Visual Banner and Personal Slogan Lesson Plan

This lesson helps students connect the professional skills they are developing in their courses with their lived experiences beyond the classroom. This exercise encourages students to create a personalized banner (image at the top of their ePortfolio homepage) and statements to reflect their skills development in multiple areas of their lives. It can also cultivate students' confidence by helping them identify individual areas of mastery.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Students develop visual literacy skills in relation to the professional genre of visual communication
- Students are better able to assess their skills development across the various areas of their lives
- Students are more confident in their ability to recognize and communicate their skill sets to potential employers based on identified levels of mastery
- Students develop a more dynamic and holistic ePortfolio
- Students are better able to brand themselves

Activity: Brainstorming/Think-pair-share/Alignment assessment

1. Students will begin brainstorming a list of activities they participate in, or have participated in, in the last two or three years. They are to generate as large a list as possible. Students can be given 10 minutes to generate this list.
2. Ask students to pair with another student and share the content of their list. Encourage them to talk about what they find most interesting.
3. Provide students with a list of professional skills and behaviours. Ask them to identify activities from their list that have cross-over with professional skills. For example, if a student is a rock climber, they use initiative, problem solving, decision making, and they take calculated risks to reach their goals.
4. Once students have narrowed their list down to 3 activities/interests/hobbies, ask them to consider the way they might convey one of these activities to others in the context of professional skills. Have them list all the associated skills they can think of (if they're getting stuck, have them pair up again and share ideas).
5. Next have students start brainstorming possible personal statements. The statements should be pithy, memorable, and offer insight into who the student is: the personal, professional, and academic areas of their lives. For example, a rock climber might say: "I am always pushing myself to reach the next level," or "I meet, exceed, and set new goals," or "I'm ambitious and willing to take calculated risks." Depending on the field of study one of these statements might be more or less appropriate. Students can further brainstorm with peers about possible statements.

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Next Steps:

1. Students need to create, or curate, an image that is appropriate for a professional document but which also draws on imagery from their areas of interest/personal pursuits:

    The image should:

    ● be crisp, clear, and of high resolution
    ● effectively use directionality (according to the cultural context the student hopes to work within). For example, a student who wants to work in Hong Kong's fast paced financial industry may select an image that has literal or figurative movement from right to left. A student looking to work in NY might choose an image that points from left to right. Students can assess this according to the way text is read and the direction of the future (culturally speaking). In dominant North American culture, the future faces to the right.
    ● The image should clearly identify the author of the eportfolio. Team photographs are not advisable.
    ● The image should convey accomplishment or actions taken towards a goal. For example, if the student is a rock climber… reaching the summit and looking out over the landscape might be ideal. If they are a striker (soccer), the image may be an action shot of a soccer net from a dramatic angle to illustrate the desire to succeed and push one's limits. If they are competitive figure skaters, a simple image of the student's skates on a frozen outdoor pond could work well to suggest not only the drive and ambition that comes with this sport, but also the ability to balance work and life and take joy in the pursuit of the skill itself.
    ● Images should not show any habit that can be perceived as unprofessional (use the grandmother test - would grandma proudly display this photo in her home?).

2. After selecting an image that works well and that helps round out their dynamic presentation of professional skills, students need to spend time working on their personal statement.

    Personal Statements should:

    ● be pithy and memorable
    ● be unambiguous.
    ● be grammatically correct.
    ● create a bridge between the visual content of the banner and the articulation of skills found in the e-portfolio.

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