

Three Funny Things

This activity is based on the “Three Good Things” activity, but instead targets students’ sense of humor. This intervention exemplifies the well-known phrase “laughter is the best medicine.” Instead of writing about three positive things that happened during the day, students write about three funny or amusing things that happened. After completing this activity, students will have a significant boost in happiness and cheerfulness, and will even smile more often (Gander et al., 2012).

Grade Level: All

Materials: Paper, pencil

Duration: 3-5 minutes daily, for one week. Repeat as needed.

Implementation: 1. Decide what time of day you will set aside for the activity each day. If you decide to do the activity at the beginning of the day, consider having students reflect on the previous day.
2. Introduce students to the idea of 3 funny things and provide examples perhaps by sharing your own 3 funny things
3. Provide students a few minutes to write down and reflect upon their list.

Does it work?

Building upon the idea of three good things, one group of researchers wanted to test the power of humor and see if the intervention would work just as well with funny things (Gander et al., 2012). Participants were asked to write down three funny things that happen each day and why they were funny, for one week. After completing the study, participants reported an immediate and stronger experience of positive emotion, marked by increased cheerfulness, laughter and smiling (Gander et al., 2012). A more recent study comparing both the three good things activity and the three funny things activity (with a control group) found that daily reflection on three funny things may be more effective at reducing depressive symptoms (Gander et al., 2020). Both activities were shown to both increase the intensity of positive emotions that the participants felt, but also increase the variety of positive emotions experienced. The three funny things intervention in particular was shown to increase feelings of amusement (Gander et al., 2020). It has also been found that the three funny things intervention may be more effective at increasing happiness among extroverted participants as compared to introverted participants (Wellenzohn et al., 2018). It is important to note that even if students do not have a naturally strong sense of humor, this activity can still benefit their wellbeing (Wellenzohn et al., 2018).

References:

- Gander, F., Proyer, R. T., Ruch, W., & Wyss, T. (2012). Strength-based positive interventions: further evidence for their potential in enhancing well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14, 1241-1259. <https://edtechbooks.org/-rLAZ>
- Gander, F., Proyer, R.T., Hentz, E. & Ruch, W. (2020). Working mechanisms in positive interventions: A study using daily assessment of positive emotions. *The Journal of Positive*

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Fawson, S., Bates, M., & Boren, D. M. (n.d.). *Addressing Wellbeing In Schools*. EdTech Books.
https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing