



Creating a Positive, Solution Focused Approach in the Classroom
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Setting the Stage

- > What is solution focused teaching?
- > Context of language
- > Core skills and practice
 - > Exceptions
 - > Scaling
 - > Miracle question
- > Application to courses
- > Workshop debriefing

What do you need to leave here
with to know it was worth your
time being here?

What is Solution Focused Teaching?

- ... teaching that uses respectful curiosity to focus on what is possible and achievable

- ... teaching that is grounded in the belief that students know how they learn best

The Appeal

- emphasis on student strengths
- anchored in behavioral changes
- focus on successes
- shared vision for outcomes

Bridging Solution Focused and Traditional Teaching

- Teacher as facilitator of learning (Rogers)
- Genuine participation intensifies motivation, flexibility and rate of learning (Watson)
- Education is a cooperative "art" (Houle)
- Teacher is a learner and seeks growth (Tough)
- Teacher accepts student as a person of worth (Knowles)
- Students engage in acts of discovery (Bruner)
- Democratic social arrangements (Dewey)

Core Assumptions

- | | |
|---|---|
| ⊙ Solution building v. problem solving | ● Students have resources and strengths |
| ⊙ Future is created | ● There is no one right way |
| ⊙ Begin where the student is | ● Students are experts on their own learning |
| ⊙ Teaching must be goal-directed | ● Teachers are hopeful, optimistic and respectful of students |
| ⊙ Every solution begins with one small step | |

Teaching Approaches

- Use many ways of knowing
- Encourage questioning, wondering and curiosity
- Explore social work's history and invite students to imagine a new future
- Use creative activities to stimulate right-brained thinking
- Model strengths-focused interviewing
- Model being educative without being controlling
- Are creative about reflecting on practice (metaphors, imagery, role-plays)
- Provide supported time to practice

Context of Language

⌘ Problem Talk

- Pathologizing or labeling
- Time spent in talking about what is **NOT** working
- Keeps all of us stuck in the past
- Creates atmosphere of negative feelings

⌘ Solution Talk

- Talking outside of the problem
- Reinforces times when the problem is **NOT** a problem
- Amplifies possibilities
- Creates atmosphere of positive feelings

Consider....

*language creates a **psychophysiological** response in us whether we are actually having the experience or whether we are just pretending to have it*

Probability in Language

studies indicate that people are willing to make the leap from possibility to probability and that once an event is judged as likely they make the further leap from probability to actuality

Tips in Using Language to Create Solutions

- ∞ Wh questions
- ∞ Tentative language
- ∞ Introduce possibilities (When you have learned how to...)
- ∞ Reframing (giving a positive connotation)
- ∞ Compliments (how have you managed to...)
- ∞ Personal meaning

Practice #2

- With a partner, practice asking a scaling question
- Be sure to ask follow up questions to the scale
- Remember you can ask relationship questions to help with perspective
- How will you do this with a group of people?

Miracle Question

*

Suppose that one night, while you were asleep, there was a miracle and the problem that we are discussing was solved. How would you know? What would be different? How will your field educator know without your saying a word to them?

Miracle Question II

- Suppose that something miraculous happens and (the problem) is gone. What would be different? How will your field educator know without your saying a word to them?

Miracle Question

Helpful suggestions:

- * Remember to include "and the problem that we are discussing was solved"
- * Follow up with relationship questions
 - * *What would your classmate/instructor/advisor notice about you?*
- * Work with the students response until you have a good idea of what the Miracle is in behavioral terms

Instruction Example

- Problem: "I don't know what you want in this paper"
- Suppose that when you go home tonight you read the assignment over and something "out-of-this-world" happens and you completely understand how to write this paper.

Instruction Example Con't

- What is the first thing you will do? What ideas will you be thinking about? What will your outline look like?
- Who is the first person you would talk to about this? What would they notice about you?
- What is the first thing that will let you know something out-of-this-world has happened?
- What are you already doing that helps?

Practice #3

- What other wording and ways could you ask the miracle question?
- How would you follow up?
- Consider a situation where it may have been helpful for someone to ask you the miracle question.
- How would it have helped?

Follow Up

- Elicit successes: What has worked?
- Amplify successes: How did you get it to work so well?
- Reinforce successes: What are you going to do to keep it going?
- Measure change: Scaling question

Building Cooperation

- Empathize
- Have an open mind
- Stick with what is important to the student
- Avoid arguing/debating with student
- Think "student empowerment"
- Have realistic expectations
- Attend to past and small successes
- Avoid "why"
- Be willing to admit mistakes
- Be willing to apologize

Insoo Kim Berg

(July 25, 1934 - January 10, 2007)

If it ain't broke don't fix it
Once you know what works, do more of it
If it doesn't work, don't do it again

Debriefing

- What fits for you?
- Can you recall times when you wish you had used this approach?
- What is the first thing you will do differently as a result of this workshop?
- What might your students notice about you as you use the solution focused tools?

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List of Questions Lead-In

The most difficult part of mastering new concepts and skills used in SFBT is like learning a new language and learning to think differently. The following are some suggestions to make you feel comfortable using solution-building conversations.

Wh Questions (What, Who, Where, When, Which, and How)

What does ___ expect to come out of your coming to this meeting?

What needs to come out of this meeting so that you can say this is helpful?

Which part do you agree with and which part do you disagree with?

What tells you that you are at 5?

Tell me about the times when you are more productive? What is different then?

What do you know about him/her that tells you that he/she can do this?

What difference is it going to make in your _____?

How would that be helpful to you?

What has been changed, even a little bit, since you began taking this class?

Tentative Language (Perhaps, it seems, suppose, it appears, it sounds like . . .)

I am not sure about this, what do you suppose . . .

Do you suppose . . . ?

It sounds like what you really want is . . . to be more hopeful about yourself.

I'm not sure it will happen, but suppose, just suppose your instructor changed . . . How would that be helpful to you? What difference would it make to your relationship?

What will change in your ___ (assignments, behavior, and attentiveness)?

Relationship Questions

What would your best friend (boss, advisor) say you are like when you are calmer?

What would ___ notice different about you that will tell her that things are better?

What would your clients say they like best about your being clear? (Not What your clients would say they hates about you being distracted?)

Personal Meaning and Language

You are clear about not procrastinating. What about that is so important to you?

You must have a good reason to . . . ?

So, how would that be helpful for you to (not go to class, stay in bed, procrastinate)?

What Else?

What else would it take for you to really understand this material?

What would ___ say it would take for you to improve your grades?

Lead-in Possibilities in Solution-Building Practice

Always make use of Wh questions (what, when, where, who, how come).

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| How do you want your experience here to be different? | How can I help? |
| How will things be different for you? | I wonder if you noticed? |
| What small change would you make? | How would that help? |
| I wonder what difference that would make? | Tell me more about.... |
| What tells you that you can do this? | What would it take to? |
| I am not sure, do you suppose....? | Is it possible that? |
| I wonder what your classmates would say? | Did you notice? |
| How will you know things are getting better? | Suppose....just suppose |
| How did you figure out how to do that? | How do you know? |
| Perhaps... | Anything else? |
| What difference would it make? | It seems like... |
| Did I hear you right? | It is amazing! |
| What else would change? | I don't know....yet. |
| What is better? | What else is better? |
| When things are different, what would you do then that you are not doing right now? | |

Scaling Question in Solution-Building Practice

1. What tells you that you are at 6?
2. How long did it take you to get to 6?
3. What is different at 6 than, say, when you were at 4?
4. What would others (advisor, another teacher) say where you are at on the same scale?
5. What do you need to do to maintain your 6?
6. What would it take to move up 1 point on the same scale?
7. Suppose I ask your field supervisor (classmate, etc.) what would ____ say you are at on the same scale?
8. When you move 1 point higher, what would be different in your life? With your colleagues (friends, etc.)?
9. How would your group participation (written work, class attendance, presence in class, energy level, etc.) be different?
10. Sometimes you may want to ask:
How come you are not a -3? What are you doing well? What do you have to do so that you can stay at a 1?

The Miracle Question in Solution-Building Practice

Now, I want to ask you a strange question. *Suppose* that while you are sleeping tonight and the entire dorm is quiet, a *miracle* happens. The miracle is that *the problem we are talking about is solved*. However, because you are sleeping, you don't know that *the miracle has happened*. So, when you wake up tomorrow morning, *what will be different that will tell you that a miracle has happened and the problem which brought you here is solved?*

Guidelines for Developing Well-Defined Goals

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Key Words</i>	<i>Sample Question</i>
In the positive	"instead"	"What will you be doing instead?"
In process form	"how"	"How will you be doing this?"
In the here and now	"on track"	"As you leave here today, and you're on track, what will you be doing differently or saying differently to yourself?"
As specific as possible	"specifically"	"How specifically will you be doing this?"
In the student's control	"you"	"What will you be doing when that happens?"
In the student's language	Use the client's expressions	For example, "So you'll bring it up and talk it out, the next time you feel slighted?"

Strengths and Limitations of Teaching Methods

Lecture

STRENGTHS:

- presents factual material in direct, logical manner
- contains experience which inspires
- stimulates thinking to open discussion
- useful for large groups

LIMITATIONS:

- experts are not always good teachers
- audience is passive
- learning is difficult to gauge
- communication in one way

PREPARATION:

- needs clear introduction and summary
- needs time and content limit to be effective
- should include examples, anecdotes

Lecture with Discussion

STRENGTHS:

- involves audience at least after the lecture
- audience can question, clarify & challenge

LIMITATIONS:

- time may limit discussion period
- quality is limited to quality of questions and discussion

PREPARATION:

- requires that questions be prepared prior to discussion

Panel of Experts

STRENGTHS:

- allows experts to present different opinions
- can provoke better discussion than a one person discussion
- frequent change of speaker keeps attention from lagging

LIMITATIONS:

- experts may not be good speakers
- personalities may overshadow content
- subject may not be in logical order

PREPARATION:

- facilitator coordinates focus of panel, introduces and summarizes
- briefs panel

Strengths and Limitations of Teaching Methods

Brainstorming

STRENGTHS:

- listening exercise that allows creative thinking for new ideas
- encourages full participation because all ideas equally recorded
- draws on group's knowledge and experience
- spirit of congeniality is created
- one idea can spark off other other ideas

LIMITATIONS:

- can be unfocused
- needs to be limited to 5 - 7 minutes
- people may have difficulty getting away from known reality
- if not facilitated well, criticism and evaluation may occur

PREPARATION:

- facilitator selects issue
- must have some ideas if group needs to be stimulated

Videotapes

STRENGTHS:

- entertaining way of teaching content and raising issues
- keep group's attention
- looks professional
- stimulates discussion

LIMITATIONS:

- can raise too many issues to have a focused discussion
- discussion may not have full participation
- only as effective as following discussion

PREPARATION:

- need to set up equipment
- effective only if facilitator prepares questions to discuss after the show

Class Discussion

STRENGTHS:

- pools ideas and experiences from group
- effective after a presentation, film or experience that needs to be analyzed
- allows everyone to participate in an active process

LIMITATIONS:

- not practical with more than 20 people
- few people can dominate
- others may not participate
- is time consuming
- can get off the track

From "Getting the Most out of Your AIDS/HIV Trainings"
East Bay AIDS Education Training Center
Revised from 1989 addition by Pat McCarthy, RN, MSN, 1992

Strengths and Limitations of Teaching Methods

PREPARATION:

- requires careful planning by facilitator to guide discussion
- requires question outline

Small Group Discussion

STRENGTHS:

- allows participation of everyone
- people often more comfortable in small groups
- can reach group consensus

LIMITATIONS:

- needs careful thought as to purpose of group
- groups may get side tracked

PREPARATION:

- needs to prepare specific tasks or questions for group to answer

Case Studies

STRENGTHS:

- develops analytic and problem solving skills
- allows for exploration of solutions for complex issues
- allows student to apply new knowledge and skills

LIMITATIONS:

- people may not see relevance to own situation
- insufficient information can lead to inappropriate results

PREPARATION:

- case must be clearly defined in some cases
- case study must be prepared

Role Playing

STRENGTHS:

- introduces problem situation dramatically
- provides opportunity for people to assume roles of others and thus appreciate another point of view
- allows for exploration of solutions
- provides opportunity to practice skills

LIMITATIONS:

- people may be too self-conscious
- not appropriate for large groups
- people may feel threatened

PREPARATION:

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Strengths and Limitations of Teaching Methods

- trainer has to define problem situation and roles clearly
- trainer must give very clear instructions

Report-Back Sessions

STRENGTHS:

- allows for large group discussion of role plays, case studies, and small group exercise
- gives people a chance to reflect on experience
- each group takes responsibility for its operation

LIMITATIONS:

- can be repetitive if each small group says the same thing

PREPARATION:

- trainer has to prepare questions for groups to discuss

Worksheets/Surveys

STRENGTHS:

- allows people to think for themselves without being influenced by others
- individual thoughts can then be shared in large group

LIMITATIONS:

- can be used only for short period of time

PREPARATION:

- facilitator has to prepare handouts

Index Card Exercise

STRENGTHS:

- opportunity to explore difficult and complex issues

LIMITATIONS:

- people may not do exercise

PREPARATION:

- facilitator must prepare questions

Guest Speaker

STRENGTHS:

- personalizes topic
- breaks down audience's stereotypes

LIMITATIONS:

- may not be a good speaker

PREPARATION:

- contact speakers and coordinate

From "Getting the Most out of Your AIDS/HIV Trainings"

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Revised from 1989 addition by Pat McCarthy, RN, MSN, 1992

Strengths and Limitations of Teaching Methods

- introduce speaker appropriately

Values Clarification Exercise

STRENGTHS:

- opportunity to explore values and beliefs
- allows people to discuss values in a safe environment
- gives structure to discussion

LIMITATION:

- people may not be honest
- people may be too self-conscious

PREPARATION:

- facilitator must carefully prepare exercise
- must give clear instructions
- facilitator must prepare discussion questions