Answers to Exercise 4.2

Connecting to Students’ Life Ambitions

1. *Why is it true that personal projects can intrinsically motivate students?*

Assuming that the human mind is organized in a hierarchy of goals, any time students are working on high-level goals within their personal hierarchies, they are probably highly engaged. The personal project is designed to tap into high-level goals for each student. The students’ personal project selections have no constraints. Consequently, students should choose personal projects that they consider valuable and select goals about which they are truly excited.

2. *Explain the reasoning behind asking students in phase one to identify what they would try if they knew they wouldn’t fail.*

The purpose of the activity is to help students recognize goals they have for themselves that they may have suppressed because they believe the goals to be impossible to accomplish. As we saw in chapter 1, this can happen at a very early age if students have not cultivated the belief that they can accomplish complex goals with necessary effort.

3. *What are the roles of heroes and role models in the personal project?*

Heroes and role models represent concrete examples of people who have achieved the type of goal to which students aspire. The fact that others have accomplished their goals helps students perceive their goals as much more reasonable and possible. Also, as students learn about the lives of their role models and heroes, they might glean ideas and insights that will help them with their goals.