**Engaging Writers: Six Little Words (6-word Memoir)**

**Materials**: Introductory PowerPoint, Computer/Projector, Writer’s Notebook, sentence strips

**Rationale/Purpose:** Starting Small—At Any Level helps build confidence, shared experiences, stamina/endurance, and a sense of being a writer. Creates a sense of community among students and provides a way for students to share their lives. Some ways to start small include sharing stories—speaking and listening, making lists, using models as templates, and short, focused assignments.

6 word memoirs can be used as an introduction tool for the class, as a motivating tool to invite in English Learners, reluctant writers, and as a non-threatening writing tool to bring writing into classrooms, build relationships, and create community.

**Procedure:**

1. Introduce lesson by asking the question: What is a memoir?
2. Define six word memoirs using <http://www.smithmag.net/> website.
3. Show examples of six word memoirs using the first 3-4 minutes of YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1vWxQuckiY> (4th Graders: 6-word Memoir, Doug Franksh)
4. Look at slides of examples. Talk about their meaning.
5. Ask students how they could mimic a model (or copy and change it)
6. Ask students to write three six-word memoirs about themselves. ONE LIFE. SIX WORDS. WHAT’S YOURS?™
7. Celebrate! Publish! Have them choose a six-word memoir that they wrote, put it on a sentence strip, personalize, and hang up.

**Assessment:** Students will publish a six-word memoir on a sentence strip that they will hang up. Class will take a gallery walk and read each six-word memoir.

**Accommodations/adaptations:**

* Use models for students to copy and change.
* Use sentence frames for English Learners.
* Allow English Learners to write in their native language and translate for class.
* Look at characteristics that make a six-word memoir more profound.
* List their identities (brother, student, painter, sports player, singer) and create six word memoirs about one of their identities
* Create six word memoirs about characters in a story or in history.
* Revise and edit 6 word memoirs before publishing
* Use the 6 word memoirs as a title or focused purpose of a narrative
* Publish their 6 word memoir by taking student’s picture while they hold it up
* Use to show growth in mindset
* Write six word memoirs about science concepts, math algorithms, or historical figures or events
* Create a poem using six word memoirs

**Resources:**

<http://www.smithmag.net/>

*Legend has it, Ernest Hemingway was once challenged to write his memoir in only six words. Inspired by this, the eighth grade students of Woodrow Wilson Middle School have met the same challenge and summed up the most important aspects of their lives in 6-words. These are their stories.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd3IiNrhYdg>

Student Voices

<http://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/schools/>

testing tests my lack of patience

by teacher in aronsonm@link75.org at Woodside Elementary

<http://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/schools/story.php?did=2132>

A thousand masks, who am I?

by Daemia Henderson! in Creative Writing at Bedford Middle School

<http://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/schools/story.php?did=2131>

Daisies bloom; sun burns, petals wither.

by Penelope Bedford in Creative Writing at Bedford Middle School

<http://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/schools/story.php?did=2129>

The rules shouldn’t just be monochrome.

by Jubilee W. in Ramsey Period 5 at Joseph A. Foran High School

<http://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/schools/story.php?did=2128>

Classroom Of The Month: Mr. Hollman’s 5th Grade Special Education Class At The Helen Keller School In Bronx, New York

<http://sixwordmemoirs.com/about/classroom-of-the-month-mr-hollmans-5th-grade-special-education-class-at-the-helen-keller-school-in-bronx-new-york/>