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*A 7-Day
Unit Plan for
High School
Psychology*

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



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It is my hope that teaching positive psychology will bring a new perspective to the teaching of psychology as a whole.

Procedural Timeline

Lesson I. Positive Psychology:

A New Perspective on Human Behavior
CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE A

Lesson II. Positive Subjective Experiences:

A General Overview

Activity 2.1 Daily Mood Form
Transparency Master A
Wealth and Well-Being

Lesson III. Positive Subjective Experiences of the Past

Activity 3.1 The Satisfaction With Life Scale
Transparency Master A
Wealth and Well-Being

Lesson IV. Positive Subjective Experiences of the Present

Activity 4.1 Creating Flow Experiences
CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES B & C
Transparency Master B
Graphical Representation of Flow
Transparency Master C
Activities That Require Skill and Challenge
Transparency Master D
Activities That DO NOT Require Skill and Challenge

Lesson V. Positive Subjective Experiences of the Future

Activity 5.1 Measuring Optimism
Activity 5.2 Exploring Your Future: The Hope Scale
CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE D

Lesson VI. The Good Life: *Defining Character*

by Applying Positive Subjective Experiences

Activity 6.1 A Beautiful Day:
Applying Positive Psychology
Activity 6.2 Pleasurable Versus Philanthropic Activities:
Which Bring More Happiness?
CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES E & F

Content Outline

I. Positive Psychology:

A New Perspective on Human Behavior

A. Psychology's focus before World War II was threefold:

1. Curing mental illness
2. Making the lives of all people more fulfilling
3. Identifying and nurturing high talent

B. After the war, psychology's focus shifted to curing mental illness and has been largely successful.

1. According to Seligman (as cited in Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), 14 different disorders have been identified and can be successfully treated.
2. The DSM-IV is a helpful tool for psychologists in identifying and treating mental disorders.

C. As society becomes wealthier and healthier, we might expect that people would become happier and more fulfilled, but this is not the case.

1. Of the people in the United States, 15 to 20% will fall prey to severe depression, and about half will experience a milder form of depression at some point in life (Saroyan, 1998).
2. Today's average age of onset of depression is 15 years old, compared to 30 years old many years ago (McGuire, 1998).

D. Positive Psychology seeks to refocus the science of psychology toward the other two goals.

1. Definition of Positive Psychology—Positive Psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning. It aims to discover and promote factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive (Sheldon, Frederickson, Rathunde, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).
2. Goal of Positive Psychology—The goal of Positive Psychology is to consider optimal human functioning at several levels, including biological, experiential, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global. To accomplish this, studying the following is necessary:
 - a. The dynamic relationships among the processes in the levels listed above
 - b. The human ability to create order and meaning in response to inevitable adversity
 - c. The means by which “the good life” may emerge from these processes (Sheldon, Frederickson, Rathunde, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

E. Positive Psychology seeks to understand and encourage factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish.

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE A

II. Positive Subjective Experiences:

A General Overview

A. Positive subjective experiences indicate the degree to which people are achieving a goal based on what they believe to be important.

For example, if people value making straight As in high school, then doing so will result in positive feelings about themselves and those around them. Not doing so will result in negative feelings toward themselves and those around them. The same can be said for anything of value—volunteer work, fixing up old cars, yard work, one's job, making Mom and Dad proud, and so on.

B. Several factors influence the extent of positive subjective experiences:

1. Temperament—Temperament consists of the inborn qualities that determine how well people interact with the environment.
2. Learned positive outlook on life—People learn optimism and hope through experience. Also, people achieve greater life satisfaction when they work for things they value rather than merely for things that bring immediate pleasure.
3. Strongly held important values and goals related to these values—People who have clear goals and make progress working toward them report higher levels of subjective well-being.
4. Cultural differences—Although income level predicts positive experience, so do cultural differences. For example, Latin cultures report higher levels of well-being than one might predict from their incomes. Also, psychological measures, such as self-esteem, more accurately predict positive subjective experience in individualistic cultures (United States or Western European cultures) than in collectivist ones (Japanese or communist-based cultures).
5. Age—People's ages bring a wealth of perspective and experience that colors how they view life situations. For example, older people tend to view illness as being a part of the normal aging process than younger people. They have more confidence in their ability to deal with the problem and prefer a greater quality of life to mere survival (Williamson, 2000).

C. Understanding the sources of positive subjective experience leads to better individuals and societies.

People who have positive subjective experiences often

1. Contribute more to their communities
2. Have better relationships with others
3. Are more creative in some realms
4. Excel in sports and academics
5. Provide leadership
6. Are models for others
7. Propose new ideas in terms of science, business, and other life arenas
8. Help others
9. Are less of a drain (relative to those without such positive experiences) on psychological and physical health systems

Content Outline...continued

Activity 2.1 Daily Mood Form
Transparency Master A *Wealth and Well-Being*

III. Positive Subjective Experiences of the Past

A. Well-being—Well-being is the pervasive sense that life has been and is good. It is an ongoing perception that this time in one's life, or even life as a whole, is fulfilling, meaningful, and pleasant (Myers, 1993).

1. Dynamic equilibrium theory—Well-being remains relatively consistent over the life span because of personality, although current events in people's lives can either raise or lower well-being temporarily (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999).
2. People who have a high sense of well-being tend to be extraverts, optimists, and worry-free.
3. The types of goals people have determine how much well-being they are experiencing with life in general.
 - a. Intrinsic goals are positively correlated with well-being.
 - b. Extrinsic goals are negatively correlated with well-being.
4. Contrary to popular belief, well-being does not rise when income rises.
 - a. Wealth does not mean well-being—According to University of Michigan researcher Ronald Inglehart (as cited in Myers, 1993), people from wealthier countries report higher levels of well-being than those in poorer countries on average, but levels of well being differ from country to country. West Germans average twice as much personal income as the Irish, but the Irish report being happier. The same can be seen with the wealthier French as compared to their Belgian neighbors.
 - b. Within countries, the richer are not always happier. Living in abject poverty does not promote happiness, but having more than one needs has little effect on one's well-being. Diener and colleagues (Diener, Horowitz, & Emmons, 1985) interviewed 49 of the wealthiest Americans as listed by *Forbes* magazine and found them to be only slightly happier than average.
5. Health does not correlate with well-being. How people view their health depends on their emotional state and objective measures of their health from doctors (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999).
 - a. People generally need a basic level of health wherein pain does not interfere with activities (Williamson, 1998).
 - b. People with high levels of well-being and hope usually return to normal levels of well-being after unpleasant diagnoses of illness (Synder, 2000).
 - c. The exception to this rule is for people with multiple disabling conditions. Although their well-being eventually goes up after initial diagnosis, they usually do not return to normal levels of well-being that were present before diagnosis.

B. Satisfaction—Satisfaction is the feeling that one has accomplished a goal during a certain period of time.

1. As long as people feel they are reaching their goals somehow, satisfaction remains unaffected. Although the ultimate goal may be high, even small achievements can foster feelings of satisfaction.
2. People use social comparison to determine how well they are achieving satisfaction with life.
 - a. Adaptation-level principle—People’s satisfaction is relative to their prior experience. People tend to compare their present levels of satisfaction with past experiences. When situations change for the better or worse in relation to perceived goals, levels of satisfaction are affected. For example, students who receive a higher grade than expected both feel good and praise the teacher; whereas those who receive a lower grade than expected both feel lousy and trash the teacher. Thus, a B grade could mean something quite different to the student who expected an F as compared to a student who expected an A, thus changing levels of satisfaction with the class (Snyder & Clair, 1976).
 - b. Relative deprivation principle—People’s happiness is relative to others’ attainment of happiness. How happy or frustrated people feel depends on with whom they compare themselves. People readily identify others as being rich or beautiful, but rarely believe themselves to be so. For example, to someone making \$10,000 a year, \$50,000 seems like wealth; but to someone making \$500,000 a year, \$1,000,000 seems like wealth.

Activity 3.1 The Satisfaction With Life Scale
Transparency Master A *Wealth and Well-Being*

IV. Positive Subjective Experiences of the Present

A. Flow—Flow is a state of optimal experience. Flow activities are done for the sake of doing them and not for extrinsic rewards.

1. Qualities of flow experiences include the following:
 - a. Attention that is freely invested and centered on achieving goals—Choosing to spend time in activities and working toward goals encourages flow.
 - b. The lack of psychological disorder—When people experience psychic entropy, they tend to lose flow. Psychic entropy is what happens when people get information that conflicts with their existing intentions or that distracts them from carrying out their intentions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The less stress and distraction, the greater the opportunity for flow.
 - c. Merging action and awareness—Fully concentrating on an activity that requires all of one’s relevant skills produces flow. People in flow situations describe themselves as being so focused on the activity that they do not notice distractions that come along.

Content Outline...continued

- d. Challenges that require skill—Without a skill in an activity, the activity becomes meaningless. For example, for those who are not skilled at analyzing English literature, reading a novel by Dickens seems boring and pointless. However, to an expert, such a novel contains nuances that are both exciting and meaningful.
 - e. Clear goals and feedback—Goals must be clear, attainable, and meaningful, and feedback must be immediate if flow is to be experienced. For example, the tennis player knows his goal is to hit the ball over the net successfully, even aiming at certain spots to increase the challenge. However, a person whose goal is to watch TV all day usually does not experience flow because the goal is ambiguous (how long is “all day?”) and is not challenging or meaningful.
 - f. The lack of worry about losing control of the situation—Although people in flow situations are usually engaging in activities that could lead to failure, they often do not fear failure because they believe they possess the necessary skill to accomplish the goal. There are two types of “dangers” people experience in flow situations:
 - i. An objective danger, which is an unpredictable physical event that a person can prepare for in advance. For example, rock climbers can prepare for a sudden storm, avalanches, and so on, that are objective dangers.
 - ii. A subjective danger, which is a danger that arises from a person’s lack of skill. This danger can be overcome through discipline and preparation. For example, rock climbers who lack the experience to determine their limits (physical and psychological) should gradually take on more challenging climbs to gain this skill.
 - g. The transformation of time—Time seems to slip away without notice. During flow experiences, what one perceives as a short period of time usually becomes hours without a second thought.
 - h. The loss of self-consciousness—People in flow experiences are not worried about the perceptions of others or feelings of inadequacy. Remember that attention is so concentrated that there is no room for such distractions.
2. Enjoyment versus pleasure—A big difference
- a. Pleasure—Pleasure is the good feeling that comes from satisfying homeostatic needs like hunger. Feelings of pleasure are usually temporary.
 - b. Enjoyment—This is the good feeling people experience when they are challenged beyond homeostatic pursuits. Enjoyable experiences produce flow.
3. “Microflow” activities are activities that people engage in during boring or tedious activities. For example, during a boring lecture, a student may doodle intricate designs in the margins of her notebook. This activity provides sufficient challenge to the student but does not distract her to the point that she cannot pay attention when the lecturer begins to discuss something of interest.

Content Outline...continued

4. Areas in which people experience flow
 - a. Work—Attempting to transform mind-numbing jobs into meaningful challenges promotes work as a flow experience. For example, assembly-line workers may set hourly production goals for themselves and then try to beat those goals throughout the day. Each new goal requires more and more skill to accomplish.
 - b. Hobbies/leisure activities—The more time and energy a leisure activity involves, the more enjoyable. For example, socializing with friends is more enjoyable than watching TV.

B. Happiness

1. People tend to report themselves as happy. One third of Americans say they are very happy, with only 1 in 10 saying they are “not too happy.” Most describe themselves as being “pretty happy.” Some possible explanations for these levels of happiness:
 - a. Tendency to be agreeable—People over-report good things. This phenomenon can be seen in survey research with people exhibiting social desirability—the desire to look good for others. Also, demand characteristics come into play when people want to give the researchers what they think they are looking for.
 - b. People’s momentary moods—In positive moods, people view the world with a “rose-colored mirror” in that they are positive in viewing themselves but are less benign in their views of others (Sigmon and Snyder, 1993). In negative moods, people see the world as being ugly, depressing, and hostile.
2. Qualities of happy people include
 - a. Self-esteem—Self-esteem is a self-referential mood that reflects one’s appraisal of success or failure in important life goal pursuits. People who believe themselves to be relatively competent report being happier, thus they do not just “feel good about themselves,” but “feel good about themselves for having just succeeded.” However, high, unwarranted self-esteem can lead to problems such as divorce and violence.
 - b. Personal control—People who have a sense of personal control in their lives are happier.
 - c. Optimism—People who believe bad situations are not their fault, do not always interfere with life, and do not permeate into all aspects of life are happier.
 - d. Extraversion—Extraverts are more involved with people, have a larger circle of friends, engage more often in rewarding activities, experience more affection, and have more social support. Extraverts tend to be more cheerful and high-spirited as well.
 - e. Hope—People who exhibit high levels of hope tend to be happier as they pursue goals and challenges.

Content Outline...continued

Activity 4.1 Creating Flow Experiences

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES B & C

Transparency Master B

Graphical Representation of Flow

Transparency Master C

Activities That Require Skill and Challenge

Transparency Master D

Activities That DO NOT Require

Skill and Challenge

V. Positive Subjective Experiences of the Future

A. Optimism—*Optimism is the belief that bad events are temporary, are not one's own fault, and are confined to present circumstances.*

1. Explanatory style—This is the habitual way of explaining bad events. Three qualities of explanatory style that determine optimism or pessimism are
 - a. Permanence—This is the belief that bad events that happen will always be there to affect life. Optimists resist this belief and see bad events as temporary. However, optimists feel that good events have more permanent causes.
 - b. Pervasiveness—This is the belief that failure in one area translates to all other areas of life. Optimists explain failure as being specific to one situation rather than universal in their entire lives. Again, however, good events tend to be explained as being pervasive throughout people's lives if people are optimists.
 - c. Personalization—This is the belief that bad events are one's own fault rather than due to circumstances. Optimists believe failures are not their own fault but rather due to circumstances. But once again for optimists, good events are due to strengths rather than external circumstances.
2. Seligman (1998) warns that too much optimism can erode a sense of responsibility. Although one should not attribute all events to external causes, those who are depressed should work to change their explanatory styles to reflect the qualities of optimism.
3. Overcoming pessimism—Two techniques can be used to deal with pessimistic thoughts, although one works better in the long run than the other.
 - a. Distraction—Distraction is trying to think of something else besides the pessimistic belief. People may try to shift their attention to another thought or schedule time later to think over the negative belief. This technique is better when action needs to be immediate and succumbing to negative thoughts can be destructive. For example, a police officer goes into a dangerous situation with unknown elements (do the people have guns?). The officer begins to think, "I could get killed," and she begins to hesitate. Without distracting herself from these thoughts somehow, the officer could be killed for her hesitation.

Content Outline...continued

- b. Disputation—Disputation is arguing with oneself about pessimistic beliefs. Going on the offensive against pessimistic thoughts can help to change reactions from being dejected to being optimistic.
 - i. Distancing—Realizing that negative thoughts are usually unfounded can help people realize how destructive pessimism can be. We would never tolerate insults about ourselves from others, so why do we take them from ourselves?
 - ii. Evidence—Checking for evidence that disproves pessimistic beliefs is an effective way to combat them.
 - iii. Alternatives—When disputing pessimistic beliefs, people should look for all the possible reasons for the situation. Usually, situations have many explanations, yet pessimists focus on the most harmful and defeating one. Realizing the other alternatives can give a sense of the changeable, specific, and nonpersonal causes for outcomes.
 - iv. Decatastrophizing—What if the negative belief is correct? Understanding that all possible implications for the belief are not “the end of the world” can ease the suffering the belief can cause.

B. Hope—Hope is the overall perception that one’s goals can be met.

1. According to Snyder (2000), hope has three necessary ingredients:
 - a. Goal-oriented thoughts—All nonrandom human behaviors are directed by some goal, either short term or long term.
 - i. Goals need to be of sufficient value to the individual so as to occupy conscious thought.
 - ii. Goals should be attainable yet uncertain in nature. Goals that are 100% likely to be achieved do not give people hope.
 - b. Pathways to achievement—To achieve goals, people need to generate plausible routes to achieving them.
 - i. This type of thought process begins in infancy when cause and effect relationships are first being understood. Children see that certain actions influence events that occur.
 - ii. Singular or multiple pathways need to be generated. In fact, people need to generate alternative pathways when they face obstacles.
 - iii. People with the highest levels of hope tend to generate multiple pathways to goal achievement.
 - c. Agency thoughts—In this motivational component to hope, people believe that they can initiate and sustain the pathways to goal achievement.
 - i. This type of thought begins after 1 year of age when children realize they are actors who can influence their environment and initiate cause-and-effect relationships.

Content Outline...continued

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- ii. The emphasis here is on thinking and not emotions, which are byproducts of hope.
 - a. Positive emotions equal perceived success in achieving goals.
 - b. Negative emotions equal perceived failure in achieving goals.
- 2. In studies, hope has been linked to higher academic and athletic performance, better adjustment, and better coping with health issues.
 - a. Performance—Hope is linked to higher standardized achievement test scores but not to scores on intelligence tests.
 - i. Higher hope and higher GPA are positively correlated.
 - ii. According to Curry (as cited in Snyder, 2000), higher hope and increased athletic performance are positively correlated.
 - b. Adjustment—The level of hope people have is related to their perceptions about themselves and their goals.
 - i. People with higher levels of hope remember more positive comments and events about themselves, whereas people with lower levels remember more negative comments and events.
 - ii. People with higher levels of hope feel challenged by goals, whereas people with lower levels feel demoralized by goals.
 - iii. People with higher levels of hope have higher feelings of self-worth.
 - c. Health—Higher levels of hope are correlated with better coping skills and higher levels of pain tolerance.
 - i. For spinal cord injury patients and adolescent burn survivors, those with higher levels of hope showed better coping with the problem, less depression, and fewer harmful-to-recovery behaviors, and they interacted better with caregivers.
 - ii. Using a cold-pressor test, Snyder and Brown (in Snyder, 2000) found that higher hope correlated positively with less perceived pain and greater endurance for pain.
 - iii. For cancer patients, higher hope was related to greater knowledge and better coping with the disease.

Activity 5.1 Measuring Optimism

Activity 5.2 Exploring Your Future: The Hope Scale
CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE D

Content Outline...continued

VI. The Good Life: Defining Character by Applying Positive Subjective Experiences

A. People's character refers to the enduring effects of life experiences on the human psyche (as cited in McCullough & Snyder, 2000). The qualities below that define "the good life" enrich our lives, make them worth living, and promote strong character. The hallmarks of positive subjective experiences are integrated throughout areas of our lives.

B. Connections outward involve interactions with others that enhance life experiences.

1. Love and intimacy—These are meaningful relationships, including friendships, that involve loving and being loved.
2. Satisfying work/occupation—This is being committed to a vocation and valued through it.
3. Helping others (altruism)—This is helping and being helped and supported.
4. Good citizenship—This is participating in activities that have public benefit and being respected in the public arena.
5. Spirituality—This is connection to a deeper meaning or reality.
6. Forgiveness—This is the ability to reconcile with those who offend and to avoid retaliatory aggression against the offender (McCullough, 2000).
7. Leadership—This is supporting the growth of those younger who will be the future leaders.

C. Individual qualities include those that are enduring and meaningful.

1. Integrity and ethics—This is living up to the principles and dreams of life.
2. Creativity/originality—This is using information in a unique way or creating new avenues of information.
3. Play—This is having a sense of fun and humor.
4. Subjective well-being—This is the pervasive sense that life has been and is good.
5. Courage—This is being unafraid of death, being able to overcome obstacles, and being willing to take risks based on principles.
6. Humility—This is the accurate assessment of abilities and achievements where mistakes and limitations can be recognized. Usually humility entails an ability to accept new ideas and advice while maintaining a low self-focus and the appreciation of the value of all things (Tangney, 2000).

D. Life regulation qualities involve those that guide day-to-day life.

1. Purposeful future-mindedness—This is the pursuit of personal ideals and goals.
2. Individuality—This is the integration of personality traits into a unified and distinct whole.
3. Self-control—This is the ability to alter one's states and responses, a key to the adaptation process (Baumeister & Exline, 2000).
4. Wisdom—This is the capstone of the good life; the ability to navigate the issues and pragmatics of life.

Content Outline...continued

Activity 6.1 A Beautiful Day: *Applying Positive Psychology*

Activity 6.2 Pleasurable Versus Philanthropic Activities:
Which Bring More Happiness?

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES E & F

Activities

I. CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES

Directions: Write a minimum-of-1-page paper discussing the following questions. Bring the paper to class for discussion.

- A. How important is it to study positive human qualities? Should the same amount of attention and funding be given to positive qualities as to negative qualities (illness)? What advantages could be gained from the study of positive qualities?
- B. In what type of situation/activity have you experienced flow? Write down how you felt during that experience. Did your flow experience match the qualities discussed? In what ways?
- C. Why do people choose pleasurable experiences over enjoyable ones? Hypothesize the reasons.
- D. As you plan for your future in college and then in the career world, what do you envision yourself doing with your life? What is your primary concern as you decide which career to choose? Why? Do you plan to choose a service-oriented career? Why or why not? If not, do you plan to engage in philanthropic activities?
- E. What is the difference between pleasurable and philanthropic activities? To what extent does each make you happy? From which do you personally derive the most happiness? Why?
- F. Describe the most creative thing you have ever done. Why did you consider it creative?

Instructor's Note. These questions could be used as a journal assignment that continues throughout the unit, as essay questions for tests, or as individual assignments.

II. CLASSROOM DEMONSTRATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Instructor's Note. Several of these activities call for students to write reflective papers detailing their experiences with each particular concept addressed. With the popularity of portfolio assessment, instructors may wish to have students compile these papers into a "Positive Psychology Portfolio" to be turned in at the end of the unit. Discussion of each activity can take place during the unit, but papers can be submitted at the end of the unit to save time and prevent an overload of papers to grade. In addition, many of the activities require students to assess life goals and interests, and students can keep their portfolios as a reference of these goals and interests throughout their college years.

Activity 2.1

Daily Mood Form

Ed Diener, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Randy Larson

Concept: To assess the content of a person’s emotional life, researchers have sometimes asked volunteers to keep a record of their daily experiences for weeks or even months. With this information, how much positive and negative affect people experience can be determined. How do these areas correlate with overall positive subjective experiences studied in this unit?

Materials: Enough copies of the Daily Mood Form (Handout Master A) per student for several days of recording. This activity can span past the unit duration, if desired.

Description: Distribute copies of the Daily Mood Form and instruct students to record their levels of affect at roughly the same time each day (before they go to bed, when they wake up in the morning, at lunch, and so on). At the end of the exercise, have the students calculate their affect scores and the frequency of their affect in the following way:

Compute a positive affect score by finding the average of the ratings for “happy,” “joyful,” “pleased,” and “enjoyment.” Compute the negative affect score by finding the average of the ratings for “depressed,” “unhappy,” “frustrated,” “angry,” and “worried.” Subtract the negative score from the positive one to get a Global Daily Mood score.

To compute frequency of positive affect, divide the number of days in which a positive score was given by the total number of days the reports were made.

Discussion: If the Global Daily Mood score is greater than zero, the subject reported more positive than negative affect. If less than zero, the subject reported more negative than positive. The average frequency of positive affect among college students was 72 percent, with a range of 20 to 99 percent.

Diener and his colleagues report that frequency of positive affect scores was associated with a number of traits reflecting psychological well-being and adjustment, including high self-esteem, self-confidence, satisfaction with one’s life, and cheerfulness. Other studies have found that positive affect is strongly related to the personality trait of extraversion. In contrast, negative affect is related to neuroticism, defined as the tendency to worry and become easily upset. Interestingly, these relationships were found even when the mood measures were taken a decade after the measures of personality.

Reference

Activity originally appeared in Bolt, M. (1998). *Chapter 13: Emotion. Instructor’s resources to accompany David G. Myers’ Psychology, 5th edition.* 18. New York: Worth.

Activity 3.1

Satisfaction With Life Scale

Ed Diener, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Concept: The Satisfaction With Life Scale was developed to assess people's satisfaction with life as a whole. The scale does not assess satisfaction with life domains such as health or finances, but allows subjects to integrate and weigh these domains in whatever way they choose. It is not a long measure, but the scale's validity has been tested in many settings and countries and found to be high.

Materials: Enough copies of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Handout Master B) for each student to have one.

Description: Hand out copies of the Satisfaction With Life Scale. Give students a few minutes to fill it out.

How To Score: Students should add the column of their responses to come up with their scores. A score of 20 represents a neutral level of satisfaction in which a person is equally satisfied and dissatisfied with life.

Discussion: Satisfaction is distinct from well-being in both the areas of degree and time. Satisfaction focuses more on a person's feelings about a given goal pursuit at a given time, while well-being relates to a person's feelings about many different goal pursuits across time. Students' scores on the Satisfaction With Life Scale may be different depending on what they have experienced recently. Their well-being may be high, but their levels of satisfaction may fluctuate if they have experienced a blockage of goals—getting lower grades than expected, not getting into the colleges of their choice, or not making teams they tried out for.

Activity 4.1

Creating Flow Experiences

Amy C. Fineburg, *Homewood High School, Birmingham, Alabama*

Based on the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, University of Chicago

Concept: Flow is the state of optimal experiences in which a person engages in an activity simply for the sake of the activity itself. People who are in a state of flow during activities are using high levels of skill and challenge together to create an experience that is rich and personally beneficial. School can often be devoid of flow for many students because they are engaging in many activities for which a high level of skill and challenge is not likely to be present. This activity will help students create flow experiences in their daily lives, thus enriching their school experiences.

Materials: Transparency Masters C & D

Description: *Step 1*—Prior to teaching the concepts of flow, lead students in a discussion about activities in which they have skill and enjoy the challenges involved in participating (Transparency Master C). Brainstorm as a class about the qualities of the skillful activities to determine how and why those activities are more enjoyable.

Step 2—Following this discussion, present the qualities of flow experiences. Be sure to discuss how the activities the students listed would fall under the category of flow.

Step 3—Using Transparency Master D, brainstorm activities that do not require skill or challenge and ways to make those activities become flow experiences. Share with the students the following anecdote.

Professor Heinz Maier-Leibnitz, a German experimental physicist, suffers from an occupational handicap common to academics: having to sit through endless, often boring, conferences. To alleviate this burden, he invented a private activity that provides just enough challenge for him not to be completely bored during a dull lecture, but is so automated that it leaves enough attention free so that if something interesting is being said, it will register his awareness.

What he does is this: Whenever a speaker begins to get tedious, he starts to tap his right thumb once, then the third finger of the right hand, then the index finger, then the fourth finger, then the third finger again, and then the little finger of the right hand. Then he moves to the left hand and taps the little finger, the middle finger, the fourth finger, the index, and the middle finger again, and ends with the thumb on the left hand. Then the right hand reverses the sequence of the tapping, followed by the reverse of the left hand's sequence. It turns out that by introducing full and half stops at regular intervals, there are 888 combinations one can move through without repeating the same pattern (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

While most students may not create such elaborate games to play while listening to boring lectures, they can engage in similar routine microflow activities that will bring enjoyment to otherwise low-skill and low-challenge activities. Examples of other, less complicated microflow experiences may include doodling, chewing on gum or pencils or pen tops, smoothing hair, or humming a tune.

The Challenge: Once Step 3 is complete, have students choose one way in which they can make a low-skill and low-challenge activity into a flow experience. During the next couple of days (instructor's choice) students should engage their microflow strategies during a particularly non-flow experience, such as a lecture. Students will write a short paper about this experience addressing the following questions:

- In what microflow activity did you engage? In what situation was the microflow activity used? What were the qualities of this situation that made it a nonflow experience for you?
- How did you make the microflow activity provide challenge for you while you were engaged in it? How could you make it provide even more challenge in the future as you become more skilled at the microflow activity?
- How do you create flow in situations in which you are skilled?

Discussion: Most students are skilled in some activity in which they engage, but trouble arises in relatively boring situations or in situations that present a low level of challenge. Microflow activities help people overcome boring, tedious situations in which escape is usually impossible without consequences (like school attendance). While microflow types of activities help in inescapable situations, life is not enhanced by them overall. Students need complex, demanding, and high-skill activities that will produce flow and will also provide something to look forward to during boring experiences. As Dr. Mike Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced as “Cheek-sent-me-high”) says in his book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, “Enjoyment appears at the boundary of boredom and anxiety, when the challenges are balanced with the person’s capacity to act.”

Reference

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: HarperCollins.

Activity 5.1

Measuring Optimism

Martin E. P. Seligman, University of Pennsylvania

Concept: The level of optimism people possess is a predictor of depression both currently and in the future. This test of optimism will help your students see their overall levels of optimism and in which area—permanence, pervasiveness, or personal—they have more pessimistic thoughts.

Materials: Sufficient copies of the Optimism Questionnaire (Handout Master C) and the Scoring the Optimism Questionnaire handout (Handout Master D) so that each student will have one.

Description: Instruct the students to take as much time as they need to answer each of the questions. On average, the test takes about 15 minutes to complete, so this might serve as a good homework assignment instead of a class assignment. There are no right or wrong answers.

Discussion: Hand out the sheet “Scoring the Optimism Questionnaire.” Give the students time to total their scores, and then discuss their feelings about their scores. Did they score as high or as low as they anticipated? Why or why not? In answering the questions, did they see any trends in their answers? In which areas did they score the best or worst? What can the students do with the information they learned from this exercise?

Reference

Seligman, M. E. P. (1998). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life* (2nd ed.). New York: Pocket Books.

Activity 5.2

Imagining Your Future: *The Hope Scale*

C. R. Snyder, University of Kansas

Concept: Hope is defined as the overall perception that a person's goals can be met. The primary components of hope are pathways (the perceived ability to generate routes to achieve goals) and agency (the willpower or energy to get moving toward one's goals). The following activity will measure the amount of hope students possess and help them to see a relationship between their future goals and their current levels of hope.

Materials: Sufficient copies of the Goals Scale (Handout Master E) so each student will have one.

Description: Ask students to close their eyes and think of the future.

Give them a few seconds and then ask what came to their minds and how long it took for them to picture something. Notice the quality of the goals the students have, especially whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Discuss with the students how most people have good ideas about the goals they have for their futures. People are generally goal oriented, and those goals are usually intrinsic. Once discussion is satisfactory, pass out the Goals Scale and give the students a few moments to complete it. It is not long, so it should not take much time to complete. Once completed, instruct students on how to score the scale. The instructions follow.

For the agency score: Add items 2, 9, 10, and 12.

For the pathways score: Add items 1, 4, 6, and 8.

Distracters are items 3, 5, 7, and 11 to make the goal of the scale less obvious. (This section may lead to a discussion of the purpose of distracters in experimental research. Because classroom conditions are not experimental in nature, it is not the intention for students to be fooled by the distracters.)

Note. When administering this, we call it the "Goals Scale" rather than the "Hope Scale" because on some initial occasions when the scale was administered, people became so interested in the fact that hope could be measured that they wanted to discuss this rather than taking the scale. No such problems have been encountered with the rather mundane title "Goals Scale."

Reference

Activity originally appeared in Bolt, M. (1998). *Chapter 13: Emotion. Instructor's resources to accompany David G. Myers' Psychology, 5th edition.* 18. New York: Worth.

Activity 6.1

A Beautiful Day: Applying Principles of Positive Psychology
Martin E. P. Seligman, University of Pennsylvania

Concept: Positive psychology seeks to understand the qualities of the good life, encompassing positive subjective experiences and the qualities that define them. This activity will challenge students to explore their own definitions of the good life as they apply the concepts studied throughout the unit.

Materials: None.

Description: After discussing the qualities of positive subjective experience and what constitutes “the good life,” propose the following to the students:

Design a beautiful day (a 24-hour clock day) that is within the realm of possibility for you to live currently. Explain why you chose each element.

Have students bring in their designs for discussion. This discussion is to help the instructor be sure that the students understand what the research says about positive subjective experiences and “the good life.” Once discussion has come to a satisfactory conclusion, present the following assignment to the students:

Try to live that day and report your feelings while including answers to the following questions:

Part 1: Were you successful in living that day?
Why or why not? Were all of the qualities of your beautiful day truly beautiful? Why or why not? What would you now change about your perception of a beautiful day?

Part 2: Is there any action you might take to move toward achieving a “beautiful day” on a more regular basis?
How does your concept of a “beautiful day” fit in with your life’s goals?

Activity 6.2

**Pleasurable Versus Philanthropic Activities—
Which Bring More Happiness?**

Martin E. P. Seligman, University of Pennsylvania

Concept: Research on flow and optimism shows that positive affect lasts longer after a person is engaged in rewarding yet challenging activities rather than in activities that bring just physical or homeostatic pleasure. Students routinely engage in both types of activities, but the common belief is that pleasurable activities are more satisfying than philanthropic ones. This activity will help students become aware of their feelings in regard to these two types of activities and lead to discussion of which type of activity creates more positive affect.

Materials: None.

Description: Have students brainstorm and write down what activities they have participated in during the last week that were pleasurable and/or philanthropic. Have them reflect on how the activities differed, how each type of activity made them feel afterward, and how long those feelings lasted. After the discussion, instruct students to notice when they participate in activities that are pleasurable and/or philanthropic over the next 3 to 5 days (instructor's choice). They should address the following questions in their papers/discussion:

- What were the specific differences in each type of activity?
- What type of emotions did you feel during each type of activity?
- How long did the generally positive emotions you experienced during each type of activity remain with you afterward?

Note. Some students may not feel as though they participate in philanthropic activities. Although likely to be false, this belief may hinder students from completing this activity successfully. Some have argued that assigning philanthropy tends to neutralize the altruistic qualities of the activity, so it may be necessary to assign or suggest some simple philanthropic activities to students who have trouble with the concept. Some suggestions may include:

- Helping someone younger with homework
- Paying someone's toll
- Holding the door open for someone behind you
- Letting someone get in front of you in line at a restaurant or store
- Doing chores around the house that are not normally yours or that you weren't asked to do
- Serving in a soup kitchen or homeless shelter

These are only suggestions and might help students more accurately recognize philanthropic activities in their lives.

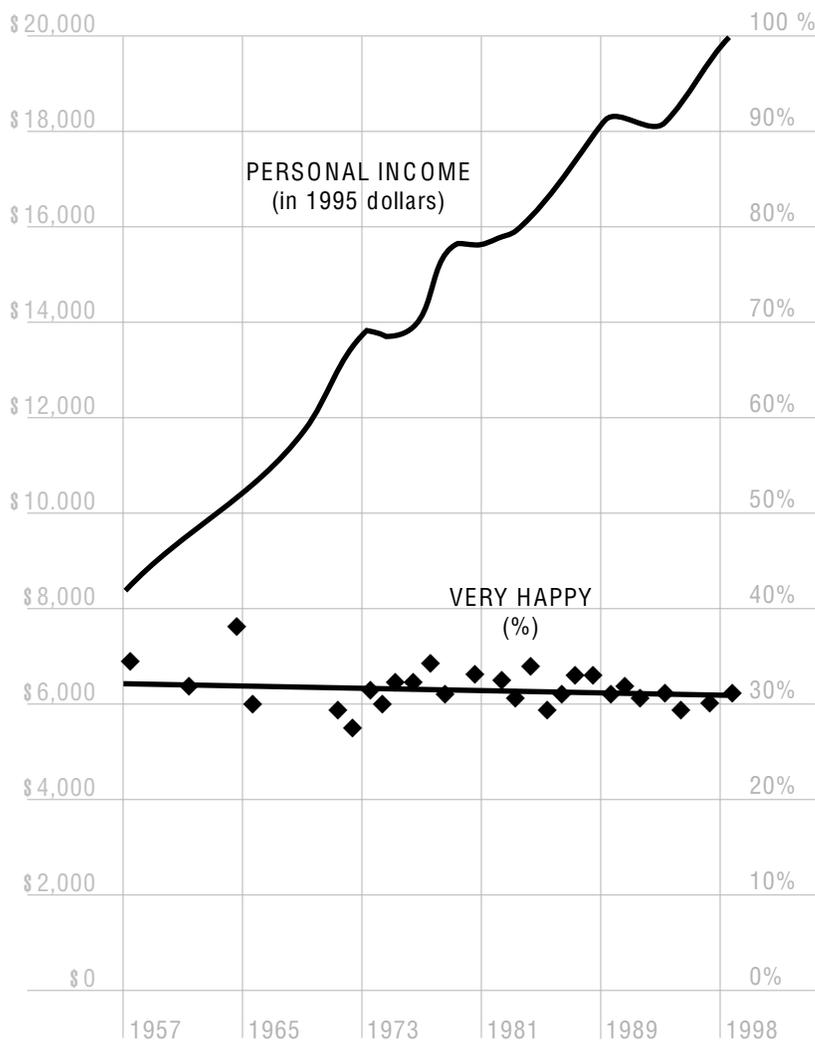
Discussion: The primary difference between pleasurable and philanthropic activities centers on who is affected by the activity. Pleasurable activities benefit the self, while philanthropic ones benefit others. Research on the “good life” suggests that people are happier when they are helping others rather than just benefiting the self.

Transparency Masters

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Transparency Master A
Wealth and Well-Being—
The United States

Unit Plan for
High School
Psychology

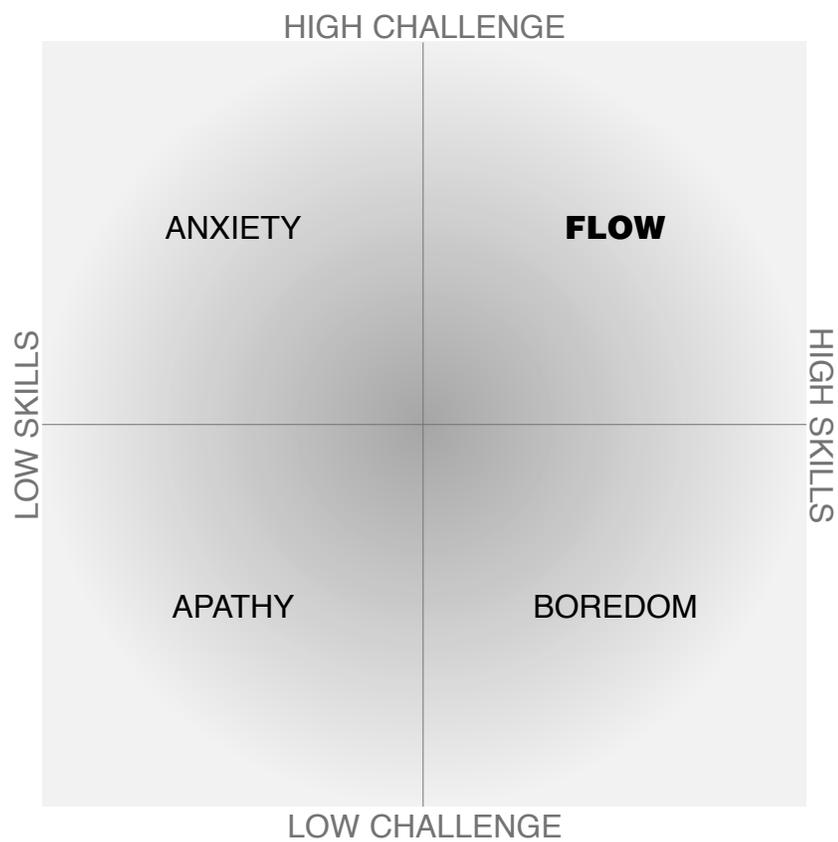


Myers, D. G. (1992). *The pursuit of happiness: discovering the pathway to fulfillment, well-being, and enduring personal joy*. New York: Avon.

A 7-Day **Positive Psychology**

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Transparency Master B
Graphical Representation of Flow



28

Bolt, M. (1998). *Chapter 13: Emotion. Instructor's resources to accompany David G. Myers' psychology, 5th edition.* 20. New York: Worth.

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Transparency Master C
Activities That Require
Skill and Challenge

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Activities that Require Skill and Challenge	Enjoyable Qualities of These Activities

A 7-Day **Positive Psychology**

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*Transparency Master D
Activities that DO NOT Require
Skill and Challenge*

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Activities that DO NOT Require Skill and Challenge	Ways To Create Flow in These Activities

Handout Masters

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Handout Master A
Daily Mood Form

Unit Plan for
High School
Psychology

Daily Mood Form

Name: _____

Day #: _____

Date: _____

*Please indicate how much of each emotion
you felt today.*

- 1 Not at all*
- 2 Very slight*
- 3 Somewhat*
- 4 Moderate amount*
- 5 Much*
- 6 Very much*
- 7 Extremely much*

_____ Happy

_____ Depressed/Blue

_____ Joyful

_____ Pleased

_____ Frustrated

_____ Angry/Hostile

_____ Enjoyment/Fun

_____ Worried/Anxious

_____ Unhappy

A 7-Day **Positive Psychology**

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Handout Master B *Satisfaction With Life Scale*

Directions: Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your response.

Scale

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly Disagree
- 4 = Neither Agree or Nor Disagree
- 5 = Slightly Agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly Agree

- _____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
- _____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
- _____ 3. I am satisfied with life.
- _____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
- _____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larson, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 71-75.

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Handout Master C *Optimism Questionnaire*

Unit Plan for *High School* *Psychology*

Directions: For each question, pick the choice that best describes how you would explain the given situation. Although you may not have experienced the situation before, put yourself in that situation to determine how you would respond.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. The project you are in charge of is a great success.
a. I kept a close watch over everyone's work.
b. Everyone devoted a lot of time and energy to it. | PsG
1
0 |
| 2. You and your boyfriend/girlfriend make up after a fight.
a. I forgave him/her.
b. I'm usually forgiving. | PmG
0
1 |
| 3. You get lost driving to a friend's house.
a. I missed a turn.
b. My friend gave me bad directions. | PsB
1
0 |
| 4. Your boyfriend/girlfriend surprises you with a gift.
a. He/she just got a raise at work.
b. I took him/her out to a special dinner the night before. | PsG
0
1 |
| 5. You forget your boyfriend's/girlfriend's birthday.
a. I'm not good at remembering birthdays.
b. I was preoccupied with other things. | PmB
1
0 |
| 6. You get a flower from a secret admirer.
a. I am attractive to him/her.
b. I am a popular person. | PvG
0
1 |
| 7. You run for a community office position and you win.
a. I devote a lot of time and energy to campaigning.
b. I work very hard at everything I do. | PvG
0
1 |
| 8. You miss an important engagement.
a. Sometimes my memory fails me.
b. I sometimes forget to check my appointment book. | PvB
1
0 |

A 7-Day **Positive Psychology**

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Handout Master C *Optimism Questionnaire*

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|--|-----|
| 9. You run for a community office position, and you lose. | PvB |
| a. I didn't campaign hard enough. | 1 |
| b. The person who won knew more people. | 0 |
| 10. You host a successful dinner. | PmG |
| a. I was particularly charming that night. | 0 |
| b. I am a good host. | 1 |
| 11. You stop a crime by calling the police. | PsG |
| a. A strange noise caught my attention. | 0 |
| b. I was alert that day. | 1 |
| 12. You were extremely healthy all year. | PsG |
| a. Few people around me were sick, so I wasn't exposed. | 0 |
| b. I made sure I ate well and got enough rest. | 1 |
| 13. You owe the library \$10 for an overdue book. | PmB |
| a. When I am really involved in what I am reading,
I often forget when it's due. | 1 |
| b. I was so involved in writing the report
I forgot to return the book. | 0 |
| 14. Your stocks make you a lot of money. | PmG |
| a. My broker decided to take on something new. | 0 |
| b. My broker is a top-notch investor. | 1 |
| 15. You win an athletic contest. | PmG |
| a. I was feeling unbeatable. | 0 |
| b. I train hard. | 1 |
| 16. You fail an important examination. | PvB |
| a. I wasn't as smart as the other people taking the exam. | 1 |
| b. I didn't prepare for it well. | 0 |
| 17. You prepared a special meal for a friend,
and he/she barely touched the food. | PvB |
| a. I wasn't a good cook. | 1 |
| b. I made the meal in a rush. | 0 |

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Handout Master C
Optimism Questionnaire

Unit Plan for *High School* *Psychology*

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 18. You lose a sporting event for which you have been training for a long time. | PvB |
| a. I'm not very athletic. | 1 |
| b. I'm not very good at that sport. | 0 |
| 19. Your car runs out of gas on a dark street late at night. | PsB |
| a. I didn't check to see how much gas was in the tank. | 1 |
| b. The gas gauge was broken. | 0 |
| 20. You lose your temper with a friend. | PmB |
| a. He/she is always nagging me. | 1 |
| b. He/she was in a hostile mood. | 0 |
| 21. You are penalized for not returning your income-tax forms on time. | PmB |
| a. I always put off doing my taxes. | 1 |
| b. I was lazy about getting my taxes done this year. | 0 |
| 22. You ask a person out on a date, and he/she says no. | PvB |
| a. I was a wreck that day. | 1 |
| b. I got tongue-tied when I asked him/her on the date. | 0 |
| 23. A game-show host picks you out of the audience to participate in the show. | PsG |
| a. I was sitting in the right seat. | 0 |
| b. I looked the most enthusiastic. | 1 |
| 24. You are frequently asked to dance at a party. | PmG |
| a. I am outgoing at parties. | 1 |
| b. I was in perfect form that night. | 0 |
| 25. You buy your boyfriend/girlfriend a gift, and he/she doesn't like it. | PsB |
| a. I don't put enough thought into things like that. | 1 |
| b. He/she has very picky tastes. | 0 |

A 7-Day **Positive Psychology**

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Handout Master C *Optimism Questionnaire*

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|---|-----|
| 26. You do exceptionally well in a job interview. | PmG |
| a. I felt extremely confident during the interview. | 0 |
| b. I interview well. | 1 |
| 27. You tell a joke, and everyone laughs. | PsG |
| a. The joke was funny. | 0 |
| b. My timing was perfect. | 1 |
| 28. Your boss gives you too little time in which to finish a project, but you get it finished anyway. | PvG |
| a. I am good at my job. | 0 |
| b. I am an efficient person. | 1 |
| 29. You've been feeling run-down lately. | PmB |
| a. I never get a chance to relax. | 1 |
| b. I was exceptionally busy this week. | 0 |
| 30. You ask someone to dance and he/she says no. | PsB |
| a. I am not a good enough dancer. | 1 |
| b. He/she doesn't like to dance. | 0 |
| 31. You save a person from choking to death. | PvG |
| a. I know a technique to stop someone from choking. | 0 |
| b. I know what to do in a crisis situation. | 1 |
| 32. Your romantic partner wants to cool things off for a while. | PvB |
| a. I'm too self-centered. | 1 |
| b. I don't spend enough time with him/her. | 0 |
| 33. A friend says something that hurts your feelings. | PmB |
| a. She always blurts things out without thinking of others. | 1 |
| b. My friend was in a bad mood and took it out on me. | 0 |
| 34. Your employer comes to you for advice. | PvG |
| a. I am an expert in the area about which I was asked. | 0 |
| b. I am good at giving useful advice. | 1 |

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Handout Master C
Optimism Questionnaire

Unit Plan for *High School* *Psychology*

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|--|-----|
| 35. A friend thanks you for helping him/her get through a bad time. | PvG |
| a. I enjoy helping him/her through tough times. | 0 |
| b. I care about people. | 1 |
| 36. You have a wonderful time at a party. | PsG |
| a. Everyone was friendly. | 0 |
| b. I was friendly. | 1 |
| 37. Your doctor tells you that you are in good physical shape. | PvG |
| a. I make sure I exercise frequently. | 0 |
| b. I am very health-conscious. | 1 |
| 38. Your boyfriend/girlfriend takes you away for a romantic weekend. | PmG |
| a. He/she needed to get away for a few days. | 0 |
| b. He/she likes to explore new areas. | 1 |
| 39. Your doctor tells you that you eat too much sugar. | PsB |
| a. I don't pay much attention to my diet. | 1 |
| b. You can't avoid sugar: It's in everything. | 0 |
| 40. You are asked to head an important project. | PmG |
| a. I just successfully completed a similar project. | 0 |
| b. I am a good supervisor. | 1 |
| 41. You and your boyfriend/girlfriend have been fighting a great deal. | PsB |
| a. I have been feeling cranky and pressured lately. | 1 |
| b. He/she has been hostile lately. | 0 |
| 42. You fall down a great deal while skiing. | PmB |
| a. Skiing is difficult. | 1 |
| b. The trails were icy. | 0 |

A 7-Day Positive Psychology

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Handout Master C Optimism Questionnaire

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 43. You win a prestigious award. | PvG |
| a. I solved an important problem. | 0 |
| b. I was the best employee. | 1 |
| 44. Your stocks are at an all-time low. | PvB |
| a. I didn't know much about the business climate at the time. | 1 |
| b. I made a poor choice of stocks. | 0 |
| 45. You win the lottery. | PsG |
| a. It was pure chance. | 0 |
| b. I picked the right numbers. | 1 |
| 46. You gain weight over the holidays and you can't lose it. | PmB |
| a. Diets don't work in the long run. | 1 |
| b. The diet I tried didn't work. | 0 |
| 47. You are in the hospital, and few people come to visit. | PsB |
| a. I'm irritable when I'm sick. | 1 |
| b. My friends are negligent about things like that. | 0 |
| 48. They won't honor your credit card at a store. | PvB |
| a. I sometimes overestimate how much money I have. | 1 |
| b. I sometimes forget to pay my credit-card bill. | 0 |

Scoring Key

<i>PmB</i> _____	<i>PmG</i> _____
<i>PvB</i> _____	<i>PvG</i> _____
<i>HoB</i> _____	
<i>PsB</i> _____	<i>PsG</i> _____

Total B _____ **Total G** _____

G - B _____

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Handout Master D
Scoring the
Optimism Questionnaire

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Seven categories are measured on the Optimism Questionnaire and one overall combined score reflects your level of optimism. Score each category separately first and then determine the final composite score.

Permanent Bad (PmB)—

Believing the causes of bad events are permanent.
Total the numbers in the right-hand margin from items
5, 13, 20, 21, 29, 22, 33, 42, and 46.
Record this total in the PmB line on the scoring key.

*If you totaled 0 or 1, you are very optimistic on this dimension.
2 or 3 is a moderately optimistic score;
4 is average;
5 or 6 is quite pessimistic; and
7 or 8 is very pessimistic.*

Permanent Good (PmG)—

Believing the causes of good events are permanent.
Total the numbers in the right-hand margin from items
2, 10, 14, 15, 24, 26, 38, and 40.
Record this total in the PmG line on the scoring key.

*If you totaled 7 or 8, you are very optimistic.
6 is a moderately optimistic score;
4 or 5 is average;
3 is a moderately pessimistic score; and
0, 1, or 2 is very pessimistic.*

Pervasiveness Bad (PvB)—

Believing failures are universal and extend beyond the situation.
Total the numbers in the right-hand margin from items
8, 16, 17, 18, 22, 32, 44, and 48.
Record this total in the PvB line on the scoring key.

*If you totaled 0 or 1, you are very optimistic on this dimension.
2 or 3 is a moderately optimistic score;
4 is average;
5 or 6 is quite pessimistic; and
7 or 8 is very pessimistic.*

A 7-Day **Positive Psychology**

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Handout Master D
Scoring the
Optimism Questionnaire

Pervasiveness Good (PvG)—

Believing good events are universal and extend beyond the situation.

Total the numbers in the right-hand margin from items 6, 7, 28, 31, 34, 35, 37, and 43.

Record this total in the PvG line on the scoring key.

If you totaled 7 or 8, you are very optimistic.

6 is a moderately optimistic score;

4 or 5 is average;

3 is a moderately pessimistic score; and

0, 1, or 2 is very pessimistic.

Hope Score (HoB)—

A combination of pervasive and permanent beliefs about bad events.

Take your PvB total and add it to your PmB total.

This will yield your hope score for bad events.

If it is a 0, 1, or 2, you are extraordinarily hopeful.

3, 4, 5, or 6 is a moderately hopeful score;

7 or 8 is average;

9, 10, or 11 is moderately hopeless; and

12, 13, 14, 15, or 16 is severely hopeless.

Personalization Bad (PsB)—

Believing faults are personal and internal and, therefore, difficult to change.

Total the numbers in the right-hand margin from items 3, 9, 19, 25, 30, 39, 41, and 47.

Record this total in the PsB line on the scoring key.

If you totaled 0 or 1, you have very high self-esteem.

2 or 3 is a moderate self-esteem;

4 is average;

5 or 6 indicates low self-esteem; and

7 or 8 indicates very low self-esteem.

Positive Psychology *A 7-Day*

Handout Master D
Scoring the
Optimism Questionnaire

**Unit Plan for
High School
Psychology**

Personalization Good (PsG)—

Believing faults are external and not personal
Total the numbers in the right-hand margin from items
1, 4, 11, 12, 23, 27, 36, and 45.
Record this total in the PsG line on the scoring key.

*If you totaled 7 or 8, you are very optimistic.
6 is a moderately optimistic score;
4 or 5 is average;
3 is a moderately pessimistic score; and
0, 1, or 2 is very pessimistic.*

Computing the Overall Score

First, add the three B scores ($PmB + PvB + PsB$).
This is your Total B (bad events) score.

Next, add your three G scores ($PmG + PvG + PsG$).
This is your Total G (good events) score.

Subtract B from G. This is your overall score (G-B).

Interpreting the Overall Totals

*If your B score is from 3 to 6, you are marvelously optimistic.
If it is in the 6 to 9 range, you are moderately optimistic;
10 or 11 is about average;
12 to 14 is moderately pessimistic; and
anything above 14 cries out for change.*

*If your G score is 19 or above,
you think about good events very optimistically.
If it is from 17 to 19, your thinking is moderately optimistic;
14 to 16 is about average;
11 to 13 indicates that you think quite pessimistically; and
a score of 10 or less indicates great pessimism.*

*Finally, if your G-B score is above 8,
you are very optimistic across the board.
If it is from 6 to 8, you are moderately optimistic;
3 to 5 is average;
1 or 2 is a moderately pessimistic score; and
0 or below is very pessimistic.*

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A 7-Day **Positive Psychology**

Unit Plan for High School Psychology

Handout Master E The Goals Scale

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes YOU and put that number in the blank provided.

- 1 = Definitely False**
- 2 = Mostly False**
- 3 = Somewhat False**
- 4 = Slightly False**
- 5 = Slightly True**
- 6 = Somewhat True**
- 7 = Mostly True**
- 8 = Definitely True**

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- _____ 1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.
- _____ 2. I energetically pursue my goals.
- _____ 3. I feel tired most of the time.
- _____ 4. There are lots of ways around any problem.
- _____ 5. I am easily downed in an argument.
- _____ 6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me.
- _____ 7. I worry about my health.
- _____ 8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.
- _____ 9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.
- _____ 10. I've been pretty successful in life.
- _____ 11. I usually find myself worrying about something.
- _____ 12. I meet the goals that I set for myself.

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