

**Title: Memoirs- Going to Your “Happy Place”**

Jennifer Uhlman	English Language Arts Grade 8 (3-4 class lesson)
Lesson Goals:	Mindfully recalling favorite memories as a strategy to achieve a variety of goals including; cultivating optimism, alleviating negativity, generating ideas from past experiences, and boosting physical health. Creating a learning environment that is engaging and involves positive interactions.
Outcomes Targeted:	HL 8.1- analyze the relationship between values and personal health practices ELA 9.1- continue to develop writing forms previously introduced and expand this range to produce (for example) biographies, drama, literary responses... 8.4 demonstrate an awareness of how and when to integrate interesting effects in writing; integrate detail that adds richness and density; include thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions. 10.2- choose, with increasing regularity, the prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies to aid in producing various texts.
I Can Statement:	I can use the strategy of recalling happy memories to release the “feel good” chemicals in my brain as a way to overcome negative feelings that arise.
Key Vocabulary and Skills:	Memoir, Dopamine, Neurotransmitter
Material Needed:	iPads, paper, pencils, student work packet, whiteboard markers

**Lesson:**

I. Introduction (Teacher organized)

\*\*\*Students will receive a paper copy packet that includes all of the information/instructions that they will need to recall and write their happy memory with step-by-step instruction. Click link for packet

- 1) Read through with the students the effect of dopamine in the brain  
<http://msuhlman.weebly.com/uploads/2/4/8/2/24828726/dopamine.pdf>
- 2) Warm-up- Pose to the students “ Think of something happy or funny that you and the class shared. Maybe there was an exciting field trip, maybe you had class outside, maybe you had an interesting guest or presentation, maybe someone told a good joke.” Invite the students to build this memory. The more they can elaborate the more they can appreciate the memory. Ask them to think of the memory as a story and try to add important details. If details come up that are not as happy, acknowledge them as part of the experience but explain that you’d like to keep the focus on what was good. Jot their ideas down on the board.
- 3) Discuss: How did remembering something together help you savor the happiness of the memory? If an experience is less than perfect, how can we approach the good parts without feeling as if it was ruined? Does recalling a memory in detail change the way you feel? What is one of the main places in our brains where

memories are stored? (answer: Hippocampus)

Time Allotted: 15 minutes

## II. Guided Learning (Teacher/student collaboration)

- 1) Distribute the Memoir student packet and read through with the students
- 2) Complete pre writing activities as they arise

<http://msuhlman.weebly.com/uploads/2/4/8/2/24828726/memoir.pdf>

Time Allotted: 45 minutes (remainder of class 1)

## III. Collaborative Learning (Student focused activity)

The student focused activity is drafting, editing and writing their memoir.

Time Allotted: may need 2-3 classes to brainstorm, rough draft, edit, final draft etc

## IV. Grand Finale

Students are expected to read their memoirs to the class, including powerpoint visuals, or they can make a screencast/video of themselves reading in real time or using a powerpoint as the visual.

Assessment and Evaluation: Student memoirs will be graded using a rubric. (Rubric is included in the student packet)  
Evaluation will also be determined through the prewriting activities or completion of the student packet

Adaptations and IPPs: Noted students are able to work in a different space if required (resource room)