

Pre-Virtual Field Trip Activity

Measuring Happiness

What's In Store: Discover Your Happy Virtual Field Trip

Happiness is more than a feeling—it is a skill we can practice, like playing a sport or learning to write. In this virtual field trip, you'll explore the science of happiness. You'll learn how happiness affects your health, the health of those around you, and even the health of your community. Explore alongside students, teachers, scientists and experts that have made careers around happiness and learn real skills that you can use to experience more happiness.

Before the Virtual Field Trip

Prior to engaging with the Virtual Field Trip and suite of activities, encourage students to journal and reflect on the question “what does happiness mean?” Students will return to this journal entry and revise it with their new learnings on happiness and the science of emotions after completing the virtual field trip and classroom activities.

Time

15–20 minutes daily over the course of one week, one 45-minute class period

Overview

If someone asked you how you could measure happiness, what would you say? In this activity, students begin by building a personalized happiness rating scale based on the Six Sustainable Happiness Skills. Then they fill out their rating scale once a day, over a period of seven days in order to create a personal happiness dataset. Next, students then chart their personalized dataset and use that data visualization to identify what behaviors, habits, and thought patterns help them experience more happiness. Finally, students develop a Happiness in Action plan that crystallizes key actions they can take to generate more happiness in their lives.

Materials

- Printed copies of the rating scale template (one per day of measurement period)
- Large-format paper for the data visualization
- Markers and writing utensils
- Six Sustainable Happiness Skills handout
- Happiness in Action Plan student capture sheet

Procedure

1. Engage students in a critical thinking activity by asking the questions below in one of three following ways:
 - Pose to the class and facilitate a wider discussion.
 - Divide students into pairs and instruct them to devise answers together and report to the class.
 - Allow students time to reflect on the questions individually and write down their responses.

Critical Questions:

- 1. What does “happiness” mean to you? What makes you happy?**
- 2. Is happiness the same for everyone?**
- 3. It’s been shown that when we make happiness the end goal, we end up experiencing less of it. Why do you think that is? With that knowledge, how do you think you can achieve more happiness in your life?**
- 4. How would you track your happiness?**
- 5. Do you think measuring happiness is easy or hard? Why?**

2. Distribute rating scale templates to students 7 days before engaging the class in the Virtual Field Trip.
3. Set aside 10 minutes of class time over the next 7 periods in order to allow students to reflect and complete that day’s rating scale.
4. Once students have filled out 7 copies of the rating scale over 7 class periods, inform students that they will now create a visual representation of their happiness data.

Distribute Six Sustainable Happiness Skills handout. Ask students to review the information on the handout and compare their happiness data with the Six Sustainable Happiness Skills.

- Which of the Happiness Skills match their data or experience(s)?
- Which of the Happiness Skills hadn’t they thought about?

Why might differences and/or similarities exist between their findings and what researchers have discovered? Provide students with the autonomy to create their own representation, with a few parameters:

- Their visualization must show how their happiness changed over time.
 - Their visualization must include the Six Sustainable Happiness Skills.
5. Distribute large-format paper and markers to students. Provide students with 20 minutes to complete their visualization independently.
 6. When students have completed their visualizations, allow a few students to demonstrate their work.
 7. Divide students into groups of 4–5 and distribute Happiness in Action Plan student capture sheets.
 8. Instruct groups to review datasets of their members and identify common themes and trends. Groups will then write these themes on their Happiness in Action Plan.
 9. Invite each group to share their Happiness in Action Plan with the class.
 10. Close the activity with a reflective discussion: Help students make connections by returning to the critical questions asked at the outset in the activity in one of three following ways:

- Pose to the class and facilitate a wider discussion.
- Divide students into pairs and instruct them to devise answers together and report to the class.
- Allow students time to reflect on the questions individually and write down their responses.

Critical Questions:

- 1. What does “happiness” mean to you?**
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- 5. Do you think measuring happiness is easy or hard? Why?**

Standards

Common Core State Standards: Math

Summarize, represent, and interpret data on a single count or measurement variable
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.ID.A.1

Represent data with plots on the real number line (dot plots, histograms, and box plots).
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.ID.A.2

Use statistics appropriate to the shape of the data distribution to compare center (median, mean) and spread (interquartile range, standard deviation) of two or more different data sets.
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.ID.A.3

Interpret differences in shape, center, and spread in the context of the data sets, accounting for possible effects of extreme data points (outliers).
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.ID.A.4

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

HS-PS1-2 Matter and its Interactions

Construct and revise an explanation for the outcome of a simple chemical reaction based on the outermost electron states of atoms, trends in the periodic table, and knowledge of the patterns of chemical properties.

HS-PS2-6 Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions

Communicate scientific and technical information about why the molecular-level structure is important in the functioning of designed materials.*

HS-LS1-7 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Use a model to illustrate that cellular respiration is a chemical process whereby the bonds of food molecules and oxygen molecules are broken and the bonds in new compounds are formed resulting in a net transfer of energy.

****Optional approach/extension: split “Measuring Happiness” into a pre-and-post VFT activity where students record data prior to the VFT and create their Happiness in Action plans immediately following the VFT.**



	Happiness Rating				
	Low Happiness 1	2	3	4	Lots of Happiness 5
Sense of Purpose Today's action:					
Growth Mindset Today's action:					
Helping Others Today's action:					
Mindfulness Today's action:					
Human Connection Today's action:					
Gratitude Today's action:					



Happiness in Action Plan

Have you ever noticed that the more you try and feel an emotion, the harder it is to feel? Or that the more you try not to think about something, the more you end up thinking about it? The funny thing about happiness is that the more you try and achieve it the less likely you are to actually experience it.

What does your personal happiness dataset tell you about what makes you happy?

How can you experience more happiness in your life without making happiness the goal?

What are 5 steps you can take to make that experience possible?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Handout 1: Six Sustainable Happiness Skills

 Mindfulness	 Human Connection	 Gratitude	 Positive Outlook	 Purpose	 Generosity
<p>Live in the moment. Be fully present NOW. The past is over, and the future hasn't happened yet, so don't worry so much about them. Mindfulness is being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings in the here and now. Be kind to yourself. Adopt a supportive stance toward yourself and others. When we practice mindfulness, we worry less, and opens us up to JOY!</p>	<p>We all want to feel loved, be comforted, and know that we belong. Strong relationships are critical to wellbeing. Significant others, friendships, and social engagement with peers are a huge predictor of happiness in life. People with close bonds are better able to overcome life's challenges, and less likely to experience depression, low self-esteem, or health problems.</p>	<p>Thank others for the goodness they contribute to your life. Thankfulness fuels optimism, reinforces trust, and is often reciprocated. It creates a benevolent loop and a sense of overall wellbeing. It adds to the quality of our relationships. Gratitude shows that we are aware of our own privilege, and thankful for the sources of goodness outside ourselves.</p>	<p>Find the good in others. Imagine the possibilities! Be open to the idea that everything turns out for the best, eventually. A positive outlook helps us be more hopeful, and bounce back from adversity. People are more creative, resilient, and likely to do better in school and in life when they're experiencing positive emotions. Embrace life's potential!</p>	<p>Live for something bigger than yourself. You matter! You can make a difference in the world, at school, at work, at home, for a team or a community, or in someone else's life. Purpose means living by your values and goals. It means having a vision for what your life's mission is about. Set out to do something meaningful. Strive to make a positive difference.</p>	<p>Hold the door for someone else. Help an elderly or disabled person get safely across the street. Generosity doesn't have to be about money. It can be about being helpful, supportive, or simply being kind. It's about giving of yourself to someone else. Generosity has been shown to boost your endorphins, giving you an increased sense of wellbeing.</p>