



INSPIRING GIRLS
TO COMMIT TO A
LIFELONG
JOURNEY OF
PERSONAL
GROWTH...ONLINE!

NCGS 2017 CONFERENCE



thinkwithheart
A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

EXPANDING OUR MINDS. ENGAGING OUR HEARTS.



"I gained important life lessons and had a chance to get a clearer sense of defining my true self."

PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

- The purposes of this session are to: 1) encourage the use of curriculum designed specifically to develop “non-IQ” or “soft-skills,” and 2) promote online learning. We will share our experience in:



think

- **Creating and facilitating courses for high school girls that are designed to develop “non-IQ” skills** (empathy, self-awareness, resilience, etc.).
- Using an online learning venue to **engage more introverted students.**
- Leveraging the power of **peer-to-peer learning** where the role of a teacher is guiding learning as a “coach.”

BACKGROUND: WHO WE ARE

- What is Think With Heart: A newly formed 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization inspired by a successful program piloted at Emma Willard School.
- What we do: Think with Heart designs and offers online courses through which high school girls gain valuable knowledge from experts in the social sciences in the following areas:
 - enhancing connections with others,
 - growing capacity for empathy,
 - discovering personal preferences for processing information and interacting with the world,
 - building on "signature strengths,"
 - deepening self-confidence,
 - monitoring and managing emotions, and
 - building resilience.
- Think With Heart's long-term goals: 1) Establish an online community supporting girls who are committed to growth in mind and heart, and 2) Provide girls access to resources and courses offerings in support of ongoing social and emotional learning.
- 2017-18 services/offerings: A 3-part, 30-week foundation "CORE" course and two 4-week workshops (Compassion and Positive Psychology).



VALUE OF ONLINE

- **Scheduling Flexibility** – Because the material is accessible anytime and from anywhere, girls can spend time completing assignments and sharing ideas with peers when their schedules allow (the courses are designed to be less time-consuming than other classes - 1-3 hours/week).
- **Alternative Learning Venue** – With more communication moving to digital platforms, learning to communicate online with empathy and consideration of others' viewpoint is increasingly important. Also, many students, especially the more introverted types, prefer to take time to process the rich course content – delivered by the experts themselves – before sharing their thoughts and feelings with others.
- **Preparation for College** - Online courses in higher education are becoming more common. According to a 2017 report, 30% of all students in higher education are now taking at least one online course.
- **Reflective Writing Practice** - Reflective writing challenges us in ways other forms of writing do not. Through reflective thinking and writing, girls integrate new knowledge, clarify their thoughts, draw connections, test their assumptions, and personalize their learning experiences.
- **Learning Effectiveness**- Research supports the effectiveness of online learning. As is the case with face-to-face classrooms, there is not just one way to facilitate learning in an online venue. There are a variety of ways to have a strong teacher presence and lively student engagement with content and one another in “virtual classrooms.”

The online learning venue of Think with Heart is not meant to replace important and valuable face-to-face learning experiences in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Rather, the online curriculum complements the core academic program and other school activities through offering co-curricular, non-traditional courses that are specifically designed to enrich face-to-face interactions.

BIG PICTURE, INITIAL GOALS FOR PILOT PROGRAM

- **Create an intellectually and emotionally engaging curriculum.**
- Offer girls courses that can be **completed alongside a traditional course load.**
- **Inspire curiosity** about “non-IQ skills” such as listening, empathy, self-awareness and resilience.
- Introduce girls to the growing body of research supporting the value of “non-IQ skills” (and that these skills can be learned) so that **girls will be motivated to take an active role in their own personal development.**
- **Give students experience in online learning.**
- **Offer an alternative learning venue** (from the traditional classroom) to girls who prefer to process ideas quietly and organize their thoughts before they share them with others.
- Promote **higher order thinking skills.**
- Create a learning community based on the “*Community of Inquiry*” framework:
 - Create a “climate of trust.”
 - Provide rich content while making learning activities fun and relevant.
 - Encourage girls to co-create their own learning.
 - Practice empathy and respectful perspective-taking in an online setting.

ELEMENTS OF “CORE” COURSE

CORE is a three-section, 30-week foundation course offered to 9th, 10th and 11th grade girls. Think with Heart also offers shorter (4 weeks) “workshops” during which girls delve more deeply into topics explored in the CORE course.

Elements of CORE:

Communication
and Connection

Orientation in Self-
Awareness

Resilience and
Adaptability

Emotional
Intelligence

Section I - Connectology: *An Exploration of Human Connection*

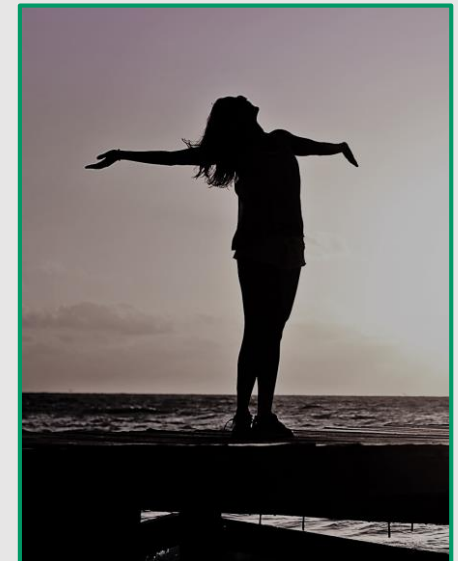
Connectology exposes girls to the ingredients of effective communication and relationship-building, delving into the many factors that influence how well we connect with one another, what drives us to connect, and why deepening our connections is important. Connectology emphasizes active listening and empathy, key components of effective and meaningful communication. The course also includes learning about tools to improve explanation skills, and it provides introductions to critical thinking and current brain research that supports our inherent desire to connect.

Section II - Self-Discovery and “EQ”: *An Orientation to Self-Awareness Training and Emotional Intelligence*

Self-Discovery and EQ, the second section of CORE, connects self-awareness to a better understanding of others. Self-Discovery and EQ enables girls to identify and build on their individual strengths and to recognize and appreciate differences in themselves and in others, thus building a foundation of knowledge of emotional intelligence.

Section III - Resilience: *An Examination of Coping with Challenges and Persevering with Resilience*

Resilience builds on Connectology and Self-Discovery and EQ, encouraging self-reliance and resilience with a focus on responding to and managing both everyday challenges and significant hardships. Students examine strategies for increasing resilience, explore self-care techniques to cultivate general well-being, and deepen their learning about empathic communication.



CORE: COURSE OBJECTIVES

Connectology: Course Objectives

- Describe the importance of effective communication and its central relationship with human connection.
- Discuss the relational process of human communication based on a transactional (vs. linear) view.
- Expand and strengthen listening/decoding and expressing/encoding skills.
- Identify common cognitive biases and prejudgments and practice self-monitoring.
- Discover the connection of empathy to both listening/decoding and expressing/encoding.
- Explore brain research relating to enhancing human connections (empathy, neural coupling, storytelling, etc.).
- Construct a personalized meaning of human “connection.”



Self-Discovery & EQ: Course Objectives

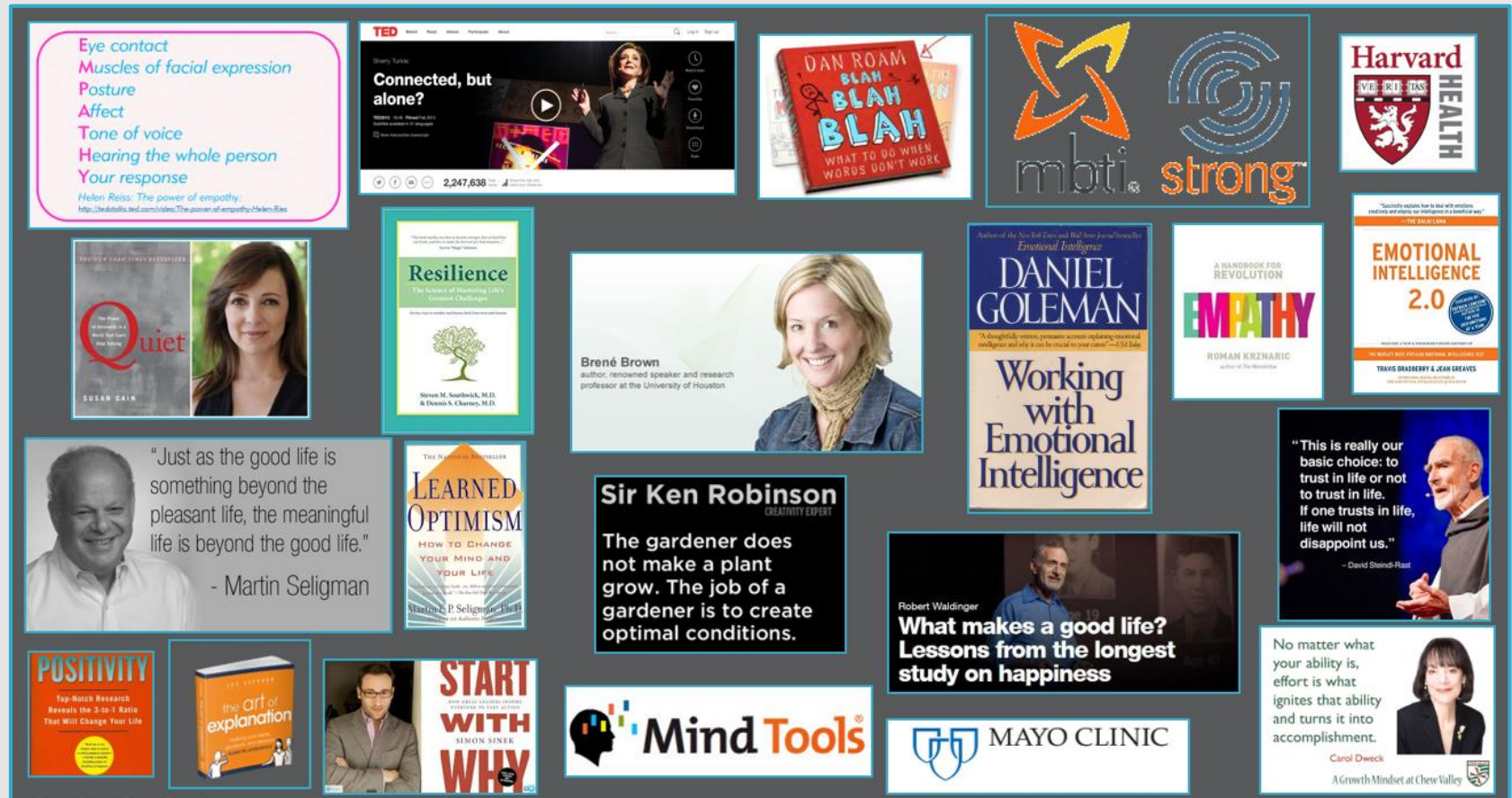
- Identify well-researched self-assessment tools and express, through written reflection, their role in enhancing self-awareness.
- Demonstrate, through thoughtful participation in forum discussion, an understanding of one's own personality, interests and values, as well as assess one's effect on others.
- Building on the prerequisite *Connectology* course, relate the process of gaining self-knowledge to a growing understanding of empathy.
- Construct a personalized definition of one's “emotionally intelligent” self.

Resilience: Course Objectives

- Recognize and describe human resilience.
- Identify a variety of forms of hardships and stressors, and explore human responses to hardships and loss.
- Describe physiological responses to stress and relate stress responses to human behavior and actions.
- Explore several factors that contribute to strengthening resilience and relate them to one's own life.
- Create personal goals for building and nurturing resilience.



SNAPSHOT OF RESOURCES

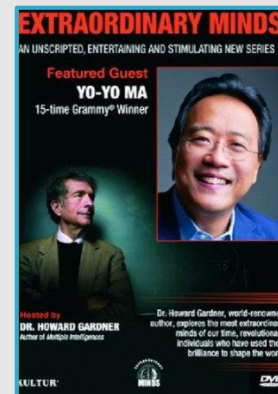
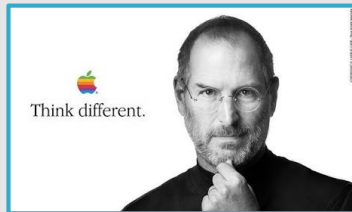


The CORE curriculum is intellectually rich, drawing content from a wide range of social science experts, including research from the flourishing field of Positive Psychology.

OTHER SOURCES FOR CONTENT AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning activities are fun and relevant to the girls.

In addition to weekly readings, girls are asked to watch at least one video (less than 20 minutes) each week. Examples of videos include TED talks, ESPN-produced stories about resilience or demonstrations of empathy, clips from news shows, interviews, movie clips and advertisements.



KEY POINTS: WHAT WE'VE OBSERVED SO FAR



- High school girls are naturally motivated to learn.
- Girls understand that self-development is important and is an ongoing journey.
- For most girls, CORE was their first online learning experience. They did not seem to have difficulty transitioning from a traditional classroom to online.
- The online format is proving to be especially valuable to the more introverted girls.
- The credit/no-credit structure allows the focus to be on learning rather than on grades, and the girls consistently reported that they appreciated that format.
- Quality individual feedback from the facilitator/coach is essential and is time-intensive.
- Girls' unique perspectives enhanced the learning experience for all. The girls seemed to feel empowered by this.
- Girls reported that expanding course participation to include girls from multiple schools might enrich their experience.

CONTINUED LEARNING: AREAS TO REFINE

- **Assessment**: Assessment of “soft skills” is challenging but doable. Continue researching assessment methods. Add more summative assessments, add variety to formative assessments, and formalize rubrics (examples of rubrics on following pages). Improve critical feedback.
- **Alignment**: Alignment of program objectives, course objectives and learning objectives should be continually evaluated – alignment is key to an effective course design.
- **Institutional Support**: Ensure institution(s) participating in CORE or Workshop courses support online learning and recognize its strategic value.
- **Technology Tools**: Test and evaluate additional tools that support learning objectives and meet criteria for user-friendliness and usability. Incorporate more tools to enhance and “humanize” the online learning experience. Consider synchronous learning component(s).
- **ADA/Accessibility**: Gain professional development to better evaluate whether all students are supported appropriately and thoroughly.
- **Content**: Evaluate content to ensure it is up to date and connecting with the girls.

TESTIMONIALS

"Prior to this course, I was blissfully unaware of how hard it truly is to establish meaningful connections with people. I learned that relationships are not an easy thing to create, nor are they something that happen on their own. It is something that requires both a lot of time and effort. It also requires that both people be able to listen, to truly listen, not only each other, but to their emotions as well. I also realized that it is something that everyone yearns for. The desire to be listened to, to be cared for, burns inside the hearts of each and every person, and that is something that I have slowly began to realize. I was unaware of how important it was to consider people's true needs and unaware of how to feel empathy or be empathetic. However, I emerged from this course with a new understanding of the way relationships work and the significance of taking people's emotions and feelings into consideration."

- *Connectology Student*

"I really liked the ties between connecting and neuroscience, such as with mirror neurons and neural coupling. I also found the 'curse of knowledge' to be extremely interesting, because it was something I noticed in my life but didn't acknowledge as such a large phenomenon. This was really the case with the course in general though, because it was very interesting to formally learn about things you do and use every day, but never knew there was a name for them or specific purposes."

- *Connectology Student*



"I definitely learned a lot from the notes and the videos. In particular, I liked the ted talk about the 75-year long study. I also enjoyed the week where we discussed the different types of loss. That week I really felt like I learned something that I will think about and draw from in the future."

- *Resilience Student*

"I had a lot of fun, and I'll miss reading the notes each week and watching the interesting, heartfelt videos!"

- *Resilience Student*

"It was a fun course, I learned a lot of things that I plan to apply to my life. It was interesting to learn about how important it is to learn about your personality and EQ because they are so important when it comes to your relationships, your performance at work or school, and your own happiness and wellbeing."

- *Self-Discovery & EQ Student*

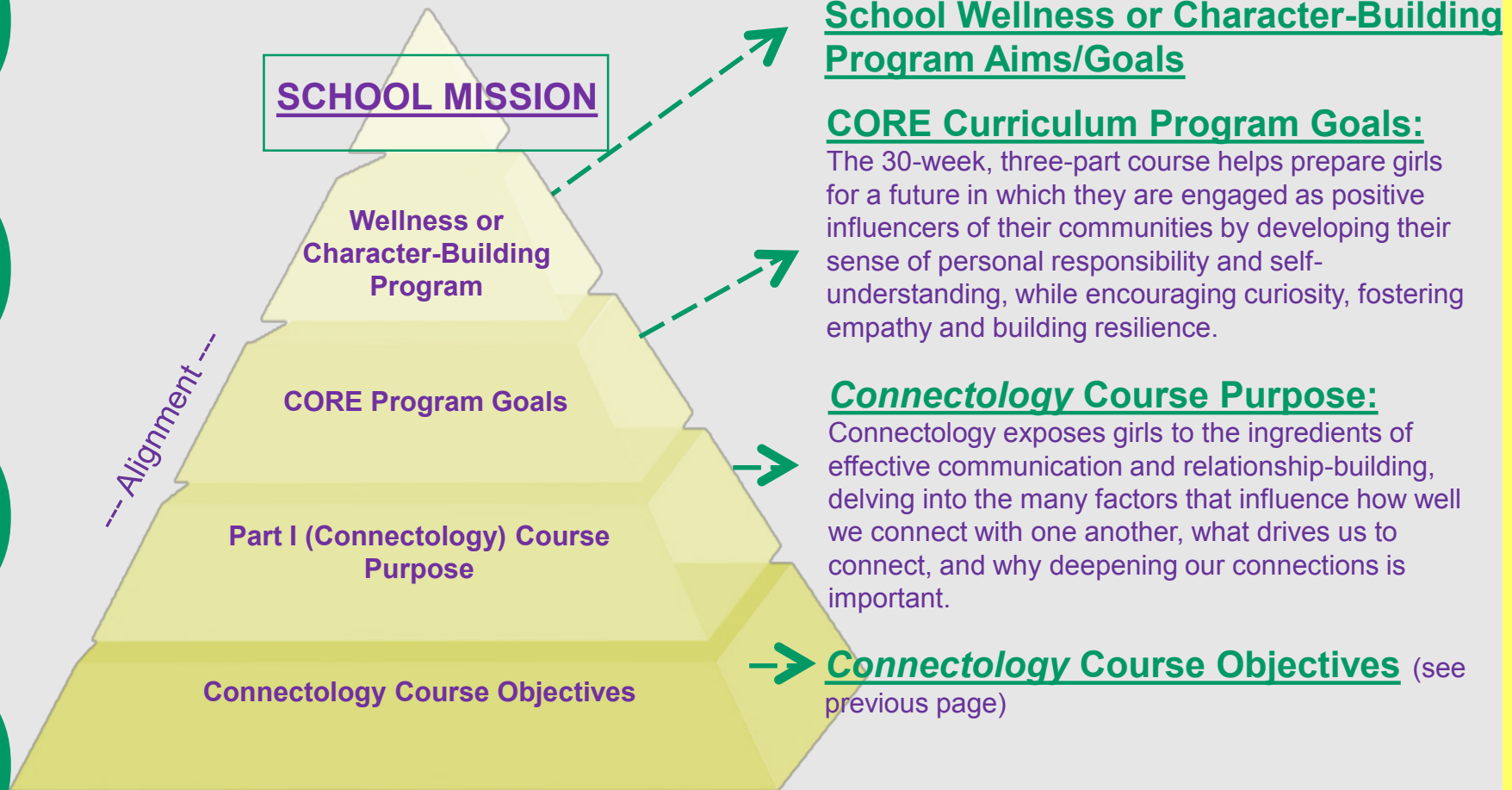
My favorite thing about the course was... "When we looked at our personality preferences in terms of studying and learning. That is a large and important part of our lives right now and it was fun to learn about."

- *Self Discovery & EQ Student*

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consisting of three parallel, wavy vertical lines. The outermost line is light gray, the middle line is bright yellow, and the innermost line is a slightly darker shade of gray. These lines create a stylized, organic shape that resembles a splash or a modern letter 'C'.

COURSE DESIGN ELEMENTS & SUPPORTING SLIDES

COURSE PURPOSE, ALIGNMENT AND DESIGN ELEMENTS



EXAMPLE – FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- The rubric shown here is shared as a guideline/criteria list for a “**full credit**” discussion posts – initial responses and response posts to classmates.
- This rubric was used as a guide for the pilot program at Emma Willard School.
- A more comprehensive rubric includes specifics for receiving 2 points, 1 point or 0 points as well as examples of “full credit” posts (the point system will be used in upcoming sessions).

Discussion Posts: Criteria for Full Credit Posts	
Initial Post:	
Timeliness:	Post is completed by the deadline (Wednesdays at 10:00 EST unless otherwise noted).
Length:	Post meets or exceeds minimum word length (typically 150-200 words).
Relevance:	Post is on-point, aligned with forum question/related to weekly topic.
Quality:	Post gives indication that assignments (readings, videos) were completed and is reflective and thoughtful. Post includes personal examples, and/or uses metaphors, analogies, a story, etc. to demonstrate understanding (or an effort to understand).
Contribution to Learning Community:	Post exhibits creativity, thoughtfulness and respect for differences in opinion/perspective. Post encourages further discussion on the topic.
Response Post:	
Timeliness:	Post is completed by the deadline (Fridays at 10:00 EST unless otherwise noted).
Length:	While there is no minimum word length required, post includes a substantial response.
Thoughtfulness and “Listening”:	Post indicates a reflective and thoughtful effort to understand the other(s)’ point of view (includes “active listening”, expression of empathy/desire to understand, etc.).
Contribution to the Learning Community:	Post demonstrates respect for differences in opinion/perspective and encourages a variety of points of view. If a disagreeing statement is made, it is done so respectfully and in a way that extends discussion.

EXAMPLE – SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- The rubric shown here relates to a **5-part synthesis project, a “Self-Discovery Sketch.”**
- Students complete (and submit) specific parts throughout the Self-Discovery and EQ course (parts are due during weeks 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10). Feedback is given after each part is submitted, and students have the opportunity to revise their Sketch before Week 10.
- At the end of the course (Week 10), students add a reflection to their “Sketch” and submit their final project.

Self-Discovery Sketch Project: Criteria for Full Credit Sketch		
	Accepted for Credit	Needs Revision
Part I: Personality (Due during Week 5)	Part I includes identification of dominant MBTI preferences and a reflective statement summarizing key insights gained from the study of personality (with special attention given to communication style).	It is unclear what dominant MBTI preferences are or a reflective statement is missing from Part I.
Part II: Interests (Due during Week 6)	Part II includes identification of dominant Holland Code types and a reflective statement about deepening the exploration of interests in preparation for college.	It is unclear what dominant Holland Code preferences are or a reflective statement is missing from Part II.
Part III: Values (Due during Week 7)	Part III includes identification of 3-5 “core” values and a reflective statement about how values relate to learning about personality and personal interests as well as to decision-making.	3-5 core values are not listed or are unclear or a reflective statement is missing from Part III.
Part IV: Attributes of an “Emotionally Intelligent” Self (Due during Week 9)	An identification of 7-10 attributes of one’s “emotionally intelligent” self and a reflective statement about how to continue the growth/learning process beyond the course.	7-10 attributes of an emotionally intelligent self are not listed or are unclear or a reflective statement is missing from Part IV.
Part V: Reflection on Exercise and Course: Identify at least two areas or themes from your Sketch that you will carry forward in your personal or school/work life. Include any “aha moments” and examples of how you will use what you have learned in this course.	Reflection includes 150-200 words, identification of at least two areas or themes from the Self-Discovery Sketch exercise (or whole course), and a description of how to incorporate learning into personal, school or work life.	Reflection does not meet minimum word criteria, does not include two themes from the Self-Discovery Sketch exercise (or whole course) does not include a description of how the learning will be incorporated into school or work life.

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

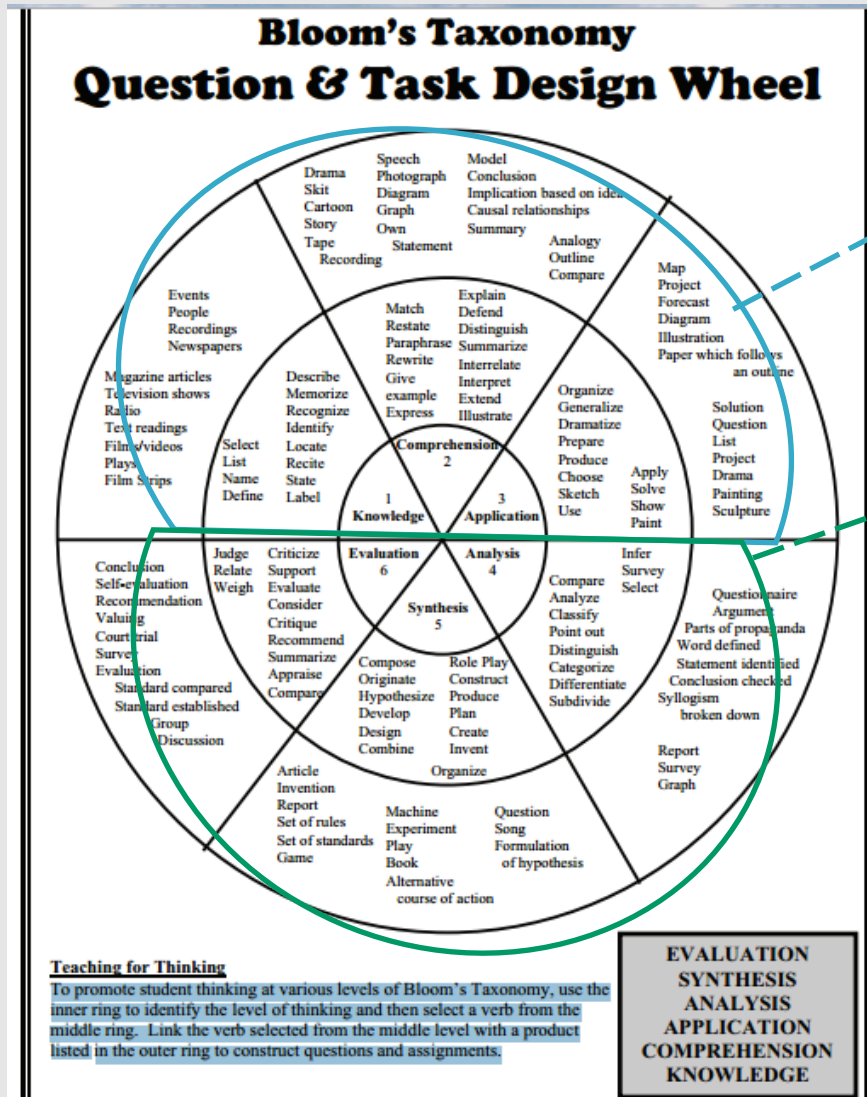
There are numerous technology tools available that can enhance the learning experience, and many of them are free to use!

Examples of tools you may want to check out are:

- **Video and/or screen recording software:** Youtube, Camtasia, Oovoo, Jing, Screencast-o-matic, Snagit
- **Video tools to add animation or fun:** Powtoon, EduCanon, Tellagami, Voki, Animoto, Storybird
- **Word cloud/word clusters:** Tagul
- **Screencasting/Whiteboard Tool:** Explain Everything
- **Soundtools:** Soundcloud

For more suggestions for enhancing learning, please check out the “**Five-Minute Film Festival: 6 Interactive Video Tools for Engaging Learners**” on edutopia’s website: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/film-festival-interactive-video-tools-resources>. The site page also includes reviews and guides of interactive technology tools as well as sources and ideas for using videos in the classroom.

USING BLOOM'S TAXONOMY TO ENCOURAGE HIGHER ORDER THINKING



Weekly notes, reading pieces and thinking prompts are designed to provide foundational knowledge.

Forum discussion questions and synthesis assignments are designed to encourage higher order thinking.

We have found it helpful to use Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide when forming weekly learning objectives, organizing content and creating discussion questions.

“COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY” MODEL

Social Presence

Student-to-Student
Interaction

Create a “climate
of trust” – an
environment where
students feel
encouraged to
share their ideas

Cognitive Presence

Interaction with
Content

Enrich the learning
experience with
articles, web
sources, personal
experiences

Educational Experience

Facilitate learning
activities, focus
discussions, guide
social and cognitive
presence

Teaching Presence

Student-Teacher/Learning Coach-
Content Interaction

COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY FRAMEWORK

- ➔ According to research, the *interactions* within the learning environment have the greatest impact on learning.
- ➔ The online learning environment includes you, your students, the content and the technology used for teaching and learning.
- ➔ The Community of Inquiry (COI) model (developed by Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer) is a well-respected framework for online learning in higher education.

*The Online Learning
Consortium, 2015*

BACKGROUND ON PILOT PROGRAM



Emma Willard School proudly fosters in each young woman a love of learning, the habits of an intellectual life, and the character, moral strength, and qualities of leadership to serve and shape her world.

Pilot Program – Course Completions

- 21 girls completed *Connectology*
- 11 girls completed *Self-Discovery and EQ*
- 9 girls completed *Resilience*

• Demographics at Emma Willard School (Troy, NY)

- Number of students: 358
- Boarding: 220
- Day: 138
- Grades Taught: 9-12
- Number of states represented: 26 states
- Number of countries represented: 35 countries
- By citizenship, dual-citizenship & students living abroad: 4.3%
- Students of color: 93 students
- International students: 79 students
- Number of course offerings: 125
- Average class size: 12-14 students
- Student/teacher ratio: 6:1