Using The Hope Model in South Korean Educational Institutes

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Abstract

South Korea is one of the top educational countries in the world yet there are underlying factors that inhibit South Koreans from utilizing their full potential as students. South Koreans have a number of factors, including low satisfaction, low positive feelings, high negative feelings, poor family connections, and poor social connections that contribute to depression that manifests itself as a high rate of suicide. The depression that is experienced in South Korea can be solved using the Hope Model that teachers should implement to provide more positive feelings, more pathways to achieve goals, and more agencies for motivation to use the pathways and reach the desired goal.

1. Introduction

South Korea has been consistently ranked as one of the leading educational countries in the world in recent years. The Korean devoting to education is unparalleled. The country has devoted an immense amount of resources to education; compared to the 1990 educational budget set by the Ministry of Education, it now has six times that amount totaling $29 billion. Teaching in Korea is a well sought after and respected position that has ties to Confucian roots with only 20% of teachers who enter preparation programs become secondary school teachers. In addition to the top down approach of placing more money to fund schools and teachers, students have been incentivized to obtain a bachelor's degree by earning up to two and half times more than their colleagues who have not completed a tertiary degree. With Korea's rapid economic development, students are rushing to keep up with society's current demands in the labor market (South Korean Education Reforms, 2016). This is reflected in Korea having the largest percentage of college graduates for 25-34 year olds (Population with tertiary education, 2016).

While South Korean education is thriving, the society has suffered. The immense pressure placed on a high-stakes test in Korea is called the Suneung, the Korean equivalent to the SAT. This gateway test holds the key to a student's ability to enter a university. This test alone is a sole contributor to stress, psychological depression, and suicide. Liang Wang (2013) researched the effects of high stakes testing and its connection to suicide in Korea. Wang's (2013) research for Korea finds that "suicide was the leading cause of death of Korean individual's ages 15-24 years in 2008" (p.2). Outside of the educational scope, Koreans have a high amount of negative feelings, social connection issues that contribute to low mental and social health, and self-anchoring, satisfaction with life, issues.

2. Depression in Korea

While South Korean ranks high in many happiness indexes, those indexes are based on items such as GDP per capita, physical health, life expectancy, feelings of the government, education, safety and security, personal freedom, and social capital. They many of these fail to note the personal feelings and social support that people go through on a daily basis. Diener, Ng, Harter, and Arora (2010) compiled the results of selected nations and ranked them by the GDP per capita while then listing a nation's social psychological prosperity, self-anchoring, positive feeling, and low negative feelings. This combination has led to Koreans having a high suicide rate. South Korea is ranked first in suicide for

OECD countries with 29.1 suicides per 100,000 people as of 2012 according to the OECD data. The World Health Organization (2016) lists South Korea at 36.8 suicides per 100,000 people as of 2012 which results in South Korea having the highest suicide rate in the world. These high suicide numbers reflect the high amount of underlying emotional issues, hopelessness, lack of hope, and stress, that are being bred within the Korean culture.

A number of studies have been conducted to try to unravel the issues that affect suicide. Arnau, Rosen, Finch, Rhudy, and Fortunato (2007) studied depression during a longitudinal study, and they identified that a number of factors that contribute to depression when they said, "the number of recent stressors, major life events, coping style, and social support could all have direct effects on depression" (p.59). These factors are also synonymous with the findings of Diener et al

(2010) concluded about Korean society. There is a clear link between what Koreans are reporting in surveys and a long term depression that is lies within the society. Cho, Nam and Suh (2005) reiterated this conclusion when they conducted a survey of 3,711 respondents in South Korea discovering that 34.3% of the men and 47.5%
of the women showed depressive symptoms. Compared to North America and Western Europe, only 2% and 6% respectively of the adult general population had depression (Ohayon and Hung, 2006). The economist also published a 2011 article discussing the findings of a study done in South Korea that concluded that the obsession for education within South Korea is becoming an emotional stressor for children. The article is summarized when The Economist (2011) stated that, "Results of a survey released last week by the Institute for Social Development Studies at Seoul's Yonsei University show that Korean teenagers are by far the unhappiest in the OECD". With a large amount of the South Korean population showing depressive symptoms, a minute amount actually get help. Ohayon and Hung's (2006) research on the prevalence of depression disorders in South Korea sampled 3,719 non-institutionalized individuals aged 15 years or older, and their survey yielded that only 15.7% of the participants consulted a physician in the last 12 months. Only 7.4% of those showing depressive symptoms actually were taking antidepressant treatments.

This long-term, untreated depression has educational effects within the classroom that effect a person's memory. Depressions association with negative emotions can lead to a low vigilance, restlessness, easily distracted and poor focus, lower processing speed, memory encoding problems, and slower cognition (Ai, Cascio, Santagelo, Evans-Campbell, 2005). While Korea is one of the top educational countries in the world, this is amazing feat for a country that is showing large, recurring emotional issues that directly affect the population's ability to learn.

2.1 Depression's impact on Memory. Our mental state is impacted on multiple levels ranging from a long-term state which is crafted over time from holistic events that slowly shape ourselves and our future to events and thoughts that immediately impact of conscious thoughts and feelings. Emotions and mood are the driving forces behind this mental state. Mood is a general, wide-spread feeling while emotions are feelings that can rapidly appear or disappear due to recent events (Compton & Hoffman, 2013). These emotions are one of the factors that affect our mood. Constant negative emotions to events will yield a negative mood. With a prolonged negative mood, depression can develop. The American Psychological Association (2016) defines depression as, "People with depression may experience a lack of interest and pleasure in daily activities, significant weight loss or gain, insomnia or excessive sleeping, lack of energy, inability to concentrate, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide." Koreans high suicide rates, common negative feelings, low amount of positive feelings, and lack of social support facilitate negative emotions, but the findings of Diener et al (2010) suggest that the feelings in Korea are a long term issue that could result in depression which will have lasting effects on the student and the student's ability to learn.

One of the biggest roles involved in learning is processing speed; the lower a student's processing speed, the more time the student will need take tests, absorb information, and perform tasks in the classroom. Instead of taking the time to learn, comprehend, evaluate, and create material from topics discussed in the classroom for a more complete education, students will spend their restricted time with an educator on less topics throughout the academic term. Research has been done linking the presence of depression and processing speed. Research conducted by

Tsourtos, Thompson, and Stough (2002) found that unmedicated depressed patients' processing speed was lower than the both medicated and control groups. This is supported by their findings when they said, "Our results indicated that speed of information processing, as measured by [inspection time], is impaired in young, unmedicated, unipolar depressed patients. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that young depressed individuals do show cognitive slowing" (Tsourtos, Thompson, & Stough, 2002, p.262). Egeland et al's (2003) research builds upon previous research when they studied the cognitive and attentive profiles of schizophrenic and depressed patients while comparing the results to a control group. Their findings support upon Tsourtos, Thompson and Stough's results that depression inversely affects processing speed**.** Egeland et al's (2003) confirms this when they said, "finding a speed reduction in both clinical groups is in accordance with previous research" (p. 281). A 2005 study conducted by Calhoun and Mayes specifically looked at the processing speeds in children with depression. Their research can be summarized when they found the following, "As expected, children with depression performed poorly on [Processing Speed Index] relative to other score" (Calhoun & Mayes, 2005, p.339). With processing speed being directly affected by depression, this can lead to other issues within the classroom due to the structure that comes with formal education in primary, secondary, and ternary institutes.

Student motivation becomes an issue if students are constantly trying to catch up with the material due to low processing speeds especially when students move to higher levels and study more complex ideas and topics. Students can lose vigilance and motivation when they require more effort and time to understand what is being studied within the classroom at higher levels due to lower processing speeds. Research conducted by Tarkbuck and Paykel (1995) on depression and memory can be summarized when they said, "The changes associated with depression affect particularly 'complex' tasks that require a greater degree of internal processing and conscious effort"(p.293). While in a depressed state, student may be capable of completing a task or learning, but the lack of vigilance brought on by depression inhibits a student's ability to learn. Egeland et al. (2003) discusses the low vigilance and its correlation to depression. They concluded that, "within the depressed group decreased vigilance correlated with level of depression" (p.282).   This was built upon Tarbuck and Paykel's (1995) research that found that depression reduces a person's central drive. This apathetic state brought on by depression is hindering students from learning and gaining necessary educational skills needed to succeed in school and within the job market and creating a lack of hope for the student's future.

2.2 Depression and Goal Pursuit. The apathetic state that is brought on by depression not only affects memory but also a direct role in goal pursuit in individuals. Depression hinders goal pursuit in addition to goal setting. Students experiencing depression due to the existing factors within South Korea have their goals set by society through the high-stakes tests and required academic success needed to for the job market.

Brandtstadter and Renner's (1990) early work set a precedent that a low depressive state would lead to a greater believe of internal control. Their early findings helped build later research including Brandtstadter's later work with Rothermund which discovered that "The present approach posits that depressive symptoms point to difficulties in relinquishing blocked goals; at the same time, however, it suggests that feelings of depression may play a functional role in promoting accommodative revisions of the person's system of preferences through destroying the cognitive sets and biases that maintain assimilative efforts" (2002, p.140). The destruction of previously learned cognitive sets that can be used to later assimilate when reaching difficulties during a goal pursuit is the reason for depression with the inability to continue and the accommodation of goals. Students need to learn to properly assimilate and accommodate to achieve their goals, but the depressive state hinders this process. A more positive mood and higher hope will bring confidence and greater goal pursuit to students and facilitate more appropriate and positive assimilation to endure though difficulties encountered during goal pursuit and proper accommodation when the current cognitive set does not work (Johnson, 2010; Street, 2002).

2.3 Hope and Depression. Snyder (1994) has the most commonly used definition of hope which he defines as "a construct of pathways and agencies. Pathways being the ability to find ways to reach one's goals and agencies being the motivation to reach one's goals." Hope can provide us ways to improve ourselves through constructing goals and using pathways to find ways to reach them. Through proper training, students can construct healthy goals and pathways that will benefit and prepare them for educational assessments and the actual job market. Within an educational institution, it is up to both the student and the teacher to generate agencies that can be used to facilitate the goals and pathways needed to succeed within the educational institutions that help students prepare for the job market.

Depression and hope have been correlated inversely together resulting in a lack of pathways and agencies. Ai, Cascio, Santangelo, and Evans-Campbell (2005) evaluated the relationship between hope and spiritual meaning with depression and anxiety shortly after a dreadful events of 9/11,. Al et al. (2005) discovered that the more educated and hopeful that someone was, the lower amounts of depression and anxiety that were shown. It was also concluded that "depression was positively associated with negative emotion." (Al et al., 2003, p.533). Arnau et al. (2007) follows this conclusion of an inverse relationship between hope and depression through their longitudinal research that lead to them concluding that "high levels of hope predicted decreased levels of depression" (p.57). This inverse relationship specifies that when hope is low depression is high. This lack of pathway and agency results in a loss of meaning and facilitating a cycle of poor mental health (Hedayati & Khazaei, 2014; Mascaro & Rosen, 2005).

In 2010, Han, Park, Im, Ju, Bae, and Kang researched the relationship between hope, depression, and suicidal ideation in chronically mentally ill patients. They found significant correlations between them and concluded that the patients should focus on increasing hope and decreasing depression. This study not only confirms the inverse relationships between hope and depression, but begins to show that focusing on improving hope will lead to better cognition through improvements of pathways and agencies (Al et al., 2013; Arnau et al., 2007; Hedayati & Khazaei, 2014; Mascaro & Rosen, 2005, Synder, 1994). For students, their existing issues, low satisfaction; low positive feelings; high negative feelings; poor family connections; and poor social connections, would benefit from the similar solutions that were provided for the chronically

mentally ill patients. Improving hope would help reduce the depression and restore the hope needed to succeed within educational institutes. Without pathways and agencies, students struggle to maintain focus without a clear goal or the ability to reach it thus losing purpose to attend or participate within educational institutes (Hedayati & Khazaei, 2014).

3. Using the Hope Model to Reduce Depression

Hope and depression's inverse relationship can be effected through hope training using the hope model. It is derived from hope theory's usage of goals, pathways, and agencies. Snyder (1994) describes that it is necessary for the individual to believe in the ability to generate a route to his or her goals in addition to believing in the ability or having the determination to use those generated routes to the goals. These pathways and agencies working together in a transactional way with pathway thinking enhances agency thinking and in turn agency thinking enhances pathway thinking (Compton & Hoffman, 2013; Irving et al., 2004; Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 1994). This is exemplified in Feldman and Dreher's (2012) research when they studied decades of research surrounding hope theory and put it to the test with a single intervention with college students by attempting to improve hope and thus increasing goal direct behavior. Feldman and Dreher's (2012) single intervention found the following, "a single-session intervention can increase hope in the short term as well as lead to greater levels of goal progress as much as a month later" (p.756). With only a single session, we can see student improve hope and thus improve their goal pursuit.

Figure 1 describes the hope model that we use in our everyday lives. There are three phases that direct our goal-oriented thoughts when we pursue a goal: an individual's learning history, the preevent phase, and the event sequence phase (Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 1994). The individuals learning history is all of his or her's previous pathways constructed to reach desired goals, the agencies that were used to use those pathways, and then the eventual goal attainment or failure to reach the goal. These pathways and agencies are combined with our emotional set that is a combination of our innate personality that is molded by previous events in our lives. Individuals with a history of numerous accomplished goals and successful overcoming of the obstacles will have an emotional set that is more hopeful, more positive feelings, and confident that goals can be reached whereas an individual's emotional set with numerous failures to reach goals, resulting from poor goal setting, will be less hopeful, more passive, and encounter more negative feelings (Compton & Hoffman, 2013; Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 1994).
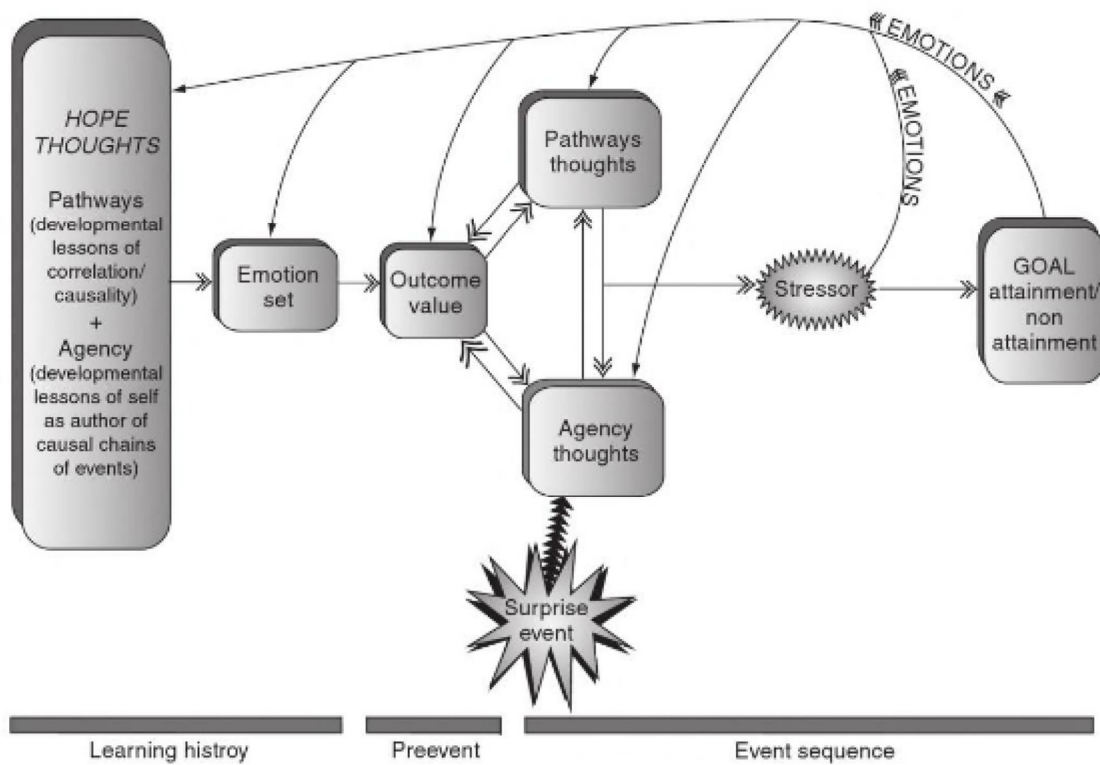
Figure 1: Hope Model including the feedback involving agency and pathways goal-directed thoughts and emotions

When pursuing a goal, the individual will enter the preevent phase where he or she will weigh the outcome value of the goal. If the outcome value of the goal being pursued becomes too low, the goal pursuit will be halted. If the goal is determined to be important enough, the individual will immediately move into the event sequence phase. As the individual starts to pursue a goal, pathway and agency thinking will facilitate each other in addition to the outcome value of the goal with each effecting the other. This allows the individual to monitor the outcome value while constructing available pathways and the agency required to use them. Through this process, the individual can appropriately determine the outcome value of the goal; this process of goal pursuit is necessary since the outcome value cannot be appropriately determined until the pursuit of a goal has commenced (Compton & Hoffman, 2013; Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 1994).

Finally, there is the event sequence phase where the individual will use goal-specific pathways and agency. The individual will repeatedly cycle through various pathways and agency throughout the event sequence to facilitate the pursuit of the goal. Ultimately, the goal is either attained or not and the resulting positive or negative emotions influence future hope thoughts and build upon an individual's learning history resulting in building hope and confidence or hopelessness and passiveness (Compton & Hoffman, 2013; Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 1994).

There are two external sources that affect the individual during the event sequence, stressors and surprise events. Stressors are any obstacle that puts the goal pursuit at risk. These stressors influence the current goal pursuit effecting pathways, agency, and the outcome value as well as the

learning history of the individual. During a goal pursuit, individuals who have low hope will likely see stressors as insurmountable challenges whereas individuals who have high hope will likely see stressors as an obstacle that needs to be overcome. In addition to stressors, surprise events are incidents that occur outside of the context of the goal pursuit. They can be either positive or negative in nature and effect the individual's agency by either increasing or decreasing motivation depending on the incident that has occurred. These events are beyond our control yet they are merged into our goal pursuit thought process during the preevent and event sequence phases (Compton & Hoffman, 2013; Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 1994).

By using the hope model, we can effectively create more hope through this model by assisting students in the educational institute to create realistic goals that can be attained. The curriculum that is already established within the educational institute has clearly defined goals. These goals can be broken down into smaller goals that the teacher should facilitate to keep student on track not only for academic reasons but to provide more hope through building a students learning history, creating reachable goals, helping students improve their ability to build more pathways, and helping students cope with surprise events and stressors. This improvement of hope will decrease depression and improve a student's academic performance and enhance learning.

3.1 Using the Hope Model Inside the Korean Classroom. The greatest amount of influence a teacher can have is inside the classroom. An educational institute provides power, authority, teacher-student relationship, and educational context to the situation and the students situation at home or outside of the educational institute is merely a suggestion from the teacher that about employed strategies on how to improve. It is up to the teacher to utilize his or her time and influence within the student's duration within the educational institute.

When a teacher is attempting to influence a student, the teacher should take advantage of using the student's records to better understand the student's personality and academic history. The teacher, when possible, should confer with teachers who had previous experiences with the student to better understand his or her personality in addition to a student's agency and sociability. This information will be necessary to better understand the student's motivation, agency, as well as the student's potential pathways and what goals the student tends to value.

These steps are no different inside a Korean classroom. In fact, the Korean education system places a high amount of emphasis on teachers to teach non-academic topics in the ethics class that is implemented from elementary school where students are taught Korean Confucianism, how to be polite, how to behave around adults, what is socially acceptable, and general etiquette to high school where they are taught more philosophical topics and the differences in generations. This emphasis on using the public education system to teach students how to behave in society is a good reason to implement the hope model within the education system indirectly into the classes since the hope model will have lasting effect outside the classroom just as the ethics class does. This system can also be implemented indirectly within all educational institutes within Korea.

3.2 Implementing the Hope Model. After gathering information on a student, a teacher would then set out required goals that required by the class; this would be tests, quizzes, projects, and attendance or any other assessments that are used to determine a student's mastery of knowledge during the class. The next step is to identify strivings that the student that the student can set up to

accomplish their required goals for the class. These strivings need to fit with the student's agency and available pathways to generate value to the goal, the required assessments in the class. The teacher needs to set required checkpoints that coincide with these strivings to ensure that students are building towards the overall goal. This helps facilitate a students learning history by completing reachable, smaller goals that will help facilitate the completion of the larger goal thus providing more hope for the future. The teacher should help the student use previously learned pathways and help generate new pathways if the student does not have any available pathways that help reach the goal.

An example of this would be a student who is assigned a 500 word English paper. This is a daunting task for many Koreans since Korean students are rarely asked to write more than a paragraph. The student would start by crafting various strivings that would help reach the main goal of the 500 word English essay. These striving, brainstorming ideas, writing an outline, writing a rough draft, editing, then submitting the final paper, are also pathways within the hope model. The student also has inherent agencies of needing to pass the course and preserving the ego. It would be up to the student and teacher to work together to generate additional pathways, including addition steps to help finish the paper, and agencies, such as improved English, increase independent problem solving skills, building problem solving skills, and staying with friends in the same class or cohort. Figure 1 shows what a teacher would help a student develop to generate positive and achievable pathways and appropriate agencies to increase the overall value of the goal while considering a students' hope thoughts and emotional set. Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 use the each of the pathways crafted in the overall hope model. These figures outline the pathways that the student will go through to reach the overall goal. These smaller goals that were originally set up are used to increase positive emotions and increase goal-directed behavior through the fostering of the completion of smaller goals. Through completing these smaller goals, we can provide the student a method of breaking down the bigger goal into more objective pathways that will be turned into goals. These goals will keep the student on a positive path to goal attainment, completing the 500 word essay, and increase positive emotions in addition to providing the student the opportunity to develop more pathways and agencies by working with the teacher.

While the student and teacher can work to build the overall value of the goal, stressors can influence the student's perception and value of the goal and their goal pursuit. The stressors are partly the teacher's responsibility to help keep the goal value high enough that the student will use the pathways and agencies available. For the student whose goal is the 500 word essay, if the stressors become too large, they will decrease the overall goal value low enough that it becomes unimportant. This causes the student to stop his created pathways and agency causing the student to achieve a different goal and influencing the student's learning history. The next time a student encounters an English essay, the student will assign the goal, the English essay, and a low value and not pursue it because of previous learning experiences that causes stress.

In addition to stressors, surprise events are another uncontrollable event that influences the goal pursuit. The surprise events that students and teachers encounter are unavoidable. A student's hope thoughts and emotional set will influence how the student handles the surprise event. It is up to the teacher to help the student set up and build a more positive emotional set that will give the

student more pathways, agencies, and a more resolute approach to goal pursuit due to positive feelings and greater fostering of hope through multiple goal attainments.

With stressors, surprise events, low hope thoughts and emotional set, and poor pathways and agency, student can fail at achieving their goal. It is up to the teacher to influence the student's agency to help the student gain more motivation. The teacher should also provide smaller, more systematic strivings that include additional time to amend failing work or to improve already suitable work. This systematic approach puts the student on a fixed schedule to foster more positive emotions and build hope with multiple goal achievements.. If a student fails to reach one of these smaller strivings, the built in additional time will allow the teacher and student to generate additional pathways and agencies to give the student the ability to attain the overall goal and keep the original pathways, agencies, and strivings without major alterations.

4. Discussion

With depression inversely linked to hope, large amounts of depression correlates to low pathways and agencies. This helps provide an explanation to poor mental health and hope for the future that has manifested itself in the highest suicide rates in the world. The hope model should be implemented within the educational curriculum within South Korean educational institutes, especially secondary schools where students are taking high-stakes tests that will define their future. The model should not be used exclusively or taught explicitly but it should be implemented within the curriculum of South Korean educational institutes as a means to help students become better learners through teaching hope to improve emotional well-being with supported goal creation and support to suppress and assist with stressors and surprise events.

In addition to supporting students, the teacher's role when implementing the hope model is to help with creating reachable goals and provide emotional and critical thinking support during the preevent and event sequence phases. The teacher should focus on creating hopeful students by facilitating the pursuit of reachable goals and helping the students craft realistic pathways that are supported by the students own agency. This in turn will provide South Korean students with more hope, and the emotional set of a positive, active, hopeful individual that is not negatively affected by stressors or surprise events. Instead of feeling hopeless when a goal is not achieved, with their more positive emotional set, students will ideally modify their pathways in addition to adding to their learning history so that they are better prepared to set more realistic goals, use appropriate pathways with agency, and be able craft sensible pathways that will lead to desires goals.

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Figures
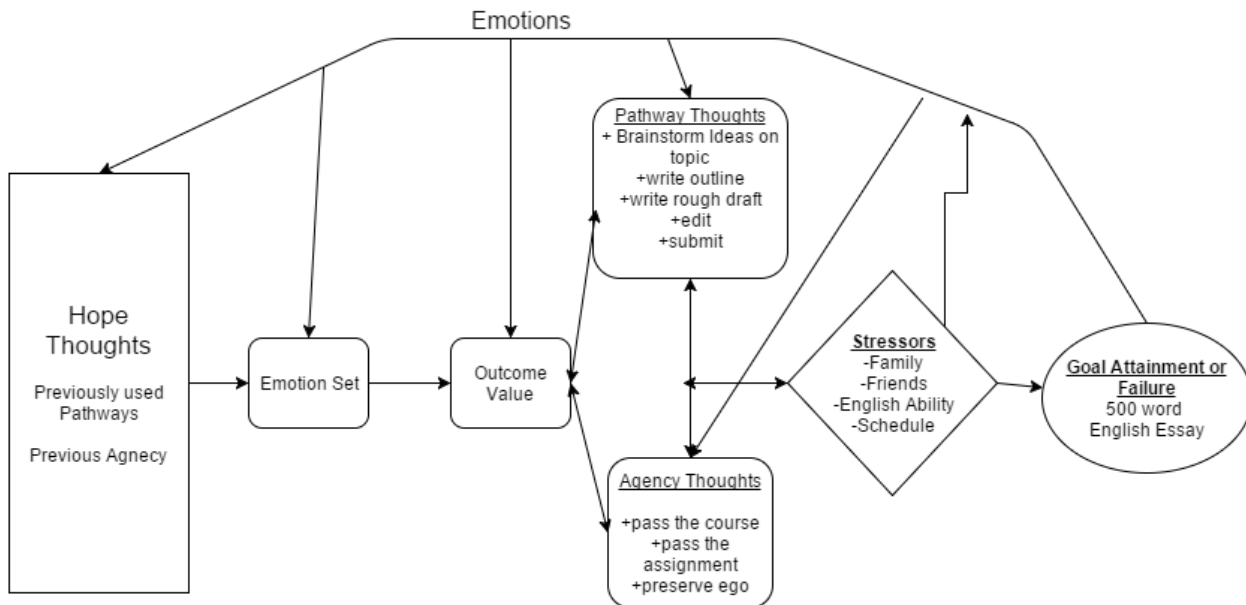
Figure 1: An example of the Hope Model to be used for a student who is given an assignment of a 500 word essay
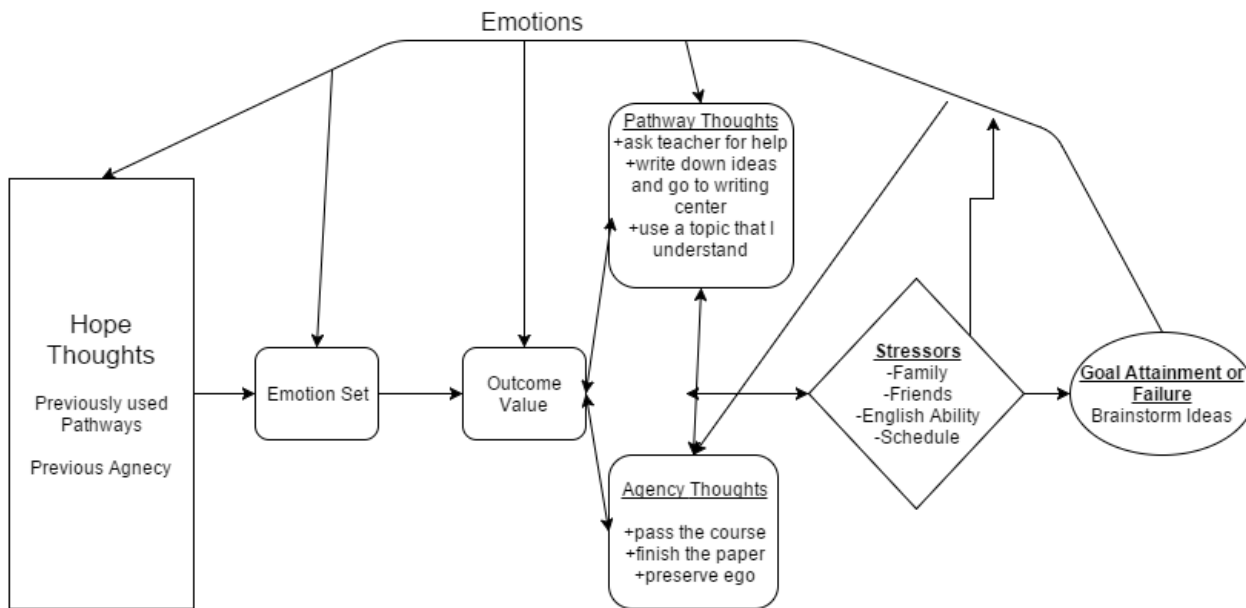

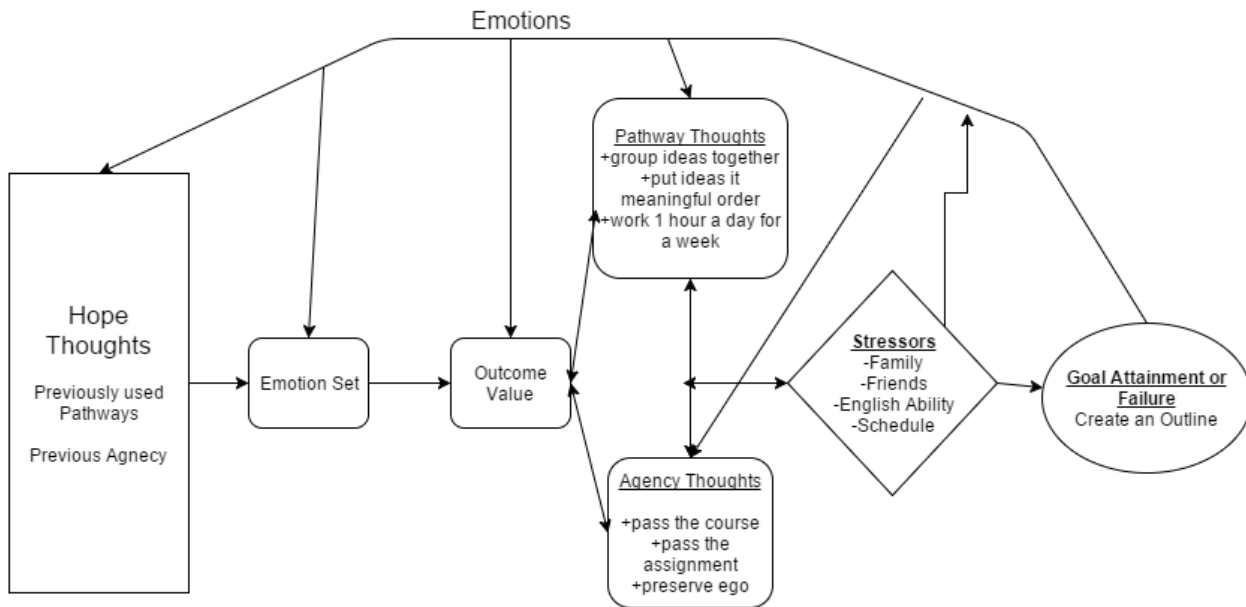Figure 2: Hope Model used for an a single individual pathway, brainstorm ideas.

Figure 3: Hope Model used for a single individual pathway, create an outline.
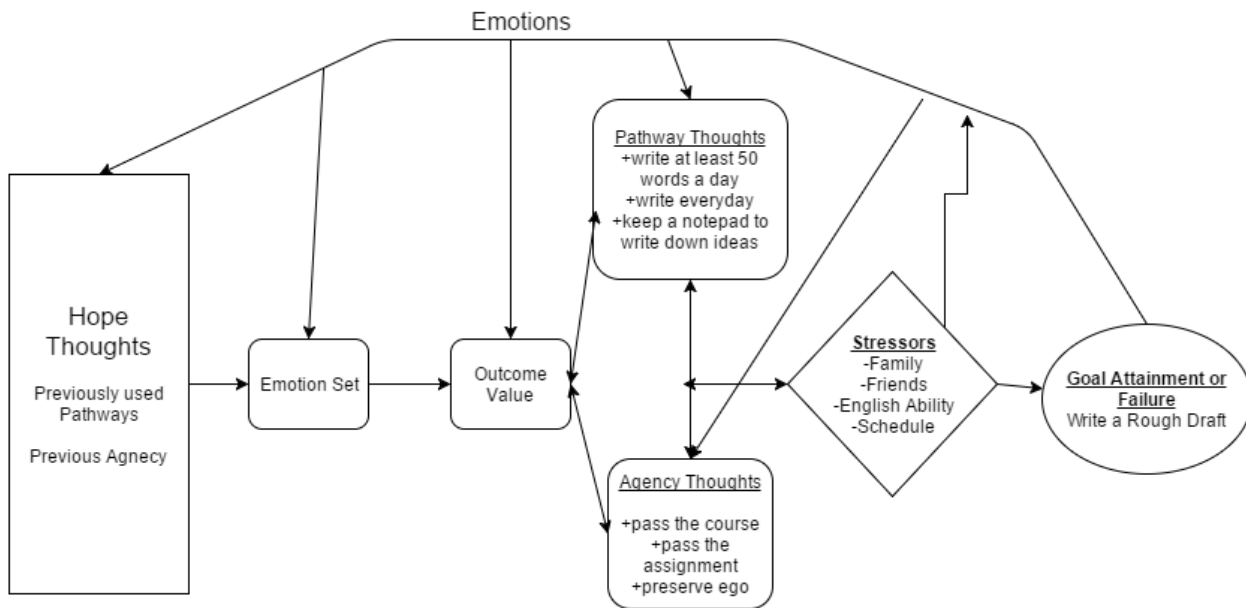
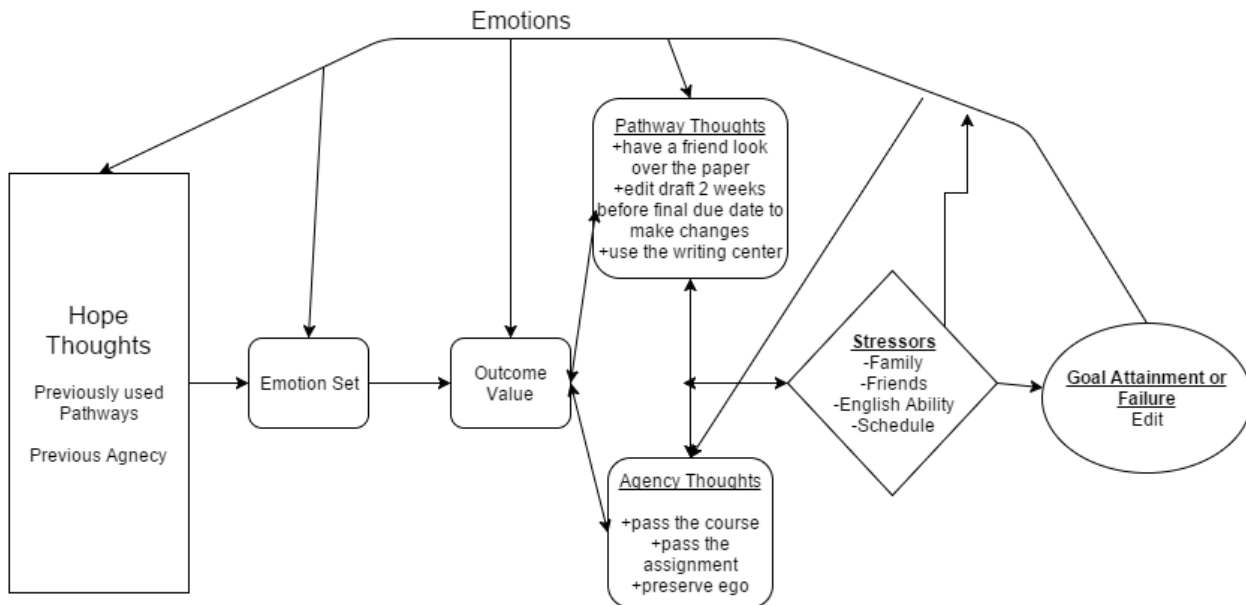Figure 4: Hope Model used for a single individual pathway, write a rough draft.

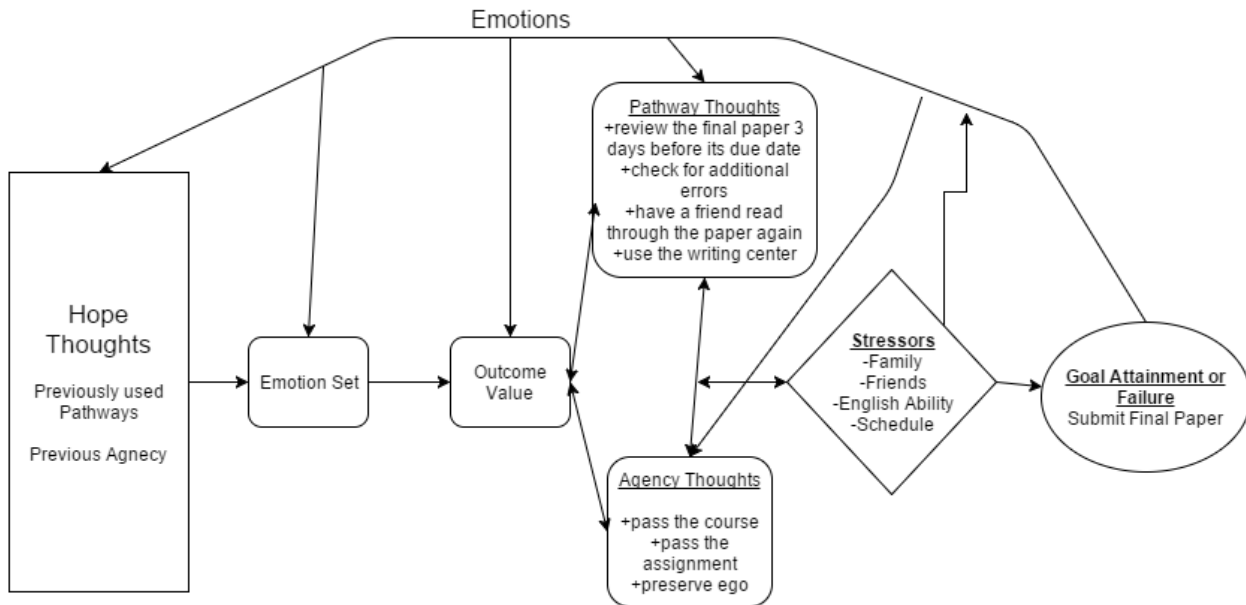Figure 5: Hope Model used for a single individual pathway, edit

Figure 6: Hope Model used for a single individual pathway, submit final paper.