

Teach like a positive psychologist

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A few years back, TIME magazine published a special “mind and body” issue with a cover story on “The New Science of Happiness” (Wallis, 2005). It was an introduction to the “positive psychology” movement started by former American Psychological Association president and University of Pennsylvania psychologist Martin Seligman. Positive psychology focuses attention on mental health, rather than on mental



illness as psychology had traditionally done. Seligman (2003) pointed out that positive psychology is not a replacement for traditional psychology. Rather, it’s a supplement and extension of traditional psychology. He also clarified that it is not “the power of positive thinking,” which he calls an “armchair exercise” (p.186) based on a philosophy rather than science. Positive psychology involves empirical and replicable research. It also understands that, at times, negative thinking is both necessary and accurate. Although bookstore shelves are full of “happiness” books these days, many researchers prefer terms like “positive emotion” or “subjective well-being” rather than “happiness.” In this chapter, as I do in my classroom, I mainly use the word “happiness,” for the sake of simplicity.

In the same Time Magazine, University of California Riverside researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky identified “Eight steps toward a more satisfying life” (2005, p. 32-33). They are as follows:

1. Remember good things in your life. (Count your blessings)
2. Do kind things.
3. Say “thank you” to people who help you.
4. Take time for your friends and family.
5. Forgive people who hurt you.
6. Take care of your body and health.
7. Notice good things as they happen.
8. Learn to work with your problems and stress.

What struck me when I saw Lyubomirsky’s list, which I paraphrased to make it more accessible for learners, is that most of the things on it are similar to things we are already doing in many ESL/EFL classes. “Friends and family” and “health” are standard topics in many elementary-level classes. “Remember good things in your life” – that’s grammar. It demands some sort of past tense. “Notice good things as they happen” requires the present. “Thanking” and “Forgiving” are language functions, often carried out with language routines.

So, I thought, if we are doing similar things anyway, why not do them in a way that focuses on and elicits positive emotion? We can consciously look at these ideas in our classes. This led to me reading a few dozen books and papers on positive psychology and to experimenting with the ideas in my own classes and, later, to me sharing those ideas with other ESL/EFL teachers in workshops and on the internet. In the process, I started to understand both the theoretical and practical ways we can connect positive psychology and ELT.

In addition to the natural interest of the topic – everyone wants to be happy – there are other benefits for students “working on happiness.” Christopher Peterson of the University of Michigan noted that “positive attitudes and motives about school translate themselves into good academic performance” (2006, p. 285). Oishi, Diener & Lucas (2007) echo this when they present a survey of over 118,000 people around the world in which those with higher levels of satisfaction in their lives – though not necessarily the highest levels possible – are more likely to continue on with their education. The same paper reported on another survey that found happy US university students had higher grade point averages, missed fewer classes and reported higher levels of conscientiousness. Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich & Linkins (2009) cite data indicating useful educational attributes connected to positive mood including broader attention and enhanced creative, holistic, analytic as well as critical thinking . Harvard’s Shawn Achor points out that positive emotion makes people better learners, “primed” for learning. Explaining the neuroscience behind this, he says, “positive emotions flood our brains with dopamine and serotonin, chemicals that not only make us feel good, but dial up the learning centers of our brains to higher levels. They help us organize new information, keep that information in the brain longer, and retrieve it faster later on” (2010, p. 44).

Positive Psychology Tips for Language Teachers

If positive emotion can be such a plus for learning, how can we translate the ideas into specific language tasks for English learners? One way to start is to let learners know about Lyubomirsky's "eight steps." I do that through a standard listening activity: peer dictation. I copy the eight items. As an example, I dictate the first one, "Remember good things in your life." The other seven are copied onto strips of paper. Each student gets one. Students stand and circulate, dictating and writing the sentences until they collect all eight. This can either be a full sentence dictation or a cloze dictation where they have a handout with key words deleted. Once they have written all of them, we talk about what they might mean in day-to-day life.

Later in the course, we revisit the list with a *Happiness Haiku* in which students work in pairs. Each group is assigned an item from this list. They write a haiku (5/7/5 syllable poem) on their topic, make a poster with their haiku and share it with the class. This not only helps with awareness of English syllabication, it also gets students thinking more deeply about the meaning than is possible with the previous, sentence-level dictation.

The tips below describe a series of ESL/EFL activities, each designed to have learners using English while also practicing the individual steps from Lyubomirsky's list. For positive psychology/ELT activities to have a lasting impact, they need to be practiced regularly. Essentially, we are inviting learners to do language tasks that help them develop a new set of habits, behavioral and cognitive, related to well-being. It is important to note that many positive psychology activities "have been shown to be successful through science, rather than conjecture" (Lyubomirsky 2007, p. 89), and that they can contribute to learners' "experience, growth, retention and depth of understanding" (Ben-Shahar, 2010, p. xii). I have tried to use just such activities and research as the basis for the tips and tasks that follow.

Tip 1: When focusing on the past, focus on the good stuff.

Lyubomirsky's list begins with "**Remember good things in your life.**" It is very common in ESL/EFL classes to ask students to keep journals to build their writing fluency. We can invite them to keep *Happiness Journals* or *Gratitude Journals*. About once a week, students think about things they are grateful for that happened in the previous week. They write them down. In the process, they remember and mentally re-experience those positive experiences and emotions. Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson (2005) suggest that when doing such "count your blessings" tasks, in addition to identifying the positive event, adding "why" it happened or was good adds to the tasks' usefulness and the depth to which the positive emotion is re-experienced. Naturally, this provides further language practice and is a good discourse strategy as well.

Tip 2: Do kind things. Compliments are a good way to start.

It is, perhaps, something of an irony that when we follow Lyubomirsky's advice to **do kind things** for others, we become happier, too. It is a kind of

virtuous cycle. Williams, Haber, Weaver & Freeman (1998) report that life satisfaction is about 24% higher in people who engage in altruistic activity. An easy way to add that to the ELT classroom is with language routines for *Compliments*. Focus the students on ways to give each other compliments, either by putting them on a board or a handout, or by eliciting ideas from the students and putting those on the board. Here are possible examples:

<i>You've got a beautiful smile.</i> <i>You are really good at English.</i> <i>That's a nice shirt.</i>	<i>You have great ideas.</i> <i>Your handwriting is so neat.</i> <i>You are always on time.</i> <i>You are really smart.</i>	<i>You're a really nice person.</i> <i>That bag is really cool.</i> <i>You help me a lot. Thanks.</i>
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Students work in groups of 4-5. Taking turns, each person thinks of and gives one true compliment to each person in the group. The person being complimented just says, "Thank you." Then, after all the compliments have been given, everyone "mentally reviews" (remembers) all the compliments they heard. Each time they think of one, they smile. By doing so, they are "mentally recycling" the language they heard – a sort of silent review. They are also taking the time for a post-task reflection on what they have been saying and hearing.

Note that responses to compliments are cultural. In Japan, for example, if someone says, "Nice shirt", the other person will often minimize the compliment, "Oh, it's old. Nothing special, really." In Thailand or Pakistan, the person might say, "Oh, I'll give it to you." They don't actually give the shirt away. It is just the polite response. In some cultures like Samoa, they actually would give it to you. I'm not suggesting students respond with "Thank you" because that's how it should be done in English. Rather, it is important to know that not everyone will respond the same way as people do in their native culture. This can lead to an interesting discussion for awareness.

Tip 3: Show gratitude.

It is probably no surprise that people who take the time to **say thank you to people who help you**, as Lyubomirsky recommends, have psychological benefits like increased optimism and dealing better with stress (Emmons, 2007). There are physical payoffs as well. Gratitude seems positively related to having more energy, healthier hearts and less illness (Mid-Columbia Medical Center, cited in Snider, 2010). The next two activities take a broad view of gratitude. The first focuses on the words "Thank you" in different languages. The next activity will focus specifically on the act of thanking a family member or other important person. You might want to precede them by modeling showing gratitude to your own students. Tell them something true that you appreciate. For example, say something like, "You know something I really appreciate? That fact that you all (*try to help each other/ are on time/ are really trying to improve your English/ etc.*)" The important thing is that it is something that is true and you appreciate, not something you wish were true.

Thank You to the World. On the board write,
 I want to say _____ to _____ for/because _____.
 (thank you) (country/culture) (reason)

In pairs or small groups, students think about how many languages they know how to say “thank you” in. They write or say a sentence, using the pattern, for each one. Examples:

I want to say grazie to Italy because they gave the world some great art (and pizza!)

I want to say shukran to Egypt for math. I don't like math but it's important.

After a few minutes, several pairs work together to compare answers.

Gratitude Letter. This activity focuses on gratitude while following Lyubomirsky's tip to **take time for friends and family**. Learners write a thank you letter to someone – very often they choose a parent – who helped them. In the letter they explain what exactly the person did, why it was important and how it helped or changed the writer. You may want to teach patterns such as, *I want to thank you for..., I remember the time you..., ... was special for me, ... this helped me (because)..., etc.* If the person they are writing to doesn't read/speak English, they should write it in both English and the language of the person they are thanking. Of course, writing the letter in both English and their native language gives them the opportunity to compare the level of nuance they were able to use in English. Ideally, they should give the letter to the person and read it to them. Of course, they can mail it if giving it to the person isn't practical.

In my own classes, writing the letter is assigned homework but actually giving it to the person is optional, although nearly all students do. I've heard wonderful stories like, “I read it to my mom and we cried together.” Clearly crying born of love and joy. Of course, responses aren't always what one would anticipate. One student reported reading it to her father, who looked at her and asked, “What did you do to the car?”

The *Gratitude Letter* as a positive psychology technique was developed by Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman. When Peterson (2006) told University of Michigan colleague Nansook Park about it, she commented, “Do you mean your students have never done this before?” (p.17) In Korea, where Park grew up, students do this annually for their teachers. It made Peterson wonder, “How many other such cultural practices need to be documented and disseminated across national borders?” (p. 17)

Tip 4: Focus on forgiving.

Forgiveness is important. Staff at the Mayo Clinic, one of the USA's most respected medical research facilities, say forgiveness leads to healthier relationships, greater spiritual and psychological well-being, less anxiety and hostility, fewer symptoms of depression and lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse.

The topic can be challenging in the classroom since personalized stories are often painful and private. But it can be an opportunity for receptive language listening activity. Make sure the students understand what the word

“forgive” means. Also tell them that they will do a listening activity about forgiveness. Have them think of something bad someone did to them that they have not forgotten. Be sure they understand that the situation they think about is private and they will not be asked to talk about it. Ask the students to stand up and hold out one arm. They should pick up something slightly heavy such as a bottle of water or a textbook. Depending on the level of the students, you may want to give them copies of the script, below. Read it to them in a slow, peaceful voice. They read along silently. They will notice, as you read, that whatever they are holding is getting heavy. That is part of the metaphor.

Teacher script:

Forgiveness

Someone did something bad to you.

Forgiveness does NOT mean the bad thing was OK.

Forgiveness does NOT mean that person can do the bad thing again.

Forgiveness is important for things that must NOT be done again.

When you do not forgive, who is hurt?

The person who did the bad thing usually doesn't know. Or doesn't remember. Or doesn't care.

The anger is in your heart. You carry the weight.

It does not help to know why the person did the bad thing. Usually that person doesn't know.

You carry the weight. You have the power to let it go.

*The weight in your heart is heavy. You can **put it down**.*

The thing they are holding contributes to the metaphor. And metaphors are useful for teaching things we can't teach directly. I often end this lesson by asking students to think about this paraphrased quote from Bernard Meltzer, “When you forgive, you don't change the past. You change the future.”

Tip 5: Incorporate smiles and laughter into lessons.

Physical activity contributes to happiness. Ben-Shahar (2010) reports that exercising three times a week is as powerful as anti-depressant drugs for people suffering from depression. That's why Lyubomirsky advises to **take care of your body and health**. Of course, most people know what to do to take care of their bodies – but knowing about healthy behavior and actually doing it are very different things.

Smiles and laughter are physical activities that contribute to good health. Stibich (2010) states the health benefits of smiling include stress release, lower blood pressure, a boosted immune system and a release of endorphins and serotonin in the brain. Mumbai physician Madan Kataria (2008), the creator of Laughter Yoga, points out that holding one's face in a smile position causes the release of the same neurotransmitters in the brain that a real smile does.

One activity that does this is *Smile Writing*. On the board, write a target sentence like the following:

_____ is _____
(your name) wonderful, fantastic, a super student, great, (etc).

Encourage students to supply other positive adjectives. Students then take out a pen, pencil or magic marker. They put it in their mouth horizontally. Holding up a notebook, they try to write a sentence about themselves, using any positive adjective. It is, by the way, easier to hold up and move a notebook, rather than to write on paper that is flat on a desk. When they finish, they show it to the partner who tries to read what they have written. This is, of course, just a quick warm-up or change of pace activity. Naturally, it usually results in smiles and laughter. It is a rather silly thing to do. But there is another important reason for the smiles. Holding the pencil in their mouths horizontally locks the face into a smile position. And the brain responds by releasing the neurotransmitters endorphin and serotonin, the “natural pain-killing” chemicals. Smiling acts as a natural drug. Kahneman (2011) reports on similar activities where people artificially smiling – using pencils as we did here – or artificially frowning by squeezing their eyebrows together, reported increased positive and negative emotional responses, respectively. There seems to be truth behind Kataria’s (2002) suggestion to “fake it ‘til you make it” (p.103) – genuine smiles and laughter do follow even artificial stimuli.

Tip 6: Promote mindfulness.

Lyubomirsky’s tip to **notice good things as they happen** is different than the first item on the list – Remember good things in your life. That is past tense. This is noticing the present, noticing good things as they happen. This is sometimes called “mindfulness.” In the classroom, it can be as simple as students working in pairs to see how many good things they can list about today: “The sun is shining. I have good friends. There is a cool breeze, etc.” Then pairs join other pairs and share their ideas.

In the multi-tasking, 24/7 world we live in, it can be useful to consciously learn how to slow down and be “in the moment.” I sometimes do this with a simple listening activity. It is modeled on an eating meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn, popularized by Moyers (1993). Kabat-Zinn has people eat a raisin, noticing it in a way far deeper than they usually notice anything they are eating. I do something similar with dried blueberries. I give each student a blueberry, explaining that we are going to eat them very slowly, noticing every step. Then I read the following script, pausing at the dots (•) to let the learners fully experience what they are doing.

Teacher script:

Eating a blueberry with mindfulness.

Today we will do something unusual. You are going to really experience eating a blueberry. • You are going to eat this blueberry and as you do, really notice it.

You'll get to know this piece of fruit better than any fruit you've eaten before.

• Hold it in your hand. Look at it. • Notice the color. Notice the wrinkles. I wonder if they are like fingerprints. I wonder if each one is different than other ones. • And smell it. You can notice that slight, sweet flavor. • And put it in your mouth but don't eat it just yet. • Notice how your tongue knows just where to put it. • And notice how your mouth is wet with saliva. Your body automatically knows you are going to eat something good. • And now, very slowly start to chew it. • As you chew, you taste and smell the flavor. • Take your time. It is good and you want it to last as long as possible. • Think about how wonderful it tasted, because you took the time to notice.

Although this is a listening task, you'll notice it was actually multi-sensory. They not only used their auditory sense but also visual, haptic (tactile/kinesthetic), olfactory (smell) and gustatory (taste) senses. And, by taking the time to learn how to work with mindfulness, they are able to expand the skill to other parts of their lives. In my own classes, I follow this with an exercise where we brainstorm other times we can notice and enjoy what is happening. Students often come up with suggestions like “smells in a bakery or flower shop”, “sounds of children laughing”, “the feeling of a pet's fur”, “the taste and feel of a cold drink on a hot summer day.” These are all acts of “mindfulness.”

This mindfulness/appreciation of the moment can become an act of “savoring”, which Bryant & Veroff (2006) define as “to attend to, appreciate and enhance positive experiences.” Those can be experiences in the present or the past or anticipation of things in the future. Though the events may be past or future, the appreciation is happening in the present. Fredrickson (2009) points out that when we focus on those positive experiences, we actually “re-experience” the positive emotion, thus increasing our positive-to-negative emotion ratio. To have students combine these past, present and future events in class you can ask them to reflect on a variety of personal experiences.

Savoring fluency task. Either give a copy of these items to each student or, to provide an accuracy task before the fluency work, copy the sentences, cut them into strips and give one sentence to each student. They stand and circulate, dictating their sentences to a partner and writing down their collected all the items.

Something you are really interested in

Something you are looking forward to

A wonderful childhood memory

A good friend

When do (or did) you laugh a lot?

A time you felt proud

Someone who helped you

When do you feel peaceful?

Give them a few minutes to look over the sentences. They check (✓) the ones that are the most interesting. As an alternative, you might have them rate all the items as “interesting”, “average” or “not interesting”. Some teachers have them use smiley faces (☺, ☹, ☺) to do this. As they are rating the questions, they should think:

What do I want to say?

How will I say it?

Note that as they are thinking about the items, they will naturally be mentally experiencing small stories from their lives related to positive feelings. Once they have decided on a few they want to talk about, have them work in groups of two or three. They talk about the questions they are interested in. Encourage partners to ask WH-questions about what the speaker says, such as, “When does (did) this happen?” “Who were you with?” The WH-questions are not only a good language-practice strategy to keep the interactions flowing, they also constitute what Seligman (2011, p. 48) calls “Active and Constructive Responses” which help the speaker relive and savor the event.

Tip 7: Find *flow* while sharing ways to work with problems and stress.

Everyone faces problems. Happy people learn to move beyond the difficulties and the stress. *Moving On: 4-3-2* is a speaking activity that encourages students to talk about a problem they had in the past that they overcame. It is based on the fluency activity “4-3-2” (Nation, 1989) which is also known as “*Carousel*” and “*Fluency Workshop*” (Maurice, 1983). Note that this is actually a success story – a problem they moved beyond. Start by telling the students a story from your own life about how you overcame a problem. It might be related to language learning or to something completely different.

Then ask everyone to think of a problem they overcame. Common topics include school and tests and learning a new skill (riding a bicycle or swimming). They should think about these questions:

- What was the problem?
- What did you do to get past the problem?
- Did getting past it make you a stronger person?

As with preparation for other fluency activities, it is good to give them “thinking time” to ask themselves, “What do I want to say?” and “How will I say it?”

Start the speaking activity in pairs, *A* and *B*. *A* speaks on the topic for exactly four minutes. Different teachers do the activity differently. Some have the students do a four-minute monologue. Others encourage the partner to ask questions to clarify or expand the story as they go along. When the four minutes are over, *B* tells his/her story to *A* for four minutes.

Everyone then changes partners. This time, *A* talks to *C* for three minutes, trying to say the same amount 25% faster. Since speakers have already told their story once and know what they want to say, they are usually

able to accomplish the task. Then *C* speaks as *A* listens. Finally, people change partners again. *A* speaks to *D* for two minutes, then *D* speaks to *A*.

The 4-3-2 activity lends itself to what Csíkszentmihályi (1997) calls “flow”, the psychological state that is a balance of challenge and skill in which the person in flow is very focused and often unaware of the passing of time. Athletes refer to it as being “in the zone.” The first time the student speaks, it is usually something of a struggle. They are trying to figure out both their content – what they want to say – and the language they will use to say it at the same time. The second time, they have to speak faster but they already know what they want to say. By the third time, they are often more able to focus completely on their meaning. Many approach or are in “flow”. For beginners, the times may need to be shortened but the 4-3-2 ratio seems to work. Once students know the 4-3-2 activity, it can be used with nearly any topic. Snyder (2006) suggests that while the entire process of learning English may not bring on “flow” for many students, individual tasks can bring flow when they require students to “continuously set new goals and rise to new challenges demanding greater levels of skill in the activity” (p.8). The combination of the reduced time each round, which serves as a new goal/challenge, and the increased skill created by the repetition meets these requirements.

Conclusion

The ideas and activities suggested here are based on things positive psychologists suggest their students and clients do. These activities also have specific language learning goals. It’s important for learners to know why we are asking them to do the things we suggest, especially when those things don’t fit into their image of what they should be doing in a language class. For example, in one of the activities, I suggested students stand and circulate, dictating sentences to each other. Some students resist being asked to stand up and walk around. It might be useful to point out that sitting for twenty minutes leads to blood building up in the feet, lower-legs and buttocks. Standing and moving for just one minute brings a 15% increase of blood and therefore oxygen to the brain (Sousa, 2006). Giving learners information like that usually makes them more willing to try new things. With many of these activities, it might be useful to draw their attention to the language learning goals – topics, grammar and functions/routines – that they are practicing.

Also, as a caveat, it is important to remember that we are language teachers, not psychologists. While positive emotion facilitates learning (Willis, 2006) and most of the emotion that comes up in these activities is positive, we need to be careful not to get into areas that we are not equipped to deal with. A simple example: some teachers encourage learners to use positive aphorisms/affirmations. While those can be useful in creating self-fulfilling prophecies (Lyubomirsky, 2007), there is also evidence (Wood, Perunovic & Lee, 2009) that repeating positive affirmations such as “I am a lovable person” may actually lower self-esteem in people with a weak sense of self-worth to begin with. As teachers, we need to be careful to pay attention to the science of psychology, not just passing “feel-good” fads.

A somewhat more serious example: While research indicates the efficacy of forgiveness, it is easy to imagine an ESL class with refugees who faced truly horrific situations in their home countries. In those cases, it may be better for the teacher to put the learner(s) in touch with someone like a psychologist or a social services professional who is better trained in meeting the person's complex needs.

As positive psychology matures, it is becoming more sophisticated. The "Happiness/Subjective well-being" that Lyubomirsky's "Eight steps toward a more satisfying life" focused on is only one part of a more complex mix of ideas. Seligman (2011) has recently introduced the PERMA model to give a more holistic view of well-being. PERMA stands for Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement. Although the positive psychology language activities presented in this chapter all deal with a specific aspect of positive emotion, many also exemplify other areas of the PERMA model. Like the ideas from Lyubomirsky's list, the items in the PERMA model also have applicability for us as ESL/EFL teachers.

Positive Emotion. Lyubomirsky's original list deals with this group so the "happiness/positive emotions" activities in this chapter all work on positive emotion.

Engagement. This includes mentally and emotionally engaging the learners. This is often done by challenging them. The *Thank You to the World* and *Moving on: 4-3-2* activities are examples of this. *Thank You to the World* is actually a drill, but having the learners come up with their own substitutions makes it more challenging and motivating than most drills. The time-pressure aspect of *Moving on: 4-3-2* makes it challenging. Challenge – which is accompanied by "eustress" (positive stress) – is essential for any activity that involves "flow."

Relationships. Positive psychologists study a range of relationships. As teachers, our major interest is in student-student and teacher-student relationships. Activities that build rapport can be useful. A simple starting point? Smile. Some teachers believe they should start off the school year tough, letting the students know they can't get away with anything. The common expression "Don't smile until second semester" (or until December, etc.) might actually be counter-productive in trying to establish rapport with your class. We naturally mirror facial expressions, and with them the emotions that we see in others. (Lundqvist and Dimberg, 1995) Smiling at the students from the first day is essentially inviting them to smile back and establish a good, positive relationship.

Meaning. We deal with meaning and meaningfulness when we connect with something bigger than ourselves. In the classroom, this can mean moving beyond topics like "What's your favorite sport?" and "Who's your favorite movie star?" Activities like *Compliments* and *Gratitude letter* move into the realm of meaning in this sense.

Achievement. Goal setting. Helping students look at where they want to be a month or a year from now. It may be as simple as helping learners

move beyond the general “I want to be a good English speaker” to look at small, specific steps they can take to achieve the goals. Wingate (2000) encourages learners to identify their dream, note obstacles in the way of reaching the dream, then find specific ways around those obstacles and steps they can do right away to start working on their goals. Lyubomirsky (2007) echoes the same idea when she encourages people to break their goals down to “baby steps” (p. 222). Sivers (2010) cautions against telling people about those goals, because it can create a “social reality” that tricks the mind into feeling that we have done more of the work to achieve the goal than we actually have. The take-away for us as teachers is that it may be useful to help students look at ways to realistically tackle their goals, without necessarily forcing discussion of what those goals are since those goals may well be personal and private, and since discussing goals can actually lead us toward not accomplishing them.

Lyubomirsky, whose work I’ve based this chapter on, has also refined and revised her list (2007), moving, for example, “religion and spirituality” from a subset of “learning to work with problems and stress” to being its own category. She also added “flow” and “goal-setting” as separate categories. Given our interest in connecting the ideas with tasks with clear language teaching/learning goals usable in the broadest of teaching situations, I’ve found it useful to stay with her original set of categories.

Finally, it is best to remember that teaching is, of course, a social endeavor. It happens between teachers and learners and between the learners themselves. There is a clear trend toward more humanistic language teaching. As Stevick (cited in Murphey, 2013) argues, “Language study is inevitably a total human experience; ... teachers ought therefore to act as though it is.” In humanistic language teaching, we don’t just teach English. We teach people. Positive psychology – the science of happiness – offers opportunities for us to work with students in more holistic ways and to improve those human connections. The old adage “happiness comes from within” might be updated, as Haidt (2006, p. 223.) puts it, to “happiness comes from *between*.”

Resources for Further Exploration

www.ELTandHappiness.com. The author maintains this website which contains over 50 downloads of activities and articles related to using positive psychology in ELT. They are all free. The tasks include PDF handout versions of the activities in this chapter. He has another website of free teaching resources at www.HelgesenHandouts.weebly.com

Many of the books in the reference section are very accessible and useful for further reading. A good set to start with are Seligman (2011), Fredrickson (2009) and Lyubomirsky (2007). Those three authors, along with Tal Ben-Shahar, Mihaly Csikszentmihályi and Shawn Achor also have useful videos on youtube.com.

Seligman's website, <http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>, features many resources including a survey of "Character Strengths" which helps people identify things that make them happy.

Positive Psychology Daily News (<http://positivepsychologynews.com/>) lets people sign up for a free, frequent newsletter that highlights some of the newer research, books and conference reports in this area.

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Marc Helgesen, Professor, Miyagi Gakuin Women's University, Sendai, Japan is the author of over 150 books, textbooks and articles dealing with English teaching including *English Firsthand* (Pearson Education). He has been an invited speaker at conferences on five continents. He is current chairperson of the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERFoundation.org). He can be contacted at march@mgu.ac.jp. He maintains two websites mentioned under Resources for Further Exploration.

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