

# LIFE SKILLS 101 COURSE GUIDEBOOK (IO2)

## Level UP

*Setting the ground for a multi-level approach on developing soft  
skills in Higher Education*

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# PREFACE

People in their daily lives look for ways to become successful and happy, but often they face obstacles to do so. So, what are the secrets to a successful life? What are the characteristics of successful people? What skills can enhance people's quality of life and contribute to coping with the daily difficulties they face, as well as their professional development?

The aim of this course is to provide answers to the above questions and to motivate students to grow through self-awareness and development of a personal development plan. This course covers cutting-edge research on how people acquire self-regulatory skills enabling them to achieve personal, academic, and professional goals. Students will learn how these discoveries relate to needs, cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, and what tools can be used to achieve their goals.

This series of sessions is intended to increase students' understanding of transversal or life skills, such as the ability to set goals and achieve them, emotion regulation, conflict resolution, assertiveness, creativity etc. The aim is to help students understand how, through the acquisition of these skills, they can develop flexibility, adaptability, and manage challenges of everyday life.

The course focuses on the transition from traditionally focused teaching of purely theoretical content to a scientifically supported education oriented towards the development of skills, knowledge, and ways of application in everyday life. In the context of this methodology, students will have the opportunity to evaluate their skills and to be trained in a systematic self-observation of their behavior. More specifically, the course will be delivered in a way that

will help students apply their knowledge in their daily lives through applied personal development exercises. At the same time, as they acquire new knowledge, students will have the opportunity to understand the basic elements that consist of the specific skills, to debunk myths, as well as to link this knowledge with their personal and professional development, by creating an individual self-development plan.

## **Learning Objectives**

It is expected that upon completion of the course, learners will be able to:

1. Recognize major theoretical perspectives, and figures in psychology and their link to trends in contemporary research.
2. Use basic psychological terminology, concepts, and theories related to soft skills.
3. Explain why each skill is important and how it is linked to success.
4. Predict how individual differences influence skills competence.
5. Identify principal methods and types of questions that emerge in specific content domains.
6. Describe examples of relevant and practical applications of these skills to everyday life.



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# SESSION 1: SELF - REGULATION

The central question of this course is determining what we can change and what we can't. The goal of this course is to present the concept of self-regulation as a meta-skill to help us genuinely change something about or to improve ourselves by regulating our behaviors using self-reflection and self-management.

## Lesson Walkthrough

- Discuss which factors lead to success
- Review what self-regulation is
- What are components of self-regulation
- Self-regulation strategies
- Self-compassion

## Factors associated with success in life.

Examine some ideas about a) What is success? b) What leads to success? and c) What does it mean to be successful?

Realize that success is a multidimensional construct [Seligman, 2011] and that success' factors can be predetermined (e.g. genes, prior experience) or modifiable (e.g. skills, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge) [Lyubomisky et al, 2005].

## What is self-regulation?

*Self-regulation is a meta-skill that allows us to take responsibility for our own life.*

Understand that self-regulation is a ‘metaskill’ that allows us to understand and manage our behavior [Fujita 2011, Ludwig et al., 2019]. It involves the modification of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and engagement in effortful self-control [Inzlicht, Werner, Briskin, & Roberts, 2021].

Gain knowledge on the different components of self-regulation and their contribution in achieving a goal. We will stress the role of self-awareness and self-management in initiating and changing behaviors [Reeve, 2009, Ch. 9 & 10; Shah & Gardner, 2008; Ch. 18; Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 500; Vohs & Baumeister, 2004 p.1; Duckworth, 2011].

Outline a number of positive life outcomes (physical health, adjustment, mental health, social relationships etc.) associated with self-regulation [Vohs & Baumeister, 2004; Duckworth, 2011; Duckworth & Seligman, 2017; Peterson & Seligman, 2004].

*Self-regulation is about developing a skill set with diverse strategies and use them flexibly based on the situational demands and our priorities.*

## Self-regulation strategies

List a number of self-regulation strategies and explain which self-regulation strategies are the most adaptive [Hennecke, Czirkmantori, & Brandstätter, 2019].

Understand the importance of self-regulatory flexibility [Bürgler,

Hoyle, & Hennecke, 2020].

## Self-compassion

Realize that the process of self-regulation is not a linear process. There will be ups and downs, and difficulties and challenges are part of the process [Muraven & Baumeister, 2000].

Learn to apply self-compassion as an alternative to self-criticism [Biber & Ellis, 2019; Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005].

### ***Activity 1: Self-compassion***

<https://accelerate.uofuhealth.utah.edu/resilience/how-to-practice-self-compassion-for-resilience-and-well-being>

## Homework (Self-reflection activity)

In your daily life, which aspects may require some more self-regulation?

- In which aspects in life do you consider yourself successful and happy?

- In which aspects in life do you consider yourself not successful and happy?
- Which factors are withholding you from success & being happy?

Think about a variety of aspects in life:

- University life
- Emotional life
- Social life: Friends and family
- Hobbies: music, sports...
- Health: food, physical activity
- Which self-regulation strategies do you apply in daily life?
- Which ones do you recognize to be helpful to you, and ones not?

### ***Preparation for Session 2***

In preparation of the next session, complete the following questionnaire.

Write down your top three-character strengths.

<https://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey>

### **Suggested Reading**

- Biber, D. D., & Ellis, R. (2019). The effect of self-compassion on the self-regulation of health behaviors: A systematic review. Journal of Health Psychology, 24(14), 2060-2071.
- Bürgler, S., Hoyle, R. H., & Hennecke, M. (2020). Flexibility in using self-regulatory strategies to manage self-control conflicts:

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- Vohs, K. D., & Baumeister, R. F. (Eds.). (2016). Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory, and applications. Guilford Publications.

## SESSION 2: VALUES & GOALS

In this session, we will address values, the core guiding principles that shape what is desirable, or important in our daily life. We also will learn procedures on how to translate these guiding values into meaningful and consistent actions. In addition, we will discuss the role that character strengths can play in that process.

### Lesson Walkthrough

- Recap on the Previous Session & homework
- What are (your) values?
- Values and goal setting
- How to set value-based goals?

### What are (your) values?

*Activity: Values Clarification*

We begin with a values clarification activity to help students self-reflect on their own values:

<https://positivepsychology.com/values-worksheets/>

We provide definitions of values to facilitate discussion [Boniwell, 2012]. We discuss the importance of values in our lives and how and why following our values benefits our lives highlighting the following [Harris, 2009; Luoma, Hayes, & Walser, 2007]:

*Values are not rules. Values are qualities in life we choose. There are no right or wrong values.*

- They help us to set goals.
- They enrich and give meaning to our lives.
- They help when we lack motivation.
- Values make decisions easier.
- Our values help us during challenges.

## **Values and goal setting**

We make a distinction between values and goals: Values are not goals. Values cannot be achieved because they are moment to moment choices. However, we can set goals towards them.

We propose some definitions for goals: A goal is what a person strives to achieve (Locke, 1996) or “a target ... to be achieved in a task within a set period of time” (APA Dictionary of Psychology).

We introduce the “SMART” way as an effective strategy to formulate goals [Doran, 1981]:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time Bound

and the reasons of making it an effective strategy [Boniwell, 2012]: e.g. achievable, personally meaningful, set a timeframe/deadline, observable/measurable.



### ***Activity 1: SMART goals***

After explaining the SMART goal element, we invite students to write a SMART goal. We then discuss with them their examples.

When formulating a goal, we may face challenges while trying to achieve it. It's important to remember that a) effective self-regulation and b) self-compassion can facilitate goal-directed behavior [Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005; Terry, & Leary, 2011; Breines, & Chen, 2012].

### **Values-based goal setting**

We introduce “Values in action” [VIA; e.g., Park and Peterson, 2006]: character strengths as pathways to translate personal values to committed action [Peterson & Seligman, 2004].

### ***Activity 2: Character strengths***

We invite students to reflect on their character strengths (based on the results of VIA survey) and how these strengths have helped -will help them in their daily life.

### **Homework (Self-reflection activity)**

We use the “Best Possible Self” activity to help students practice on formulating values-based goals.

1. Think about your best possible future self. Write it down.
2. Formulate a SMART goal to achieve one aspect of your best possible self.
3. Reflect on how does this goal relate to your values and character strengths?

## Suggested Reading

- Boniwell, I. (2012). *Positive Psychology In A Nutshell: The Science Of Happiness: The Science of Happiness*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Breines, J. G., & Chen, S. (2012). Self-compassion increases self-improvement motivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(9), 1133-1143.
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- Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2006). Character strengths and happiness among young children: Content analysis of parental descriptions. *Journal of happiness studies*, 7(3), 323-341.
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*Values are where we want to go in life, whereas goals tell us how we can get there.*

*Character strengths may help us to achieve value-based goals.*

(From Getting Clear About Values – Working with ACT)

## **SESSION 3: MIND HABITS**

This session, is about discussing how different cognitive processes such as attention, memory and interpretation affect the way we perceive the world. In this session we will learn about “unhelpful mind habits”, inflexible thinking styles and how they affect our psychological and social well-being.

### **Lesson Walkthrough**

- Recap on the Previous Session & homework
- Cognitive processes affect the way we perceive the world.
- Cognitive biases: Mind habits that have impact in our psychological and social wellbeing.

### **Cognitive processes**

Systematic, often unconscious, errors in thinking that occur when people are processing and interpreting information in the world around them and therefore, affect the decisions and judgments that people make.

Cognitive biases result from the fact that our brain has to simplify the complex world we live in, and therefore selectively pays attention to stimuli around us, selectively stores information in memory, and selectively processes information.

These selection processes lead to cognitive distortions, and sometimes distorted, maladaptive and inflexible thinking styles.

### ***Activity 1: The Invisible Gorilla***

We start with an “awareness” activity aiming to help students realize attention limits

#### The Invisible Gorilla: And Other Ways Our Intuitions Deceive Us

We discuss that: Our brain works as an information processor. We don't have the ability to process all the stimuli in an environment (and this is in fact an evolutionary advantage) [Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008].

### ***Activity 2: A list of things***

Next activity is to run an adaptation of Roediger and McDermott [1995] paradigm, in which participants are invited to remember words presented in a list.

We discuss that memory is also selective: We remember the gist rather than the details of stories and events. The information that is presented vs. what we infer from this information may be different [Koriat, Goldsmith, & Pansky, 2000; Laliberte, et al. 2021].

## **Unhelpful Mind Habits**

### ***Activity 3: What is your immediate thought***

We invite students to consider a situation like the following [Williams, & Garland, 2002]:

*You have gone to the city to meet your friend at 8 pm, but they don't not turn up. What is your immediate thought?*

Then we guide students to examine each thought and identify the any unhelpful thinking styles like the following [Beck et al., 1979; Burns, 1999; Yurica, & DiTomasso, 2005]:

- Arbitrary inference / (Jumping to conclusions)
- Catastrophizing
- Dichotomous thinking / Black-and-White thinking
- Labeling
- Magnification
- Mind reading
- Overgeneralization
- Thinking in extremes / Thinking in 'should' s.

*Human thinking, although often reasonably accurate, is frequently clouded by cognitive biases.*

*[Hastie, & Dawes, 2009; Stanovich & West, 2000]*

Here we highlight the impact of cognitive biases in our life: Subjective well-being, happiness and success are not necessarily due to external events that occur in our lives, but rather to how we interpret those events.

These interpretations occur based on a belief system including assumptions, perceptions and expectations of reality, rather than reality itself [Beck et al., 1979; Burns, 1999; Robinson & Kirkeby, 2005; Compton, & Hoffman, 2012].

Following we make an introduction on how to adopt a flexible way of thinking [Branch, & Willson, 2010; Norton, 2008, 2012; Riggensbach, 2012]: checking on the evidence, gather data etc.

***Activity 4: “What reality are you creating for yourself”?***

1. Watch Isaac’s Lidsky Ted [video](#)
2. Students reflect on how do thought processes and inflexible thinking styles affect their reality, and how they can change it?

We introduce the concept of “Cognitive Flexibility” [Garland et al., 2015; McCracken and Morley, 2014] : Cognitive flexibility requires us to first mindfully attend to the information that comes in.

***Activity 5: Optimism bias. Cognitive biases can also be positively framed***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2GncOR7LZI>

Introducing the distinction between “realistic optimism” vs. “unrealistic optimism”. Unrealistic optimism is linked to wishful thinking: belief that a personal future outcome will be more favorable than that suggested by a relevant, objective standard and it is associated with high-risk behaviors [Shepperd, et al. 2015].

**Homework (Self-reflection activity)**

We instruct students to choose several cognitive biases from the following [list](#) and pay attention throughout the week to what extent they are susceptible to these biases.

We invite them to try to shift from conventional appraisal to mindful attention & reappraisal

*Resources:*

Mindfulness: <https://www.headspace.com/>

If they want to further explore on their cognitive biases: Introduce them to try out an implicit association test [here](#).

## Suggested Reading

- Beck, A. T. (Ed.). (1979). *Cognitive therapy of depression*. Guilford press.
- Branch, & Willson, (2010). *Cognitive behavioural therapy for dummies*. John Wiley & Sons.
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## SESSION 4: EMOTIONS

In this session, we will address and define the construct of emotion, the purpose and function they serve, and how emotion modulation is associated to individuals' wellbeing and success.

### Lesson Walkthrough

- Recap on the Previous Session & homework
- What is an emotion? What are its defining characteristics?
- Do emotions serve a purpose and a function?
- Emotion Regulation strategies: How do emotions relate to thoughts, behaviors, and mental health?

### What is an emotion?

#### *Activity 1: Discuss in the plenary*

What are emotions? Which emotions come to students' mind? How do they feel now?

We introduce the concept of emotion as a multidimensional and multilayered construct (physiology, arousal, valence etc.). We make a distinction between emotional experience and emotional response [Hofmann, 2015].

Then we describe how emotions are elicited and their association with different experiences and responses:

<http://atlasofemotions.org/>

## Do emotions serve a purpose and a function?

### *Activity 2: Emotions-Myths & Realities*

*Emotions are vital signals for our survival and growth.*

*Emotion's intensity, duration and usefulness depend on how we appraise and respond to them.*

Students participate in a knowledge quiz about emotions, based on Individual Beliefs About Emotion (IBAE) [Veilleux, et al 2020].

- Where do emotions come from?: Situation, thought, emotion [Ekman's Atlas of Emotions].
- Are negative emotions bad?: Negative emotions as protective mechanisms and positive emotions as an expansion of the self [Boniwell, 2012].
- Should emotions be shared with others?: The value of emotions in social connections [Hoffmann 2015] and social sharing [Rimé, 2009].
- How long do negative emotions last?: Emotions as dynamic processes [Leahy, et al 2011; Verduyn, & Lavrijsen, 2015].
- Can emotions be changed?: Attitudes towards emotions controllability is linked to less risk for psychopathology [de Castella et al., 2013, 2018].

## Emotion Regulation

We begin this section with the provision of a definition for Emotion Regulation: ‘The ability of an individual to modulate an emotion or set of emotions’ [[emotion regulation – APA Dictionary of Psychology](#)].

### ***Activity 3: Adaptive & Maladaptive Emotion Regulation***

We introduce students to an activity to help them identify which emotion regulation strategies may be adaptive and which are not

[emotional\\_regulation\\_lesson\\_plans.pdf \(mcgill.ca\)](#)

Then we provide a categorization of adaptive and maladaptive strategies [Aldao, et al. 2010].

*Flexible implementation of emotion regulation strategies in line with contextual demands is associated with better mental health, wellbeing and success.*

### ***Activity 4: How would you respond?***

Students are instructed to fill a scenario-based worksheet activity [FREE- Burton, & Bonanno, 2016; DIRE- Dixon-Gordon et al, 2018] in which they need to:

1. Imagine their self in a situation
2. Imagine the emotions they might have under this situation
3. And the strategies they might use to regulate these emotions.

Following we discuss the concept of “flexible emotion regulation” [Aldao, &

Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012]:

Effective emotion regulation may vary based on the stimulus (e.g., acute vs. chronic), the situation (e.g., private vs. public), and the person (e.g., personality).

As a final note we introduce students to contemporary approaches regarding the importance of positive emotions [Fredrickson, et al. 2001]: to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources.

### Homework (Self-reflection activity)

We instruct students to:

1. watch the following ted video:  
*How to make stress your friend?:*  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly\\_mcgonigal\\_how\\_to\\_make\\_stress\\_your\\_friend?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=en)
2. monitor their emotional states using at 3 particular times during the week (choose non-significant events).

Briefly describe the event	Name/label the emotion	What triggered your emotion?	Which thoughts/thinking styles were you having in parallel with the emotional experience?	What was your emotional response?	Did you use any emotion regulation strategies? If so, which one(s)?
1)					
2)					

***Extra Resources: Stress Management***

Definition: “*the physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. For example, it may be manifested by palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, shortness of breath, fidgeting, accelerated speech, augmentation of negative emotions (if already being experienced), and longer duration of stress fatigue*” [[APA Dictionary of Psychology](#)].

Stress is normal. Acute and time-limited stressors have evolutionary purpose (survival: our immune system gets prepared for possible infection, injury, or both). However, if stress is chronic or severe, or if a person has selected maladaptive strategies to cope with it (e.g. substance use), it can become detrimental to our health and well-being.

*Stress Management tips* [Craske & Barlow, 2006]:

- Be observant (Increase self-awareness about bodily responses to stress)
- Reduce energy drinks, caffeine and other substances
- Get enough sleep
- Get regular exercise
- Try a relaxing activity (e.g., breathing exercises)
- Stay connected. Keep in touch with people who can provide emotional support and practical help
- If you're overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional.

*Stress management: Relaxation techniques*

**Autogenic training:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uypmGzt783E>

**Imagery:**

<https://youtu.be/6BSIx8tCISk>

**Progressive muscle relaxation:**

<https://youtu.be/pyxvL1O2duk>

**Slow breathing:**

<https://xhalr.com/>

**Diaphragmatic breathing:**

<https://youtu.be/0Ua9bOsZTYg>

**Suggested Reading**

- [Aldao, A., Nolen-Hoeksema, S., & Schweizer, S. \(2010\). Emotion-regulation strategies across psychopathology: A meta-analytic review. \*Clinical psychology review\*, 30\(2\), 217-237](#)
- [Aldao, A., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. \(2012\). The influence of context on the implementation of adaptive emotion regulation strategies. \*Behaviour research and therapy\*, 50\(7-8\), 493-501.](#)

- Boniwell, I. (2012). *Positive psychology in a nutshell: The science of happiness: The science of happiness*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Burton, C. L., & Bonanno, G. A. (2016). Measuring ability to enhance and suppress emotional expression: The Flexible Regulation of Emotional Expression (FREE) Scale. *Psychological assessment*, 28(8), 929.
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- Veilleux, J. C., Warner, E. A, Baker, D. E., & Chamberlain, K. D. (2020). Beliefs about emotion shift dynamically alongside momentary affect. *Journal of Personality Disorders*.
- Verduyn, P., & Lavrijsen, S. (2015). Which emotions last longest and why: The role of event importance and rumination. *Motivation and Emotion*, 39(1), 119-127.

# SESSION 5: SOCIAL SKILLS

Why social skills are important and how they impact our life? In this session, we will discuss the core components of social skills that enable humans interact in an effective and positive manner.

## Lesson Walkthrough

- Recap on the Previous Session & homework
- Why is being social good for us?
- What makes communication effective?
- Which communication style fits better with negotiation skills?

## Why is being social good for us?

We initially discuss how social connection is related to survival, wellbeing and success.

The influence of social relationships on risk for mortality is comparable to other well-established risk factors for mortality [Holt-Lunstad, et al 2010; 2015; Holt-Lunstad, 2021].

Perceived social support is an important predictor of subjective wellbeing. Also, interactions with strangers may promote well-being (Vitamin S) [Geerling, & Diener, 2020; Van Lange, & Columbus, 2021].

### *Activity 1: What makes a good social connection?*

Have a brief teaser discussion with students to identify the critical elements of social connection.

Discussion points [Solomon & Theiss, 2012; Jones , 2013]:

- Generating meaning by sending and receiving signs and symbols (verbal and non-verbal).
- Interpersonal communication: personal bond

## **What makes communication effective?**

### ***Activity 2: Active Listening***

Discuss with students what characterizes active listening based on the video

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_dAkDsBOyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_dAkDsBOyk)

Discuss in the plenary the key components of “active listening” [McNaughton et al., 2007; McKay et al., 2009; Weger et al., 2014]:

- Paraphrasing (What, Why)
- Clarifying (asking questions until you understand the picture better; show to the person that you are interested)
- Giving Feedback (Share your perceptions in a nonjudgmental way)

*Effective  
Communication:  
Active Listening  
Focus on both  
verbal and  
nonverbal  
communication  
Managing  
Conflict through  
validation and  
negotiation.*

### **Activity 3: Non-Verbal Communication**

Invite students to watch All of them are Friends video:

<https://youtu.be/OvEci5Bjgd4> .

Discuss the key components of non-verbal communication [McKay et al., 2009; Solomon & Theiss, 2012]:

- Body movement
- Facial muscles
- Touching behavior
- Voice & breathing

## **Which communication style fits better with negotiation skills?**

### **Activity 4: Conflict Management**

Briefly discuss the video with students. What were the two types of conflict management?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_X\\_AfRk9F9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_X_AfRk9F9w)

Negotiation is a process that leads to a fair / mutually acceptable agreement. We introduce the negotiation skills procedure [McKay et al., 2009]:

- Preparation (the worst acceptable deal)

- Discussion and validation (acknowledging how other person sees things)
- Proposal and counterproposal
- Agreement and disagreement (if there is disagreement, the two parties go back to discussion).

Introducing the concept of “assertiveness” [McKay et al., 2009]. We explain the differences between **passive-assertive-aggressive** communication style and help students begin to reflect on their style.

***Activity 5: Making an “I” Statement*** [McKay et al., 2009]

Students are guided on how to prepare an “I” statement and then instructed to make one

- based on an incident that they felt annoyed or frustrated
- to express positive feelings/ acknowledge positive things

## **Homework (Self-reflection activity)**

We instruct students

1. to use the following questionnaire to self-assess their communication style  
[https://www.unh.edu/health/sites/default/files/media/2020-11/assertivness\\_inventory.pdf](https://www.unh.edu/health/sites/default/files/media/2020-11/assertivness_inventory.pdf)
2. to list at least five goals in terms of social situations in which they would like to be more assertive (write down specifically how they would like to behave differently). Include the people with whom you would like to behave assertively in each situation.

For example: “I want to present my ideas on a new product in a business meeting with my boss and colleagues,” “I want to tell my mother how I feel when she criticizes me on the phone,” or “I want to take back defective items I have bought in the store and get my money back.”

## Suggested Reading

- Geerling, D. M., & Diener, E. (2020). Effect size strengths in subjective well-being research. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 15(1), 167-185.
- Holt-Lunstad, J. (2021). The Major Health Implications of Social Connection. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 30(3), 251-259.
- Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review. *PLoS medicine*, 7(7), e1000316
- Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., Baker, M., Harris, T., & Stephenson, D. (2015). Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: a meta-analytic review. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 10(2), 227-237
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- McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. (2009). *Messages: The communication skills book*. New Harbinger Publications.
- McNaughton, D., Hamlin, D., McCarthy, J., Head-Reeves, D., & Schreiner, M. (2008). Learning to listen: Teaching an active

listening strategy to preservice education professionals. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 27(4), 223-231.*

- Solomon, D., & Theiss, J. (2012). *Interpersonal communication: Putting theory into practice*. Routledge.
- Van Lange, P. A., & Columbus, S. (2021). Vitamin S: Why Is Social Contact, Even With Strangers, So Important to Well-Being?. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 09637214211002538*
- Weger Jr, H., Castle Bell, G., Minei, E. M., & Robinson, M. C. (2014). The relative effectiveness of active listening in initial interactions. *International Journal of Listening, 28(1), 13-31.*

# SESSION 6: ANALYTICAL SKILLS

In this session, we will introduce students to the practice of actively open-minded thinking. We also guide students to understand how to deal effectively and act less impulsively to solve the problems, thus, to become more accepting of the problems and challenges that are unsolvable and decrease avoidance of problems when they occur.

## Lesson Walkthrough

- Recap on the Previous Session & homework
- Critical Thinking and why it can be so difficult
- Problem solving as a stepwise procedure
- Creativity and Innovative thinking

## Critical Thinking and why it can be so difficult

*Activity 1: Critical thinking lab* [Denton & Vrantsidis, 2018, p.6; Wilkinson, et al. 2008, p.263]

Students are divided in small groups and they are instructed to decide as a group a question they would like to answer (“Is ... good for you?"). They are guided to use google or any available source of information to help them answer the question.

Then discuss in the plenary:

- How did they build an argumentation for their claim?
- Did they present supporting evidence?



- Which were sources of information and how reliable were they?

### ***Activity 2: Wason Rule Discovery Test***

We present the following video to students and discuss in the plenary on what makes a solid argument:

<https://youtu.be/vKA4w2O61Xo>

We introduce the concept of “Confirmation Bias” (tendency to seek out evidence consistent to our views) [Lilienfeld, et al. 2009].

Critical thinking tips [Dunn, et al. 2008, p.65, 70; Cottrell, 2017, p.13]:

- Seek evidence for and against the claim
- Maintain a vigilant attitude (non-judgmental) toward personal biases

### **Problem solving as a stepwise procedure**

We make a link between critical and problem-solving skills. Critical skills are key for making smart decisions and solving problems.

We discuss with students the definitions of

Problem solving: *The process by which individuals attempt to overcome difficulties, achieve plans that move them from a starting situation to a desired goal, or reach conclusions through the use of higher mental functions, such as reasoning and creative thinking* [problem solving – APA Dictionary of Psychology]

Decision making: *The cognitive process of choosing between two or more alternatives, ranging from relatively clear-cut choices (e.g., ordering a meal at a restaurant) to complex choices (e.g., selecting a mate)* [decision making – APA Dictionary of Psychology]

Following we present the stepwise procedure of problem solving [Dobson & Dobson, 2018, p.145; D’Zurilla, & Nezu, 2010, p.224]:

- Define the problem
- Generate several solutions
- Evaluate and compare solutions
- Select the most appropriate
- Implement
- Review

***Activity 3: Apply the stepwise problem-solving model***

Give the following instructions to students:

*Think of a problem you recently experienced or are currently experiencing. Open yourself up to find possible solutions for this challenge:*

- *Define the problem*
- *Make a list of realistic solutions*
- *Evaluate and compare the solutions*
- *Select the most appropriate solution*

## Creativity and Innovative thinking

### *Activity 4: Living Beyond Limits*

Briefly discuss the following video with students. Which skills did Amy Purdy use to cope with the difficulties she was facing?

[https://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_purdy\\_living\\_beyond\\_limits](https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_purdy_living_beyond_limits)

*Despite the burden of stress/pain, surviving a problem led to us evolve and grow.*

Discussion Tips: This is an exercise to make a bridge with content taught in previous sessions. Guide students to recall skills from previous sessions. Facing a problem usually increases the burden of stress. However, once the burden of stress/pain subsides we may see that surviving the problem led to us evolve and grow.

Introducing the concept of “creativity” [Car, 2003; Compton & Hoffmann, 2013; Peterson & Seligman, 2004]: originality that leads to a significant positive contribution.

Invite students to brainstorm on effective strategies for boosting creativity [Epstein et al. 2008], such as:

- Capture new ideas
- Seek out challenging tasks
- Broaden your knowledge.
- Seek out new stimuli or combinations of stimuli

### *Activity 5: Improvisation exercise*

Make two break out rooms. You start with the sentence: “Last weekend, Jane went to the park with some friends...”

Then you call a name and a word. The person whose name you called, has to continue the story mentioning the word you called in the next 2 or 3 sentences. Words to call:

Egg, Helicopter, Dinosaur, Library, Tea, Stairs, Spaghetti, Bike, Duck, Murder, Moon, Email, Picture, Sweater, Box.

## Homework (Self-reflection activity)

We instruct students

1. to use the following questionnaire to self-assess their creativity problem solving skills  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/tests/career/creative-problem-solving-test>
2. to list at least one SMART goal in terms of specific behaviors they would like to achieve in order to upskill creativity problem solving.
3. Choose a creativity booster to apply it in their daily life to help them achieve this goal.

## Suggested Reading

- Carr, A. (2013). *Positive psychology: The science of happiness and human strengths*. Routledge.
- Compton, W. & Hoffman, E. (2013). "Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Flourishing, Second Edition" USA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Cottrell, S. (2017). *Critical thinking skills: Effective analysis, argument and reflection*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

- Denton, A., W. & Vrantsidis, T. (2018). Critical Thinking in Psychology (& Life) Workshop Series: Instructional Materials. Society for the Teaching of Psychology. APA.
- Dobson, D., & Dobson, K. S. (2018). *Evidence-based practice of cognitive-behavioral therapy*. Guilford publications.
- Dunn, D. S., Halonen, J. S., & Smith, R. A. (2008). Engaging minds: Introducing best practices in teaching critical thinking in psychology. *Teaching critical thinking in psychology: A handbook of best practices*, 1-8.
- D’Zurilla, T. J., & Nezu, A. M. (2010). Problem-solving therapy. *Handbook of cognitive-behavioral therapies*, 3, 197-225.
- Epstein, R., Schmidt, S. M., & Warfel, R. (2008). Measuring and training creativity competencies: Validation of a new test. *Creativity Research Journal*, 20(1), 7-12.
- Lilienfeld, S. O., Ammirati, R., & Landfield, K. (2009). Giving debiasing away: Can psychological research on correcting cognitive errors promote human welfare?. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 4(4), 390-398.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.
- Wilkinson, T. J., Dik, B. J., & Tix, A. P. (2008). The Critical Thinking Lab: Developing Student Skills Through Practical Application. *Teaching Critical Thinking in Psychology: A Handbook of Best Practices*, 263-265.

## SESSION 7: PLANNING

This session, aims to introduce students in a broad array of skills to allow them think strategically in different aspects of life. These essential tools can provide the context to boost our efficiency by guiding our actions to yield the best possible outcome.

### Lesson Walkthrough

- Recap on the Previous Session & homework
- What is time management?
- Procrastination
- Setting Priorities
- Scheduling

### What is time management?

We introduce students to today's topic by discussing and presenting the key elements of time management [Claessens, et al. 2007]:

- Self-awareness
- Planning Behaviors
- Monitoring Behaviors

Does time management work? [Aeon, Faber, & Panaccio, 2021]:

Influence on job performance, academic achievement, and wellbeing.

*Activity 1: Know How you spend your Time* [Chapman, & Rupured, 2014]

We guide students to reflect on the time required for routine tasks, so they can gain useful insight that can help them be more realistic in planning and estimating how much time is available for other activities.

e.g.

to what do you devote most of your time?

how long can you concentrate on a task?

## **Procrastination**

### ***Activity 2: Why you procrastinate and how to still get things done***

We present the following video and then we facilitate a brief discussion in the plenary about familiar to them behaviors.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rk5C149I9C0>

We then briefly present some useful information about the concept of procrastination and how this may impact our efficiency [Steel, 2007]:

- the act of unnecessarily postponing decisions or actions
- Triggers: Negative emotions, ambiguity, task difficulty, lacking meaning.

## **Setting priorities**

### ***Activity 3: How to gain control of your free time***

*Time management is  
about changing  
perspectives:*

*We cannot manage time;*

*We manage the events in  
our life in relation to  
time*

*(Chapman, & Rupured,  
2014)*

Briefly discuss the following video with students. Which skills did Laura Vanderkam mention for time management? Then we introduce the Time Management Matrix [Covey, et al. 1994]: based on the dimensions of urgency and importance.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/laura\\_vanderkam\\_how\\_to\\_gain\\_control\\_of\\_your\\_free\\_time?language=en#t-613464](https://www.ted.com/talks/laura_vanderkam_how_to_gain_control_of_your_free_time?language=en#t-613464)

***Activity 4: Values-based prioritization*** [Covey, et al. 1994]

After presenting the time management matrix we instruct students to make a list of all the tasks they did last week and then assign them in the matrix based on their values.

The final part of the session is to briefly present useful techniques for scheduling [Mackenzie & Nickerson, 2009; Rimmer, 2019; Sainz, Ferrero, & Ugidos, 2019]: Timeboxing, Time awareness, automation, delegation, prioritizing etc.



## Homework (Self-reflection activity)

We instruct students

1. to use the following questionnaire to self-assess their time management skills  
[How Good Is Your Time Management? - from MindTools.com](#)
2. to make an ideal weekly schedule
3. At the end of the week, to have an overview of tasks and activities.
4. To note at least 1 new insight (e.g. something that may interfere to their effectiveness and one taught strategy that may be helpful.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

## Suggested Reading

- [Aeon, B., Faber, A., & Panaccio, A. \(2021\). Does time management work? A meta-analysis. PloS one, 16\(1\), e0245066.](#)
- [Claessens, B. I., Van Eerde, W., Rutte, C. G., & Roe, R. A. \(2007\). A review of the time management literature. \*Personnel review\*.](#)

- Chapman, S. W., & Rupured, M. (2014). Time management: 10 strategies for better time management.
- Covey, S. R., Merrill, A. R., & Merrill, R. R. (1994). First things first. *Executive Excellence*, 11, 3-3.
- Mackenzie, A., & Nickerson, P. (2009). The time trap: The classic book on time management. Amacom.
- Rimmer, A. (2019). How do I improve my time management skills?. *BMJ*, 366.Sainz, Ferrero, & Ugidos, 2019
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- Steel, P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133, 65–94. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.133.1.65

# SESSION 8: ADAPTABILITY & FLEXIBILITY

This session, aims to introduce students to the concepts of adaptability and flexibility, two of most important skills for success in the 21st century. In this last session, students will have the opportunity to understand the importance of having the ability to change through the flexible use of different resources to fit a situational demand.

## Lesson Walkthrough

- Recap on the Previous Session & homework
- Psychological Flexibility
- Connecting the dots

## Psychological Flexibility

We introduce students to today’s topic by introducing the concept of “Psychological flexibility” [Masten, 2001; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010; McCracken, & Morley, 2014]:

- adapting to fluctuating situational demands
- reconfiguring mental resources
- shifting perspective
- balancing competing desires, needs, and life domains

### *Activity 1: Case Scenarios*

We instruct students to read two different stories:

Story 1: P.K. Philips

My Story of Survival: Battling PTSD | Anxiety and Depression Association of America, ADAA

Story 2: Sofie Goos

<https://www.innervoice.life/sofie-goos>

and identify how these stories differ in terms of using the following skills:

- self-regulation
- self-awareness,
- self-management
- self-compassion
- value-based goal setting
- cognitive biases
- emotion regulation
- interpersonal skills
- analytical skills: critical thinking, problem solving, creativity
- planning
- adaptability and flexibility

## Connecting the dots- Course summary

### *Activity 2: So what?*

Have students answer this prompt: What takeaways from the lesson will be important to know three years from now? Why?

Discussion points:

- We can self-regulate by becoming more self-aware and developing self-management strategies.
- Self-regulation is based on an awareness of our values and relevant goal setting towards them.
- Through this trajectory of achieving our goals we need to be adaptive to unusual and unpredictable situations by adopting:
  - flexible perspectives
  - critical thinking to evaluate information you receive
  - a mindful emotional awareness and flexible use of a repertoire of emotion regulation strategies
  - an open stance toward others, allowing time and space to listen and understand
  - honest interactions with others
  - by giving respectful feedback and managing conflict in a positive manner
  - a learning orientation in challenges, through creative problem solving
  - a good plan and a monitoring system to review
  - self-compassion in times of challenges.

## **Homework (Individual Self-Development Plan)**

The final homework assignment is about the development of an Individual Self Development Plan (ISDP). Students are instructed to summarize their findings from the self-assessment activities (homework activities) in relation to what they have learnt about themselves and what they would like to change in the future.

Individual Self-Development Plan (ISDP):

1. Imagine your 90th birthday party. Two or three people will talk about who you are, what you mean to them, and the role you play in their lives.
2. In an ideal world, where you lived your life as your best ideal self, who would like to talk about your life and what would you like to hear from them?
3. Which characteristics/strengths/skills would you like them to describe (e.g. good listener in friendly relationships, good problem solver etc.)?
4. Which parts of yourself that you have improved/developed, you would like to be mentioned?
5. Which of your values would you like to be mentioned?
6. Which important personal goals you have managed to achieve in line with these values?
7. Any difficulties/hardships you have encountered in achieving these objectives? How did you manage to resolve these difficulties?
8. What thoughts go through your mind as you hear them describing yourself? How do you feel?

### **Suggested Reading**

- Kashdan, T. B., & Rottenberg, J. (2010). Psychological flexibility as a fundamental aspect of health. *Clinical psychology review*, 30(7), 865-878.

- Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227–238. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.227>
- McCracken, L. M., & Morley, S. (2014). The Psychological Flexibility Model: A Basis for Integration and Progress in Psychological Approaches to Chronic Pain Management. *The Journal of Pain*, 15(3), 221–234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpain.2013.10.014>

# **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL**

## **Course Learning Objectives**

Learners are expected to:

- Remember: Identify key life skills.
  - Recognize major theoretical perspectives, and figures in psychology and their link to trends in contemporary research
- Remember: Define/ Rephrase each one of these life skills. Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes.
  - Use basic psychological terminology, concepts, and theories
- Understand: Summarize key elements for each life skill, based on interdisciplinary research.
  - Explain why each skill is important and how it is linked to success
- Understand: Contrast research-informed knowledge for each life skill, with existing myths/misinformation.
  - Identify principal methods and types of questions that emerge in specific content domains
- Apply: Select/Choose the most appropriate components of a skill to handle specific hypothetical scenarios.
  - Describe examples of relevant and practical applications of these skills to everyday life.
- Analyze: Analyze/List several factors (risk and protective) that could predict the acquisition of a specific skill.



- Interpret behavior at an appropriate level of complexity.
- Evaluate: Assess/Reflect on their own level of competence for each life skill
  - Predict how individual differences influence skills competence
- Create: Choose/Combine several skills to solve new hypothetical scenarios.
  - Describe examples of relevant and practical applications of these skills to everyday life.

## Course Learning Experiences

Learning experiences linked to each learning objective:

- Remember: Identify key life skills.
  - Classroom response system (CRS) /quizzes, matching games
  - Lectures
- Remember: Define/ Rephrase each one of these life skills. Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes.
  - Classroom response system (CRS) /quizzes
  - Lectures
  - Students view short videos
  - Homework activities to link knowledge to personal experience (and improve learning and memory)

- Understand: Summarize key elements for each life skill, based on interdisciplinary research.
  - Lectures
  - Group discussion, debate and brainstorm
  - Students view short videos
  - Students read research articles on the relation between each life skill and aspects of success (e.g. employability, wellbeing, health)
  - Students read commentary articles on the relation between each life skill and aspects of success (e.g. employability, wellbeing, health)
  - Quizzes
  
- Understand: Contrast research-informed knowledge for each life skill, with existing myths/misinformation.
  - Lectures
  - One-to-one demonstrations / animated or video demonstrations
  - Group discussion, debate and brainstorm
  - Students view short videos
  - Quizzes
  
- Apply: Select/Choose the most appropriate components of a skill to handle specific hypothetical scenarios.
  - Group discussion and debate; brainstorming
  - Quizzes
  - Activities based on ‘real life’ scenarios, where students receive feedback

- Practicing skills in small groups (give and receive feedback)
- Analyze: Analyze/List several factors (risk and protective) that could predict the acquisition of a specific skill
  - Group discussion, debate and brainstorm
  - Group discussion and analysis of the different ways of approaching a task or problem
  - Activities based on 'real life' scenarios, where students receive feedback
- Evaluate: Assess/Reflect on their own level of competence for each life skill
  - Self-assessment, self-monitoring, reflection activities- journals/ reflective journals or reflective 'space' embedded within practical exercises/activities
  - Students draft an Individual Self Development Plan
- Create: Choose/Combine several skills to solve new hypothetical scenarios
  - Group discussion, debate and brainstorm
  - Group discussion and analysis of the different ways of approaching a task or problem
  - Students work on cases to identify the combination of transversal skills and discuss/ analyze how the skills are combined/ interconnected projects based on 'real life' scenarios and reflective journals.

## **Teaching Methodology (Tips)**

[Kirschner, & Hendrick, 2020]

- Use a combination of advanced organizers at the beginning of a new topic, further organizational aids during the chapter or unit, as well as appropriate questions, summaries, or other organizational aids at the end of the unit [Lysakowski, & Walberg].
- Begin each lesson with a short recapitulation of what was previously learnt and relevant to what is to come (e.g. quiz/discussion). Use summaries at the end of a lesson to consolidate knowledge and relate to the bigger picture through quizzes [Rosenshine, 2012].
- Present learners first with the most general concepts and then become more specific [Reigeluth, & Stein, 1983].
- Make comparisons between old and new concepts. Use analogies to relate new knowledge to familiar concepts and ideas. Sequence your lessons/curricula either from simple to complex, general to detailed, or concrete to abstract.
- Provide concrete content (e.g. examples information, concepts, pics) in parallel to verbal system to facilitate making connections [Clark, & Paivio, 1991].
- Promote a mastery-oriented mindset for learners. Help learners realise that skills are not fixed but changeable (within each ones limits) and how that is related to mastery goals and that to personal success [Effeney, Carroll, & Bahr, 2013]. Support learners to use failure as a powerful learning tool. when they do a mistake-give the chance to view their failure

constructively, to identify their mistakes and correct them [Pintrich, & Garcia, 1994].

- For teaching a basic skill use cognitive apprenticeship [Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991]: 1. Modeling: Demonstrate the different parts of the to-be-learned behavior. The expert explicitly explains what they are thinking and why they are doing certain things while carrying out a task (thinking aloud); 2. Scaffolding: Support and provide guidance while the learners are carrying out the behavior; 3. Fading: Slowly remove the guidance as the learner becomes able and independent to carry out the task their self; and 4. Coaching: Oversee the learning and provide feedback.
- Spacing effect [Carpenter, et al. 2012]: practice basic skills repeatedly but in short intervals (e.g. homework assignments that include both new and previously treated material, review sessions, etc.).
- Incorporate student-led discussions, and activities to foster active learning [Casteel, & Bridges, 2007].
- Ensure an enjoyable learning experience for learners. Become responsive to students' needs [Lucas, & Bernstein, 2004]. Motivate learners through an open learning environment to encourage active involvement and participation [Knowles, et al. 2020]. Use game-based virtual learning platforms such as [Jamboard](#) or [Kahoot](#).

## Suggested Reading

- Carpenter, S. K., Cepeda, N. J., Rohrer, D., Kang, S. H., & Pashler, H. (2012). Using spacing to enhance diverse forms of

learning: Review of recent research and implications for instruction. *Educational Psychology Review*, 24(3), 369-378.

- Casteel, M. A., & Bridges, K. R. (2007). Goodbye lecture: A student-led seminar approach for teaching upper division courses. *Teaching of Psychology*, 34(2), 107-110.
- Clark, J. M., & Paivio, A. (1991). Dual coding theory and education. *Educational psychology review*, 3(3), 149-210.
- Collins, A., Brown, J. S., & Holum, A. (1991). Cognitive apprenticeship: Making thinking visible. *American educator*, 15(3), 6-11.
- Effeney, G., Carroll, A., & Bahr, N. (2013). Self-Regulated Learning: Key strategies and their sources in a sample of adolescent males. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, 13.
- Kirschner, P. A., & Hendrick, C. (2020). *How Learning Happens: Seminal Works in Educational Psychology and What They Mean in Practice*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. 7625 Empire Drive, Florence, KY 41042
- Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., Swanson, R. A., & Robinson, P. A. (2020). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*.
- Lucas, S. G., & Bernstein, D. A. (2004). *Teaching psychology: A step by step guide*. Psychology Press.
- Lysakowski, R. S., & Walberg, H. J. (1982). Instructional effects of cues, participation, and corrective feedback: A quantitative synthesis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 19(4), 559-572.
- Pintrich, P. R., & Garcia, T. (1994). Self-regulated learning in college students: Knowledge, strategies, and motivation.

Student motivation, cognition, and learning: Essays in honor of Wilbert J. McKeachie, 113-133.

- Reigeluth, C., & Stein, R. (1983). Elaboration theory. *Instructional-design theories and models: An overview of their current status* (1983), 335-381.
- Rosenshine, B. (2012). Principles of instruction: Research-based strategies that all teachers should know. *American educator*, 36(1), 12.

## Course Diagram

'LIFE SKILLS' 101

Teaching Days:

Teaching Hours:

Teaching Room:

Instructor:

Email:

Support to students:

### *Overview/ Course Description*

People in their daily lives look for ways to become successful and happy, but often they face obstacles to doing so. So, what are the secrets to a successful life? What are the characteristics of successful people? What skills can enhance people's quality of life and contribute to coping with the daily difficulties they face, as well as their professional development?

The aim of this course is to provide answers to the above questions and to motivate students to grow through self-awareness and development of a personal development plan.

This course covers cutting-edge research on how people acquire self-regulatory skills enabling them to achieve personal, academic, and professional goals. Students will learn, how these discoveries relate to needs, cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, and what tools can be used to achieve their goals.



This course focuses on introducing transversal or life skills, such as the ability to set goals and achieve them, emotion regulation, conflict resolution, assertiveness, creativity etc. The aim is to help students understand how, through the acquisition of these skills, they can develop flexibility, adaptability, and manage challenges of everyday life.

The course focuses on the transition from traditionally focused teaching to purely theoretical content, to a scientifically supported education oriented towards the development of skills, knowledge, and ways of application in everyday life. In the context of this methodology, students will have the opportunity to evaluate their skills and to be trained in the systematic self-observation of their behavior. More specifically, the course will be delivered in a way that will help students apply their knowledge in their daily lives through applied personal development exercises. At the same time, as they acquire new knowledge, students will have the opportunity to understand the basic elements that consist of the specific skills, to debunk myths, as well as to link this knowledge with their personal and professional development, by creating an individual self-development plan.

### *Learning Objectives*

It is expected that upon completion of the seminar, learners will be able to:

- Recognize major theoretical perspectives, and figures in psychology and their link to trends in contemporary research
- Use basic psychological terminology, concepts, and theories related to soft skills

*LIFE SKILLS 101 COURSE GUIDEBOOK*

- Explain why each skill is important and how it is linked to success
- Predict how individual differences influence skills competence
- Identify principal methods and types of questions that emerge in specific content domains
- Describe examples of relevant and practical applications of these skills to everyday life.

*Class Schedule*

Sessions	Description	Description
Session 1	<b>Laying the foundation: Self-regulation as a core soft skill.</b>	Success is not predetermined, since there are factors that impact our success, and we have control over. These factors can be changed through self-monitoring/awareness and self-management.
Session 2	<b>Getting to know ourselves better. What do we want from life and how to achieve it?: Values and Actions towards them. Establishment and Achievement of Life Goals.</b>	Values are like our Built-in Compass that help us to understand what really matters in our life. Becoming aware of our values can inform our life goals and align our goal-directed behavior with a happier and more successful life.
Session 3	<b>It is the way we see the world: Human cognition, biases and perspective taking.</b>	Cognitions (mental representations of the world) are not the reality, but the way we interpret the world. All of us are susceptible to cognitive biases (systematic thinking errors). Cognitive biases can lead to errors in decisions and judgments and become detrimental for our happiness and success. Recognizing and minimizing the frequency of cognitive biases are linked to psychological well-being, and success.
Session 4	<b>Gathering information on what is happening within our environment: The power of emotions.</b>	There are no good or bad emotions. Emotions serve an adaptive role, and each one of them has its own utility in our lives.
Session 5	<b>Everything counts in sending and delivering the right message: Essential Components of Communication.</b>	When we communicate, we often focus on verbal communication. However, communication is based on multiple channels (verbal, nonverbal, prosody

		etc.). Additionally, effective communication is more about listening instead of what we say.
Session 6	<b>The art of connecting with others: Interpersonal Skills.</b>	Interpersonal relationships are important for our overall happiness. People with strong interpersonal skills are more efficient at working with others.  Maintaining good relationships is about making a win-win situation.
Session 7	<b>Seeing problems as opportunities: Problem solving and decision making</b>	Facing a problem usually increases the burden of stress. However, once the burden of stress/ pain subsides we may see that surviving the problem led to us evolve and grow
Session 8	<b>The Need to Look Ahead: Organizational skills and Strategic Planning.</b>	Daily life is full of things we need/want to do, and they are all important. The key is to learn on how to set realistic expectations and priorities (based on your values).  Part 2 (Closure)  Self-development is a continuous/non-stop, non-linear process. Failures, even the small ones, are crucial for life-long learning and growth.  Challenges help us grow: While showing self-compassion for the emotional burden that may go with this, embrace difficult challenges and failures, and accept them as part of life and an opportunity to learn/self-develop.