



Pictures of the Past: I Remember When... Lesson Plan

Introduction

While reminiscence is commonly associated with aging, people of all ages reminisce. Young people may reflect on elementary school days, a memorable family trip, a difficult period or a former best friend. Some adolescents may not appreciate when older people begin stories with "When I was your age . . . ~ or "I remember when...." It is difficult to take the perspective of another person whose life experiences differ greatly from one's own. This activity encourages students to see the value of reminiscence in their own lives and to imagine the reminiscence of another person. This activity can be used in conjunction with a novel written at the turn of the 20th century, as part of a history unit or after students have conducted oral histories.

Objectives

Students will:

- understand the value of reminiscence for people of all ages; and
- develop a story from the perspective of an older person.

Key Terms

reminiscence, perspective

Materials:

See Kingswood College Library website – excellent source of images from the past
<http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/research.htm>

Procedures

1. Ask students to think of a memorable time in their lives - an exciting, frightening, important or fun time. Who was with you? How long ago was it? What happened? Would it be the same for you if it happened today? Students can write a description of the event or describe the event verbally.
2. Discuss why reminiscing - recalling experiences and feelings from the past - is valuable. Some points students may identify are: reminiscing helps put the present in perspective; gives a sense of growth and accomplishment; can help in making better decisions for the future; creates meaning and continuity to one's life; and can be entertaining.
3. Introduce the handout (from above web site) showing portrait photographs taken around 1900. Ask students to write about one of the two persons. Some may liken the older person to a great-grandparent or someone they know. As background information, students may get ideas from an older adult about the life and times of the person in the photograph and research the time period.
4. Discuss student papers, bringing out common themes.

Extension Activities

Have students write a reminiscence paper on their own lives.

Have students research world events which occurred during the lives of the persons pictured. Discuss how world events might influence the attitudes and beliefs of those pictured.

Ask students to interview and write about the reminiscences of an older person they know.