

# About My Journal

Reflective journal writing is a powerful professional-development tool. A journal provides you the opportunity to reflect on your successes *and* struggles in the classroom as well as gives you a place to keep teaching ideas and apply your understandings in creating future lessons plans. There is empirical evidence of the value of reflective journals for professional development.

The *Project-Based Inquiry Science CyberPD* environment provides you with a convenient and secure journaling tool. A shadowed pencil icon indicates that you may add a journal entry at that given point. If you click on the pencil, it will take you to a journal-entry page. You can give your journal entry a title, and your journal entry will also display the heading and page number on which you made the entry. When you return to the student page, the pencil icon will now be highlighted, indicating that you have made an entry.

You can access your journal entry from the actual page or from the *My Journal* button at the top of the screen. The *My Journal* button at the top of the page gives you access to all the journal entries for the Unit.

At the end of each section, you will find *Teacher Section Reflection Questions*. When you click on this button, you can access the questions and record your thoughts. When you save your answers to the section reflection questions, they will then also appear in your journal.

Your journal entries are personal to you, and no one other than you will have access to them. However, you are encouraged to share your reflections and other journal entries with your fellow teachers in your *Learning Community*. A professional learning community in which teachers share their practices in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (Mitchell and Ackney 2000; Toole and Louis 2002) is important to successfully implementing and sustaining change.