

Building Identity in Career Leadership Through Persuasive Essay

Development of student writing skills as they prepare for career readiness is a critical tool for them as they begin to offer and support opinions, and to convey their life experiences. This activity is meant to strengthen their ability to clearly communicate with an audience - being the reader, and to adapt the form of their writing to be a persuasive piece which should be aimed to accomplish the goal of applying to a program they desire to be in.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Write a persuasive essay modeling skills needed in application process
- Relate the experience of others to their own personal experience

Process:

- 1) Have students review several Graduate Scholarship Program (GSP) profiles from the [website](#), to begin understanding and analyzing STEM professional profiles and experiences.
- 2) During review, ask students to consider and reflect on how the identities of these individuals led them down their path and made them candidates for the Graduate Scholarship Program. You may prompt them with the following:
 - a) How does someone build their identity? Can you determine what your career identity will be?
 - b) Do you notice which skills possessed by the individuals were highlighted in their profiles? Why or how might those skills relate to their ability to succeed in the program and beyond?
 - c) Identify specific examples where an individual scholar will be contributing to the scientific conservation community through their participation in the GSP program.
- 3) Now that students have spent time getting familiar with the profiles of GSP program recipients, have them write a persuasive essay, pretending that they are applying to a program they are excited about and really would like to get into. Consider what kinds of programs your particular students might be interested in and encourage them to select a program that would be influential to their career. What kind of program would that be? Would they apply for a specific high school program; perhaps a dance academy? [This accompanying sample](#) is a model application from one of WCS's youth programs. If your students are interested in science, wildlife, or public engagement, show them the sample as a program that could inspire their essay writing. For their essays, students could pretend to apply to an existing program or one that is hypothetical.

a) Prompt students to address the following in their essay:

- i) What have you accomplished or been successful at that relates to this program and makes you a good candidate for the program? What skills do you possess that will help you achieve success in this program?
- ii) What do you hope to do or gain while being in the program?
- iii) Where/How in the future would you intend to apply the knowledge and experience gained through this program?
- iv) How will you contribute to this career field?

Extension Activity:

Create a class future achievement profile wall in your classroom. Have your students turn their essays into word count limited profiles. Hang them up alongside photos of each student. You may want to highlight career fields that are represented by grouping them.

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