

Your Creativity, Your IMPACT

The Upward Spiral of Positivity

By Adelina Sánchez Centeno

elevate
education to empower



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Institution: Elevate Education to Empower



Subject: Courses on Positive Emotions



Students' ages: 6-99+ y/o



Location: Río Cuarto, Córdoba, Argentina



Allotted Time: 45 minutes approximately

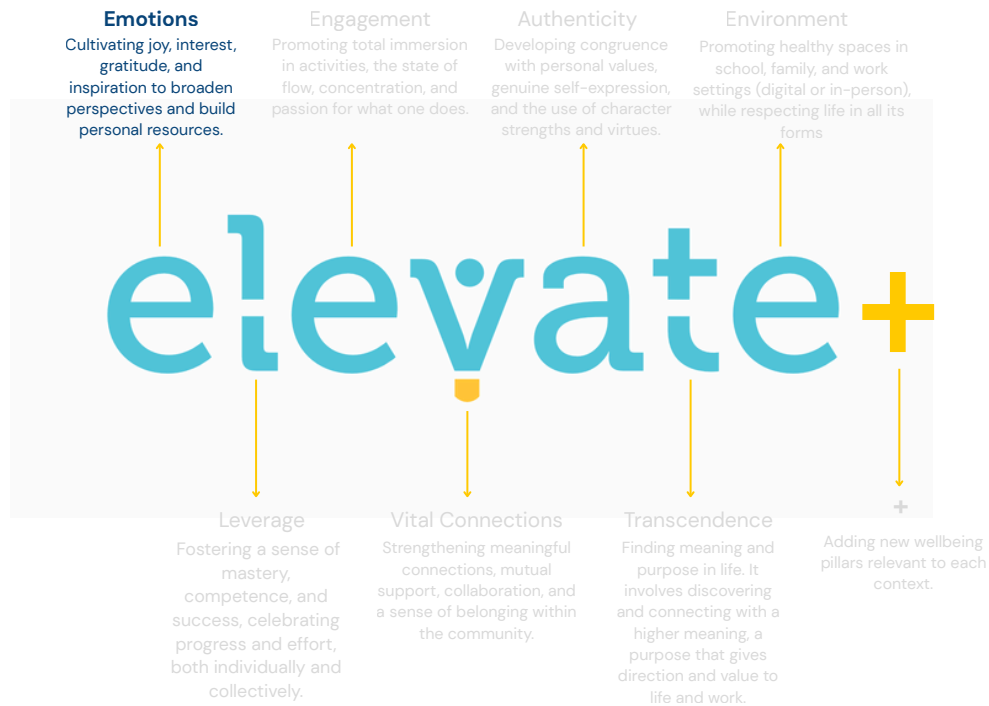


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The ELEVATE+ Activity

Which ELEVATE+ Pillar(s) does this address?



Objectives:

- Experience a moment of mindfulness through drawing and music.
- Understand the concept of "upward spirals of positivity" and how emotions build personal resources.
- Co-create a visual and written journal of gratitude as a tool for emotional regulation.



Step-by-Step Description:

Part 1: The Spiral of the Present (Moment of Intentional Calm)

Materials: A sheet of paper, a pen or pencil, and an audio player.

Suggested Music: *Interstellar (Main Theme Piano)* [Cover] by Gacabe & Jecabe (play until minute 2:45).

Instructions for the Teacher in the Classroom:

1. **Preparation:** Ask your students to sit comfortably, with their feet flat on the floor and their shoulders relaxed. Have them place the tip of their pencil right in the center of the sheet of paper.
 2. **The Prompt:** Explain that while the music plays, they must draw a continuous spiral (like a snail shell) from the center outward. Their challenges are:
 - Do not lift the pencil from the paper.
 - Do not stop.
 - Do not let the lines touch each other.
 3. **Time Management:** Let the students know that the music lasts exactly 2:45 minutes. They must pace their spacing so the spiral occupies most of the page without running out of space before the melody ends.
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1. **Mindfulness:** While drawing, invite them to guide their attention toward three focal points:
 - **The Hand:** Do you feel pressure or tension while holding the pencil?
 - **The Body:** What physical sensations do you perceive and where?
 - **The Thoughts:** If ideas or distractions pop up, simply observe them like passing clouds and gently bring your attention back to the line of your spiral.

Upon completion: Ask them to lift their pencils, admire their design for a few seconds, and, if they feel comfortable, show it to their peers. Lead a brief reflection: *How did you feel? Was it difficult to maintain your focus?*



Step-by-Step Description:

Upon Completion: Ask them to lift their pencils, admire their design for a few seconds, and, if they feel comfortable, show it to their peers. Lead a brief reflection: How did you feel? Was it difficult to maintain your focus?

Part 2: The Science of Positivity (For the Teacher)

Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory: Explain to your students that positive emotions—such as joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love—don't just feel good; they serve a vital evolutionary purpose: **they broaden our minds and build resources.**

Unlike negative emotions that narrow our focus (survival mode), positivity opens us up to new ideas, makes us more resilient, and connects us with others. This creates an upward spiral: a positive emotion leads to a constructive action, which in turn generates more positive emotions.

Part 3: Designing My Gratitude Spiral

Gratitude is one of the most powerful triggers to activate this upward spiral. Research shows that grateful individuals sleep better, exhibit higher resilience, and build stronger social bonds.

The Written Activity:

- 1)– Ask students to take their drawn spiral (or the downloadable template).
- 2)– After a couple of conscious breaths, give them 5 minutes to write along the lines of the spiral all the things, people, moments, or details they feel grateful for today.
- 3)–**The Three-Dimensional Effect:** Once they finish writing, invite students to carefully cut along the line of the spiral from the outside toward the center (without fully detaching it, so it remains a continuous hanging strip). When they lift it from the center, they will physically see how their gratitude spiral "ascends" and takes on volume.

Step-by-Step Description:

4)– Visible Wellbeing Space: Invite them to hang their upward spirals in a visible spot around the classroom (using strings from the ceiling, a corkboard, or taping them to the walls). Seeing these spirals in motion every day serves as a visual reminder of shared well-being and the resources built within the classroom.

The Elevate Challenge:

Invite them to take a second spiral template home . During the week, every time they experience a positive emotion, they should log it in a section of this new spiral to consciously expand their well-being outside of school.



Impact & Reflection: The Voice of Experience

Impact on Students:

After practising this intentional calm activity, you will notice how the classroom atmosphere transforms. In our experience implementing it, we observed that students open their hearts and become deeply receptive to understanding Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory.

Spontaneous questions arise, and they naturally contrast upward spirals of positivity against downward spirals of negativity. The moment the entire class lifts and stretches their cut-out spirals is, without a doubt, a magical instant of collective connection.

Teacher Reflection: Caring for Yourself to Care for Them

Every time I guide this activity—whether with fellow educators or with students—I am amazed by the positive impact it has on my own well-being.

A very powerful practice is to draw and cut out your own spiral alongside them.

Sharing your upward spiral with the class not only models vulnerability and gratitude, but it also actively feeds and builds your own emotional well-being.

To transform the classroom, we must first cultivate our own wellbeing.

Advice for Colleagues (Implementation Tips)

- **Don't rush the clock:** Give your students the necessary time to cut carefully, genuinely connect with their positive emotions, and enjoy the physical craft. The process is just as important as the final product.
- **Your anchor for regulation:** Don't leave the spirals up just as decoration. Reference them and use them as a visual reminder whenever the group or a specific student feels frustrated, overwhelmed, or unmotivated. It serves as an excellent reality check to remember the internal resources they already possess.

References

Fredrickson, B. L. (1998). What good are positive emotions?. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3), 300–319.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218–226.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). Update on the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 1–53.

Foto y video



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Do you have an activity that brings the ELEVATE+ pillars to life? Whether it's a 5-minute check-in or a full-hour project, we want to see it!

**Submit your activity [here](#)
let's elevate education together!**



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