

Author: Nancy C. MacDonald

Title: A Favourite Place

Grade Level: Grade 9

Subject Area: English Language Arts, Health/PDR

Overview of unit/lesson/activities (assumptions of prior knowledge/learning)

Students at this age generally are examining their personal and social identities. Asking the perennial questions, “Who am I?” “Who will I become?” In this set of lessons, students explore a personal, favourite place of the present or past to more deeply understand and communicate its meaning and its significance in their lives. They will accomplish this through a series of reflective activities and writings in a variety of genres and forms including: note making, webbing, interview construction, interview interpretation and presentation in print, audio or video formats; and the collaborative writing of information text articles using a word processor or collaborative writing online software.

The teacher will need to review the privacy considerations of writely.com prior to recommending its use to students. A review of how to preserve personal privacy in online environments is required.

Correlations to ICT and curriculum outcomes

BOC 9.5 (relates to 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4)

from a range of resource options, knowledgeably select, manage, and use technological resources to solve curriculum problems and enhance their learning, with teacher guidance

SEHI 9.4 (relates to 6.2, 6.7, 6.8) demonstrate an understanding of, and a commitment to, accuracy, ethical behaviour, and personal privacy and safety as they create and distribute information about themselves, others, and curriculum topics under study

SEHI 9.6 (relates to 6.8) follow the Public School Program Network Access and Use Policy

PTS 9.4 (relates to 6.5, 6.6) create and manipulate sound, images and video, using digital equipment and computer-based editing, to represent their learning for particular audiences and purposes, independently

PTS 9.5 (relates to 6.4, 6.5, 6.6) develop multimedia presentations, based on sound principles of design, with increasing confidence, efficiency and independence

CT 9.1 (relates to 6.3, 6.5) use language, in a range of aural, print, media, and electronic forms to explore and express their perceptions, feelings, ideas and attitudes; refine their thinking; and interact, negotiate, and collaborate with others in order to build their understanding

CT 9.3 (relates to 6.1-6.5) critically evaluate how style, form, source, and medium influence the accessibility, validity and meaning of information with independence

ELA 9 demonstrate an awareness of the power of spoken language to influence and manipulate, and to reveal ideas, values, and attitudes.

ELA 9 make informed choices of language to create a range of interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing

ELA 9 demonstrate facility in using a variety of forms of writing to create texts for specific purposes and audiences, and represent their ideas in other forms (including visual arts, music, drama) to achieve their purposes.

ELA9 analyze and assess responses to their writing and media productions

ELA 9 demonstrate an awareness of what prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies work for them with various writing and other representations

ELA 9 experiment with the use of technology in communicating for a range of purposes with a variety of audiences

ELA 9 demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations

Projected timeline for preparation and for carrying out activities

Teacher preparation: 3 hours (approx.)

Student Work: 5 - 10 hours depending on the difficulty students experience with reflective work, and the complexity and prior skill in the technology tools used for the forms of representation selected by the student.

Equipment Requirements:

Classroom computers with the following software installed:

- Inspiration
- Word processor
- Image editing software: Photoshop Elements, Picassa, IrfanView, iPhoto, Image Blender
- Video Editing software: iMovie, Pinnacle Studio
- Multimedia software: Power Point, HyperStudio, Keynote
- Electronic Thesaurus/Dictionary: Visual Thesaurus CD (Active Readers 7, 8, 9 Supplement - March 2006)
- Web Authoring software: Front Page Pro, Web Blender, Dreamweaver, Netscape Composer
- Audio recording software such as is included on Windows and Macintosh Operating System or free downloadable software such as Audacity 1.2.3

Still digital camera and recording media (floppy disk or camera cable and computer installed image download software)

Video camera (firewire cable)

Battery charger for each camera

Secure storage arrangement with pre-scheduled student access.

Overhead projector and color transparencies (or write on transparencies and erasable or permanent transparency markers)

Teaching materials provided:

Diagram of classroom set up (classsetup.jpg)

Sample Equipment sign up sheet

Sample I CAN poster (student_ican.doc or student_ican.pdf)

Resources for teacher use:

Teacher Background Reading

M. J. Langeveld's online article, "The 'Secret Place' in the World of a Child" from Phenomenology Online provides an interesting examining of the meaning of children's secret places, researched using phenomenological research methods. Teachers will find the article helpful as they frame the learning experiences for the students and assist them to delve more deeply into the topic, Favourite Places.

M. J. Langeveld. The "Secret Place" in the World of a Child, Phenomenology and Pedagogy, Vol 1, No. 2, pp. 181 - 189. <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/articles/langeveld2.html>

Phenomenology Online is located at <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/home.html>

The website provides public access to articles, monographs, and other materials discussing and exemplifying phenomenological research.

Audio

Radio Diaries - <http://www.radiodiaries.org/makeyourown.html>

Youth Radio - <http://www.youthradio.org/index.shtml>

Media Literacy Online Project - Music, Radio and Audio Media

<http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/readings/contents/audiomedia.html>

Multimedia

HyperStudio QuickStart - <http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/PD/pdf/hsquick.pdf>

Video

Learning Resources and Technology - Filmmaking Materials

<http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/PD/pdweb/videoblacklines.shtml>

Collaborative Writing Environment

www.writely.com (Teacher review required prior to recommending its use to students. Students will require an active email address to participate.)

Poetry

PBS NewsHours Extra Poetry Site - <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/poetry/#>

Teacher Resources - Poetry

- Poetry Class - <http://www.poetryclass.net/lesindex.htm>
- Poetry Magic - <http://www.poetrymagic.co.uk/cycle.html>
- Rhyme Zone - <http://www.rhymezone.com/>
Type in a word to find its rhymes, synonyms, definitions, and more.
- Writer's Block: Unblocking Writer's Block - <http://www.rhymer.com/>

Detailed Instructions for each activity or lesson:

In this set of lessons students will explore and reflect back on a favourite place they knew as a child or which they presently inhabit. Where is the place? What is special about this place? What happened in that place? How did you discover the place? Do/Did you go there alone or with others? Who knew about the place? What were/are the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings of the place? What does this favourite place mean to you? In what ways, does the favourite place define you?

Part 1 - Explore and reflect back on a favourite place you knew as a child or which you presently inhabit. (20 minutes - 40 minutes)

Where is the place? What is special about this place? What happened in that place? How did you discover the place? Do/Did you go there alone or with others? Who knew about the place? What were/are the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings of the place? Why do you or why did you love it? What did it mean to you?

Pick One:

Use one of the following to capture the words and phrases that come to mind as you think about your favourite place of the past or present. Capture in words, the thoughts, feelings, and experiences which describe your favourite place and what it means or meant to you.

- Inspiration and the rapid fire feature
- a piece of chart paper

- a word processor
- your writer's notebook

Part 2 - Let's Talk Favourite Places (20 minutes - 30 minutes)

Meet with a partner or two to talk about your favourite place. Tell them all about the favourite place, or as much as you want, to convey what it was like, what happened there, and why it is special to you. Listen carefully. What do you learn about favourite places? What similarities and differences do you find?

Consider your own favourite place again in light of what you have heard from classmates about their favourite places. Write further about your own favourite place. Add more details and vivid sensory details that both capture the essence of the place and help someone else to understand its importance to you.

Part 3 - Create Interview Questions (30 - 40 minutes)

As a team of 3 - 4 students, you have been given a group Special Assignment for the *Nova Scotia Times Newspaper*. The community is hearing from students that they have nothing to do and nowhere to go. Your task, given by the Chief Editor of the newspaper, is to write an article about places young children like to play and that teenagers favour.

You really need to get the truth from children and teenagers because you think that your article could move government to better meet the needs of children and teenagers. You have heard rumors that a new mall is planned for a wooded area near the lake. Consider how this might positively and negatively affect those special places of children and teenagers.

Develop a set of interview questions that you will ask of young children and also of teenagers to find out what makes a favourite place special. Use your notes prepared in Parts 1 and 2 to help you to develop the questions that will get really good and honest answers from children and teenagers about their favourite places.

Part 4 - Conduct Interview and Interview Summary (30 minutes - 60 minutes)

Interview 4 children or teenagers about their favourite places. Record their responses using a tape recorder, video camera, or using paper and pen notes. Write a summary that powerfully shows what children or teens find most important in their favourite places. (Edit the audio or video to the salient ideas - no longer than 4 minutes total.)

Part 5 - Reflect Again on your Favourite Place (20 minutes)

After you have been interviewed by a group in your class, review your own notes developed in Parts 1 and 2. Add any new information, ideas, feelings, and insights that come to mind about your favourite place?

Part 6 - Individual Poetry Assignment (40 minutes - 120 minutes)

Create a powerful poem, rap or song to describe your favourite place and what it means to you. You may wish to use the structure of a particular form of poetry. Your poem must be at least 5 lines long.

Part 7 - Group Article Writing Assignment (60 minutes - 240 minutes)

As a group, determine how you will write the newspaper article together. What jobs need to be done? Who will do each job? Develop an Article Writing Rubric with the teacher which shows each job and its responsibilities and how you will evaluate the quality of each completed job.

Some groups may wish to write the article on-line using <http://writely.com>. Be sure to ensure your personal privacy by not supplying your full name. You will need to supply a valid email address; however, it is not published, shared or visible to other users. Ensure that you clearly indicate that only your identified group members may read and edit your writing. Include the teacher as part of your group.

Part 8 - Celebration and Sharing 40 - 80 minutes)

As a class, organize a whole class sharing of the work products. Suggestions include:

- Poetry Café where students present their poems at café tables, or on a small stage to the entire Café
- Multimedia - Set up stations where each group presents its edited audio recording, video, or published article. One group member at a time should act as the guide to a visiting group. As groups rotate through the stations, the home group presenter is rotated as well so that all students have the opportunity to hear, see and read each product and act as group presenter.

Expected Student Products

- Inspiration, Chart, Writer's Notebook Entries, or Word Processed notes on students favourite places.
- Interview Questions
- Interview Notes, audio recordings, video recordings
- Edited Interview audio or video recording; or written summary.
- Draft poem, revision drafts, and Edited final version of the poem.
- Group Article
- Article Writing Rubric - draft
- Scored Article Writing Rubric

Logistics

The classroom needs to be arranged to support group work. Specific materials and instructions

for Parts 1-8 above may be developed by the teacher. Timings for activities will vary depending on the forms of writing and representation the students undertake. Students should have additional work that they can do independently during times when scheduling access to technology or interview subjects may cause interruptions to their work flow. Literature or Socratic circles are a good complement to this writing experience.

Computer availability - 4 classroom computers. In some schools, a cart of laptops for shared student use is available. Booking a few so that each group has access to a computer is valuable.

A posted schedule for equipment access will support students to plan and to use their time well.

Secure storage of equipment such as cameras, scanners and associated batteries and cables is required. Students will need some review on the school's rules for the safe use and handling of equipment.

The teacher will need to review the privacy considerations of writely.com prior to recommending its use to students. A review of how to preserve personal privacy in online environments is required.

Assessment

Teachers should make and give value to observations of student work processes, staying on task, time and resource management, level and quality of student reflection and insight on the topic of study - A Favourite Place. It is recommended that the teacher spend a few minutes at the beginning of each part of the assignment to develop with the students, the criteria they will jointly use to know that high quality work is being accomplished, individual and group responsibilities have been assigned, communicated and completed, and that work products are turned in on time.