

Meeting: 1003, Atlanta, Georgia, MAA CP A1, MAA Session on Getting Students To Discuss and To Write About Mathematics, I

1003-A1-867 **David W. Dempsey*** (ddempsey@jsu.edu), MCIS Department, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL 36265-1602. *Mathematicians Are Real People, Too: Biographies in a Senior Capstone Course.*

Among the most successful written projects I have assigned have been biographies assigned in my senior capstone course during the past year. Students have written papers and given oral presentations on mathematicians important to the development of our understanding of the real and complex number systems. In addition to being able to see how this drama unfolded over generations, these projects have allowed my students to put a human face on mathematics. Their new insight has had a noticeable effect not only on their understanding of the gradual nature of the development of now-common concepts, but also on their attitude toward mathematics in general. As most of my students are pre-service secondary mathematics teachers, this new appreciation is likely to carry over to increased enthusiasm in their own classrooms. (Received September 30, 2004)