Sue Ann Compton 101 Introduction to College
Writing Classroom Assessment Technique 33 -
"Focused Autobiographical Sketches," pp.281-
284 (Angelo and Cross) August 1,2011

Activity
Write and type a two-page double-spaced, autobiographical sketch focused on one successful
writing experience you have had in an English class where you were to write an essay.

Purpose
A writing teacher wants to establish a connection with students as early as possible in the
semester. This sharing will help to start this journey and reduce anxiety students may have about
beginning a college writing course.

The instructor will also gain understanding of how students reflect on their writing experiences
and how they analyze one that has been helpful. The teacher will know what habits they have
formed - helpful or not - in how they think about the process of writing.

i2a Initiatives
Students are asked to take their thinking apart and decide on and explain a solution they
have found helpful in their writing. This will challenge them to consider their point of
view, examine their purpose for their answer, what information is needed to explain their
experience, and what has been the consequence of their having this successful writing
experience.

Assessment
First, I will ask students with different experiences to work in groups of five to note their stories
and "extract any common, general principles for learning" writing skills. These
acknowledgements can be used throughout the semester if they are turned into strategies that
work well. Then, as the semester lengthens, I can use these experiences to set instructional goals.
For instance, if I have a student that explains what a great mood and setting a writing teacher
constructed in high school, individuals can discuss why this was successful and how that situation
can be duplicated in supporting college writers. (Students could also be asked to bring in those
texts they wrote with this experience they've explained, comparing then and now will prove
informative for my students and me.)