**TOOL: Learner Autobiography Lesson Plan**

**Purpose:**

* To provide an opportunity for students to explore who they are as learners and how past experiences have shaped their sense of themselves.
* To learn students’ beliefs about learning, and experiences with school, in order to support them in a way that is thoughtful and culturally responsive.

**Note:** This lesson was developed for middle or high school classes. For younger grades, consider modifying the prompts or providing sentence stems, along with any other changes you deem appropriate for the developmental levels of your students. You may also choose to shift the prompts to the present tense.

**Lesson**

**Step 1: Provide students with the following quick write (3-5 minutes):** Describe a teacher that had a positive impact on you. What did they do or say that impacted you?

**Step 2: Turn and Talk.** Allow students a minute to share with someone sitting nearby.

**Step 3: Explain to students that today they will be working on an autobiography of their own experience as a learner.** Optional script:  *We all come to school with different experiences. These experiences can really shape how we feel about our education. Today you will be writing an autobiography of your experience as a learner. I’ve provided prompts for you to get your ideas flowing, but only use those that stand out to you.*

*After we finish writing, you will have the opportunity to share portions of what you write with your peers. You will not need to share the entire autobiography with anyone else but me. This will help me get to know you better as a learner- it may even help you get to know yourself!*

**Step 4: Give students 30 minutes to write their autobiographies.** Write alongside them. This demonstrates value for the task and shows your students that you are a fellow learner investigating your own experiences. You may also choose to have students write over multiple days if you want them to complete a full process of drafting and revising.

**Step 5: After 30 minutes, have students pair up and share one paragraph of their choosing.** Let them know that they can provide any context from previous paragraphs they need to. Once both partners have shared, have them each choose a “striking line” to share with the class. This may be a line that exemplifies their experiences or just one they really like!

**Step 6:  Have the class come together to share out a “striking line.”** Share your “striking line” too.

**Step 7: Ask students to reflect on their experience with the activity in partners or on their own.**

Reflection questions: What was it like to write your learner autobiography? How do you think reading your learner autobiography could help teachers support you?

**Learner autobiography handout**

**Goal:** To explore who we are as learners and how past experiences have shaped this sense of ourselves.

This prompt is a chance for you to reflect on how your early life experiences have contributed to your development as a learner. Think about your experiences in school as an *elementary student*. There are no right or wrong answers. Allow yourself to explore.

**The following are some questions/prompts to help you recall your experiences.** Feel free to use them or create your own.

·      How did your parents/guardians talk about education (yours or their own)?

·      How did you feel about going to school most mornings? Why?

·      Recall a time you felt proud at school.

·      Recall a time when you needed extra support. Did you get it?

·      Recall a time when you felt you didn’t have a voice.

·      Tell about a teacher who helped you to achieve. What did they do to challenge and support you?

·      Which were your favorite subjects? Why?

·      Who was influential on your sense of yourself as a learner?

·      How did you learn best when you were younger? How do you learn best today?

·      Did you ever fail or get a grade that was disappointing to you? How did you feel about it? How did

        your teachers or family respond?

·      What clubs or afterschool activities did you love? Why?

·      How has your sense of yourself as a learner changed over the years?