

PICTURE THIS: EXPLORING CAREER IDENTITY THROUGH NARRATIVE REFLECTION AND GEN-AI

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WHY THIS MATTERS

Professional identity development is a central component of undergraduate education, shaping how students understand their role in a discipline and make career decisions.

(Trede et al., 2012; Barbarà-i-Molinero et al., 2017)

In agricultural communications, identity development is often cultivated through writing, storytelling, and media production experiences that position students as future communicators and advocates.

(Leggette et al., 2016; Leggette & Jarvis, 2016)

Pedagogical strategies that prompt reflection and imagination can support students' sense of purpose, voice, and connection to public audiences.

(Corder & Iribeck, 2018; Morgan, 2010)

CONCEPT

This classroom activity **integrates narrative reflection and generative AI visualization to support the development** of undergraduate **professional identity**.

Rather than positioning AI as a productivity tool, this approach frames **generative AI as a reflection and meaning-making partner**.

(Kasneji et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024)

CONNECTION TO THEORY

This activity is informed by the **Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning**, which emphasizes integrating verbal and visual modalities to support mental model construction and meaning making (Mayer, 2002; Mayer, 2024).

By layering narrative writing, visualization, and reflection, students externalized internal conceptions of their future professional selves.

HOW IT WORKS

This activity was implemented in an **introductory undergraduate agricultural course (n = 42)**.

- ➔ 1. Students **wrote a 5–7 sentence** narrative imagining themselves three to five years after graduation.
 - ➔ a. Narratives were completed prior to AI use to preserve students' internally constructed future visions.
- ➔ 2. Students **used Google Gemini** to refine their narrative into a clear image **prompt**.
(Google DeepMind, 2025)
- ➔ 3. Students **generated one AI image** representing their envisioned professional future using Adobe Firefly.
(Adobe, 2025)
- ➔ 4. Students **reflected** on alignment, mismatch, and surprise between their imagined and generated futures.
- ➔ 5. A **guided class discussion** supported peer dialogue and meaning making.



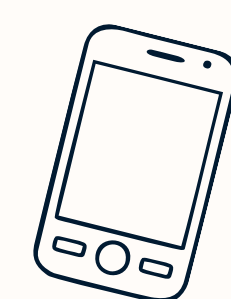
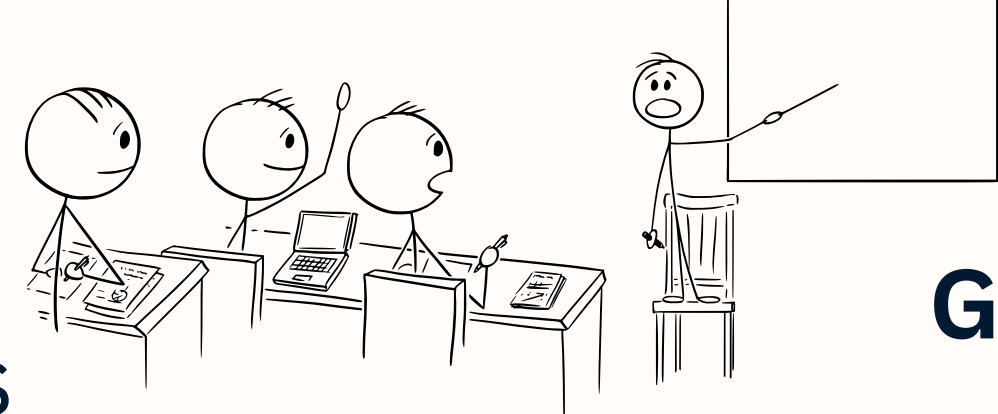
RESOURCES NEEDED

Access to a **generative AI image platform like Adobe Firefly**

One class period

Guided reflection prompts

Optional extensions include portfolio integration or digital display.



SCAN FOR ABSTRACT
AND FULL REFERENCES



REFLECTIONS

Student reflections indicated strong engagement and emotional investment in the activity. Common reflection themes included:

- Increased clarity around career goals
- Heightened confidence in future aspirations
- Recognition of personal values and priorities
- Critical awareness of the limits of AI representation

These reflections supported students' articulation of emerging professional identities.

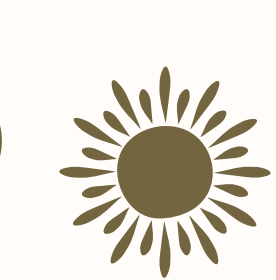
ADAPTABILITY AND APPLICATION

This innovation is:

- Low cost
- Implementable within one class session
- Adaptable across disciplinary contexts
- Suitable for early undergraduate coursework

The activity supports identity reflection while modeling thoughtful and **ethical engagement with generative AI in education**.

Student reflections indicated **increased clarity around career goals, stronger emotional connection to envisioned futures, and critical awareness of the limitations of generative AI**.



“Seeing my vision as an image absolutely helped me connect with my goal. It somehow made the goal seem more real and attainable.”



“I did not realize how much I pictured myself working with people until I saw the image.”



“The image showed me things I did not want, which helped clarify what actually fits me.”



“AI cannot fully capture what matters most, but it helped me think more deeply about my goals.”

