

Ashley Waddell

5th hour

5/3/12

Fish extra credit

"Forever Alone"

In loving memory of Swimmy and Karen

Once joined together in a tank of love,

Now separated in a stream of fear

Swimming silently, forever alone

One day she wishes to be reunited with her partner

That one day is in heaven.

Love grows passionately through every figure

No matter what form

Love is there

Even in a little fish

Love is present

But does this mean that she is now an island,

Alone with no one to care for her

Or does she have friends and a family to support her,

To help her when she needs it

To stand by her in this hard time

Kellie Hurst

4 May 2012

5th Hour

Mrs. Hurst

Small Salmon Can Teach a Large Lesson

The famous actress Lily Tomlin once said, "I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework." From the moment our classroom first got the two-hundred eggs that would later hatch into sac fry, our teacher, Mrs. Hurst, encouraged us to research information about the salmon that would improve our understanding of them. This wasn't a mandatory assignment, but it was a unique subject to research.

When I first heard about the classroom receiving two-hundred salmon eggs, I was quite surprised. We were an English class learning about salmon. I wasn't too fond of the salmon at first. Little did I know that a valuable lesson would come from all of this, and my English skills would strengthen over time, too. Our class received a worksheet with information about the salmon that we would need to analyze. The assignment was different from others because we actually had two-hundred salmon eggs in our classroom! Having them in our classroom made us very interested in learning about them through the reading.

The salmon hatched and turned into sac fry. I recall our class looking at the salmon with the smallest and largest egg sac. We were fascinated. Time passed, my English skills strengthened, and the salmon were now swim- up fry. The fish seemed like they were growing so quickly! As my English skills improved throughout the year, the fish grew on me and were with me every step of the way. They were always there, through the ups and downs.

The salmon were now around the smolt phase. We had about one-hundred forty salmon (much larger than expected in the smolt phase!). Our class was very proud of our salmon population. Unfortunately, we had to release the salmon because a few of them started to die. Looking back on the experience, I realize the life lesson that the fish taught me. All year, we were discussing the theme that familiarity alters perspective. At first, I did not truly believe in this idea. Now, I do believe that familiarity alters perspective. The salmon are a perfect example of this. Before, I didn't like salmon (or any fish for that matter), but then I gradually discovered that they aren't so bad. Now, I almost think of them as old friends. The more familiar I became with them, the more I appreciated them.

Therefore, the salmon have taught me a valuable lesson that I will not forget. I hope that Mrs. Hurst does this same activity with her students next year. The lesson learned is truly worth the experience with the salmon, or as I like to call them, friends.



Madison Foldessy

2nd hour

Mrs. Hurst

May 3rd 2012

Extra Credit

School of Fish

A typical day like any other
Trying to get through without being bothered
After first hour still tired with sleep
I trudged down the hall giving no grief
I walked to class to find a surprise
Hundreds of little eggs right before my eyes
In a tank in the corner all clear and blue
This was going to be exciting I just knew
Day by day we took care of keeping the temperature cold
It would take a while for them to hatch we were told
Weeks passed with no change
Just staying the same
But finally one day something new arose
The eggs began to move and grow

As days went by little heads poked out
And the eggs began to float about
Tiny fish no bigger than a pin
With big round bellies that used to be egg skin
Over the months they grew and grew
You could see it through and through
But then one day they began to die
We just could not figure out why
Our teacher called the salmon guy
In fear that more would die
We had to act fast and let them go
Or else we would have none left to show
So after school we let them go
To their new watery home
They were our school of fish

Sarah Bussineau
May 4th, 2012
6th Hour
Mrs. Hurst

"The Salmon Experience"

What am I going to do? I thought. *Now I have to sit by the salmon.* It was yet another day in Mrs. Hurst's sixth hour advanced English class, but today we got to change seats. My new seat was located right in the front of the room, right by the salmon tank. Before then, I had never gotten anywhere near the salmon. I had kept my distance when Mrs. Hurst asked for people to feed the fish or clean up the tank. We had read an article about chinook salmon, the type of salmon we were raising, and when Mrs. Hurst tried to motivate us with her cheery, "Isn't this interesting?" my first thought was no, of course not. I stared into the tank, contemplating what to do about my new seating arrangement.

After a while, I began to forget about the salmon. They became another normal in my daily life. It wasn't until our class began talking about making plans to release the salmon that my mindset started to change. I realized that I didn't want to see the salmon go. I quickly decided that yes, I did want to help release them into their new homes, to let them into the same place that they would breed and, eventually, die.

Everything was going according to plan, until I heard the rumors going around school one day. People were saying all the salmon were dying, the

tank was too small, Mrs. Hurst walked out of the classroom, and the salmon were gone. I couldn't believe it. The salmon were not supposed to be released for another month! During sixth hour, Mrs. Hurst explained it all. The salmon had started dying, and had to be immediately released before more died too. She and her husband had taken the salmon during her prep hour. It seemed so sudden. These fish we had cared for for months were suddenly gone. When I turned around in my seat for days to come, I was startled, for the tank that had once held squirming, swimming fish was now sitting vacantly against the wall.

Truly, I had been biased towards the salmon. At first, I had not given them a chance. I viewed the salmon as an abnormality, a strange unfamiliar project to wrap my mind around. As I became more familiar with them though, my perspective began to change. I still wish I had the chance to experience the releasing of the salmon.

Christina Thomas
4 May 2012
3rd Hour
Mrs. Hurst

"Familiarity Alters Perspective"

I remember the first time I saw the Chinook salmon. At that time they were just *two eyed eggs*. I was astonished at how many there were. I knew there was absolutely no way we can keep one-third of them alive. I always thought that fishes were useless. Surprisingly, I was proven wrong by the fish. I had judged them based on their appearance without actually knowing them. I soon changed my opinion for they had proven me wrong. Therefore, this is why my theme is: familiarity alters perspective.

Initially, when I first saw them, "useless" was the word that popped in my hollow head. My last fish I owned did nothing and died fourteen days after I got it. Of course I fed the fish and cleaned its tank, but it was just weak. Besides, they do not really make an impact on one's life. My perspective changed when I learned how interesting and entertaining they were. For instance, I did not know the salmon used their sense of smell to return to the stream in which they were born in to spawn. Sometimes they have to travel hundreds of miles! The salmon were able to keep us going with their entertaining way of interacting with one another. The value in this class project was to learn the importance of these small, but mighty animals and not to judge them. The impact they made on me I'll never forget. They taught me that life moves in a cycle which means

we are born, we grow, mate, reproduce, and eventually die. With that being said, if one were to ask me if my perspective changed, I would say, "Absolutely." These incredibly small animals were able to make my class more interesting and entertaining.

Clearly, I am severely thrilled to have experienced about half of the year with the salmon. From a *sac fry* to a *parr* and so on, they were exceptionally interesting and entertaining. Most importantly, they were able to change my perspective I originally had about them. They were able to prove me wrong and I am so grateful they did that. To this end, I will always try to keep this quote stated by Albert Einstein, "Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty."

Richard Sanna
2 April 2012
6th hour
Katherine Hurst

Splendid Salmon

When I first saw the eggs I was amazed at how small an actual life form could be. I was also stunned at the probability that over half of the younglings wouldn't ever reach the open water. Lastly I was disappointed at how short my time with them was. Just when I was really starting to admire the beautiful creatures it was time for them to depart.

Chinook salmon live a very potamodramous (migrations within fresh water) lifestyle. As mentioned above the fish start off as eggs. From there they evolve into a sac fry, where they get nourishment from the yolk sac. Then the salmon begin to emerge, becoming swim-up fry. Now the small fish, or parr, spends a month or two in warm water off stream. Afterwards the Chinook (smolt now) venture out into the Great Lakes and go through the most rigorous course of their lives, trying to find food and not become it. Their food consists mainly aquatic insects, a very high protein diet. Then, when they are sexually mature the fish will mate and lay eggs, resulting in their death. Their dead bodies provide nourishment for the eggs and allow them to grow and develop.

My 8th grade English class acquired a fish tank and we housed a group of 200 Chinook salmon, from the egg phase to the parr phase. We had people sign up for jobs, such as feeding the fish, cleaning the tank, and changing the water. We helped take care of the fish and in return got to watch a species develop from eggs to adolescents. It was rewarding in a way that I feel would be similar to watching a baby child or a puppy grow up and develop physically and mentally without being able to verbally communicate with them.

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed hosting the fish. I was also disappointed when they left after such a short time. In addition, I feel that helping take care of the fish gave me a valuable life lesson in responsibility. Therefore, I highly recommend talking to your teacher about housing some Chinook salmon, getting one as a pet, or at least researching these highly interesting creatures.

Jordan George

5/1/12

5th

Mrs. Hurst

Salmon in The Classroom

Some might say salmon and an English classroom just doesn't go together. They might say that a science class is more likely. This may be true in some respects, however it can be done. This year Mrs. Hurst's English classes have successfully raised salmon in the classroom and applied it to our learning. Familiarity with the salmon has altered our perspective of the salmon for the better. Salmon have a multi-step life cycle, salmon are important to humans, and salmon can be raised in an English class.

One might think that the salmon's life cycle is just like any other fish. They are eggs, they grow and live, and then they die. However this isn't correct. As we learned in class, salmon go through multiple stages other than just egg, live, and die. Chinook Salmon, to be exact, go through many stages such as egg, sac fry or alevins, swim-up fry, parr, smolt, and then death. The salmon start as eggs. Then as the water warms the salmon hatch from the eggs now referred to as sac fry or alevins. As part of this stage, the salmon remain in the gravel using their yolk sac for nutrients. Once they have used up their yolk sac, they emerge and feed on insects and insect larvae in the stream. At this point they are now referred to as swim up fry. After the fish have spent one to two months growing in the warm waters, they are now called parr and go through a physiological change in the fish called smoltification. Smoltification changes the salmon to have a silvery appearance. This silvery appearance prepares them for the life of the Great Lakes. Once the fish enter the Great Lakes from their native stream to, they are called smolt. They then return to their native streams to lay their eggs, and soon after they die and decompose releasing nutrients into the water for other organisms to use. As we read of this complex life cycle, our perspective of the salmon changed from them living and "ordinary" fish's life to having a very interesting life with many new stages. As one can see, the life cycle of the Chinook salmon is a multi-step life cycle that is much more complex than we presume it to be.

Salmon are also very important to humans. Chinook salmon are one of Alaska's most valuable commercial fish. Chinook Salmon are also Alaska's state fish. It is also Chinook salmon also hold

cultural importance too. Chinook salmon are spiritually and culturally valued. They celebrate the first salmon catching with the "First Salmon Ceremonies". Additionally, Chinook salmon were eaten on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Chinook Salmon are very important to history and to Alaska and many native tribes.

Moreover, Chinook salmon can be raised in an English classroom as oppose to a science classroom. As being part of this experience I was able to see the salmon go through many of its life stages successfully until the point where we had to release them back into the streams. We had a fish tank set up in the front of our room. The earlier hours would check to make sure that the nutrients and water temperature and other important levels were normal. The rest of the hours would continue to feed the fish. The fish were growing very successfully. During this process our perspective of the fish changed from them going to just be for show, to us having to care for the fish and make sure that they lived and were taken care of. We began to talk about acclimating the fish and returning them to the Clinton River. Then we soon learned that we had successfully risen so many fish that the acclimation had to be done immediately. Of 200 eggs, we were able to raise about 150 successfully and return them to the Clinton River.

In conclusion, Chinook salmon have many steps to their life cycle, are important in many cultures and in history, and can successfully be raised in an English classroom. Our perspective has changes from the fish being uncomplicated and ordinary beings to being very complex and exciting organisms through our studies and our experience with the fish. Try raising fish in your classroom and see how your perspective changes.