

Classification of Life Enrichment Skills

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Abstract

The Faculty Guidebook (Beyerlein, Holmes, & Apple, 2007) includes complete skill sets for cognitive, social, and affective domains. In the 1950s, Benjamin Bloom and his associates published educational goal taxonomies for psychomotor as well as cognitive and affective domains (Anderson, et al., 2000). However, many other skills are important for the development of a meaningful life such as those that promote physical and mental wellness, and the making of decisions and strategies related to identity development and personal lifestyle, community involvement, and the search for personal meaning. Learning-to-Learn Camps, faculty development institutes, personal growth plans, and many other Process Education™ interventions have been developed to promote personal and professional growth. The research basis for the Classification of Life Enrichment Skills is from scholarly fields such as positive psychology, adult development, counseling psychology, and community action models. The use of themes, rather than a hierarchy of processes, as in the learning skill domains, has been adopted to make clear that there are not “lower” items in the classification that are required to support movement towards “higher” items. A table of life enrichment skills provides examples that illustrate potential uses of the classification as a tool whose use can be generalized beyond the skills presently included. Many intervention models in education, counseling, life coaching, pastoral work, and community action might be enhanced by establishing themes and skills that need to be incorporated for successful processes and outcomes related to empowerment in any context.

Introduction

Ask an educator to identify the learning skills students need for a given activity and he or she is likely to have difficulty. Ask why the activity is important and how the objectives will help learners to meet real life concerns and there will be an elaborated response. The Classification of Life Enrichment Skills has been developed, in part, because of the author’s experiences with connecting learning skills to learning activities. Clearly, a stated purpose needs to help both educators and learners to recognize some practical situations for which the learning can be applied. A more efficient means of selecting key learning skills tends to be that of starting with life enrichment skills and working backwards to the relevant learning skill foundations, because context can then be articulated more naturally.

Life enrichment is a broad concept intended to describe the processes that philosophers describe as problems of life, e.g., Magee (1997), or the search for meaning, e.g., Frankl (2000). How individuals meet challenges in life often opens doors for further development—or closes them. Because infants and young children depend on caretakers to provide a sustaining and stimulating environment, adults who become parents, and those who provide support services for children, need competencies related to this complex role. Adolescents and young adults engage the world in ways that reflect the unevenness of their explorations of interests that result in identity formation. The growth of adults as self-determining individuals includes moving into many roles (e. g., parenting, working, and community involvement) that depend on personal development—and also provide challenges to personal development.

Educators work with learners of all ages and have considerable influence on the life success of many beyond the facilitation of learning skills, e. g., most people remember a favorite teacher or role model. The Classification of Life Enrichment Skills includes ways of behaving that are related to creating, sustaining, and enhancing a high-quality life for others as well as for self because an enriched life emerges from enriching the lives of others.

A classification of the life enrichment skills is not directly analogous to that of learning skill domains (cognitive, social, affective, and psychomotor) because life enrichment does not include a clear hierarchy of processes. For example, in the social domain, communication skills are essential for teamwork, management, and leadership; life enrichment skills for community involvement can be highly developed even if a person does not attend to personal wellness. In general it might be argued that maintaining wellness increases the probability of continuing with community action projects longer and with more energy, but there is not a direct competency connection. To address this and other logical inconsistencies, the life enrichment skills are classified into “themes” with skill clusters and specific skills identified under each theme.

Life enrichment skills, as identified, are often related to complex life goals that must be achieved in real contexts. Therefore skills included in life enrichment themes are not personal characteristics; although individuals who grow in certain skills are typically described in terms of having positive traits, as argued by Peterson and Seligman (2004). Like learning skills, life enrichment skills can be assessed in terms of performance quality.

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This allows the inference that additional themes can be developed for any purpose, e.g., Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) describe how human service staff increase empowerment of clients at a shelter by applying a model they designed and evaluated. Such models can be deconstructed into life enrichment themes and skills, some of which are from learning skills domains. The life enrichment skills often require learning skills as a foundation, e. g., women in a shelter program must learn how to process information, communicate, and plan as they address safety, legal matters, and work in ways that have potential to add structure to their lives.

The quality of a learning skill competency must meet some minimum standard in order to support further learning of more complex skills in the domain hierarchies. The same competency rubric (Table 3) can be applied for assessing life enrichment skills as that used for learning domain skills; however, stronger quality of performance in any life enrichment skill should not be assumed to be a predictor of success in related or more complex life enrichment skills. The principle for learning skill domains is that some combination of skills lower in the hierarchy must be learned to the level of competency required in real performance contexts to support a more complex skill. Leaders must communicate well with people in any context, but that is only one prerequisite among many. The principle for life enrichment skills is that adult developmental outcomes can be supported in many ways. Quality of competence remains a key issue even though the connections among the themes, skill clusters, and specific skills remain only probabilistic. Themes are important for life enrichment because patterns are more relevant than hierarchies of skills.

The classification of life enrichment themes and skills is a representation of positive mental, social, and physical health at the “action” level. By turning theories, models, and principles into practice, this new tool can be used to analyze and implement many kinds of human intervention programs. The principles upon which the life enrichment classification is based include the following similarities and differences from the learning skills.

Similarities:

1. Developmental and language skills are essential for increasing life satisfaction.
2. The Theory of Performance applies to life enrichment skills because using the skills effectively is influenced by the six factors that determine performance quality.
3. Life enrichment skill clusters are analogous to learning skill clusters, i. e., they are related but are

considered to be a sample of skills rather than a complete set.

4. Life enrichment skills can be assessed using the same competency rubric used for learning skills.
5. Learning skills are most valuable for educators who tend to work in structured learning environments.
6. Life enrichment skills are valuable for educators in their work to facilitate growth for learners with varied ways of being, developmental challenges, and life problems that reduce achievement.

Differences:

1. Life enrichment themes represent substantive areas of adult development presented in themes—practical life patterns—that include skills integration across the learning domains.
2. Many life enrichment skills, such as being hopeful, represent interim affective processes that are important to mental health and often indicate status outcomes correlated with happiness and satisfaction.
3. Life enrichment skills are processes that can produce much more varied outcomes than are typical of learning skills.
4. Life enrichment skills do not occur in a systematic hierarchy but have patterns of relationship that can support the development of increased complexity of skills overall.
5. Life enrichment skills are valuable for professionals, including educators, who are concerned with facilitating growth in individuals and groups for general life success and for advancement in integrated goal achievements, e.g., for graduate preparation goals.

The skills in the life enrichment classification are based on the assumption that a person can “call upon” any of the learning skills to achieve a life enrichment goal. This classification is presented to exemplify themes and skills that are important for achieving empowerment related to living a satisfying and meaningful life in all its dimensions. The themes presented include enhancing health and wellness, developing identity, enhancing quality of achievements, increasing effectiveness of community involvement, and transforming meaning. The types of skills in the present classification can be assessed using competency levels established for the learning skills from unengaged use to transformative use.

Research Foundations for a Life Enrichment Skills Classification

The research used for establishing the significance of the life enrichment classification is mainly from psychology and counseling. The themes, processes, and skills included all have relevance for practical growth in how to live meaningfully and effectively. One of the strengths of current behavioral and social science research is an increasing recognition of the social context even of skills that have tended to be considered individual in the past. Social learning theory (e.g., Bandura & Locke, 2003) has long included other people and the environment in a reciprocal feedback pattern of influence on individuals. People who have close relationships over a long time period influence each other's identity as well as behavior; role models have substantial effects too. Attitudes of individuals and groups about goal achievement can be positive or negative, and even psychological defenses can be "turned" to positive effects by emotionally skillful individuals. Inferences about life enrichment skills can be drawn from many kinds of behavioral and professional research so the classification must be considered a work-in-progress.

Increasingly psychological researchers, (e.g., Fitzsimons & Finkel, 2010; Poortviet & Darnon, 2010) consider the social contexts within which goal seeking and self-regulation occur. Much is known about self-regulation processes (e.g., Baumeister, Schmeichel, & Vohs, 2007) such as delay of gratification, focus on effective performance, growth in self-efficacy, and self-awareness; however, less is known about social influences on these processes. Rusbult, Finkel, and Kumashiro (2009) present evidence for a "Michelangelo Phenomenon" involving the possibility that interpersonal influences "sculpt" perceptions and behaviors in ways that lead toward or away from an ideal self or identity. If one partner learns how much the other admires a recent action or achievement, e.g., preventing a late fee by taking care of a credit card bill or graduating from an academic program, it is internalized in positive terms for identity and self-esteem.

There is substantial interest in the interpersonal correlates of goal initiation, pursuit, and monitoring, as well as goal mastery versus performance (e.g., Fitzsimons & Finkel, 2010; Poortviet & Darnon, 2010). Even reminders by a person closely associated with achievement, e.g., a parent one wishes to please, will result in greater activation of performance if that will clearly elicit approval. More positive examples include role models and relationship partners who share and support the initiation of goals that are related to the personal growth of another, a variation of the Michelangelo Phenomenon

previously mentioned. Poortviet and Darnon argue, in a manner consonant with Process Education (PE), that interpersonal and social factors need to be considered as part of any achievement context in order to avoid effects such as conflict, negative social comparisons, and evaluation of certain types of goals as desirable or utilitarian, e.g., one type of career is better because income is likely to be higher.

When social interactions are efficient in terms of energy directed to work on a goal rather than to organizing efforts or conflict, it increases synchrony and a sense of support by all parties. Monitoring of goal-seeking progress can be negatively influenced by social comparison with those who are more successful, but it can also be positively influenced by the awareness that friends and significant others believe in one's capabilities. Current reality TV shows often include cooking or decorating challenges that are complicated by requiring competitors to suddenly switch to a team task; frequently performance quality drops substantially due to disruptions caused by doubts about the competencies or motives of peers. Research often identifies negative effects and outcomes of social interaction processes, so it is necessary to focus on positives that are identified or to use inference to detect such skills.

Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) present a model for a process of empowerment in social or community contexts. They consider knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacy to be fundamental to effective goal-setting. In their social justice work with poor women who have suffered from abuse and prejudice, they emphasize power-oriented goals that are personally meaningful but also beneficial to others in a social or community system; e.g., becoming self-sufficient is admired by the public and likely to be supported. In Cattaneo and Chapman's synthesis of empowerment, power is moved away from a strictly individualistic purpose to goals that inspire investment, commitment, and motivation towards actions in collaboration with others for a common good. Related research on self-determination and goal setting is consistent with the model, e.g., Bandura and Locke (2003), Locke and Latham (2002), and Deci and Ryan (2000).

Vaillant (2000) argues that even psychological defense mechanisms, which are usually viewed as negative features of mental health adjustment, can be viewed as creative and adaptive ways of handling experiences involving loss, extreme change, trauma or abuse, and physical disabilities. By "sublimating" his pain and angst from headaches, deafness, and depression, Beethoven was able to create his *Ninth Symphony*, a powerfully joyous work. Even individuals with normal

adjustment and mental health must deal with conflicts of conscience, unpleasant relationship problems, serious health issues, and many other challenges in ways that allow them to go on despite all. Some use humor or simply suppress strong emotions for a time until they can cope better. A number of skills that turn defense mechanisms into positive strategies are included in the present classification. Cognitive biases, e.g., Piattelli-Palmarini (1994), also play a strong role in controlling how people interpret situations; so gaining awareness of how this occurs and how to counter with logical, reality-based interpretations adds to success in managing many problems of living.

Any process can produce highly varied outcomes. Maintaining hope during stressful times is an important ability that is correlated with personal resilience. Leipold and Greve (2009) argue, however, that the past theoretical conceptualization of resilience as a protective trait needs to be changed, because it is circular reasoning to say that a person survived adversity simply due to his or her resiliency; instead resilience can be conceptualized as processes of coping that add to the self-regulatory learning of individuals during development. Recognition of the limitations of traits, even those like resilience, is an important theoretical rationale for designing the Classification of Life Enrichment Skills around problems of living. This is further illustrated in Peterson and Seligman's (2004) work.

The concept of a classification similar to the one proposed here for life enrichment skills has important predecessors. The most systematic approach from a positive psychology perspective has been by Peterson and Seligman (2004). They identified, using extensive scholarly and analytic methods, a set of 24 "character strengths" that they believe to be universal across individuals and, for the most part, across cultures. They argue that the term "classification" is appropriate because a taxonomy requires a clear theory; e.g., evolution has shaped all life forms over long periods of time, so the ancestry of any contemporary species can be "fit" into the biological taxonomy on the basis of empirical research evidence. Character traits can be described but they cannot currently be placed into a logical taxonomy pattern that will withstand empirical evaluation or remain stable across contexts.

The lists of character strengths in Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification are organized around a "high six" set of virtues, to compare with research on the "big five" personality factors (e.g., McCrae & Costa, 1997) for which there is substantial empirical support. They also contrast their strengths-based classification

with the mental illness classification represented by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV-TR)*, American Psychiatric Association, 2000). These high-six or "core" virtues include courage, justice, humanity, temperance, transcendence, and wisdom. Under each virtue the authors identified several "families" of related traits, e.g., hope has related traits of optimism, future-mindedness, and future orientation. Finally, there are "situational themes" that must be taken into account when assessing how an individual actually demonstrates a character strength due to contextual influences such as social and performance stimuli. They believed that situations vary so significantly that the identification of character traits would be most appropriate for their purposes.

Although Peterson and Seligman (2004) carefully established ten criteria for the selection or rejection of their character strengths, there are significant issues that distinguish their approach from the life enrichment skills classification proposed here, which is based on Process Education performance skills. The performance theory of Process Education (Elger, 2007) creates a clear framework for moving character strengths from universal traits to performance skills presented at a level useful to educators and other practitioners. The skills are not always clearly differentiated from goals but all can be achieved through learning and the growth of selected skills within a problem situation. There is a degree of hierarchical complexity to the themes selected that match adult developmental processes but this is not always consistent with easily observable behavior and accomplishments of people.

The ten criteria of Peterson and Seligman for the selection of character strengths illustrate the difficulties with using a trait rather than a performance approach. In Table 1, their ten criteria are paraphrased in the left column; in the right column one or two questions are suggested that challenge their character strengths classification criteria from a Process Education performance theory perspective. Even though they concluded that it is not feasible to identify skills useful in situations, the hypothesis of the present life enrichment classification is that performance in situations is the real issue. This position is further supported by the theory of Mischel and Shoda (1995). They summarize research to argue that traits are stable only in the sense that individual variation includes "cognitive-affective units" (p. 246) that predict how someone will tend to act across different situations. In real life people react and select in complex and dynamic patterns rather than in correlation with traits that lead directly to behavior choices.

Table 1
 Questions about Peterson and Seligman's (2004) Character Strengths
 Selection Criteria from a Process Education Perspective

Peterson & Seligman's Criteria	Process Education Issues
1. Fulfilling to individuals	What are the readiness and motivation foundations that result in fulfillment?
2. Valued in its own right	What influences one's choices to use strengths?
3. Use of a strength doesn't diminish other people present	Should authentic use of strengths be controlled by social factors?
4. Opposites to strengths should not be equally "felicitous," e.g., honesty vs. tact; rudeness is the true opposite	Should measures be focused on growth rather than changes in use?
5. General across situations and time	Should the basis for generalization be the expansion of the skill rather than a trait? How can the quality of learning situations be improved?
6. Distinct: cannot be decomposed into other positive traits	Can a hierarchy of skills explain the composition of more complex traits? How do the skills in the learning domains support life enrichment skills?
7. Consensual agreement about the existence of "paragons" for each character strength	What are the developmental differences that result in skill "paragons," i.e., experts?
8. Paragons usually exist	What is meant by a paragon or expert in moral decision-making or kindness? Is there a logical pattern of development for each non-cognitive skill?
9. Some lack a character strength, e.g., due to a neurological disorder	How well does the PE "foundations of learning" approach work with extreme cases?
10. Societal institutions support positive character strengths	How can negative outcomes be prevented, e.g., from ineffective processes? Are skills used in specific contexts, e.g., teamwork, less valuable than universal traits?

Sources for Life Enrichment Themes and Skills

Life enrichment themes and skills can be drawn from a variety of scholarship and practice resources. Some of the sample resources in this list directly identify life enrichment skills; others provide a basis for inference of opposite skills or strategies.

Positive and Humanistic Psychology

Viktor Frankl (2000) is well known for his reflections on how he maintained hope during a long period in a Nazi concentration camp; his insights and those of Maslow (1970) helped to launch the humanistic psychology movement after WWII. Fredrickson (2001) exemplifies the more recent extension of humanistic theory in her positive psychology analysis of the differences between immediate coping reactions versus future-oriented responses that require a learning and growth investment.

This important distinction means that an enriched life requires hard work to develop many kinds of personal potential but also requires readiness to cope and adjust to the unexpected. Self-determination theory (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2008; Burton, Lydon, D'Allessandro, & Koestner, 2006) is an active area of research and practice within positive psychology that emphasizes the factors that support individual effectiveness and control.

Wellness Principles

Most college curricula include wellness because of its importance for improving general physical and mental health, including addiction issues. Hoeger and Hoeger (2010) address the full range of wellness and fitness issues with emphasis on how the social and cultural environments affect individual achievements and growth in motivation management of nutrition, exercise, and stress as major ways to reduce risks.

Professional Practice Models

Practical information and knowledge in any field provide insights that can be used to identify skills useful for success and growth. Sommer, Ward, and Scofield (2010) describe uses of metaphor in the supervision of counseling interns. Resilience is an important factor that varies by individual but can be increased, e.g., Singh, Hays, and Watson (2011) explored resilience strategies of transgender individuals. Lawson and Myers (2011) analyze wellness strategies for counseling professionals.

Motivation and Goal Models

Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs is a motivation model but he does not explicate the skills for actually addressing the needs. Indirectly, it does provide guidance for inferring life enrichment themes and skills. The model is based on the hypothesis that present motivational needs tend to have a hierarchical pattern, e.g., lack of food or shelter will preempt attention to social and emotional development. Situational factors clearly make a difference but do not mean that a person's higher aspirations won't return if the situation changes. Leise (2006) prepared a "primer" of motivational models for teachers. Locke and Latham (2002) present a research-based goal theory. Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007) have explored the factors that support "grit," the ability to persist with long-term goals.

Process Education Learning Skills

The Process Education Theory of Performance (Elger, 2007) provides a foundation for identifying skills that are likely to foster a continual pattern of self-growth. Strength-based perspectives have a similar value for keeping a focus on what to do to enhance skills rather than focusing on improving weaknesses. Life enrichment requires many "process" skills (cognitive, social, affective, and psychomotor) that vary in complexity and context according to purpose, development, and capabilities.

Self-Management in Social Contexts

The social context defines and triggers many personal and professional goals. Ability to effectively pursue goals depends on self-regulation processes for cognition, emotion, behavior, and motivation, which are constantly influenced by the people, opportunities, barriers, and other aspects of situations and environments (e.g., Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). All professional roles, including counseling, life coaching, mentoring, and educating, require many skills in the social domain because of the effects of these contexts on decisions and problem solving.

Self-Regulation Research

An additional perspective regarding the life enrichment classification is that self-development depends upon the self-regulation of behaviors, emotions, and behaviors for the purpose of increasing wellness, identity and self-concept, lifestyle, community involvement, and spirituality in ways that will provide strong motivation for life-long growth in all learning domains. (e.g., Leise, 2007.)

Empowerment Models and Programs

Most education and human services programs include empowerment of effective action by individuals (e.g., Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010). Self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura & Locke, 2003) and dealing with psychological or sociological "power issues" are common themes for community action projects. Bower, Moskowitz, and Epel (2009) argue that "benefit-finding" is a valuable mental health strategy for reshaping ones views about negative stressors. Riggio (2008) argues that leadership research and practice need to have more focus on how leaders develop the dynamic skills needed to facilitate the empowerment of followers.

Clinical Counseling and Psychology

The professional focus on psychopathology by counselors and clinical psychologists can be viewed as the opposite side of a coin: often the opposite of negative behaviors and reactions or defense mechanisms is a positive coping strategy or a strategy for overcoming personal challenges that are common for most people. Vaillant (2000) identifies how psychological defense mechanisms can be applied strategically for positive outcomes. Wohl, DeShea, & Wahkinney (2008) consider how self-forgiveness is an important strategy related to improvement of psychological well-being. Psychological sources of cognitive dissonance (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959) and bias (Piattelli-Palmarini, 1994) often influence individuals and groups toward unrealistic or even damaging choices; learning the positive side of these processes clarifies decisions and problem-solving strategies.

Developmental Patterns

Because development is, by definition, ongoing, it is described in terms of phases or of processes that drive change and growth. Current research (e.g., Greenwood, 2007) indicates that there is substantial flexibility in cognition and adaptation throughout life for healthy individuals. Developmental theories are well known for general child and adolescent development but also are available for specific kinds of development. Parker (2011) describes how counselors can address spirituality

as a developmental issue. Grieving and other adjustment reactions have received substantial research attention as have models for values and beliefs, which provide structure and hope for people regardless of their specific religious affiliations. Spiritual and cultural practices are also important resources for articulating how people find meaning in life.

Life Enrichment Themes

As illustrated in Table 2, five main themes comprise the present life enrichment classification; these have been chosen because they are central for personal development in many theories and philosophies of life. Health and wellness skills are essential for continuous, lifelong mental, emotional, and behavioral performance at a satisfying level of competency. Developing ones identity is a basis for actualizing the potential one has in personal accomplishments, including the roles one will be ready to play in the larger society. Enhancing quality of achievements is part of creating a quality lifestyle, which must include taking risks and making the commitments that will result in sustainable and satisfying relationships and full enjoyment of important achievements in life, such as maintaining a home and ones position in a community. Connecting with a larger community includes involvement in ways that increase resources and advocacy for the quality of life of others, including those unrelated to oneself.

An ecological system, with reciprocity and other feedback “loops,” supports the vigor and creativity of community leadership by those who are effective in addressing issues beyond their own control. Integrating universal meaning includes formulating and living a life philosophy, experiencing a sense of awe about the universe, and a spirituality that integrates all aspects of living a quality life.

Life Enrichment Skill Clusters

Clusters of skills are identified under each of the life enrichment domain processes. As many as five clusters support each process area and each skill cluster contains up to a half-dozen unique, but closely related skills. In Table 2, skill clusters are arranged as the second level of the table format (left column); the specific skills are the third level (right column); there is no special significance to the order in which the clusters or the learning skills within a cluster appear in the table. Although the themes may have some hierarchical relationships, e.g., health and wellness is helpful for the other four themes, it is easy to identify contrary examples. Similarly the skill clusters and skills are not hypothesized to have any special connections or prerequisite competency requirements with any others.

Nevertheless, in life situations such connections can be discerned, so the overall organization is intended to provide some guidance.

There are several skill clusters within each of the five themes (Table 2): enhancing health and wellness, integrating identity, enhancing personal achievements, facilitating empowerment in community, and transforming meaning. Clusters, e.g., staying physically healthy and coping with illness, include a critically analyzed sample of the main skill areas that are essential for supporting lifelong development of each process, e.g., cooking healthily and exercising for fitness. Each cluster, in turn, provides a critically analyzed set of concisely defined and complementary life skills that are judged to be a reasonable sample for each cluster within each process.

Themes, Clusters, Skills

1. Skill clusters are the basic performance identifiers, versus specific skills in learning domains, because there is much more variation in how life enrichment can occur.
2. Each skill cluster is related to a goal that requires decisions and readiness to act. Learning skills will often be a part of the skill complex required for effective achievement of goals for life enrichment.
3. Interpersonal contexts are an important dimension of performance or accomplishment at all levels. As indicated in the research review, many choices and behaviors are heavily influenced by social context, so life enrichment efforts will be effective only if supported by effective social and affective learning skills. Having the foundation skills is not the same as pursuing a life goal that requires them.
4. Like the learning skills, all life enrichment skills require engagement and self-regulation of motivation, i.e., a person must recognize what needs to be done, and do it, even if past habits work against making effective choices. A person who avoids challenges because of potential failure must self-regulate motivation by taking risks to demonstrate competencies to self and others.
5. Some life enrichment skills overlap with skills from the learning domains. The classification is intended to be a model or guiding pattern to support the creation of customized themes and sets of skills for specific learners, clients, patients, or participants.
6. These are criteria that can be applied to test whether a reasonable balance of skills are included within a theme or cluster:

- a. Timeframe, e.g., immediate coping reactions, planning of strategies for current challenges, and prevention of longer-term problems
- b. Motivational self-regulation, e.g., abilities related to managing situations rather than letting situations, others, or conditions be in control
- c. Empowerment focus, e.g., of self or others
- d. Social involvement, e.g., leading versus being an effective follower
- e. Meaning, e.g., from personal experiences, reflection, philosophizing, writing

Two different skills from the life enrichment domain are

analyzed in Table 3: managing health challenges and supporting effective leadership. These two examples illustrate how specific skills can be demonstrated at very low levels (without conscious engagement) on a continuum through transformative use of the skill. Monitoring the proficiency of the learning skill along a common developmental continuum can be an effective motivator for learners as well as a useful guide for facilitating educators and mentors.

Applications

The Classification of Life Enrichment Skills is intended as a frame of reference or perspective for identifying important life change goals or aspirations. Providing

Table 2: Life Enrichment Skills Domain

ENHANCING HEALTH AND WELLNESS	
Skill Clusters	Specific Skills
1. Gathering Health Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about nutrition—identifying personal food needs • Identifying health challenges—recognizing when to use medical/professional resources • Gathering objective information—expanding professional diagnostic judgments with quality knowledge resources • Monitoring changes in capabilities—gathering qualitative data about physical, emotional, social, and cognitive reactions
2. Staying Physically Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking healthily—learning food selection and preparation skills • Maintaining healthy weight—balancing calorie intake with weight goals and “set point” (body’s current standard) • Optimizing nutritional choices—establishing and maintaining a healthy diet • Exercising for fitness—establishing an effective physical fitness routine for age and health status • Maintaining one’s physical performance—adapting fitness routines to changes in strength and response latency (“primary” capabilities)
3. Staying Mentally and Emotionally Healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing and addressing stressors strategically—improving reactions to stressors by implementing plans for managing both negative and positive stressors • Making behavioral changes—managing health challenges • Maintaining adaptive emotional strategies—recognizing evidence for the effectiveness of uses of “secondary” strategies as “primary” capabilities decrease
4. Coping with Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing medical issues—making reasonable judgments about treatment of illness or injury • Objectifying beliefs about pain—influencing subjective beliefs with medical explanations of pain • Benefit finding—finding positives from stress and illness • Collaborating with professionals—taking recommendations seriously while remaining open to alternatives • Promoting support systems—reinforcing essential helping • Making behavioral changes—adjusting realistically to support treatment • Managing health challenges—activating secondary strategies and resources when primary abilities are reduced in vigor

DEVELOPING IDENTITY	
Skill Clusters	Specific Skills
1. Establishing Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiating self from others—recognizing similarities and differences from others • Expanding self-concept—increasing awareness of multiple factors relevant to self • Increasing self-esteem—increasing confidence in self • Clarifying interests—discovering what is engaging • Becoming consistent with personal values—refining internal congruence • Striving for growth—moving toward an ideal self
2. Self-Regulating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring internal reactions—noticing differences in effects of experiences • Generalizing self-control strategies—consciously maintaining control of personal reactions • Rationalizing unavoidable conflicts of conscience—moving on from irresolvable situations • Anticipating negative events—preparing to adjust affectively through imagination • Taking account of the influences of others—adjusting to social factors • Caring for self in stressful contexts—managing self-care in a consistent manner • Applying an assessment mindset—gaining performance insights from any feedback
3. Expanding Interpersonal Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoying social activities—engaging with others in play and recreation • Valuing others—avoiding exploitation and negative social comparisons • Exploring trust—learning who is dependable in ethical decision making • Learning from ethically ambiguous experiences—establishing values in real contexts • Being assertive—differentiating stubbornness and passivity from social effectiveness • Collaborating—working with others to achieve goals
4. Developing Motivational Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persisting—maintaining focus despite disruptions and barriers • Articulating factors in past successes—recognizing how past challenges were managed • Monitoring progress with goals—recognizing when to change methods • Being flexible in strategies—changing methods in thoughtful ways to overcome barriers • Using strengths—selecting strategies based on self-knowledge from past performances • Generalizing from past successes—predicting how to increase the probability of future performances
ENHANCING QUALITY OF ACHIEVEMENTS	
Skill Clusters	Specific Skills
1. Establishing Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing—risking choices that eliminate alternatives • Sharing responsibilities—being interdependent in the achievement of goals • Communicating honestly—keeping secrecy out of relationships • Sharing resources—cooperating in the use of time, finances, and roles • Affirming—valuing others through behavior
2. Setting Life Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting educational goals—planning training or education needed for career goals • Setting financial goals—planning a balance of short and long-term responsibilities • Setting career goals—planning a career path consistent with skills and interests • Adjusting to change—reacting effectively to change and stressors • Re-setting priorities—being open to the revision of plans to meet new contingencies • Being self-efficacious—implementing in real time
3. Caring for Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting—facilitating development • Leading a family—being in control of family dynamics • Facilitating achievement—guiding the learning and accomplishments of others • Minimizing waste—recycling and preserving resources for sustainability

4. Creating a Lifestyle Consistent with One's Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining satisfaction with work—staying focused on positive contributions • Being constructive in exchange skills—focusing on objectives beyond self • Balancing intrinsic and extrinsic life goals—avoiding extremes in valuing • Being realistic in self-efficacy predictions—accurately assessing competencies • Valuing objects for quality—making mid- to long-term choices • Valuing objects for utility—selecting objects and technology for needs • Being energized by life choices—staying focused on potential
5. Managing Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining contacts—assuring continuity of friendships and acquaintances • Seeking social support—finding individuals or groups who can help • Sharing conflicted feelings about needing help—being open with caregivers • Valuing relationships with others—letting others know they are important

INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Skill Clusters	Specific Skills
1. Joining and Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing quality leadership—observing a leader's process and outcomes • Joining valued organizations—selectively seeking out groups whose values are consistent with one's own • Collaborating with leaders—taking action in concert with group positions • Being altruistic—sublimating personal emotions into energy for others • Supporting effective leadership—using persuasion to influence other followers
2. Community Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing quality leadership—finding evidence that a leader demonstrates balanced performance • Using an assessment mindset—being open to clarification about how to perform better • Collaborating with a leader—taking on roles that will actualize a shared vision • Challenging a leader—helping a leader avoid “groupthink” by asking for consideration of a diversity of perspectives • Persuading others to value a leader—making balanced arguments in discussions with potential followers
3. Working on Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying “power” issues—gathering information on unjust treatment • Constructing advocacy models—creating strategies for just change • Perceiving benefits of performance improvements—interpreting change needs in relation to needs of others • Facilitating self-efficacy—supporting interventions that promote growth in competencies • Promoting self-determination—supporting identity and self-concept in action contexts

TRANSFORMING MEANING

Skill Clusters	Specific Skills
1. Transforming Defensive Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a mental time out—recovering from an emergency by stepping out of emotional states • Sublimating—redirecting emotional energy to positive ends • Reducing cognitive dissonance—using reason and “discounting” to influence interpretations • Hoping with realism—using expectations to guide satisfaction with goal attainments • Adjusting expectations—using standards flexibly as guides • Assessing goal attainment—finding satisfaction with progress • Monitoring defensiveness—recognizing positive uses of criticism • Generating alternatives—creatively moving beyond barriers

2. Mindfulness and Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savoring the moment—attending intensively to present experience • Being humble—reflecting on assumptions about the world • Using humor to change perceptions—delicately reorienting reactions to negative events • Being temperate—maintaining balance in all aspects of living and relating • Minimizing influences of technology on values—recognizing how technology changes priorities
3. Wisdom and Self-Actualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using wisdom—accessing insights from great thinkers • Acting wisely—using past and present wisdom about living a meaningful life • Acting courageously—selecting times and issues to take decisive action • Being humane—treating people and all life with respect • Being independent in life goals—developing intrinsic motivation for important life paths • Mentoring—being a positive influence for others’ independence
4. Spiritual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking the transcendent—valuing spiritual experiences • Accepting ambiguity—recognizing the impossibility of certainty • Articulating beliefs—continually constructing one’s belief system • Symbolizing—representing values and beliefs in multiple ways • Committing to universal principles—assuming that wisdom extends beyond one’s reference group • Challenging spiritual development—searching for new levels of insight about life and beliefs

Table 3: Examples of Competency Levels for Two Life Enrichment Skills

Level of Competency	Description of Individual Response	Examples: a. Making behavioral changes—managing health challenges b. Recognizing quality leadership—observing a leader’s processes and outcomes
Level 5 <i>Transformative Use</i>	Skill is expanded and integrated with other skills for creative, productive application in novel contexts; inspires others to emulate use	a. Supports others with similar challenges, e.g., by involvement in a diabetes self-help group b. Engages others in reasoned debate about the qualities of multiple leaders in historical context as a source of reflective analysis
Level 4 <i>Self-Reflective Use</i>	Effective use of skill by learner; skill can be self-improved and adapted to unfamiliar contexts with occasional advice from a mentor	a. Plans a positive lifestyle that is consistent with maximizing treatment outcomes b. Reflects on leadership qualities needed to influence valued change for a community
Level 3 <i>Self-Motivated Engagement</i>	Skill used routinely and effectively in multiple contexts through learner self-direction; able to advance without external coaching	a. Assertively self-manages to maintain compliance with medical advice b. Assesses leaders on the basis of multiple criteria regardless of personal agenda
Level 2 <i>Use Influenced by Context</i>	Skill used knowingly, possibly proactively, by learner, but skill needs to be constantly challenged by a mentor	a. Inconsistently follows medical advice due to continued susceptibility to past habits and influences, e.g., eating foods friends prefer b. Assesses leaders in terms of their congruency with one’s personal preferences or needs.
Level 1 <i>Unengaged Use</i>	Use of skill initiated by a prompt or influence external to the learner; unintended use of skill	a. Passively accepts “fate” or feels overwhelming anxiety or depression, e.g., in reaction to a diagnosis of diabetes b. Emotionally accepts or rejects a leader without assessment

an open model, with present themes and skills intended as exemplars, presents users with the opportunity to explore creatively, to identify the most important insights about life skills needed for any context or purpose. Two examples illustrate.

Counseling interns working with the author often express concerns about self-care because of unexpected emotional reactions (referred to as counter-transference), especially when clients have experienced severe neglect and trauma. The life enrichment skills for this problem come from multiple themes, including wellness, identity, achievement, and finding meaning. Successful resolution of personal reactions requires interns, like all mental health professionals, to establish “boundaries” by recognizing the value of reducing their own subjectivity through emotional self-control and through improved cognitive representation of their professional role for helping in limited ways. Resilience (e.g., Leipold & Greve, 2009) clearly increases as interns grow in coping skills and maintain wellness practices that stabilize their daily rhythms. Self-assessment and reflection on performance helps to establish effective strategies that reduce anxiety and lead to fuller attention to clients. Over time, therapists who find their role to be a source of satisfaction will gain wisdom from both successes and failures as exemplars of humanity in all of its contradictions.

Educators who facilitate Learning-to-Learn Camps or college success courses based on *Foundations of Learning* (Redfield & Lawrence, 2008) must confront multiple barriers that are influencing learning, and establish new, positive strategies that are effective for learning and growth. Among the themes and skills important in this work are wellness, identity, teamwork, life goals, self-assessment, and reflection. Students enter with low expectations of themselves but with hope for change. Gaining control of basic cognitive, social, and affective skills improves their performance and changes their attitudes, especially about themselves and their potential. By keeping a focus on how to change their lives, these programs assure that most of the participants take charge of their own learning and recognize how to distinguish what they can do for themselves from what they should pursue with guidance from teachers, mentors, or life coaches.

Concluding Thoughts

Educators are a special audience who can use the classification to help with the identification of learning skills. They can identify life enrichment themes and skills to support their selection of learning skills around the meaningful concerns of their students to help

motivate “buy in” and engagement in reflective, self-assessed learning. As students reach the upper-level work in their majors, career and lifestyle issues become increasingly important to integrate as part of preparation for the job market. Mentors, life coaches, counselors, community organizers, and spiritual leaders can use this classification tool to identify holistic and meaningful ways to challenge life enrichment goals of clients and followers.

The broader audience for this classification is anyone with a growth-oriented worldview. Life enrichment themes and skills are important for establishing the proper motivational context and empowerment of growth in contexts such as higher education, career, family, and personal life. Many of the life enrichment skills require some foundation in the more focused learning skills from the cognitive, social, affective, and psychomotor domains. Research foundations for the classification come mainly from psychological and counseling research that increasingly demonstrates how all skills are motivated and influenced within socially-challenging contexts. Situations present challenges that are well-met by those with a clear sense of performance competence about the real issues that create the standards that must be met.

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