



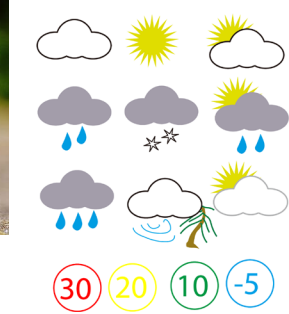
Fostering interests to increase motivation, friendships, and employment opportunities

Teresa Cogar, M.Ed, PBSF & Staci Carr, PhD

Housekeeping

- For educational and quality control, we will be recording this zoom session.
- By participating, you are consenting to being recorded.
- Before this session is shared, we will edit to remove identifying information to protect your privacy.
- The Q&A section will be removed and only be shared as an anonymous transcript

What are Special Interests



Fostering Special Interests and Motivation

- ❖ Motivation can be difficult
- ❖ Influenced from:
 - Learning history
 - Learning styles
 - success and failure
 - incentives to engage in task (internal and external)
 - Learners perspective (Is this meaningful, purposeful?)



Setting up the Environment for Success

- ❖ Incorporate learning tasks into preferred topics and activities.
 - ❖ Tasks and activities associated with success increase motivation
 - ❖ Allow the person to talk about their interest- but shape it into a conversation rather than a monologue
 - ❖ Teach how to put the special interest “on-hold” (that’s what really separates it from a hobby)
 - ❖ Allow your son/daughter/student an opportunity to “share” about their interest.



The importance of Special Interests

- ❖ Fosters motivation
- ❖ Self-image/Competence
- ❖ A way to connect with others socially
- ❖ A way to contribute to society
- ❖ Meaningful to that person



What do my special interests mean to me

- ❖ They are not arbitrary to a person with autism
- ❖ It can be a starting point of conversation, friendships, and possible careers
- ❖ They have intense focus on these interests, FOCUS is a good thing when shaped and channeled appropriately



People Making a Difference with Special Interests



Photo by Rosalie Winard

"I think using animals for food is an ethical thing to do, but we've got to do it right. We've got to give those animals a decent life and we've got to give them a painless death. We owe the animal respect."

[Temple Grandin](#)

“

The climate movement does not need any more awards. What we need is for our politicians and the people in power [to] start to listen to the current, best available science.

”

GRETA THUNBERG



A Note from Temple Grandin

"I strongly recommend that students with autism get involved in special interest clubs in some of the areas they naturally excel at. Being with people who share your interests makes socializing easier."

DR. TEMPLE GRANDIN

Meet Temple and hear her speak on autism!
Register at FHautism.com

Interests and Friendships

- ❖ Can use talent and knowledge to connect with others
- ❖ Assist with feeling competent about subject matter
- ❖ Helps with acceptance by peers instead of rejection
- ❖ Most friendships are based on common interests
- ❖ What activities are in school or the community that match (or closely relate to) your child's or student's interests?



Consider completing something like this...

Student Interests at a Glance

Student: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____



Strengths	Interests	Abilities	What makes him/her happy

Interests and Employment

- ❖ Determining what learning style matches what activities and potential jobs:
 - Visual Thinkers (photography, computer troubleshooter, landscape, web design)
 - Music/ Math Brains (engineer, music teacher, statistician, computer programmer)
 - NonVisual Thinkers or more verbal brains (copy editor, accountant, inventory control specialist)

Useful Links!

O'NET: <https://www.onetonline.org/>

“I want to be...” (My Next Move)

“Tell us what you like to do” to begin a survey. (or use the link:

<https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>)

Knowing Your Strengths: <http://bit.ly/1ekuhOU> (this is a paper pencil inventory)

CareerOneStop Training Center: <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/interest-assessment.aspx> (has English and Spanish options)

Jumpstart: This website developed by the Australian government includes workplace preference assessments based on three domains: (a) interactions, (b) environments, (c) tasks. The website provides a downloadable pdf file for each of these domains.

<https://www.jobjumpstart.gov.au/article/know-your-work-preferences>

Wait... there's more

Student Interest Survey for Career Clusters Inventory: Electronic access to paper version

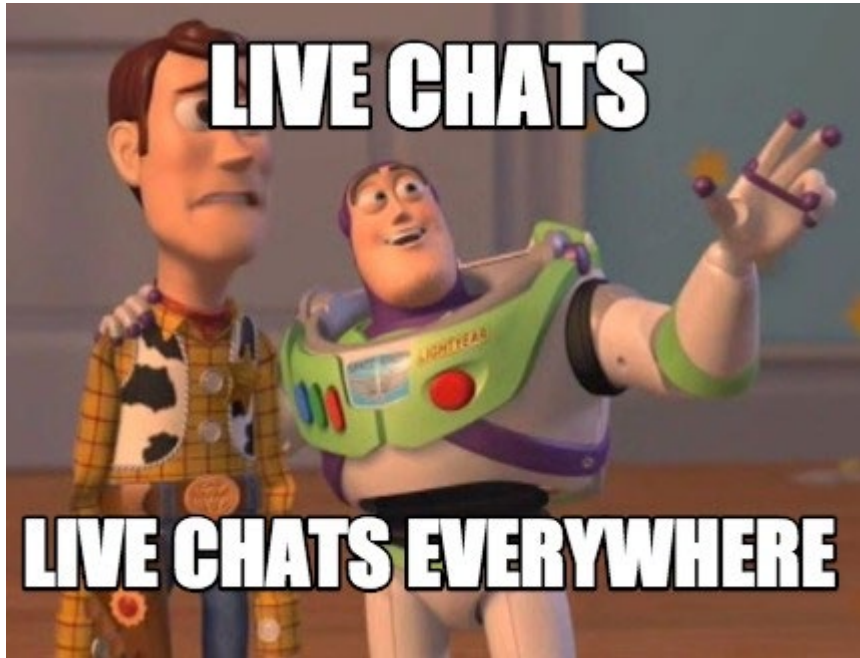
(English and Spanish): <https://careertech.org/student-interest-survey>

Virginia Department of Education Career Clusters webpages:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/career_clusters/index.shtml

Virginia Wizard: This is a Virginia specific site that links assessments with resources in Virginia.

<https://www.vawizard.org/wizard/careersAssess>



Upcoming Topics

Date	Topic	Presenter
June 26, 2020 12:00 -1:00	How can my child get organized, pay attention, and complete a task? Executive Functioning and how to support EF	Staci Carr & Josh Taylor

Registration Link:

https://vcu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlkdeusrDwsHdNcnuXggG_jt77dCaKlCqfa

Or, go to the www.vcuautismcenter.org and click on Lunch and Learn

For questions or more information

Please visit:

www.vcuautismcenter.org

Or

e-mail: autismcenter@vcu.edu