

How to make teaching relevant to students' hopes and interests

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Overview

Relevance: how personally meaningful an object (e.g. topic or activity or outcome) is to a learner.



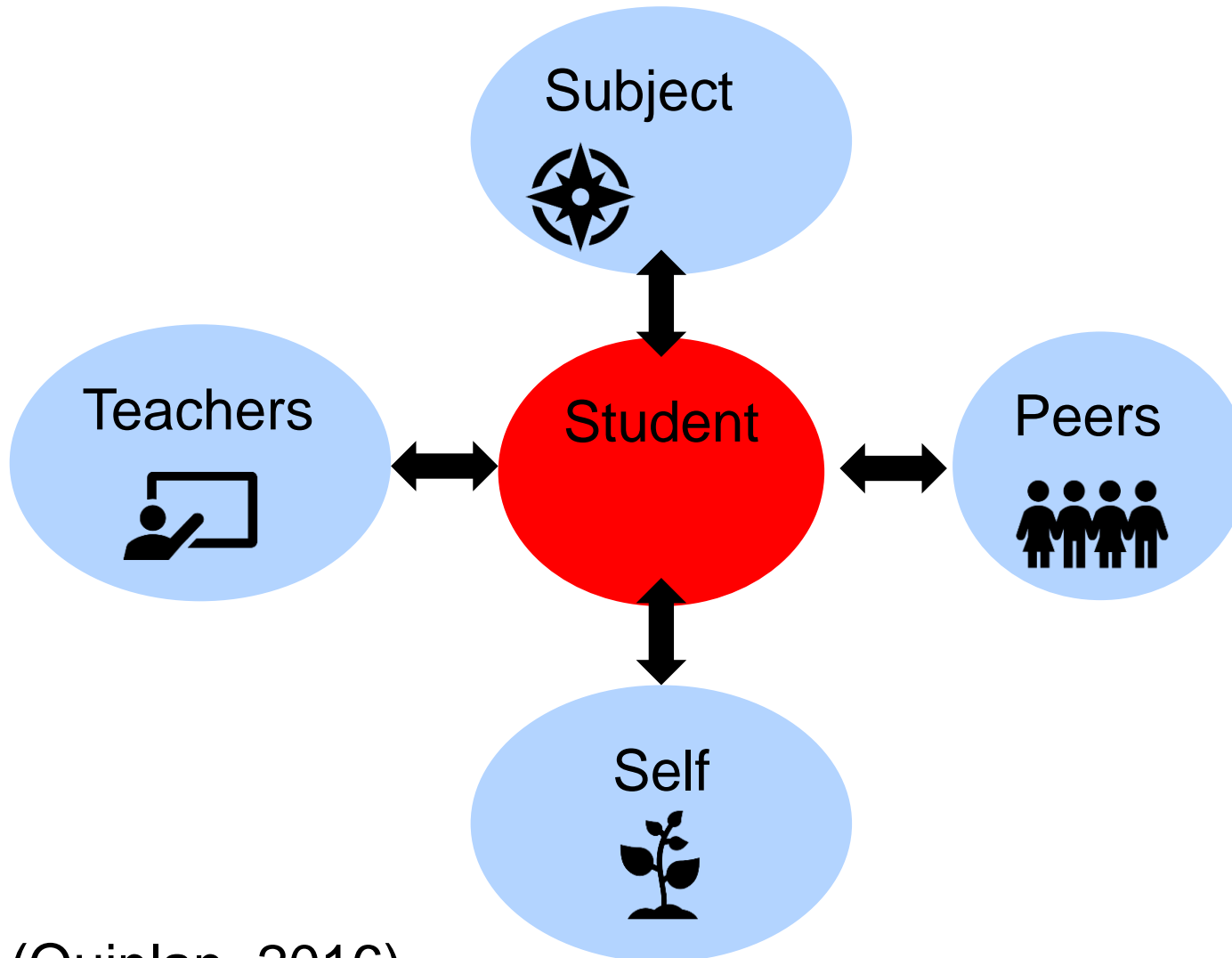
Study 1: What are students' hopes for university study? (Quinlan and Salmen, 2019)



Methods

- **Online survey** as part of undergraduate student survey (non-finalists) (n=1772)
- When you decided to come to this university, what learning experiences did you want?
- Thematically coded responses
- Grouped similar codes into themes based on (Quinlan, 2016)

Key Emotional Relationships in Higher Education



(Quinlan, 2016)

Q1. What students *want* from their learning experience

Explore subject (20%)



Apply learning (15%)



Explore and apply (10%)

Grow as a person (11%)



Interact with peers (8%)



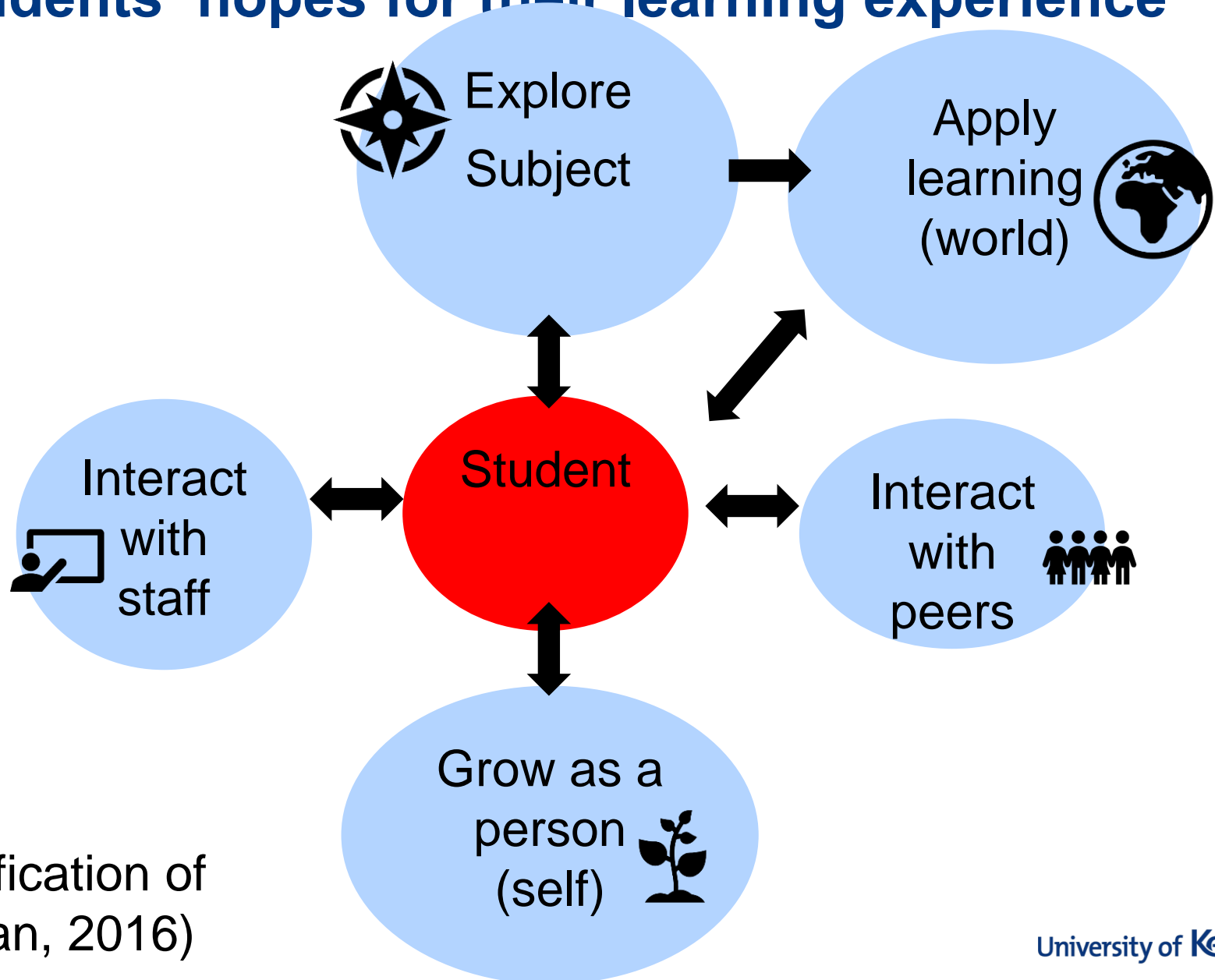
Interact with staff (3%)



Cumulative: 67%

Nonspecific (12%)

Students' hopes for their learning experience



(modification of
Quinlan, 2016)

Students care about the learning process



Teaching to address all of these student hopes

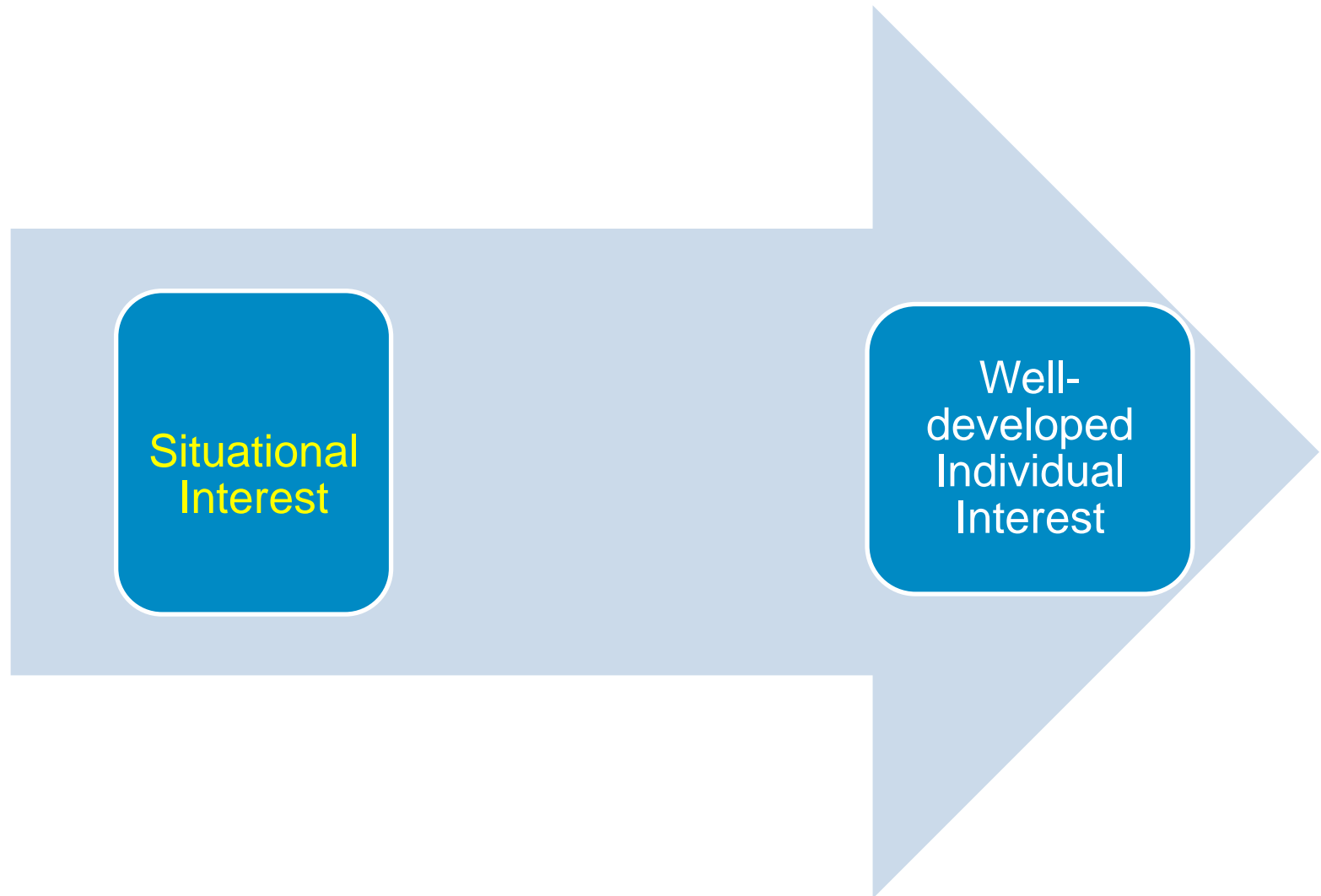
- High impact pedagogies such as internships, service learning, research projects (Kuh, 2008; Kuh and O'Donnell, 2013) for all of the hopes
- Authentic assessment for applying learning
- Collaborative/cooperative learning activities
- Problem-based learning
- Simulations



Study 2: What triggers students' interest during lectures?



A Theory of Interest as a Motivational Variable



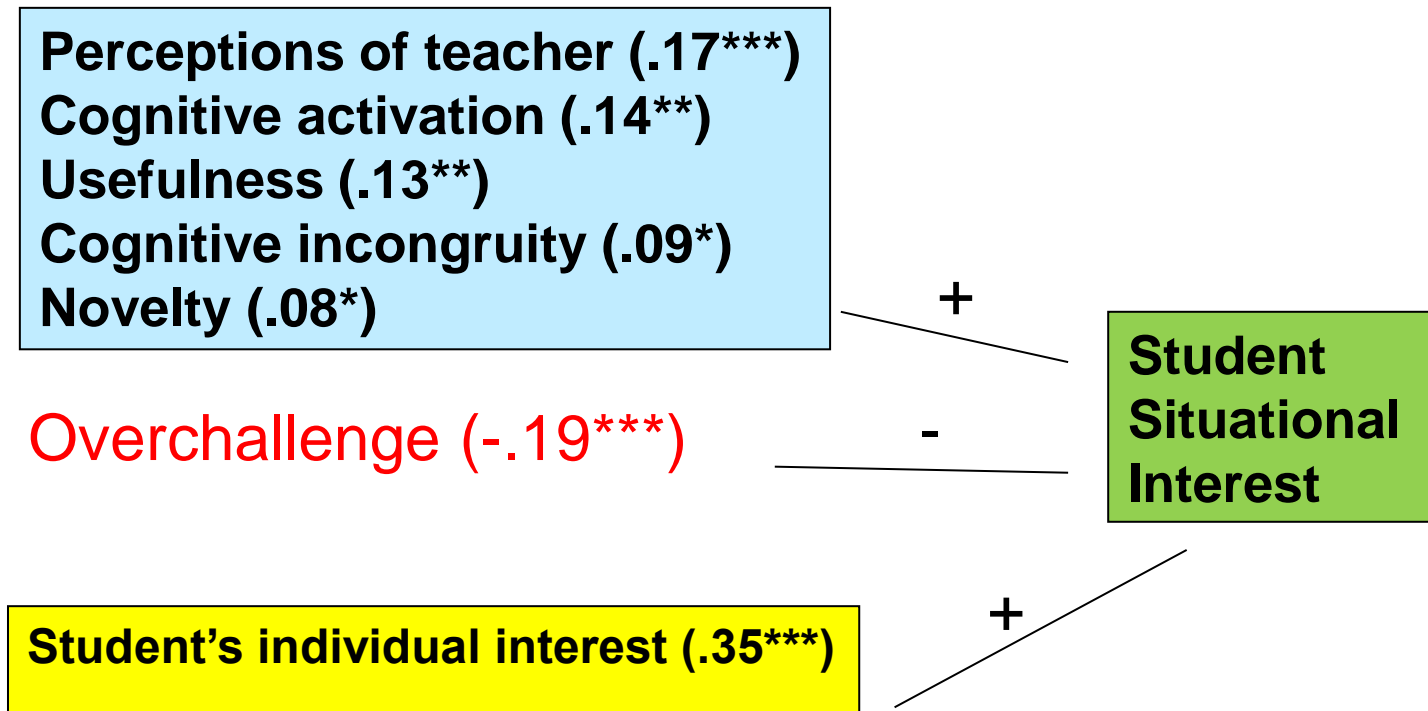
(Renninger & Hidi, 2006; 2015)

Study 2 Methods

- Observed 12 first year undergraduate lectures in social science and science subjects.
- 706 students (460 females; mean age: 19 years) completed post-lecture survey.
- Survey analysis: descriptive statistics, t-tests, multiple regression



Study 2: What triggers students' situational interest during first year lectures?



(Regression: Standardized betas where * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$)

Quinlan (2019)

Statistics for bioscientists example



Unpicking the interesting moments: using case examples

Lack of co-ordination

Mrs Smith

Many people with mental, physical and/or medical conditions are at risk of long hospital stays and/or to long-term care in a nursing home.

Mrs Smith is a fictitious women in her 80s with a range of long-term health and social care problems for which she needs care and support.



Mrs Smith encounters daily difficulties and frustrations in navigating the health and social care system. Problems include her:

- many separate assessments
- having to repeat her story to many people
- delays in care due to the poor transmission of information
- bewilderment at the sheer complexity of the system.

10

Unpicking interesting moments



Study 3 Conclusion: how to trigger students' interest in lectures

- BE interesting as a teacher
- Make students think – ask a question, give them a puzzle or a problem
- Show them relevance and usefulness
- Present something incongruent or new
- Pitch to the right difficulty level



Conclusion

- Relevance is vital to high quality education
- To make learning relevant to students, align learning with their hopes:
 - explore subject, apply learning, grow as people, interact with staff and interact with peers
- Attend to these hopes throughout the course design – from programme level to micro level interactions

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Other References

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Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

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