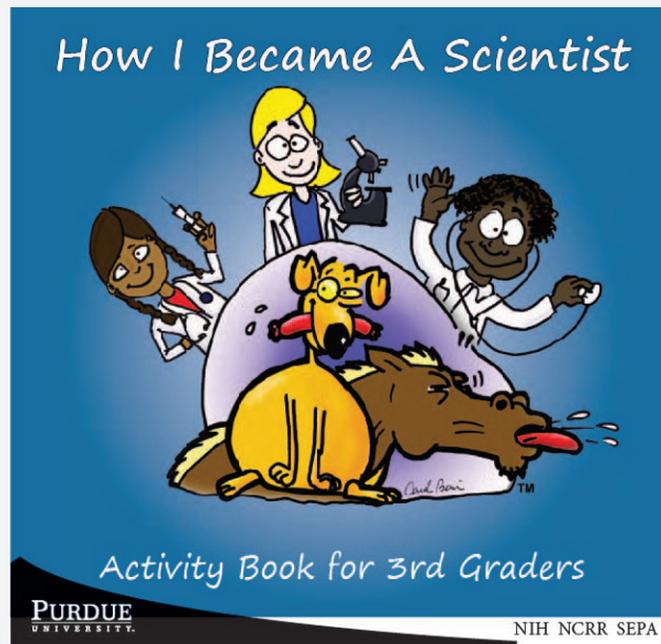


Scientists Become Real People to Students

Schneider, Jessica, Kauline Davis, and Thad Blossom. *How I Became a Scientist: Activity Book for 3rd Graders*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2010.

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How I Became a Scientist contains valuable information for children to read concerning scientists at Purdue University. The information has a focus of what the scientist currently does, why he or she became a scientist, and the interests he or she had while in school. The scientists are from all over the world with one thing in common—they all work with animals. The intent of the book is to stimulate interest in entering the field of science. In this 24-page book targeting third graders, there is a brief introduction to the scientists and their fields of study.

In addition to the introduction, there are two additional components to this book that I find interesting: one, the scientist's hometown—whether it be in the United State or elsewhere in the world—and two, the activity pages that follow each scientist's information. Both aspects of the book may lead to additional research by the student about places in the world or topics included on the activity pages. The first four activities included in the

book are easily completed by a third grader; even my first graders could complete these. I often heard, "This is easy" when my first graders did them. The scrambled words activity was also very easy for first graders to complete.

My first graders enjoyed sharing the book as I read it to them one afternoon. They did enjoy the information as well as the geography. (Geography is stressed daily in our classroom.) I was curious as to how third graders would respond to the book and sought their critiques as well to reinforce or dispute my personal beliefs about the book. The overwhelming consensus of third graders is that *How I Became a Scientist* is a good read and the activities are challenging enough, although some were not as challenging as others. One comment was even written, "*How I Became a Scientist* is a really good book and a fun book to read." This student expressed the sentiment of many students as well as myself. Anyone would be able to learn something from this book, and students in the primary school will especially enjoy the accompanying activities.

For independent late-second grade and fourth grade readers this would be a wise choice of reading material to develop the interest of a "budding" scientist. Phonetic pronunciations are given for the scientists' names and a glossary is included as well. The scientists are presented with a photograph and a map of the location of their origin which helps younger students when they read this book. The illustrations in the book are borderline too young for third graders, but perhaps a third grader may enjoy the exaggerated facials. The illustrations are comic-like and attractive, especially for first graders. The X-rays are a valuable addition to the text in the "radiograph" section. I would have liked to have seen actual photographs of the animals throughout and an actual scientist on the cover. The cover does attract the younger readers who are the targeted audience. Being able to complete the activities in the book without having access to other paper makes this a great activity book for travel. The student need only have something to write with if he or she is using it alone. In the classroom, some activity copies would be needed. Otherwise, the book is only useful once.

Overall, *How I Became a Scientist* would be a great addition to any home or classroom library as well as the media center. Anyone purchasing it for classrooms may want to consider purchasing multiple copies as it is almost assured that students will be tempted by the activities in the book.

About the Author

Al Enlow is a first grade teacher at Cumberland School in West Lafayette, Indiana. He has been teaching for 15 years and has teaching experience in grades one through six. His Bachelor's degree is from Manchester College while his Master's degree is from Purdue University. A former guest lecturer and teaching assistant in Purdue's College of Education, Al resides in West Lafayette.