



# Purpose, Motivation & Student-Directed Projects In the Humanities

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Humanities (Continuing Education)

345-101-MQ: Thinking in the Humanities  
345-102-MQ: Food, Self, and Society

In a review of motivational interventions in the classroom, Chris Hulleman and Kenneth Baron highlight (2015) five different possible routes...

1. Choosing fun and enjoyable activities that maximize interest;
2. Appealing to self-relevance;
3. Highlighting the relevance for current or future goals;
4. Highlighting the importance of pleasing others and/or;
5. Offering rewards or threatening punishments.

Cavanagh, Rose. 2016. *The Spark of Learning: Energizing the College Classroom with the Science of Emotion*.

# Part 1: Motivation

## Some Issues...

General Education Requirement

Societal Devaluation of Humanities

Negative Student Expectations

Disconnected from Student Goals

Course Selection in Cont. Ed

**Compulsory**

**Impractical**

**Boring**

**Useless**

**Arbitrary**

## How Do I Motivate Students?

Extrinsic Motivation: **Grades + Graduation**

Heighten Salience: **Current Events + Pop Culture**

Energy & Enthusiasm: **Model Interest**

“Throughout the last few years I have been trying to figure out what I want to do with my life, this has been an ongoing question of mine. Just recently I got an idea of something that does interest me, which is marketing...”

“During one of my binge-watching nights, I came across an episode where the character became a Neonatal Nurse. That is when it hit me. It is what I was meant to do.”

“One of my main goals in the future is to be a social worker especially with children...”

“One of my goals is to somehow turn my interests into a productive part of my life and not only a hobby. I just need to find out how.”

# Part 1: Motivation

**Students’ personal and professional goals vary**

Paradigm Shift

**How Do *I* Make You Care? / What Do *You* Care About?**

Intrinsic Motivation: **Pre-Existing Interests + Goals**

**Student-Directed Projects**

Students propose a project **question** or **topic** that...

1. Connects to course themes and competencies
2. Reflects their individual career or personal goals
3. Is interesting / relevant to themselves and others

Students propose a project **medium** that...

1. Reflects their individual strengths and interests
2. Reflects their individual career or personal goals

## Provide multiple means of **Engagement**

Affective Networks  
The "WHY" of Learning



### Access

#### Provide options for **Recruiting Interest** <sup>(7)</sup>

- Optimize individual choice and autonomy (7.1)
- Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity (7.2)
- Minimize threats and distractions (7.3)

### Build

#### Provide options for **Sustaining Effort & Persistence** <sup>(8)</sup>

- Heighten salience of goals and objectives (8.1)
- Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge (8.2)
- Foster collaboration and community (8.3)
- Increase mastery-oriented feedback (8.4)

### Internalize

#### Provide options for **Self Regulation** <sup>(9)</sup>

- Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation (9.1)
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies (9.2)
- Develop self-assessment and reflection (9.3)

# Part 1: Motivation

## UDL Connection: The *WHY* of Learning

### Student-Directed Projects

Individual Choice and Autonomy

Relevant, Valuable, Authentic

Avoids Construct Irrelevance

Requires Self-Reflection + Metacognition

Creativity vs. Critical Thinking (Finn 2015)

Finn, Patrick. 2015. *Critical Condition: Replacing Critical Thinking with Creativity*.

## Provide multiple means of **Engagement**

Affective Networks  
The "WHY" of Learning



## Provide options for **Self Regulation** <sup>(9)</sup>

- Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation (9.1)
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies (9.2)
- Develop self-assessment and reflection (9.3)

Internalize

## Provide multiple means of **Action & Expression**

Strategic Networks  
The "HOW" of Learning



## Provide options for **Executive Functions** <sup>(6)</sup>

- Guide appropriate goal-setting (6.1)
- Support planning and strategy development (6.2)
- Facilitate managing information and resources (6.3)
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress (6.4)

# Part 2: Self-Regulation

## UDL Connection: Self Regulation & Executive Functions

### Reflective Writing (101 + 102)

#### 1. Student Profile (Week 1)

1. Personal / Professional Goals
2. Academic Interests
3. Non-Academic Interests
4. Academic Strengths
5. Academic Challenges

*Detailed individual written responses – used to guide project proposal*

Guide Appropriate Goal-Setting

Facilitate Personal Coping Skills and Strategies

“Whatever it is that you want students to learn how to do, *that is what they need to be doing during the course*” (105).

Fink, L. Dee. 2013. *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*

## Part 2: Self-Regulation

### In-Class Reflective Writing / Scaffolding (101+102)

Learning Centered vs. Content Centered Approach

#### 2. In-Class Writing Exercises

1. Possible Project Topics
2. Possible Project Media
3. Connections to professional / personal goals

*Instructor feedback + individual written responses*

#### 3. Project Proposal Workshop (Week 5)

1. Project Topic + Justification
2. Project Medium + Justification
3. Connections to professional / personal goals
4. Connections to course themes and competencies

*Instructor feedback, in-class peer feedback + individual written responses*

## 1. My question

### **Can romantic relationships be dangerous to those diagnosed with intellectual delays?**

Adults with special needs (down syndrome, autism, damage to brain-cells, etc..) are often discouraged from engaging in romantic relationships with one another. The moral issue is that it's not necessarily safe to allow these types of exchanges. Risks include:

- Consent can be a blurred line when dealing with people who have varying levels of functioning and understanding
- Workers will need to be extra vigilant, which can be difficult in under-staffed facilities
- Risk of pregnancy for a population of people who are ill-equipped to care for children
- How our students will react to rejection and heartbreak? This could create a whole new set of issues for some of them

However,

- They are adults, not children
- Most of them want a relationship as much as any other adult
- Sex-ed can be taught. As long as it's done in an adaptive manner for them to understand

## 2. Relevance to the course

**This question is mainly related to topics of love and freedom.**

### **The Subject of Love:**

My topic is related to love because it involves complex moral questions surrounding the subject. Historically, many types of love and relationships have been considered ie., love of a mistress, polygamy, same-sex love, lgbtq2ia+ relationships, etc... I will be exploring the concept of love between unique individuals who possess varying levels of understandings toward relationships.

### **The Subject of Freedom:**

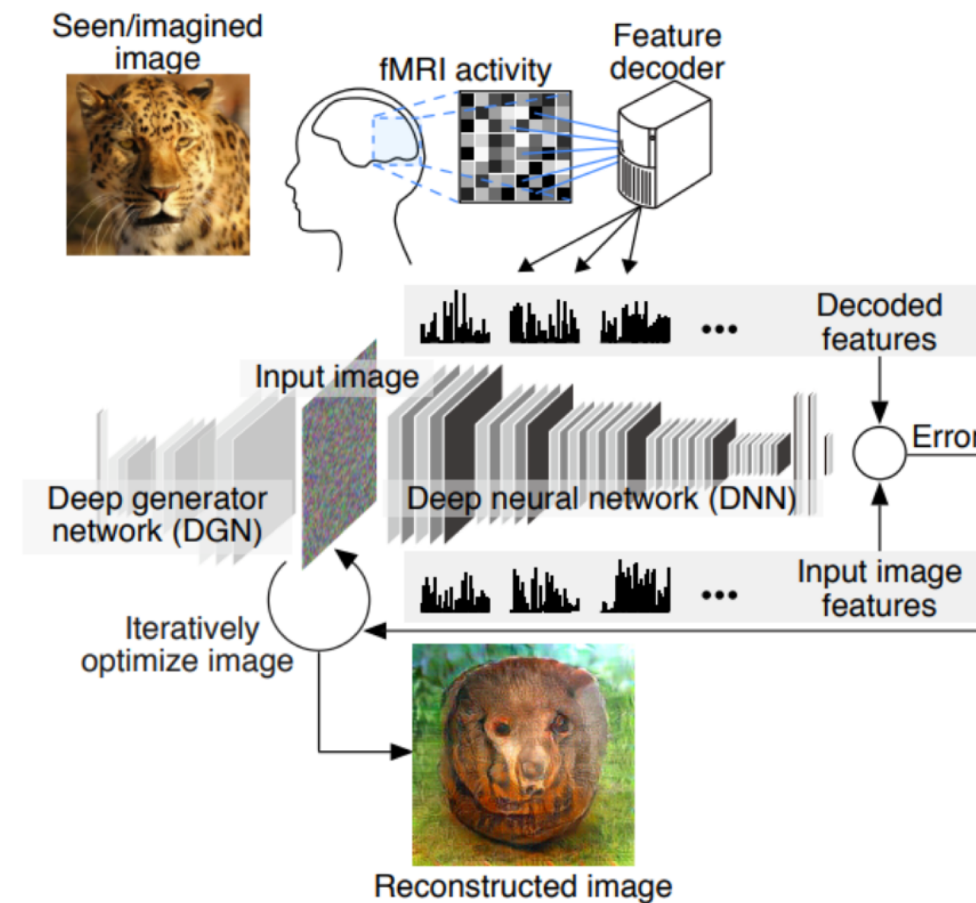
My topic will explore the concept of freedom because It challenges the "what if" and the "why not" of maximum liberty. The concept of freedom is interesting because it challenges rules that are in place for peoples' safety, thereby questioning if people are freer without rules, or freer when safe.



1. My question for this project is:

What will be the effects of *Vision Reconstruction* to the creative industries and its employees?

Vision Reconstruction is a brain scanning device that can convert an imagined image into a digital image. However, this technology is still in development. Therefore, the question of this project will revolve in an idea of **“what will happen to the creative industries if this technology is completed or perfected?”**.





I have always known that I am the type of learner who observes from a distance and applies the information later. What I didn't know was how social I am as a learner.

Most of the time, I process new-found information by myself, but with this class, I didn't.

I wanted to know what other people think and how other people think. I wasn't afraid of feeling stupid or getting things wrong, I just wanted to have a stimulating conversation.

I've been processing information from my economics class with Jon and I find it really helpful.

## Part 2: Self-Regulation

### Reflective Writing (101)

#### 4. Learning Self-Assessment (Week 15)

- How did your project change throughout the course?
- What was most challenging / rewarding aspect?
- What would you do differently?
- Did you discover anything about yourself as a learner?
- After consulting the rubric, what grade would you give yourself?

SO. My final project.

It's beginning to stress me out.

I don't really know what direction to go in. I keep writing and rewriting it.

After the last class I decided to have the characters live in one of those commune-type living arrangements like in Denmark. So far I have three different stories going on and am considering making it jump back and forth between the three. However, I'm also thinking of only using one of the storylines and writing it in the first person. I really don't know what to do and I feel like my indecision is making me fall behind and I should be writing the actual thing right now but I'm still doing the story plan. If I don't decide soon my story will suck but if I don't pick something good then my story will suck...

## Part 2: Self-Regulation

### Reflective Writing (101)

#### 4. Learning Self-Assessment (Week 15)

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#### 5. Weekly Journal Entries (101)

Project-Specific Questions

1. Progress Reports
2. Concerns

“This is the best part of the course. It provides an opportunity for us to be accountable for our knowledge and we are not graded on a general scale.”

“I like how there is choice and it’s not one specific topic. This way it benefits everyone.”

“I think it’s helpful to relate what we learned in class to something we like. It gives a purpose to why we’re actually learning these things.”

“It gives us a chance to actually want to learn something new instead of always writing a boring long essay on a topic we don’t care about.”

## Part 3: Student Reactions

### How Do You Feel About the Student-Directed Project?

“It’s very useful because we can use the proposal feedback to improve our final project.”

“It pushes students to further their learning and apply course material to the real world.”

“I think the project is a good way to motivate ourselves to review course material.”

“I love the concept. It keeps me engaged and giving my 100%”

“I enjoy the fact we are asked to come up with our own method of presentation. I think it allows us to be creative but also to be more comfortable throughout the process...”

“Lets students link what is important to them with the course content. This ensures what we learn in class is actually practical for us.”