**Sharissa’s Theory of Student Learning and Development**

My theory of student learning and development is largely influenced by my life experiences, intertwined with my teaching experiences. My curricular views are primarily learner centred and I believe that it is our job as educators to create the environment in which students learn best.

When students feel heard and respected, especially regarding curricular and content decisions, they are often motivated to engage in classroom activities. Respect falls into the Esteem category of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, a basic need which should be met before meaningful learning can happen. As a shop teacher, I also label myself as a maker educator. I am a firm believer in inquiry, personalized learning, and making. Inquiry projects allow opportunity for choice, personalization, and guided or open inquiry, which can allow for autonomy. Making is inherently personalized, and often stems from an inquiry process. It also gives students a deeper understanding by allowing them to construct their own meaning through a hands-on process.

Making lends itself well to autonomy-supportive instruction, including allowing students to make mistakes and learn to solve their own problems. This strategy is called F.A.I.L and S.A.I.L, where failure is seen as a First Attempt In Learning, but resiliency and problem-solving skills are strengthened with Subsequent Attempts In Learning. This concept can also be implemented when solving meaningful real-world problems, where solutions are not clear or easily determined. However, students need to be exposed to meaningful real-world problems, because they are the ones who make and shape the future. Finally, we must create opportunities for learning in an interactive and hands-on environment, so we can do our best to meet the needs of our 21st century learners. Regardless of what the future will look like, our students will always need interpersonal skills and practical hand-skills.