

Human Cube Report

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EDPB 503, Professor Amina Turton

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Introduction

Jenny Fuller is a 17-year-old female student who lives in 100 Mile House, British Columbia. Jenny is a bright, ambitious student enrolled in my Career Life Education 12 class. Although Jenny presents as a model student, Jenny is a perfectionist, has few personal boundaries with teachers, peers, employers, or parents, and has recently confided in me that she struggles with a debilitating anxiety disorder and minor OCD, which she is seeking the assistance of a physician and the school counsellor for. Jenny has informed me that she is often awake for 18 hours a day, and spends this time repeatedly going over the minutiae of her homework, engaging in multiple clubs and volunteer activities, and working at a part-time job to prepare financially for university. Jenny is a talented writer, but has few (if any) close friends. She is frequently moody, is often overwhelmed and stressed by her responsibilities, and struggles with personal hygiene and nutritious food choices when the stress becomes overwhelming.

Learning Environment

Jenny attends a relatively large high school in 100 Mile House, a major center in the geographically vast Cariboo region. There are over 700 students in her graduating class. Many of these students have IEPs, have pursued alternate education, or have had specific needs addressed by a school based team. Because of this overwhelming need at Jenny's high school, and because her mother and father are both teachers at the school, I feel that straight-A, model citizen Jenny has frequently had her needs overlooked by support staff.

Although Jenny "shuts down" when interacting with peers, she has generally congenial relationships with her teachers. However, Jenny regularly becomes teary when offered constructive feedback, or is given a grade she finds unacceptable to her standards. Unfortunately, school resources are stretched thin (we currently have one counsellor serving our student population) and budget constraints. I am hopeful that

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Jenny will benefit as a student in my Career Life Education 12 class. This particular class dynamic is unique in that I have plenty of time to meet one-on-one with individual students while their peers work on portfolios, build resumes, and conduct research.

Home Life

Because of her excessive schedule and responsibilities, Jenny is very rarely at home. However, during our discussions, Jenny has confided in me that her home life is somewhat troubled. Jenny states that while her parents are not abusive, her father is frequently moody, irritable, and difficult to please. Jenny's mother is emotionally distant. From a young age, Jenny's parents have impressed upon Jenny the importance of postsecondary education, and lavishly praise her classroom success. However, Jenny's mother and father have never told her that they love her, and have never offered Jenny verbal or physical affirmation (beyond stating that she is extremely 'smart'). Jenny is eager to earn her parent's approval and affirmation, which is why, according to Jenny, she is pushing herself hard at school, struggles with anxiety, and strives to never say "no" to a parent, teacher, employer, or peer. Jenny has also confided that she is hesitant to share this information, as her parents are both teachers at the high school, and are highly respected within the small community.

Strengths

Jenny is incredibly resilient, and demonstrates a high degree of grit and gumption to follow through with her responsibilities. When Jenny is comfortable, she is warm, kind, funny, adaptable, and a truly brilliant young woman. Jenny has few personal hobbies that she does not consider obligations, but is a phenomenally gifted writer. Jenny is able to make meaningful connections within her writing, and writes about the world through a brilliantly complex and nuanced perspective.

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General Concerns with Jenny

As noted, Jenny is exhausted, anxious, and overwhelmed in her pursuit of parental affirmation and approval. This pursuit has left Jenny burned out emotionally, with a moody disposition, an unwillingness to interact with her peers, and an inability to practice healthy boundaries or self-care.

Jenny's Peers

Although Jenny has few friends, there are a number of bright and kind students in my Career Life Education 12 class who have expressed an interest in befriending Jenny. Three of these students, in particular, have a strong sense of self, and strike an excellent balance between school and life responsibilities. These students are:

- **Dorothy Gimble:** A gifted writer with a laid-back demeanor. Dorothy is planning on travelling abroad for a year following graduation. I believe that Dorothy's shared interest in writing, strong sense of confidence, and easygoing personality may make her an ideal friend for Jenny according to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Crain, 2000).
- **Clara Razowsky:** Clara has been very open in our Career Life Education 12 class about her struggles with anxiety, and is an official Mental Health Awareness Ambassador at school. Clara is also the daughter of the school's vice principal. I believe that these similarities to Jenny's experiences may help Jenny relate easily to Clara.
- **Taylor Hofstede:** Taylor is a young woman who runs our school's newspaper and literary magazine. Taylor has expressed an interest in reading Jenny's poems and short stories, and to edit these pieces with Jenny. I believe that this friendship, along with the potential to have her work affirmed by a larger audience, may help Jenny's sense of personal identity flourish.

Cube Assignment Plan

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Student Name: Jenny Fuller

Teacher Name: Nikki Webber

Student's Grade: Career Life Education 12

Date: November 21, 2017

Rationale: Through this series of lessons, Jenny and her peers will examine how finding a balance between work and personal life is essential to good physical and mental health. The students will also discover the internal factors (self-awareness, personal learning inventories, etc) necessary for effective career and life planning.

Competencies and Concepts: Within this series of lessons, Jenny and her peers will use self-assessment and reflection to consider her graduation and post-graduation goals and plans; students will recognize the need for a healthy balance between school and other life activities; students will recognize and explore diverse perspectives on how work contributes to our community and society (role model lunch).

Assessment

Lesson Outcome	Source of Evidence	Criteria
I can self-assess and reflect upon my identity, values, and personal goals.	Vygotsky's metacognition exercise.	Jenny is able to create and practice a set of her <i>own</i> affirmations, without requiring them from others.
I have a healthy balance between school and life activities; I can	"Small Step" Locke Lesson; "Normalization" Montessori Lesson;	Jenny is able to identify boundaries (evidenced by a more relaxed schedule) and is

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<p>create personal boundaries to prevent burnout.</p> <p>I recognize how diverse perspectives and ways of knowing contribute to our community and society.</p>	<p>“Role Model Lunch” Vygotsky lesson; “Writer’s Retreat Field Trip” Montessori Lesson.</p>	<p>able to incorporate self-care practices of her own choice.</p> <p>Jenny has meaningful conversations with at least three adults who could potentially act as role models to her, and asks these women about their lives, education, and experience. These role models will reciprocate the learning by offering Jenny a toast (or verbal affirmation) at our lunch. During the writer’s retreat field trip, Jenny will also learn how personal development does not need to be synonymous with financial or academic success.</p>
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Resources, Materials, and Preparation

- Selection of personal development books focused on the needs of young adults. These books ideally have a focus on self-care and organically growing one’s own sense of identity.
- Access to yoga mats (ideally a yoga instructor will come to the class)
- Blank journals for student use
- Guided mindfulness app (such as *The Daily Calm*) and classroom speaker.

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- Premade personal affirmation poster (to use as example)
- Vehicle and field trip consent forms
- Ingredients and tableware for students to prepare food for the role model lunch (ideally the students will select the menu)
- Editing stationary or laptop for assisting with contributions to literary magazine
- Scholarship brochure / pamphlets for the writer's retreat

Lesson 1: Initial “Small Step” Meeting, Locke	Timing
<p>Introduction: <i>How will you introduce this lesson in a manner that engages students and activates their thinking?</i></p> <p>Due to Jenny’s extreme anxiety surrounding missing class time, I will arrange to meet with Jenny during her lunch break. I am confident that this continuation of her schedule, along with a lack of socializing with her peers during lunch, will help Jenny feel as comfortable as possible while we meet.</p>	<p>I anticipate that this initial conversation will take up to 60 minutes, and will require a follow up within 5-7 days to</p>
<p>Teaching / Learning Sequence: <i>What steps and activities are you going to use to help students acquire and practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the outcome?</i></p> <p>Jenny has some anxiety surrounding games, and has told me that she finds it an insult to her age and intelligence when teachers or counsellors engage in small talk with her. As Jenny is nearly an adult, I will have an organic, natural conversation which will include gradual suggests of establishing personal and academic boundaries, dropping certain commitments, and considering alternatives to these commitments which involve self care. Because Jenny loves to read, I will offer her</p>	<p>“check in” with Jenny, and to ensure that small steps of learning are taking place. Jenny has anxiety surrounding loose deadlines, so it will be important that our meeting take</p>

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<p>a small selection of books which may benefit her self growth, and which Jenny may initially see as benefitting her professionally (such as <i>The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens</i>). Because Jenny craves the verbal affirmation of adults (which she does not receive from her parents), I will close by mentioning a few of Jenny’s best qualities (with evidence from my experience with her), and let her know that it takes great courage and vulnerability to seek the help of a grown up.</p>	<p>exactly as long as we had scheduled it for, and that the follow up meeting occur precisely when planned (no</p>
<p>Closure: <i>How will you solidify the learning that has taken place and deepen the learning process?</i></p> <p>I will solidify that learning has taken place by meeting with Jenny the following week. I will ask her questions about the books she has selected, ask if she has defined boundaries in her life by saying “no” to someone expecting an unreasonable commitment from her, and if she has been incorporating self care into her daily life. A very positive step for Jenny this week would be to cut down the hours for her part-time job, or to scale back on her myriad of activities and clubs (most of which she has confided that she does not enjoy).</p>	<p>‘dropping in’ to check up on Jenny).</p>
<p>Connection to Practitioner:</p> <p>This lesson is in the spirit of John Locke, who claimed that young people learn best with “small steps” and “gentle degrees” when introducing new concepts or skills (Crain, 2000).</p>	

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Lesson 2: Self-Awareness Exercises, Montessori and Piaget	Timing
<p>Introduction: <i>How will you introduce this lesson in a manner that engages students and activates their thinking?</i></p> <p>During my next meeting with Jenny, I will cite a number of studies which find a link between self-care, lowered anxiety, and academic success. I am confident that because these findings are backed by research, and because they may improve her chances of entering an excellent university, that Jenny will be willing to try the self-awareness exercises I have planned.</p>	<p>During this lesson, it is important that Jenny have both the time and personal space to thoroughly try each of these three</p>
<p>Teaching / Learning Sequence: <i>What steps and activities are you going to use to help students acquire and practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the outcome?</i></p> <p>During these meetings, Jenny and I will work together to try a number of personal practices which I believe may help lower Jenny’s anxiety and improve her quality of life. Jenny has confided in me that she is often deeply anxious, unhappy, and negligent in many aspects of self-care. During this meeting, our Career Life Education 12 class (and, subsequently, Jenny) will try a beginner’s yoga class, practice writing in a mindfulness journal (Jenny is a talented writer, and I believe this is a practice she would enjoy and make a regular habit of), and listening to a guided meditation, such as <i>The Daily Calm</i>.</p>	<p>practices, and to engage them as thoroughly or lightly as she wishes (Montessori). Ideally, this lesson will occur as a series of three one-hour meetings, complete with a follow-up the</p>
<p>Closure: <i>How will you solidify the learning that has taken place and deepen the learning process?</i></p>	<p>following week.</p>

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<p>During our subsequent meeting, I will inquire as to what daily practices Jenny has started using in her life. Jenny does well with organization and ritual, and I believe she is reliable for seeing at least one practice through each day. I will be confident that learning has occurred when I can document that Jenny has taken at least one of these practices (yoga, guided meditation, or a mindfulness journal), and has added it to her process of normalization as a young adult.</p>	
<p>Connection to Practitioner:</p> <p>This lesson stresses the theories of Montessori, who stated that normalization is an important element in the lives of children and young people. Normalization is the process of taking things that might not regularly be a part of a young person's life, and making it so (Crain, 2000). This lesson (particularly the mindfulness journal) also synthesizes nicely with Piaget, who stated that young people go through a formal operations period, in which young people develop the ability to consider abstract notions and think in hypothetical terms (Crain, 2000).</p>	

Lesson 3: Self-talk and Self-reflection, Vygotsky	Timing
<p>Introduction: <i>How will you introduce this lesson in a manner that engages students and activates their thinking?</i></p> <p>Although this class will be fully applicable to my entire Career Life Education 12 class, I will take Jenny quietly to my office during lunch. I believe she will appreciate this, as Jenny has severe anxiety regarding missing classes (she is aggressively pursuing entry to postsecondary studies, and she wishes our meeting</p>	<p>This is a simple but important lesson, and Jenny will need at least a full hour of time to grasp the concept</p>

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<p>to remain confidential from her parents, who work in the school). I hope to keep our meeting casual and calm; we will eat lunch, chat about things that interest Jenny, and play music. If Jenny and other students are willing, I will make this an activity for a small group, and intentionally include Clara, who is in our Career Life Education 12 class, and has been open about her experience with anxiety and self-reflection.</p>	<p>of metacognition. A follow-up lesson is also essential.</p>
<p>Teaching/ Learning Sequence: <i>What steps and activities are you going to use to help students acquire and practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the outcome?</i></p> <p>As the opportunity presents itself, I will ask Jenny to name three things she likes about herself. I will show her a small word poster of things I associate with myself, and encourage her to do the same. After Jenny has completed the poster, I will encourage her to write some verbal affirmations to practice in the morning, following difficult moments with her parents or peers, and while falling asleep. I will encourage Jenny to create affirmations that have little to do with her intelligence (Jenny’s parents frequently tell her she is “smart”, to the exclusion of almost anything else). Such affirmations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am resilient and brave.• I am a creative problem solver .• I am warm and kind. I am worthy of friendship and love.• I am a complex and interesting person to be around.• It’s my life. I can live it. I can do what I want with my life, and be whoever I want to be.	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can work hard to achieve my own goals, or I can relax and breathe. It is completely my choice. 	
<p>Closure: <i>How will you solidify the learning that has taken place and deepen the learning process?</i></p> <p>I will solidify this lesson by regularly asking Jenny during our meetings if she is practicing her affirmations, and by closely observing her behavior throughout the following weeks and subsequent lessons. I will additionally challenge Jenny to share her affirmations with me, and will suggest a few of my own which may build her up (Jenny thrives on adult praise, which she does not receive at home).</p>	
<p>Connection to Practitioner</p> <p>This lesson stresses the importance Vygotsky placed on the role of metacognition in a young person’s personal development (Crain, 2000). By practicing personal affirmations and positive self talk, Jenny will build her <i>own</i> self-confidence apart from the affirmation of her parents.. This will lead to the formation of a whole-person identity as Jenny reaches maturity.</p>	

Activity 4: Peer and Role Model Lunch, Vygotsky and Locke	Timing
<p>Introduction: <i>How will you introduce this lesson in a manner that engages students and activates their thinking?</i></p> <p>Times of approximately one hour each will be arranged for Jenny, our Career Life Education 12 class, and I to visit a number of successful, warm, and personally</p>	<p>These small field trips will occur periodically over the course of a</p>

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<p>vibrant women that I believe Jenny and her peers will be able to personally relate to and potentially emulate. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beryl Stripe, a remarkably resilient local poet and potter who endured emotional abuse throughout her childhood, and who has used her love for writing and the arts to lead workshops throughout Vancouver Island, and has positively impacted the lives of young people in her community.• Cassidy Glencoe, a successful business owner in her mid-thirties who built a grassroots, online company. Cassidy is passionate about social justice, has a brilliant and engaging wit, and has travelled widely throughout the world. Cassidy has warmth, drive, and gumption in spades, and would be a healthy role model for Jenny to emulate.• Simone Smythe: Owner of the writer’s retreat workshop in Yellow Point, yogi, feminist, and novelist. Simone is a personal friend who has used her writing to create a life for herself that she has been able to define on her own terms.	<p>week, culminating with the lunch and toasts, which ideally will take no less than 90 minutes.</p>
<p>Teaching / Learning Sequence: <i>What steps and activities are you going to use to help students acquire and practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the outcome?</i></p> <p>Each of these women has used literature and writing to interpret the text of their own lives. Following our visits, I will inform Jenny that these remarkable women will be coming to the school for a very special lunch, which our class will prepare together. I intend to make this lunch optional for our Career Life Education 12 class, but anticipate Jenny and her peers (particularly Dorothy, Clara, and Taylor)</p>	

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will participate. During the lunch, which I anticipate to be full of warmth, laughter, wisdom, and fun, each of these women will make a short, 1 minute personalized “toast” to Jenny, who they will have met earlier in the week (these toasts may also be applied to other students who may have participated in this lesson). These toasts will help build Jenny’s self-confidence, offer her inspiring role models, and help Jenny to see herself as these brave women do.

Closure: *How will you solidify the learning that has taken place and deepen the learning process?*

Following the lunch, I will ask Jenny how she felt about the toasts, and what she would write if she was creating a toast for:

- Herself
- One of the women
- A peer at the lunch

I will know that the lesson has been successful if Jenny is able to refer to herself in the same glowing, empathetic terms she would naturally use to refer to one of the older women, or to a peer. The goal of this lesson is not simply for Jenny to be surrounded by role models or for them to build her up, but for Jenny and her peers to confidentially be able to see themselves the way that others do.

Connection to Theorist:

This peer and role model lunch is in the spirit of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development, which suggests that young people learn and thrive when surrounded by strong peers, adults, and role models that they can emulate (Crain, 2000). This

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<p>lesson is also in line with the theories of John Locke, who stressed the importance of exposing youth to people who model the traits and characteristics we wish to impress upon them, and praising the young person when they emulate the same traits (Crain, 2000).</p>	
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Activity 5: Contributions to Local Literary Magazine, Erickson	Timing
<p>Introduction: <i>How will you introduce this lesson in a manner that engages students and activates their thinking?</i></p> <p>Jenny is a highly gifted writer, but relies solely on the opinion of her teacher-parents when assessing the value of her work. This lesson will focus on channeling this writing gift in a way that will give Jenny a strong sense of <i>personal</i> accomplishment, the support of other writers, and help Jenny form her own sense of identity outside of earning her parent’s approval.</p>	<p>The initial editing process, conversation, and giving Jenny a reference letter will take a minimum of 90 minutes. I would like to</p>
<p>Teaching / Learning Sequence: <i>What steps and activities are you going to use to help students acquire and practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the outcome?</i></p> <p>In this lesson, I will assist my Career Life Education 12 students in networking and submitting work they find personally meaningful. During this lesson, I intend to assist Jenny in the final editing of a number of her writing pieces, and with Jenny’s consent, we will submit them to <i>Vancouver Literary Quarterly</i> for potential publication. I am confident that this will please Jenny, as she is actively pursuing scholarships for postsecondary studies. During the editing process, we will play</p>	<p>follow up within 10-14 days to see if this process has opened Jenny up to the possibility of submitting more work to other publications.</p>

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relaxing music, and have a general atmosphere that supports the editing as a relaxed, pleasant, low-stress activity.

During the editing process, I will speak glowingly of Jenny's creativity, humour, resilience, brilliant mind, and emerging sense of personal identity. I will also be creating a reference letter to this effect, which I will invite Jenny to review and enclose with her work. I am confident that this will deeply please Jenny, as she does not have other adults in her life who verbally praise her efforts. Although it may require some extra work, I will be assisting all of my Career Life Education 12 students with their various networking projects, and will write glowing reference letters (if at all possible) on their behalf.

Closure: *How will you solidify the learning that has taken place and deepen the learning process?*

As Jenny continues to publish her work, I am convinced that her self-confidence will flourish, particularly when she encounters the verbal or written support of her peers and other writers. As her writing skills continue to improve – and as she writes on her own terms and according to her own interests – Jenny will be able to design a deeply satisfying life in which she is in 'flow' and reflects her newly formed identity and values. I will know that this lesson has been successful when Jenny continues to submit quality work for publication, and as I watch her confidence flourish as a result. I will also be carefully observing the potential for friendship between Jenny and Taylor, who is also a talented writer in our Career Life Education 12 class.

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<p>Connection to Theorist:</p> <p>This lesson has been designed according to the theory of Erik Erickson, who stated that the process of reaching adulthood occurs through the reworking of prior identifications and the formation of a new identity (Crain, 2000). This identity is developed through one’s personal accomplishments.</p>	
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Activity 6: Writer’s Retreat Field Trip, Montessori	Timing
<p>Introduction: <i>How will you introduce this lesson in a manner that engages students and activates their thinking?</i></p> <p>Inform Jenny and the class that we will be embarking on a field trip to visit a professional writing workshop. The idea of networking and creating professional connections in preparation of university will intrigue Jenny.</p>	<p>For Jenny to have a full and thorough opportunity to explore the retreat and engage in some of its self-care practices, I</p>
<p>Teaching / Learning Sequence: <i>What steps and activities are you going to use to help students acquire and practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the outcome?</i></p> <p>The “professional writing workshop” will, in fact, be a quiet writer’s retreat situated on an organic farm outside of Kamloops. Upon arrival, Jenny will be free to explore the working farm, yoga studio, kayaks, and writing cabins. It is hoped that she will interact with many of the brilliant writers and vibrant minds that find tranquility at the retreat. As Jenny’s teacher, I will do my best to not interfere with this organic learning process, and take both a literal and metaphorical “step back”</p>	<p>recommend a minimum of at least a full school day at the retreat, and potentially overnight. I believe this is an optional activity that would benefit a number of</p>

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<p>as Jenny and the other students explore and discover the potential for writing as a personal practice outside of professional achievement. Jenny can learn aspects of self-care that can be translated into her own experience; she will also be able consider the potential of visiting the retreat again, on her own terms. It is important that Jenny be able to identify personal practices (including her gift of writing) outside of the ways they will benefit her professionally, academically, or in her pursuit to please her parents.</p>	<p>students in our Career Life Education 12 class. Being around other writers her own age may also help Jenny build her</p>
<p>Closure: <i>How will you solidify the learning that has taken place and deepen the learning process?</i></p> <p>On the drive back to 100 Mile House, I will naturally steer our conversation toward her experience with the writer’s retreat, and ask her about the many activities and personalities she encountered. If the retreat sparked her interest, I will mention the retreat’s annual student scholarship. In this particular instance, I will be an active listener, and allow Jenny to lead the conversation according to her own interests and experiences regarding the retreat. This is a practice I will use individually for each Career Life Education 12 student who I accompany on the retreat.</p>	<p>self-confidence through the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky).</p>
<p>Connection to Theorist:</p> <p>Maria Montessori stressed the importance of the teacher stepping into the background of the young person’s learning experience, and allowing the young person to learn according to their own interests. She further stated that involvement in meaningful activities outside of the classroom would boost an individual’s self-confidence. Ideally, these meaningful activities should occur in nature (Crain, 2000). I am convinced that Jenny’s personal sense of self-worth will flourish when</p>	

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<p>she is deeply invested in her own well-being, engaged in personally meaningful activity outside of the classroom, connected to the natural world and to her own interests, and surrounded by people who will both inspire Jenny, and build her up. In the spirit of Montessori, these things will occur when Jenny is able to discover them on her own terms, and in ways she will find personally meaningful.</p>	
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References:

Crain, W. C. (2000). *Theories of Development: Concepts and Applications*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.