

Resource Guide

Fostering Intrinsic Motivation

Motivating students in the classroom is important for creating an engaged learning experience. While extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or punishments, may provide temporary boosts, it often lacks the sustained commitment seen with intrinsic motivation. Fostering intrinsic motivation, rooted in personal satisfaction and a genuine interest in the subject matter promotes deep understanding of material. However, it can be difficult to motivate the diverse set of students you teach who have responsibilities to other courses, work, caretaking, service, social activities, and/or involvement. Here are four tips to help foster intrinsic motivation in your course.

- **Provide meaningful questions:** Asks questions for discussion or solving that connect to authentic questions that connect to students lives or that challenge them connecting ideas to a certain time, place, or making connections to other disciplines.
- **Allow Choice:** When possible, allow students to make their own choices, whether that be over student groups, options for artifacts on a particular assignment or types of activities they do to complete course objectives. This gives student autonomy and fosters ownership of their learning.
- **Explain why:** Be transparent about why you are having students complete any task, but also explain why you love the field. Motivation can come if students can connect the coursework to why they are in the course related to their passion or future goals.
- **Foster a growth mindset:** Students can be more motivated if they believe they are able to succeed in the course. Provide encouragement, explain that even though content may be difficult, you believe they can meet the expectations.

Resources

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Priniski, S. J., Hecht, C. A., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2018). Making Learning Personally Meaningful: A New Framework for Relevance Research. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 86(1), 11–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2017.1380589>

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by email at cttl@slu.edu.