

GENERATION JOBLESS



Teacher Resource Guide



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ABOUT THIS TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Activities and projects were researched, designed, and written by Joana Angela Milano.

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Generation Jobless

Overview of *Generation Jobless*

For many high school students, earning a university degree seems to be a rational, no-questions-asked, logical next step in their lives. Most parents have a dream of their children going to university, getting an education, and establishing a satisfying and stable career. However, most university graduates soon come to a rude awakening: the real world is not exactly how they dreamed it to be. Youth unemployment is double the national average. Moreover, most university graduates resort to working at jobs that are not related to their degrees or to the skills they were trained for in university. “Generation Jobless” looks at some case studies of university graduates and their lives after earning a degree. Experts on education policies, current employment and education trends weigh in on this issue.

Goals of the Teacher Resource Guide

This teacher resource guide aims to provide teachers with classroom activities that promote critical thinking and inquiry-based learning. These activities will help students practice thinking strategies, develop habits of mind, build criteria for judgment and use critical

thinking vocabulary in responding meaningfully to a text or topic at hand. This guide also promotes the practice of literacy skills. Each activity can stand alone and can be modified according to students’ needs. The activities and guiding questions aim to bring critical conversations on equity and social justice within the educational system and beyond (i.e. being part of the workforce and society).

Recommended Grade-Levels, Subject Areas and Curriculum Links

Though the topics raised in this documentary are most relevant to senior high school students, the primary focus of the activities and exercises on this guide is to develop critical thinking and literacy skills across curricula. Teachers may decide to modify the activities to suit other grade levels as well. Suggested subject areas are the following:

- English
- Literacy Preparation
- English as a Second Language
- Equity Studies
- Social Sciences
- Career Studies



Focus Critical Thinking Questions

What is success?

*Who do you consider
“successful?”*

*What are your criteria for
success?*

What is your success story?

Enduring Understanding

“The story that young people have been told is that if you do the right things, if you go to school, get a university education, you will be rewarded with the trappings of a comfortable, middle-class life. I think in many ways, young people who are graduating now feel as though they have a whole team behind them. And if they don’t succeed, they’re letting down the team.” – Sean Lyons, Associate Professor, University of Guelph



PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: A-B-C of Success

Goals: To activate students' knowledge, assumptions and biases about the idea of success; to build initial criteria for judgment on success/failure

Focus: Literacy/Vocabulary

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Materials: Chart Paper, Coloured Markers, Tape

Instructions:

- Put students in groups of 3. Give each group a blank chart paper and some coloured markers. Instruct students to write the letters of the alphabet on the left side of the chart paper and leave the right side blank. Write the question on the board: "What comprises a good life?"
- Each group will respond to this question by coming up with answers that begin with the letter of the alphabet. The answer for each letter entry should be a noun or verb only. If students cannot think of a word that corresponds to a particular letter, they can skip it. Each letter can have a maximum of 3 different answers/words (to match the number of people in their group) if the students cannot reach a consensus on a single word.
- After 10 minutes, each group will post their chart paper filled with answers on the board for everyone to see.
- With the help of the class, circle similar answers/responses for each letter. Take note of any response that stands out.
- After the discussion, use the class response to point out the importance and influence of having a particular "success story" in mind when making life choices. The documentary then can be viewed as one kind of success story for university-bound students.

Guiding Critical Thinking Questions:

- ❖ When coming up with an answer, which places, sources, or people came to your mind? Did you have an exemplar or role model you were thinking of?
- ❖ When and how did you learn about this exemplar or role model?
- ❖ What is your role model's success story?



Activity 2: Anticipation Guide

Goal: To make students aware of their own opinion and biases about post-secondary education and youth unemployment/underemployment before they are exposed to the different viewpoints in the documentary; to initially generate opinions and overall interest in the topic.

Focus: Literacy

Estimated Time: 3 minutes (preview); discussion time afterwards may vary

Materials: Anticipation Guide handouts (To save paper, fit two guides on one page.)

Instructions:

- Before viewing the documentary, distribute the anticipation guide for students to fill in individually. These handouts will not be collected, but instruct students to keep the guide. The statements in this guide reflect the big ideas in the documentary.
- You can return to this guide as a source of discussion after watching the documentary. Below is an example of an anticipation guide (modify if necessary):

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Check the appropriate box that corresponds to your opinion about the given statement.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
The youth is the most vulnerable sector of our society.			
Young people should go to school and pursue university education to guarantee them a better life in the future.			
Every parent/guardian wants his/her child to get higher education.			
Co-op programs should be made mandatory in high school.			
Grade 9 students are capable of deciding their own stream as they enter high school.			



Guiding Critical Thinking Questions:

- ❖ Review your answers on the anticipation guide: Did the documentary change or affirm your views about these topics? How so?
- ❖ What pieces of evidence were the most compelling for you in your change of view?
- ❖ If you chose neither, what kind of information is missing (and can you do further research on) to compel you to choose a stance?

VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Character Switch

Goals: To consider and explore different sites of privilege and oppression (This activity is a modification on the popular Step Exercise used in workshops about racism.)

Focus: Social Justice and Equity: Race, Citizenship, Ability, Class

Instructions:

Estimated time: 30-45 minutes (may vary on depth of discussion)

Materials: 10 Pieces of paper with pre-assigned characterizations written on them (colour coded, preferably)

- Show the first five minutes of the documentary (0:00-5:16). It introduces Azaria Botta, a UBC graduate who works as a waitress at a Japanese restaurant in Vancouver. Azaria's story is used as an example and case study in this documentary. Some of her co-workers are also referenced.
- Before introducing the activity, review the key pieces of this clip to make sure that the whole class is on the same page.
- Each student gets a piece of paper with an assigned character description. Students should not share the information with their classmates.
- Instead of a white female, tell students to imagine and change Azaria's characterization to the one written on their respective piece of paper. Consider the following questions:
 - ❖ Do you think your character will have a better or worse chance of finding a job than Azaria? How so?



❖ What other challenges would your character face that Azaria is not facing? Conversely, what challenges would be eradicated?

- Students may write point-form responses to this question. Students with similar characterizations will be grouped together and share their responses. Facilitate a class discussion by going through each identity group.
- Suggested characterizations: (Pieces of paper may also be colour-coded for easier references during class discussion. You may also modify these identities or create your own.)
 - White Canadian male, middle class family, some unrelated work experience
 - Asian immigrant female, 5 years in Canada, ESL
 - White Canadian female, using a wheel chair, some related volunteer experience
 - Black Canadian male, middle class family, some related work experience
 - South Asian male, born in Canada, some unrelated work experience
 - Asian male, born in Canada, related work experience, middle class family

Note that these characterizations are all hypothetical but assumed to be in the same situation as Azaria: a university graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Be mindful of the degree of sensitivity required for this activity. Knowing your students well and having a good rapport with them will help in managing and encouraging a productive discussion about equity and social justice.

Activity 2: Place Mat

Goal: To divide the documentary into smaller chunks (acts) and give students ample time to gather thoughts, reflect on how the material relates to them, and then share their ideas with a smaller group.

Focus: Literacy (Brainstorming, Reflection, and Finding Connections)

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

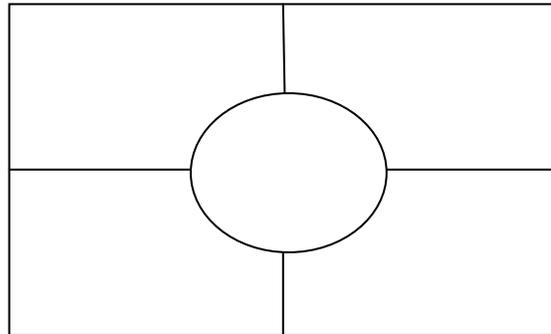
Materials: Chart paper and coloured markers

Instructions:

- Students must have a pen and paper ready for taking notes while watching the documentary. They should write down anything that catches their attention in the documentary or any piece of information that is unclear for them. Remind students that this is not a quiz: they do not need to take note of every single statistic or name.



- The documentary is divided into four acts. At the end of each act (watch for commercial cue from the host), stop the documentary to set up for the Place Mat activity.
- Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Students should be sitting in a smaller circle with the chart paper in their midst.
- Provide each group with one chart paper on which you have pre-drawn the diagram below. (Alternative listening practice: Leave the chart paper blank. Describe the diagram, and allow the students to draw the image themselves.)



- Each student gets a corner of the chart paper where in they will quietly write their thoughts about the section of the documentary shown to the class. Students are encouraged to fill in as much as space as possible. Drawings/illustrations should be allowed.
- After 5-10 minutes of individual writing, the group comes together. Each student shares and discusses their thought corner. The rest of the group listens and takes note of any similarity of thoughts they share with their classmates. Any similarities, overlap of information, overarching themes and questions they found should be recorded on the inner circle.
- Each group shares their inner circle information with the whole class. You can keep doing this activity for each act of the documentary.

Activity 3: SWBS (Somebody Wanted But So)

Goal: To establish a pattern of consequences from the different case studies presented in the documentary

Focus: Literacy (Summarizing, Finding Patterns)

Estimated time: 15 minutes but could vary

Materials: Pen and paper



Instructions:

- Before showing the documentary, demonstrate the process of summarizing without telling the students what you are doing. For example, summarize a recent movie, tv show, or news item you have seen. Elicit responses from the class. Take note if the students give minimal (or complete lack of) response.
- After a casual discussion, explain the importance of a good summary: it should give the audience a good amount of information to start an engaging conversation. Remind students that summarizing information is a skill that happens on a daily basis with your friends and co-workers.
- The students will do the same as they watch a documentary. They will create a SWBS table. Draw this on the board as an example:

Somebody	Wanted	But	So

- The documentary uses a number of individual case studies to support its arguments. As students watch, they will fill in this table with the person's name ("Somebody"), this person's plans or motivations ("Wanted"), conflict/challenge ("But"), and the outcome ("So"). You may decide to do the first case study (Azaria Botta) with the students as an example.
- After watching the documentary, discuss students' SWBS entries. De-emphasize the amount of information written by a student. Explain that a good summary provides enough information to establish an important pattern.

Guiding Critical Thinking Questions:

- ❖ Do the "Wanted" and "So" columns reveal a pattern of outcomes? What is the pattern?
- ❖ The "Wanted" and "So" columns should reflect the expected career and actual employment that these university grads have/had. What is the difference between the jobs on these two columns?
- ❖ The documentary talks about low-skilled jobs that university grads find themselves in upon unsuccessful search for a career: "A Canadian policy research networks report estimates that one in three college and university grads between the ages of 25 and 29 end up in low-skilled



jobs.” Azaria Botta also refers to the service industry as a trap: “The service industry is always referred to as a trap because the money that you make there is comparable to a really good job. It’s a dead end, serving has no future, but you get kind of stuck on the road.” What is “skill” and how do we measure it? What are the criteria for identifying a particular job “high skilled” or “low skilled”?

- ❖ The documentary offers a number of possible solutions to the problem of youth unemployment/underemployment (e.g. early streaming, co-op education, practical training, etc). It also identifies key players that shape this problem: government, schools, and employers. Do you think these key players are addressing the problem or neglecting it? Why?
- ❖ Are there voices missing from this dialogue? You can show these CBC videos to explore more voices weighing in on the topic:
 - News Clip: “Youth Unemployment” by CBC News (<http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/Toronto/ID/2409169550/>)
 - TV Episode: “Youth Unemployment” by CBC The National (http://www.cbc.ca/thenational/content/analysis/thebottomline/youth_unemployment.html)
- ❖ If you could add a next column to the table, what would be your title heading and what information should it contain?

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Formal Class Debate: Is Switzerland’s approach to streaming students better than ours?

Goal: To give students an opportunity to use their experiences as a source of knowledge and explore possible solutions; to practice expressing one’s informed/revised opinion; to negotiate stance based on context and available information

Focus: Literacy (listening, speaking, representing, forming and revising opinions) and Critical Thinking

Estimated Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials: Blank coloured pieces of paper (two colours), box or bag, timer, buzzer or any source of buzzer sound to signal stop



Instructions:

- Before the start of class or watching the documentary, students will draw a piece of paper from a bag. The paper will be one of the two colours and will determine their side of the debate.
- After watching the documentary, write this quote from the documentary on the board or PowerPoint slide: “The reason [our high school students are more successful at finding satisfying employment] is because we stream them already before post-secondary education into different types of education.” – Dr. Stefan C. Wolter (Swiss Advisor)
- The documentary offers Switzerland as a sample solution to youth unemployment/underemployment. Review Switzerland’s secondary school system as a class and how it differs from our school system.
- Post the debate question: Is Switzerland’s approach to streaming better than ours?
- Divide the class according to the colour they picked from the bag earlier. Students will sit according to their side.
- Give both sides 10 minutes to brainstorm their main points for argument with their team members. Each team must have 5 points to offer and assign one speaker to explain each point (You can decide the number of points based on class size).
- Round 1 (Presentation): Each team gets 10 minutes to present their arguments: two minutes for each speaker/point. The other team will listen respectfully and take notes. The affirmative team goes first, then the negative team presents their arguments.
- Round 2 (Rebuttal): Each team reconvenes for another 5 minutes to discuss how to refute the other team’s arguments. A different set of speakers must be chosen to present each point. The negative side goes first, followed by the affirmative. Each speaker gets 2 minutes to explain their rebuttal.
- Round 3 (Final comments): For the last time, the teams come together for 3 minutes to gather their final thoughts. Elect a different speaker to conclude the team’s stand on the issue. The final speaker gets 5 minutes to deliver his/her team’s final thoughts. The affirmative goes first, then followed by the negative.
- Ground rules: Nobody is allowed to speak while an assigned speaker has the stand. Each valid argument and rebuttal will gain one point (record scores on the board). For every time a member fails to follow the rules, one point will be taken away. Every part of the debate will be timed. A winner will be declared based on the points.



Accompanying Homework: Writing an Informed Opinion Paragraph

- Read this related CBC article (in-class or make copies to take home): <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/academic-streaming-still-an-issue-says-education-expert-1.2548889>. Listen to this podcast exploring the same issue (in-class, students will take notes): <http://www.cbc.ca/ottawamorning/columnists/2014/02/26/streaming-grade-eight-students/#>.
- Write a paragraph stating your opinion about academic streaming in high school: Is streaming helpful for students in making more informed career decisions? In this assignment, students get to make their own choice on the matter (unlike the assigned positions in the debate). This is a suggested list of what this opinion paragraph may contain. Modify, if needed.
 - A clear statement of your opinion (Respond to the question directly)
 - At least one reference to the documentary
 - At least one reference to the article and/or the podcast
 - At least two personal reasons for your choice
 - One area of this topic that you are still unsure of and that you would like to know more to give you an even more informed stance in the future.

After collecting homework, have a discussion with students about the process of having and forming an opinion before and after watching the documentary, before and after hearing everyone's comments, and being assigned and being free to choose your position on the issue. How did it feel having to adjust, even slightly, your initial opinions? What can make us change our minds or affirm our stance?

Post-Viewing Activity 2: The Be Inspired Project x Gallery Walk

Goal: This project will allow the students to look at and critically analyze their sources of inspiration, the people around them who consciously or unconsciously influence them in building their identity and success story.

Focus: Literacy (Consolidation of information, Personal reflection, Metacognition, Critical analysis)

Evaluation: A creative student output in the form of a poster/collage or video

Instructions:

- After watching the documentary, allow students to explore the concept of "success story." The university grads who were interviewed for this documentary held a particular success story in



their minds. What was their success story? What are some popular success stories and who started them?

- The purpose of any success story is to inspire others. Can you think of other effects/consequences of having and upholding a success story? What are some advantages and disadvantages of “looking up to someone” or having a success story as you embark on adulthood?
- This is an individual project where students will choose 5 sources of inspiration or success stories that have influenced their lives thus far. These sources can be specific individuals, groups of individuals, organizations, sports teams, fictional characters, ideologies, philosophies, etc.
- Students will create one entry for each source of inspiration. Each entry will have a visual (photo or video clip), a short summary describing who/what the inspiration is, an explanation of how they were exposed and continue to be engaged by this inspiration and a reflection of how the inspiration has contributed to their own definition of success and how they see themselves in the future.
- The last entry of this project is the students’ own and more personalized success story which will be an amalgamation of these 5 sources and other personal experiences they may have had. This entry should also include an action plan that outlines the student’s path to their own success story. It will also help to include anticipated roadblocks and uncertainties along the way.
- Dedicate a full or half a period for the whole class to have a gallery walk presentation of their work. Put up students’ posters/collages, or continuously play their videos as their classmates walk around and see what the class has accomplished. Encourage students to ask each other questions and give constructive comments about each other’s work.
- Assessment and Evaluation. This project may work as an Independent Study Unit for junior and senior students. You may decide to have a rubric or checklist for evaluating the project. Because this project has a more personal approach to it (i.e. students are considering their own future careers), assessment of the process (the different stages of this assignment) should be valued equally or slightly more than the output.



FINAL NOTES

Activities and projects were researched, designed, and written by Joana Angela Milano.

Literacy-based activities (A-B-C of Success and SWBS-Somebody Wanted But So) found in this resource were adapted and modified from *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches Language/English, Grades 7-9*, a resource distributed in a Curriculum and Instruction course at OISE, University of Toronto.

The Character Switch Activity is based on a popular workshop exercise on exploring privilege and oppression. See a more detailed description of one version of the activity here:

<https://people.creighton.edu/~idc24708/Genes/Diversity/Privilege%20Exercise.htm>

