

Victoria Community Continuing Education

Evaluation Report

12C015A Happiness: Its Meaning, Measurement & Importance

Tutor: Dan Weijers

Course Date: **12, 19, 26 July 2012**

Participants: **46**

Surveys completed: **22**

Response Rate: **48%**

CCE Manager read report.

Comments: Generally positive feedback. Some good suggestions for further seminars.

No review required

Review required

Minor changes required (CCE Manager: (name& date)

Moderate changes required (CCE Manager: (name & date)

Substantial changes required (Re-approval required, ratification date:)

Changes Recommended

1. Course Structure

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses	Mean
1	The course structure was clear and logical.	9	9	2	2	0	22	1.86

2. Course Content

#	Question	Far Too Advanced	Too Advanced	About Right	Too Basic	Far Too Basic	No Opinion	Responses	Mean
1	The course content was:	0	0	19	1	2	0	22	3.23

3. Communication

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses	Mean
1	The teacher communicated ideas and information clearly.	5	14	1	2	0	22	2.00
2	The teacher encouraged questions and interaction.	16	4	1	0	0	21	1.29

4. Enrolment and Pre-course Service

#	Question	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion	Responses	Mean
1	The enrolment service I received was:	15	3	2	0	0	0	20	1.35
2	The course and venue information sent to me prior to the start of the course was:	14	3	3	0	0	0	20	1.45
3	Overall the course administration was:	14	3	2	0	0	0	19	1.37

5. Course Facilities

#	Question	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion	Responses	Mean
1	The teaching facilities were:	8	10	4	0	0	0	22	1.82

6. Overall Rating

#	Question	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion	Responses	Mean
1	Overall I would rate the quality of this course as:	7	9	4	1	0	1	22	2.14

7. How did you find out about this course?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	VUW Community Continuing Education brochure	14	64%
2	VUW Professional Development brochure	0	0%
3	VUW website	5	23%
4	VUW email newsletter	5	23%
5	Through my organisation	0	0%
6	Newspaper Advertising	0	0%
7	From a CCE teacher	0	0%
8	Word of mouth	1	5%

7a. How did you receive the Community Continuing Education brochure?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	A copy was mailed out to me	6	43%
2	I picked up a copy	8	57%

7b. If you picked up the brochure yourself, please state where:

Text Response

Chaffers New World

University campus

Kilbirnie Library

Railway station

Library

Wgtn. Central Library

Railway station campus

Thorndon New World supermarket area

8. How could we improve this course?

Text Response

Less opinion and a wider discussion on the (Eastern) alternative approaches

I cannot think of any ways to improve this course. It was really great, one of the best we have taken.

Would have loved one more session on subject.

Maybe have a fourth evening?! Bring Aaron Jarden in to do a whole session? His talk when he filled in for Dan was interesting too. The room was a little cold last night (though was fine the first two sessions) but this is not a big thing.

Not much to mention.

It was really good course, discussion led to many areas. Maybe make it 4 nights.

Since street parking is free after 6pm and we are not allowed to park on campus, how about starting the course at 6.10pm so we can use the free parking without being late?

The last session was overtaken by too many questions and comments from course participants which meant that some of the material intended for presentation was dropped.

I thought the course was good, discussion was very interesting. Maybe use Prezi, incorporating more interesting images into the slide show presentation.

It would be helpful if students receive 'further reading' links such as current treasury goal schema, overview of works by Richard Layard etc. The course covered only particular area of introducing happiness, particularly general terms and involvement of government. Important subjects were not covered such as how market covers people endeavour to reach happiness (with relation to behavioral economics) and practical advices how people should adjust their behavior to feel happier. It would be nice if these areas were covered as well.

Loved it. Would like more of them.

Perhaps class outline/agenda emailed through as I travelled from Palmerston North so often felt like I had missed out arriving after the start of each lecture. Apologies for this, but it was unavoidable.

Would have liked a handout of the basics

Transparent and detailed summary prior to commencement to manage expectations.

It could sustain a 4th session. That would allow for a bit more discussion (there was plenty on offer) and to include bits that Dan said we skipped - commuting & advertising. There could also be more

on the brain plasticity angle and especially to consider (in context of public policy) - even if it is achievable to measure happiness/wellbeing, what practical public policy options are available to improve our score (and until they exist, is there much point measuring?).

Incorporate some NZ-based case studies of the application of the approach (if the information is available)

9. Suggestions for future course topics?

Text Response

Would be interested to hear more about well-being measurement and SWB evaluations for policy-making

More philosophical topics.

Sociology

More philosophy courses would be great. Also a geology trip to South Island.

Great to see one coming up on women and investments. More along those lines

New Zealand history and arts.

Interesting learning that the policymakers incorporate happiness into their decisions because this is not evident, especially in my field of work with Probation clients and their families. But then that could be because they are a small percentage of the population and successive governments from my point of view have not worked well with those from low socio-economic population preferring to use them as a political points scoring at each election instead of building strong policies of change. So, I would like to learn more of what government/policymakers consider with decisions made on social policies like (1) Policies that are currently being introduced by Paula Bennett from the working group paper will obviously make things worse for those in poverty - education and support while they will take much longer, would seem the more cost effective option to choose from a wellbeing (happiness) point of view for these families and economically for the country. NZers seem to prefer punitive measures rather than an holistic approach that would benefit all of society. (2) Corrections - again, I would be very interested in learning more about how the policymakers incorporate, for instance, happiness into the prison system. My experience through going into prison is most in the system do not really give a toss. Take for instance the food they provide - it's almost worse than eating McDonalds everyday as it is very high in refined carbohydrates, i.e. white bread; nurses are gatekeepers between prisoners and doctors with often life threatening outcomes; Nicotine Replacement Therapy is provided for about 3 months when evidence proves otherwise. Working in the field of addiction most quitters take several attempts to give up smoking. I understand Corrections say they have based this decision on "overseas research" but fail to quote whose research this is. The health of prisoners has huge ramifications for society, particularly the families of those in prison and the domino effect of this on the rest of society that often leads to recidivism. Instead of building prisons why not plough the funding into more productive rehabilitation but then Justice/Corrections is a great political point scorer.

Science of happiness, or latest neuroscience developments, also writing a non-fiction book course from someone with a science back ground would be most appreciated! Thank you!

Maybe a 'part 2' instead of expansions suggested above?

Application of happiness / positive psychology in institutions and organisations.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	10

10. Any additional comments?

Text Response

This was an interesting topic - and the tutor encouraged discussion - but the course could do with a good polish of how it was presented

Thank you for the perfect organisation.

Dan was excellent. He had a very gentle delivery style and was extremely and equally patient with each and every person who had a question or comment, and 'managed' the class well - e.g. reminding people to raise their hands, getting the class back on track when a digression had gone on a wee while etc. I learnt a lot, even just from the first session, and have found what I learnt immediately and personal applicable and transformative. I really looked forward to the 2nd and 3rd sessions, and have now borrowed a book from the library to follow up on one of the aspects Dan introduced in the course so I can learn more.

Thanks a lot!

Your courses are valuable, from this course on happiness I have gone on to enrol in the Positive Psychology course which seems to complement the Philosophy course. I was going to do Philosophy 101, but the fees and lack of interaction between lecturer and students put me off.

Dan was a great teacher, clear and confident in his presentation and very welcoming of questions and discussion. Thanks for a very interesting 3 weeks.

Dan was a good lecturer

As for me there was too much discussion on the course. My reason for coming on this course was to get some references about what experts (especially scientists) do in happiness area, rather than listening to other students. That was the biggest disappointment of the course.

I would have liked group activities so I could have met some of the other people. They seemed very interesting.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course and returned on Friday 20/07/12 for the Justice Hot Tub Debate - another stimulating VUW event. Thank you for providing these continuing education courses, your efforts are very much appreciated :)

Simply that the philosophical approach to happiness was not the right approach for me - next time I would be interested in a similar topic coming from the dept of psychology, or possibly from religious studies. I was left with the question - 'where is joy in all of this?'

Charming presenter

Enjoyed the course; thanks

Great course, well-presented by Dan.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	14