

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson Template ---

Title of lesson: **Chicken or Egg: How do our childhood experiences determine who we are or who we will become?**

Suggested grade/age: 7th grade and up. Strategies can be used with younger students a simpler form.

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: A few class periods are need to complete the prewriting and first draft. The revising and final drafts (not included in this template) will require additional time.

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

(Why is this lesson important in the development of your students' skills or knowledge? What do you want students to learn or be able to do? What "best practice" does this lesson incorporate?)

1. Students will re-read an exert from *My Life With the Chimpanzees* and make a connection with experiences in their own lives.
2. Students will learn and utilize several brainstorming and pre-writing strategies.
3. Students will share and evaluate experiences.
4. Students will understand how to organize writing.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

(What steps do you take to implement this lesson in your classroom? Where is this lesson located in the school year or unit—beginning, middle, end? Does this lesson scaffold or build to a culminating assessment or demonstration of learning?)

This lesson occurs after students have read the first few chapters of *My Life with the Chimpanzees*. They are beginning to understand who Jane Goodall is and her impact on the study of animal behavior.

Students will read the exert from *My Life with the Chimpanzees* in which Jane watches a chicken hatch an egg for the first time at the age of six. We will then discuss what affect this experience had in her future as an ethologist.

I will then tell several stories from my own life and explain how they influenced the person I became. I will show them a piece a writing that I generated from the list of experiences.

Students will then create a T-Chart. The heading on the left side will say, "Experience." On the right side the heading will be "Led to." The students will brainstorm, and then pair-share the different experiences that boosted their interests or help mold them into the people they are growing up to be.

Students will pick one experience and list the events of that experience in chronological order (1-6- amount not critical). Students will then create a “senses chart” to help them identify details from this experience.

Once these steps are completed, students may begin writing a first draft of the memoir.

Related Resources:

(What technology, articles, books, or supplies do you recommend?)

Write Source writing textbook

In the Middle Nancy Atwell

Creative Writing in the Classroom Nancy Atwell

My Life With the Chimpanzees Jane Goodall

Smart Board or Power point is nice for this lesson because you can go back and forth between slides, or show several slides to show how the prewriting is included in the draft.

Students all have writer’s notebooks that stay in the classroom.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

This lesson is very easy to adapt. Make it simpler for younger or special needs kids. Give them simple ideas to extend things they “like,” (video games, sports, etc...). For older or more advanced kids, really delve in to what experiences may lead them in to a possible career or life-long passion. Zoom in more on the feelings and emotions they felt while going through this experience.

For additional information, contact:

Suzie Myhre: suzie.myhre@spps.org