

Career Research

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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As a teacher-librarian and career facilitator in a large high school, it is important to create multi-purpose situations that allow me to fulfill both roles simultaneously. As a career facilitator, I implement and manage career portfolios, as well as present and create documents to include in the portfolios (i.e.; goal plan worksheets for course selections, questionnaires for job shadow experiences, and behavioral interview anecdote worksheets to prepare for mock job interviews). Along with coordinating career portfolios, another major task involves managing and teaching the navigation of the school's career website, *Pursueonline* (<http://pa.pursueonline.com/>), as well as the career software, *Career Cruising* (<http://public.careercruising.com/ca/en>) to which the school subscribes. To intertwine these tasks, and, since there is no career education course available in Grade 10, Grade 11 or Grade 12, I implement an inquiry career research essay assignment in the *My Story: Talents and Gifts to Share* unit of Christian Ethics 10. This assignment could also be used in ELA A10: *The Unknown – Hopes and Fears* and ELA 20: *Anticipation – On the Threshold*.

The project begins with an explanation of my role and purpose as career facilitator - to provide an opportunity for students to have time to assess their gifts and talents, inquire about a career that interests them and then to create a word document that, once completed, can be placed into their career portfolios as evidence of the *Employability Skills 2000+* (<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx>) Fundamental Skills (Communicate, Manage Information) and Personal Management Skills (Demonstrate Positive Attitudes & Behaviors, Be Responsible, Learn Continuously). I then explain my role and purpose as teacher-librarian - to assist them in researching a career, writing a formal essay that includes a title page and a works cited page, and teaching them about plagiarism. I also indicate that they will be able to practice incorporating a person's spoken word, and the appropriate in-text citation, into the body of an essay to prepare them for when they will need to write an essay in English class and include the speech of a character to support their thesis statement.

After discussing the students' assessment checklist and rubric, the students log in to their *Career Cruising* accounts. The students then take a Matchmaker Quiz and answer questions to assess their interests and aptitudes. A matching list of careers is then generated and the students investigate these selections, as well as search for other careers that interest them. Once the students have selected a career to research, I present them with a "Career Essay Organizer" booklet that resembles a scaffolded essay. This essay includes a skeleton-form of an introductory paragraph and concluding paragraph, as well as the topic sentence and concluding sentence of each body paragraph. The students then use the information on the "At a Glance" page of the website to copy the jot notes on the screen for the body paragraphs (core tasks, working conditions, education and training, attributes and abilities, earnings). They also use the pages with interviews of people with the career to select quotations of what someone likes and dislikes about the career.

After the students have completed copying their jot notes into the "Career Essay Organizer" booklet, we discuss plagiarism and when a citation is needed. I also confess that since the assignment includes the script of an interview about someone's opinion about the best and worst aspects of a career, all students must include in-text citations for these portions of the essay. The students are then instructed about how to cite if they are a) paraphrasing the opinion, b) using the exact spoken words of fewer than four lines, or c) using the exact spoken words of four lines or more. I also inform the students that they must reword the copied jot notes of the other body paragraphs and form them into complete sentences or else that too would be plagiarism; for this reason, the students are also informed that they must hand in both their Career Essay Organizer and their final essay as the copied jot notes within the Career Essay Organizer will be compared to the completed sentences written in the final essay.

Once the students have completed typing their final essay and including their personal response in the concluding paragraph, we use *EasyBib* (<http://www.easybib.com/>) to create a works cited page. We also discuss the guidelines of a title page and create one. The students then submit the Career Essay Organizer, Career Essay Checklist (Self Assessment) and the final essay with a title page and works cited page. When this essay has been corrected, it is then placed into the student's career portfolio as an artifact reflecting an employability skill.



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Overall, this assignment has been tremendously successful both with the students and the teachers with whom I have collaborated. The students have an opportunity to receive career education instruction and to practice writing a formal essay in a non-threatening environment that provides structure so that they experience success. The teachers also find this assignment to be very useful as it allows them to incorporate other assignments into their course to reinforce the instruction of writing a formal essay, creating a works cited page and incorporating in-text citations.