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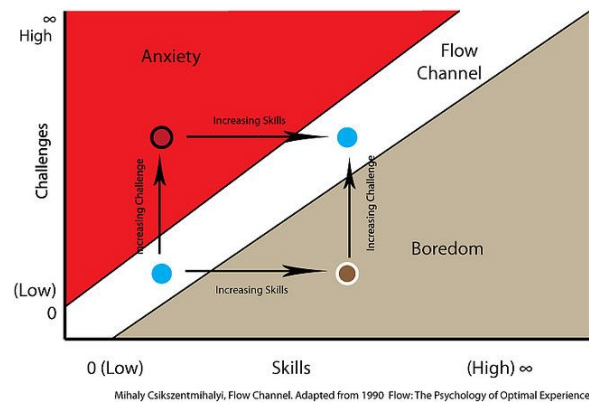
Professor Riman

PSDS 3100 B

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Finding Flow

How can each person create an excellent life? The first step in answering such questions involves getting a good grasp of the forces that shape what we can experience. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Finding Flow*. Understanding the **Theory of Flow** may greatly enhance your general performance and creativity. A state of Flow is complete immersion and focus on an activity that can produce a rapture-like response. You may have experienced or verged upon a state of flow without understanding what it was. **Csikszentmihalyi** points out that Flow is so consumptive of our attention that we exclude other stimuli like an athlete, musician or athlete "in the zone".



[Read this article and watch the two videos](#) then write a 1-2 page response that explores your experiences and reactions as outlined below.

Written Reactions should be formatted as per these bullet points

- **Summarize** the article's key points.
- **Reflect:** Have you experienced the state of flow? **Describe** a flow-like experience you may have had. If you are not sure you have experienced flow, describe a moment where it seemed possible.
- **Briefly discuss** the conditions that interfere or enhance your performance.
- **Recommendations:** Would you like to see the Flow theory incorporated into our class possibly as a research topic? How would you approach the topic?
- **Submit a pdf file and name it: PSDS3100B_Flow_LastnameFirstInitial_S19**

Response:

In these articles and videos Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, an author, and professor of psychology explains the theory of flow which is a period of intense concentration. He started researching this topic when he attended a lecture by Carl Jung on trauma and the psyche. It led him to begin understanding the root of happiness. When Csikszentmihalyi interviewed different types of people such as athletes to artists, he discovered that the flow state is essential to both productivity and content because the subject is so involved that it is all that matters. The characteristics of flow are as follows: 1) Complete concentration on task 2) Clarity of goals and reward in mind and immediate feedback 3) Transformation of time (speeding up/slowing down of time) 4) The experience is intrinsically rewarding 5) Effortlessness and ease 6) There is a balance between challenge and skills 7) Actions and awareness are merged, losing self-conscious rumination 8) There is a feeling of control over the task. A few ways of stimulating flow are to not be alone, use imagery, and find the correct motivation either intrinsic (the reason you want to do something) or extrinsic (validation). According to the article, the brain experiences decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex which is used in conscious cognitive function.

I am unsure if writing under pressure or reading an extremely compelling book counts as a flow state, however, I do feel as if I have experienced the listed characteristics of flow. During my first semester, I had to write a ten-page argumentative research paper in a day. I was under a deadline because I had made an appointment with the writing center on Monday even though the deadline was later. I knew that I would procrastinate if I did not set an earlier deadline and also would not have good writing if I did not go to the writing center. I started by writing an outline. It started really simply and then blew up into a really detailed outline, almost a draft. I was

choosing different articles to read and choose quotes from and had anywhere from twelve to eighteen. I had sped through the database EBSCO to find the best quality information. My analysis was not bullet points anymore but true paragraphs. I had sectioned the parts of my paper to lead into one another, from history to statistics and psychology of the topic. I did not realize that my writing was actually good, proving my point with a good structure and links from one sentence to the next. Sometimes, by writing an entire assignment that is this long in one go, the quality tends to decrease. However, I was concentrated solely on my topic. This assignment was one I was interested in because I got to pick my topic and while it wasn't extremely challenging, it wasn't extremely easy either. A condition that isn't beneficial is if I am not excited by an assignment or topic. I think it is extremely important to the quality of my work. It also links back to what Csikszentmihalyi said about flow and how it is my motivation. Once I get into the zone of writing, I am able to spout words on a page. My writing style is to just keep going instead of making sure every sentence is perfect. I like to edit and write drafts so that I am not stuck and also do not get distracted. Another condition is that I tend to do my best work if I am alone in a room. If I have to do an assignment in a day, I typically take breaks in between each assignment.

I think happiness is an interesting topic, however, I would like to research something that is more interactive or topics I can test. I think I would approach the topic by including a type of psychology that links to other areas rather than something that is very personal, which might be difficult to test. I am not fully sure as to how that would look.