
Psychology in Action

The Psychology of Thrill-Seeking



Organizing a course (or a section of a course) around a central theme can provide much-needed context to help students learn psychological concepts. A rich central theme can advance critical thinking, increase motivation, and foster active learning. In this presentation, I'll demonstrate how the psychology of thrill-seeking can serve as such a theme.

Thrill-seekers crave intense experiences despite physical or social risks. They jump out of planes, climb skyscrapers, and eat anything (even poisonous pufferfish) while others, the chill-seekers, are overwhelmed by the same experience. Over the last 50 years, hundreds of studies have been published examining various aspects of thrill-seeking. Thrill-seeking can be used as a theme to teach various aspects of psychology such as theories of personality, research methods, statistics, and positive psychology in a way students find personally engaging and memorable. In addition to learning about thrill-seeking, attendees will learn how they can incorporate themes into their own curricula in order to provide deeper context, increase engagement, and help students apply their knowledge.

Resources

NITOP Resource Website

drkencarter.com/nitop2020

Resources on the psychology of thrill-seeking including, slides from my NITOP presentation, the brief sensation-seeking survey, links to videos, interviews, podcasts, and a comprehensive bibliography on sensation-seeking.

The Psychology of Thrill-Seeking Coursera

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/psychology-of-thrill-seekers>

My five-week free course on the psychology of thrill-seeking that includes videos, readings, and quizzes.

Brief Sensation-Seeking Survey

<https://tinyurl.com/usxdwye>

A link to the article for the Brief Sensation-Seeking Scale.

Behavioral and biological correlates of sensation-seeking

<https://tinyurl.com/qsu9z8v>

2003 Literature review on sensation-seeking by Jonathan Roberti

Contact information

Kenneth Carter, PhD
Charles Howard Candler Professor of Psychology
Oxford College Emory University
kenneth.carter@emory.edu
