While attending college at SAE Institute-Atlanta my class, 0814AM, was given a class period in the SSL recording studio to create a song. Prior to having the studio time my class and I allocated Brandon, BDP, the task of making a synchronized beat. After listening to the beat, during class, Andre volunteered to rap on our track, but he was reluctant. My classmates and I hadn’t come to a decision of whether we wanted a club song or love song, so Andre didn’t have any direction. Another classmate of mine, Trez, told Andre to “feel out the beat…do what you feel,” pertaining to the lyrics. So Andre walked into the vocal booth, put on the headphones, and gave us the cue to start the track, as he looked through the glass separating the vocal booth from the control room. As the instrumental played the first time, with eyes closed, Andre spit two completely different verses. He used the first take as a rough draft. The second time it played he stuck with one idea and ran with it successfully. Andre had confidence and swagger, as he stood behind the microphone rapping about trying to pickup a women at a club, with his hands on the headphones and eyes still closed. As a class we decided to record one more time, as an extra, in case something went wrong on the second recording. Andre used his sense of flow to quickly create verses to our song, so we could complete our class project. His mind freed itself from the pressure of messing up, to allow the great verses to shine through. Closing his eyes and putting his hands on the headphones was Andre’s visual form of tapping into his sense of flow. Our song was more than a few instruments playing; Our song now had two verses with space left for two choruses.
Mihayli Csikszentmihayli wrote an article titled “If We Are So Rich, Why Aren’t We Happy?” Csikszentmihayli studied psychology, tailored to pinpointing the circumstances leading to people living happier lives. While studying Mihayli became known for his in-depth ideas on the concept of flow, and how it effects lyricists work flow. The experience of flow is described with supporting examples of knowledge based flow, loss of the perception of time, and the specific types of activities which generally result in flow. These three ideas prove the importance of achieving flow during daily tasks. Flow is most important to people with creative personalities. For example the horoscope sign Capricorn is known for being targeted toward creative, fun, and spontaneous individuals. Mihayli Csikszentmihayli accurately expresses the ease in a creative process when flow is present through having a clear mind and focusing on artistic aspects rather than tedious steps.

In “If We Are So Rich, Why Aren’t We Happy?” flow while executing creative work is important, because the human mind is allowed freedom from reality, rules, and regulations. Early in the article Csikszentmihayli said “Creative activities, music, sports, games, and religious rituals are typical sources for this kind of experience” (Csikszentmihayli pg.148-149). Many creative activities are meant to be a form of self expression such as writing music, the example from the article. When an individual is writing music their mind isn’t focused on the stresses of everyday life, the imagination is free. Being creative allows everyone an opportunity to live out daily fantasies while possibly entertaining others wanting the same experience. Having experienced being around professional song writers, they zone out, and write about the first topic or feeling coming to their mind. When the feeling is deemed as negative by society, drug use, Csikszentmihayli explain it perfectly as, “…a particular kind of experience…worth doing for it’s own sake…it may
have no consequence outside itself” (Csikszentmihayli pg.149). The rapper Future discusses popping Xanax and drinking Codeine, but he has publicly said he’s never done drugs. Future uses flow to entertain an audience, by rapping about actions he’s never done before, resulting in a gain of wealth. Without the knowledge of the music industry, artists similar to future wouldn’t be successful artists.

An individual who has previous knowledge pertaining to the task at hand will be more relaxed while completing a creative activity, according to Mihayli Csikszentmihayli. Having knowledge gives the brain an opportunity to concentrate on creative aspects of the project, rather than the tedious steps. In Csikszentmihayli’s article he proclaimed, “…effortless performance is only possible because the skills and techniques have been learned and practiced so well that they have become automatic” (Csikszentmihayli pg.150). This idea can be applied to many daily tasks such as when a person washes their hands. It’s common knowledge to most people to have hot water come out of the faucet the left handle needs to be turned, the right handle for cold. Washing our hands is part of most peoples daily routines. We don’t have stand in front of the sink for a few minutes to think about which handle to turn, it happens instantly. Washing our hands isn’t viewed as a chore by many Americans. Knowledge can come from studying but the most common way to achieve flow is from doing an activity repeatedly, and over time we lose track of how long it takes to complete the activity.

Losing track of time is a positive, from Mihayli Csikszentmihayli point of view, result of flow molding a relaxed creative atmosphere. As a well known lyricist in Csikszentmihayli’s article said about his writing process, “You lose your sense of time…you are sort of swayed by possibility…” (Csikszentmihayli pg.150). A typical atmosphere in a recording studio includes dim
lighting, no outside windows, and sound proof rooms. Studio sessions can last for six hours depending on the project, so being in an isolated space for so long creates a disconnect from reality. There have been many occasions when artists walk outside to take a smoke break to come back inside saying “I didn’t expect to open the front door and the sun be out.” Most recording sessions start when the sun goes down and don’t end until the sun comes up, the next day. After an engineer walks into the control room, locks the door behind them and sits down, the outside world has no meaning. Being isolated achieves a clear mind with no distractions leading to flow, and resulting in two hours feeling as if it had only been two minutes. An artist and engineer can become so involved in where the song can go, passion and drive fuel the adrenaline of happiness. Losing track of time is an effect of flow. The brain is focused on the project’s success, rather than how long the process is taking. When the session is over reality kicks back in and exhaustion begins to show itself, but flow is still present because the creative mind never sleeps.

Flow studied in “If We Are So Rich, Why Aren’t We Happy?” is correctly explaining the relaxed atmosphere, present when being creative causes a sense of spiritual freedom and a misperception of time. When a lyricist writes songs, there aren’t sets of guidelines to follow, creativity is embraced. Over time a lyricist can create a good quality song in a small amount of time, because they already know the process their brain needs to go through, to create a masterpiece. During the creative process, of completing the song, time can slip away and before anyone can notice the studio session time is already over. The idea of time slipping away was exactly what happened to my class when we were creating our song “Hot Fire.” Nadiyah, my best friend and classmate, was running late to class and didn’t arrive until we only had forty five minutes left in the studio. She hurried up and put her stuff down, listened to the uncompleted song, and volunteered to sing the chorus. Nadiyah makes a living as a professional backup singer, so recording is
routine for her. After she confidently walked into the vocal booth and put on the headphones while standing in front of the microphone, I began to play the track. The first take recorded was good, she gave two variations of an idea of a chorus. As a class we decided to go with the second version; Nadiyah said “okay, start it from the beginning.” In no time we had all the lyrical content we needed, but we ran out of time and couldn't add any ad-libs or harmony to the song. “Hot Fire” turned into a success because we had all the basics and that’s all that mattered. Flow assisted 0814AM in creating our class song to be used in a later mixing lecture.