



THE WAY I SEE IT: LOOKING AT MATS AS ART

Hooked mats provide an excellent way to introduce inquiry-based learning into any classroom. As objects of everyday life, mats provide valuable examples of art in our ordinary lives. Since hooked mats are also visually appealing, they serve as starting-points for visual inquiry and can thus act as “springboards” for achieving a wide range of curriculum outcomes. Students are thus empowered to seek and explore their own questions about the past.

In this lesson, students will practise two specific thinking strategies: *See-Think-Wonder* and *See-Know-Feel*. Based upon a mat in the New Brunswick Mat Registry, students will use their notes (as well as additional historical research) to establish a character and write a memory.

Grade Level: Adaptable for all grades

Curriculum Links: Symbolism; NB & Canadian Identity; Decorative Art; Women’s Work

Materials Required:

- Internet access to the New Brunswick Mat Registry web site (<http://www.mats-tapisnb.com/index.html>) and searchable database (<http://website.nbm-mnb.ca/NBMR-RTNB/index.asp>);
- Copies of the worksheet “Questions About Art”;
- Copies of the worksheet “See, Know, Feel”;
- Examples of antique hooked mats brought from home (optional);
- **Additional resources:** [The Project Zero Artful Thinking Project \(2006\)](#);
- **Video interviews:** Susan Vida Judah, Doris Norman, Students of École Grande-Digue, Waddy Family, Viola Léger, and Huberte LeBlanc.

Preparation:

Visit the [New Brunswick Mat Registry web site](#) and browse the [database collection](#) of hooked mats available for classroom use. An interesting variety of designs can be downloaded in advance for use in the classroom, or students can be provided with a link to browse the collection for themselves.



Here are some useful examples:

- [Acadian Flag](#), 1994, by Aldea Pellerin-Cormier (2009.7.1)¹
- [Bluenose](#), 1988, by Doris Bradford Norman (NBMR2011.16.3)
- [Lumber Camp](#), 1930, by Marie Godin Poirier (NBMR2011.23.1)
- [Sugarbush](#), 1950-1960, by Laura May Jones Abbott (NBMR2012.31.3)

These hooked mat examples provide vivid symbols of Canadian identity. In making your design selections (or guiding students in selecting their own) it will be important to ask yourself four key questions:

1. What **curriculum connections** do I want students to learn and explore by examining the mats as decorative art?
2. What **questions** can I ask to encourage the discovery process?
3. What types of **information** about the mats will I need and how will I **frame** this information for students?
4. What other **activities** can enhance the learning experience?

Lesson Process:

See-Think-Wonder: Questions About Art

1. Invite students to spend a minute observing Acadian Flag by Aldea Pellerin-Cormier (for example) to consider, on their own, what might be going on in the picture.



2. Have students share their ideas with a partner and then open the discussion to the entire class. Each time a student shares an interpretation, ask them what they saw in the design that supports their idea.

3. Once key details and a few different interpretations have been shared, distribute the "Questions About Art" handout (attached). This will enable thoughtful examination of the hooked mat in question.

¹ Use the mat accession number (i.e. 2009.7.1) to locate each design in the registry database.



4. For each question, have students share (and record) their ideas with a partner. Then open discussions to the entire class around questions 5 and 6. This will serve as a starting point for the next activity.

See-Know-Feel

1. Invite students to spend a minute observing another selection from the [New Brunswick Mat Registry database](#). Ask each student to select an image that

attracts their attention, and ask them what in that image sparks their interest.

2. Select one example from the registry to model the thinking routine (i.e. *Lumber Camp* by Marie Godin Poirier). Ask a volunteer to select a person, animal, or object in the image and ask the group to imagine themselves inside that point of view.

a. Start by asking “What can the person/animal/object see?”

b. As a group, consider “What might the chosen person/animal/object know or believe?” (This asks students to interpret context clues and develop a more complete story. They should use visual clues—such as expression, body language, props, and setting—to support their ideas.)

c. Finally, ask the group “What might the chosen person/animal/object feel?” (This asks them to empathize with the character, to consider the emotional impact of the scene and the relationships between different people, animals, or objects.)

3. Once you have modeled the routine, divide students into pairs and distribute the *See-Know-Feel* handout. Ask students to work together in expanding upon their character by conducting historical research in the subject area (i.e. lumbering in New Brunswick in the 1930's).

Assessment:

1. As a writing assignment, ask students to use their research notes about their mat to reconstruct a character (based upon evidence they have drawn from their analysis) and create a memory that their character might have. Emphasise that their memory must be historically accurate.

Request that they submit all of their worksheet notes with the assignment.



Name: _____

Date: _____



Worksheet: Questions About Art¹

See

1. Describe your hooked mat. Think about line, colour, texture, pattern, and shape.

2. What do you know about this mat? What is familiar? What is unfamiliar?

Think

3. List words or ideas that come to mind when you look at this mat. Why does it make you think about those words?

¹ Adapted from: The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) *Questions About Art* (2013), Retrieved from: <http://www.slideshare.net/cnardi/art-inquiry-in-any-classroom> and The Artful Thinking Project (2006), Retrieved from: <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/artful-thinking>

4. What associations can you make from it? Can you find other mats in the collection that are similar? How are they different? How are they similar?

Wonder

5. What questions would you like to ask about this mat?

6. In one sentence describe the most interesting thing about this piece of artwork.

Name: _____ Date: _____



Worksheet: See-Know-Feel¹

See

1. What can the person, animal or object see?.
2. What evidence do you have to support this claim?

Know

3. What might the person, animal or object know or believe?
4. What evidence do you have to support this claim?

¹ Adapted from: *The Artful Thinking Project* (2006), Retrieved from:
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/artful-thinking>

Feel

5. What might the person, animal or object feel?

6. What evidence do you have to support this claim?

7. What additional information can you find from secondary sources? (Cite your sources as a bibliography)