

Methodology

Explicit instruction is an ideal strategy to encourage students to independently write their autobiographies. Annie Lessard, a teacher at Centre Jules-Léger (CJL), suggests the following steps:

1. Have students read examples of other students' writing, based on their age and interest levels.
2. Identify the main parts of the text, e.g.:
 - i. Catchy title
 - ii. Introduction
 - i. Topic
 - ii. Topic
 - iii. Topic
 - iii. Development:
 - i. First main idea
 - ii. Second main idea
 - iv. Conclusion
3. Develop a text using the writing process:
 - i. Pre-writing
 - ii. Drafting
 - iii. Revising
 - iv. Editing
 - v. Publishing
4. Encourage students to share their autobiographies

As part of their French classes, my students have read and analyzed several autobiographies. Once identified the elements of the structure, they had the opportunity to compose their own autobiography, describing some key events in their lives that particularly affected them. Students were encouraged to talk about their challenges, particularly their learning disabilities. By understanding their difficulties, the students have learned to raise awareness of their surroundings, to persevere and to accept their situation and appreciate that they all have strengths and qualities that enable them to succeed and take their place.

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