



WANDERING MAP ACTIVITY

(Resource for exploration of career, identity, goals)

Part I:

Creating the Map

On a large sheet of paper or on your laptop, start thinking about all the interesting and/or significant things you've done, or that have happened to you. Go back as far in your life as you wish.

- Have you had unique jobs or taken unusual classes?
- Did you have a memorable summer experience?
- What are you most proud of?
- Do you have hobbies you've pursued for a while?
- What honors have you earned?
- What successful experiences can you recall?
- What apps, social media sites, YouTube channels, blogs, video streams, etc. do you frequent or follow?
- Consider documenting things like objects, events, classes, jobs, etc.

Write down or type your thoughts--anything that comes to mind. No explanations are needed, just document **key words, short phrases, or draw pictures**.

As you document things, do not try to organize them. Write or draw them, draw a circle around them, and keep going. You can document any number of items. Do not worry about appearance, spelling, etc., and do not censor your thoughts.

Part II:

Identifying Categories (at least 5)

Looking at your map, identify items that may fit into a category. Notice what things have in common: jobs, vacation spots, friends, classes, creativity, sports, etc. Then, draw lines on the map connecting the separate categories (or circled events) or put the items into a list/group.

- Are you surprised by the list of categories?
- Are there categories you were not expecting to see?
- Is there a pattern to your categories?
- Does one category have more items than another?

Part III:

Identifying Themes and Threads

Look at your map again, ignoring the categories that you've identified. Look more closely.

- Do you see a thread that follows you from elementary school through college and beyond?
- Is there a pattern to the types of positions you've held?
- What might some of your seemingly dissimilar experiences have in common?
- What did you learn or what strengths did you acquire by pursuing a particular activity? (e.g. leadership, teamwork, practice/discipline, writing, risk taking, working with children, physical/hands-on work, etc.)

Some possible themes are:

Adventure – taking risks, trying new things

Creativity – self-expression, ideas as in art and music

Family – nurturing, children, family gatherings

Health – exercise and eating well

Independence -- freedom and autonomy

Leadership – organizing, inspiring

Learning – acquiring knowledge, life-long learning

Physical Work – using your hands, building

Security – safety, stability

Spirituality – practicing religion, meditating

Wealth – acquiring money, economic security

Part IV:

Reflection

Take some time to journal about your Wandering Map. What were your primary themes and how are they important to you? What are some feelings you experienced as you wrote your initial list? What surprises you? How can you use this activity to help you prepare for your future work life? If you have taken the [Focus 2](#) or [CHOICES360](#) career assessment(s), are there any connections to your map and your results?

***Adapt from Katherine Brooks' book called *You Majored in What? Mapping Your Path from Chaos to Career*