Teaching Hope : A Study to the Effect of a Positive Psychology Based Intervention on Cambodian Students' Hope

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of a positive psychology based intervention on the state of Hope in 20 CamEd students. The intervention was focused on analyzing character strengths through the VIA-IS 120, practicing gratitude and techniques from cognitive behavioral therapy to create positive thinking and positive self-talk. The ADHS was used to measure participants state of Hope prior and after the intervention. Results show no significant difference in experienced Hope after the intervention. Different explanations are discussed to why this intervention was unsuccessful in changing experienced hope. The collected data was also used to compare trait Hope, as measured with the VIA-IS Hope scale, with state Hope. A positive correlation was found which suggests both constructs behave in similar ways as argued in Snyder's (1996) Hope theory. These findings show a need to further develop interventions which are targeted on hope to improve well-being and academic achievement in CamEd students.

Keywords: Hope, Positive Psychology, Character Strengths, Students, Cambodia

Introduction

Background

Earlier research to the CamEd student population showed levels of psychological distress in line with the ranges of distress found in the general Cambodian students population and students worldwide (Cornet, 2018; Pan, 2017). These levels of distress are bringing students at risk for a lower mental well-being (Riley, 2004) and lower academic achievement (Samouei et.al., 2015). The field of Positive Psychology offers ways of supporting students by focusing on solutions, their strengths and creating a positive mindset (Bolier et. al., 2013). In order to target interventions for lowering psychological distress to the Cambodian student population, future research to CamEd students was done to identify their character strengths (Cornet, 2018). Results show relatively lower scores on the strengths Hope and Gratitude in CamEd student's general character profile. Both of these strengths are proven to be important for academic achievement and general well-being in students (Niemiec, 2013). CamEd students can benefit from interventions that are focused on improving hope and gratitude and research to the effect of these interventions on this specific population should be conducted.

Hope

Snyder, Irving, et al. (1991, p. 287) defined hope as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals).". This theory now is widely regarded as the Hope-theory. The theory states that a sense of willpower, the believe that you can achieve something (called Agency), is only one part of Hope. Besides agency, Hope is also defined by perceived ways of reaching goals (called Pathways).

Both ways of thinking are interrelated, but are describing two different aspects of hope. To illustrate, one can have willpower to achieve a goal, but at the same time can be unable to perceive ways to reach their goal. Both agency and pathway thinking are needed to achieve higher levels of hopeful thoughts. (Snyder et. Al., 1996). The theory thereby holds a more cognitive view on motivation which differs from earlier emotional approaches on Hope (Edwards et. al., 2007).

Hope as a cognitive construct can be perceived both as a disposition and a state. Dispositional hope describes a more enduring type of hope that is often linked with personality traits and general optimism. State hope is more influenced by current events and is sensitive to change over time. It thereby only measures perceived hope at the current moment. People with a disposition on hope naturally tend to experience high states of hope more often, since constructing agency and pathway cognitions comes more easily for them (Snyder et. al., 1996).

Hope and Optimism are both constructs related to positive emotions and personality. Although at first sight they seem to describe a similar dynamic in positive cognitions (a positive perception of future events), a meta-analytic study of Alarcon, Bowling & Khazon (2013) suggests that these constructs are distinguishable from each other and hold unique influences on well-being. Hope and Optimism can therefore be approached is separate constructs.

Hope and its effects

The effect of Hope, both as a disposition and as a state, is studied extensively in the field of positive psychology and is considered an important character strength. Hope has a positive effect on Life satisfaction (lounsboury et al., 2009), Physical and mental health (Niemiec, 2013) and correlates with psychological well-being (Hasnainet al., 2014). In students, Hope is found to be a strong predictor for academic achievement (Rand et al., 2011), average GPA (Feldman & Kubota, 2015) and grade expectancy (Rand, 2008). Paired with optimism, Hope has a direct influence on academic performance (Rand, 2008). In students hope, together with optimism and gratitude, also shows a moderating effect on psychological distress after experiencing negative life events (Gungor, 2016). A study of Snyder et. al. (2002) shows that students with high levels of hope where more likely to graduate than students with low levels of hope. Furthermore low level hope students where at a higher risk for dropping out throughout every year of their university career.

Seeing the extensive amount of evidence of the effects of Hope on general well-being and academic performance in students, it can be argued that hope is a reliable and important academic predictor as well an important influence in general well-being. This emphasizes the need to further research to possibilities of teaching students hope.

Positive Psychology Interventions in the classroom

Positive Psychology Interventions (PPI's) are defined by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) as psychological interventions which are aimed at raising positive feelings, cognitions and behaviour. Meta-analysis from Bolier et.al. (2013) shows that PPI's are a proven way of raising well-being and lessen psychological distress in the general population. As argued by Waters (2011), positive cognitions, mindset and emotions are constructs that can be taught in the same way as general subjects can be taught to students. Hope specifically is a part of positive psychology that greatly effects the overall well-being and academic performance of students. Interventions aimed at increasing the levels of hope should therefore be examined.

When approaching Hope as a cognitive construct, interventions should be mainly focused on agency and pathway thinking. Green, Grant & Rynsaardt (2007) showed that students levels of Hope can be raised by providing a 2-week face to face coaching intervention focused on solution focused goal-setting, thereby raising both agency and pathway thinking. Lopez et. al (2014) further analyzed ways of improving pathway and agency thinking which lead to a list of do's and don'ts which can be used in creating PPI's targeted on the strength Hope (Table 1).

Table 1. Enhancing Pathway and Agency thinking

Pathways

DO	DON'T
• Break a long-range goal into steps or sub-goals	• Think you can reach your big goals all at once
• Begin your pursuit of a distant goal by concentrating on the first sub-goal	• Be too hurried in producing routes to your goals.
• Practice making diff erent routes to your goals and select the best one.	• Be rushed to select the best or fi rst route to your goal.
• Mentally rehearse scripts for what you would do should you encounter a blockage.	• Over think with the idea of finding one perfect route to your goal.
• In you need a new skill to reach your goal, learn it.	• Conclude you are lacking in talent or no good when initial strategy fails.
• Cultivate two-way friendships where you can give and get advice.	• Get into friendships where you are praised for not coming up with solutions to your problems.

Agency

DO	DON'T
• Tell yourself that you have chosen the goal, so it is your job to go aft er it.	• Allow yourself to be surprised repeatedly by roadblocks that appear in your life.
• Learn to talk to yourself in positive voices (e.g., I can do this!).	• Try to squelch totally any internal put-down thoughts because this may only make them stronger.
• Recall previous successful goal pursuits, particularly when in a jam.	• Get impatient if your willful thinking doesn't increase quickly.
• Be able to laugh at yourself, especially if you encounter some impediment to your goal pursuits	• Conclude that things never will change, especially if you are down.
• Find a substitute goal when the original goal is blocked solidly.	• Engage in self-pity when faced with adversity.
• Enjoy the process of getting to your goals and do not focus only on the final attainment.	• Stick to a blocked goal when it is truly blocked.
	• Constantly ask yourself how are doing to evaluate your progress toward a goal.

Aim of study

This study aims to measure the effectiveness of an intervention designed to increase state Hope in CamEd students. Dispositional Hope (as measured in Character strengths) relates with state Hope. Although changes in dispositional Hope will most likely occur when interventions are given over longer period of times, state Hope should be able to improve by relatively small interventions. This study will therefore focus on single intervention targeted on state Hope. When there is more data on the effect of these type of interventions in the CamEd students population, further, more comprehensive,

approaches can be considered to improve academic achievement and general well-being of this population. Furthermore, this study will analyze if dispositional Hope correlates in the same way with state Hope in CamEd students as found in studies on students from western countries.

Hypothesis

Seeing the before mentioned data about PPI's and the effect on dispositional and state

Hope this study expect the following outcomes:

1. Post intervention state Hope scores will be significantly higher than Pre intervention state Hope scores.

2. The character strength Hope will have a positive correlation with state Hope.

Method

Participants

All participants of this study are students from CamEd business school located in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. A total of 57 students filled in the online questionnaire for character strengths (VIA-IS 120). 46 students filled in The Adult State Hope Scale (ADHS) before the workshop and 21 students filled in the ADHS after the workshop.

20 respondents filled in all three questionnaires. The data analysis is therefore focused on these 20 respondents only. The average age of these 20 students is 18.9 (*SD*=1.37).

14 of the respondents where female and 6 male (70% over 30%). (See table 2).

Table 2. Social-Demographic Characteristics Participants

	Frequency (n = 20)	Percentage
Gender		
Female	14	70.0%
Male	6	30.0%
Age		
17	2	10%
18	5	25%
19	8	40%
20	2	10%
21	2	10%
23	1	5%

Measures

Hope. The state of Hope was measured by the Adult State Hope Scale (ADHS). The ADHS is designed to measure the current state of hope through Agency en Pathways components. The self-report survey consists of 6 items that are answered on a 8 point likert-scale ranging from 1: Definitely False to 8: Definitely True. The ADHS has a strong internal consistency and construct validity. The scale exhibits discriminant validity with constructs related to Hope. The scale is therefore useable in a pre- and post-test research designs (Snyder et al., 1996).

Character Strengths. Character strengths where measured with the VIA inventory of Strengths 120 (VIA-IS 120). The VIA-IS is developed by Peterson and Seligman in 2004 and is derived from the VIA-IS 240. The VIA-IS 120 is a self reporting survey that focuses on 24 different strengths which are measured through 5 questions each (see Appendix A). Every item can be answered on a five point likert-scale ranging from 1: *very much like me* until 5: *very much unlike me.* This gives score ranging from 10 to 50 points for each of the 24 strengths. The 24 strengths can be further grouped into 6 different "virtues". These virtues are considered to be important character strengths throughout history and different cultures (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005). The VIA-IS 120 has good validity and reliability. Results of the survey correlate strongly on how family and friends describe the respondents character strengths. The survey is relatively unaffected by self-reporting biases (Niemiec, 2013).

Procedure

Intervention. The intervention was designed as a workshop in collaboration with the CamEd Audit Club. The 3.5 hour workshop took place on the 5th of May 2019 in CamEd Business school. It covered topics such as: Dealing with change, failure and teamwork. The workshop consisted of multiple exercises originating from Positive Psychology combined with techniques from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. The following Positive Psychology Interventions where incorporated into the workshop:

- Character strengths: During this intervention the participants learned about their own character strengths and how to recognize and apply these in day to day life. The VIA-IS 120 was used to help students understand their strengths. Participants had to discuss strengths they recognized in each other and results where discussed in small groups with a focus on finding examples of their strengths in day to day life.

- Gratitude Journal: During this exercise participants where asked to write down three things that happened in the last 24 hours that they are grateful for. Results where not shared in class.

Besides these interventions, Cognitive behavioral therapy theories about the effect of thinking, mindset and the effect of positive self talk where discussed during the workshop. These interventions where chosen based on the list of topics stated by Lopez et. al. (2014), and are targeted on increasing pathway and agency thinking. The interventions tried to support participants on creating a positive mindset, recognizing own talents/strengths and findings ways to apply these strengths in day to day life. See Appendix C for the workbook that was used as exercise material during the workshop.

ADHS. The ADHS was distributed through Google Classroom. Participants where given a link to the survey prior (https://forms.gle/8g9aQhNiP6MrKsTVA) and one shortly after (https://forms.gle/BsFXvg8MsKjyRNzXA) the workshop. A short explanation about the research and an instruction on how to fill in the survey was given before the first survey.

VIA-IS 120. The VIA-IS was, after approval by the VIA institute, distributed through the website: www.viacharachter.org. Participants got an explanation of the theory behind character strengths during the workshop where after they did the survey through: https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/pro/rshl8e/account/register. Participants got an explanation about their strengths and used their top 3 character strengths in other exercises during the workshop.

Data collection. Both the ADHS (Google Classroom) and the VIA-IS (viacharacter.org) where done in an online environment which automatically gathered the data in excel. Further statistical analysis of the results of this study where done with IBM SPSS Statistics version 25.

Results

Reliability

The ADHS pre and post test was completed by 20 participants. The questionnaires where tested for reliability by using the Cronbach's alpha and showed poor internal reliabilities off α = .403 and .386 pre test and α = .634 and .601 post test (Table 3). Knowing the ADHS is widely considered to have good internal validity, reasons most likely lie in this study. First of all the Cronbach's Alpha is known to be sensitive for small amounts of items and participants, which both are the case in this current study. Another possibility is the limited understanding of English of the participants which can influence their understanding of questions and thereby the correlation between items.

Table 3. Reliability scores ADHS pre and post

	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
ADHS pre		
Pathway scale	.403	3
Agency scale	.386	3
ADHS post		
Pathway scale	.634	3
Agency scale	.601	3

To identify items that correlated poorly to the overall scale a between item correlation analysis was done. When looking at every single item from both pre and post ADHS, Item 3 from the Pathway scale and item 4 from the Agency where negatively influencing the internal validity of the overall scale (Table 4).

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha after item deleted ADHS pre and post

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	
Items Pathway scale	**ADHS Pre**	**ADHS Post**
1. If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it	.012	.395
3. There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now	.505	.694
5. I can think of many ways to reach my current goals	.351	.319
Items Agency scale	**ADHS Pre**	**ADHS Post**
2. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals	.718	.745
4. Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful	.183	.450
6. At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself	-.322	.138

After deletion of these items the Cronbach's alpha are reasonable to good (when taking the low item and participant count of the study into account). Cronbach alpha's where respectively: α = .505 and .694 pre test and α = .718 and .745 post test (Table 5)

Table 5. Reliability scores ADHS pre and post after item deletion

	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
ADHS pre		
Pathway scale	.505	2
Agency scale	.694	2
ADHS post		
Pathway scale	.718	2
Agency scale	.745	2

1. Post intervention state Hope scores will be significantly higher than Pre intervention state Hope scores.

When measured before the workshop, participants score an average of 11.80 (SD = 2.142) on Pathway and 11.45 (SD = 1.731) on Agency with a total average AHDS score of 23.25 (out of a possible total score on the ADHS of 32) with a standard deviation of 3.354 (Table 6).

Table 6. ADHS pre test scores

	Mean N = (20)	SD	Items
Pathway	11.80	2.142	2
Agency	11.45	1.731	2
Total	**23.25**	**3.354**	**2**

When measured after the workshop, participants score an average of 12.25 (SD = 2.291) on Pathway and 11.45 (SD = 2.350) on Agency with a total average AHDS score of 23.70 (out of a possible total score on the ADHS of 32) with a standard deviation of 4.341 (Table 7).

Table 7. ADHS post test scores

	Mean N = (20)	SD	Items
Pathway	12.25	2.291	2
Agency	11.45	2.350	2
Total	**23.70**	**4.341**	**2**

A paired samples T-Test was conducted to determine whether the differences in means are significant. There was no significant difference between the pre and post test score son the ADHS ($t20$ = -.440, p = .665). There where also no significant differences found in both dimensions of the ADHS, Pathway ($t20$ = -.825, p = .419) and Agency ($t20$ = .000, p = .1.000) (Table 8). Seeing these outcomes the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8. Paired T-Test ADHS pre and post

	SD	t	df	P
Pathway	2.438	-.825	19	.419
Agency	2.449	.000	19	1.000
Total	**4..570**	**-.440**	**19**	**.665**

2. The character strength Hope will have a positive correlation with state Hope.

Scores on the Hope scale of the VIA-IS are collected in order to analyze the relationship between the trait Hope and the state Hope. The scatter plot shows a linear relationship between both scales (Graph.1).

Graph 1: Scatter plot Trait hope (VIA-IS) and State hope (ADHS)
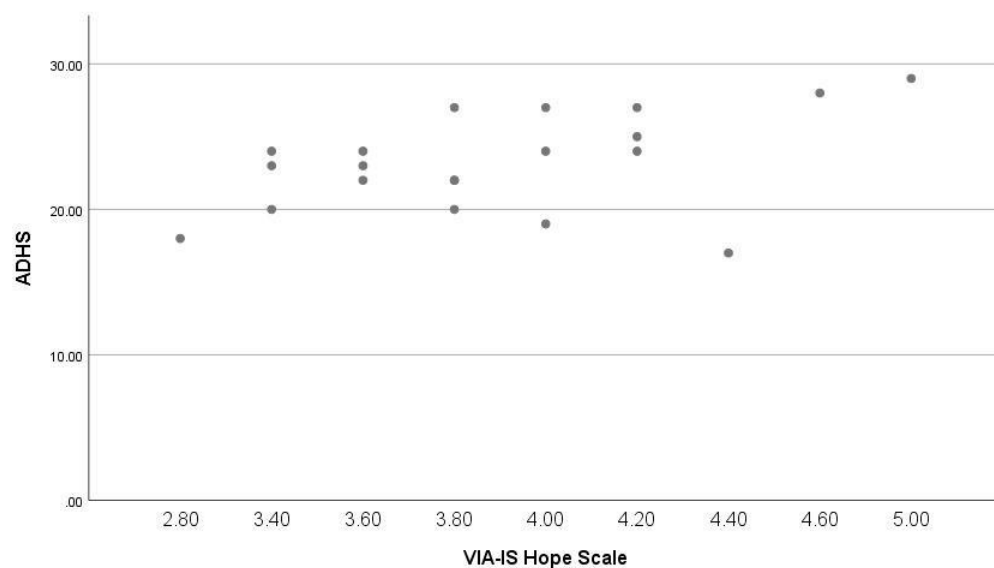
Since a linear relationship was found a Pearson's correlation was conducted to further assess the relationship between Trait and State Hope. There was a small positive correlation between both scales $r(20) = .515$, $p < 0.10$ (Table 9).

Table 9. Correlation between VIA-IS and ADHS Hope

	ADHS Hope
VIA-IS Hope	.515*

*$p < 0.10$

Seeing the found correlation the hypothesis: The character strength Hope will have a positive correlation with state Hope, can be accepted.

Discussion

Outcomes and expectations

The findings of this study show that the positive psychology intervention (in form of a workshop) had no significant effect on the participants state of Hope as measured with the ADHS. When compared with earlier studies in the effect of PPI's on Hope these outcomes are different then expected (Lopez et. al. 2014; Marques et. al. 2009). Explanation of these differences can most likely be found in the design of the intervention used in current this study. Lopez et. al (2014), in their study, argue that interventions targeted on Hope in students should be focused on techniques that enhance goal-setting, pathway and agency thinking. They suggest that this can be done by mainly focusing on techniques for students to identify their goals, dividing the goals into sub-goals (goal-setting), creating different ways of finding solutions to these goals (pathways) and finally creating positive self-talk and motivation

(agency). The workshop as given in this current study focused more on general positive psychology by letting participants analyze their character strengths and how to apply these in day to day life, combined with fostering gratitude and general positive self talk (Appendix 3). Although these topics are connected with the construct of Hope, they are not fully targeted on the construct of Hope as measured with the ADHS and as used in other studies on the effect of PPI's on Hope (Lopez et. al. 2014; Marques et. al. 2009). Furthermore this intervention was designed as an 3 hour workshop instead of a more comprehensive multi-session intervention as used in most other studies on positive interventions. The effect of this currents study's intervention on Hope is likely limited by these factors

The findings regarding the relationship between trait Hope and state Hope where as expected. Although it has to be stressed the correlations that where found are not that strong. These finding shows that the relationship between state and trait hope in CamEd students is most likely similar with the western population. Snyder (2014) argued that people with a higher trait of Hope put themselves in situations where they experience more successful goal-related outcomes and thereby also don't experience unsuccessful event sequences.

Implications

Interventions on Hope. The results of this study implies several important areas for further research. First and foremost a new study is needed that uses a intervention on Hope that is more in line with the interventions used in other studies (Lopez et. al.

2014; Marques et. al. 2009). Interventions that focus on analyzing goals of the participants (study or general life related), helping them to find different ways to achieve these goals and ways how to create a positive mindset can be implemented in a workshop or short series of workshops. These interventions can be used for additional research to the current one to further study the ways of enhancing Hope in CamEd students. Furthermore a broader range of positive emotions can be assessed in order to measure effectiveness of PPI's. Hope is for example closely related to other positive emotions like self-esteem, gratitude and optimism. Assessing the effect of interventions on this range of positive emotions can give a more detailed understanding.

Other ways of enhancing hope in students can be found in the way lecturers approach their students. A studies of Luo et. al. (2019) and Waters (2011) show that the relationship lectures have with their students and the support they give are a big influence on the effectiveness of PPI's in general and on Hope specifically.

Hope and culture. Not much is known about cultural differences in hope. Although not discussed in detail, differences in the effectiveness of PPI's on Hope in this study compared with other studies may partially be caused by cultural differences. The theory of Hope used in this study is supported through studies from 10 different countries, but not much research is done to culture differences in the effectiveness of interventions on hope. These findings are a first suggestion that, in this studies population, trait and state hope are related to each other in similar ways as what is known from other studies. But more research is needed.

Limitations

The internal reliability of the ADHS in this study was low, even after deleting items that showed low correlation with the total scale. A low reliability can be caused by different reasons, but seeing that the ADHS is well established as a reliable survey, causes of this low reliability should lay in factors from this study specifically. Although the reliability (after item deletion) is not falling below critical range for a study of this size, it still should be taken into account when analyzing the data.

This study didn't make use of a control group. In general, randomly allocating participants in a control and condition groups greatly increases the external validity of pre- and post-test research. A control group greatly reduces the probability of variables other then the independent variable to impact the (lack of) change in the dependent variable. Using a control group would be a more elegant design for this type of study although one can argue that the amount of other variables that can influence the state of Hope in this study is limited seeing the short amount of time between the pre- and post-test (3 hours).

Conclusions

Seeing the high levels of experienced mental distress in students, interventions that are improving the mental well-being, and thereby academic achievement, are greatly needed. The field of positive psychology offers a framework through which these interventions can be developed by focusing on the parts of mental-well being that are related which achieving, positive emotions and life-satisfaction. This study examined the effect of an intervention based on topics from positive psychology on CamEd students. Seeing the intervention didn't seem to affect the state of Hope, more research is needed to analyze what type of interventions work for the CamEd students population. Further analysis of the data shows that relationship between trait and state hope looks similar to other studies, suggesting that the construct of Hope in CamEd students behaves in similar ways as found in other populations.

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Appendix A: ADHS

The Adult State Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1996)

Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes *how you think about yourself right now* and put that number in the blank before each sentence. Please take a few moments to focus on yourself and what is going on in *your life at this moment.* Once you have this "here and now" set, go ahead and answer each item according to the following scale:

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

_____ 1. If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it

_____ 2. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals

_____ 3. There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now

_____ 4. Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful

_____ 5. I can think of many ways to reach my current goals

_____ 6. At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself

Scoring information

Pathways subscale score: Add items 1, 3, and 5. Scores on this subscale can range from 3 to 24, with higher scores indicating higher levels of path-ways thinking.

Agency subscale score: Add items 2, 4, and 6. Scores on this sub-scale can range from 3 to 24, with higher scores indicating higher levels of agency thinking.

Total hope score: Add the pathways and Agency sub-scales together. Scores can range from 6 to 48, with higher scores representing higher hope levels.

Appendix B: VIA-IS 120

1. Being able to come up with new and different ideas is one of my strong points.
2. I have taken frequent stands in the face of strong opposition.
3. I never quit a task before it is done.
4. I always keep my promises.
5. I have no trouble eating healthy foods.
6. I always look on the bright side.
7. I am a spiritual person.
8. I know how to handle myself in different social situations.
9. I always finish what I start.
10. I really enjoy doing small favors for friends.
11. There are people in my life who care as much about my feelings and well-being as they do about their own.
12. As a leader, I treat everyone equally well regardless of his or her experience.
13. Even when candy or cookies are under my nose, I never overeat.
14. I practice my religion.
15. I rarely hold a grudge.
16. I am always busy with something interesting.
17. I am thrilled when I learn something new.
18. I like to think of new ways to do things.
19. No matter what the situation, I am able to fit in.
20. I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion.
21. I believe honesty is the basis for trust.
22. I go out of my way to cheer up people who appear down.
23. I treat all people equally regardless of who they might be.
    One of my strengths is helping a group of people work well together even
24. when they have their differences.
25. I am a highly disciplined person.
26. I always think before I speak.
27. I experience deep emotions when I see beautiful things.
28. At least once a day, I stop and count my blessings.
29. Despite challenges, I always remain hopeful about the future.
30. My faith never deserts me during hard times.
31. I do not act as if I am a special person.
32. I welcome the opportunity to brighten someone else's day with laughter.
33. I never seek vengeance.
34. I value my ability to think critically.
35. I have the ability to make other people feel interesting.
36. I must stand up for what I believe even if there are negative results.
37. I finish things despite obstacles in the way.
38. I love to make other people happy.
39. I am the most important person in someone else's life.
40. I work at my very best when I am a group member.
41. Everyone's rights are equally important to me.
42. I see beauty that other people pass by without noticing.
43. I have a clear picture in my mind about what I want to happen in the future.

44   I never brag about my accomplishments.
45   I try to have fun in all kinds of situations.
46   I love what I do.
47   I am excited by many different activities.
48   I am a true life-long learner.
49   I am always coming up with new ways to do things.
50   People describe me as "wise beyond my years."
51   My promises can be trusted.
52   I give everyone a chance.
53   To be an effective leader, I treat everyone the same.
54   I never want things that are bad for me in the long run, even if they make me feel good in the short run.
55   I have often been left speechless by the beauty depicted in a movie.
56   I am an extremely grateful person.
57   I try to add some humor to whatever I do.
58   I look forward to each new day.
59   I believe it is best to forgive and forget.
60   I have many interests.
61   When the topic calls for it, I can be a highly rational thinker.
62   My friends say that I have lots of new and different ideas.
63   I am always able to look at things and see the big picture.
64   I always stand up for my beliefs.
65   I do not give up.
66   I am true to my own values.
67   I always feel the presence of love in my life.
68   I can always stay on a diet.
69   I think through the consequences every time before I act.
70   I am always aware of the natural beauty in the environment.
71   My faith makes me who I am.
72   I have lots of energy.
73   I can find something of interest in any situation.
74   I read all of the time.
75   Thinking things through is part of who I am.
76   I am an original thinker.
77   I am good at sensing what other people are feeling.
78   I have a mature view on life.
79   I am as excited about the good fortune of others as I am about my own.
80   I can express love to someone else.
81   Without exception, I support my teammates or fellow group members.
82   My friends always tell me I am a strong but fair leader.
83   I always keep straight right from wrong.
84   I feel thankful for what I have received in life.
85   I know that I will succeed with the goals I set for myself.
86   I rarely call attention to myself.
87   I have a great sense of humor.
88   I rarely try to get even.
89   I always weigh the pro's and con's.

90   I stick with whatever I decide to do.

91   I enjoy being kind to others.

92   I can accept love from others.

93   Even if I disagree with them, I always respect the leaders of my group.

94   Even if I do not like someone, I treat him or her fairly.

95   As a leader, I try to make all group members happy.

96   I am a very careful person.

97   I am in awe of simple things in life that others might take for granted

98   When I look at my life, I find many things to be grateful for.

99   I have been told that modesty is one of my most notable characteristics.

100   I am usually willing to give someone another chance.

101   I think my life is extremely interesting.

102   I read a huge variety of books.

103   I try to have good reasons for my important decisions.

104   I always know what to say to make people feel good.

105   I may not say it to others, but I consider myself to be a wise person.

106   It is important to me to respect decisions made by my group.

107   I always make careful choices.

108   I feel a profound sense of appreciation every day.

109   If I feel down, I always think about what is good in my life.

110   My beliefs make my life important.

111   I awaken with a sense of excitement about the day's possibilities.

112   I love to read nonfiction books for fun.

113   Others consider me to be a wise person.

114   I am a brave person.

115   Others trust me to keep their secrets.

116   I gladly sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.

117   I believe that it is worth listening to everyone's opinions.

118   People are drawn to me because I am humble.

119   I am known for my good sense of humor.

120   People describe me as full of zest.

Appendix C: Workbook

Contents of workbook:

Agenda Workshop

My Strengths

Dealing with Change

Creating a positive mindset (dealing with failure) Working in teams

Appendix

Agenda

Opening Dealing with change
Failure

Coffee break

A positive mindset Teamwork
Closing

My Strengths

Write down your four highest scoring strengths here (from the on line survey). Explain these strengths in your own words:

1:_____

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2:_____

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Dealing with change

1. How does change typically effects you?

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2. Write down a situation of change that you successfully dealt with. What kind of things did you do that worked for you?

_____

_____

_____

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_____

3. Look at your personal top three strengths. How can you use your strengths to deal with change?

_____

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_____

_____

_____

Positive mindset

Know your strengths

Think about a few of your favourite hobbies or activities. What is it about these activities that you enjoy? How do these activities put your strengths to use?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sometimes other people are better at spotting our strengths than we are. Because we are so used to our own strengths, they can start to feel ordinary or unspectacular. Ask someone in this classroom about what he/she thinks are your strengths. Ask examples where they saw you having these strengths and write them down here:

_____

_____

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_____

Think of someone whom you admire or respect. What are this person's greatest strengths? Do you share any of these strengths?

_____

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_____

Your Best Possible Self

- Take a few minutes to select a future time period (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, 5 years from now) and imagine that at that time you are expressing your best possible self strongly. Visualize your best possible self in a way that is very pleasing to you and that you are interested in.

- Imagine it in close details where you have worked hard and succeeded at accomplishing your life goals. You might think of this as reaching your full potential, hitting an important milestone, or realizing one of your life dreams. <u>The point is not to think of unrealistic fantasies, rather, things that are positive and attainable within reason.</u>

- After you have a fairly clear image, write about the details. Writing your best possible self down helps to create a logical structure for the future and can help you move from the realm of foggy ideas and fragmented thoughts to concrete, real possibilities.

- Be sure to write about the character strengths that you observe in this image.

- And, what character strengths will you need to deploy to make this best possible self a reality? Write all of this on the next page.

My best possible self:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Which of your strengths do you need/can you use to reach your best personal self?

_____

_____

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_____

_____

<u>Practising the feeling of Gratitude</u>

Write down three things (from this morning or yesterday) that you are grateful for. Everything is ok to write down, but of possible try to focus on gratitude you feel towards others.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teamwork

<u>Survival Game</u>

Your plane crashed on the beach of an Island. Your group survived the crash. You are not sure of there are people living on the island. Your phones are not receiving any signal. You decide to go track into the jungle to look for water, food and hopefully some other people!

You can only take 12 items with you. You need to choose together which 12 items you will take on your journey into the jungle. Try to choose items that are most useful for survival (10 min.)

_____

_____

<u>Your role in the team in this exercise:</u>

Describe the role you took during this exercise. Think of: Leading/Following, Sharing ideas or mostly listening, focused on making decisions or focused on keeping every happy?

_____

_____

_____

Which character strengths did you use during this exercise?

_____

_____

Appendix

1. Breathing Exercise

This exercise can be done in 5 - 10 minutes. It is a quick and effective way of focusing your mind and is also helpful to make you feel more relaxed.

Find a relaxed, comfortable position. You could be seated on a chair or on the floor on a cushion. Keep your back upright, but not too tight. Hands resting wherever they're comfortable.

Noticeandrelaxyourbody.

Try to notice the shape of your body, its weight. Let yourself relax and become curious about your body seated here—the sensations it experiences, the touch, the connection with the floor or the chair. Relax any areas of tightness or tension. Just breathe.

Tuneintoyourbreath.

Feel the natural flow of breath—in, out. You don't need to do anything to your breath. Not long, not short, just natural. Notice where you feel your breath in your body. It might be in your abdomen. It may be in your chest or throat or in your nostrils. See if you can feel the sensations of breath, one breath at a time. When one breath ends, the next breath begins.

Bekindtoyourwanderingmind.

Now as you do this, you might notice that your mind may start to wander. You may start thinking about other things. If this happens, it is not a problem. It's very natural. Just notice that your mind has wandered. You can say "thinking" or "wandering" in your head softly. And then gently redirect your attention right back to the breathing.

Stayhereforfivetosevenminutes.

Notice your breath, in silence. From time to time, you'll get lost in thought, then return to your breath.

Checkinbeforeyoucheckout.

After a few minutes, once again notice your body, your whole body, seated here. Let yourself relax even more deeply and then offer yourself some appreciation for doing this practice today.

2. The 4 steps to deal with change

Step 1: Think about what you change/influence:

Which parts of this problem/change is out of your control and influence?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Which part can you influence?

_____

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_____

_____

Which part can you control?

_____

_____

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_____

Step 2: Take time for yourself

Write down things you normally do (or that you know that will help you) to make yourself feel better, happier, more positive in general. Do these things when you are feeling negative:

_____

_____

_____

Step 3: Analyse your thinking

Use a negative state of mind as a reminder to activate a positive mind state. This sounds impossible and, yes, it can be a challenge! But with a little practice, you can do it. For example, you are probably all-too-familiar with your critical inner voice. When you hear it making harsh judgements about you (again!), deliberately counter that voice with self-compassion.

Possible negative self-talk: "See I can't do it. I am not good enough. I look stupid"

Possible positive self-talk: "It was a difficult situation. Maybe I didn't handle it the way I wanted to. But anyone can make a mistake. And now I know what to do."

See "positive mindset" and practices for more information

Step 4: Decide what is important for you

What do you find important in this situation that is changing?

_____

_____

_____

What is your goal and how can you keep making sure you will reach this goal?

_____

_____

_____

3. Gratitude Journal tips

1. Plan to write in your gratitude journal every night for 15 minutes before bed. Set an alarm reminder on your phone or schedule it in your calendar. I've found that it is easier to write at night so that I can include things that I am grateful for from that day.

2. Keep your gratitude journal by your nightstand so you will see it before going to sleep and remember to jot down what you are thankful for. Your journal may even become a symbol of gratitude so that when you just look at it, you will feel a sense of appreciation.

3. Write as many things as you want in your gratitude journal. Writing down 5-10 things that you are grateful for each day is a good number to aim for.

4. Your gratitude journal doesn't have to be deep. What you are thankful for can be as simple as "family" or "the new book or movie I recently enjoyed" or "this morning's breakfast." What you are grateful for will differ from everyone else.

5. The timing of when you want to write is up to you. While I try to write in my gratitude journal every night, sometimes it becomes every other night. That's okay. Journal when it feels right for you — the benefits really are worth it. (Jessen, 2015)