

EDUC-945: The Happy Classroom: Practicing and Teaching Well-Being

Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

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Number of Graduate Semester Units: 3 units

Target Audience: K - 14th grade teachers

Course Access: <https://connect.fresno.edu>

Course Description

Discover evidence-based techniques to foster happiness and overcome obstacles to well-being. Designed for educators, this course offers a blend of personal growth and professional strategies, equipping you to apply the science of happiness within educational environments. Together, we will:

- delve into the science of happiness, with a focus on positive psychology.
- examine why the things we believe will bring us happiness often fall short.
- investigate how happiness interacts with the mind and body.
- explore key indicators of happiness and engage in practical exercises to enhance well-being.
- develop strategies to work with negative emotions and thought patterns.
- learn methods to measure and cultivate well-being within educational settings.
- create a "menu" of happiness-strengthening activities for personal and professional practice.

Join a community of happiness practitioners as you journey toward well-being in the classroom and beyond. Course content draws on the CASEL Framework (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning).

Note: Required book must be acquired separately.

Required Texts and Course Materials

Books

- **Required:** Suldo, S. M. (2016). *Promoting student happiness: Positive psychology interventions in schools*. Guilford Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1462526802.
<https://www.amazon.com/Promoting-Student-Happiness-Interventions-Intervention/dp/1462526802>
- **Recommended:** Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. Penguin Press. ISBN-13: 978-0143114956.
<https://www.amazon.com/How-Happiness-Approach-Getting-Life/dp/0143114956>

Canvas: This course will be delivered totally online. Canvas is a web-based learning management system (LMS) that provides students access to online resources, documents, videos, assignments, quizzes, forums, etc. Canvas is easy to learn and has a user-friendly interface.

Online Resources: Relevant online resources that support the course content and encourage further investigation will be available throughout the course assignments. Active hyperlinks are utilized throughout the course and will link to the appropriate information when clicked. These include videos, podcasts, worksheets, online activities, journal articles and other resources.

Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year, from the date of registration, to complete assignments. Students may complete assignments in no less than three weeks for a 3-unit course (one week per unit).

National Standards Addressed in This Course

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

(<http://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/>)

First published in 1989 and updated in 2016, [*What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*](#) articulates the National Board's Five Core Propositions for teaching. The Five Core Propositions - comparable to medicine's Hippocratic Oath — set forth the profession's vision for accomplished teaching. Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board Standards and the foundation for National Board Certification. Course assignments have been designed so students can demonstrate excellence against these professional teaching standards whenever possible.

- Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- Proposition 2: Teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities

CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) Framework

(casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/)

The 5 core SEL competencies:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Responsible Decision Making
4. Social Awareness
5. Relationship Skills

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.org)

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes (CE-SLO)

CE-SLO 1	Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
CE-SLO 2	Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE-SLO 3	Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
CE-SLO 4	Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
CE-SLO 5	Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
CE-SLO 6	Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (C-SLO)

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course By the end of this course the student will be able to:		National Standards Addressed*	CE-SLO Addressed**
C-SLO 1	Understand the foundations of happiness and well-being - Define happiness and distinguish between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. - Explain the key principles of positive psychology and their application in education. - Identify personal and professional benefits of fostering happiness in the classroom.	NBPTS 1, 2, 4, 5	CE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
C-SLO 2	Apply evidence-based strategies for enhancing happiness - Implement research-backed happiness practices, such as gratitude, connection, savoring, kindness, purpose, and optimistic thinking. - Utilize the Well-Being Promotion Program to support student and teacher well-being. - Reflect on personal happiness and develop strategies to enhance well-being in daily life.	NBPTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	CE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

C-SLO 3	Analyze the science behind happiness - Describe the neuroscience of happiness and its impact on emotions and behavior. - Recognize happiness myths, cognitive biases, and psychological barriers that affect well-being. - Explore the role of the vagus nerve and neural plasticity in emotional resilience.	NBPTS 1, 2, 4, 5	CE 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
C-SLO 4	Cultivate positive classroom environments - Develop and implement happiness-focused pedagogical practices. - Assess and measure student well-being using positive psychology tools. - Create a "Happiness Menu" of classroom strategies to sustain well-being.	NBPTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	CE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
C-SLO 5	Address the role of family and culture in shaping happiness - Collaborate with families to foster well-being. - Apply trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches to well-being. - Explore strategies for fostering happiness in diverse and marginalized student populations.	NBPTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	CE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
C-SLO 6	Prioritize teacher well-being and self-care - Recognize the importance of teacher happiness for student success. - Develop self-care strategies to manage stress, prevent burnout, and cultivate work-life balance. - Practice mindfulness, self-compassion, and resilience to enhance personal and professional fulfillment. - Develop strategies to work with negative emotions and thought patterns	NBPTS 1, 4, 5	CE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
C-SLO 7	Collaborate with teaching peers and online colleagues - Engage in forum discussions to exchange ideas and best practices for promoting happiness in educational settings. - Provide and receive peer feedback and incorporate insights into classroom applications. - Share personal experiences, success stories, and challenges in implementing well-being practices. - Collaborate on creating and refining happiness-focused lesson plans and interventions	NBPTS 1, 2, 4, 5	CE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

* Please refer to the section on **National Standards Addressed in This Course**

** Please refer to the section on **Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes**

Topics, Assignments, and Activities

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
Home Page	- Welcome Video - Course Syllabus - Policies and Procedures - Introduce Yourself Forum	
Module 1 – Introductions	- Introductions and goals for class 1.1 You at Your Best 1.2 Happiness Break: Cultivate Connection	10 pts 10 pts
Module 2 – Happiness Defined	- What is happiness and why should I practice it? - What determines our happiness? - Can happiness be measured? - What is my happiness baseline and how can I reset it? - Hedonic vs. eudaimonic happiness - Well-being theory and the PERMA+ model - Intersections of positive psychology and Christianity - Read chapters 1-2 (Suldo): background and rationale; measuring students' well-being 2.1 Happiness Notes (Module 2) 2.2 Your Happiness Baseline 2.3 Happiness Break: 5 Minutes of Gratitude	10 pts CR CR
Module 3 – The Science of Happiness	- Introduction to positive psychology - What is the difference between positive psychology and the science of happiness? - Neuroscience of happiness: dopamine, serotonin, endorphins, oxytocin, amygdala, hippocampus, neural plasticity - How to access the vagus nerve for well-being - Read chapters 3 and 4 (Suldo): factors associated with youth subjective well-being; how positive psychology interventions improve students' well-being 3.1 Happiness Notes (Module 3) 3.2 Happiness Break: Acts of Kindness	10 pts CR
Module 4 – Happiness Roadblocks	- Why do the things we believe will bring us happiness often fall short? - Myths about happiness - Hedonic adaptation (aka "the treadmill") - Cognitive biases that influence happiness - No textbook reading 4.1 Roadblocks and Pathways 4.2 Happiness Break: Savoring (Choice)	10 pts CR
Module 5 – Positive Education & The Well-Being	- About positive education - What are the pedagogical practices that facilitate happiness in educational settings?	10 pts 10 pts

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
Promotion Program	• What are considerations and caveats in helping students work towards happiness? • What are some examples of happy pedagogy in practice? • Read chapters 5-6 (Suldo): The Well-Being Promotion Program; happiness interventions—considerations, modifications, and case studies • 5.1 Happiness Break: Character Strengths Survey • 5.2 Your Character Strengths	
Module 6 – Happiness Practices	• Key indicators of happiness • Strengths-based practices for promoting personal and professional happiness • Explore flow, savoring, awe, empathy, gratitude, kindness, character strengths, spiritual connections, compassion, optimism, social thriving, trust and belonging, forgiveness, coping, resilience, purpose, hope, time affluence, self-care (body, mind, spirit), and more • No textbook readings • 6.1 Set 3 Intentions for Happiness Habits • 6.2 Happiness Break: Optimistic Thinking	10 pts CR
Module 7 – The Role of Teacher Well-Being	• Recognize the importance of teacher self-care for professional success • Managing stress and preventing burnout • Mindfulness, self-compassion, and work-life balance • Working with difficult emotions and mental chatter. • The ripple effect of teacher happiness on students • Read chapter 7 (Suldo): teacher well-being, strategies for promoting teacher and student happiness • Optional: Self-Care Assessment • 7.1 Self-Care Calendar • 7.2 Happiness Break: Self-Care (Coping, with RAIN)	10 pts CR
Module 8 – Family and Cultural Considerations	• The Well-Being Promotion Program supplement for parents • Cultural differences in happiness • How can families be invited into happiness work? • Culturally responsive approaches to happiness • Addressing barriers to happiness for students in marginalized groups • Trauma-informed practices • Read chapters 8 & 9 (Suldo): parent well-being, family-focused strategies for happiness, cultural considerations in happiness • 8.1 Happiness Break: Loving-Kindness Practice for Teachers • 8.2 Upload your Happiness Break Journal (journal	10 pts 60 pts

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
	entries from assignments 2.3, 3.2, 4.2, 6.2, 7.2, and 8.1)	
Module 9 – Happiness Menu	- Classroom routines, practices, resources, and activities for cultivating happiness - Planning, measuring, and improving upon happiness in the classroom - Create a “menu” of happiness activities and practices - Tips for sustaining happiness over time - Collaborating with school communities for systemic well-being - Inspiring lifelong learning and growth in students and teachers - Chapter 10 (Suldo) is optional reading 9.1 Happiness Menu 9.2 Happiness Break: Purpose - Your Happiness Baseline Revisited (Optional)	30 pts 10 pts
Course Wrap-up – Grading and Evaluation	- Course Evaluation - Course Completion Checklist - Grade Request / Transcript Request	
	TOTAL POINTS	200 points

Grading Policies, Rubrics, and Requirements for Assignments

Grading Policies

- Assignments will be graded per criteria presented in the course rubrics.
- A = 90-100% and B = 80-89%, (anything below 80% will not receive credit.)
- The discernment between an A or a B letter grade is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see course rubrics).
- Coursework falling below a B grade will be returned with further instructions.
- All assignments must be completed to receive a grade and are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

Grading Rubrics

Grade	Percent	Description	Rubric
A	90-100%	Excellent	Meets all course / assignment requirements with significant evidence of subject mastery and demonstration of excellent graduate level professional development scholarship.
B	80-89%	Very Good	Adequately meets criteria for all course/assignment requirements - demonstrates subject competency with very good graduate level professional development scholarship.

NC	Below 80%	Unacceptable	Does not meet the minimum criteria for all course/assignment requirements and demonstrated little, if any, evidence of acceptable graduate level professional development scholarship.
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Writing Requirements

- **Superior:** Writing is clear, succinct, and reflects graduate level expectations. Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. Maintains a consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Standard:** Writing is acceptable with very few mistakes in grammar and spelling. Addresses most parts of the writing task. Maintains a mostly consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes mostly relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Sub-standard:** Writing contains noticeable mistakes in grammar and spelling. Does not address all parts of the writing task. Lacks a consistent point of view and organizational structure. May include marginally relevant facts, details, and explanations.

Lesson Plan Requirements

- **Superior:** Instructional goals and objectives clearly stated. Instructional strategies appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is clearly delineated and authentic. All materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson clearly listed.
- **Standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are stated but are not easy to understand. Some instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is present. Most materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are listed.
- **Sub-standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are not stated. Learners cannot tell what is expected of them. Instructional strategies are missing or strategies used are inappropriate. Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is missing. Materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are missing.

Instructor/Student Contact Information

Throughout the course participants will be communicating with the instructor and their classmates on a regular basis using asynchronous discussion forums. Students are provided with instructor contact information in the event they want to make email or phone contact. In addition, students are encouraged to email or phone the instructor at any time. Students will also receive feedback on the required assignments as they are submitted.

Forums

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online discussions promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. While students may not be engaging with the same students throughout this course, they will be expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question whenever possible. The faculty role in the discussion forum is that of an observer and facilitator.

Coursework Hours

Based on the Carnegie Unit standard, a unit of graduate credit measures academic credit based on the number of hours the student is engaged in learning. This includes all time spent on the course:

reading the textbook, watching videos, listening to audio lessons, researching topics, writing papers, creating projects, developing lesson plans, posting to discussion boards, etc. Coursework offered for FPU Continuing Education graduate credit adheres to 45 hours per semester unit for the 900-level courses. Therefore, a student will spend approximately 135 hours on a typical 3-unit course.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations in their academic work in all classes. In order to receive assistance, the student with a disability must provide the Academic Support Center with documentation, which describes the specific disability. The documentation must be from a qualified professional in the area of the disability (i.e. psychologist, physician or educational diagnostician). Once documentation is on file, arrangements for reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information and for downloadable forms, please go to <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/disability-access-education>.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled per the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue and Handbook - <https://handbook.fresno.edu/graduate/academic-policies>

Technology Requirements

To successfully complete the course requirements, course participants will need Internet access, can send and receive email, know how to manage simple files in a word processing program, and have a basic understanding of the Internet. Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. If you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

Getting Help with Canvas: If you need help with Canvas, please contact the FPU Help Desk by phone: (559) 453-3410 or email: helpdesk@fresno.edu. Help is available Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Final Course Grade and Transcripts

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to request their final grade by accessing the form at ce.fresno.edu/grade-request. Once the instructor receives the request and posts their final grade, students will receive an email communication from the University. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted before you order your transcripts online.

University Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the information presented in the Academic Catalog and for knowing and observing all policies and procedures related to their participation in the university community. A summary of university policies may be found on the university website at <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/registrar-office/academic-catalogs>.

Fresno Pacific University Student Learning Outcomes (FPU-SLO)

FPU-SLO 1	Oral Communication: Students will <i>exhibit</i> clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically <i>evaluate</i> content and delivery components.
FPU-SLO 2	Written Communication: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> proficient written communication by <i>articulating</i> a clear focus, <i>synthesizing</i> arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to <i>inform</i> and <i>persuade</i> others.
FPU-SLO 3	Content Knowledge: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
FPU-SLO 4	Reflection: Students will <i>reflect</i> on their personal and professional growth and <i>provide evidence</i> of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
FPU-SLO 5	Critical Thinking: Students will <i>apply</i> critical thinking competencies by <i>generating</i> probing questions, <i>recognizing</i> underlying assumptions, <i>interpreting</i> and <i>evaluating</i> relevant information, and <i>applying</i> their understandings to new situations.
FPU-SLO 6	Moral Reasoning: Students will <i>identify</i> and <i>apply</i> moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and <i>articulate</i> the norms and principles underlying a Christian worldview.
FPU-SLO 7	Service: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
FPU-SLO 8	Cultural and Global Perspective: Students will <i>identify</i> personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to <i>evaluate</i> complex systems.
FPU-SLO 9	Quantitative Reasoning: Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
FPU-SLO 10	Information Literacy: Students will <i>identify</i> information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, <i>explain</i> how that information is organized, <i>identify</i> the best sources of information for a given enquiry, <i>locate</i> and critically <i>evaluate</i> sources, and accurately and effectively <i>share</i> that information.