



CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2015 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s) Madeleine A. Powley	Project Number 35386
Project Title Are You Happy and You Know It? The Effects of Recognizing Happiness and Thankfulness on a Daily Basis	
Abstract Objectives/Goals The objective in the project was to discover whether students who kept gratitude journals over a 10 day period showed a more positive outlook on life and performed better in school than students who did not keep gratitude journals over the same 10 day period. Two hypotheses were tested. The first hypothesis predicted that those who recorded in gratitude journals showed higher scores in positive framing on a survey. The second hypothesis predicted that regardless of whether or not the students wrote in the journals, those with high performance in school had a higher subjective well-being. Methods/Materials Sample- 105 high school students Psychological Construct Survey Gratitude Journals and Daily Activity Journals Student Grades (independently obtained) Students were assigned into three groups: Control, Neutral and Experimental. The control group did not obtain the journal, and the neutral group obtained the journal but only wrote daily events. The experimental group wrote thoughts of gratitude in the journal. An identical survey for all groups was distributed before and after the 10 day period. The data was then gathered and analyzed. Results For hypothesis one, there was no major difference between the groups and the assignments for the journals. It is unclear whether the manipulation in the experiment worked. If this project were to be continued, more variables and manipulation checks would be added. In the second hypothesis, the students with higher performance did show higher personal satisfaction. Females showed higher subjective well being, especially if they were low performers. Students who also showed low performance gained a positive outlook on life if they studied for any amount of time. Conclusions/Discussion High school students ranging in grades 9-12 completed a survey before and after a 10 day period and filled out a journal according to their group assignment. Results show that regardless of the journal assignment, no change was seen in the students' subjective well-being and outlook on life. However, those who performed lower in school improved their subjective well-being if they studied. This trend was especially seen in females.	
Summary Statement This project measured the subjective well-being and school performance of students who kept a gratitude journal versus those students who did not keep a gratitude journal.	
Help Received Parent helped with statistical measurements, printout of poster at Naval Postgraduate School, school teacher providing population of subjects	