

Designing Materials and Methods for Teaching Soft Skills: A Model Lesson Plan on Positive Thinking for Graduate Students

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Abstract: As nowhere in history the new generation of students is confronting confusion in choosing their career and creating their character as present one does. Eventually, teaching soft skills has become the need of the hour. The educational institutes, society, family and corporate are expressing the same. Therefore, contextualizing and designing material and various innovative methods to impart soft skills have become a challenge. The research paper presents a model lesson plan for graduate students on positive thinking. The paper aims to present positive thinking skills through a literary text by dominantly facilitating an activity based teaching. It incorporates activities like pre-reading activity, think before you read, reading the text, understanding the story through discussion in pair work, glossary activities, learning from people, focusing on applying the story, undergoing a self-assessment test, learning about positive thinking, tips to develop positive thinking, and some post reading activities/assignments. As the researchers have been successful in designing various materials and proposing methods in various text books prescribed in state level educational institutions, the present lesson plan is sought to be a just guiding material for promising soft skills teachers and trainers.

Key words : soft skills, positive thinking, pre and post reading activities, role plays, pair work, self-assessment.

POSITIVE THINKING

1.Pre-Reading Activity:

Which thing plays a vital role in getting success? Many people have many opinions. But the one truly deciding is one's attitude. Discover the importance of attitude through this activity.

If ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ-equal to 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18, 19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26 -total the numbers against the words which amounts their deciding factor in success.

Word	Equal Numbers	Total
HARD WORK	8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11	= 98%
KNOWLEDGE		
LOVE		
LUCK		
MONEY		
LEADERSHIP		
ATTITUDE		

2. Think before you Read:

Have you ever faced a problem that you thought impossible to solve? Many of life's greatest accomplishments have been achieved because men and women refused to be frightened by the "impossible." David in the Old Testament faced a similar problem. He had a "giant" task. But he conquered his enemy with his positive attitude. You've probably heard the story of David defeating Goliath, but have you applied these same principles in your life against your giant problems? Read the story with the intention of how he had to deal with a real, live giant, the qualities he possessed enabled him to succeed and the same will work for you too. One of the foundational truths that enabled David to face this giant was that he viewed the whole situation through positive attitude

David, Man Of Positive Attitude

The Philistine army had gathered for war against Israel. The two armies faced each other, camped for battle on opposite sides of a steep valley. A Philistine giant measuring over nine feet tall and wearing full armor came out each day for forty days, mocking and challenging the Israelites to fight. His name was Goliath. Saul, the King of Israel, and the whole army were terrified of Goliath.

One day, David, the youngest son of Jesse, was sent to the battle lines by his father to bring back news of his brothers. David was just a young teenager at the time. While there, David heard Goliath shouting his daily defiance, and he saw the great fear stirred within the men of Israel. David responded, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of God?" So David volunteered to fight Goliath. It took some persuasion, but King Saul finally agreed to let David oppose the giant. Dressed in his simple tunic, carrying his shepherd's staff, sling, and a pouch full of stones, David approached Goliath. The giant cursed at him, hurling threats and insults.



David said to the Philistine that the battle belonged to the Lord. As Goliath moved in for the kill, David reached into his bag and slung one of his stones at Goliath's head. It found a hole in the armor and sank into the giant's forehead. He fell face down on the ground. David then took Goliath's sword, killed him and cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. The Israelites pursued, chasing and killing them and plundering their camp.

3. Understanding the story:

Answer the following questions and later you may discuss in your class.

1. How were the Israelites in trouble?
2. Who was Goliath? What was his personality? Was it a challenge to his Israelites?
3. What is courage? Do you find courage in David? How?
4. Who and How did discourage David when he started thinking to face Goliath ?
5. What factors could have been David afraid because no one respected him?
6. What did motivate David to fight against Goliath while the entire army was so frightened?
7. How could David's past victory help him to fight against Goliath?
8. Was David confident about his talent and sure about his victory? How?

4. Learning from people:

There are both positive and negative people in the story, find them out and say why they are so.

	People	Positive/Negative	Why are they Positive/Negative?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

5. Applying the story:

Usually, we limit the story of David and Goliath to the size of the two men. Goliath was huge and strong. David was small and comparatively weak. Is this only a story about size difference? No, let's derive some principles of positive thinking.

- Positive thinking looks at self first
- Positive thinking overcomes hurdles
- Positive thinking celebrates past victories
- Positive thinking is contagious

- Fear is enemy to ositive thinking
- Positive thinking is continuous process
- Positive thinking is result of empathy
- You may gather strength from background but not all

- Positive thinking generates creative solutions
- Positive thinking stands you special in negative world

6. Are you a positive thinker? (Self-assessment test)

Read the following 'yes' or 'no' questions carefully. If your answer is YES, write 1, if NO write 0.

	Questions	1 or 0
1	Do you believe that you are unique and special?	
2	If somebody wants to talk to you, you fear that they share any problem?	
3	If a person hurts you, you believe everybody is the same.	
4	You have already failed in one task, you believe you certainly fail this time too.	
5	You believe that there are no solutions for your problems.	
6	When you are given an assignment you fear that you may not do it properly.	
7.	When you win in game, you believe it is because of luck.	
8	Do you have hope that you will have good future?	
9	Your well-wisher scolds you for your mistake, you accept it or revolt against.	
10	Have you ever attributed success to others?	
11	Have you ever congratulated yourself?	
12	Do you try to justify always after doing something wrong?	
13	Do you enjoy secrecy?	
14	Do you feel excited for future projects or studies?	
15.	If you are late to college for helping someone to cross the road, you think that your teacher will punish you.	
16	You always worry that something bad happens to you.	
17.	Do you feel bad for missing a chance to get a prize?	
18	Do you go to college on Monday happily?	
19	Do you go movie, if a stranger offers you a movie ticket,?	
20	Do you feel happy whenever you see your face in mirror?	

If your score is between 15-20, you are a good positive thinker. If your score is less than 15, you need to improve looking at the things positively.

7. Thinking about positive thinking:

The story is more about two competitors' attitudes rather than their sizes. Attitude makes such a big difference. Your attitude decides your altitude, aptitude and amplitude. Attitude is said to be foundation for one's personality. If you build your life without proper positive foundation, the superstructure will one day be suddenly collapsed. David looked at

the problem entirely from different angle from his fellow Israelite soldiers. He saw himself not as a soldier in king's army but protector of his own honor and dignity in front of enemy. That's why he created a very different battle plan. He didn't need traditional armor designed by somebody, he had his own. He exercised faith in his God given potentiality to overcome obstacles in life. He believed that nobody is created to be such a weak creature to be defeated and lost. He also deemed it as a moral battle against evil. He established himself as a man of positive attitude where Goliath as man of arrogance. David believed in mental dynamics whereas Goliath bluntly believed only in his physic.

The story of David and Goliath invites us to consider where we face battles today. As David changed the rules of the battle, so we too can.

What is Positive thinking and not?

'The way you look at things' is attitude. The way you look at the bright side and remedy side of a problem is called positive thinking. Positive thinking is all about changing your ideas, perceptions and interpretations about the things around you. By doing so, in turn you determine the way of handling your life along with its assets and liabilities. Positive thinking is the capacity to focus on what is right and neglecting what is wrong or unpleasant. Positive thinking is focusing on reality and possibility of happening certain things with your confidence and determination.

Advantages of thinking positive:

- Positive thinking helps you to derive satisfaction from what you do and what you have.
- Positive thinking is guide to success and peace of mind.
- Positive thinking can make reaching your goals easier and more enjoyable.
- Positive thinking helps you to become a flexible person.
- Positive thinking helps you to unfold the world of problems .
- Positive thinking helps you to motivate yourself .

Why are people negative?

- People don't think positive because they don't have confidence.
- People don't think positive because they have fear of failure.
- People don't think positive because they over estimate their problem.
- People don't think positive because they listen to others and circumstances.
- People don't think positive because they suspect everything.
- People don't think positive because they forget their past victories.
- People don't think positive because they don't have hope in future.

How to develop positive thinking?

- *Right belief breeds right attitude:* Man believes as he behaves. Your belief in your talent will boost up your confidence and generates your positive thinking. Believe right!

- *Practice positive visualization:* Hope is the rope of success. Try to see good in others and expect bright future. Think big!
- *Accommodate with positive association:* Negative people will instill negative thinking. Avoid those people and establish positive image. Have good friends!
- *Respect yourself and others too:* Comparison is the death of joy. Don't compare yourself with anyone in this world...if you do so, you are insulting yourself. Be yourself!
- *Set positive goals:* If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. One who is clear about his goal will not be easily trapped and tempted and always has a positive view about things. Be Clear!
- *Be optimistic and realistic:* There are three types of thinking; negative thinking, positive thinking and right thinking. Select last one. Be realistic!
- *Instill positive mind at best time.* Spend your prime time in a day or life for practicing positive things. Start your day with best listening and reading educative things not with entertaining and emotional stuff. Not entertainment but education!
- *Don't believe in failure:* Fear of failure will lead one into negative thinking. A person who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything! You can't separate the successes from the failures—it's all part of the same journey. Fall but rise!
- *Break the negative habits:* There are bad and good addictions. Why don't you have good? Addicting to screen culture, believing in superstitions, false prestige, identity crisis and eager to decide life partner - are said to be the negative side of the youth. Have best habits!
- *Remove the labels that imposed by others:* Remember! Birth and background have nothing to do with a person's greatness. Constant efforts from now only will make a person great. Things which are behind you or before you can do nothing but within you will do everything. You are not responsible what others feel about you!
- *Have a strong and persistent desire:* Ambition is the path to success. Persistence is the vehicle you arrive in. Believe in I can win!

• **8. Post Reading activities:**

Write your positive self-talks.

	Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
1.	I don't know how to do it. I may fail.	
2.	It's too difficult.	
3.	I don't have resources.	
4.	I don't have enough time.	
5.	They didn't smile at me .I am bad.	
6.	I did a terrible mistake. I can never overcome.	
7.	I am from poor background.	
8.	This is difficult subject.	
9.	I am not perfect.	
10.	I don't have encouragement.	

1. Collect some proverbs and quotations on positive thinking and have discussions among

- yourself.
2. Prepare a list of things you worry about. Write down the advantages of them. Search for the root causes and actions to overcome the situations positively.
 3. Select someone you often blame for his /her mistakes, manners and failures. When you tell so about it, does it change him / her behaviour? What is the impact of such thinking on your feelings? Analyse and record it properly?

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