Autobiography Pre-Writing Using Online Graphic Organizer

GLCE:

**W.PR.04.02** apply a variety of pre-writing strategies for both narrative and informational writing (e.g., graphic organizers such as maps, webs, Venn diagrams) in order to generate, sequence, and structure ideas (e.g., plot, setting, conflicts/resolutions, definition/description, or chronological sequence).


Goal: Through this lesson, students will learn how to utilize an online graphic organizer (Mindomo) to help them organize their thoughts and ideas in preparation for writing their autobiography. The graphic organizer will capture their thoughts in a way that can be saved, conveniently referenced and a valuable tool for writing their paper.

21st Century Skills:

1. This lesson plan promotes creative and innovative thinking and inventiveness because it introduces a completely new tool- the Mindomo Mind Map. By giving the students a new medium, they have to find different ways to express their ideas- in this case, through an online tool that acts as a visually appealing and self-organized pre-write. The lesson supports creative thinking because it gives students a chance to sort through their ideas and then display them according to their own preferences. Mindomo offers various graphic organizer formats, but it is completely up to the user how detailed and involved theirs will be. The lesson models creative thinking because the students do not have to do everything independently. The tool just gives them the boost need and the directions to successfully create a mind map.

2. The digital tool I chose to use in the lesson promotes student learning and creativity in several ways. As teachers, we understand that prewriting is an vital step in the writing process. It puts our thoughts out before us and lets us organize them so that we can successfully create a cohesive and coherent paper. In my lesson, I chose to use the Mindomo mind-map as my prewriting tool. It is especially useful for writing an autobiography (the ultimate outcome of the lesson) because it can be manipulated to account for sequence (for example, the students can arrange the bubbles diagonally and number them to display when certain events in their lives happened). Finally, my lesson pushes students to be creative because it introduces a new and fun tool and goes beyond the less-engaging act of filling in an already created paper graphic organizer. Artistic skills are called into use.

3. My lesson plan addresses students’ diverse learning styles, working strategies and abilities while using the Mindomo tool. Although Mindomo seems to be a very visual learning oriented tool, it is more than that. The prewriting tool also incorporates tactile learning- the students have to type, work a mouse and navigate the webpage. Since the students work in pairs, there is talking involved- one of the best ways to learn is to teach another something that you have a grasp on. Since some students will
catch on quicker than others, this learning style will also come into play. My lesson encompasses students’ diverse working strategies because they can design their mind map however they would like, as long as it includes each designated point necessary for their written autobiography. There is certainly room for creative expression. The students will be in partner pairs- assigned so that their abilities and challenges complement one another. For example, I will pair strong keyboardist with novice ones and strong writers with those who might need a little help.

**Lesson Description:**

The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize the students with a mind-mapping tool called Mindomo and use the tool to create a pre-write for their written autobiography.

1. The students will be divided into pairs- I will be sure to pair strong writers with weaker ones and students more familiar with computers with those who are not as familiar. Each student will have their own computer or laptop to work on, but they will be seated to their partner.

(I will have already set up a Mindomo account so that each student can make their own graphic organizer)

2. I will explain the basics of Mindomo so the students (by using my own computer screen projected onto the tv)- how to add a bubble and in what position, how to change font, add or change color, how to change the overall format of the graphic organizer, how to add notes, create main bubbles and sub-bubbles, how to add notes etc. As I am explaining, the students will do each of the things that I do. This way they will have already had a brief run-through before they create their own organizer.

3. I will then take questions about the tool and answer them.

4. I will explain that we are using this tool as a graphic organizer for the upcoming writing of our autobiographies. It is meant to organize our thoughts in a way that looks cool and will easily transfer when it comes time to write the paper.

5. I’ll pass out the criteria list for what must be included in the organizer:
   
   · A main bubble with the student’s full name and birthday
   
   · A favorite activities bubble with at least three sub-bubbles explaining their three favorite activities.
   
   · A bubble titled Family with sub-bubbles introducing each member of their immediate family.
A main bubble titled: important life events, sub bubbles briefly explaining at least four of these events, including the year.

Another bubble titled: future goals, with 3 goals listed using sub-bubbles

One more section with a main bubble and sub bubbles of their choice.

I will let the students know that I am here to help them under two conditions. They must first consult the Mindomo’s help module to try to solve their problem. Then they must ask their partner for help. If neither of these options work, they can then raise their hand and I will come assist them.

The graphic organizer must have at least color- they can experiment with font and font size as well as bubble shapes. The criteria list will say: “make it look cool!”

6. The students will work on their mind maps for 45 minutes. After the time is up they will save their organizer. We will come back on work on these the next day if need be. If not, the following lesson will involve the students using their mind maps to write the first draft of their autobiography. Their brainstorming will have all been organized and synthesized in their graphic organizer through Mindomo.

Grading Student Work

I will use a qualitative method for grading student work, with this rubric:

**Outstanding Work** will include each element listed on the criteria list, including all details and descriptions. There will be no errors in mechanics and spelling. The graphic organizer will be colorful and visually appealing.

**Good Work** will include most of the elements listed on the criteria list, including at least ¾ of the items listed. It will have some mechanical or spelling errors, but they won’t interfere with understanding the graphic organizer. The graphic organizer will be colorful and visually appealing.

**Fair Work** will be missing some of the criterion requirements. The descriptions will be lacking and may not include details. There will be many errors in mechanics and spelling that interfere with one understanding the graphic organizer. Little will have been done to make the product colorful and visually appealing.

**Poor Work** will be missing ¾ or more of the listed elements, with no attention to detail, explanations, color, visual esthetics or neatness, mechanics and spelling. Or failure to create a mind map.