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But Thinking Makes It So: A Curriculum to Build an Optimistic Explanatory Style Leveraging High School Dramatic Arts

Abstract

An association exists between optimism and emotional, physical and performance benefits that can help protect high school students against depression and strengthen resilience. Learning to change one's explanatory style is a way to promote optimism. High school drama programs present an opportunity to teach positive psychology skills, such as optimism, to increase the well-being of students. At the same time, these skills offer an opportunity for actors to gain mastery in their craft. This paper proposes a four-class high school drama curriculum that attempts to do both. Curriculums to change explanatory style have already been designed with successful results. The curriculum proposed here adapts these skills to make them useful for actors when analyzing scenes and developing characters. If, "all the world is a stage, and all men and women nearly players"(Shakespeare, 1623, 2.7.142-143), then actors who find the skills useful in their theatrical practice, should experience higher engagement, adoption, and mastery of the explanatory style skills and thus, experience higher well-being.

Keywords

positive psychology, theater, optimism, adolescents, high school, humanities, well-being, creative youth development

Disciplines

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But Thinking Makes It So:

A Curriculum to Build an Optimistic Explanatory Style Leveraging High School Dramatic Arts

Adriana Mora

University of Pennsylvania

A Capstone Project Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Andrew Soren

August 1, 2017

A Curriculum to Build an Optimistic Explanatory Style Leveraging High School Dramatic Arts

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Capstone Project
Master of Applied Positive Psychology
University of Pennsylvania
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Abstract

An association exists between optimism and emotional, physical and performance benefits that can help protect high school students against depression and strengthen resilience. Learning to change one's explanatory style is a way to promote optimism. High school drama programs present an opportunity to teach positive psychology skills, such as optimism, to increase the well-being of students. At the same time, these skills offer an opportunity for actors to gain mastery in their craft. This paper proposes a four-class high school drama curriculum that attempts to do both. Curriculums to change explanatory style have already been designed with successful results. The curriculum proposed here adapts these skills to make them useful for actors when analyzing scenes and developing characters. If, "all the world is a stage, and all men and women nearly players"(Shakespeare, 1623, 2.7.142-143), then actors who find the skills useful in their theatrical practice, should experience higher engagement, adoption, and mastery of the explanatory style skills and thus, experience higher well-being.

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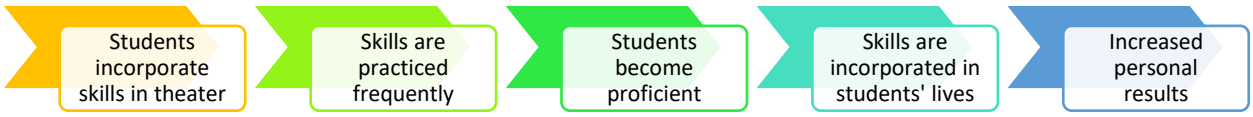
The arts and the humanities have had a vital role to play in human development. If we look across time and cultures, we can trace the human race's close relationship with the arts. Surprisingly, there is limited research on how the arts and the humanities bring forth well-being (Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2017). However, most people likely agree that they experience positive emotions when engaging with arts, whether while watching a movie or acting in a play, listening to music or breaking out in song. De Bottom and Armstrong (2015) view art as a way for humans to become better versions of ourselves. They see in art an instrument to compensate any frailties inherent to the human condition. This paper proposes to leverage the engagement that high school students have with the dramatic arts to learn skills that can help them become a better version of themselves. This curriculum also intends to teach optimism skills through theater to better equip students for the depression epidemic that affects almost one in every four teens between the ages of 12 and 17 (cumulative incidence of depression; Breslau et al., 2017).

The skills proposed in this paper are not new. They have been implemented, tested and fine-tuned for over 20 years in different countries and with various target populations. Academic researchers have closely examined the effectiveness of these skills. I feel confident when proposing the use of these skills and firmly believe in the benefits of further dissemination.

At the same time, I see an opportunity to use these scientifically founded positive psychology skills to help the actor achieve mastery in his or her dramatic art. Due to their foundation in psychology, these skills are also an interesting tool for human understanding. Actors can implement the skills for scene analysis and character development. My goal is to present these skills first, as valuable acting assets that can enhance character understanding. I hope this will lead to frequent engagement with the skills, thus leading to more proficiency when

using, and consequently to stronger results, as summarized in the figure below.



Finally, there have been substantial budgetary cuts to arts programs in schools (Beveridge, 2009). Less than half of high schools offer drama in regular school hours (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). This makes it harder for a program like to be implemented. However, there has also been an increase in the interest for creative youth development (CYD) programs in the last several years. CYD programs are designed to help adolescents transition to competent and responsible adults through the integration of the arts, sciences, and humanities (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 2010). This curriculum can well fit into a CYD program as it helps build life skills that carry into adulthood and build critical learning. It is my hope that this increase in interest in CYD programs will make it easier for schools and other institutions to find funds and sponsors for a project like this.

Optimism and Explanatory Style

Prince Hamlet is surprised by his good friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who have traveled from Wittenberg to Denmark for a visit. Initially happy to see them, Hamlet quickly starts to question their vacationing choice. Denmark, really? But Denmark is a prison. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are confused by his words. What does he mean, a prison? Denmark can't be more of a prison, than any other place on earth. Hamlet agrees, maybe the

whole world is a prison. However, Denmark must surely be the worst of all. The absolute worst! Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are still confused (albeit, they are confused during much of the play). This place is a castle, certainly not a prison. Once more they venture to disagree with Prince Hamlet: Denmark feels not like a prison to them. It is then that Hamlet finally agrees! "Why, then 'tis none for you; for there is nothing either good or bad **but thinking makes it so**. To me, it is a prison." (Shakespeare, 1599-1602, 2.2.220-245).

Maybe Hamlet is not the best character to quote in a paper about optimism, but he does have a point about our thoughts. In the next section, I will examine what research has found on the effect thoughts can have on us.

Benefits of a More Optimistic Outlook on Life

I will start this section by defining optimism within the context of this paper. Popular culture sometimes refers to an optimist as a person lacking the capacity to see reality or unable to see the ugly, as described in the satirical work "The Devil's Dictionary" (Bierce, 1911/2017). Many might also think of a naïve Pollyanna that celebrates misfortune (Porter, 1913). This is not the definition of an optimistic outlook on life considered in this paper. Anthropologist Lionel Tiger (1979) defined optimism as a "mood or attitude associated with an expectation about the social or material future- one which the evaluator regards as socially desirable, to his advantage, or for his pleasure" (p. 18). Thus, for the purposes of this paper, an optimistic outlook is one where the person believes that mostly good things will happen, whatever that person regards as good. Thus, there is subjectivity in optimism; it depends on what one regards as positive. In the scene described above, Hamlet points to this subjectivity when he declares that nothing is either good or bad in itself, but it is the interpretation and thoughts we give to the event that color them as good or bad (Shakespeare, 1599-1602).

Even though people have a consistent tendency or disposition towards a specific optimistic or pessimistic style (Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, & Seligman, 1986; Peterson & Seligman, 1984), it is possible to change a pessimistic style into a more optimistic one. In other sections of this paper, I will share some of the research on teaching optimism. Now, let's start by considering why optimism is important.

A more optimistic outlook on life has been linked to various well-being outcomes. This section references some of the research around optimism and why it is an important skill to teach to children and adolescents. This section is not meant to be an exhaustive compilation of all the research around this topic that has been carried out in the last 30 years. It means to cite some examples that illustrate the reach and limitations of these skills and provide people interested in the implementation of this program a foundational understanding of the benefits of an optimistic outlook.

The benefits of an optimistic outlook that have been researched can be divided into three main areas: physical health, performance, and mental health. While it is clear why improvements on physical health or performance are desirable for any population, the benefits to mental health are particularly relevant for adolescent populations. Adolescence is a critical period for the development of depression that can lead to suicide attempts, conduct problems, and poor academic functioning. Data from 6-year consecutive study points to a cumulative incidence of depression between the age of 12 to 17 of 13.6% for males and 36.1% for females (Breslau et al., 2017). Another study places mental disorder affecting children and adolescents as high as 20% (Kieling et al., 2011). These rates are alarming for such a young age. The prevalence of depression seems to be increasing in more recent birth cohorts (Lewinsohn, Rohde, Seeley, & Fischer, 1993); younger generations are at higher risk (Weissman et al., 1992).

Additionally, there is some evidence pointing to a decrease in the average age of the first onset (Klerman & Weissman, 1989). Half of the mental disorders an adult will experience emerge by the age of 14 (Merikangas et al., 2010). Depression's prevalence is increasing, particularly in developed societies (Hidaka, 2012). This is a critical situation. When the idea of a program or skill set for learning optimism was conceived, its ambition was to be an inoculation against depression (Seligman, 2006). How effective is it for this purpose? Let's examine some of the research.

Much research has been conducted to look at the relationship between explanatory style, or how you explain to yourself why events happened to you, and depression both in adults (Peterson & Seligman, 1984; Peterson & Vaidya, 2001) and in children (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1986). I will discuss more in detail what explanatory style is in a later section, but for now, it is important to understand that explanatory style can take a more optimistic or pessimistic outlook. In 1984, 104 studies with nearly 15,000 subjects were included in a meta-analysis that looked at the relation between explanatory style and depression. The findings of this study showed a reliable association between a more pessimistic explanatory style and depression. The results were consistent across different types of subjects (students versus patients), across type of event evaluated (hypothetical or real) or across instrument used to measure depression (Sweeney, Anderson, & Scott, 1986). More recently, a study with college students suggested that pessimism can predict depression in students (Swanholm, Vosvick, & Chng, 2009), reinforcing the findings of the 1986 meta-analysis.

Research has also linked performance to explanatory style. In a study that compared two varsity swimming teams, the athletes that at the start of the season had more pessimistic explanatory style had poorer performances during competition than the more optimistic

swimmers (Seligman, Nolen-Hoeksema, Thornton, & Thorton, 1990). Swimmers were classified as pessimistic or optimistic using the Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson et al., 1982), an instrument that measures how optimistic or pessimistic is your explanatory style. Specifically about academic achievement, some studies argue that more than optimism, it is hope that will be a better predictor of grade-point average (Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Rand, Martin, & Shea, 2011). Hope Theory is another fascinating topic also worth exploring with adolescents, but out of scope for this paper. For those interested in hope theory see the reference section for Snyder (1994). In this theory, Snyder defines hope as the thought process that allow individuals to make plans and execute those plans in their pursuit of a goal. While hope seems to closer predict grades in school for adolescents, pessimism is a strong predictor of hostility and fear (Ciaroochi, Heaven, & Davies, 2007), both of which can lead to poor overall school performance and hinder well-being.

Additionally, I mentioned that optimism has also been linked to physical health and illness (Jackson, Sellers, & Peterson, 2002; Lin & Peterson, 1990; Peterson, Seligman, & Vaillant, 1988). Rasmussen, Scheier, and Greenhouse (2009), conducted a meta-analysis on research that linked optimism to physical health. They reviewed the findings of 83 studies, and their main conclusion was that optimism is a predictor of positive physical health outcomes (mean ES 0.17, $p<.001$). The effect was larger for studies that used subjective versus an objective measure of physical health, but true for both scenarios. Optimism continued to be a predictor of health when the analysis was focused on specific indicators like mortality and survival, cardiovascular health, immunological functioning, physical symptoms, pain, outcomes related to pregnancy and cancer outcomes. A disposition to optimism seems to be protective of physical health. Furthermore, when there is a health issue, pessimism has been associated with

experiences of worse pain and functional outcomes, as one study found with patients that had undergone total knee replacement (Singh, O'Bryne, Colligan, & Lewallen, 2010).

What is it about optimism that yields this type of results in performance, emotional well-being and physical health? Some would argue that it is self-fulfilling. If you expect positive results, you will take steps in that direction. Peterson (2000) hypothesized that more than the presence of optimism, perhaps it is the absence of pessimism that helps create a self-fulfilling expectation. Craver and Scheier have also spent years studying optimism. They developed a scale that has been used to measure optimism versus pessimism called the Life Orientation Test or LOT (Scheier & Craver, 1985) and its subsequent revised version LOT-R (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994). The scale was revised as some studies found a strong association between optimism as measured by the LOT and negative affective or neuroticism (Andersson, 1996). With the original LOT (Scheier & Craver, 1985) scale, the effects attributable to optimism were indistinguishable from the effects attributed to neuroticism, thus the need to revise. Both the original LOT and the revised LOT-R are self-reported questionnaires that use an agreement/ disagreement scale to phrases. Like Peterson, Craver and Scheier would agree to a certain degree on the self-fulfillment effect of optimism. In their research, they saw that people with favorable expectations for the future seem to show patterns of behavior that are conducive to the benefits they get. For example, optimists seem to take proactive steps to protect their health while pessimists exhibited more health-damaging behaviors (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstorm, 2010). This might not be the only reason why optimism has had positive effects on emotional well-being, performance, and physical health. However, if it can help adolescents make better choices and more positive behaviors, it is one more reason to want to teach them how to be more optimistic.

In the rest of the paper, I will explain what an optimistic explanatory style is, how it has been taught and suggest a possible way to teach it by leveraging theater. However, before moving forward, I want to mention some of the barriers or questions readers might already have to optimism. Some might be wondering about the relationship of optimism to reality. Is an optimist just unrealistic? The optimism I refer to in this paper is the explanation given to the event, the *thinking that makes it so* referenced by Hamlet. We explain things to ourselves all the time (Wong & Weiner, 1981). I will focus on those explanations and the accuracy of those thoughts. I will also leverage skills that examine the accuracy of our interpretations of the event that aim at as much objectivity as possible. However, we must recognize that there are limitations in humans' capacity to reason, and this is true regardless of the life outlook. Much research corroborates significant reasoning limitation (for example see Baron, 2000; or Kahneman, 2011). Our limited reasoning capacity makes these examining skills useful. As we will explore further, they aim to make us more objective evaluators of a situation. Furthermore, there is evidence that more optimism will make you try harder, make you believe you can do it and your judgment can err on the side of being too optimistic about how far optimism will take you to the point of overestimating your performance (Tenny, Logg, & Moore, 2015). However, this also means optimism can build resiliene.

Another question the reader might have is if there are circumstances in which a more pessimistic outlook is advantageous. And the answer is: yes! There are. I would prefer the pessimistic airplane pilot, the one that expects and prepares for the worst. Optimistic thinking has been linked to an underestimation of risk (Peterson & Vaidya, 2003).

Optimism is not the solution to all emotional problems; it is one more tool. For adolescents in high school facing the depression threat referenced earlier, it is likely that a more

optimistic view could be more beneficial than a pessimistic one. Seligman (2006), proposed a flexible or complex optimism in which one can voluntarily switch from optimism to a more pessimistic outlook for the life decisions that would benefit from this view. While this is the ideal approach, within the scope of this paper, I will focus only on teaching a limited number of skills for developing optimism. For those interested in a next step once optimism is mastered and want to look to flexible optimism, the reference section provides the link to this material.

Positive Psychology

Much of the optimism and explanatory style research is from the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life worth living. The question of what is good in life has long puzzled humans, and various fields of knowledge have offered answers like philosophy and ancient wisdom. In fact, one social psychologist who also works in the field of positive psychology did just that. Haidt (2006) brought forth ancient wisdom learnings on how to live a good life that are supported by modern scientific research. It is this scientific rigor and use of the scientific method that differentiates the field of positive psychology from other less academic approaches to what is the good life, like the self-improvement movement.

The field of positive psychology was officially named in 1998, when Dr. Martin Seligman, inducted as president of the American Psychological Association (APA), questioned the heavy skew towards pathology the field of psychology had taken (Seligman, 1999). Traditional psychology has made great progress in dealing with mental health issues, and this should remain a concern for the field. However, at the time of this speech, the focus was very skewed towards pathology with little to say regarding well-being, living the good life and aspects like psychological health or optimism (Pawelski, 2003). Many would agree, thriving in life does

not mean just dealing with problems. Furthermore, focusing so much of the psychology endeavor on a disease model of human nature had consequences in the way we think of people. A deficit centered model views humans as frail, victims or survivors (Peterson, 2006).

Positive psychology tries to bring balance back to the field. It proposes to study what goes right with people and the good life. It has a focus on well-being aspects like positive emotions, relationship skills, grit, personal responsibility or wisdom (Maddux, 2002). The field can be applied at the level of the individual when studying and developing positive traits and experiences and at the collective level when studying and developing positive institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmialyi, 2000) and communities (Prilleltensky et al., 2015). Positive psychology focuses on traits chosen for their own sake (Seligman, 2011). While the work of traditional psychology is valuable and must be continued, positive psychology argues that it is incomplete. Human thriving and goodness are as real as disease and as deserving of research (Peterson, 2006).

It is important to make a distinction between positive psychology and happiness. Happiness or positive emotions, in general, are a subject of study within positive psychology. However, positive psychology is not limited to the study of a pleasant life, nor does it equate feeling good with living the good life. Positive psychology is broader than positive emotions and encompasses other desirable traits and dispositions like strengths such as kindness or curiosity. While positive emotions are important, it is a field that also examines other aspects of well-being such as engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment (Seligman, 2011), self-acceptance, autonomy (Ryff, 1989), vitality, competence, resilience, and optimism (Huppert & So, 2013), social justice, fairness and mattering (Prilleltensky, 2011), among other well-being constructs.

Thus, happiness is not the ultimate goal of positive psychology, and life in pursuit of happiness alone could be not only shallow but also unsuccessful. Seligman further argues against a happiness centric goal proposing there is a set range for our levels of happiness. The range is different for each person, and people will normally fluctuate within the range. Seligman proposes that this range will also be influenced by life circumstances, often out of one's control and factors that are under voluntary control. It is this last variable, those factors that are under one's control, which are more interesting for a field like positive psychology. Those are the factors that can be enhanced to increase the overall well-being (Seligman, 2002).

Years of research and practice seem to support that one's level of optimism can be one of such variables under control. The next section will discuss what is optimism and the explanatory style and examine some of the research around it.

Optimism and Explanatory Style

Earlier in this paper, I mentioned that one way to measure optimism is to ask for the expectations on the future directly. I mentioned the LOT-R scale (Scheier et al., 1994) employs this method. A different approach was followed by Seligman and colleagues who addressed optimism through an explanatory style (Seligman & Buchanan, 1995) following the work of Albert Ellis (1962). Explanatory style, in simple terms, is how you explain to yourself why things happen. Research seems to support the idea that we spontaneously ask ourselves why something happened, particularly when things don't go our way. These explanations are referred to as spontaneous attributional search (Wong & Weiner, 1981). An attributional style or explanatory style proposes that people will form their expectations of the future based on their interpretations of what already happened. Again, particularly relevant for events judged as bad or negative (Seligman, 2006). We usually explain events to ourselves regarding: a) Who caused

this event or who is to blame, b) The period this event might affect, how long it will last and c) How many aspects of life will be affected by this event (Seligman, 2007).

One way to measure explanatory style is using the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ), that presents hypothetical cases where the respondent is asked to select the most likely cause if this event had happened to them. The options reflect dimensions of personal, pervasiveness and permanence of explanatory style (Peterson et al., 1982).

In the context of this paper, a person with an optimistic explanatory style is one who can objectively examine their role in the event and be accountable for their actions without taking any unnecessary blame. This is the personal versus external dimension; when we determime who is to blame. A person with an optimistic explanatory style can see the negative event as temporal, something that will pass, as things always do. This is the permanence versus temporal dimension; when we determine how long this will last. Thus, a person with an optimistic explanatory style is less likely to use absolute terms like always and never when explaning the period the negative event ecompasses. A person with an optimistic explanatory style is also less likely to feel the negative event will undermine other aspects of their life; they will view the negative event as specific to that aspect of life and not permating other aspects of life. This is the pervasiveness dimension; when we determine how many aspects of life will this event touch. A person with a pessimistic explanatory style tends to explain to him/herself bad events as completely their fault, permanent and pervasive, that they will undermine everything. Personal, permanent and pervasive interpretation can lead to more personal, permanent and pervasive interpretation about the future, thus reinforcing pessimism (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Alloy, Peterson, Abramson, & Seligman, 1984).

The opposite is true for the positive events. More optimistic people will think positive events are personal, permanent, and pervasive. In other words, they make good things happen that will stay and have positive ripples in many areas of their lives (Seligman, 2006).

Thus, we can summarize the explanatory style in these three dimensions:

Me/ Not me:	**Personal**/ Internal	External
Always/ Not always:	**Permanent**/ stable	Temporary/ Unstable
Everything/ Not everything:	**Pervasive**/ global (will undermine everything)	Specific for that event

(Reivich & Shatté, 2002; and Seligman, 2006)

Let's use Act 3, Scene 3 from Othello (Shakespeare, 1603) to analyze these layers of explanatory style. Iago wants to plant the seed of suspicion and jealousy in Othello, because, well, he just hates the guy because he passed him up for a promotion. Using his manipulative tricks, he manages to get Othello to start doubting the faithfulness of his wife, Desdemona. The *green-eyed monster* strikes. Othello now suspects his wife. Let's look at how he explains to himself why this alleged betrayal is happening to him. He says things like:

"I do not think but Desdemona's honest… And yet how nature, erring form itself-" (Shakespeare, 1603, 3.3.230-235). In other words, she probably is not cheating, but things sure do have a way of going bad. Besides the fact that he is already accepting Iago's lies without any proof, Othello also is making a **permanent** statement, things, in general, go bad. Further in this same scene, when he is alone, we get to listen to more of his explanatory style. Why does he think his wife is cheating on him? In Lines 263-280 he speculates that maybe it is because he is black (she is not) or because he does not have nice manners for conversation, or because he is old. All three extremely personal explanations (yes, and racist). In his view, these are possible faults within himself that could have driven his wife to cheat. Notice how he is not blaming her (external), but looking for faults within himself (**personal**). Othello carries on and claims that he

is abused and must now hate his wife. He is completely accepting Iago's hints, no proof necessary. He laments the curse of marriage (talk about **pervasiveness**!); he is saying this about all marriages. Then he makes another **pervasive** statement. He would rather be a toad in a dungeon than to share his love. It sounds like this aspect of his life, the fictitious betrayal of his wife, will undermine everything he has done. All the battles and titles he has won. He would rather be a toad than the General he is. If his relationship falls apart, Othello falls apart. And he views betrayal as a plague for important men. In other words, this will always happen to him, because he is an important man (**permanent**). He believes this is his destiny. Thus, we can conclude that in this scene, Othello's explanatory style is more pessimistic.

This scene analysis was done using an explanatory style evaluation technique called Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations or CAVED (Peterson, Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1992). Besides the potential for self-evaluation and insights, this technique can be a powerful tool for any actor when studying scenes that contain character explanations or justifications. In the section on Theater as a Tool for Well-being, I will discuss in detail how actors can use explanatory style towards the development of the characters they play in theater pieces. Appendix A has another example of using CAVE for character analysis.

How many times do we act like Othello? Maybe believing things without evidence? Taking responsibility for things that are not under our control? Believing that things will always be bad? Or that a failure in one part of our life undermines everything we have ever done? Our explanatory style is likely to be influenced by that of our parent's. Research has found that a child's explanatory style and that of their parents tend to be similar (Fincham & Cain, 1986; Seligman et al., 1984; Turk & Bry, 1992). And there is also evidence pointing to the stability of the explanatory style for negative events; we tend to keep explaining adversity to ourselves in a

certain way (Burns & Seligman, 1989). However, we can learn to question our style and opt for a more positive one. The next section deals with skills that can help one build a more optimistic explanatory style.

Building an Optimistic Explanatory Style

In the previous section, I discussed what is an optimistic explanatory style and the benefits of optimism. In this section, I will share some of the skills available to change your default style to a more optimistic explanatory style. It is important to mention that other skills have also been used to improve optimism, such as social skills, goal setting or problem-solving skills (see for example Gillham et al., 1991 or Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011). I will not be covering these skills in this paper, but the reference section has more information for a curious reader.

The techniques used to change an explanatory style are founded in cognitive therapy and learned helplessness theory. Aaron Beck (1967), regarded as the father of cognitive therapy, revolutionized the way we think of mental illness by proposing that depression comes directly from what we think. Beck argued that by changing the thoughts and how the patient thinks about him/her self their experiences and the future, we can alleviate depression. In other words, Beck's revolutionary thinking was that by changing pessimism and feelings of hopelessness, depression could be alleviated (Beck, 1991). Cognitive therapy is still today a strong current of psychological therapy. Since then, a lot of research has backed Beck's claims. For example, studies of people's bias towards the positive. Individuals who are not anxious or not depress have tendencies to see themselves in the best possible light, and this is taken as a sign of well-being (Taylor & Brown, 1988; Taylor, 1989). Mentally healthy individuals tend to have positive thoughts about themselves.

Another important foundation of explanatory style is learned helplessness theory (Maier, Seligman, & Solomon, 1969). The original learned helplessness theory proposed that experiencing uncontrollable events can lead the individual to expect that no actions on their part can have an effect on the outcome. In other words, nothing you do matters (Maier, Seligman, & Solomon, 1969; Miller & Seligman, 1975; Maier & Seligman, 1976). Seligman and Maier revised their original learned helpless theory fifty years later; they now propose that passivity in response to an aversive situation is not learned. In other words, helplessness is not learned. Instead, they theorize this is the default, and we unlearn this response by control and mastery. We learn that we can control aversive events. Thus a more accurate name would be unlearned helplessness (Maier & Seligman, 2016). However, the consequence is similar, feelings of helplessness can lead to explanations about the causes of the helplessness and predictions they would make about their helplessness in the future that is associated with a negative explanatory style that can lead to depression (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1986).

With the foundation in Beck's cognitive therapy (Beck, 1967) and the learned helplessness theory (Maier & Seligman, 1976), Albert Ellis's ABC model (Ellis, 1962) was adopted as a fundamental tool in changing the explanatory or attributional style. I will refer to this version of the model as ATC, though the acronym ABC will also be found in the literature. In this model, the A is the activating event or adversity. The activating event will trigger in us the T, which stands for thoughts (or B, beliefs) that then have C, consequences (Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Seligman, 2006; Seligman, 2007).

The A can be something big like ending a friendship or smaller like not finishing homework on time. The A can also be things we perceive as positive, like being invited to a party. The activating event precipitates a reaction or consequence from us. Each person has

different reactions to different stimuli (A). While getting a paper back with a B grade might make one student happy it could cause a lot of stress in another. The differences in the reactions are due to the thoughts that mediate between the event and our reaction. We might feel the mechanism is: I don't have my homework done, thus, I feel anxious. But it is not. Many researchers argue that thought mediates between the event and our reaction and emotions to that event, among them Richard S. Lazarus. Lazarus (1991) is renowned for his theory of cognitive-mediation. He argues before the emotion or reaction takes place we do an appraisal of the situation: what does this mean for me or for those I care about? Therefore, there is a thought about myself, who I am and what might happen to me between not doing my homework and feeling anxious.

The T stands for thoughts or beliefs (in the original ABC acronym). And *there's the rub* that brings us back to Hamlet's wise words about how thinking creates reality; thinking makes it so. Our emotions and behaviors are triggered not by the event itself, but by our interpretation of the event. Let's re-look at Othello. Desdemona was in fact not cheating on him, but Othello's thoughts about her potential infidelity eventually drive him to murder and suicide. Thoughts are always running in our head. We are creating explanations all time. However, we are often not aware of these beliefs. In Othello's example, we saw that he thinks Desdemona cheats: because I am older, because of my manners. Othello's thoughts tell us what this means for his future. For Othello's all is lost if she is cheating and he will be like a toad in a dungeon.

People have patterns of thought. We gravitate to certain types of whys around the cause of the activating event and the implications of the event. Becoming aware of your common pattern of thought is a great step in changing on explanatory style (Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Seligman, 2006; Seligman, 2007).

As I mentioned, the thoughts then lead to consequences. The adversity provoked a thought that will have a reaction or C for consequence in the ATC model. The consequence will be the appropriate or inappropriate response you have to a that activating event.

There are some thoughts that tend to be accompanied by a consistent consequence. These pairings are useful to know, as they can help us more easily identify the thought that is leading us to feel and act a certain way. As described by Reivich and Shatté (2002):

- Anger usually will come from thoughts that your rights are violated, that someone will harm you
- Sadness might come from thoughts of loss or loss of self-worth
- Guilt might come from feelings that you violated someone else's rights or worth
- Anxiety and fear from thoughts that the future is threaten
- Embarrassment from being compared negatively to others

Barbara Fredrickson (2009), who has researched positive emotions adds ten of the most common positive emotions to the list:

- Joy can come from thoughts on how well things are going, and this is effortless
- Gratitude can come from thoughts, realization or appreciation for some kind of gift/blessing that has come our way and should be treasured
- Serenity can come from thoughts about how safe, how comfortable and familiar your circumstances appear
- Interest might come from thoughts around something new or different that offers you possibilities or mystery
- Hope might come from thoughts of the direness of your current circumstances accompanied by expectations of a better future

- Pride can come from thought that we caused something good in our lives or the lives of others
- Amusement can come from non-serious thoughts about a surprising or unexpected incongruity (that makes you laugh)
- Inspiration can come from thoughts or realization of human excellence or nature
- Awe can come from thoughts and realizations of goodness on a grand scale
- And Love. Many thoughts can drive love, including all the ones cited above.

It is important to put the warning out to the reader and the actor that there are cases when the event alone can drive the emotions, not the beliefs. There might be characters or real people going through events that are so severe, that the emotion mostly derives from the event itself, like the case of loss of a close family member. It might not be useful in severe situations to try to question the thoughts. However, most of the time, there are thoughts in the middle.

I explained the relationship between thoughts and emotions and behaviors. I also covered how we can analyze the thoughts we have about why things happen to us in three dimensions: Whose fault is it, mine or not mine? How long will this last, always or just some time? How many aspects of my life will this touch, everything or some things? Also described as the personal, permanence and pervasiveness dimensions of the explanatory style.

Another important step in adopting a more optimistic explanatory style is evaluating the accuracy of those thoughts and beliefs. As I recounted at the beginning, we are not talking about an optimism that assumes everything is always fine, but one that is as accurate as possible. We are also not examining the accuracy of the event as much as the accuracy of our interpretation of the event. There can be many inaccuracies in our interpretation. We can take blame that is not ours. Or feel we should solve situations that are not under our control. Or feel the situation that

is happening now will go on forever when most things pass, or we grow accustomed to our new situations, both good and bad in a process referred to as hedonic adaptation (Lyubomirsky, 2010).

At this point, I want to take a little time to discuss accountability. Some parents or teachers might worry that an optimistic explanatory style, specifically in the dimension of personal, might lead adolescents to shy away from their responsibility for their actions. This is not the intent of the personal dimension. It is important to acknowledge how much one's actions lead to the result. However, the opposite situation is taking more blame than one deserves for an outcome. Again, the objective is to try to be accurate about the event.

This is where disputation comes in handy. How do we manage to look more accurately at our interpretation of events? Experts in the field suggest looking for evidence and facts. What evidence can I find that my thoughts, believes and interpretation of the event is accurate? Taking alternative perspectives, how would others feel if they were in my situation? And de-catastrophizing, or accurately evaluation the implications of the situation. Finally, have a plan for when our thought patterns are set in action (Seligman, 2007).

Going back to Aaron Beck, the father of cognitive therapy, in his book on how to treat depression he stated seven common thinking traps (Beck & Alford, 2009). Reivich and Shatté (2002) added an 8th trap and through their work have seen that the same traps can apply to resilience and explanatory style. A thinking trap is a thinking pattern, the T in the ATC, that can cause us to miss important information and prevent us from seeing how things are. Below are eight common traps as described by Reivich and Shatté (2002). I have added examples for each one that may be familiar to the high school drama teacher:

Jumping to conclusions & making assumptions without relevant data	Othello (Shakespeare, 1603) is a good example of this trap. He is more than willing to assume the worse of his wife, with only Iago's instigation and no proof of her unfaithfulness. King Lear is also a good example. His daughter Cordelia has showed him love for years. One day when she cannot be out-flatter her sisters in praising how much they love their father, he despises her. He does not realize she is honest and loves him like a daughter should. He cannot see the dishonesty in the other two sisters; their empty complements (Shakespeare, 1606).
Tunnel vision, when we focus only on information that confirms a belief we have and miss the clues that confirm the opposite or disconfirm ours	In A Midsummer Night's Dream (Shakespeare, 1590-1597), Helena is unable to see that both Lysander and Demetrius are in in love with her (due to Robin's spell). She is so deep into her thoughts of Demetrious' previous rejection, that when he does love her, she can only believe this to be a joke. Her focus on rejection did not allow her to see all the clues of the good that is happening to her.
Magnifying and minimizing, unlike tunnel vision, in this trap we can see whole spectrum but value one over the other	In Much Ado About Nothing (Shakespeare, 1598-1599). Benedict and Beatrice can only see faults in each other. Once they are each led to believe the other one is in love with them, they see nothing but good to the point they both decide to requite the love.
Personalizing, attribute problems to ourselves, even those out of our control	King Lear decided to divide his kingdom between two of his three daughters. Cordelia gets nothing, as Lear is convinced she does not love him. Cordelia is the only one that loves him; the other two are good liars. The minute the two evil daughters have power, they don't want Lear with them. For the rest of the play, Cordelia has the need to rescue her dad from his own foolishness. And though it is great for a daughter to be loving and forgiving, Cordelia would do well to remember her father's predicament is his fault (Shakespeare, 1606).
Externalizing, opposite of personalizing, nothing is ever our fault	Angelo, from Measure for Measure (Shakespeare, 1603-1604) sentences Claudio to death for fornication and then propositions a nun! (A nun to be, but still pretty bad.) He sees the fault in others, not himself.
Overgeneralizing, always and everything explanations about yourself or others	Hamlet claims: "Frailty, thy name is woman!". Not frailty, this name is mommy or thy name is Gertrude; but woman. All woman. (Shakespeare, 1599-1602)
Mindreading, assuming you know what others are thinking or expecting others to know what we are thinking	When Hamlet begins to act strange Polonius is convinced he is mad because he is in love Ophelia, who, by is order, is ignoring him. He is sure he understands Hamlet and this eventually gets him killed (Shakespeare, 1599-1602).
Emotional Reasoning, drawing conclusions based on our emotional state	Lady MacBeth finds out the witches have promised her husband will be king. She asks the spirits to "unsex" her, meaning rid her of feelings like compassion and kindness and fill her with the "direst cruelty" so she will have the courage to make her husband king, by whatever means. Her empowering emotions convince her she is incapable of remorse. She thinks her plan cannot go wrong. But that empowerment is fake and her reasoning faulty. Overcome by guilt she falls apart (Shakespeare, 1606).

One important thing to notice, especially when working with students that might bring their personal examples to the class: we must point out the behavior that resulted from that

thinking trap, not the character. In other words, you don't have a fault in your character that makes you fall into this trap. You exhibited behavior that fell into the trap. Behaviors are punctual, and we can change. Faults in character are much more difficult to change or even considered permanent, they are pervasive, and they are personal.

Teaching Optimistic Explanatory Style

In the previous section, I listed some techniques to acquire a more optimistic explanatory style. This section will discuss how some of these skills and techniques have been taught and the results they have had. This is not meant to be an exhaustive review of all optimistic explanatory style training efforts or training that have increase optimism as an objective. This is meant to illustrate some of the research on training programs that have scientifically measured results and that I considered relevant to the application proposed in this paper. Finally, in this section, I will mention how this program has changed through the years and reached other populations besides schools.

I will start by discussing the Penn Prevention Program (Jaycox, Reivich, Gillham, & Seligman, 1994; Gillham, Reivich, Jaycox, & Seligman, 1995) as this is the foundation program that evolved into today's Penn Resilience Program (PRP). I will also focus more on PRP as it is the inspiration for the curriculum proposed in this paper. Its original objective was to teach skills that could inoculate children at high risk of depression by using an optimistic explanatory style. The original Penn Prevention Program was an 18-hour program across a total of twelve weeks. The program consisted of games, discussions, skits, and role playing with many of the cognitive skills discussed in the previous section. The children who received the training had fewer depression symptoms than the control group even after six months (Jaycox et al., 1994) and after two years from the intervention, without any additional sessions (Gillham et al., 1995). They

manifested half the rates of depression of the control group (Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011; Seligman, 2007).

The National Institute of Mental Health funded more programs for the prevention of depression as the described above for schools and a version for prevention of depression and anxiety in colleges called APEX (Gillham et al., 1991; Reivich, Shatté, & Gillham, 2003). APEX was also a foundation program to create today's PRP.

PRP and PRP-like programs have been implemented in different parts of the world like UK (Challen, Machin, & Gillham, 2014), Australia (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009; Quayle, Dziurawiec, Roberts, Kane, & Ebsworthy, 2001) and the Netherlands (Tak, Van Zundert, Kuijper, Van Vlokhoven, & Engels, 2012), examples of teaching well-bieng in Bhutan, Mexico and Peru (Adler, 2016), to name a few.

PRP has also been extensively researched, which is one of the reasons why I selected it as foundation and inspiration for the program proposed in this paper. Furthermore, there is enough research to conduct a meta-analysis. In 2009 a meta-analysis of 17 controlled studies that evaluated the efficacy of the PRP was carried out (Brunwasser, Gillham, & Kim, 2009). The meta-analysis revealed that PRP participants reported few symptoms of depression after the intervention and after two follow-ups (after 6-8 months and after 12 months), though the effects are stronger in the follow-ups than immediately post intervention. It must be noted that the effects are modest, but similar to the effects found in other depression prevention program meta-analyses (Horowitz & Garber, 2006). The study revealed significant results both when the training was conducted by researches, usually trained psychologists and when conducted by community members (through train the trainers). This is very encouraging for the dissemination of these skills, as it means trainers don't need to be psychologists.

PRP has been applied both as a targeted and as a universal program. When applied as targeted program, the research team first identifies students at higher risk for depression, and it is those students that receive the PRP program intervention. When PRP is applied as a universal program, all students received the intervention, regardless of their risk or propensity for depression. There is a second meta-analysis from 2016 on the effectiveness of PRP as a universal application. This meta-analysis found no evidence that PRP reduced depression, anxiety or improved explanatory style (Bastounis, Callaghan, Banerjee, & Michail, 2016). I speculate that some of the reasons why this meta-analysis found no evidence of the effectiveness of the program might be the small base size, only nine studies were included and the fact that it included only universal applications of PRP. Preventions programs like PRP seem to have bigger effect size when applied as a targeted program versus a universal program. This is not only true for PRP, but for other depression prevention programs (Horowitz & Garber, 2006). Furthermore, Bastounis, Callaghan, Banerjee, & Michail's (2012) meta-analysis considered only the post test results, immediately after the intervention. Many studies, including the very first application of a PRP (Gillham et al., 1995) show more results after longer periods (2 years), than at the post-test. Furthermore, I have not found any documented evidence of any harmful effects of a PRP implementation.

It is important to keep in mind the results of these type of programs, if any, will be moderate to small; regardless if it was PRP or other similar depression prevention programs. If the reader is interested learning about other depression prevention programs, look in the references section for stress inoculation training using cognitive behavior strategies (Hains & Ellmann, 1994), Australian resourceful adolescent program using cognitive-behavioral and

interpersonal approach (Schochet et al., 2010) or educational support group for children of divorced (Gwynn & Brantley, 1987).

Today, the Penn Resilience Program (PRP), where Dr. Karen Reivich is now the director and lead instructor of the training programs, has expanded from schools to other realms like corporations, military, first responders, government and sports organizations ("PRP Overview," 2017). It is also important to mention that the program has grown from depression prevention to a wider scope: resilience. In today's PRP, optimism is just one aspect of resilience included in the program along with other protective factors that contribute to resilience like problem solving, self-efficacy, self-regulation, emotional awareness, flexibility, empathy and strong relationships as well as other empirically validated concepts from positive psychology (Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011). These other protective factors are not included in the proposed curriculum. The reference section can guide the reader to other sources if they wish to explore more.

One interesting and noteworthy application of the PRP is the U.S. Army Master Resilience Training Program (MRT; Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011). This training is part of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. The training is carried out face to face for ten days and targets sergeants that first learn the skills themselves and then how to teach them to their soldiers. The U.S. Army has tried to empirically validate the program (Lester, McBride, Bliese, & Adler, 2011) to determine the effectiveness in this population.

With these examples, I have tried to illustrate the breadth of optimism education training programs. I believe they are effective and can have small to moderate effect sizes. They are likely to be more effective for people at risk for depression (targeted programs versus universal), but I believe the tools are useful life skills that students can apply when they need them. These

programs are also teachable, and it does not take a certified psychologist to teach and share them. For these reasons, I believe the program proposed in this paper could be of value.

Theater as a Tool for Well-Being

In the first part of this paper, I shared the research-based benefits of optimism, described optimistic explanatory style, compiled tools and skills for changing explanatory style and reviewed some of the research on the effectiveness of teaching skills that build an optimistic explanatory style. I will discuss the opportunities I see in teaching optimistic explanatory style by leveraging the drama space offered in high schools. As I mentioned in the introduction, the tools and skills proposed in this paper are not new but adapted from existing, tested interventions, specifically from the Penn Resilience Program (PRP). What I hope to bring, is a new delivery mechanism that leverages the humanities, specifically theater, to enhance the engagement of the target population: high school drama students or high school drama club participants. My hypothesis is that stronger engagement will lead to more practice with the skills and thus, stronger personal results. Theater can be a strong delivery mechanism for these skills, due to the structure of theater, the structure of the drama classes and the receptivity of the students. I will discuss each of these components in the next three sections of this paper.

The Receptivity of the Students

According to the teachers interviewed for this paper, in most high schools and for most students, the drama club is an optional afterschool activity and the drama class an elective (E. Griffin, personal communication, June 3, 2017; E. Jonas, personal communication, June 1, 2017; J. Sherry, personal communication, June 3, 2017). Students chose to be in that class or afterschool activity; it is not obligatory. Thus, I am speculating, students will have more receptivity to the skills due to their intrinsic motivation to engage with theater, the positive

emotions they derive from the dramatic arts (e.g. flow), and the relevance of the material proposed as a tool enrich their acting skills. Before teaching a life skill, this program proposes to teach optimism skills as acting tools. I hope more receptivity will lead to higher engagement with the tools, thus more practice and proficiency in the tools.

Let's examine intrinsic motivation. Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) makes a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when we are moved to do something because it is interesting or enjoyable, as opposed to extrinsic motivation when we do something because it will have an outcome. Their research has shown different outcomes depending on the type of motivation one has towards the action or behavior. Intrinsic motivation results in learning of higher quality and creativity. Intrinsically motivated students carry out an activity for the fun or the challenge, rather than an external pressure or reward (Ryan & Deci, 2000). One can speculate that many of the students that choose to enroll in the drama elective class or club are likely doing so because of the inherent satisfaction they get out of the activity, rather than some separable consequence as *my parents forced me.* In other words, students don't require external incentives to do this activity; they find the activity itself pleasurable and rewarding. Ryan and Deci (2000) further argue that intrinsic motivation is critical in the cognitive, social and physical development. Given that students are moving towards somethings that interests them, they grow in knowledge and skills. Considering these research findings, we can speculate that learning the skills proposed in this paper, through a class that students are intrinsically motivated to take, will lead to more practice and better results.

A second reason why students might be more receptive to optimism skills that are part of their drama curriculum is due to the experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) that theater might provide many of the actors. Flow is a state of complete engagement. During flow, there is

an absence of time and emotion. Our attention is completely and effortlessly focused. To experience flow, the activity must present an optimal challenge. An optimal challenge is one that it is not so hard as to frustrate us, but hard enough that it presents a task that will absorb us. However, through our sustained engagement with the activity, we will achieve mastery of that level of challenge, and the optimal challenge needs to get increasingly harder for us to stay in flow. Flow can be experienced in any activity of life, but for high school students that chose to enroll in acting, it is more likely that rehearsals and presentations can put them in a state of flow, especially due to the creative effort acting requires. Flow experiences allow for the students to be in a more receptive mode of information due to the sense of challenge and mastery they are gaining.

This leads us to the third and most important reason I argue students might have more receptivity to the material: presenting the skills themselves as tools to gain mastery. Art and the humanities can help make the field of positive psychology grow, as positive psychology can make the art and the humanities grow. The skills proposed in this paper are meant to teach the students to be more optimistic, but also to be better actors. The skills are presented first and foremost as acting tools, specifically for scene analysis and character development. My hypothesis is that once the students have enough practice and are fluent using the tools on characters and drama scenes, they can turn the skills onto their own lives. In the section of the curriculum, we will see how CAVE (Peterson, Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1992) and ATC (Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Seligman, 2006) can be leveraged as powerful science-based acting tools.

In this section, I discussed several elements that can make the drama club or drama class student more receptive to the skills presented in the curriculum for learned optimism. First,

presenting the psychology-founded power of the tools for character development and scene analysis. Then, by leveraging the intrinsic motivation, flow, and mastery. Now, let's discuss why drama itself presents a great opportunity to be a vehicle of these skills.

The Structure of Theater

Let's examine the characteristics of drama that lend themselves for the teaching of explanatory style skills. Specifically, theater's teaching power, the collectivity of theater and support of a group, the dramatic structure and the use of soliloquies to let us into the thoughts of the characters, and finally the flexibility drama classes and clubs have versus other classes in a high school curriculum.

Theater might seem like an odd place for optimism. After all, the main component of drama is conflict. Moores argues: "there is simply no such thing as an artistically complex story about someone who is happy and lives with other joyous people in pure felicity" (Moores et al., 2015, p. 1). However, the characters and stories, conflicted as they might be, present a learning opportunity for the students. Theater based interventions have been linked to positive outcomes like improvements in memory, comprehensions, problem solving and personal growth in older adults (Noice, Noice, & Kramer, 2015). It can also be argued that theater, as a form of fiction literature improves theory of mind, thus increasing empathy (Kidd & Castano, 2013). The research on theater as a tool to bring forth human flourishing is still limited. However, as speculated in the introduction, the prevalence of theater through time and cultures can serve as an indicator of a link between theater and human flourishing. Theater can be a vehicle for knowing who we are, what our thinking patterns are and what we want to change.

Throughout history, theater has been a teaching tool, besides its entertainment value (Berthold, 1999). If we go back to Seneca's plays, they were meant to preach a moral lesson.

His characters are dominated by a passion that eventually brings their downfall: think of Medea and her blood thirsty revenge (Seneca, trans.1899). In modern times, Augusto Boal developed a theatrical form called Theater of the Oppressed that uses theater to promote social and political change (Boal, 1974/1979). One implementation of this is teaching moral courage through the theater of the oppressed via improvisational exercises (Gillespie & Brown, 1997). Thus, theater lends itself to teach, whether for the audience, for the participants of the theatrical event or both.

The dramatic structure itself has a format that is appropriate for introspection skills. In theater, the audience has to understand some of the thought processes of the characters to follow the story. The characters will often share what they are thinking out loud. In a soliloquy, the character speaks his/her inner thought directly to the audience. Hamlet's *To be, or not to be* is probably the most famous and oft-cited soliloquy where we hear Hamlet debating the pros and cons of suicide (Shakespeare, 1599-1602). PRP uses skits as a tool in their program precisely because it forces us to exteriorize the inner thoughts of the characters, critical element in when using ATC.

Theater can also leverage the power of the group. The theater is a collective endeavor. Instead of teaching optimism, as it is often taught, as an asocial skill (a student alone with his thoughts), by placing them on the stage for others to see and comment, optimism can be learned in a collective. In a 2000 article about the future of optimism, Christopher Peterson questioned what he felt was a lack of research that distinguishes between individual versus collective or public optimism. He pointed out that much of the optimism literature was asocial. Theater can leverage the power of the group and more importantly the group support. Peterson referred to this as a helping alliance; the sharing of expectations for intervention and outcomes; a group level optimism (Peterson, 2000).

I have argued that theater is a good vehicle for optimism skills due to its teaching power, its structure that exteriorizes thoughts and its collective nature. Now let's take a closer look at the scenario of drama/ theater instruction in high school.

Drama Theater Education in America

The 2002 No Child Left Behind Act had a detrimental effect on funding and scheduling of on all non-tested subjects, especially those considered electives like theater (Beveridge, 2009). Though there is a lot fewer data gathered on the arts than subjects like math or language, there is enough research to help us understand the state of art education in American schools. The Department of Education's Fast Response Survey System report (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012), shows that there is an infrastructure for arts education, but not universally available, and often limited to music and visual arts. This structure is also inconsistent across grade levels with significant inequities in students access to arts education. Specifically, for drama/theater education, in the 2009-2010 school year, only 45% of public secondary schools offered drama/ theater in the regular school hours (slightly lower than it was in 1999-2000 when it was 48% in 1999-2000). This percentage is lower in schools with higher poverty concentration (28%), while in schools with lower poverty concentrations it can reach 56%. Of the high schools that offer drama/ theater education, 73% have instructors reported as art specialists (64% were full-time arts specialties, 9% were part time). The report also included the number of courses offered in drama/ theater. 63% offered one to two courses, 25% offered three to four courses, and 11% offered five or more courses. Of those schools, 72% declared to have a curriculum guide that teachers were excepted to follow (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012).

What is Teaching Dramatic Arts in High School Like

Drama teachers, as well as teachers of other subjects with experience both in public and in independent schools, shared their perspective of what life is like in the class room. Their experiences corroborate much of the data presented in the previous section. Emily Jonas is one such teacher. She has a postgraduate degree in teaching drama and works for a school in the state of Virginia. Jonas believes in the power of theater as a tool to increase student well-being. She feels "dramatic arts provide students with a voice that can activate social change and bring togetherness" (E. Jonas, personal communication, June 1, 2017).

From the teacher's experience, spaces for dramatic arts in high schools normally take one of two forms: an elective class or an afterschool club or activity. Some schools might have both class and afterschool club or activity. The afterschool activity is often focused on a school production. Time to add new content, such as the program proposed in this paper, is limited to this space. The director/teacher of the play is striving for quality and will want to allocate as much time as possible to rehearsal and production. Some schools can have as many as three productions per year (E. Jonas, personal communication, June 1, 2017; J. Sherry, personal communication, June 3, 2017).

Teachers interviewed feel that the drama class, on the other hand, can have more flexibility regarding timing. The content of a theater class can vary from school to school. While in some schools the drama course sits under the athletics department and might have a content focus on more acting and acting methods, others might be under the English department with more attention to the text and context of when the text was written. In others, the drama class will sit under the fine arts department and give more importance to theater as an artistic movement (E. Jonas, personal communication, June 1, 2017; J. Sherry, personal communication, June 3, 2017).

The interviewed teachers argued that the content of the class can also be influenced by the type of school. Public schools are more likely to follow a state standard for drama; these standards change state to state. Independent schools have more liberty to create content they feel relevant for the students. While the common core like math or English might be similar in public and independent schools, elective courses, like drama, will have more variation (H. Edwards, personal communication, June 3, 2017; E. Griffin, personal communication, June 3, 2017; E. Jonas, personal communication, June 1, 2017). In both public and independent schools, however, teachers feel they have more liberty to create content for a drama class than they would for other more traditionally academic courses like math that are subject to standardized testing. This flexibility presents the teachers with more work, but also space to create and bring relevant content and build a rich learning experience (S. Kokores, personal communication, June 3, 2017). For most students, drama or theater class is an elective. The time allocated to these classes also can vary significantly from school to school. They can range from a weekly 45-minute class to 55-minutes class three times per week (E. Jonas, personal communication, June 1, 2017; J. Sherry, personal communication, June 3, 2017).

The interviewed teachers also observe variation in the profile of the teachers leading the dramatic arts courses, which will again depend on the school and state. Some states or public schools required all teachers to be licensed. In these schools, teachers are more likely to have backgrounds in teaching English, Literature or Theater Education. Other states and some independent schools don't require a certified teacher; in these schools, teachers might have more diverse backgrounds like women studies, dramatic arts or humanities, to name a few. Theater teachers might often also be responsible for other courses like public speaking, history or English.

The curriculum suggested in this paper, thus, has been designed to be flexible and to try to accommodate teachers with diverse backgrounds, different student needs, and different timing allocations. It is meant to be the starting point for teachers. Teachers are encouraged to use and adapt the material in the way they feel can motivate and engage the students and will be more useful for them.

The Optimism Drama Curriculum

This section of the paper will explain the proposed program that leverages theater to teach optimism skills and enhance acting skills. This curriculum has not yet been piloted. There are some limitations that can be anticipated before a pilot and others that are likely to arise after which will necessitate some fine tuning and adaptation.

Curriculum Limitations

- Research: It is my hypothesis that the skills shared will be handy tools in an actor's tool belt, but have no evidence to back this up. Though the skills shared have been studied and are research based, this program is not. It has never been implemented, and thus the effectiveness of delivering these skills through theater has not been tested. Furthermore, there is no research on how effective the tools are for the actor and the character creation process.
- Scope: the scope of this curriculum is limited. This is not a PRP program. PRP is at least a 12-18-hour program that teaches many skills including optimism, social problem solving, goal-setting, among others. The few skills included in this program are just a small part what PRP teaches (Reivich et al., 2011) and aimed to be shared in about 4-6 hours of class.

- Optimism: This program focuses on optimism only, which is just one aspect that can be improved to obtain overall well-being. It is by no means the only psychological state of development that can lead to well-being. Fred Luthan and other proponents of Psychological Capital (PsyCap), for example, argue that there are four constructs with a demonstrated impact on satisfaction and performance of organization and optimism is just one of them. They include hope, efficacy, and resilience (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2014). Furthermore, empirical research points to a composite of these four facets as a stronger predictor of satisfaction and performance than each of them alone (Luthans, Avolio, Avery, & Norman, 2007). I am the first to admit that optimism alone can only take the students so far, but I am convinced it would not do any harm and even a little help can make a difference during the hard time's adolescents can face.
- Reach: This program is aimed only to a few students that join the drama electives or afterschool programs. Thus, there is some self-selection in the participation. Furthermore, as stated before only limited number of schools that have such programs or activities.
- Train the trainer: My aim is for a drama teacher to read this paper and be able to implement the curriculum. I have not created any supplementary training. Many PRP programs are created as train the trainer program, meaning the trainer learns the skills, applies them and then teaches them to others. The trainers, thus, don't need to be psychologist or experts in positive psychology. Thus, like in PRP, I strongly recommend that teachers apply all these skills to themselves first, so they can live the skills, adopt their own lives to them to be able to teach them. This is

the model that PRP has successfully followed by teaching the teachers, and one of its creators strongly feels that this how you have sustainable change (Reivich, 2012).

- Universal versus targeted. This program is meant as a universal program, meaning it would be directed to all students in the drama class or group, as opposed to selective programs where a sub-group that is identified at an above average risk and the program targets only those individuals manifesting signs or symptoms. It was designed this way, so no student feels singled out and because it is meant to be part of the acting class activity. However, it must be noted that one meta-analysis of 30 studies on depression prevention programs where some included PRP techniques suggest that universal programs are less effective than targeted or selective prevention programs (Horowitz & Garber, 2006).

Despite the above listed limitation, I believe there is value in piloting this program. The current rates of depression that children and adolescents are facing mentioned earlier in this paper are alarming. The skills suggested in the program have shown small to moderate results and no harmful effects. I believe sharing these skills in a highly engaging vehicle like the drama classes and incorporating them as part of the student's acting skills will have a powerful result.

Curriculum Implementation

This curriculum was created as four classes of about 1 hour each. If the class blocks are of 90 minutes, use the extra time to work on more examples and more improvisations. It is not recommended to try to do two classes back to back as it will not allow the students time to absorb and reflect on the material. This introspection time is crucial in the process. Ideally, carry out one class per week and review the content as time allows. If you meet with the

students more than once per week, the recommendation is for you to reinforce the lesson with improvisations on the other days to allow students this introspection time before new content is introduced. Alternatively, present each lesson with more than one week space in time, and reinforce the concepts as you work with the regularly scheduled content.

For each class, I provide some examples. However, if the students are working on a production or studying a specific play, I encourage replacing these examples with examples from the work the students are engaging with. I have intentionally selected many examples from Shakespeare in this paper, hoping it will be easier for teachers to fit these lessons within the drama or English curriculum (there was method in my madness!). If these examples don't resonate with the students, change them to what will resonate. The program has written following an Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) planning framework, as many teachers are likely to be using it or at least will be familiar with it. Before the class curriculum, I placed extra supporting information for the teacher.

The Four Class Drama Curriculum

Class 1- The thinking that makes it so: ATC

Additional supporting teacher information: Actors are taught about action and reaction, but as I explained on page 19, in the section on Building an Optimistic Explanatory Style, there is something in between Thoughts, the *thinking that makes it so*. Actors are also taught about impulses and impulse flow, this is when the thoughts are so automatic they seem absent, but almost always, there are thoughts mediating between the action and the reaction. The objective of this class is for students to see the relationship between thoughts and feelings and reactions. The teacher will present the ATC model. Then the students will carry out improvisations from scenes to put in practice. ATC model or activating event, thoughts, and consequences (Reivich

& Shatté, 2002; Seligman, 2006; Seligman, 2007) can enhance scene analysis. Most acting methods will stress the importance of analyzing the scenes. I will reference the Stanislavski method of acting, given he was the first to develop a systematic approach to actor training that went beyond physical and vocal training. Many of today's acting methods have a foundation or basis on this. In Stanisvavski's method (1988) he talks about breaking up the scene in units and objectives, so it is easier to understand or "eat up the turkey." Teaching actors to analyze the actions and reactions by clearly stating the thoughts that go in between the action and lead to the reaction or emotion will not only give the actor and director a deeper understanding of the scene but a lot more leverage for play and actions on stage. Some scenes have the thoughts stated; some use soliloquies to express the thoughts.

Class 1
The thinking that makes it so: ATC

Enduring Understandings:
- Students will understand that thoughts mediate between an event and the reaction or emotions, both for characters in plays and for themselves.

Essential Questions:
-What ways can we understand thoughts the character may have had before his/her reaction?
-How can explicitly expressing those thoughts help us understand the character better?
-How does understanding the thoughts help us build the emotions and actions that follow?
- How does this apply to our own life?

Knowledge and Skills:
-Students will identify and describe an activating event.
-Students will identify activating events on scenes.
-Students will identify and explain the consequences of an activating event.
-Students will be identify and explain the consequence in a scene.
-Student will understand that the thought led to the consequence.
-Students will infer and describe the thoughts that mediated between the A and the C.

Class Session
Introduction to ATC Model:
A- objectively, without interpretation of the event, the who, what, when, where of the situation
T- beliefs and thought, how the character interprets an event, the thoughts that go through their head
C- what does the character feel, how do they react emotionally, the intensity of emotions (mild, moderate, intense) and what behaviors do they demonstrate?

Scene improvisation
Students take turns acting out the scenes below. The first time they do a cold read of the scene on stage they should limit themselves to the simple dialog.

The students watching have to create and narrate the thoughts that can lead to that reaction they saw. Probe for more than one answer for each scene. Allow time to discuss each proposed thought process.

Have the students improvise the scene a second time. For the second time, they should act it with the thinking process that was suggested by the students. They should use this as a direction instruction. This time they can improvise more dialog and actions that match the proposed thought process.

Discuss how their acting of the scene and the scene itself changed. How did knowing what the thought process was change their on-stage decisions? Have the students watching point out and discuss how the acting was different from the first time they played the scene to the second time, once they established the thought that went in the middle.

Scene 1:
Character A: Could I borrow your phone?
Character B: No
Character A: (sadden) OK

Scene 2:
Character A: Could I borrow your phone?
Character B: No
Character A: (joyous) OK

Scene 3:
Character A: Could I borrow your phone?
Character B: No
Character A: OK (grabs the phone and runs)

Scene 4:
Character A: Could I borrow your phone?
Character B: No
Character A: (angered) OK

Group discussion: How does this apply to our lives?

Homework:
Assign students with a scene or two scenes to analyze from plays they are familiar with or a current production they are working on. Have them fill out the worksheet on Appendix B. Review homework with the students on the next class.

Class 2- Explanatory Styles and CAVE

Additional supporting teacher information: As discussed on page 17 on the section on Building an Optimistic Explanatory Style, explanatory style has 3 layers or 3 Ps. Explanatory style is how we explain to ourselves why things happen to us, or how the characters we play explain to themselves why things happen. The dimensions of explanatory style are personal, permanent and pervasive.

Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations or CAVE (Peterson, Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1992) is taking "naturally" occurring verbatim material and looking at it through these three layers. Appendix A has two examples teachers can use in class. A scene from Othello (Shakespeare, 1603) that exhibits a pessimistic explanatory style and a scene from The Taming of the Shrew (Shakespeare, 1590-1592) where Katherine exhibits an optimistic style. Both reacting to adverse activating events. Using CAVE in this manner can give actors a deeper understanding of the character they wish to play. Teachers should present CAVE first and foremost as an acting tool, that students can also leverage in their own life. Stanislavski's acting method encourages a strong understanding of the character (Stanislavski, 1988). CAVE is thus a useful tool for an actor developing a character as it allows the actor to see the character against different and deeper lenses with a strong psychological foundation.

Class 2
Explanatory Style

Enduring Understandings:

-Students will detect internal explanations: how people, and characters in plays, explain to themselves why things happen

- Students will analyze explanations as me/not me, always/ not always and everything/not everything

Essential Questions:

-What are personal explanations to good events? How would those thoughts make me/ my character feel or react?

-What are personal explanations to bad event? How would those thoughts make me/ my character feel or react?

-What are permanent explanations to good events? How would those thoughts make me/ my character feel or react?

-What are permanent explanations to bad event? How would those thoughts make me/ my character feel or react?

-What are pervasive explanations to good events? How would those thoughts make me/ my character feel or react?

-What are pervasive explanations to bad event? How would those thoughts make me/ my character feel or react?

Knowledge and Skills:

-Students will recognize internal explanations in scenes.

-Students will identify the explanatory style exhibited by their characters.

-Students will identify explanatory style in their own explanations.

Class Session

Introduction to Explanatory Style:

Last class we talked about thoughts and how they are between what happens to our characters and how our characters feel and react.

Today we will talk about a special kind of thoughts. These are thoughts we all have, all the time.

Well build characters also have these thoughts. They are the thoughts of how we/ our characters explain the good and bad things that happen.

When something happens, good or bad, we tend to explain to ourselves

- Who is responsible or to blame for what happened?
- How long are the effects of what happened going to last?
- How many part of my live will this touch?

Me/ Not me:	**Personal**/ Internal	External
Always/ Not always:	**Permanent**/ stable	Temporary/ Unstable
Everything/ Not everything:	**Pervasive**/ global (will undermine everything)	Specific for that event

Scene analysis

Give students the original text or a modern translation (e.g. http://nfs.sparknotes.com/othello/) of the passage from Othello scene Act 3, Scene 3 (See Appendix A).

Have one or several students do a cold improvisation of the scene.

Then work in pairs to analyze the scene. First underline everything that sounds like an explanation, separating each explanation into a single idea.

Then determine if they feel the character's explanations is personal or external, permanent or temporary, pervasive or specific in a continuum scale.

Group discussion: What did you find? What are Othello's explanations? What does that say about his character?

Explain that more optimistic characters tend explain good events as personal, pervasive and permanent while bad events external, specific and temporarily.

More pessimistic characters tend explain bad events as personal, pervasive and permanent while god events external, specific and temporarily.

Overall, what do we think about Othello? Is he optimistic or pessimistic based on his explanatory style?

Have students act out the scene a second time. How does knowing this about the character change how we play Othello in other scenes? What did we see different? How did it feel different to play Othello, now that we understand this about him?

How does this apply to our lives? Have there been times when we have given more optimistic explanations to ourselves? How did we feel? Have there been times when we have given more pessimistic explanations to ourselves? How did we feel then?

Homework: Assign students with another scene from plays they are familiar or the example from Katherine from The Taming of the Shrew provided in Appendix A. Review homework with the students on the next class.
Alternative: have students look for a scene on their own and analyze it.

Class 3- Thinking Traps

Additional supporting teacher information: As discussed on the section on Building an Optimistic Explanatory Style on pages 25 and 26, thinking traps are patterns of thought that make us miss some information. They are rigid and often recurring patterns of thinking that make us or our characters miss critical information.

Class 3
Thinking Traps

Enduring Understandings:
- Students will understand that people, and characters, can have recurring thinking patterns that cause us to miss important information.

Essential Questions:
-What are ways we can understand a character's potential thinking traps?
-What consequences do thinking traps have for the characters?
- How could the character have avoided the trap and consequence?
- How does this apply to our own life?

Knowledge and Skills:
-Students will describe what thinking traps are.
-Students will be able to recognize a thinking traps in a scene
-Students will be able to modify a scene to avoid a thinking trap.

Class Session
Introduction to Thinking Traps. Explain a thinking trap is a way of thinking that causes us to make a mistake, emit a wrong judgment, miss information or make a wrong choice
Divide the students into 8 groups.
Assign one thinking trap to each group (keep them blind to the other groups). Use the table provided earlier on this paper to create the handouts, giving each group only 1 trap, can share with or without the examples from Shakespeare provide on the right column.

Scene improvisation: Catch that Trap!
Each group has 15 minutes to write a scene they will play for the others that illustrate the thinking trap they were assigned. After the scene plays out, the students watching have to discuss what the thinking trap was.

Group discussion: What is the trap? How did this trap make the characters miss important information? What consequences did it have for the character or characters? How could it have been avoided? Have the players share what their trap was. If time allows, have them play the scene a second time, but this time, avoiding the trap as suggested by the observers.

Homework: Catch yourself falling into a thinking trap this week and bring the example to class. Review homework with the students on the next class. **Alternative**: have them look for thinking traps in plays and bring the example to class.

Class 4- Disputation

Additional supporting teacher information: This lesson requires a lot of introspection and sharing from the students. It is recommended for the teacher to be extra deliberate in creating the right atmosphere. Students will be asked to think about what they have learned about how events trigger thoughts that in turn trigger emotions and reactions. How we all have ways in which we explain things to ourselves. Students will be asked to write scripts inspired by their own lives and act out for the rest of the class.

Class 4
Disputation

Enduring Understandings:
-Students will understand they have the power to question their automatic thoughts and opt for different ones.

Essential Questions:
-What type of thoughts are we more prone to?
-Are those types of thoughts helping me or hurting me?
-How can we question those thoughts to make sure they are accurate?
-Why might we want to question those thoughts?
-What happened to the characters?
-What do we want for us?
-Do we want the drama to stay on stage?

Knowledge and Skills:
-Students will apply disputation to their own thoughts.
-Students will convert scenes with pessimistic explanatory styles to optimistic explanatory styles.

Class Session
In the last few classes we have learned that thoughts will determine how we feel or react to an event. We learned that when things happen, we all find explanations and some can be more personal or external, more permanent or temporary and more pervasive of specific.
We also learned that there are thinking traps that are thoughts that makes us miss important information. Today we are going to learn how to re-write scenes, so that we can challenge thoughts we have been talking about. We can call this disputation and it will help us challenge or dispute inaccurate assessments of what is happening.

Scene improvisation:
Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 students. Each group has 20 minutes to come up with a scene they will play for the others that illustrates one or several of the concepts learned in the past 3 classes. Allow time for discussion and re-writing after each group presents. Each group should have time to re-imagine the scenes as if the character had disputed some of the inaccurate thoughts and then we will present I the scene again.

Group discussion: What did we see? Did that help or hurt the character? Would it be better to keep doing that or change it? How could this have been avoided? What could we do?
Allow students to propose disputation solutions on their own. Does it help to get another point of view? Does it help to see the real size of the action and its consequences?

After all the groups have presented ask, what about real life? We don't always get to re-write scenes in life. What can we do then? Would you want to have different thoughts? Why? How could your life be different if you could change some thoughts?

What can we do to help each other change the type of thoughts we want to change?

One key question we asked was, if this thought was hurting you or helping you. What about the thoughts that are accurate? Those that are helping us?

Most of the time our thoughts are accurate and are helping. We just want to be vigilant of those that hurt us.

Future Direction

The next steps for this curriculum would be to pilot it, fine-tune and eventually measure its effectiveness. It will be valuable to start by sharing this document with a group of volunteer teachers. Asking them to first implement in their own lives, live the lessons. Then asking them for feedback. As was mentioned before, a key to a successful transmission of this material is for the teacher to embody the material. Teachers' feedback should be incorporated in the curriculum.

In a next stage of fine-tuning, teachers will implement the curriculum. Ideally, the implementation is done in different scenarios like public and private schools, drama class and

drama afterschool club, implemented by certified teachers and teachers with other diverse backgrounds and with students from different backgrounds. This will help ensure the program can be adaptable and useful in different contexts.

After the implementation, the curriculum's effectiveness should be measured. The suggested method is using a control cell and experimental cell design. The ideal control cell is taken from a drama class or elective from a different school with the same student demographics that is not implementing the curriculum. This would limit the chance of cross-contamination and other confounding variable related to the nature of the course. However, this experimental design option might not be realistic to many schools as they would need partnership with a second school. The second option is to use a control cell within the same school, but with students enrolled in other afterschool activities or electives, noting that some cross-contamination is likely to happen, especially in smaller schools where siblings or close friends end up in the experimental and control cells. If the measurement is done from elective courses, both the control course and the experimental course (drama), should have the same weight on the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA) or impact in the graduation requirements and similar number of hours per week. If done as an afterschool activity, likewise select for control group an activity with similar number of hours per week.

Both experimental and control cells, should be balanced in terms of demographic and academic characteristics of the sample. The demographic characteristics include percentage of females, percentage of students from each high school grade (proxy for age) and, if available, percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, as a proxy to social economic background. The academic characteristics include overall academic performance as currently measured by the school (e.g. grade point average), average absent days in a school year.

Measurements should be made immediately after the implementation of the program, at 6 months, 12 months and 24 months after the implementation of the program and compared to the measurements of the same students before the program and students in the control group. The same students should be followed, even if they select different electives the following years. Some of the suggested measurement to compare are grade given in conduct, if available, the total absent days from school, high-school dropout rates, and academic performance (GPA). This curriculum is not expected to have an impact on GPA, but on resilience and well-being. Absent days and dropout rates are good proxies for resilience in high school.

I am limiting the measurements to indicators the school already collects and not relying on addition instruments or questionnaires given the restrictions parent consent forms could place on the research. However, if it is possible for the school and the reader is interested in pre and post questionnaire measurements see the reference section for overall well-being measures, Satisfaction with Life Scale or SWLS (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) or the explanatory style measurement using the Attributional Style or ASQ (Peterson et al., 1982).

Though this curriculum has been designed for high school drama class or club, it could easily be adapted to other populations that practice theater like professional or amateur drama groups, summer camps, prison populations, college level theater, etc. Feel free to contact me via email if you want to deploy this curriculum or to share feedback.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Examples of scene analysis through CAVE (Peterson, Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1992) for character analysis. Example from The Taming of the Shew, Act 3, Scene 2 (Shakespeare, 1590-1592), lines 8-10 of the play when we can hear a little bit of Katherine's explanatory style.

Situation: It is the day of Katherine and Petruchio's wedding, but there is not sign of Petruchio.

Lines/ text	**Thinking that makes it so/ Katherine's thoughts:**
I am the humiliated one.	When Baptista comments that this situation is humiliating to them, Katherine assumes the responsibility. She does not take on unnecessarily blame, but does confront the reality of the adversity: she is the stood-up bride, "No shame but mine."
My father forced me to accept this man into my heart. And I told him so!	She recognizes her father's blame. This is external (versus personal) blame and an accurate set of the blame. She is not only right, but she had told him so.
This man is a con artist; he did not intend marrying. He is playing a bad joke.	Now she recognizes the groom's responsibility, again an external explanation. Notice how Katherine says: "means to wed at leisure." She does not say he did not mean to marry her (which could be personal). He just did not mean to marry (not personally against her).
Now everyone will point at me, the fool's wife, if he bothers to come and marry me.	She does not make a permanent comment. She does not say something like: "I will forever be known as." Thought she is not specifying that it is temporary, she is also not making it permanent. In these lines, we don't see any pervasive comments. We are not given any evidence that point to her thinking this might touch other parts of her life.

Overall: For a person that got stood-up on the altar, Katherine manages a very accurate analysis of the situation. She puts the blame where it belongs: the groom and her the dad. She does not take it personally. She does not say he stood her up because of a fault within her. Very different from the Othello example in the body of the paper where he finds many explanations he considers faults within him. We don't hear her make any permanent or pervasive comments. Overall, Katherine exhibits an optimistic explanatory style in the face of a major adversity. Of course, this scene occurs before all the food-and-sleep-depriving-taming hogwash that upholds and praises gender inequality. At this point, Katherine is still awesome and optimistic.

For easy reference for the teachers, the previous Othello, Act 3, Scene 3 (Shakespeare, 1603) example is provided again below.

Situation: Iago plants suspicion in Othello that his wife, Desdemona is cheating on him.

Lines/ text	**Thinking that makes it so/ Othello's thoughts:**
I think Desdemona is honest, but things usually go bad.	Thinking trap: there is no proof Permanent and pervasive statement. All things, always go bad.
Maybe she is cheating because I am old	Personal and permanent (and racist). He will always be older than her. Notice he is not looking for faults in Desdemona at this point. He is looking for faults within him for her alleged unfaithfulness.
Maybe she is cheating because I am black	
Maybe she is cheating because I am don't have nice manners	
Marriage is a curse	Pervasive
I rather am a toad in a dungeon	No other of his accomplishments matter anymore, not that he is a fierce leader or a successful general, also pervasive.
This happens to important men; it is a plague	Permanent. Even if he were to find a new wife, this would happen again, because it always happens to all important men.

Overall: Thinking trap: jumping to conclusions. He does not exhibit an optimistic explanatory style.

How would you play this character differently, now that you understand this about him?

Appendix B

Class 1 Fill-in homework worksheet

Situation (who, what, when and where) specific non-evaluative	
Thinking that makes it so Why? Your thoughts	The So, the consequences (Emotions and Behaviors How intense
Cross check: how certain are you	