

Grade Seven Unit: "Serving Canadian Communities through Careers" Ages: 11-13

Overview:

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" It's a question all students hear at one time or another. The closer they get to graduation, the more pressure students feel to have it all figured out. The very idea of a "career," though, carries with it the idea of a continuous progression or development of one's skill and understanding; a person's "career" is, in reality, really more of a lifelong *journey* than an ultimate *destination*. Of course, this is truer for some people than for others, but the pressure that students can feel at the end of Grade Twelve is really quite unfair, and can cause sometimes crippling anxiety.

So why then talk about careers already in Grade Seven? Isn't that exerting too much pressure? Not at all. On the contrary: it can free them from having to "choose" a narrowly-defined career; rather, discovering the extreme variety of careers available can be a freeing experience. It can open up possible futures that the students may have not previously imagined. As Kieran Egan states, we are only able to imagine about things that we know; consequently, it is imperative that students *know* about as many possible careers as possible as early as possible, in order to open up potential avenues of imagination and/or self-development.

Often, people treat education as a means to an end: if you complete this course of study, then you will have this job waiting for you at the end. Some believe that all education is like trade school: it equips you for a certain job. I believe that education is much more about "opening doors," about developing the mind and the ability to think critically and imaginatively about a large amount of knowledge, so that the student is ready and equipped for the widest possible variety of careers possible, rather than training for one specific job. The first is limiting, while the second is much less so. That is one goal of this unit: to foster an understanding of seemingly limitless career opportunities that exist, as well as a focussed, in-depth, detailed exploration of an unusual career of one's choosing.

Additionally, a career is often thought of in the context of one's *self-satisfaction* – how will it make *me* feel fulfilled and how it will help *me* to buy the things that I want. However, there would *be* no careers if it wasn't for the larger community and society. Ultimately, any career or job is done for both self *and* others. We are always "doing something for somebody else" even as we do it to earn money for ourselves. Occupations exist within community. No person is an island; we are interdependent and rely on each other. In order to have a strong society, we need to care for each other, also in the careers that we choose. A useful metaphor is the spider's web: we all spin our own strands (our own career), but each strand contributes to the whole web. If you disturb one strand, the whole web moves; if one strand becomes dysfunctional, the web is weakened. Another useful metaphor for society is the human body: every part, such as the eye, the ear, the hand, the internal organs, functions in different ways and has different strengths, but each part serves the *whole*. If one part does not function as it is designed to, the whole suffers. This ties in to the notion of *responsibility*. We have a responsibility to use our strengths and talents towards the wellbeing of society. Of course, we will not be satisfied in our careers if we don't enjoy them. Knowing our own interests and aptitudes is also an important thing to consider. Thinking about careers, then, involves thinking about self (our own interests, aptitudes, goals, desires, and self-fulfillment) and about others (the ideas of interdependence and service).

1. Finding my narrative: Heroic Qualities.

What heroic qualities or values are central to this topic? What is full of wonder?

The main heroic quality is the idea of **community**. This relates to BC Performance Standards, which states that the students must show "a sense of community and an interest in making the world a better place; tries to follow through on planned actions."

Images that capture the heroic quality:

- Spider's web or human body (as mentioned earlier): functioning parts construct a strong whole
- Idea of everyone contributing a piece of a puzzle to make a beautiful picture
- Idea of a link in a chain: "The chain of responsibility; don't break it"
- Image of climbing a mountain as a team (Mount Everest ascent or *Banner in the Sky* novel)

All four images include both heroic qualities of community and responsibility.

Alternative Heroic Qualities:

1. **Responsibility** (Social, Personal, Democratic): the responsibility to use our talents and cultural capital; as we mature, there should be a correlating *decreasing* of dependency and *increasing* of responsibility
2. **Altruism**: The belief in or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others (in the context of the Golden Rule as the basis for a career)
3. **Courage**: "Better by far to be good and **courageous** and bold and to make difference. Not change the world exactly, but the bit around you." It takes **courage** to go out and make a positive difference in the world.

2. Shaping the lesson or unit

2.1. Finding the story or narrative: engaging emotions and imaginations

Organizing Content into Story Form: Overall structure of unit

Life is a journey, not a destination. It's a story that's not over until our lives are. Within that story is the tale of our careers, and that tale can be told using the frame of Freytag's Pyramid. The life of our career can be compared to climbing a mountain. At this point in the students' lives, they are beginning their way up the mountain. Some may eventually make it to higher peaks than others because of differing abilities, but each will summit his or her personal peak. Each of us strives to reach our own goals, our own peaks. But we cannot reach any peak without the help of the community of hikers around us. We cannot reach our individual peak, the "height" of our careers, without the help of others in society. One thing to think about is the pros and cons of reaching one's peak earlier or later in life, or whether it really matters at what time in your life you reach the peak. Also, traveling the mountain entails hard work but it can be exhilarating as we conquer new peaks, and as our muscles get stronger. Sometimes setbacks occur, and we may regress; sometimes, for short periods of time, we may travel alone, and sometimes we will travel with others. Our challenge is to get ourselves to the highest peak *for us*, using those muscles that we have and that we have developed, but also with others' help. How high we get depends both on what strengths we have and how hard we push ourselves to our limits, but this is always done in concert with the other in community. Everyone working hard together provides the best results for everyone.

This narrative could be tied in to the Grade Seven novel we study, *Banner in the Sky*, where the protagonist, Rudi, must learn to work as a team, to rely on others, while still pushing himself to the extremes. The mountain climbers were the strongest when all were working together. And when one of their members got hurt, he was not abandoned; similarly, if someone in the "web" of society is unable to work, others pick up the slack.

Students do not yet need to know "what they are going to do," as they are still at the beginning stages of journey, and can't know what the summit will look like yet; it's still hidden beyond the rolling hills in front of us, and is still "in the clouds." The important thing for students is to keep going up, to keep looking forward, and to keep developing muscular strength and skill (including knowledge).

2.2. Finding extremes and limits:

What aspects of the topic expose extremes of experience or limits of reality?

What is most exotic, bizarre or strange about the topic?

Begin with *More* picture book: then show video of Black Friday; show video of very poor North Americans; identify purpose of careers: discussion of Maslow's hierarchy. How many of our needs can be "bought"? After looking at both extremes of wealth and poverty, mediate the middle: What are basic needs?

We will begin with an exploration of the limits and extremes of careers. From one cluster, how many careers can you list? Students will be directed to find careers that fit the following categories: pays the least/most; helps people most directly/indirectly; requires most/least physical exertion; requires most/least mental exertion; requires the least/most education; are the most/least fun and most/least thrilling; would be the most/least satisfying; are the most/least interesting and ; are the most public/private; are the most risky or dangerous/safe; are the most creative/non-creative; which careers test the limits of human experience or endurance? In addition, students could examine which would be the most useful/useless skill to have for a career or the most effective/ineffective way to make the world a better place.

[Interesting side note: According to the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS), the riskiest careers have less to do with getting shot at or jumping out of planes, and more to do with working underground or at sea.]

Students will then examine one famous Canadian, focussing on *the story of*/how they have excelled in their career/how they have done "extreme" things in their careers to help others and strengthen or serve society. They will fit their examination of them into narrative form of mountain-climb.

We will collaborate with the school library to find picture book biographies to get students started. Then we will move to the internet.

A beginning list of web links:

- Craig Keilburger: <http://www.freethechildren.com/about-us/our-story>
- A variety of Canadian heroes: <http://www.canada-heros.com/>;
- Canadian women: <http://www.heroines.ca/people/bios.html>
- Dr. Roberta Bondar: <http://www.r-go.ca/pages/bondar.htm>
- Dr. Norman Bethune:
http://www.canadaka.net/modules.php?name=Famous_Canadians&action=edit&person=108

- Farley Mowat:
http://www.canadaka.net/modules.php?name=Famous_Canadians&action=viewperson&person=405
- Inventor of Trivial Pursuit http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/bl_trivia_pursuit.htm;
- Opening a coffee shop: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/tim-horton>;
- Inventing 5-pin bowling: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_F._Ryan;
- Governor General: Michaëlle Jean: worked in battered women's shelter http://www.canada-heros.com/jean_michaelle.html;
- Coast Guard (most heroic action while on the job);
- Canadian Heroines: <http://www.heroines.ca/people/heroines.html> ;
- Peacekeeping soldiers: Romeo Dallaire:
http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Heroes/Gen_Romeo_Dallaire.html.

Students will create "information cards" about their famous Canadian, which will include important information, amazing facts, heroic quality. Students will present their cards, and if peers can make a personal connection, they get a card. Student with most cards given out wins.

2.3. Finding connections to human hopes, fears, and passions:

To what human hopes, fears, and passions does the topic connect?

The dream jobs we aspire to as children are a window into our passions and talents. Identifying and understanding those passions are key to beginning to see the path opening up before us "up the mountain," even if it isn't clear what the ultimate destination (peak) will be. One of the most important characteristics of a "dream job" is to take *pleasure* in your work. Accordingly, it will be useful for students to examine their *own* passions and talents, in order to align what brings them pleasure with the careers they explore. They will think about what they are interested in or excel at; what excites them or bores them; and what their personal strengths and weaknesses are.

Interestingly, I have found that students at this age will identify "work" as "something you *have* to do," while they define "play" as something you *want* to do. The goal of this unit is to help students realize that "work" and "play" are not binaries; they do not even need to be mediated; rather, they can overlap completely. Ideally, a career will be something you both *have* to do and completely *want* to do and take pleasure in doing.

Actually, it has been found that all you need to be happy is love (to those around you) and fulfilling work that matches one's passions and talents. A career in the context of society can provide the opportunity to meet both those needs.

In order to identify their own passions and talents, students will create a powerpoint entitled "Who am I?" which will highlight these. Then they will add slides that will show "What careers am I suited to?" Students' powerpoint presentations will loop continuously during Presentation Day. To follow the narrative of the unit, students are identifying personal strengths for "climbing the mountain" and what kinds of "peaks" they would like to climb. (What kinds of careers interest them and are suited to their strengths.)

Students will then identify *one* "Canadian" career that suits their passions and talents, and will study that career in-depth. It can be a career that fascinates them or one that is very unique or amazing or exciting. They will research education and training required and "a-day-in-the-life-of" that career; they will discover "cool facts, the best/worst thing about it, and how it serves others in society and

interconnects with other careers. They will "interview" a real or fictional person connected with that career. This information will be presented on Presentation Day, along with their powerpoint.

It is important that students find the "human interest" in their chosen career, That is, how does [your chosen career] *help* others in society? How does it strengthen society? How does it help other people live better lives? How does it help not only *you* to be the best you can be, but how is it conducive to helping *others* be the best they can be? This major theme will be examined in the context of the analogies of the spider's web and mountain climbing, and will be a prominent part of student displays.

Revolt and idealism:

Often, the most fulfilling careers are those that involve "fighting" for something or someone, trying to make the world a better place for people to live in. Those careers are the ones that tend to be the most emotionally engaging. A brief look at a few careers will demonstrate this principle: whether it's a lawyer fighting for civil rights, political figures fighting for political change, a teacher fighting to help a student overcome obstacles, farmers fighting against nature, rap singers fighting mainstream culture, those fighting for women's rights or against abortion; peacekeepers fighting against wars, medical workers fighting against sickness, or policemen fighting crime, it's the very notion of fighting against something, of pitting our personal resources against something outside of us, that is invigoration. Each person is working towards an ideal. It could be interesting for students to examine what kinds of "fighting" their chosen career entails.

2.4. Employing additional cognitive tools of Romantic understanding:

What kinds of activities might you design to deploy other tools in your students' cognitive toolkits?

Collections and hobbies: What parts of the topic can students explore in exhaustive detail?

After coming to an understanding of the extremes and limits of careers and identifying their own passions and talents, students will choose *one* career to research – one that interests them and accords with their personal aptitudes. They will become an "expert" on that career. (see previous)

Change of context: What kinds of activities could change the context in the classroom? How might drama or role-play be employed or how might students engage the body's senses in learning?

On Presentation Day, the students must dress according to their chosen career. In addition, they must be prepared to demonstrate some task related to it.

The literate eye: How could graphs, lists, flowcharts or other visual formats be employed in learning about the topic?

Students will prepare a poster board to demonstrate their in-depth knowledge about their specific career. It will include pictures, timelines, and text.

We will make a classroom bulletin board display that depicts how all careers are inter-connected – to simulate a spider's web.

The sense of wonder: How could you use that sense of wonder to draw students forward in thinking about further dimensions of the topic?

Students could ponder the amazing variety of careers that are out there, and that new ones are always being created. Students could predict what new careers will possibly be available in the future.

They could also compare what careers today were not available 100 or even 50 years ago (could compare grandparents' and parents' generations careers with contemporary ones).

Students could also be led to ponder that some people *have* no work, and that work is a *privilege* as well as a responsibility.

Embryonic tools of philosophic understanding: Consider how to frame the topic in terms of a general idea or theory? How can students' sense of agency be engaged?

Students will be encouraged to think about "What do I need to do *today* to reach my goal in the future?" and "How can I learn/show social responsibility *today* to train for acting socially responsible in the *future*?" "How do the habits I develop and choices I make today affect my future? "

2.5. Drawing on tools of previous kinds of understanding:

Somatic understanding – How might students use some of the toolkit of Somatic Understanding in learning the topic? How might their senses, emotions, humor, musicality, and so on, be deployed?

Senses: Students will be required to demonstrate one task of their career: this will involve learning through their senses

Humor: A fun way to find one's "job personality": <http://www.kidzworld.com/quiz/2815-quiz-whats-your-job-personality>

Mythic understanding – How might students use some of the toolkit of Mythic Understanding in learning the topic? How might abstract and affective binary oppositions, metaphor, vivid mental imagery, puzzles and sense of mystery, and so on, be deployed?

Rhyme, rhythm, and meter:

"Shangri-La" by the Kinks: working at a job you may not like because you have bills to pay
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4DJ9YUYshE>

"Poor People" by Alan Price: <http://www.lyricstime.com/alan-price-poor-people-lyrics.html> -

Binaries: work/play; rich/poor; short/long schooling; haves/have nots; unemployed/employed

Jokes: students must include cartoon or riddle on poster board

Metaphor and vivid mental imagery: covered in "images" section

Story: will find picture book that tells *fictional* story of Canadian career

3. Resources

Picture Books, including: *More* by I.C. Springman (to begin unit: discuss consumerism and reason for making money) What's the purpose?

Clip on Black Friday: http://www.cnn.com/video/?hpt=hp_t1#/video/bestoftv/2012/11/23/evexp-natpkg-black-friday-mashup.hln

Clip on Poverty in America: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaM6gUHEF5s>

Career Clusters Interest Survey

Careers in B.C. Science: <http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/Career-Profiles/Pages/Career-Profiles-List.aspx>

Career Exploration: <http://thefunworks.edc.org/SPTUI--FunWorks/funworks/accessible/home.php>
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

To assess aptitude and research careers (Minnesota) <http://www.iseek.org/careers/index.html>
Interests and Goal Assessment: http://breitlinks.com/careers/career_pdfs/Assessment_07.pdf (check worksheets at bottom)

<http://www.learningforlife.org/documents/Career-Exploration-Lessons-for-Sixth-and-Seventh-Grades.pdf>
<http://www.scienceworld.ca/teen#career>

Interview template:

http://www.powertolearn.com/teachers/lesson_activities/careers/CBV.125.E.CAR.R4.D1_58.pdf

http://www.powertolearn.com/teachers/lesson_activities/careers/CBV.124.S.CAR.R4.D1_58.pdf

How to Make Career Day Interesting | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/how_10068018_make-career-day-interesting.html#ixzz2CjsjLAe7

<http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/article/1296082--atkinson-series-career-education-lacking-in-canada>
(excerpt: National Occupation Classification, a federal government publication, describes 923 distinct occupations encompassing 25,000 job titles.)

4. Conclusion

How does the narrative end? How can one best bring the topic to a satisfactory closure and how can students feel this satisfaction? Alternatively, what new questions can draw students to think more deeply about the topic? How can you extend students' sense of wonder?

Although we don't know what our life story looks like until it's over, we can project forward and imagine what our "mountain climbing journey" might look like. In addition, keeping with the theme of community, we can also analyze what we can do to help *others* reach their goals and dreams. Also, we can analyze how others will need to help *us* reach our "peaks." We will realize the amazing interconnectedness of all things. The study of the wide variety of careers may engender a new sense of purpose for learning.

5. Evaluation

How can one know that the content has been learned and understood and has engaged and stimulated students' imaginations?

Evaluation of:

Cards of Famous Canadian: Contest

Presentation Day:

Students will dress according to career studied in-depth (role-play).

Students will present:

1. Bulletin board display showing all careers chosen by student interconnected – like a (spider's) web
2. Powerpoint (on display) on personal characteristics, talents, interests, and suitable careers
3. Poster board display of chosen career, which includes:
 - One "Canadian" career of choice (can be the most unique or amazing job ever) that suits interests and talents
 - Interview of one person you know or one person you read about (a hero) who does this job.
 - What are some cool facts about this career?
 - What kind of education is necessary for this career?
 - How are your passions and interests suitable for this career?
 - What kinds of things would you do in the day of the life of this career? Make a possible dayplan
 - What's the best thing about this career? The worst thing?
 - How are you serving others in society in this career?
 - What kind of "struggle" is involved in your career?
 - What characteristics do you have that may make you suitable for a career like this?
 - What do I need to do in the short term in order to achieve this career? In the long term?
 - Colorful displays to illustrate what the career accomplishes. Include color pictures, drawings and descriptions of the work involved
4. Demonstration of some task associated with career
5. Must include ONE of the following on poster board:
 - cartoon (hand-drawn or found) dealing with career
 - metaphor that pertains to your career
 - riddle that pertains to your career

Grade 7 PLOS taught:Career Development

B1 classify jobs according to career clusters (e.g., by type of industry, type of work, personal interests)

B2 identify skills that are transferable to a range of school and recreational situations (e.g., time management, teamwork, problem solving, communication, adaptability)

Language ArtsOral Language (Speaking and Listening)*Purposes (Oral Language)*

A1 use speaking and listening to interact with others

A2 use speaking to explore, express, and present a range of ideas, information, and feelings for different purposes and audiences

A3 listen critically to understand and analyse ideas and information

Strategies (Oral Language)

A4 select and use various strategies when interacting with others

A5 select and use various strategies when expressing and presenting ideas, information, and feelings

A6 select and use various strategies when listening to make and clarify meaning

Thinking (Oral Language)

A7 demonstrate enhanced vocabulary knowledge and usage

A8 use speaking and listening to respond, explain, and provide supporting evidence for their connections to texts

A9 use speaking and listening to improve and extend thinking

A10 reflect on and assess their speaking and listening

Features (Oral Language)

A11 recognize and apply the features of oral language to convey and derive meaning

A12 recognize the structures and patterns of language in oral texts

Reading and Viewing*Purposes (Reading and Viewing)*

B1 read fluently and demonstrate comprehension and interpretation of a range of grade-appropriate literary texts, featuring some complexity in theme and writing techniques

B2 read fluently and demonstrate comprehension of grade-appropriate information texts with some specialized language and some complex ideas

Strategies (Reading and Viewing)

B5 select and use various strategies before reading and viewing to develop understanding of text

B6 select and use various strategies during reading and viewing to construct, monitor, and confirm meaning

B7 select and use various strategies after reading and viewing to confirm and extend meaning

Thinking (Reading and Viewing)

B8 respond to selections they read or view

B9 read and view to improve and extend thinking

B10 reflect on and assess their reading and viewing

Writing and Representing*Purposes (Writing and Representing)*

C1 write a variety of clear, focussed personal writing for a range of purposes and audiences that demonstrates connections to personal experiences, ideas, and opinions

C2 write a variety of effective informational writing for a range of purposes and audiences that communicates ideas to inform or persuade

C4 create meaningful visual representations for a variety of purposes and audiences that communicate a personal response, information, and ideas relevant to the topic

Strategies (Writing and Representing)

C5 select and use various strategies before writing and representing

C6 select and use various strategies during writing and representing to express and refine thoughts

C7 select and use various strategies after writing and representing to improve their work

Thinking (Writing and Representing)

C8 use writing and representing to critique, express personal responses and relevant opinions, and respond to experiences and texts

C9 use writing and representing to extend thinking

C10 reflect on and assess their writing and representing

Features (Writing and Representing)

C11 use the features and conventions of language