zone' and expressing their experiences?</i>		

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<p>Self-awareness: Emotions</p>	<p>Acknowledge and address emotions to avoid anxiety and irritability. Utilise tools such as Plutchik's emotion wheel to identify emotions.</p>	<p><i>Did I identify and manage my own emotions effectively?</i></p> <p><i>Did I share my emotions with young people engaged in my arts sessions when appropriate?</i></p>		

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Self-awareness: Thoughts	Adolescents often see the world as either good or bad, right, or wrong, with nothing in between. Help adolescents recognise the complexities and grey areas in life situations.	<i>How did I foster creativity in my sessions to help young people identify and describe thoughts, feelings, and body sensations?</i> <i>Did I notice unhelpful thoughts? Did I recognise them as just thoughts by saying "My mind is saying..."</i>		
	Encourage young people to observe their thoughts. Guide them to watch their thoughts without getting caught up in them.			
	Incorporate mindfulness into your teaching, focusing on your breath when thoughts are negatively affecting the way you feel.			

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Mindfulness	Introduce mindfulness to children and adolescents gradually, building on a little at a time.	<i>How did I incorporate mindfulness into every session?</i> <i>Did young people experience any challenges with mindfulness?</i>		
	Develop your own mindfulness practice to enhance your own wellbeing and effectively support the young people you teach.	<i>How did I help them overcome these challenges?</i>		

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Sensory Awareness	Helping young people pay attention to their senses is a simple way to practice mindfulness.	Did I help young people in my arts session become more aware of their senses?		
	Explore your own sensory awareness to use your senses as a means of calming yourself when needed.	What senses was I good at noticing? What sensory experiences helped me feel calm?		

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Coping with Criticism	Engage in thoughtful and dynamic exchanges when ‘giving and receiving’ feedback.	How did I deliver feedback (informally and formally; privately and publicly)?		
	Remain open-minded and objective, welcoming diverse ideas that differ from your own when providing feedback.	How did I align feedback processes to the Wellbeing Factors?		
	Focus feedback on the work, offering guidance on improvement without personal commentary or perfectionist themes.			
	Avoid giving feedback about something that can’t be changed.	Did I openly discuss the feedback processes with the young people?		
	Provide specific and positive feedback to support wellbeing and promote positive change and growth			
	Use feedback as an opportunity to help young people develop the skills for self-evaluation in both their art form and social and emotional competencies.	How did I support the young people to handle and respond to feedback in beneficial ways?		

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	Deliver feedback in ways that suit young peoples' developmental stages, allowing them to absorb it calmly.			
Expressing Emotions	After engaging in intense emotional expression in creative work, ensure young people have time to wind down and return to a grounded emotional state afterwards.	<p><i>How did I provide an environment wherein young people felt safe to express their emotions?</i></p> <p><i>Were there young people who appeared to struggle to be aware of, and express their emotions? What strategies did I put in place to specifically help those young people?</i></p>		

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	<p>Be genuine and authentic in your emotional interactions with young people to avoid ‘emotion labour’, which can lead to exhaustion and burnout.</p>	<p><i>Was I aware of my own emotions throughout the day and my need for emotional expression?</i></p>		

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Managing Pressure	Recognise that coping strategies can be culturally based. For example, some Aboriginal people may rely more on emotion expression, communication, and collective coping.	<p><i>Did I break down the task into smaller more manageable chunks? Did young people in my arts sessions need scaffolding and could they work on the task independently? Did I teach any sub-skills?</i></p> <p><i>Did any young people need a more intense focus on stress relief strategies? How was this be provided?</i></p> <p><i>What stress-relief strategies did I use? Are they effective or do you need to explore and incorporate additional techniques?</i></p>		

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Compassion	Practice self-compassion to enhance your ability to respond effectively to the needs of young people.	<p><i>Did I dicuss how the practice of self-compassion may be helpful or unhelpful in the lives of young people.</i></p> <p><i>Did I revisit and discuss whether they have used this practice.</i></p> <p><i>Reflect on my use of self-compassion... how do I respond when something doesn't turn out as planned in my life.</i></p>		

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Doing what I value	Encourage young people to explore their own values language (avoiding imposing values on them).	<i>How well can the young people articulate their own values? Is this something that needs revisiting?</i>		
	Promote values talk as a way for young people to engage with the world and add meaning to their life.			
	Highlight that values are fluid and can change in form or function.			
	Explain that values are about how people want to act – not the outcomes they want to achieve.			

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Positive Body Image	Reflect on your own body image and how it influences what you say to young people engaged in your arts sessions.	<i>Reflect on the messages I conveyed to young people engaged in my arts session about their bodies through my words, actions, and the way I feel about my own body.</i> <i>Did I engage with support from the Butterfly Foundation if I needed resource for improving my own body image?</i>		

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<p>Learning from Mistakes</p>	<p>Encourage self-compassion in young people to help them learn from mistakes.</p>	<p><i>Did I have strategies in place to help those young people who appear afraid to make mistakes?</i></p> <p><i>How was perfectionist or highly self-critical behaviour perpetuated in my cohorts?</i></p>		
	<p>Show young people that you make mistakes and how you learn from them.</p>	<p><i>Did I have strategies in place to help young people who appear to be highly perfectionist and/or highly self-critical?</i></p>		

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Trying Something New	Encourage young people to explore and test their strengths. Focusing on their strengths helps them feel valued and believed in.	<i>Reflect on my attitude toward trying something new. Did I overcome the voice in my head that may discourage me from trying something new out of fear of failure?</i>		
	Trying new activities is a way for young people to discover what they care about and what energises them, helping them develop their values.	<i>What did I identify as my strengths? Did I see opportunities to further develop and use these strengths in my current life?</i>		

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Positive Peer Comparison	Encourage young people to be mindful of their comparisons to others and remind them that everyone has unique experiences and skills.	Did I model healthy social comparing?		
	Create opportunities for young people to collaborate. This allows them to balance negative comparisons by seeing the value in learning from others and getting to know their peers 'close up'.	Did I encourage young people engaged in my arts sessions to be themselves in how they speak and act?		
	Utilise compassion-focused techniques to help young people circuit break overly critical interpretations of self or others.			

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Listening	Teach active listening to young people to enhance their social and emotional wellbeing.	<i>How well did I listen to young people without judgement or feeling the need to come up with a solution?</i>		
	Active listening fosters mindful thinking, reducing anxiety and depression while promoting empathy.	<i>How comfortable did I feel as a listener?</i> <i>Did I always need to come up with a solution or are young people content with having their story heard?</i>		

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Empathising	Foster emotional development to support empathy growth.	Did I balance a focus on emotional empathy with cognitive and compassionate empathy?		
	Emotional regulation allows a young person to face uncomfortable emotions of others in a healthy way. Promote strategies to regulate negative emotions.			
	Ensure youth are aware that the ability to 'read' faces well is an important part of developing empathy.	Did I display empathy in my classes? How?		
	Cultivate listening skills to developing empathy, starting with their own feelings and thoughts and then those of others.			

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	Encourage ongoing practice in imagining and perceiving another’s perspective, as repeated efforts are more effective than occasional ones.			
	Model desired values. Empathy training research shows when teaching artists model desired values, children are more likely to adopt these compared to merely being instructed to behave in a certain way.			
Working in groups	Assist young people to recognise their natural roles to enhance self-awareness.	<i>What role do I take when teaching or instructing? Am I always the facilitator? Did I alternate roles so that facilitation is shared, is everyone accepted as equal members of the group?</i> <i>What roles do I take in teams within my organisation?</i>		

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	Encourage young people to experiment with different roles to develop social understanding and expand their own social and emotional wellbeing skills.	<i>Do I get opportunities to try out different roles?</i>		