



## Bueller?... Bueller?... Bueller? Helping Disinterested Students Discover Their Passions

*Like Ferris, if there were no obstacles to stop you, what would you do this weekend?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Describe yourself in this weekend.*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Few amongst us has spare time for self-reflection; however, examining yourself is an essential step to discovering your passions. We can begin the process of self-reflection with probing questions, which, with students, we can ask during our advising meetings when they are a captive audience – essentially forcing them to make the time for self-reflection.

Let's look at some examples...

- If you couldn't be a \_\_\_\_\_, what would you be?
- What is your dream job? If you could be anything, what would you be?
- What interest are you most afraid of admitting to yourself and others?

- What are you curious about? What fascinates you? What are you passionate about?
- What is your favorite class? Why? or What is your least favorite class? Why?
- How could you make the world a better place? What do you want your contribution to this world to be?
- What do you love about yourself?
- What is your backup plan?
- Who do you know that's doing something you'd like to do?
- What is stopping you from moving forward and exploring your passions?

*What other questions might you ask students to help them discover their passions? Try to think of three.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

A compilation of our questions will be available at  
<http://www.education.txstate.edu/advising/nacada2008.html>

Questioning has its limits, though.

*Where is your ideal place to live?* \_\_\_\_\_

Your answer is limited by your knowledge and experiences. Your response is limited to the places you've visited, which may or may not be ideal places for you to live (the old, "it's a great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there"). If you selected a place you've never been, then your answer is nothing more than a guess. Responses to questions are often theoretical or abstract. Similarly, students' answers to the questions we've discussed are limited by their knowledge and experiences, which may or may not have been reality-tested.

Ideally, students would reality-test their passions through a variety of experiences, including:

- interviews with practitioners
- volunteering
- job shadowing
- working/experiential learning
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Other techniques that you might use to help students discover their passions are life maps, collections or favorite things, and saying “yes” to trying new things. Life maps help you to reflect on the big picture, to think holistically. They help you to see where you’ve been and to consider where you might be headed. Similarly, collections or favorite things can expose values and passions. Name your favorite items in each category on this list of twelve, based on a Victorian parlor game:

- animal (\_\_\_\_\_)
- book (\_\_\_\_\_)
- item of clothing (\_\_\_\_\_)
- comfort (\_\_\_\_\_)
- food (\_\_\_\_\_)
- place (\_\_\_\_\_)
- pastime (\_\_\_\_\_)
- possession (\_\_\_\_\_)
- music (\_\_\_\_\_)
- shoes (\_\_\_\_\_)
- transport (\_\_\_\_\_)
- weather (\_\_\_\_\_)

