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# All About Me: Promoting Reading and Writing Through Creating Autobiographical Posters

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# All About Me: Promoting Reading and Writing Through Creating Autobiographical Posters

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# All About Me: Promoting Reading and Writing Through Creating Autobiographical Posters

Edward J. Dwyer

Getting acquainted, especially at the beginning of the school year, can be made much easier and more enjoyable as well as academically productive through implementing the *All About Me* strategy. It works like this:

1. Take a close up individual picture of each student. I like to take the picture while students are working independently. Posing often yields stilted pictures. I sometimes ask students to change seats and work in an area with better lighting. A combination of artificial, overhead lighting and natural light from a window works very well. The natural light, though not direct sunlight, should fall on the student's face. Avoid taking any pictures where there is a window directly in back of or close to the sides of the frame of the picture.

I send the film to have 4" x 6" (10 cm x 15 cm) prints made. The 4" x 6" prints are a little more expensive than the standard 3.5" x 5" (9cm x 13cm) prints but are well worth the extra cost.

2. In the next step, I invite the students to tell about themselves in a few paragraphs titled *All About Me*. They write about such topics as where they live, what they like to do, favorite foods, their families, pets, and anything else of interest to them. We share drafts and talk about contents. The only limitation is that, for purposes of future publication, we need to limit the content to about 150 words so the picture and message can fit on an 8.5" by 11" (21.5 cm by 28 cm) piece of paper.

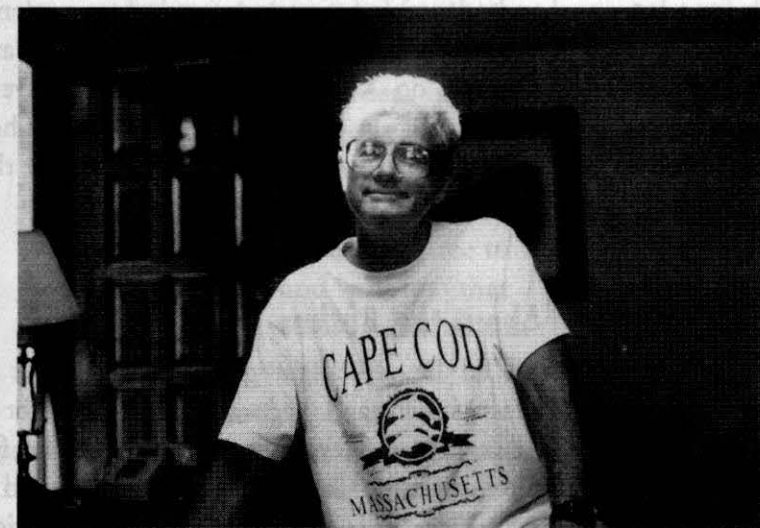
3. Students complete their writing and then type the contents using a word processing program on one of the classroom computers. They save their work on their own disks. Students print their *All About Me* selections and share them with other students to determine if changes and/or modifications are needed. Each student then returns with the hard copy to the computer, inserts the disk with the original copy, and then works toward a product ready for publication. I keep an interested eye on content and offer suggestions but give the students a great deal of freedom in completing their *All About Me* selections. I want them to be as uninhibited as possible in writing about themselves.

4. Each student then prints out a final version of *All About Me*. The titles are all the same, *All About Me*, but with each student's by-line on his or her publication. In the final printed version, the students leave a space of 5 inches (13 cm) between the by-line and the body of the text. Students make adjustments in text content if there is too much information to fit on the page. Students can use manuscript writing to do their poster if they are not adept at using a computer or one is not available. I have found parent volunteers and teacher assistants very helpful in providing support for students in making their *All About Me* posters.

5. The students then place a picture of themselves at work in the classroom in the space on the copy and hold it with two tiny pieces of poster putty, rolled over clear tape, or a dab of glue from a glue stick. The picture

All About Me

By Edward J. Dwyer



I enjoy living and working in Northeast Tennessee very much. I was born and raised in a very crowded city in Massachusetts and; consequently, I greatly appreciate the green hills and spaces in Tennessee. My family and I live about a mile from the campus of East Tennessee State University. It's very convenient for me being so close to campus and to so many other things in Johnson City and the surrounding area.

I've worked at ETSU for nearly 20 years. It's a wonderful place to teach, study, and meet with other people. My office, though not lofty in appearance, seems to me like a secure sanctuary where there all kinds of great things to do like study, work with my computer, and engage in creative and expository writing.

My wife, Evelyn, teaches mathematics at the Greeneville Campus of Walters State Community College. My oldest son, Chris, is in his first year at Science Hill High School, Julie, my daughter, is at Liberty Bell Middle School, while my other son, Andrew, is in fifth grade at South Side Elementary School.

I like to read, spend time with my family, swim, jog, and travel. My favorite foods are pizza, steak, baked potatoes with sour cream and butter, and ice cream. Since nearly all of my favorite foods are high in fat, I've modified my eating a great deal in the last 10 years. I eat much smaller portions of my favorites and lots of more healthful foods.

ETSU and Tennessee have been good for me. I'm delighted to be a member of the East Tennessee State University community and a resident of Johnson City.

and the whole page are then covered with a clear plastic adhesive, providing a protective coating.

6. Students then put a thin strip (approximately one inch/ 2.5 cm) of clear plastic adhesive all across the top and all across the bottom of the page on the back of the completely covered printed side. This is not essential but adds even more durability to the page.

7. Using poster putty, students put up their *All About Me* selections on walls all over

the classroom. Masking tape can also be used and, of course, tacks or staples on cork boards. The strips of clear adhesive plastic covering on the back add an important measure of protection during mounting. I put up my own *All About Me* along with the children's.

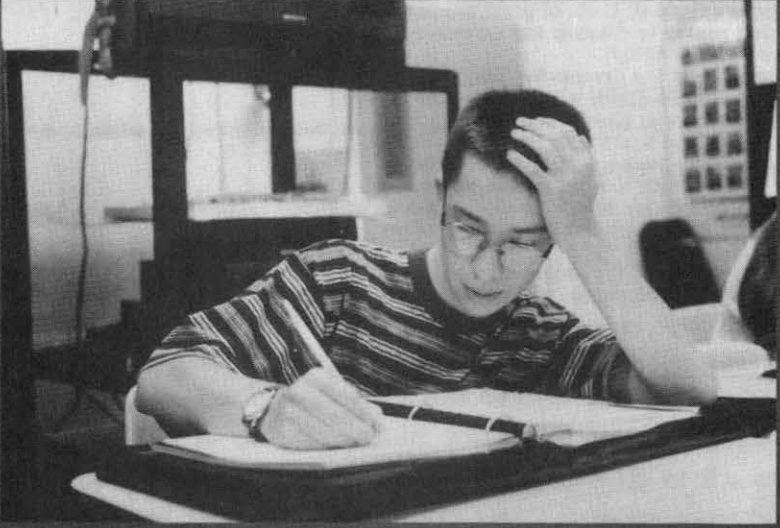
8. We then walk around the classroom and read the selections which now take on the appearance of professionally constructed posters. The students are delighted with the results. Reading about classmates and seeing

their pictures encourage great interest. They readily attach names and faces to the contents of the *All About Me* posters.

We keep the posters on the walls for a few days and then as a class book in a three-ring binder. We use an electronic hole puncher to cut even and precise holes through the plastic covering for including the posters in the binder. After about three weeks in the class book, the posters then become permanent parts of students' portfolios.

**"Reading about classmates and seeing their pictures encourages great interest."**

All About Me



I am Ryan Davidson I was born in Gunison Colorado April 2, 1983. My family moved to Tennessee in 1985. My little sister was born when I was four. I started riding a bike when I was four and haven't stopped scenic. I started school in 1986. I switched schools in the second grade to Jackson elementary. In the third grade we bought land in Colorado. We have gone back every year scene we moved. I started riding a dirt bike 3 weeks before the 7 grade.

The *All About Me* strategy described herein was mainly used with fourth- and sixth-grade students but seems entirely appropriate and adaptable for younger and older students as well. In fact, it would be wonderful to have students do *All About Me* posters in every grade and keep them through the years. They undoubtedly would become treasures for the students and their families.

### About the Author

Ed Dwyer taught grades four and six in Massachusetts and grades six, seven, and eight in Alaska. He also served as a reading specialist for three years in Calgary, Alberta. He earned a Ph.D. in Reading Education at the University of Georgia and is currently a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at East Tennessee State University.

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