Career Development in a Changing Society: A Literature Review and Resource Guide for Teachers, Including Lesson Recommendations and Workshop Outline

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Abstract

Written by a new teacher hoping to inspire . . .

Throughout my educational and working years of observation, reflection, and research, I have realized that those who are happy are the ones who are doing something that brings out their passions and talents and makes them feel inspired. I have also recognized that having more happy people in the world is what we need for sustainability in both environmental and economic conditions. However, happiness does not come knocking on your door, despite what many believe. It involves connecting yourself with work that inspires you, rather than conforming to the pressure of what society thinks you should do, or even maybe what you thought you would do when you first began to think of a career. How do people recognize passions, values, and talents? By being given opportunities to do so. This project explores the need to bring career thinking into the high school curriculum in a way that helps students recognize passions and values, and also helps them develop the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. The first half of the project outlines the problem and discusses the need for schools to adapt to the ever-changing world and look closely at what students need to function collaboratively in the workforce. As the project evolves you will find suggestions for how to creatively weave career thinking into the curriculum in ways that help students simultaneously develop valuable life skills and relate to the content being covered critically and reflectively.

Keywords*:* career development, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, passion, role of the teacher

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Career Development in a Changing Society: A Literature Review and Resource Guide for Teachers, Including Lesson Recommendations and Workshop Outline

Everyone has his or her own recipe for life. To establish what recipe will create your desired outcome, you must write it taking into consideration values, needs, passions, and strengths, not to mention what extra fun you may want to include for diversity and taste. My own recipe is still in the midst of being written, and will likely be delicious, judging by the tasting I have sneaked in so far. What is especially exciting is that my recipe has involved taking bits and pieces from other cookbooks and inspirations, to help form my own personal treat. Despite the fact that there are various ingredients that have yet to be thrown in, the process has been enjoyable and the recipe is finally clear—to create a passionate, humble, intuitive, creative, and inspirational teacher. Although I have not always been adding ingredients to consciously produce this exact result, everything I have included, whether I was aware or not, has mixed together smoothly and will add value to the taste of this final product.

As a teacher, I recognize that students are the most abundant ingredients in the recipe of life. As the leaders of tomorrow, they have the possibility of not only maintaining the world as we know it, but improving it. They live in a world in which success is at their doorsteps, especially if they look at their faces in the mirrors and recognize their creative powers to make a difference.

Everyone has a story about being inspired by someone else: a family member, friend, professor, author, playwright, local musician, and the list can go on. Often what inspires us about someone is his or her outlook on life, how he or she brought meaning to

our lives and affected how we feel about something; perhaps that something is our own self.

Imagine the life of a teacher, someone working with the future leaders of tomorrow, enjoying the positive power to affect the way students feel about themselves; someone with the capability to inspire students to feel confident and kind, curious and creative; someone to help make education meaningful to each and every student. Teachers have the ability to shape the way students view learning, and to open them up to the possibilities that come with the process of learning and finding meaning everywhere. Teachers have the ability not only to facilitate the development of knowledge, but to lead students to utilize their knowledge in ways that better both themselves and their environments, spreading the wealth one learner at a time. However, at the end of day, knowledge without practice is like flying without wings. A teacher can instruct students on how to memorize and take in information, but if the students cannot apply the knowledge within an authentic context, the time spent acquiring that knowledge becomes devalued. The previous picture painted is idealistic and imaginative, yet undoubtedly possible and necessary for the world to prosper.

The Four Cs of the 21st Century

All of this leads to raising two common questions—if the learner is the principal ingredient in the recipe of life, what does this mean for the school, and are schools preparing students to take on their important roles in society? As suggested in opinion pieces by the authors Pink (2005), and Robinson (2011), we have moved away from the Information Age and are now living in the new Creativity Age; therefore, we must be training students to thrive in the future, not the past. Naturally, a school and home are the

most important places for providing students with the necessary tools and skills to be able to successfully function critically and collaboratively in 21st-century society. According to the website *Partnership for 21st Century Learning* (P21), the four main needed skills are communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. P21 has a mission and vision to build collaborative partnerships between businesses, education, communities, and government leaders so that all can acquire the same knowledge and skills needed to prosper in our ever-changing world in which learning never stops. Students need not only to learn how to think, but they must also learn how to transform thinking into value, and as Robinson (2009)—internationally recognized author, speaker, and leader in the development of creativity in education—stated, "creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value" (p. 67).

Teach students how to think, not what to think. As a new educator, and a current Master of Education candidate, I have devoted this project to making education meaningful and offering ideas to help prepare students to function as valuable creative members in the world in which they live. I have focused this document on bringing relevant needs such as career thinking into various parts of the high school curriculum, weaving in opportunities throughout to develop creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication. In this document, I address how teachers can facilitate career thinking in the classroom by focusing lessons on students' interests, on character development, and on the recognition of values, passions, and strengths; this can be done while simultaneously offering opportunities for 21st century skill development.

I begin by looking at what happens to students throughout education with regard to stifling creativity and conforming to a mold, reviewing leaders in the field of creativity

research. I look at how teachers should be guiding students in the direction of career thinking in a way that allows for artistic exploration and the development of self-awareness as a tool for making future decisions. I provide an overview on why this is needed, and why teachers are the ones who should be responsible for doing so, and have attached a practical document for present day teachers to use in their classrooms. This document includes suggestions for how to weave career thinking into the curriculum through creativity and artistic exploration, while simultaneously developing the skills needed to function successfully in the present century. In both the literature review and resource guide, I have included a section on working with gifted students, because these students have unique and commonly overlooked needs in the context of career development. The final section of this document contains a workshop design that can be taken on by a teacher, an administrator, or another leader in education, during which teachers are given the chance to implement the research into practice by designing a lesson that weaves career thinking into it, and simultaneously helps students develop 21st century skills. The workshop plan is meant to demonstrate to teachers how this action can be done in any subject, highlighting the importance of creativity as a process that will add value to the world (Robinson, 2009).

Defining creativity. Before I begin my literature review, I believe it is important to define what it means to be creative. When I began this project, I spoke to some friends about what creativity means to them, most of who responded by saying they were not artistic and therefore not creative. They were inspired when hearing about my project ideas, because they recognized the relevance when it comes to connecting education to the economy, yet they were unsure about how they could become an active part of this

creative revolution. It seems this association with being artistic is felt not only by my close friends, and this is exactly why teachers need to begin spreading the word about what the essential skill of creativity means—today. Although many definitions exist, the definition that evolved through an action research project that you will read about in my literature review (Gamwell et al., 2012) is the following: "Creativity includes something that: is original, new, innovative; has value or the capacity for effectiveness; is or can be practically implemented or created; can be used to solve problems or has applied appreciate inquiry techniques to catalyze positive transformation and change" (p. 15). Please keep this definition in mind while reading my project, and attempt to make connections to the value creative thinking has when it comes to career thinking, career development, and career performance.

Literature Review

What is Happening—The Need for Career Thinking

At the end of the 20th century, many career-development theories suggested that there was enough accurate information and guidance for individuals to independently acquire skills needed for effective career planning, and that only a select few were in need of guidance regarding career decisions (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999). Recent research has shown that for students to make sound career decisions, they need to develop the tools needed for processing information, and develop specific self-knowledge and skills that will support them when making choices throughout their lives (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In 2011, Symonds, the Director of the Pathways to Prosperity Project, gave a presentation at the Industry Trade Federation Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, as part of his work for the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The presentation focused

on meeting the challenges of preparing young adults for the 21st century. This challenge was characterized by young people failing to lead successful lives as employable adults, a lack of global leadership in educational achievement, and an increase in young adults' inability to find work, lengthening the transition to adulthood (Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011). In 1973, the ticket to living the American Dream was a high school diploma. At that time, no more than 72% of the workforce of 91 million had any postsecondary education. However, in 2010, it became necessary to possess some post-secondary education in order to thrive in the global economy, despite 63 million jobs being added between 1973 and 2007. During this period, jobs became less accessible to those with no high school diploma, dropping by 2 million jobs. In 2011, these workers with no more than a high school education made up only 41% of the workforce, compared to 72% in 1971. Presently, even some with higher education diplomas are graduating ill-prepared to face the challenges that confront them when choosing a career, and contributing positively to the 21st century workforce (Gamwell et al., 2012; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Moody, Kruse, Nagel, and Conlon (2008) conducted a qualitative study examining students' perceptions of the career development curriculum currently in place within their school in Oregon, United States. This curriculum consisted of career research, the development of a career portfolio, practicing various work place technologies, and creating a hands-on career development project that was to be presented before peers and community members. The participants were 39 incarcerated youth attending a correctional facility in Oregon, 35% female and 65% male, ranging from the ages of 17 to 23. Although their report found that students who participated in

this program were more likely to graduate from high school, these students reported knowing little about their options in terms of careers. They also reported knowing little about their interests, values, and skills, and how to go about achieving any personal goals.

Although some career-development models have been suggested over time and contain excellent ideas (e.g., Hackett, Betz, 1981; Super, 1980), they have failed to address the creative needs of the 21st century. They have looked mostly at the product of finding a student's occupation and less at the process of becoming a creative and critical thinker, collaborator, and communicator. Students are going through constant change, as are careers; therefore, helping students find an exact occupation may not be beneficial, considering both the career and person may not be the same by the time it comes to making a decision. Times are changing rapidly and as teachers, we are supposed to be veering away from product-oriented learning, focusing on helping students gain the skills, knowledge, and specifically, resilience, to be able to make career decisions. As opposed to teaching students what choices to make, we should be there to help them learn how to make a choice, and how to recognize their own selves enough to make wise decisions based on individual needs and strengths.

Working with change. Within this rapidly changing world, teachers need to shift from teaching students only rational and logical thinking processes to facilitating knowledge of self-awareness, self-efficacy, and the ability to make decisions and solve problems using the resources and minds in front of them. Making education meaningful is now about teaching students how to learn, think, problem-solve, and transition in a world filled with change; it is about providing students with opportunities to take risks, make mistakes, and gain knowledge to recognize values and interests, in order to go out

into the world post high school and function on a professional level, hopefully in a job that brings out the best version of themselves.

In a book used in seminars internationally and translated into eleven languages, Von Oech (1998) spoke about mind-stretching techniques and games people can use to stimulate creative thinking. He suggested puzzles, metaphors, cartoons, quotations, and mental exercises that work specifically at unlocking the creative potential in anyone, regardless of that person's qualities, characteristics, or occupation. When speaking about education, Von Oech (1998) explained that "much of our educational system is geared toward teaching people to find 'the right answer' . . . This may be fine for some problems where there is in fact one right answer. The difficulty is that most of life isn't that way. Life is ambiguous; there are many right answers—all depending on what you are looking for. But if you think there is only one right answer, then you'll stop looking as soon as you find one" (p. 14). His words have implications for all teachers because they emphasize the need to build skills throughout the process of learning, rather than seek the answer and finish the product, closing the mind to further exploration.

Meeting the demands of employers. Technology has changed the way we look at the world, and social media have changed communication all together. This reality has reformed what needs to be taught in school, and what has become relevant. Today, students must not only possess skills and knowledge, but must know how to apply that knowledge.

In her think-piece *Employers' Challenges to Educators: Making Education Meaningful to Students' lives*, American journalist Schwartz (2014) outlined the need for career thinking in schools by bringing up the fears many business leaders feel when

thinking about whether students develop the proper skills and tools to succeed in the workplace. Schwartz summarized the remarks from four panelists at the Next New World Conference, after being asked the question of how American education could better meet the demands of the 21st century. The Next New World Conference is held annually, and addressed the generation of growth and how the future of education needs to prepare workers to acquire skills needed to keep up with this growth. Although no empirical evidence was noted, Schwartz explained that, as opposed to specific skills, recruiters are now looking for individuals who are confident, able to identify and articulate strengths, quick on their feet, and authentic.

Schwartz (2014) also acknowledged how students will be interested in learning only when they are faced with something that is interesting to them. What attracts a student's interest has a lot to do with his or her mindset. Teachers need to help students develop a growth mindset, with which they open themselves up to a challenge, recognizing the beauty in imperfection and the growth that can eventually take place (Duckworth, 2013). Having a fixed mindset involves being afraid of a challenge and paying only attention to matters that spark your interest and that you know you can easily comprehend. This may be one of the main reasons students close doors and hinder the possibility of developing the skills needed to be the best they can be in society. Wagner (cited in Schwartz, 2014) stated that if children lack motivation, content knowledge can be poured into their heads but will come out of both ears.

In today's teacher education, student teachers are constantly told to facilitate critical thinking and communication among students. However, Wagner (cited in Schwartz, 2014) explained that we cannot stop there. On top of being critical thinkers

and communicators, students must become critical and creative problem solvers. As teachers, this is important to consider. We must provide opportunities for students to go out into the world and solve real world problems. This will help students become innovators, and power change agents, recognizing the power when transforming thought into action. As Schwartz (2014) explained, when this is done, students are given the opportunity to develop intrinsic motivation and to implement their initiative, perhaps helping them recognize their strengths and values, and lead to thoughts on where they belong in the world. Busteed, executive director of Gallup Education (cited in Schwartz, 2014), explained that students are often not low on goals and agency but simply do not see the objective in what they are doing in school. This will inevitably lead to apathy.

What Are Schools For?

> *Current systems of education were not designed to meet the challenges we now face, they were developed to meet the needs of a former age. Reform is not enough: They need to be transformed.*
>
> Sir Ken Robinson, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Education, University of Warwick

Ironically, in 1967, Rogers, a renowned humanistic psychologist who believed in the importance of providing a genuine environment, believed that an educated individual was redefined as a person who recognized how to listen, to communicate, and to adapt to change. He acknowledged that knowledge is never secure; instead, that seeking knowledge is the only basis for security. Rogers also believed that change was the only thing we could rely on in the modern world. He made this statement over 40 years ago.

Today, in 2015, education has come a long way, and has modeled itself after the ideas of people like Rogers, who believed in teaching students not what, but how to learn.

In a chapter on the interpersonal relationship of the teacher, Rogers (1967) outlined the virtues that facilitate learning. He incorporated illustrations from the teaching field in a qualitative form, using direct quotes from 19 students who had experienced the classes of five teachers known for exhibiting realness in their approaches to facilitating learning. These teachers incorporated facilitative, student-centered learning in their classrooms. The success of this approach was noted through positive and inspiring comments, often claiming life-changing, mind-altering experiences had taken place. One of the strongest points made throughout the article was how "realness" and authenticity in the teacher are what inspired students to demonstrate those same qualities. Exemplifying realness meant one was true to his or her feelings, expressive of those feelings and making those feelings available to others—essentially, refraining from hiding under an image and allowing direct contact with the learner. This underlines the significance of the interpersonal relationship in the facilitation of learning. If students are to learn to be themselves, they must be encouraged to do so, and what better way than to be guided by someone exuding a natural and authentic energy.

According to Rogers (1967), if students learn from a teacher who is being genuine and authentic, they will more likely learn how to act like their own selves, increasing the likelihood of finding a job that suits their unique characteristics. For this reason, the teacher's role in fostering career thinking has become a topic that needs to be addressed.

The role of a teacher in a student's life. Schools play a strong role in students' lives because they are the places they spend most of their waking time. Whether it is

with their peers, teachers, or during their academic experiences, the opportunity for learning and self-development is likely to happen during the time spent in school. Career development is a lifelong process that requires constantly developing personality, skills, and knowledge (Kim, 2013). Teachers have the ability to impact students in more ways than just one, and are ideally suited to encourage this ongoing development. Rogers (1967) claimed that teachers had the potential to form strong relationships with students because of the sheer fact that honest communication was exchanged on a regular basis. This genuine communication and authentic approach that was explored by Rogers is one that captured the essence of what helps students learn, and what will help students not only become competent in the classroom, but take that classroom learning outside of the building and into the real world. The National Commission on the High School Senior Year (2001) recommended that the primary goals of high school should be to teach students to think critically, be comfortable problem-solving, and feel prepared to make decisions.

Imagination, creativity, and innovation. In 2012, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) conducted an action-research study focused on how imagination, innovation, and creativity can be achieved when all stakeholders, including teachers and students, share insights and contributions. The research was conducted by welcoming thoughts and ideas from others, encouraging anyone to join in on the conversation, especially because the report is part of an ongoing process. The report was meant to capture a snapshot of the journey to a resource called Lead the Way to Creativity, and was intended to act as an introduction and invitation to the interactive hub of resources at www.leadthewaytocreativity.com. The report noted:

> We tend to define brilliance as the ability to memorize facts or formulas. And while human history already stands in testament to the beneficial changes that innovation can bring, today's leaders in business, government and not-for-profit organizations are recognizing that our world's future success also depends on new ways of doing things. They are increasingly calling for imagination, creativity, and innovation in employees, volunteers, community leaders, and citizens. This presents an exceptional and unprecedented opportunity for educational systems to not only step up and answer the call, but to also research and determine exactly how we can best help learners of all ages to become the creative, engaged, critical thinkers needed for our future. (Gamwell et al., 2012, p. 6)

Throughout this research, the OCDSB discussed and collaborated with several experts regarding the definition of creativity, and it was made clear that creativity itself is evolving. As mentioned earlier in the introduction to this project, creativity is no longer confined to the arts, and the majority of definitions define creativity in the broader sense, as "something that can be applied to finding solutions in fields as diverse as science, medicine public relations, engineering space exploration, agriculture, human resources, education, and more" (Gamwell et al., 2012, p. 14). All of this can be applied to bringing career thinking into curriculum, recognizing the powers of creativity in assisting students in all aspects of skill development and self-awareness, with the hopes that this may help them recognize their passions and strengths. As eloquently quoted by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, French author of the book *Citadelle* (1946) and pioneering aviator, "if you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them

tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea" (Brainy Quotes, n.d.).

Explore what makes you happy. *The Element,* a New York Times best-seller written by Robinson (2009), is an inspiring book about the importance of finding your passions and using your passions to do what you love. Robinson acknowledged the many concerns individuals have with economic stability, and provided suggestions for how to actively face these fears. He recognized that sometimes what people love is not necessarily an area offering economic wealth, but made valid points against succumbing to the pressures of society to do something solely for the point of making money; he insisted that this economic stability will fall into place when passion meets talents. Robinson offered a practical outlook for individuals to explore how to find their passions, and how to utilize those passions to find what they love, and what they are naturally good at. It is no secret that the economy, environment, and education system are falling short of offering hope for sustainability. Robinson's book provided observed evidence based on years of experience in education and creativity research, highlighting individual stories—which I shall elaborate on in the following paragraph—of those who are doing what they love and naturally good at, and who are in fact happy and contributing generously to the world in which we live. These stories negate any doubt that doing what you love will allow you to live prosperously, and emphasize the need for educators to work with students in ways that help them find passions and recognize talents. Robinson pointed out that our educational system was created to meet the requirements of the industrial economy. The subjects that were given priority when it came to teaching were those that would help serve the economy in the most valuable way, such as language,

science, and mathematics. Education was meant to help students perform logical and rational thinking. Robinson suggested how today's education system needs to be reformed in three ways. First, it needs to become a personal experience for every student, during which all are guided in the direction of recognizing strengths and practicing creativity. In order for this to happen, the teacher needs to focus on the contribution that every student makes. Second, a culture of tolerance and understanding must be built, considering our global society allows for higher cultural proficiency among students. Third, education must teach collaboration and communication, in order to prepare students to meet the demands of the working world. Indicatively, teachers need to facilitate the development of skills and self-awareness, and assist students with applying both to something that is meaningful and personal. Robinson concluded that the way to prepare students for this creative challenge is to help them find the "Element."

Finding the Element. Passion is something that is often lost in a world of deadlines and obligations. Producing a similar feeling from what Csikszentmihalyi's called "Flow" (1990)—in which a state of concentration is so focused that it amounts to absolute motivation and absorption in an activity—Robinson (2009) expressed the importance of finding the intersection at which passion meets talent, in order to thrive in a desired occupation; this he called the Element. He explored the environments that allow individuals to find themselves in this Element, and the conditions that interfere with this possibility, one of them being education. He discussed how when people have achieved the Element, they feel the most inspired to achieve at the highest level. In this book, he drew on several stories such as Paul McCartney, Matt Groening, Richard Branson, Arianna Huffington, and Bart Conner, demonstrating the insignificance of both

age and occupation when it comes to getting in the way of achieving the Element. Essentially, he argued how anything is possible when passions have been found, suggesting that the passionate ones are essential for 21st century innovation. One of the first stories Robinson related was of a girl named Gillian whose response to the statement "but nobody knows what God looks like" (p. 11) was "they will in a minute" (p. 11). This brought up the incredible imagination that children have and how they are not afraid to show it. According to Robinson, creativity is something children are confident about, but if you ask an entire college class if they are creative, most of them would respond with negative remarks. There is a passion that everyone is born with but many lose touch with after years spent in the fast-paced world and in the education system. Due to structure and deadlines, and both intrinsic and extrinsic pressure, many individuals fail to connect with their natural talents, resulting in a lack of awareness as to what could be truly possible when passion meets talent. Today, given the wide realm of possibilities, students are often lost as to where to take the first step toward beginning a career, and often turn to parents for help. Unfortunately, despite having the best interests of their children at heart, parents or guardians do not always steer their children in the direction of finding true talents, usually because they are pointing them in a direction of a more conventional life, one in which they feel could help their children succeed and live a prosperous life. Robinson revealed that he has met people who have absolutely no idea what their talents and passions are, claiming they do not like what they are presently doing but have no idea what they would enjoy doing. The individuals Robinson interviewed and wrote about in his book exemplify stories that are anything but conventional. Many of them took twists and turns before realizing their passions, but

despite not living "perfect lives, all of them regularly experience moments that feel like perfection" (p. 14).

One of the main reasons Robinson (2009) spoke about the importance of finding the intersection between passions and talents is, not only because it will make individuals feel more fulfilled, but also because the future of our communities depend on it. As he wrote:

> The world is changing faster than ever in our history. Our best hope for the future is to develop a new paradigm of human capacity to meet a new era of human existence. We need to evolve a new appreciation of the importance of nurturing human talent along with an understanding of how talent expresses itself differently in every individual. We need to create environments—in our schools, in our workplaces, and in our public offices—where every person is inspired to grow creatively. We need to make sure that all people have the chance to do what they should be doing, to discover the Element in them-selves and in their own way. (p. 14)

Throughout his book, Robinson reminded us of the extraordinary potential we all have to grow and develop to meet our Element and how we must embrace this Element in order to embrace the human capacity. For example, three stories mentioned described individuals who struggled in school and were thrown in all sorts of directions in terms of diagnosing what was suspected to be the problem. All three of these struggling individuals are now prospering, as a dancer, a cartoonist, and a Nobel-winning economist. As Robinson quoted "they have found high levels of achievement and personal satisfaction upon discovering the thing that they naturally do well and that also

ignites their passions" (p. 26). Within this continually changing society, finding your Element offers the best possibility for "genuine and sustainable success in a very uncertain future" (p. 28).

One of the reasons many people have not found their talents and passions is because individuals often have a very limited perception of their own natural capacities. This is likely because they have not been provided with enough opportunities to practice revealing their natural capacities, and have instead followed a path that required specific competencies that all needed to learn. Robinson (2009) said there are several reasons for this lack of natural capacity. First, he believed that everyone is born with extraordinary powers of imagination, intelligence, feeling, and intuition, but that most use only a fraction of those powers and therefore do not even know they possess them. The second reason is because people are not well versed in how all of their powers relate holistically. Many believe that there is no relationship between the mind, the body, and feelings, claiming them to be entirely independent from each other. These people have not found the Element, as they have not been able to recognize their organic nature. The third reason has to do with how individuals are not always capable of recognizing their individual potential for growth and development. Humans often think that life is linear and that abilities only decline as we age and that "opportunities we have missed are gone forever" (p 29). These characters have failed to understand that it is never too late to explore something new and to renew possibilities for fulfillment.

Some of the key messages inspired by Robinson (2009) are that education does not equal success, high marks do not equal power, one size certainly does not fit all, we need to think differently and honor these differences, we must find the people who bring

out the best in us, pursue something for the love rather than the money, fear less about meeting expectations, and finally, spend more time focusing on fulfilling passions. Teachers need to spread these messages to students, encouraging and celebrating student diversity and a love for learning about what makes them feel passionate and brings out their natural abilities.

Passionate teachers create passionate students. Robinson (2009) brought up many reasons to structure our education system in a way that focuses on helping students find their passions and strengths. A person at the forefront of this process is the teacher. From my own involvement as a student and a teacher, I have seen how students learn from teachers and mentors who inspire them to embrace a challenge. I have watched students grow more confident when a teacher brings out the best in them and believes in them. I have witnessed and experienced the benefits that come when a teacher allows a student to be him or herself. I have felt the contagion of passion, and believe that students learn best when a teacher demonstrates passion in both what he or she does and what he or she inspires in the students. I have felt the energy in the room explode when humor and imperfection are present; both of these release an aura of freedom which students appreciate, because it allows them to explore who they are and feel supported in their journeys. At the end of the day, if a student is learning from a teacher who demonstrates genuine personality traits, he or she will feel more comfortable being true to himself or herself and learning in the most authentic and meaningful way.

Reviewing Career Development

It appears there was a burst of research done in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and a break until more recent years when the need for career thinking in schools became

apparent again, as indicated in the action report by the OCDSB (Gamwell et al., 2012). Hansen, a professor at the time in the Department of Counseling and Student Personnel Psychology at the University of Minnesota, presented a theoretical analysis (1972) about a new model for career development, one that encompassed many theoretical and practical ideas that could still be incorporated today. This model, geared toward students from kindergarten to grade 12, incorporated the principles of career development (Super & Overstreet, 1960), and honored the importance of developing self-concept as a means of benefiting from the strategies described. The article was written in the form of an opinion piece, and offered suggestions for activities that were based on the author's years of experience and observation in the area of career development and education. Although there was no evidence given that this model was successful, it provided insightful ideas that incorporated knowledge of self, interaction with others, and utilized different forms of media in order to expand awareness. Hansen's article addressed present-day challenges and identified the areas that a career-education program should include, such as one that integrates career development through subjects and curriculum, one that allows exploration through volunteer experiences or community involvements, one that allows hands-on involvement, that integrates academic and vocational subjects, and one that involves counseling, placement, and follow up. Hansen explained how, in 1972, students were not being given enough opportunity to explore themselves and careers. He noted that the help they received with career guidance did not take into consideration the changing nature of the individual, of the technology and of work, nor did it address how different careers have different meanings for certain people. Hansen's career-education model assumed that a career will not only be your job, but may also stay with you

throughout your life as a student, spouse, parent, or worker. He explained that career education needs to focus specifically on self-development and help students recognize that understanding self-concept will allow them to identify where they may fit into the working society.

Integrating career development. Rather than including a separate course on career thinking, Hansen (1972) demonstrated that attaching the idea to relevant issues being discussed throughout the school year would allow students to link classroom learning with practical application. He emphasized how integrating career thinking into the curriculum could help students identify how school subjects are closely related to careers. Hansen's model proposed that the elementary school years be spent developing self-concept and self-awareness. He explained that children must develop an understanding of what they can and cannot do; therefore, it is crucial to help students feel good about themselves and recognize the value in what they can do. He indicated the emphasis that needs to be placed on building communication skills and interpersonal skills at this stage, because this may help students gather a better understanding of what roles they like to play in social situations. Not only this, but elementary children also need examples of the working world, in a broad sense. In grades 7, 8, and 9, Hansen pointed out that students should be learning how to make decisions, how to classify the working work, practice problem-solving real world problems, and learn about the economic trends of their time. In grades 9 to 11, students need to be moved from learning about careers to actually doing, going out on field trips to speak to individuals, finding out about the job market, and organizing career information discussions or presentations. Today, this can be done entirely through Skype or FaceTime. In the final

years, Hansen proposed personalizing the involvement and offering students various ways to explore how careers are related to the curriculum, through first-hand experiences. He suggested the exploratory occupational information interview, in which a student would, through a series of steps, explore his or her options, and inform himself or herself on what needs to get done to reach that option. The second option suggested would involve meeting with a counselor and coming up with a career plan to examine the student's goals and values, become aware of what influences his or her decisions, test his or her tentative decisions through trying out experiences as a volunteer or direct observation, and use resources to obtain other specific information to perhaps modify goals and plans when appropriate. The next suggestion is that the student actually goes out and experiences a job first hand. Some of the other options Hansen presented involve inviting parents to come into the classroom to speak about their respective jobs, planning 30-minute telephone calls with individuals in specific fields, planning a weekly group to discuss what students feel they can do best, planning field trips to explore various careers, and meeting with experts in nontraditional fields, to ensure that students know there are more than the obvious options.

In 1972, Hansen's suggested model was used at Marshall University High School in Minneapolis. The success of this program was not revealed in the article, however, it was elucidated that the program should be seen as a framework in which teachers and schools could select parts or create other suitable developmental strategies to suit particular student needs. It was also suggested that a program of this kind would require the full-time assistance of a career specialist, and that the success of this program would depend on the participation of all affected by the program in the decision-making process.

Hansen's model was progressive in the sense that it focused on self-development as "a process of developing and implementing a self-concept, with satisfaction to self and benefit to society" (Super & Overstreet, 1960, p. 243), and acknowledged the importance of bringing into consciousness the connection between the curriculum, the self, and career development. This is especially important in today's society, in which there are so many unforeseen jobs. For this reason, students may end up limiting themselves if they go into a career-development plan with only an end goal or product in mind. The focus needs to be on the process, and helping students recognize strengths and values to eventually link those with an area of expertise in a desired line of work. Hansen (1972) noted the issues that need to be taken into consideration, such as the fact that students may be at various stages of development, therefore inhibiting some students' participation. Hansen suggested that any school wishing to use his model would need to pick and choose what works best for the population of students, and the time period in which the school is choosing to implement this. He also mentioned that the key decisions as to how this could be implemented would need to be decided by a group within the school system, who are interested and concerned about career development.

Gifted Students

Classrooms are consistently changing and growing in terms of the various abilities and characters that populate them. As teachers, one of the challenges faced is devising a plan to help students find meaning in their education, knowing that all students are different and that each requires a specific plan. Universal design for learning identifies the importance in recognizing that what is necessary for some is good for all, insisting

that plans should be made to accommodate the extreme needs in the classroom, because that plan will likely also address the needs of other students.

One may be surprised to hear that gifted students have been highlighted in the research on career indecisiveness, noting that they are often assumed to be those who need no assistance and are as a result left behind with regard to the development of self-knowledge, a key component in recognizing an appropriate path to travel on. In a literature review including program-planning suggestions, Higgins and Boone (2003) mentioned how preparing gifted students for life in the real world is often not a primary concern in school, despite the need. They wrote about the transition issues encountered by gifted students and the need to help these students develop self-determination, in order to use their gifts as a way to become the next innovators. They addressed the issue that teachers and guidance counselors focus solely on the product, rather than the process of developing enough awareness to be able to make sound decisions regarding one's future, resulting in students with multiple abilities leaving school unsure in which direction they should go. They also illustrated that gifted students are a particular target audience in need, noting that it is primarily because parents and educators often believe this population of students are immune from the insecurities experienced by typical students concerning their future beyond the school environment. They highlighted how longstanding research in the field of gifted education indicated that a focus on the real world and life after school (e.g., career education, life skills) is often omitted in programming for students who are gifted and talented (Delisle, 1982; Montgomery & McKay, 1992).

Higgins and Boone (2003) noted that several factors have been outlined as affecting gifted students' inability to make decisions during or after high school. First, many students who are gifted or talented experience societal, familiar, or personal expectations about what they should do after school. The expectations from the family or society are often conflicted with what the student actually wants to do. Witty and Grotberg (cited in Higgins & Boone, 2003) stated that this conflict might turn some students away from making a decision altogether, because they might fear the future and feel unsure that they can meet the goals set by others. Many gifted students are also forced to make premature commitments to careers based on the subjects that they excel at, forcing them to narrow their focus and experiences too early (Khatena, 1992). This necessity to narrow his or her focus, often imposed upon the student by external parties, leaves the student feeling as though he or she has no choice but to do what society wants him or her to do. According to Higgins and Boone (2003), this may result in choosing a career for the wrong reasons, and may lead the student to lose interest early on, or perhaps feel resentful that he or she was forced to make a choice between personal expectations and other's expectations. Second, sometimes expectations are too low, specifically for students who live in poverty, are female, of color, or have a disability. Unfortunately, certain stereotypes manifest, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly. In order to avoid these pitfalls, Higgins and Boone suggested that teachers focus on abilities and interests, and work specifically on helping students resist personal or societal stereotypes. Because there is often a lot of time, energy, and money involved in pursuing a particular career, students should be made aware of the concerns and investments involved in certain careers, not only financial investments, but the investment of self,

time, the possible deferment of other life experiences, and energy. Third, many gifted students feel a pressure to conform. This may come from the mindset they have developed, specifically those who have established a fixed mindset and are afraid to take chances that may result in achieving less than their usual accomplishments. Many gifted students avoid situations in which their success is not assumed, resulting in a lack of taking any sort of risk. This often results in students deciding on one secure occupation rather than a career in an area considered to be more nebulous. Fourth, there are students who refuse to conform, and want to do anything but what they are good at or what their parents or guardians expect them to do. Fifth, according to Kerr (1981), many students conform to a point to which they focus specifically on one area, often resulting in neglecting the development of other important parts of their lives, such as interpersonal relationships, social skills, and public interaction upon leaving school. Taking all of these issues into consideration, Higgins and Boone (2003) suggested a program that incorporates mentoring, the development of self-determination, leadership skills, and the integration of career development through service learning and hands-on experience; they titled this multifaceted concept "Beyond the Boundaries of School" (p. 143). They highlighted the importance of teachers affording students the opportunity to provide risk-free career exploration and real-world-based education at the beginning of their schooling, in order to help them identify interests and values throughout, while recognizing the changes that may take place and how those changes affect one's self-awareness and self-determination.

Understanding multipotentiality. The term multipotentiality has been widely used throughout the literature on gifted students (Rysiew, Shore, & Carson, 1994). After

being used by various others in distinct ways, Rysiew et al. (1994) published a theoretical analysis in an attempt to analyze the perceptions of this term and to clarify how multipotentiality differs from the term "overchoice." In this analysis, they sought out comments from experts on the field about the theorizing efforts. Multipotentaility is based on the reality that gifted or talented students typically have broad interests and multiple abilities. The difference between multipotentiality and overchoice, as elaborated in the review by Rysiew et al., was that the term multipotentiality refers only to having multiple abilities. The dilemma of having many interests and abilities can lead to inertia that prevents students from moving forward or backward (Higgins & Boone, 2003). Often students end up following a natural flow that was chosen for them, as opposed to taking a proactive stance in determining their lives after school. The consensus of the review by Rysiew et al. (1994), was that multipotentiality becomes problematic when individuals are also experiencing high levels of interest, motivation, and opportunities, which may lead them to feel indecisive about which interests to focus on, resulting in overchoice. After reviewing various definitions of multipotentiality, it was concluded that:

> Multipotentiality is the ability and desire to pursue different activities and goals. It is especially evident in leisure and career decision-making. One may benefit from the effects of multipotentiality, have a wide variety of "good" choices, and lead a varied and full life. One may also suffer from the "overchoice" and find decision making difficult, as it is not possible to do all that one would like to do and is capable of doing. (p. 42)

This definition received feedback from identified experts (Colangelo, Delisle, Fredrickson, Milgram, Perrone, Silverman, and Willings), procuring positive feedback that inspired further exploration of the term multipotentiality, in order to help guide gifted students in career and life planning.

In 2001, Sajjadi, Rejskind, and Shore conducted a follow-up study to the theoretical analysis published by Rysiew et al. (1994), examining longitudinal empirical data. Their intention was to discern suppositions of multipotentiality, and to assess the impact these suppositions have on career related decision-making. The sample studied did not suffer from problematic effects of having multipotentiality. However, the sample comprised 180 students in undergraduate university programs; this may have led them to feel confident in their present states and less worried about choosing a career. An assumption could be that when multipotentialed students are on a clear path in university, they might face fewer challenges than after university, when decisions need to be made regarding employment choices. Having many different options may increase the negative effects of multipotentiality becoming apparent.

Within the work of Sajjadi et al. (2001), many studies were reviewed by researchers making both positive and negative claims to being multipotential. Although having many abilities is a good thing overall, multipotentialed students may face concerns when it comes to choosing a career. Being told that you can do anything you want and be anything you want negates and denies who you are already, which is said to be placing multipotentialed students on a treadmill of becoming something different than their present selves, which is the opposite of living in the moment and being who you are (Perrone, Male, & Karshner, 1979). Students with multipotentiality often believe that

because they can be anything they want to be, they should always strive to be a better or different version of their own selves, as opposed to their present selves. According to Pask-McCartney and Salomone (1988), having too many options may provoke anxiety and confusion, leading to overchoice. A person with multipotentiality may think about so many career options that positive qualities can be neglected (Rysiew, Shore, & Leeb, 1998). He or she may also recognize that anything is possible, and therefore have a difficult time confining him or herself to doing one thing in particular. Multipotentialed individuals are also said to have a rich range of interests, making it likely that they will fluctuate between careers and have a hard time zeroing in on one that makes them feel satisfied.

Multipotentiality as a problem. Within the work of Sajjadi et al. (2001) was mention of a study conducted by Holland and Nichols (1964) in which two samples of National Merit Scholars were tested. Students with many competencies, high extracurricular achievement, rich experience, and resource-rich homes reported the highest career indecision. Indecisive individuals reported high levels of motivation, ability, interest, and opportunity, which are the four main variables of multipotentiality, resulting in the inability to make a decision regarding a career (Rysiew et al., 1998). In a follow-up study with a sample of more than 1000 Merit Scholar gifted students, it was noted that eight years after graduation, students' precollege plans did not predict vocational and education decisions (Watley, 1969). In 1970, Watley and Kaplan also found in a study of 3000 National Merit Scholars, that half of them had changed careers once, and many were considering still another career. In 1988, Kerr and Colangelo did a study of college-major decision-making that showed how uncertainty increased with

academic ability from students in the 18th percentile to those in the 95th and 99th percentiles. In another longitudinal study, Martins and Pulvino (1975), noted adjustment difficulties were found among students who had not had a stable move toward a specific occupation, whereas students who did move to a stable job were better able to plan and move toward a specific goal, leading to increased satisfaction with that goal and a higher status job.

Positive aspects of multipotentiality. As previously mentioned, Sajjadi et al. (2001) also painted the other side of the story, reviewing articles that reported positive effects of multipotentiality. Not all students with multipotentiality suffer from career indecision or related problems (Pask-McCarthney & Salomone, 1988); however, when there is an abundance of the four key elements of multipotentiality—ability, interests, motivation, and opportunity—there may be a high risk of experiencing overchoice.

In many of the studies discussed, the degree and frequency of problems associated with multipotentiality may have led to overlooking the positive aspects of having multiple abilities (Sajjadi et al., 2001), of which there are many. Fredrickson (1972) noted that multipotentialed students end up either following a path or changing to another choice with few to no setbacks. He also noted that being multipotentialed would help an individual anticipate change and recognize that "it is not a failure to measure up to the requirements of a previous choice, but an awareness of the plasticity of man to adapt to his changing world of work" (p. 73). Fredrickson and Rothney (1972) associated the environment to bringing out the positive aspects of multipotentiality, claiming that:

> Any individual who, when provided with an appropriate environment, can select and develop any number of competencies to a high level. He is a person who

> seemingly is able to adapt his performances and is, therefore, well suited for a world in which there is much change. (p. vii)

Frederickson (1972) brought up the importance of offering students a positive environment to grow in. Thus, the positive associations mentioned above may be from students who were guided appropriately and placed in suitable environments that allowed them to thrive. It may also be because students were assisted when it came to learning how to adapt to change and develop the resilience needed to utilize their positive characteristics to their benefits.

Conclusions about multipotentiality. All of this information points to the need to teach gifted students not which careers they should choose, but how to think about careers, including possible transitions from career to career, and how to recognize what jobs may be available to an individual's varied interests and capabilities. According to Sajjadi et al. (2001), students with multipotentiality need to be assisted when it comes to recognizing their values and interests, in addition to their strengths. This brings up the need to help multipotentialed students develop a growth mindset as opposed to a fixed mindset, praising effort more than results, regardless of whether or not they would be described as gifted.

Implications for teachers include the need to offer students nourishing, rich environments that allow them to grow as individuals and recognize how their strengths can benefit their development, as opposed to hinder it. Other implications of this research include the need for teachers to help students recognize their own selves through the development of activities that involve linking real-life skills with what students are

learning in the classroom, and helping students identify at a younger age some of the areas that pique their interests or bring out the qualities they value in their own selves.

Bringing Career Thinking into the Curriculum

Bringing career thinking into the curriculum should begin a lifelong process through which students develop an understanding of their own selves, the working world, and how they want to appropriately interact. Career thinking should be more than academic learning; it should involve learning to defer gratification, develop long-range plans, make clear decisions, manage time and money, take risks, develop structure and discipline, learn how to focus, and develop the ability to make decisions based on individual character and values. Career thinking should also broaden students' career knowledge and expose them to the process of career planning so that they have enough knowledge to make informed choices about potential careers that currently exist, or careers that may evolve with time (Delisle & Squires, 1989). Essentially, teachers need to provide students with the skills and aptitudes necessary for changing along with change (Higgins & Boone, 2003).

Incorporate decision-making. Appropriate career development empowers students to make suitable career decisions through providing information, linking that information to past experiences and developments, encouraging self-knowledge, enhancing self-concept, and helping students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills needed to make applicable decisions regarding their state of development (Krumboltz, 1993; Super, 1980). Although this sounds like a complex task, teachers can help students acquire these thinking skills and knowledge by providing them with tools to be able to recognize what works, what they enjoy, and how to differentiate between not being good

at something and not valuing something, or being very good at something that lacks a connection to individual values. Providing students with the skills and opportunities to make their own decisions based on evidence and experience will assist them with making sound choices with regard to their futures. As a teacher, this is not an easy task, and requires adapting your teaching techniques to ensure you are helping students develop self-awareness and self-determination, rather than inhibiting that development. This may mean linking your lessons appropriately to provide students with opportunities to take their learning outside of the classroom and experience why that learning is taking place, and how it could assist them in the future. This may also mean linking each of your lessons to future schooling opportunities, or career opportunities. Rather than having students read about abstract concepts that have no effect on their everyday lives, teachers can relate material to possible careers or university programs, and plan assignments that force students to reflect on skills, values, and interests. This way, they will feel more passionate about what they are writing because it will be linked to their own self-development, encouraging a deeper connection to the writing. Any chance a teacher has to incorporate real life skills and career possibilities into the classroom will benefit the students enormously.

Incorporate social media. Another way to bring career thinking into the classroom is to do so using social media. In an education forum for Ontario secondary school teachers about 21st century skills, Anderson and Arcus (2013) presented a theoretical analysis about why teachers should embrace social media and find ways to use them in their classrooms. They outlined how this would not only promote media literacy to help control the influence of the media, but also help students find meaning in their

daily activities. Andersen and Arcus are retired Ontario teachers who currently work for the Association for Media Literacy. In their analysis, they outlined critical questions teachers may want to include when exploring social media with their students. Their article provided evidence that social media may provide students with access to research and communication outside of school walls, which may assist them in broadening their views and finding meaning in the world that surrounds them. They also wrote about the concerns students must be aware of, such as privacy and bullying, and concluded that teachers must educate students about these concerns, in order to assist them in utilizing social media effectively, critically, and reflectively. As Anderson and Arcus noted, social media are no longer something on the surface of our lives, but rather, are core aspects of our every day and are most certainly here to stay. Students often share their online selves for the world to see; therefore, finding ways to for them to do this that can concurrently assist them with reflecting on their core identities can help them establish ideas for what they may want to pursue with regard to careers. As many social media sites have already done, providing students with ways to enrich their own self-knowledge can be beneficial for long-term professional and personal development.

As a teacher, a possible project to implement could ask students to look at their own personal evolution through social media, as a way to identify how their core selves have changed, and how their values have transformed. This recognition of the change that has occurred is fundamental, as Winton (2010), in his research on character development, emphasized that values change over time. This is essential to take into consideration when bringing career thinking into a classroom.

Incorporate experience. In a republished version of the 1938 *Experience and Education* (1998), Dewey expressed the notion of experiential continuum. Our past experiences can either leave us arrested on a low plane of development, or leave us steps ahead. As students, we can experience a whole 11 or 12 years in school and remember nothing from those years, contrary to someone who chooses not to go to school, and teaches himself or herself in ways that make sense for that moment in time, thus more easily recalling what was once learned.

> Almost everyone has had occasion to look back upon his school days and wonder what has become of the knowledge he was supposed to have amassed during his years of schooling, and why it is that the technical skills he acquired have to be learned over again in changed form in order to stand him in good stead. (p. 48)

This brings up the appropriate need for teachers to connect career thinking to experience, something that will in turn assist them with the development of self-knowledge and self-determination, two key characteristics that will support students in the process of career thinking.

Incorporate self-awareness. Young, Levin, and Wallin (2000) wrote a chapter in the book *Equity in Schools and Society* titled "Making Sense of Public Schooling" in which they discussed the importance of self-knowledge in order to realize why other people are the way they are, and why people learn the way they do. Learning will always depend on someone's unique experiences and how those experiences have affected them, which brings up the importance of developing self-knowledge. In describing the relationship between education and self-knowledge, Symons (1975) argued that to be educated means to know ourselves: who we are, where we are in time and space, where

we have been and where we are going, and what our responsibilities are to ourselves and to others. He also suggested that self-knowledge cannot be separated from an awareness of the social context in which we live our lives, the two kinds of knowledge being not merely interdependent, but ultimately one and the same. In order to do so, individuals need to be made active ingredients in creating and criticizing the acquisition of knowledge (Young et al., 2000).

Working within the confines of education. Teachers are faced with a difficult challenge of teaching many curriculum expectations across various different strands for several periods a day. In Ontario, high school teachers with a 100% contract are teaching three different lessons a day, 75 minutes each, requiring many hours of preparation for those lessons as well. This is time-consuming and requires a great deal of organization. The next challenge is to make the lesson creative and inspiring, so that students connect with the learning in a meaningful way. This sometimes means linking what they may be reading to something they could have experienced, encouraging comparisons and connections to be made to other academic and non-academic work they have completed. In the book *Bridging English* (5th ed.), Milner, Milner, and Mitchell (2012) explored ways through which both English teachers and students can gain knowledge and perception that will help them bridge the gap between the past and the present. Milner et al. discussed various theories of learning, language, and literacy, by offering activities and suggestions to help teachers meet the present needs of today's classroom. They did this by acknowledging classical work that has inspired some of the most profound learning in the English classroom. They took their readers on a path of learning about instructional methods and curriculum ideas that may help address the diverse needs of

students today. They also addressed the expanding definition of literacy, and how this definition has changed with the evolving 21st century demands. They explored various instructional strategies that teach the English curriculum in ways that recognize the positive aspects of education theories while also remaining progressive in their approach to addressing the current needs of students. The book is progressive and offers various analogies that have the reader thinking and making connections about what needs to be learned in the English classroom, in order to prepare students for life outside of school. An analogy that was used, created by Freire (1970), looked at how education is like banking, in which the teacher acts as the depositor and the student asks as the depositories.

> Banking [memorization] education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythisizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of mythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. (p. 83)

Incorporate 21st century skills. The book *21st Century Skills* by Trilling and Fadel (2009) addressed how teachers need to make the move to a 21st-century approach to learning. It highlighted the need to bring creativity and innovation into the curriculum, to avoid teaching students only what is going to be taught on the big exams. Trilling and Fadel mentioned a story about a Chinese delegate, Mr. Zheng, who came to see how U.S. schools were innovating in teaching and learning. He asked the school director "Where

in here do you teach creativity and innovation! I want to know how you teach this! We need our students to learn how to do this!" (p. xix), at which point the school director sighed, collected his thoughts, and explained how both innovation and creativity are not in the curriculum, but are more intertwined with the air people breathe. He then rationalized that with the right support and the right teachers, students can learn to be creative and innovative by coming up with new solutions to problems and creating answers to questions they care about. Schools are often so caught up teaching the everyday curriculum and preparing students for final tests, that teachers miss the opportunity to intertwine creativity and innovation in their lessons. The foundation of this book highlighted how the skills needed to function in society have not necessarily changed, but how these skills are taught, learned, and practiced has shifted rapidly. Trilling and Fadel addressed how schools from all over the world are moving toward establishing curricula that delve deeply into how to transform knowledge gained into innovation. They focused on how the global landscape for learning is restructuring itself, and how parents, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers need to have a clear vision of how our children now need to learn in order to be successful. Their goal with this book was to inspire anyone who cares about education and our future to develop a new road map to help guide the explorations and journeys along a learning path catered specifically to our times. Prior to writing this book, four hundred executives of major corporations were questioned about whether or not students graduating were ready for work. The collective response was "not really" (p. 43). The study provided evidence that students graduating from universities, colleges, and secondary schools were lacking in some fundamental skills:

- Oral and written communications
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Professionalism and work ethic
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Working in diverse teams
- Applying technology
- Leadership and project management (p. 47)

It has been estimated that over $200 billion a year is spent on training skilled and educated employees to engage in jobs at the necessary level (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Jobs that used to require routine and manual skills are now turning into jobs that involve higher-order thinking skills and applied skills such as expert thinking and complex communicating—a mélange of skills. The education systems of today's world must prepare students for that.

Furthermore, it has been noted that students today may experience up to eleven different jobs between the ages of 18 to 42, and that this number could double in a lifetime (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). It was also noted that "two essential skill sets will remain at the top of the list of job requirements for 21st century work: the ability to quickly acquire and apply new knowledge" (p. 47), and "the know-how to apply essential 21st century skills—problem solving, communication, teamwork, technology use, and innovation" (p. 47).

All of this brings up the need for teachers to educate with these skill sets in mind, ensuring students experience enough opportunities to infer knowledge, practice inquiry, work collaboratively, and solve diverse problems using innovation and creativity.

Pathways to Success

The Ontario document *Pathways to Success* is about implementing an entire school program to assist students in achieving their personal goals, and become contributing members of society (Government of Ontario, 2013). The Ontario Government believes that in order for students to succeed, they must be given an individual path that supports them in identifying personal interests, strengths, and needs, and provides them with tools for recognizing aspirations and knowing their own selves. The Ontario Government also believes in providing diverse and engaging opportunities for students in and outside of the classroom that meet the needs of the students and honor their postsecondary destinations. The *Pathways to Success* document promotes student development, interpersonal development, and career development, by responding to the realities of this complex, rapidly changing world. As stated in the Ontario document, current research recognizes the positive outcome after a clearly articulated education system has been put into place. The areas of improvement noted are in achievement, the development of independence and resilience, and personal goals (Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1999).

Quebec Education Plan. Within the Quebec Education Plan (QEP), there is a section titled *Broad Areas of Learning* (2001). These areas were chosen based on their relevance to both the student and society. The QEP recognized that students must be provided with opportunities to develop skills and make connections with the content they are learning in school and their outside of school lives. As a result, the five broad areas of learning "provide opportunities to develop a sophisticated understanding of various life contexts and to envision a variety of possible actions in related situations" (p. 21). The

QEP (2001) noted how teachers must take advantage of spontaneous moments to incorporate events both in and outside of school that highlight the importance of these five broad areas of learning. One of these five areas is titled Personal and Career Planning, and has an educational aim "to enable students to make and carry out plans designed to develop their potential and help them integrate into adult society" (p. 24). This brings up the importance of integrating career thinking into the curriculum in a way that helps students make connections between what they are learning and possible areas of employment. In order to do this, the QEP proposed that there be a strong focus on the development of self in order to not only recognize potential, but also know how to fulfill this potential. Additionally, it recommended teaching students to adopt strategies that help them fulfill or plan a specific project. Finally, it suggested that a focus be spent on helping familiarize students with the working world, what it entails, and their role within the workforce. Similar to Ontario's *Pathways to Success* program, the QEP highlighted the need for teachers to work with students to develop self-awareness, recognition of the realities of the 21st century, and develop skills such as "creativity, self-confidence, initiative, tenacity, leadership, boldness, love of challenge, and satisfaction in work well done" (p. 24).

Focusing on the process. Recognizing and incorporating the positive aspects of the Ontario document and the Quebec Education Plan, the plan included in the resource guide of this project looks specifically at the process rather than the product of finding a career, and involves working on projects in specific subject areas that incorporate problem-based learning and real world learning; this is done to expose students to relevant experiences in the field. My suggestion is that rather than having a separate

course with a product in mind, the process of career thinking be woven into the curriculum through the development of self-awareness and authentic learning experiences. Wagner (cited in Schwartz, 2014), Expert in Residence at Harvard's Innovation Lab, noted that students develop intrinsic motivation to take initiative and find their place in the world when real life skills and problem-based learning are woven into the curriculum. Wagner also came up with the idea of a Dream Director, a job that involves helping students identify their dreams by scaffolding tasks to assist students with obtaining what is needed for that dream. Wallis and Steptoe (2006) from *Time* magazine noted that in the United States, children need to be taught more about the world, to think outside the box, and to decipher between good information and bad information. This is particularly important with the never-ending access to information, and to help people develop social skills, emotional intelligence, and communication skills.

The Infusion Approach

Career education is moving away from looking specifically at a career as a single choice that needs to be made throughout a course focusing solely on career development. The focus is now on a pervasive, life-span perspective in which career development is infused into the curriculum on a regular basis throughout kindergarten to the end of secondary school (Millar, 1995). The desired result of this approach is that students recognize that a career is dynamic and evolving, and is also an indispensable element in one's direct future. The approach aims to prepare students for a lifetime of change, productivity, and happiness, while equipping them with resilience, the ability to make decisions, and the development of self-awareness.

Millar (1995) reported that infusing career development and planning skills into the curriculum is a highly advocated for method. Not only do students have regular opportunities to ask questions about related jobs to the subject matter they are learning, but the subject matter then becomes more relevant in the exact moment they are learning it, likely facilitating increased success in school. Millar has been involved in many infusion-approach studies (e.g., Millar, 1994; Himsl & Millar, 1988) which have all indicated how the infusion approach is the best for education, as long as the staff presenting the approach are properly trained. In Alberta, there has been a program called "Every Career Development" created to help teachers infuse career development skills into their everyday curriculum activities (Millar, 1995). The goal of this approach is that students have a smooth transition from high school to work, or from high school to more school. The facilitator guide the course (Redekopp, 1994), contains six chapters with useful information to help guide a career development plan; this information has been used to help create the lessons in the resource guide of this project. Chapter 1 focuses on understanding global trends, chapter 2 provides an overview of career development, chapter 3 brings up career development in the school context; chapter 4 provides descriptions of the labor market and work dynamic analysis, chapter 5 identifies strategies for helping students build their careers, and chapter 6 provides diverse learning options for three groups of perspectives students in (a) high school courses, (b) informal learning events, and (c) learning experiences after high school. The entire process involves self-analysis learning and looking at experiences from the context and perspective of a student.

Throughout the course, teachers are given diverse strategies to help them better understand themselves, in order to properly assist their students. Millar (1995) explained that, in order for this program to be infused into the curriculum, professional development needs to be provided for teachers in the form of a workshop or training. For this reason, I have provided a sample workshop suggestion at the end of the resource guide included in this project.

The "High Five" of Career Development

In 1994, a selected group of experts—Butter, Davidson, Day, Aryeh, Gitterman, Hackett, Lamb, McCormick, Redekopp, Tocher, Myrhe, Ross, and Robb (Redekopp, Day, & Robb, 1994)—spent a day together outlining everything they knew about career development. With a goal of promoting career development to Canadian youth, the intention was to come up with five concise messages that could be used in this promotion. The notes taken were formulated into five key messages, which were then titled the "High Five." The key phrases formulated were: change is constant; follow your heart; focus on the journey; stay learning; and be an ally. The article provided evidence as to why these phrases were pertinent and would remain relevant for years to come, highlighting the universal quality of the messages, and how they could virtually reach any audience in the world. First, the messages were received favorably by people, particularly parents who claim that the "High Five" take away some of the enormous pressure they endure in order to help children decide what they would like to be when they grow up. Second, the messages have helped career experts attach meaning to what they are trying to accomplish with their clients, mostly by giving them a framework to subvert to when unsure how to explain themselves to others. Redekopp et al. noted that

when presenting the "High Five" to career experts, a general sigh of relief is always heard. At the time, both Redekopp and Day worked as Life-Role Development Group principals in Edmonton, Alberta, while Robb worked as a career-development consultant, also in Edmonton. The "High Five" messages have since been incorporated in a combination of speeches, workshops, and products. The following quote sums up the experience and the product formed—"this seemingly impossible task turned out to be not only achievable, but exceedingly powerful for ourselves and our clients, regardless of their age" (p. 1).

Change is constant. This is especially important to consider in the 21st century, in which technology is changing every second and jobs are becoming obsolete, while other jobs emerge. Teachers need to take into consideration the fact that technology is changing the way we view the world, our economic system is fluctuating, demographics are changing, and all of this is affecting the world of work. Essentially, the only constant in life is change, and change is therefore the only thing we can plan for. Teachers need to recognize these external changes that will occur, and prepare students for internal changes, which are most likely the result of growth and development. For example, people may experience a change of beliefs from when they were 12 years old, leading them to become interested in different things, which may result in new ideas about work. Asking a student to decide on a job at the age of 16 would likely result in dissatisfaction, because that job may not be around anymore by the time they turn 18 or whenever it is they enter the working world; this is especially likely for those who decide to go to college or graduate school. In both decisions to either pursue higher education or enter into a job directly after high school, many personal changes will occur. Individuals will

develop new ideas, skills, knowledge, beliefs, and encounter others who may alter the way they view themselves and the world at large. Some people may decide to travel or work abroad. Those who recognize and value that life and their individual selves are fluid, will benefit from a stronger ability to adapt to change in themselves and their environments. This has a strong implication for teachers to teach students not to seek a product, but rather, to recognize the stages and their own selves throughout the process. It was also noted how goal setting needs to be viewed differently, because goals may not always be reachable if they are reaching for a specific career. Instead, goals need to be seen in the context of serendipitous discoveries (Redekopp et al., 1994).

Follow the heart. The second point expressed by Redekopp et al. (1994) was that one must follow the heart. The consistency of change leaves students needing to rely on the proverbial heart as a guiding light. Because the heart includes values, passions, and interests, it is the ideal tool to help someone recognize a suitable career path. It was also expressed how knowledge and attitudes are additional tools that will help one follow a path, but should never be the deciding factors.

Focus on the journey. This statement brings up the importance of process versus product. In the process of helping a student find work that is meaningful to him or her, that student may unconsciously realize an area he or she would like to explore (Redekopp et al., 1994). The most meaning is often found in the journey toward one's vision. Focusing on the journey also allows people to worry less about making the correct choice and recognize the effects of all of their decisions leading up to the present.

Stay learning. According to Redekopp et al. (1994), once someone is in an occupation, he or she tends to forget about the concept of lifelong learning. If life is

always changing, so is learning, meaning we must constantly adapt to change and continue the process of learning the new and adapting the old. This learning does not need to be the same form of learning that people are often afraid of, but can happen through engaging in experiences that help characters grow and stay motivated.

Be an ally. The last theme implies collaboration and acting as a community. Encouraging this in students will help them recognize that learning is always possible from those around them and sharing leads to growth and development. Acting in a community also helps students recognize themselves and where they fit, identifying certain roles that bring out individual values and interests. Often, when people think about the labor market, they think of something external from their lives, something that does not involve the people who are already in their lives. However, work is often right in front of them, in their own communities. That said, if they do not reach out and communicate with those around them, they would not make themselves known. Additionally, the idea of community encourages asking for help and sharing resources, therefore, students need not be afraid to reach out (Redekopp et al., 1994). Asking for help is a sign of strength in community, because it demonstrates how you can articulate your needs and identify who may be able to help meet your needs. Not only this, but it allows someone to continuously learn and stay on top of the change that needs to be reacted to throughout.

As a present day teacher, I would argue that the sentences making up the "High Five" of Career Development have remained suitable and could be integrated into a new infusion program that works at weaving career thinking into the curriculum.

Resource Guide for Teachers Including Lesson Suggestions, Writing Ideas, and Workshop Plan

This resource guide was inspired by all of the work outlined in the literature review, and the authors and work you will proceed to read about throughout. It was created using qualities in career development frameworks outlined by Hansen (1972) and Millar (1995), and incorporates the key messages in the "High Five," outlined in the work of Redekopp et al. (1994).

Using the Infusion Approach to Bring Career Thinking Into the 2015 Curriculum through Imagination, Creativity, and Innovation

Throughout my life, I have developed insight into how people grow and develop a desire for challenge, and how to foster learning environments that promote innovative thinkers and life-long learners. I have learned about the sensitivity and patience required when working with individuals from different backgrounds, and the importance of fostering a positive environment in which students feel respected, involved, and inspired. This environment, in my mind, involves creativity, play, and offering students the opportunity to adapt learning in personal ways that inspire passions within. Having recently completed teachers' college, and in the final stage of MEd, I am a new teacher trying to find creative ways to teach in order to ignite a love for learning in my students. Not only do these lessons inspire students to think about their own development and how it is evolving, they also helps students learn to think critically, to use imagination, and to have fun throughout. The process of making a lesson creative can often mean thinking

about what you would like to associate your lesson with, and how you would like to make it relevant to the students.

The literature review in this project outlined the important role of the teacher, and the need for connecting lessons with skill development and the development of passions and strengths, specifically at the high school level. In order for students to find their passions and strengths, and feel comfortable developing skills, they must experience learning authentically, in a space that challenges them to make mistakes and think metacognitively about how the mistakes have produced individual growth. It is equally important to encourage independent thinking by teaching students how to think (not what to think), focusing on the importance of critical thought, imagination, and innovation.

This resource guide incorporates the evidence outlined in the literature review supporting the need for career development in school—for all students, including those who are gifted—and integrates aspects of both career development models summarized by Hansen (1972), and Millar (1995). Both approaches can be used at any time and in any curriculum. Hansen provided evidence that supported the development of self-concept as a means of benefiting from career development in education; Millar described a career development framework for teachers to use creatively and authentically. Common goals between the two included finding ways for teachers to connect activities done in the classroom to trends and events unfolding in both the labor market and students' outside of school lives, while working toward developing self-awareness. This demands creativity on the part of the teacher, because using this approach requires that teachers take time to review the curriculum they are teaching, and describe how it could assist students in meeting the workforce requirements of the present day economy. In

doing so, teachers need to ensure students recognize that the skills needed to function in society will change depending on the demands of society. This brings up the importance of adaptability. Teachers need to have students identify their values, passions, and interests, and to identify how all three could be fulfilled in both their work and their outside of work lives. In order for students to identify these areas, they must engage in conversations with both themselves and the world around them.

Using the arts to imagine, create, and innovate. Over the years, Michael Wilson, a professor at the University of Ottawa, has looked deeply into the absence of the arts in schools, and how to overcome the constant budget cuts on arts education. One of these strategies is to weave arts education into other aspects of the curriculum, so that it becomes a way of teaching rather than a subject that is being taught. Wilson (2012) wrote, "In North American education, the arts tend to be treated as separate and distinct subjects, each with an individual pedagogy that ignores their essential commonality" (p. 1). Students must learn how to think outside the box and recognize what makes them feel good, and in order to do this, they must learn how to identify these feelings. Wilson explained,

> by age four, most children have a highly sophisticated range of expressive instruments to make sense of their emerging worlds. Those instruments are the foundations for all artistic explorations and communication. The graded school system will be shown to cripple this natural free association with creative and aesthetic language, through its increasing penchant to categorize all learning into increasingly disconnected silos of manageable and efficient organizational constructs. (p. 2)

Wilson's (2012) book *In a Grain of Sand*, addressed ways in which teachers can help maintain "the natural childhood learning approach through an arts approach to learning that is grounded in two main concepts: creativity and aesthetic experience" (p. 3). These ideas, coupled with my own experience in education, have inspired me to believe that imagination, creativity, and innovation are what help students identify passions and strengths.

Connecting through feelings and personal relationships. At the National Round Table for Arts Education Conference, Westheimer (2015) emphasized how students must learn to express themselves artistically, in order to connect through feelings, emotions, and values. Westheimer went on to explain how no student remembers the teacher who conformed to the curriculum; they remember the teacher who challenged them and drew on their own passions and their students' passions to create something special. He explained that standardization is the enemy of all that, and unfortunately, standardization is what exists. Standardization means the same, and if we are trying to produce the same student everywhere, who will fill all of the diverse roles needed for this world to function? Westheimer discussed the importance of imagination, and how the world of imagination is to help us move from the world we have to live in to the world we want to live in. He explained that if we are not able to imagine what is possible, we will not be able to go anywhere. All of this brings up the importance of play and having fun with learning while creating something that is meaningful and personal. This form of expression will help students identify core qualities about who they are, what makes them feel good, and what avenues they may wish to explore. This recognition may also assist students identify areas they wish to explore academically,

professionally, and personally. Most importantly, it will help students recognize that life is a process that involves making connections and adapting to new environments. In order to do all of this, they must first learn to think, to share, to create, and to communicate.

Inquiry-Based Teaching and Learning

Inquiry-based teaching and learning helps students develop skills needed to thrive in the 21st century, and develop the awareness to identify passions and strengths—all of this adds positively to the process of career development. Shore (2010) wrote a paper based on a presentation to psychologists in education about the evolution of both giftedness and school. Giftedness was once referred to as only someone with a high IQ; curriculum was once—and sometimes still is—about teaching students to answer questions of which people already know the answers. Shore discussed both these evolving phenomena by illustrating some of work being completed in his laboratory at McGill University. In one of his ideas, he explained intellectual giftedness, in which he spoke about some of the assumptions made that gifted students look or art a certain way. He addressed the invention and evolution of the IQ, noting that it was a good indicator of giftedness a century ago, but that we must now take into consideration the other types of giftedness—those who are socially, musically, and mathematically gifted, and those who are high achievers, creative thinkers, or are gifted in their ability to care and be kind. This transitioned into a discussion about the meaning of intelligence, and how this meaning has changed from knowing answers to already existing questions, to creating innovative questions of which the answers are unknown. Shore noted,

> Should we seek political and economic leaders who immediately knew all the right answers a year ago? Or is there something more to being smart or bright or gifted, such as coming up with good questions? Having broad interests? Recognizing good and bad evidence? Making good judgments with incomplete information? Making ethical choices? Balancing many and perhaps contradictory ideas simultaneously and making some sense of them? Speaking out to authority in the face of injustice? In practice and away from specialists' labels, children and adults whom we call smart do these things. (p. 156)

Inquiry-based teaching and learning relates directly to the quotation above, and also to the lessons described further in this project. The focus of inquiry-based teaching and learning involves asking students to pursue ideas and questions of which they find interesting, generating their own research about a unit being studied in class; it involves encouraging dialog between students, inspiring students to explore outside of the classroom to find new information or connections that could help them find meaning in what they are learning; it involves giving students the opportunity to explore in-depth and to later reflect on that exploration in ways that help open themselves up to new ideas or concepts; it involves encouraging collaboration and offering opportunities for various modes of expression, always placing emphasis on seeking out new ideas to explore creatively and innovatively (Shore, 2010). Inquiry-based teaching and learning brings to light the important role of the teacher as a facilitator, someone to inspire students to want to explore through inquiring creatively and authentically, gearing their inquiry to individual interests and passions.

Creatively Working with Lessons

The following section will focus on ideas meant to help teachers recognize how any lesson can be connected to incorporate career thinking, skill development, and self-awareness; aspects of inquiry-based teaching and learning will be incorporated throughout. These lesson ideas incorporate the key concepts of the "High Five" of Career Development (Redekopp et al., 1994), mainly through reflection and journal writing. Through various activities, students are provided with opportunities to develop 21st century skills (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, n.d.) through expression, while also recognizing passions and strengths (Robinson, 2009). The examples are linked to the Ontario curriculum expectations, however, they are meant to serve as general ideas for teachers to use when developing unit or lesson plans. The ideas can be used in different school board curricula, and across multiple different curriculum subject areas. In addition, I have included general suggestions for writing activities that help students practice 21st century skills and offer opportunities to recognize passions and talents.

Life of Pi. I realized the power in a lesson when I read Bills, Bond, and Cascio's (2014) article "'No bamboozlement here': Teaching Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* across the curriculum." Bills et al. enabled me to recognize how any piece of material can cover a wide range of subject areas and inspire different skills and realizations among students. For example, this book was used to teach comparative religion, mathematics, zoology, marine biology, history, political science, and globalism. In each of these subject areas, relevant topics were chosen within the novel *Life of Pi*—a book about a young man's journey at sea with a tiger, after surviving a shipwreck—to make associations with the subject material. For example, in order to relate to marine biology, the topic focused on

when Pi was stranded on a lifeboat, and had to quickly learn about sea life; ultimately, it was the whales, fish, sharks, and sea turtles who saved Pi's and Richard's lives.

The "High Five" of Career Development could be involved by having students look into how aquatic life has changed throughout time, and how each animal brings something different to the environment—this demonstrates how change is constant. A teacher could bring up the importance of being an ally to someone, by inquiring about how these aquatic creatures survive. To portray the importance of focusing on the journey, a teacher could ask students to look into how aquatic mammals survive over time, which could also allow them to recognize how animals are always learning and growing—as are humans. To bring in a connection to passions, values, and strengths, a teacher could have a student choose one sea creature to connect with, and ask that student to set up an imaginary interview with this animal. This lesson could end with a reflection on how this relates to their individual lives and thoughts; why did they choose those specific sea creatures? What inspired the questions they asked? By making connections, asking students to think on their feet, encouraging collaboration among classmates, and inspiring creativity, many of the skills needed in the workforce are being addressed and practiced, and students are indirectly connecting with something they feel passionate about.

Curriculum expectations. In accordance with the curriculum expectations in Ontario, this lesson plan was used as an example to demonstrate how a novel such as *Life of Pi* can be used across multiple subject areas.

Suggestions for working with gifted students. In any of the ideas described using the *Life of Pi*, gifted students must be guided in a way that helps them create a focus on

values, passions, and experiences. Although this is important for all students, it is especially important for gifted students, because if they are left with too many options to explore, they may feel overwhelmed by the amount of choices (Park-McCartney & Salomone, 1988; Rysiew et al., 1998). Therefore, another option could involve putting themselves in the place of Pi, and having them come up with a plan of action for how to overcome a situation; this corresponds with how gifted students enjoy working with a plan, and also prefer increased complexity (Coleman & Shore, 1991). This adaptation could also help students recognize their many skills, and more importantly, support identification of which skills they value most about themselves when it comes to solving a problem.

Creative writing—writing a hook. Many students dislike reading because they are given books that are not interesting to them. They assume that the act of reading is what they dislike, rather than the books; therefore, they are unwilling to give other books a try. As a teacher, one of my goals is to help students learn to love reading by finding the joy and meditative feeling that comes with reading. I encourage students to recognize and appreciate the opportunities that reading gives them when it comes to developing both self and world awareness. I want students to see how reading often leads to writing, and how the process of both can help someone develop more efficient communication skills, and gain a better understanding of who he or she is as an authentic individual. Consequently, I believe lessons on creative writing are essential for students to explore their individual voices and writing styles.

The following two-day lesson could be utilized in any high school English class, and is focused on getting students to feel comfortable putting their thoughts into writing,

and writing creatively on a cue. This lesson will incorporate a large aspect of reflection and self-awareness, and is meant to familiarize students with the liberating feeling of free-writing. One of the goals is to get students playing around with their own writing and using their imaginations. Another goal of this lesson is for students to recognize that part of writing is about having a plan, but a large part needs to be left up to the moment. This is important for allowing their minds to take them on journeys through the words and sentences they form. Writing what is on the mind is a significant aspect of developing self-awareness; therefore, this lesson is also meant to help students recognize what is on their minds, which may lead them to recognize something new about themselves. This lesson was inspired by how Hawker (2012)—the author of the book *Branded*—keeps her readers hooked.

Ideally, this lesson would take place while beginning to read a book that keeps the readers feeling hooked. This could similarly take place after reading a short story that hooks the readers, or even giving students something to read online that evokes in them that feeling of wanting more. This literature suggestion can be at the discretion of the teacher.

The lesson will begin by asking students what they think about writing, prompting them to jot this down in their daily journals. The teacher will then ask students what they think of the author's writing so far. What has been keeping them interested? How has the author been doing this? Subsequently, the teacher will ask students to describe what keeps them interested when they read books, and will have them create a list in their classroom journals. The teacher will introduce the idea of the hook, and pass out post-it notes on which students will be asked to share one experience in which they were hooked

by a story. This series of post-it notes will be used to create a wall of ideas that could help students plan for writing their own hooks.

The next part of the lesson will involve going over the specific tips for writing a hook, such as the need to make your reader wonder, create an interesting picture, and to start with an unusual situation (*Write it Sideways*, n.d.).

After students go over the tips for writing a hook, they will be informed that their turn will soon come to write their own hooks, but before this can be done, a brainstorming session must take place. This is meant to first help students work collaboratively to help get the creative juices flowing, and second, to transition from collaborative thinking to individual thinking by using the ideas brought up in the brainstorming session to form individual pieces of writing.

This lesson involves critical thinking by exploring the author's writing, and taking time to analyze how that style of writing kept them hooked. A large amount of communication is involved in this lesson, because students are first asked to take the time to recognize what and how the author is trying to communicate, and what his or her intentions are, and to then communicate their own thoughts. This involves linking what they read to what they wish to write, and ensuring they are communicating effectively for the intended purpose. The creativity involved in this lesson is everywhere, through making connections, brainstorming, and using connections and ideas to help students write for an intended purpose; this requires both creativity and critical thinking. In this lesson, students also experience the benefits of collaboration, because the collaboration that took place likely helped them on their own personal journeys to creating their hooks. The type of hook a student creates may help him or her identify his or her passions and

strengths, because he or she is provoked to explore writing creatively and to choose something that sparks a specific interest. This not only helps teachers get to know students more as individuals, but also helps students recognize what they may be thinking about in that specific moment.

Bringing in the "High Five" of Career Development would involve asking students to revisit their journals and to write out a new view on writing. How did this activity change their view? Do they have a new appreciation for writing? The modification in their views could help them recognize the consistency of change. In order to demonstrate the importance of following the heart, the teacher could encourage students to write about why this activity changed their views on writing? What were they allowed to do in this activity that they are sometimes not allowed to do in other forms of writing? This could spark a discussion on the importance of writing about something that ignites passion. The importance of being an ally could be demonstrated by asking students to come up with three reasons the brainstorming session helped them with their writing; this could help students recognize the importance of collaboration and seeing each other as resources, not competitors. To demonstrate the importance of life-long learning and focusing on the journey, the teacher could have students outline five areas they would like to explore in their writing, and have them outline under each category how they would like to begin this pursuit.

Curriculum expectations. The Ontario curriculum for grade 12 university-level English classes recommends a section based on developing and categorizing content. Within this section, students are expected to generate, gather, and arrange ideas and information to write for an deliberate purpose and audience by generating, developing,

and exploring, to focus ideas for potential writing tasks (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

Suggestions for working with gifted students. According to Pask-McCartney and Salomone (1988), having too many options may provoke anxiety and confusion in gifted students, leading to overchoice. In the literature review, it was noted that gifted students must be guided in the direction of focusing on values; otherwise, they may feel there are too many options to pursue (Rysiew et al., 1998). In this specific lesson, which involves writing a hook, gifted students could be prompted to write more specifically about something they value, or something related more specifically to an area they would like to explore with regard to a career. This could be done using a concept map in the brainstorming session, during which students write out ideas and relate those ideas to values and interests, after which they could identify one specific idea as the focus of the hook. This adaptation addresses how gifted students, when compared to other students, solve problems by categorizing ideas into thematic groups that help bring the solution into focus, and develop more effective processes to self-regulate and self-monitor (Shore, 2010). During problem-solving activities, gifted students have been shown to think differently than other students—for example, they often work with a plan whereas other students do not (Coleman & Shore, 1991). They also adapt well to switching between tasks, demonstrating flexibility (Devall, 1983; Dover & Shore, 1991). Offering this initial challenge of linking concepts and taking time to understand the links between these concepts ties to how gifted students enjoy thinking and working. It affords them opportunities to put thoughts into action with a plan, while self-monitoring and remaining flexible to the realizations that occur throughout the development of this plan.

Practicing oral communication through active citizenship. This writing activity is a combination of collaborative writing and journal writing, as described by Milner et al. (2012) in *Bridging English* (5th ed.). My goal for this activity is to help students recognize the importance in sharing their voices, the power in collaboration, and the impact taking time to reflect on a group activity can have on the development of self-awareness.

This activity should take place after units on active citizenship, and persuasive writing and speaking. I think it is important for students to recognize the influence in their own voices, especially at the high-school age. Through both collaboration and reflection, this activity is meant to get students thinking about ways they can demonstrate active citizenship, and how their unique skills and values fit into a specific project.

After grouping the students, the teacher will have them start the activity by writing collaboratively, in which he or she would give each group of students a piece of chart paper saying either the word community, school, country, or world. The teacher will then ask students to brainstorm topics that require their actions and voices within the category they have been assigned. The reason I suggest beginning this part of the activity through collaborating is because students may feel overwhelmed being given such a broad task, which could result in a form of writer's block (Rose, 1984). However, through sharing ideas and beginning the class with brainstorming, students will hopefully realize how quickly new ideas emerge when collaboration is taking place. Often, students experience writer's block because they are in a position of stalemate, usually because they fear being judged for saying the wrong thing. Rose (1984) noted that writer's block often emerges when students fear bringing something up that may lead to

embarrassment. If the teacher begins the class by encouraging nonjudgmental brainstorming, students together create a space where all ideas are accepted and encouraged, resulting in the disappearance of any fear of disapproval.

The next step of the activity will involve thinking critically and working together to come up with a solution. All students will be asked to circle two main points on the paper. Subsequently, as a group, students will decide on a main theme that covers all of the circled points. This involves critical thinking, because students must make connections to the ideas mentioned and find ways to frame these ideas under a specific theme or topic. The teacher will inform students that the next step is going to require them writing a speech, collaboratively, that they will deliver to the class. The students would have already studied persuasive writing and would have had practice writing speeches. This activity is meant to help students take everything they have learned about active citizenship and persuasive writing. This can be done through working collaboratively and critically to come up with a plan of action for how to suggest change regarding something they feel passionate about.

After each group of students decides which topic they would like to focus on, they will begin to write a speech as a group. This next process involves recognizing the importance in all types of skills, and working together to communicate who may be able to do what to create an efficient team. There would need to be one or two facilitators, one or two researchers, one or two writers, and one or two speakers. The teacher would take the time to ensure students remember that in order to lead, you must also be able to follow, and that different tasks require different skills, but that all skills are respected and equally needed. In this section of the lesson, the students will have up to 25 minutes to

put together a speech, which they will then present in front of the class. During the presentations, those not presenting will write out one thing they liked about the group's presentation on a small sheet of paper, which will be given to the students after each presentation. The teacher will also verbally express one thing he or she liked about the presentation. Both sets of feedback will focus on outlining the qualities that made the presentation persuasive and powerful.

This lesson is meant to happen quickly, because it forces students to think on their feet and to utilize the diversity of minds in the class to create a plan of action. A particularly positive aspect of this activity is that students are using each other as resources, not competitors, and working together. As Dale (1997) mentioned, this process eliminates the isolation often involved in writing. This type of activity is one in which collaboration is the key to success, because if left alone, many students may wonder if what they are saying is interesting to others, or accurate. On the contrary, working with a team allows students to plan more, work together to come up with ideas, and take responsibility for a certain part of the thinking, writing, and speaking process.

The second half of the activity will involve writing a journal log. I think it is important for students to take the time following group work to reflect on what they brought to the table. Often, students spend time in groups and do not recognize how they participated or what they brought to the group, especially because many students may not recognize the importance in all of the various roles. This type of reflection is very significant when it comes to recognizing passions and values. The teacher will ask students to sit down and to write an entry about something they experienced, in a free-flowing fashion. There will be many different prompts to help guide students, but the

teacher could also encourage them to come up with their own ideas. Some examples of prompts are as follows:

- How did you find yourself participating in this group? Were you more of a speaker, facilitator, writer, or listener? How did this quality assist the group reach their goal?
- What did you enjoy most about this activity?
- Did you find new ideas emerged because of the group brainstorming session?
- Did you find yourself feeling more confident as time progressed? Why do you think this was so? If not, why not?
- Did you feel empowered by this activity? How so? If not, why not?
- How could you use this activity to help you realize something about yourself as an active citizen?

As Kittle (2008) mentioned, this type of writing may lead to an expanded piece of writing in the form of a narrative or a persuasive argument, which may allow students to identify a more profound interest in something they experienced in the activity.

Bringing in the "High Five" of Career Development would involve prompting students to discuss with a partner how each topic is relevant, and predict a topic that may be relevant in ten years, or a topic that was relevant ten years ago—this brings up how change is constant. To demonstrate the importance of focusing on the journey, the teacher could have each student outline an impossible task, and write out steps for how that student could achieve this impossible task—this demonstrates the importance of focusing on the journey, rather than being discouraged by the overwhelming task at hand. This entire assignment helps students recognize the importance of being an ally; however, to be sure that students recognize this importance, a teacher could have students write out

three reasons acting as a group could be more beneficial in drawing attention to their issues. In order for students to recognize the importance of following the heart, a teacher could speak to the class about how they would have felt about getting assigned a topic, as opposed to choosing their own topic. This would hopefully help students recognize the amount of passion that was involved when they were an active part of the process, as opposed to simply reacting on something that was assigned to them as a task. Finally, to help students recognize the importance of life-long learning, a teacher could give an example of something happening in the world, such as promoting environmental sustainability by recycling properly, and how students could be a part of the change by making a difference through active learning.

Curriculum expectations. The Ontario curriculum for grade 11 college-level English classes recommends a section based on communicating orally for a range of purposes, using language suitable for the anticipated audience. Within this section, students are expected to communicate in a clear, comprehensible manner, using a structure and style effective for the purpose, subject matter, and intended audience. Although this lesson would be taught in a high-school English class, there are many cross-curricular lessons that can be tied to Civics, History, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Dramatic Arts, or effectively any other discipline (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

Suggestions for working with gifted students. A suggestion for working with gifted students would be to propose they practice all of the different roles (facilitator, researcher, speaker, writer), and take a moment to outline in their journals which role made them feel most inspired. By offering the option to practice many roles, gifted

students are given the opportunity to recognize which role brings out their values and interests in the most profound way. This supports how gifted students need to be guided in the direction of recognizing values, interests, and strengths (Sajjadi et al., 2001). This is especially important considering a gifted student may likely be able to complete all of the roles, and may therefore feel lost with regard to what they truly enjoy. The dilemma of having many interests and abilities can lead to inertia that prevents students from moving forward or backward (Higgins & Boone, 2003). Often students end up following a natural flow that was chosen for them, as opposed to taking a pro-active stance in determining their lives after school. This suggestion takes a pro-active stance at working with gifted students to practice multiple roles and to recognize which role he or she valued most, preventing the possibility of doing something simply because he or she is good at it. According to Shore (2010), gifted students are said to solve problems using a forward strategy and can understand the difference between helpful evidence and irrelevant evidence. This adaptation requests these qualities, during which gifted students are asked to take on different roles and work effectively in those roles (problem solving), and are then asked to decipher how each role made them feel (realizing the reasons for these feelings by categorizing them into either helpful and irrelevant evidence). Moreover, curriculum should allow gifted students to engage in ill-defined assignments during which they are in charge of shaping some of the expectations (Shore, Cornell, Robinson, & Ward, 1991). This activity supports this curriculum suggestion by allowing for independence when creating the tasks for each role, which will differ depending on the individual participating in the role.

Social media. This lesson combines both identifying the meaning behind a message, and identifying why that message is meaningful to you. Often, we develop self-awareness by taking the time to recognize the choices we make, and why we make these choices. Media play an active role in our lives whether we want to accept it or not; therefore, as opposed to letting the media control us, we must find ways to use the media to create control in our own lives—this can be done by finding individual meaning in what we choose to pay attention to.

The proposed lesson will involve a two-week long assignment during which students will keep track of specific media forms that speak to them; for each, they will write about how and why that form or message spoke to them, and research more about the image or message, and its intended purpose. By the end of the second week, students will have compiled a small portfolio of media messages that identify something about them, and uncovers the hidden messages that are sometimes found in media forms.

After students complete the work, they will go into groups to discuss with their classmates the individual meaning behind the media forms they chose, and the intended meaning they researched. This will transition into a group discussion about interpreting media forms, and critical literacy, allowing students to recognize the intention behind an image and how that intention is not always what the consumer feels. This type of project requires communication, because students are interconnecting with the world around them and trying to find the media forms that are meaningful to them; they are also highlighting the intended meaning behind a form of communication. This also demonstrates the importance of following the heart and creating meaning out of something that is authentic. A certain amount of collaboration needs to take place in

order for students to make the most of this project; if students were to simply look at their own work, they would be limited by their own perspectives. Taking the time to look at the work of their classmates may help students realize that a classmate interpreted the images he or she chose in a different way, helping students recognize the diversity in the human mind. This also demonstrates to students the importance of life-long learning and being an ally, because if students close themselves off to the confines of a box and restrict themselves from their communities, they may miss everything that takes place outside of the box, which may be where passions and talents get discovered. The creativity involved in this project comes from having students critically analyze a media form in two different ways. Students may begin looking at a photo, but it is not until they are creating something in their minds that the meaning becomes evident. This also helps students recognize the importance of focusing on the journey, reminding them that instant meaning is not always apparent; however, when given the right amount of time and thought, meaning can be created.

Curriculum expectations. The Ontario curriculum for grade 12 university-level English classes recommends a section based on understanding media texts, in which students are expected to express an understanding of a variety of media texts by identifying the viewpoints and biases evident in media texts, including increasingly complex or challenging texts, and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, personal identity, and power. Students are also expected to understand media forms, conventions, and techniques, in which they need to identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

Suggestions for working with gifted students. In this activity, it is important to both challenge the student, and ensure he or she does not feel overwhelmed by the number of possibilities. At the beginning of this project, it may be beneficial for the teacher to offer gifted students a different approach to completing this assignment, one that requires looking into something they know nothing about and exploring a specific theme related to this unknown. Without this guideline, many gifted students may go into this activity and choose something they feel comfortable exploring, or an interest that has been imposed on them by an external character, because in their past this has lead to success. Many gifted students avoid situations in which their success is not assumed, resulting in a lack of taking any sort of risk (Higgins & Boone, 2003). This lesson could encourage risk-taking. Higgins and Boone noted how the expectations from the family or society are often conflicted with what the student actually wants to do. Witty and Grotberg (cited in Higgins & Boone, 2003) stated that this conflict might turn some students away from making a decision altogether, because they might fear the future and feel unsure that they can meet the goals set by others. Offering them the option to choose something of interest allows them to reflect on their interests, recognize the importance in choosing and setting their own goals, and affords them the opportunity to persevere at something that was not simply chosen for them based on their skills or societal pressures. This demand challenges them to make critical connections between what they view and the theme they are hoping to fill, and they are also guided in a more specific way—one that allows them to focus their work on something they value. This supports the curriculum suggestion to engage gifted learners in activities that are ill-defined, in which they help develop expectations (Shore et al., 1991). This lesson demands a large amount

of problem-solving, self-monitoring, and flexibility, especially considering that gifted students are challenged to use self-regulation strategies to guide their approaches to reaching independently chosen goals. This requires devising a plan, which is something gifted students do naturally, whereas other students often work without a plan (Coleman & Shore, 1991). This activity dually supports the notion that gifted students are more flexible and able to use multiple strategies at once (Devall, 1983; Dover & Shore, 1991). Compared to other students, gifted students often possess more knowledge about an area and are able to retrieve relatable information efficiently; they also enjoy complex problems in which they are asked to link one thought or idea through strategies such as categorization—this activity allows them to hone all of these skills, and honors their ability to manage multiple tasks at once (Shore, 2010).

Body biography. This lesson, inspired by Morawski (personal communication, February 25, 2015), an active researcher in the area of learning through multiple modalities, is about understanding characterization, and recognizing the biases that sometimes exist based on how a character is portrayed. It is important to get students thinking about the external characteristics being described, and the characteristics we infer when we read a novel and learn about the characters involved. This is also essential to recognize in ourselves—how would someone see us if they read about us in a book? Is this different than the way we see ourselves? The body biography lesson is meant to help students look deeply at a character and make connections with what they understand, and what we can naturally assume. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the characters are never fully described, however, we get to know them deeply throughout the novel,

allowing us to make inferences about what they are like. These inferences, based on actual scenarios, are what allow us to depict these individuals through a body biography.

This activity can be implemented in lessons about history, Shakespeare, novel study, science, dramatic arts, or in any lesson in which characters are being studied. It is important for students to recognize how their understanding of characters helps them find meaning throughout what they are reading, which can result in the development of self-awareness.

This lesson will involve a large amount of collaboration, because the first half of this session will take place in groups. Students need to complete a body biography using any arts and crafts materials available in class, and will need to look specifically at what holds true to the characters' heart, legs, feet, hands, spine, and eyes. Each of these represent something unique, which will be explained to the class—the heart represents what the character holds close to them, the legs represent what helps that character feel stable, the spine represents the character's strength, the hands represent what they can give back, the feet represent the ground the character stands out, and the eyes represent the character's focus. Exploring through artistic expression and play, this activity involves significant creativity, during which students are making connections with what was read about a character, to how that character could be represented in these specific sections. This activity also involves a large amount of critical thinking, because each character embodies different characteristics, which requires differentiating why one character is unlike the other. Finally, through understanding characterization, students are communicating with both themselves and the world around them, by identifying

meaning behind a character and how that character has affected their present lives and understanding of the work being studied.

The second part of the activity asks students to create three body biographies of their own—one that represents their past, one that represents who they are now, and one that represents predictions for 10 years down the road. Students will need to explore their own characteristics in two ways, representing both how others view who they are and how they view themselves. This involves a large amount of self-reflection and a focus on values and strengths.

The third part of this activity will involve improvisation, to allow students to feel the activity through a different form of creative expression. Welsek (2010) emphasized the importance of improvisation in the classroom, during which drama is used to experience and identify personal growth. Maples (2010) noted the benefits of improvisation for developing confidence, community, and content. To begin, the teacher will place students in groups of two, and ask them to create a puppet in 5 minutes of less, utilizing the arts and crafts in the class. Students will then interact in 1-minute unscripted puppet shows, during which the only rule will be to have fun. This puppet is meant to serve as a representation of students' characteristics, and for students to recognize how those characteristics affect their interactions. The teacher will ensure students know that this activity is meant to be one in which play is encouraged and celebrated. The therapeutic act of play helps students tap into their natural method of communication (Landreth, 2012). Landreth also noted the benefits of using puppets to construct this playful environment in the classroom, during which puppets are seen as the words and play is seen as the language. This final form of expression is meant to help students

profoundly explore their characteristics through a playful and creative construction and presentation of values and strengths. The improvisation involved in this activity not only helps students meaningfully digest the construction of their body biographies, but it also helps them recognize how that construction affects the way they interact with those around them.

Relating the material to the "High Five" of Career Development involves the following—by working together collaboratively to find meaning within the characters, students could recognize the increased ability to identify characteristics in the characters when multiple minds were working together; this helps students recognize the importance of community and collaboration. Students will also be introduced to the fact that change is constant, by witnessing how they see themselves in 10 years, likely different from they are today. At the same time, this may also help them recognize their passions and values, because some of the main representations in their hearts and spines, for example, may have stayed the same—this helps students recognize the importance of following the heart and staying true to the heart. Acknowledging the difference between the past, present, and future, may help students comprehend the importance of focusing on the journey, especially when they begin to understand how much they have evolved as depicted in their past and present body biographies. If something seems unlikely in their future body biographies, having students look at the evolution and evidence of change and undertakings will allow them to see how with time, anything is possible. This will also help students recognize the significance of life-long learning, especially if they look at their past body biographies and compare them to the present, recognizing the learning that has led them to where they are today. I also believe this activity could help students

become aware of some of the biases that may exist surrounding who they are, and work toward ensuring they give off a most genuine portrayal of what they value in themselves.

Curriculum expectations. The Ontario curriculum for grade 12 university-level English classes recommends a section based on analyzing texts in terms of the communication, thoughts, questions, or topics they explore, in which they are expected to examine how various aspects of the texts contribute to the presentation or development of meaning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

Suggestions for working with gifted students. To help a gifted student make the most of this activity, teachers could suggest focusing not only on characteristics, but specifically, characteristics that a student values in him or herself. This activity already incorporates a large amount of self-reflection and identification of characteristics, but prompting students to focus on those valued most could benefit them by bringing to light what they may like to see in their futures, which involves metacognition. This supports how gifted students have a more profound ability to reflect, problem solve, and practice metacognition, which involves thinking about one's thinking (Shore, 2010). Furthermore, rather than representing themselves directly, gifted students could be challenged to increased complexity by asking them to find a character, either non-fictional or fictional, who exemplify themselves at the different stages. Not only would they need to describe this character, but they would also, in a little note, need to write one sentence per characteristic about how they know this about the character, and how this relates to something about who they are. In the final section of the lesson, gifted students would be challenged to create their puppets with their identified characters in mind, and to represent those characteristics while interacting through a creative form of expression.

The puppet activity involves identifying characteristics and recognizing how those characteristics affect communication, which requires metacognition. This additional challenge offers gifted students the opportunity to explore something more complex and original, meaningfully representing themselves through problem-solving and categorizing, utilizing their increased ability to practice metacognition.

Summary of lessons. The importance of taking time to outline how every lesson is related to something a student may experience outside of the classroom, in either the content being explored, or the skills being developed throughout the exploration, has been noted throughout this project. The lessons outlined above are meant to help teachers think about the variety of ways to work with a lesson, in order to help students appreciate the amount they are learning that can be applied to their lives outside of school. As teachers, we need to understand our impact and find ways to help students create meaning with what they are learning, by linking it to the four Cs, and facilitating a connect amid passions, strengths, and especially for gifted students—values. Sometimes it takes someone reminding us of what we are learning for it to truly sink in and help it feel meaningful. If we go through class learning but leave the class without reflecting on that learning, we may not experience the same impact.

Writing activities. The following are more examples of general activities to implement in a high school curriculum that help bring to surface the recognition of passions, strengths, values. These activities also help students develop communication skills, the ability to collaborate, and the ability to think both critically and creatively. Although the lesson plans and ideas are my own, the different writing forms were explained by Milner et al. (2012).

Collaborative writing. Collaborative writing allows students to create a community of learners in their own classrooms, often acting as a form of brainstorming for students to come up with ideas and release thoughts they may be holding onto without the fear of disapproval, which was mentioned as something students fear (Rose, 1984). I think it is important for students to engage in collaborative activities that do not promote competition. Too often, the joy of something is taken away because it turns into a rivalry. As Dale (1997) noted, collaborative writing encourages students to take responsibility for their own writing by planning more, while socializing the process. The playful energy that comes with collaboration helps students recognize each other as resources, not competitors, and takes away the loneliness of writing. Not only does this process help students develop communication skills, but it also helps them concede power in collaboration. It is equally important for students to practice communicating their opinions and dealing with the feeling of being challenged by other contrasting opinions, specifically because this is something they will encounter throughout their lives. Barfurth and Shore (2008) wrote a chapter in a book titled *Inquiry in Education*, explaining the significance of disagreements in the process of collaboration. It was noted that when students come together in a classroom environment, disagreements that seem unnerving on the surface can actually prove to be productive and a source of collaboration. The empirical evidence, which came from collecting 24 disagreements from four elementary school students over a two-month period, showed that disagreements could be constructive and prolific. The sample demonstrated the ability to use disagreements as a way to discuss, defend, and modify. They were able to seek

solutions to their problems actively and effectively in a way that increased the quality of the work produced.

Additionally, when students are encouraged to work together on something such as writing, which many would see as a more personal process, they are forced to think critically about their contributions, explore both divergent and convergent thinking, and come up with solutions to any roadblocks they may experience on the journey as a team. As Beckman (1990) suggested, it is through collaborative learning that students

> learn to share their own partial pieces of a puzzle rather than seek rewards for individual final products of for reiteration of a known discourse. These cooperative efforts help to prepare them for the flexibility and adaptation that problem solvers need in the ever more complicated work world that faces us. (p. 129)

Collaborative writing could help the students who are having difficulty letting their minds release through writing, because it allows them to practice this process with others, and to bounce ideas off each other.

Journal writing. This is one of my favorite writing activities because it is through journal writing that I began to open up as a writer and explore different parts of myself. Writing freely and reflectively helped me relate what I was learning to what I was experiencing in my everyday life. By encouraging this in a classroom, students are given the opportunity to make education meaningful and personally interact with the knowledge they are acquiring. Incorporating opportunities throughout for students to sit back, reflect, and record their reflections, or for students to write freely, letting whatever is on their minds spill onto a paper, can be a very creative and meditative process. Kittle

(2008) described "quick writes," during which the main rules are to consistently and rapidly write while also ensuring a playful feeling resides. Personally, I find that when I sit down to write freely, thoughts are created on paper that I sometimes did not even know were on my mind. For students, this act of writing freely may result in the next innovative idea or personal realization.

Sentence combining. This activity involves having students pair together different sentences from a list, in order to help increase recognition of how different words can be construed when paired uniquely. Essentially, this activity helps students understand that the way they speak and the order of their words and sentences, impacts the meaning of what they are trying to say. This activity gets students' minds going in a more structured way, which may be a nice combination to the free flowing style of journal writing, during which the goal is to simply write. Students could each start with a list of 20 sentences, and pair together the sentences in their own ways. After all the sentences have been used in a paragraph, either combined together with another sentence or used individually, students could listen to the diversity in their paragraphs. I believe including this type of writing is very important, especially if a teacher is using a lot of creative, imaginative writing. It is important for students to recognize the purpose behind their writing, and how different meaning can be created using the same words in a sentence. This type of writing involves problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking.

Literature writing. Literature writing is a creative process that requires thinking critically about reading and how it connects with what students are trying to say in their own writing. The entire process requires analytical skills and the ability to pick out important information that will help students make their arguments. This is important for

students to learn, because it helps them identify the importance of connecting the dots to prove a point, ensuring they have enough evidence to back up their connections. From my own experience, many students believe that this type of writing is something they may never need to engage with in the future; however, it is important to help them identify the skills involved in the process, and how those skills can help them in anything they decide to do in life. As teachers, it is important for us to help students make these connections so that they see the relevance in their lives.

Concept mapping. In order for students to become metacognitively aware of what they are learning, they need to learn strategies to monitor comprehension and take control of their thinking (Bauer, 2014). Introduced in 1981 by Novak, concept mapping has since gained credibility as an effective method for representing knowledge and understanding (Austin & Shore, 1993). It can be used in any situation and any curriculum, and can help students outline and clarify what it is they are thinking and learning; this is done by linking one concept to the next, allowing students to use a visual to help develop understanding of how the concepts are linked. The process of understanding affiliations and expanding on ideas can be a beneficial strategy to use for breaking down a topic to better understand, or to brainstorm new ideas—this process has been noted to increase metacognitive awareness (Bauer, 2014). Relating this experience to the development of passions, values, and interests, the process of metacognitively thinking about the connections being formed can help students identify what it is they value in who they are, and in which direction those values could take them. A suggestion would be to have students write out five main things they feel passionate about, and around each, branch out, outlining what that passion helps them do for themselves, and

what that passion helps them do for others. While doing this, students would also write why those concepts are connected, to identify the association. From each of these branches, students could branch out about more specific ideas to eventually lead them to outline possible areas they wish to explore personally, and areas they wish to explore professionally.

Apprentice writing. This style of writing involves analyzing a piece of writing and imitating that writing, whether it be through form, structure, style, or voice. In order for students to recognize what it is they value in writing, they must first become analytical consumers, picking apart pieces of writing to identify what interests them. In this style of writing, there are many opportunities for students to reflect on why a certain piece of writing has meaning to them, and what it is about that piece of writing that affects them. I believe that this style of writing has an important place to play, because it facilitates making associations with other pieces of writing, while identifying why they are making those connections—what is it about a specific text that spoke to them? An interesting project geared toward helping students identify their interests through writing, could involve asking students to develop a pocket book or short magazine about a theme they feel passionate about, and to include different snippets from their favorite writers to help fill the content. The teacher could then ask students to decorate their project in a way that is meaningful to both whom they are, and what they are trying to portray in their projects. On top of finding at least five more lengthy pieces of writing to build the foundation of the pocket book or magazine, the teacher would encourage including in quotes, song lyrics, poems, or any other written work that speaks to the students. This is not only a creative process of finding work that fits a theme, but also helps students

recognize why that work affects them, and how it links to the themes they feel passionate about. This project could be kept as a keepsake to look back on after graduation, which may later help students recognize an area of work they may be interested in pursuing, or future studies they may wish to explore.

Values game. This activity, inspired by a personal communication with Carly Fink (October 17, 2014), could be done twice a year, and recorded each time by the students in their class journals. The students would each be given a blank card out of a deck of 54 cards. Depending on the number of students in the class, each student would identify in themselves and write out two or three things they value—such as family, friends, music, exercise, technology, creativity, traveling, learning, communication, socializing, art, etc. The teacher would then take the deck of cards, shuffle them, and divide the deck into the amount of students in the class. Students would actively go around the room and trade cards with their classmates, depending on what they would like to exchange. Depending on the size and behavior tendencies of the class, this exchange may need to be facilitated in a structured way by the teacher, such as assigning students into groups, after which they could rotate, until all groups have interacted with each other. The goal of this activity is that, by the end, students will have evidence of the choices they made, by swapping one value for the next, clearly demonstrating what they value more at the present time in their lives. This could become an annual activity to be completed at the beginning and end of every year, illustrating the evolution of values and enabling further development of self-awareness.

Workshop Outline for Teachers

This workshop is meant to serve as a professional development activity for teachers to practice taking a lesson idea and connecting it to the development of passions and strengths, and the development of 21st century skills. In this workshop, the facilitator will help teachers recognize what needs to be highlighted in a lesson, in order to help students see the significance in what they are learning, specifically with regard to how it will help them become contributors in the evolving 21st century.

Hook. The workshop will begin with a brief introduction and video about 21st century learning. There are many to choose from on YouTube (*EF Explore America*, 2012; *Discovery Day Academy*, 2014; *OnSide Learning*, 2013), so this will be at the discretion of the person facilitating the workshop. Following the video, the workshop facilitator will ask teachers to write out how they have adapted to the present demands of education. The teachers will go into groups and discuss what they are currently doing, which will later turn into a whole class discussion. Next, teachers will be passed out four cards, on which they will be asked to write out two values and two passions. After this, the facilitator will take the deck of cards, shuffle them, and divide the cards up. Similar to the values cards activity described previously, teachers will go around the room and trade cards with their fellow teachers. Eventually, teachers will have a set of values and passions that are most suited to who they are. Once this is complete, teachers will go into groups and discuss how these values and passions have shaped what they have done with their lives, and what this implies in their teaching.

Together, the facilitator and teachers will highlight the four Cs of the 21st century. This will be done by dividing the teachers into groups, and assigning them various tasks

that require creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. The workshop facilitator can create these tasks, but some suggestions are:

- Have a group create a recipe for a specific purpose, and make sure they outline it, enlightening how the ingredients will help achieve their goal;
- Using a world map, outline the most efficient route to get from Montreal, Quebec, to Sydney, Australia, by boat. Make sure they take into consideration the current, winds, and weather, and have them explain why this is the most efficient route;
- With 20 words as options to use, write a quote that describes the future of education;
- Bringing back the deck of cards, ask the teachers to combine their cards to create a company that will solve one of the world's present problems. Participants will need to address what the problem is and why it holds importance, and how their created company could work toward facilitating positive change.

Essentially, the facilitator wants teachers working together and combining their skills to create, think critically, communicate, and collaborate. After this is complete, all groups will present their outcomes one at a time. As the groups are presenting, the facilitator, either on a Bristol board, blackboard or a smart board, depending on the technology available, will be expanding on each of the four Cs in a concept map, outlining how the respective groups were utilizing them. By the end of the presentations, there will be four concept maps on the board, each outlining how the teachers practiced using these skills.

Minds on. The following step will be to ask teachers to think about a lesson they would like to explore. With this lesson in mind, the workshop facilitator will describe one of the lessons mentioned in this resource guide, such as the creative writing lesson

plan, or the active citizenship lesson plan. Individually, teachers will be given a piece of paper with the lesson plan idea in the middle. Together with a partner, teachers will help each other work through their lessons to outline how each could be linked to career development and self-awareness. Teachers will take turns, starting from their middle point lesson idea, branching out to demonstrate how their lessons could help students develop passions, strengths, and values, and how the lessons could help students develop the four Cs of the 21st century. The workshop facilitator could encourage teachers to use a concept map, for clarity, although he or she could leave this suggestion open, to leave room for teachers to explore using their own approaches. By the end of the activity, each teacher will have a take-home example of how any lesson can be creatively worked with to help students develop awareness of passions, strengths, and values, and help them practice utilizing the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century.

Consolidation. To consolidate the workshop, the facilitator will split the class into groups, asking all partners to separate, after which teachers will go through their lessons and explain how they linked everything accordingly. This will be a time for teachers to share and inspire ideas in each other. Finally, the facilitator will ask all participants to write out one new way they are going to help students find their passions, and one new way they are going to bring skill development into their daily activities. This list will be created collaboratively and should be sent via e-mail to all participants in the workshop, as a final inspirational take-home.

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