

Growing Student Autonomy in the Accelerated Classroom

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EXP 389
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Serpas
Essay 1

Texts for Essay 1

- “At the University College of North Wales at Bangor” by Gerald Locklin
- “Brainology” by Carol Dweck
- “Habits of Mind” (from *The Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing*)
- *Drive* by Daniel Pink (Chapters 1, 4, 5, and 6)

Essay 1

Tell me the story of your educational history—the journey you’ve been on, the good, the bad, how you have felt about yourself as a learner in your past schooling, whether you felt much “intrinsic motivation.” Paint me a picture. Make it detailed so that I can start to get to know you and learn about your experiences.

Some things I’d like you to include:

- Describe one particularly good experience you had in your past education and tell me about why it was good. (This might be in an English class or in a different subject.)
- Describe one particularly bad experience you had in your previous education and tell me about why it was bad.
- Talk about how the ideas from *Drive* relate to your educational experience (not just in English classes). Has your previous education included much autonomy, mastery, and/or purpose? (Please refer to at least two of the above ideas from *Drive*.) If you HAVE had these experiences, please describe one example and how it felt. If you have NOT experienced these ideas in the past, please think of a specific example when this was true and describe how that felt.
- Please include some discussion of your past experiences with academic reading and writing. If you like doing these things, why do you? If you don’t, why not? Do you feel confident in these areas? Do you feel a desire for mastery? Do you feel a sense of purpose about developing these skills?
- Please close by bringing me up to the present—what do you want to get out of this particular English class at Irvine Valley College? Is there anything you’d like me to know so that I can support your learning? Anything you’re concerned about? Anything you feel excited about?

To give me as full and detailed of a story as possible, shoot for at least three pages.

Turn-in Procedures:

- Email the assignment to me before the beginning of class the day it is due.
- Bring a hard copy of your final draft to class with the following documents in your assignment folder (a 2-pocket folder):
 - Writing Center Signature page
 - Draft you reviewed during your Writing Center conference
 - All other prewriting materials, including your rough draft

Writing Center Requirements

- **Your formal conference must be completed by the end of the day on Friday, February 8th**

Strategy #2: Read with a Purpose
“Brainology” by Carol Dweck

When you **read with a purpose**, you figure out *why* you are reading a text and focus on reading from that perspective. We do this all day long as we read throughout our daily lives, including when we read emails, articles online, and even texts such as menus and instruction manuals. When figuring out your purpose for reading a text in any class, try to move beyond “because it was assigned to me,” and think about *why* the instructor assigned it. That is, think about how it connects to what you have already read in the class, the assignments you will complete based on that text, and the other readings you will complete in the class.

Complete before reading:

1. Why do you think this reading has been assigned?

2. Is there an assignment or class activity attached to this reading? If so, what do you need to get from this reading to be successful on the assignment?

3. Are there any other strategies you might need to use (i.e., taking notes, annotating) to achieve your purpose in reading?

Complete after reading:

1. How did thinking about your purpose change the way you read this text? What do you think you did differently as a result?

2. When is it important to use this reading strategy? When might it not be that necessary or important?

Strategy #6: Annotating and Underlining
Drive, Chapter 5

By **annotating and underlining** a text, we work to pick out the key ideas in a written work, and this helps us to be more interactive readers by reacting in writing to a text. By annotating and underlining, we not only help ourselves process the information, but we also help ourselves retain the information. Annotating and underlining also make it easier to review a text later and to find important quotations when writing about a text.

Before you read:

1. When might you want to write something in the margin of a text? What types of comments might you write?

2. How do you know when it's a good idea to underline text? What can you do to help you remember why you underlined the text when you reread the text?

As you read:

Underline text that stands out to you and note in the margins any questions or comments in response to the text.

Complete after reading:

1. How did annotating change the way you read this text? What do you think you did differently as a result?

2. When is it important to use this reading strategy? When might it not be that necessary or important?

Strategies for Addressing Affective Issues¹

1. Establishing & Maintaining Positive Relationships
Community-building activities (e.g., ice breakers, early group projects); building in time for one-on-one work with students; watching out for our own emotional reactions and establishing a routine for talking individually with students who are exhibiting behaviors that impeded their own or other students' learning
2. Providing Class Time for Students to Process Content & Practice Skills
Small group discussions, speed dating activities, student presentations, debates, independent and group activities in computer lab
3. Regular Opportunities for Students' Metacognitive Reflection
Providing materials on topics connected to learning and asking students to write about how these connect to their experience; quick self-assessments connected to key assignments; longer self-reflection pieces; providing samples of strong student work and asking students to write about how they can improve their own performance next time
4. Incentives and Accountability for Coming to Class and Doing the Work
"Fess up" routines for when students haven't done assignments; incentives for perfect attendance, firm policies on attendance; limitations on turning in late work
5. Intrusively Intervening when Students Show Signs of Struggle or Disengagement
Keeping a "worry list" and reaching out by email, initiating one-on-one conversations after class; monitoring who has turned in work and touching base with those who haven't; asking students to reach out to those who miss class
6. Maintaining a "Growth Mindset" Approach to Feedback and Grading
Syllabus policies that allow students to recover from a weak start; providing feedback that explicitly appreciates the thinking/skills students are exhibiting and guides them re: next things to work on; intentionally using re-do's and rewrites to foster growth; expectations that progress through major assignments over term

¹ Original handout developed by Dr. Katie Hern for a California Acceleration Project workshop.

Student Autonomy in the Accelerated Classroom

The “*Familia*”:

- Put students into groups early in the semester.
- Have them exchange contact information.
- Tell them they are responsible for each other: they contact each other when they are going to be absent, they remind each other of due dates, they find out what they missed when they are absent.
- Sometimes use *familias* for small-group work; sometimes create new groups; sometimes allow them to decide their own groups.
- When students form groups that are not *familias*, allow 5 minutes for *familias* to meet to reflect on what they learned from their *primos* in other *familias*.
- Check in with *familias* from time to time to make sure they are communicating and supporting each other.

Speed Dating Activity*:

- Design reading questions, some of which require simple recall and some of which push students to think. (Put the “recall” questions first and build into the thinking questions.)
- Before starting the activity, ask students to “fess up” – they cannot participate if they haven’t read.
- Have students sit or stand across from one another in a long line or in several long lines.
- Students can have their book in front of them.
- Give them 2 to 3 minutes to discuss each question
- Call time and then ask one line of students to shift down the line one person (each student must discuss each question with a different “date”).
- After the activity, give time for students to write a reflection: What new insights or understandings do you have of the reading after this activity?

The Poster Presentation*:

- Divide your class into groups with equal number of students for each group.
- Provide poster paper and markers for each group.
- Divide a reading into equal sections.
- Each group creates a poster that provides an overview of the section they were assigned.
- The poster could include quoted material, but it should be mostly summary and paraphrasing.
- Each group is responsible for teaching their section to fellow students.
- Once their posters are complete, one at a time, students take turns staying by “their” poster to present it to visitors from other groups.
 - In other words, there are many mini-presentations going on simultaneously.
- After a couple of minutes, call “time” and “switch”; another group member returns to her poster to relieve the first presenter.
- Process continues so that each group member presents to a small group of students, also allowing students to visit most of the other group’s posters.

Editing Workshop:

- Pull flawed sentences from student papers.
- Keep the nature of the flaws fairly focused so that students are looking at one kind of sentence flaw.
- Tell students there is an error in each sentence which could cause readers to be confused.
- Ask them to work in groups to rewrite each sentence so that the sentence no longer has the error.
- Encourage students to recast the sentence completely if they want but try to maintain what they think is the meaning of the sentence.

- Ask students to look through their own papers for similar kinds of sentences and to work together to revise those sentences.

The Fish Bowl: (I use it for a review session before a quiz.)

- Create review questions about readings.
- Arrange 4 student desks in the center of the room with all other desks encircling the four.
- First group of 4 students sits in center and answers the first question.
- Students sitting outside the fishbowl cannot talk, but they should take notes.
- After the 4 students in the bowl each have an opportunity to speak, the second group of 4 sits down.
 - The second group of four first has an opportunity to add anything to the first question.
 - Then they must answer the next question.
- The process continues until all students have been in the fishbowl and all questions have been reviewed.
- Allow for time at the end for students to discuss their observations of classroom dynamics that were highlighted by the fishbowl.

Post-it Organizing*:

- Give all students 5 or 6 post-it notes when they enter the classroom, depending upon the number of groups you have.
- Ask them to write an important idea from the reading in their own words
 - You can vary what you have them write: Perhaps a different main idea or quote from different sections of the reading; or a main idea, a question, something surprising, something they disagree with, something they agree with, etc...
- Title 5 or 6 posters around the room to match what you asked students to write for each post-it note.
- Have students put their post-it notes on the corresponding poster.
- Assign groups to posters and ask them to organize all of the post-its into themes or categories.
- Ask each group to present how they organized the material on the poster.

Note Card Questions:

- Give all students two notecards when they enter the classroom.
- Direct them to write a “reading” question about the reading on one.
 - A “reading” question is a question that should elicit student conversation to help clarify a main idea from the reading.
- Direct them to write a question they have about the reading on the other card.
- Put them into groups.
- Hand out an equal number of cards for each group and have them discuss each card.
- Allow time at the end of class for each group to summarize what they discussed and learned.
- Allow time at the end of class for students to write a reflection on what they understand and what they still need to review in the reading.

Student Note-Taker:

- Ask for two student volunteers to take notes on the board while you lead class discussion.
- Allow for time at the end to discuss what the student volunteers learned by taking notes on the board and what the rest of the class got out of observing other students take notes.

*Starred activities were adapted from or developed through my participation in the 3CSN California Acceleration Project’s Community of Practice for 2012-13.

Sample of focused questions for student self-editing workshop. The following are directions I give to students:

- Skim through your paper to make sure you have used quoted material from the readings. Use the following as a checklist:
 - Are you using quoted material?
 - Are you using quotation marks around quoted material?
 - Do you include a page citation?
 - Do you introduce the quoted material by telling background information on the quote, including who the quote is from?
 - Spend 10 minutes working in your small groups to integrate your quotes more clearly.
 - Make a list of what you need to work on with regard to quoting.

This activity can be combined with other focused questions, allowing students time to work with other students, as well as to reflect on what their own next steps are in their writing.

Sample questions for **Fishbowl Review**:

(For this exercise, my class had read 4 different authors, all with slightly different views on these questions. Within each group, each student was asked to answer the question as if they were one of the authors we had read; each student within each group had “to be” a different author. Having students practice answering as if they were the author asked them to practice their mastery of the material they had read. You can let them choose the day prior to the class which author they will “be” in class. Students had previously read the articles and spent at least one class day discussing each reading.)

- 1) How do you explain the “educational achievement gap”?
- 2) What would you propose to solve the “educational achievement gap”?
- 3) What is your view of the relation among “culture,” “identity,” and success?
- 4) Why is it important to have a discussion about the “educational achievement gap”?

Reading Activity: Speed Dating

1. What are KIPP schools?
2. What does Gladwell argue causes the test-score gap between poor, middle, and wealthy Americans?
3. According to Gladwell, how did American schools end up with long summer vacations and Asian schools end up with school years with a lot more school days? What does this have to do with the differences in math scores between Japanese and American children?
4. Why does Gladwell conclude that “Schools work. The only problem with school, for the kids who aren’t achieving, is that there isn’t enough of it” (259)?
5. What would Kozol say to Gladwell about Gladwell’s view that the “only” problem is that the school year and the school day aren’t long enough?
6. Is it fair that Marita has to get up so early to travel so far and have to work so much harder just to stay even with children with middle class and wealthy suburbs? Explain.
7. How does Gladwell want to build a “better world” (168)? Do you think his plan for building a better world is workable? What else is needed?
8. What do you think would be the best way to close the “achievement gap”?

*Speed Dating idea attributed to 3CSN and California Acceleration Project.

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Essay 7

For your final essay assignment, you will be analyzing your memoir through the lens of the readings we have completed this semester. Your essay should focus on making a claim about the overall message of the memoir based on what we have learned about the different ways in which people are motivated, how people can change, and how people respond to adversity through the various texts we have read this semester.

In coming up with your essay's focus, I encourage you to think about all that you've learned in the texts we've read this semester. You are not required to write about all of these ideas we have discussed this semester, but the following list should help to get you started:

- Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset from Carol Dweck's article "Brainology"
- Sources of motivation, including autonomy, mastery, and purpose, from Daniel Pink's book *Drive*
- Educational motivation from Mike Rose's essay "I Just Wanna Be Average" and Jean Anyon's essay "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work"
- Habit formation and change based on Charles Duhigg's book *The Power of Habit*
- Outside influences on our habits based on Lauren Slater's chapter "Rat Park: The Radical Addiction Experiment" from her book *Opening Skinner's Box*
- Cruelty and human nature from the Milgram packet and Lauren Slater's chapter "In the Unlikely Event of a Water Landing: Darley and Latane's Training Manual—A Five Stage Approach" from her book *Opening Skinner's Box*

Remember to consider the grey areas and to think about the complexities in both your memoir and the ideas we have discussed this semester.

In your essay, be sure to include:

- Support for your argument with relevant ideas, information, and quotations from your memoir
- Support for your argument with relevant ideas, information, and quotations from at least **three** of the texts we have read this semester

Things to Shoot For:

- Show that you have carefully read your memoir and the other texts this semester, and that you have fully digested and considered the different viewpoints and evidence.
- Show you are really thinking about the topic—these are complex ideas, so don't settle for easy answers.
- Write so that someone not in our class could understand it. Assume your audience has not read these texts. That means you'll need to briefly summarize key ideas/information and explain any unfamiliar terms.
- If you use the exact words from something you've read, be sure to put those inside "quotation marks" in your essay, so that readers know you've borrowed another writer's wording.
- Write at least 5 complete pages, typed, 12 point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins.

Turn-in Procedures:

- Your final draft is due **Thursday, May 16th**.
- Email the assignment to me before the beginning of class the day it is due.
- Bring a hard copy to class with the following documents in one pocket of your assignment folder:
 - Writing Center Signature page (completed by Wednesday, May 15th)
 - Draft you reviewed during your Writing Center conference

- Any drafts you brought to class for peer review, conferences, etc.
- Your packet of work from your memoir book clubs.

Reading Activities

Essay 7

See Assignment Grid

Blog Posts:

Blog Posts 15-16

These blogs will be open entry blogs to allow you to share interesting information about your memoir with the class. Feel free to share the intriguing information, interesting passages, and your reactions.

Blog 17

In our last blog entry of the semester, please share your overall feelings about our class. How have you grown both as a student and as a writer? What in the class worked well for you? What caused you difficulty? What would you say to a student who was planning to take this class next semester?

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Memoir Book List

Choose one of the following books to read in the final month of this class. Your Essay 7 assignment will be based on this text.

Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary : How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them* (ISBN 038549422X)

Description from Amazon.com: As an idealistic twenty-three-year-old English teacher at Wilson High School in Long beach, California, Erin Gruwell confronted a room of “unteachable, at-risk” students. One day she intercepted a note with an ugly racial caricature, and angrily declared that this was precisely the sort of thing that led to the Holocaust—only to be met by uncomprehending looks. So she and her students, using the treasured books *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and *Zlata’s Diary: A Child’s Life in Sarajevo* as their guides, undertook a life-changing, eye-opening, spirit-raising odyssey against intolerance and misunderstanding. They learned to see the parallels in these books to their own lives, recording their thoughts and feelings in diaries and dubbing themselves the “Freedom Writers” in homage to the civil rights activists “The Freedom Riders.” With funds raised by a “Read-a-thon for Tolerance,” they arranged for Miep Gies, the courageous Dutch woman who sheltered the Frank family, to visit them in California, where she declared that Erin Gruwell’s students were “the real heroes.” Their efforts have paid off spectacularly, both in terms of recognition—appearances on “Prime Time Live” and “All Things Considered,” coverage in *People* magazine, a meeting with U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley—and educationally. All 150 Freedom Writers have graduated from high school and are now attending college.

Michael Lewis, *The Blind Side* (ISBN 039333838X)

Description from Booklist: The titular “blind side” is a right-handed NFL quarterback’s left side. The defensive linemen rushing the quarterback from that side often arrive undetected and thus can inflict great damage on the opponent’s key offensive player as he sets himself to pass. The key to minimizing quarterback damage is an effective offensive left tackle. Lewis . . . describes the NFL’s ever-growing obsession with left tackles as a means to counter defenders who seem to grow bigger, stronger, and more vicious each season. He juxtaposes that narrative with the unlikely story of Michael Oher, who was living on the streets of Memphis when he was 15 years old. He also happened to be six-feet-five-inches tall, weigh 350 pounds, and possess definite athletic talent. Almost through sheer serendipity, he is adopted by a wealthy family whose members make it their mission to see that he has an opportunity to benefit from his amazing physical gifts. The book works on three levels. First as a shrewd analysis of the NFL; second, as an expose of the insanity of big-time college football recruiting; and, third, as a moving portrait of the positive effect that love, family, and education can have in reversing the path of a life that was destined to be lived unhappily and, most likely, end badly.

Gretchen Rubin, *The Happiness Project* (ISBN 006158326X)

Description from Publishers Weekly: Rubin is not an unhappy woman: she has a loving husband, two great kids and a writing career in New York City. Still, she could-and, arguably, should-be happier. Thus, her methodical (and bizarre) happiness project: spend one year achieving careful, measurable goals in different areas of life (marriage, work, parenting, self-fulfillment) and build on them cumulatively, using concrete steps (such as, in January, going to bed earlier, exercising better, getting organized, and “acting more energetic”). By December, she’s striving bemusedly to keep increasing happiness in every aspect of her life. The outcome is good, not perfect (in accordance with one of her “Secrets of Adulthood”: “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good”), but Rubin’s funny, perceptive account is both inspirational and forgiving, and sprinkled with just enough wise tips, concrete advice and timely research (including all those other recent books on happiness) to qualify as self-

help. Defying self-help expectations, however, Rubin writes with keen senses of self and narrative, balancing the personal and the universal with a light touch. Rubin's project makes curiously compulsive reading, which is enough to make any reader happy.

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Essay 7: Memoir Essay

Assignment Grid

For your memoir book clubs, you will be responsible for creating the assignments you and your group members will work on each day. As a group, you will be responsible for deciding which pages your group will read and discuss each day and assigning jobs to group members.

Each day, you will complete one of the following jobs. You should rotate jobs, so you are not doing the same job each day.

Here are the job descriptions:

- **Discussion Director:** Your job is to write a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this section of the book. The best questions will come from your own thoughts, feelings, and ideas about this section of the book and will make connections to both the rest of the book and the other texts we have read. You should aim for about 5 strong, open-ended discussion questions.
- **Golden Line Finder:** Your job is to find important passages in the section you are reading. You should highlight these passages and make notes in the margin that discuss their importance. Aim for 5 important passages per reading assignment.
- **Summarizer:** Your job is to summarize the reading for your group. Your summary should focus on the important parts of that section. Aim for about a one-page summary.
- **Translator:** Your job is to identify areas in the text that might be confusing to the group and to clarify these areas. You should create a document for your group that clearly identifies where to find the passage in the text and a brief, clear translation of the confusing passage. Your job as translator may also include identifying unfamiliar words and defining them for the group. Aim for 2-3 passages for each reading assignment.

In addition to the job you are assigned to complete above, each person should answer the following question each day. If you would like, you could use an evidence chart to answer the question.

- How do the ideas in the section you read connect to the other texts we have read this semester? Be sure to respond by discussing the section you read both generally and by connecting to specific passages. You should write a fully-developed paragraph in response to this question daily for each reading assignment your group completes.

You should complete your job and your answer to the daily question above in writing each day. Please date the daily assignment and clearly note the pages you read and the job you were completing. Each day, I will check your assignment for completion, and you will turn in all the written assignments in your final draft packet.

Memoir Book Club Master Assignment Sheet

Tuesday, April 30th

Reading Assignment: _____

Discussion Director: _____

Golden Line Finder: _____

Summarizer: _____

Translator: _____

Wednesday, May 1st

Reading Assignment: _____

Discussion Director: _____

Golden Line Finder: _____

Summarizer: _____

Translator: _____

Thursday, May 2nd

Reading Assignment: _____

Discussion Director: _____

Golden Line Finder: _____

Summarizer: _____

Translator: _____

Monday, May 6th

Reading Assignment: _____

Discussion Director: _____

Golden Line Finder: _____

Summarizer: _____

Translator: _____

Tuesday, May 7th

Reading Assignment: _____

Discussion Director: _____

Golden Line Finder: _____

Summarizer: _____

Translator: _____

Wednesday, May 8th

Reading Assignment: _____

Discussion Director: _____

Golden Line Finder: _____

Summarizer: _____

Translator: _____

Thursday, May 9th

Reading Assignment: _____

Discussion Director: _____

Golden Line Finder: _____

Summarizer: _____

Translator: _____

Week 15

Monday 4/29

Essay 6 due

Homework

- Memoir Group Homework

Tuesday 4/30

Discuss Memoirs in Book Club Groups

Homework

- Memoir Group Homework

Wednesday 5/1

Discuss Memoirs in Book Club Groups

Homework

- Memoir Group Homework

Thursday 5/2

Discuss Memoirs in Book Club Groups

Homework

- Post your response to Blog Prompt 15 on Blackboard by Friday at 5:00pm.
- Post your comments on two other students' blogs by Monday at 5:00pm.
- Memoir Group Homework

Week 16

<p>Monday 5/6</p> <p>Discuss Memoirs in Book Club Groups</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments on Blog 15 due by 5 p.m. today.• Memoir Group Homework <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Tuesday 5/7</p> <p>Discuss Memoirs in Book Club Groups</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Memoir Group Homework <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Wednesday 5/8</p> <p>Discuss Memoirs in Book Club Groups</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Memoir Group Homework <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Thursday 5/9</p> <p>Discuss Memoirs in Book Club Groups</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete your rough draft of Assignment 7• Post your response to Blog Prompt 16 on Blackboard by Friday at 5:00pm.• Post your comments on two other students' blogs by Monday at 5:00pm.

Week 17

<p>Monday 5/13</p> <p>Rough, Rough Draft of Essay 7 due</p> <p>Draft Conferences</p> <p>Book Club Peer Review</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments on Blog 15 due by 5 p.m. today.• Revise your draft of Essay 7 based on your peer review and/or individual conferences	<p>Tuesday 5/14</p> <p>Completed Rough Draft of Essay 7 due</p> <p>Draft Conferences</p> <p>Book Club Peer Review</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise your draft of Essay 7 based on your peer review and/or individual conferences
<p>Wednesday 5/15</p> <p>Draft Conferences</p> <p>Non-Book Club Peer Review</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete your final draft of Essay 7• Don't forget to visit the Writing Center by closing today	<p>Thursday 5/16</p> <p>Final Draft of Essay 7 due</p> <p>Introduction to Final Exam</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post your response to Blog Prompt 17 on Blackboard by Friday at 5:00pm.• Post your comments on two other students' blogs by Monday at 5:00pm.• Begin preparing for your final exam.

Sample Student Essay

Student Name

Professor Serpas

EXP 389

16 May 2013

Achieving Happiness

Nowadays we believe that if we are wealthy and have material possessions we would be happy and content with our lives. Is this really the case, how does money and materialistic items help us achieve happiness? If we look at celebrities, athletes, or individuals who possess large sums of wealth and material possessions we believe they are the happiest individuals; that they have everything and can buy anything. However, are these people really content with their lives? In Gretchen Rubin's book *The Happiness Project*, she explains that to be happy it must come from inside oneself; you must do the things you love like to have fun, freedom, and the most important the inner drive to push you on the right track in becoming happy. Rubin realizing she was in danger of wasting her life gave herself a year to conduct a happiness project; to not only become happier, but also to be more satisfied and content with everyday life. Every month she completed a different set of resolutions to help her along the way. Rubin was innately motivated to achieve true happiness and had that inner drive to change old habits and create new ones.

Moreover, methods Rubin used to become happy related to Daniel H. Pink's book *Drive*. Pink helps us understand whether or not happiness comes from outside sources or is it within oneself to make the change. His study on extrinsic forces such as money or material possession implies that these forces only keeps people happy for a short period of time; on the other hand intrinsic forces such as ones inner drive is a greater force than other outside influences. Rubin used intrinsic motivation to commit to her happiness project and her daily habits. In Charles Duhigg's book *The Power of Habit* Duhigg defines habit as "the choices that all of us deliberately make at some point, and then stop thinking about but continue doing often everyday" (xvii). Nevertheless, in his book he explains how we human beings can change habits or addictions to create new and healthy ones. Rubin created and changed habits such as, keeping a low temper, having more fun, and being energetic. Most of these habits led her with overwhelming happiness which rubbed off on others and ultimately changed the atmosphere around her house and friends. This

emotional contagion relates to Lauren Slater's text *Opening Skinners Box: Great Psychological Experiments of the Twentieth Century*, where she explains an experiment conducted by two scientists John Darley and Bibb Latane to test the reaction of a naïve subject and if that subject attempted to aid themselves or others when something disastrous or out of the ordinary occurred. Rubin's intrinsic motivation based on *Drive*, her creation of her habit loop and changing of habits explained by Duhigg, and social imitation based on Darley and Latane's smoke experiment motivated her to change her lifestyle, and become happier and more content with her life.

Gretchen Rubin was a mother of two beautiful daughters, seven-year old Eliza and one-year old Eleanor. She was married to a handsome man named Jamie who loved her as much as she did. Rubin lived in New York City and was a full time writer; however, one April morning Rubin was sitting on a bus looking through rain spattered windows when realized she was in danger of wasting her life. She did not feel happy; she had everything: a loving husband, a loving family, two beautiful kids, friends, wealth, but did not feel content with her life. Rubin describes "I wasn't depressed and I wasn't having a midlife crisis, but I was suffering from midlife malaise" (2). This midlife malaise was a sense of discontent and feeling of disbelief that she could not do or accomplish anything. As a result of being frustrated and unhappy, Rubin started her own happiness project; every month for one year she set out four to five resolutions she wished to accomplish by the end of each month. These goals led her to intrinsically motivate herself to start a long and dedicated track towards happiness.

As previously mentioned, Rubin was intrinsically motivated to make herself feel happy, but how does Rubin's goal during January reveal important information about motivation? During this month she was dedicated to boost her energy and vitality; moreover, she had five resolutions to accomplish during this month: going to sleep earlier, exercising, organizing her house, tackling a nagging task, and acting more energetic. Of these five resolutions only exercising could be completed by being intrinsically motivated. Pink defines intrinsic motivation as "that enjoyment-based intrinsic motivation, namely how creative a person feels when working on the project, is the strongest and pervasive driver" (21). Rubin was never fond of exercising and was extrinsically forced by her father when she was younger. Rubin says "with extrinsic motivation, people act to win external rewards or avoid external punishments" (22). However, with this exercising goal, she inertly motivated herself to try to exercise every day. She did this to make herself feel better, boost energy, and look better. She also bought a twenty dollar pedometer and attempted to walk 10,000 steps every day; however, it was difficult for her to walk without having some external reward. For example, she mentioned "one of my worst qualities is my insatiable need for credit; I always wanted the gold star, the

recognition” (24). Rubin later combated this by realizing the pedometer was her intrinsic motivation; she wanted to show herself she could hit 10,000 steps. Moreover, Rubin soon realized that she was her own gold star. At the end of January, Rubin was off to a promising start; she had been intrinsically motivated to become happier and rewarded herself with a check mark on her resolution chart. This made it easier for her to be motivated and stick with her happiness project.

However, intrinsic motivation was not enough, because Rubin struggled to maintain that motivation whenever her temper rose. This appalling habit had become so common for her that she was beginning to grow tired of it. Nonetheless, this is where the habit loop comes into play. Duhigg defines the habit loop as “a loop which consists of the cue, routine, reward; cue, routine, reward becomes more and more automatic” (19). The cue is the trigger that tells our brain to go into instinctive mode and which habits to use” (19). Secondly, the routine is the action or habit itself, it can be done mentally, emotionally, or physically (Duhigg 19). Lastly the reward is the pleasure and satisfaction in executing a habit. Once when Rubin was changing Eleanor’s diaper, Eliza was complaining that she had not eaten her breakfast. As a result, this made Rubin lash out and said in a menacing tone *Wait a minute* (Rubin 95). In this scenario, Rubin’s cue or trigger that made her temper rise was Eliza complaining that she had not eaten. Her routine was lashing out at Eliza telling her to wait and lastly her reward was silence and Eliza listening to her.

Moreover, Rubin wanted to change this awful habit and keep a cool head whenever her husband or kids complained. Keeping a cool head would help her become much happier and allow her to lighten up. During the month of April, one of her resolutions was to sing in the morning. This was where instead of lashing out on her kids or husband as she used to, she would try to sing their mistakes or complaints to make them laugh and listen. This took extreme discipline for Rubin, because her quick temper had become a habit which was difficult to change. However, she was still determined to alter her hot tempered habit. According to Duhigg, “the only way habit change is achievable is if you use the same cue, provide the same reward, but modify the routine to successfully change the habit” (62); Duhigg classifies this as the golden rule of habit change and to transform any habit it must be implemented. Rubin describes “One morning Eliza whined ‘why do I have to go to class today? I don’t want to go to tae kwon do,’ I wanted to snap back, ‘you always say you don’t want to go, but then you have fun,’ or ‘I don’t like to hear all this grumbling.’ instead, even though it wasn’t easy, I sang out ‘I don’t want to go tae kwon do’, making her listen in a happy manner” (96). Rubin’s routine before her habit change was lashing out at her kids; however, in this scenario she replaced her hot temper by singing Eliza’s complaints. This habit change kept the same cue which was

Eliza's complaining and the same reward which was silence or getting the job done; however, the singing did not affect anyone's feelings and the problem was dealt in a happier manner. Furthermore, this type of mentality in dealing with kids or spouses increases happiness and helps marital and child relations. Also Rubin's habit change allowed her to not only deal with problems in a positive way, but to spread happiness in an easy, but effective manner. Lastly, this shows that anyone can change a habit simply by applying the golden rule of habit change.

Nonetheless, there were other habit changes Rubin went through during the course of the year. These changes made her ultimately happier and more kind. Another one of these habits Rubin suffered from was gossiping. During the month of June, one of Rubin's resolutions was to end gossiping all together. To obtain long term happiness, you must give up something that brings short term happiness; such as gossiping (Rubin 155). This short term happiness from gossiping is increasingly fun for social functions; however, it is not a nice thing to do and whenever we say critical things about other people the spontaneous trait transference occurs. The spontaneous trait transference is a psychological phenomenon where people unintentionally transfer traits to the people who ascribe them (Rubin 156). For instance, if I was to tell Josh that Bill is ignorant; Josh would believe I was equally ignorant. As a result Rubin wished to stop. Her cue which lured her to gossip was an urge or juicy story, the routine was excessively talking about someone in a meaningful manner; also known as gossiping, and lastly the reward was socially bonding with others.

Rubin's habit change was difficult: for one she did not realize how much she loved gossiping until she attempted to stop. Moreover, her cue was still the urge or juicy story; however, her new routine was either walking away or telling gossipers to stop. This allowed her reward to stay the same, because she still socially bonded with others who disagreed with gossiping. Rubin shared "I was at a meeting when someone mentioned of mutual acquaintances, 'I heard that their marriage was in trouble.' 'I hadn't heard that,' someone replied. *So fill us in* was the implication of her tone. 'Oh I don't think that's true,' I said dismissively. *Let's not talk about that was the implication of my tone*" (155). Moreover, intervening the gossiping revealed to listeners the harmful effects of slandering and that Rubin was against it. Rubin's difficult habit not only allowed her to become happy, but it also showed that people can change who they are. Nevertheless, this made Rubin even happier, because she knew she was making a difference and that she felt more content with life than before she started her happiness project.

"We are driven by imitation; we want to be like other people, but never ourselves" (Slater 105). Why is that? Well imitating successful individuals not only makes us feel happier, but it also gives us the chance to look up to someone else and imitate them. This gives us a sense of contentment. Two scientists John Darley and Bibb Latane

conducted an experiment to test whether or not human beings are driven by social imitation. They brought in three college students; two as actors and one as a naïve subject and told them to fill out a questionnaire on college life. A few minutes into the experiment, nonhazardous smoke began to flow out from vents and captivate the room. The two actors continued to fill out the form, but the naïve subject was more interested in the heavy smoke pouring out like cream. Slater describes “The confederates were instructed to keep filling out their forms, to display no fear. They did. [...] The smoke was an irritant and caused one to cough. Each time, the naïve subject looked alarmed, looked at the smoke going from wisp to waft, looked at the calm confederates, and then, clearly confused, went back to filling out the questionnaire”(104). In other words, the naïve subject was driven by imitation; he followed the confederates lead and did nothing about the smoke. This experiment shows that we are driven by social imitation; copying other people to please ourselves and to feel comfortable rather than feeling out of place.

However, by what method can this be related to happiness? Rubin described a phenomenon called “emotional contagion where one can unconsciously catch emotions from other people--whether good moods or bad ones” (127). Thus, social imitation and emotional contagion are the same; For example, we all have that friend that has a “contagious laughter”. Why do you think that is? Well, because of that friend’s continuous laughter, everyone else in the group may start to inexplicably feel the same way, sometimes without even realizing what is causing their reaction. Moreover, one of Rubin’s resolutions during May was to take time to be silly. Even though controlling her temper by singing complaints had done her wonders, Rubin wanted a happy atmosphere around her home. She did this by being happy around the house. Studies show the happier we are, the more physically attractive, kind, and caring we look to others. Not to mention, being happy around a group of friends will also make them happy as well. One day while putting groceries away, Rubin used two clementine’s to make goggle eyes at her daughters; not only making her laugh, but her whole family as well. Since, Eleanor and Eliza saw their mother laughing at her own joke, they joined in. As a result, this made her family happier and act more enjoyable. This was exactly how the naïve subject reacted when he saw the confederates ignoring the smoke; he imitated them.

Moreover, another example of social imitation during Rubin’s year of her happiness project was during June. This month was dedicated in making time for friends. One of her resolutions during this month was to make three new friends. Studies show that the more friends and the more socially involved we are the longer we live and the happier our life tends to be. Social imitation plays a huge role in making friends, because one: we human beings will tend to make friends with people who think like us. In other words, we are attracted to people who manage to act and think

like us. Moreover, this type of social imitation is classified as self-imitation; we all acquire this trait which helps us to pick out long and short term relationships. One of her goals within this resolution was to smile more frequently, because the more we smile, the happier the individual we are talking to gets. This can make not only the individual we are talking to happy, but ourselves as well.

In conclusion, happiness does not come just from money or material possession as Rubin discovered; however, it comes from the intrinsic motivation and the belief that we can create and change habits. Mario Novak once said “Mind is everything. Every thought you create manifests itself in real world; if you didn’t achieve something you strive for – you simply didn’t believe in it enough”. In other words, we must believe in ourselves to achieve the greatest feats. Rubin believed in herself; she motivated herself to keep striving and keep going no matter how hard it got. She intrinsically motivated herself, created and altered habits, and spread happiness by social imitation to become happier in her everyday life. To this day Gretchen Rubin continues to strive and struggle to tackle all the habits and resolutions she practiced throughout that one year; so she can continue to be happy and content with her lifestyle.

In their final in-class essay for the semester, students choose 3-4 of the habits of mind from *The Framework for Postsecondary Success* and discuss how they have developed this habit over the course of the semester. The following excerpts from some student essays discuss the book club assignment:

- When I first got in to this class, I was definitely not used to all of the responsibilities that college gave to me. It was my first day in college as well, and I did not know what to expect. In the first few weeks, I would occasionally miss homework because I would not plan out my time very well. I decided, by the third week of school, that, in order to excel in the class, I was going to have to step up my game and become responsible for myself. I started to make an agenda for what work I was going to have for each day. Also, I tried to put other things below my school work on a priority list unless they really were important. Because I did this, my grade in this class went up, and I had a lot less trouble being on top of my readings and essays. Also, in week 8, I switched tables in the class for the upcoming reading group project. I was really nervous about this at first, because I was still pretty shy, and these were people I had never talked to before. After a few days, I realized the group had a lot of trouble with discussions, and sometimes did not understand one another. I decided that I had the responsibility to help this group out by being the discussion leader. I also tried to help one of my group members to understand the reading concepts better, because she had trouble reading in English. Then, we began to read the book, *Freedom Writers Diary*, for our book project. I felt that it was my job to simplify the main ideas in the book so that we could discuss them. I feel that because of this, our group had much better understanding of the text, and, in turn, wrote a stronger essay. This class has made me more responsible for myself, as well as making me a good leader to my friends in the class.
- In the last essay we did we had to pick groups and read a memoir. My group depended on each other to be successful. We were all responsible in reading the pages we had to read and doing of specific jobs we were assigned that day. Daniel H. Pink would have said that we had the autonomy to do well. If I didn't do the readings or the homework not only would have let my group down, I would have felt that I didn't do my own part. This class made me even more responsible that I was before because I was able to change my bad habits and I manage my time more efficiently.
- Another example is when we chose our own groups for the memoir, we each had a role to do and if we didn't do that, we would let others down because we didn't give them the information needed for that chapter. It was sort of a challenge to read each night and present our homework the next day but I didn't let anything get me from doing it because I couldn't let my team down. Responsibility reminds me of autonomy because we are responsible for our own actions, we direct and choose whether we decide to act responsible.
- And when we had our first group discussions with our memoir groups in class and no one seemed to participate in so I was the first one to discuss how I felt about the book and what my main thoughts were. I was able to take role and lead the group into a discussion about the book. In class I learned to apply the role of leader and take responsibility from my high school experience into group discussions we had in this class. I am still learning how to fully reach this habit because sometimes I am the one who doesn't participate but I feel that with writing one and writing two, I will be able to achieve this habit.

Students' General Reflections on Autonomy in the Class

- Being an adult, when given the course outline and syllabus for daily homework and activities in this course, I was expected but not forced to take an active role in my own participation in the class by staying on top of the assigned readings and homework assignments in order to further prepare me to engage with my peers in daily group assignments and discussions in order to write the required essays of us. Even though keeping up with all the daily reading and homework was challenging, it was ultimately my grade on the line and, therefore, it was of my free will and choice and nobody else's to put in whatever effort and work I felt necessary in order for me to receive the grade I ultimately thought I deserved.
- After leaving high school two years early, it was demanding for me to become more responsible for my actions. I was allowed more autonomy, than I was experienced to. Being forced to become more responsible for my actions and managing time more wisely was extremely difficult for me. However, when taking EXP 389, I was responsible for managing time. I had to work on my essay every night attempting to make a

masterpiece. At some points I felt like a sculptor crafting an art, that had to be just right and had to be responsible for what it would become.