

GO WITH THE FLOW

Component: Motivation & Mindset
ILO: To identify the level of challenge in learning

TOOL

The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile. Optimal experience is thus something we make happen. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p.3)
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced "Check-sen-mee-hah-lee") is a psychologist who named Flow, the concept a highly focused mental state conducive to creativity and productivity. He observed that when the level of challenge and skills are matched then flow can happen. We are in a state where complete absorption occurs.

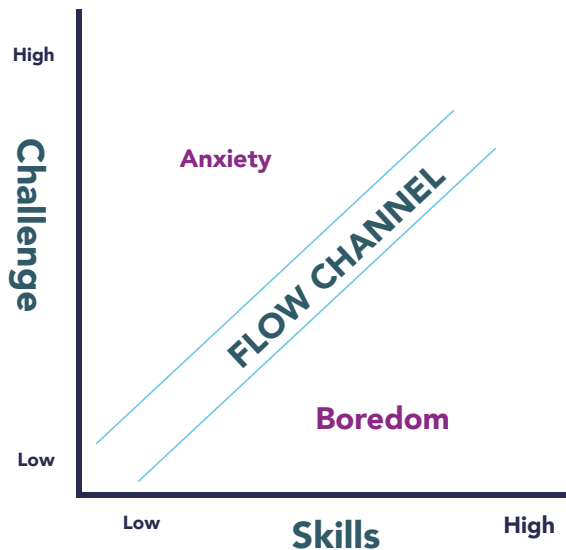
This is useful for assessing preparation for performances and presentations but can also be used for other assessments/challenges. When students identify where they are in the Flow model, they can plan what they need to do to create the right environment to be 'in the zone'.

ACTIVITY

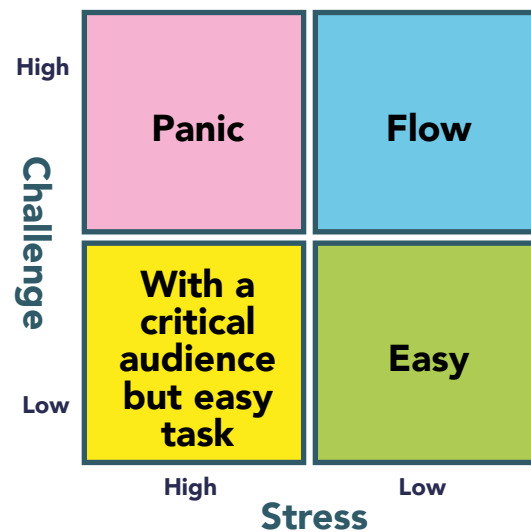
1. Describe the concept of Flow to the group.
2. Ask students to think of a moment when they felt 'in the zone' (Flow). Discuss the different states and how they identify them. What can they do to move towards Flow?
3. Set a task relevant to the module learning.
4. Once completed students assess the task and where on the Flow state they are.
5. Analyse how they can change and plan what needs to be done.

EXAMPLE

In a performance class when a piece is being learnt for assessment, students identify where they are at with their learning and how they would feel if they were to perform it today. How does that state feel? What do they need to do to change that situation and plan how that learning will take place within the time frame.



Csikszentmihalyi, M., 1990. Flow - The Psychology of Optimal Experience, Harper Collins.



Adaptation of Flow from Ian Gilbert's Essential Motivation in the Classroom

LARGE GROUP TEACHING

You can run this as a solo activity and put students into groups to discuss/adjust their decisions or have small-group discussions which contribute to a whole-group activity of generating a list of each state's characteristics.

SUCCESS

Students are aware of what Flow feels like and can describe the process to try and strive for that in their task.

REFERENCES/RESOURCES

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) Flow - The Psychology of Optimal Experience. Harper Collins.	
Gilbert, I. (2002) Essential motivation in the classroom. Routledge/Falmer.	
www.musostudy.com/resources/2E/flow-csik.png	Image for use on slides etc.
www.musostudy.com/resources/2E/flow-gilbert.png	Image for use on slides etc.