



PICTURE

INTERVENTION
MANUAL

THIS!

A person's hands are holding a smartphone horizontally, framing a city skyline. The phone's screen shows a vibrant cityscape with various buildings. On the phone's interface, there are labels like 'HDR' and '4K VIDEO'. The background is a soft-focus view of the city from above. Overlaid on this image is a large, white, bold text that reads: 'COULD TAKING CERTAIN PHOTOGRAPHS EACH DAY IMPROVE YOUR OUTLOOK ON LIFE?'.

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THE PICTURE THIS! INTERVENTION STUDY

The Picture This! study aimed to answer this question by focusing youth attention on moments during their day when they were grateful or thankful. We targeted adolescent students during the critical shift from middle to high school to offset some of the social and psychological difficulties typical

of this transition. The project utilized attractive and accessible technology (i.e., handheld tablets) and one simple exercise a day to increase moments of gratitude and savoring, with the goal of increasing student well-being during a risky developmental period.

BACKGROUND



CONDITIONS



PICTURE THIS!

(ACTIVE EXPERIMENTAL)

Participants in this condition were asked to use tablets to take at least two photographs each day for 3 weeks of an event/moment/place during their day (at school or at home) that stimulated a sense of gratitude. They were instructed to attend to the physical sensations, cognitions, and

emotional responses that accompanied the positive moment they photographed. Each day, they were directed to review the photographs taken and asked to complete a brief survey, designed to encourage savoring, reengage sensory-perception and build positive memories.

CONDITIONS



DOCUMENT THIS!

(ACTIVE CONTROL)

Participants in this condition were asked to take two photographs each day for 3 weeks using a tablet. Rather than focusing on and capturing stimuli that evoked gratitude, they were directed to focus on content that provided documentation, or a “day in the life,” of the student. Participants

in this condition were also asked to review their photos each day and complete a brief survey.

NO PHOTO

(CONTROL)

The No Photo Control group completed all the same measures as well as daily questionnaires regarding mood and mental and physical well-being, but they were not directed to take or review any photographs.



PICTURE THIS!

PHOTO SUGGESTIONS

- A funny line in a book that made you laugh
- An older sibling who stood up for you
- An encouraging smile you got from a family member
- A classmate who helped you with a homework problem
- A friend who invited you to a party
- The person who gave you a ride when you needed it
- The smell of lunch (it's hard to take a picture of a smell, but you can take a picture of something that reminds you of the smell!)
- The feel of the sun on your face
- A teacher who said you did a good job
- The color of the sky



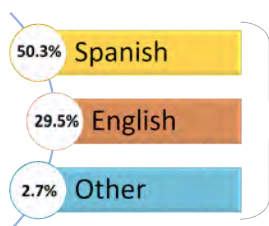
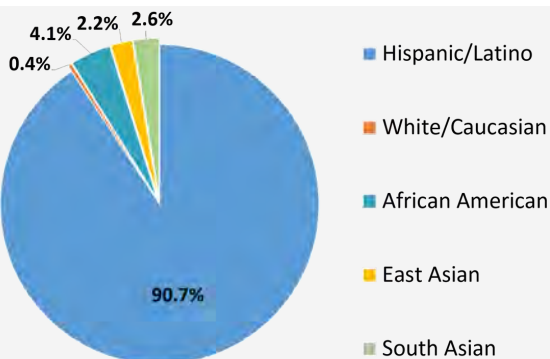
DOCUMENT THIS!

PHOTO SUGGESTIONS

- What you see when you sit in your typical seat in class
- Your usual (or unusual) breakfast
- The soccer field where you practice after school
- Your study spot in the media center
- The book you're currently reading
- Your iPod or phone with the song you can't stop listening to
- An event you are attending
- The friend you eat lunch with every day
- How you usually spend your Saturday afternoon
- Your bus stop

DEMOGRAPHICS

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPANTS*

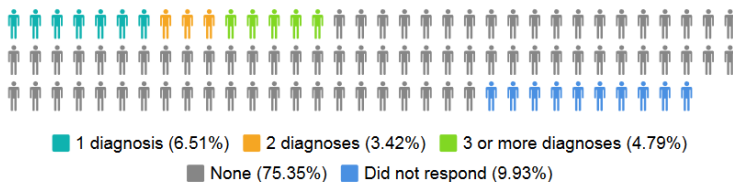


78.8% Born in the United States

20.2% Foreign Born

PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN THE HOME**

PERCEIVED SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS**



HISTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Endorsed diagnoses include: Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Phobia, Specific Phobia, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Eating Disorders, Schizophrenia, and Alcohol/Substance Abuse

* Does not include participants who endorsed more than one ethnicity or reflect missing data

**Percentages do not include missing data.

INITIAL FINDINGS

SAVORING THE MOMENT



Compared to students in the Document This! and No Photo control groups, students in the Picture This! group were better able to appreciate "the good times" and "capture the joy of happy moments" at the conclusion of the study.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT + SOCIAL SUPPORT

At the end of the study, students in the Picture This! group said they cared more about school and reported a greater sense of school belonging relative to students in the other groups. However, even students in the control group who had strong relationships with friends also reported liking their school and feeling a part of it.



ABSENCES + STUDY ENGAGEMENT



Students in the Picture This! group were absent less often than students in the control group. However, even students in the control group reported decreased absences over time if they were really engaged in the study. Control group students who demonstrated low engagement tended to have more absences.



RESEARCH PROTOCOL

- o For each of the 21 days of the intervention, participants completed daily surveys regarding general well-being and physical health.
- o Participants in picture taking conditions reviewed their pictures each evening and completed a savoring exercise.
- o Half way through the intervention, researchers provided earbuds to students as a mid-study incentive.
- o At the end of the 21 days, students were thanked for their participation with a university logo t-shirt.
- o At the end of the year, all participants were invited to share their photographs in a school photo exhibit curated for the benefit of the entire student body.



RESEARCH PROTOCOL

o Recruitment efforts: parents received a letter by mail (in English and in Spanish) from the principal and a permission form describing the study; parents also received information about the study at parent-teacher conferences, and study staff were on site to answer questions. In collaboration with classroom teachers, research staff visited participating English classes and provided information to the students about the intervention as well.

o Eligible students included individuals in participating 9th grade English classes who were between 13 and 16 years old.

o Following parental permission and assent procedures, students were asked to complete a 30-45 minute questionnaire assessing character traits like gratitude and grit, general well-being, and indices of mental health issues at 3 time points (pre-intervention, post-intervention, and follow-up) on the tablets we provided.

If you are interested in more detailed information regarding the protocols or other aspects of the research study, you may contact Dr. Laura Gale McKee at lmckee1@gsu.edu

IDEAS FOR HOW TO INCORPORATE THIS TYPE OF INTERVENTION INTO VARIOUS SETTINGS

SCHOOL SETTINGS

ART, ENGLISH, PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES

Have a Thankful Thursday reminder during the morning announcements and encourage students, faculty, and staff to take and share "grateful" pictures with one another.

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Incorporate a gratitude assignment into a photography lesson or class and host an exhibit with the photos taken.

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Create a gratitude challenge for school spirit week, during which First Years, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors compete to see who can think of the highest number and most creative ways of incorporating gratitude practices into their days. The winning class could choose a prize for themselves or for a needed group/charity.

CAMP SETTINGS

At the end of each day, have cabin leaders and campers talk about a rose (what they are thankful for that day), a thorn (what might not have gone as planned), and a fuzzy (something funny that happened).

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Encourage all campers to contribute to a shout out jar in the lunchroom where they would add notes of things they are grateful for throughout the week. Read a few of them aloud at lunch each day!



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

*BIBLE STUDY, VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, AND
JEWISH SUMMERCAMP*

Identify teachings from the Bible, the Torah, or the Talmud that are connected with gratitude, such as Psalm 100:1-5 ESV (The Psalms of David) and Ephesians 1:15-19 ESV (Paul's thanksgiving to his friends).

In Ephesians, Paul reminds his friends how thankful he is for them. Usually, following his words of thanks he offers encouragement to help build them up. Thanks and giving go hand in hand. Use this passage to encourage youth to use words of thanksgiving and encouragement with friends and loved ones. Have them take pictures of those they are grateful for and share them with the group.

Consider also the Talmud (Menahot 43b), which commands followers to say 100 blessings every day. Post blessing photos on social media to share! #thankful

HOSPITALS

Create a "gratitude" wall and a "gripes" or "grumbles" wall (either on the ward or in the patient's room) to provide patients an outlet to express important concerns (I'm feeling yucky today OR I wish I could have my mom's homemade lasagna) as well as the things they are thankful for.

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Create a gratitude game where patients are challenged to find as many possible things they are grateful for and take pictures of them on their phones or tablets. Encourage them to share those photos with their caregivers or nurses and doctors each day.

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Give patients, nurses, or parents cards and envelopes to write letters of thanks to staff, other patients or family/friends for support during the hospital stay.





PRIMARY PROJECT TEAM

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GRANT FUNDING

Provided by Character Lab

[illegible]The background of the entire page is a dense, overlapping collage of hundreds of small, square-format photographs. These photos depict a wide variety of subjects: children playing, people relaxing or working, scenic landscapes like beaches and forests, close-ups of animals like cats and dogs, food items like beer and fruit, and candid moments from daily life. The collage is colorful and vibrant, creating a sense of shared experiences and community.

MANY THANKS!

The Picture This! project team would like to thank its school partners and Character Lab for their generous support throughout this intervention study.