

Slide 1 Hello! My name is Stacy Bjorkman and I am the academic program coordinator of the bachelors in psychology program at Walden University and a Lecturer at the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay. Today I'm going to share with you an activity that I have used in my undergraduate introductory statistics courses at both universities for the last several years: The Best Possible Term activity. It is an activity I use to advance Walden University's commitment to establishing a Community of Care, which takes a holistic approach to fostering student success by considering the multitude of social and academic influences on learning and supporting the learning process with both social and academic resources. Thank you for your time and interest!

Slide 2: We all know that statistics courses get a bad rap in some disciplines, including the behavioral and health sciences. Some students approach the course from a place of fear which colors their impressions of what they will be asked to do, what they are capable of, and how they can grow their skills over time. While my goal for this slide is not to delve into specific research studies and theories, I do want to share some of the relevant theoretical foundations and previous research that provide a rationale for giving a few minutes of time to this softer side of statistics at various timepoints throughout the term. The takeaways here are that emotions, previous adverse learning experiences, confidence, self-efficacy, etc. DO influence students' academic availability, and that we CAN improve positive outcomes over time. We do that with this activity by linking the *present* version of self – in this case the academic self - with the idealized *future* version of self at the end of a successful term. Following the research you see here, the Best Possible Term serves as a goal, potentially acting as an incentive for behaviors that are consistent with that ideal version of the self and end of term. Let's see how the activity helps students initiate that positive approach to the semester.

Slide 3: This activity works well in any sized sections of seated or asynchronous online classes. In both class types, I provide a brief explanation of the activity and its purpose, and depending on how much time we have, describing some of the research you saw on the previous slide. In face-to-face classes, I like to provide students with a brightly colored piece of paper to work with – because taking notes on paper is a novel experience these days - and present the Best Possible Term activity after reviewing the syllabus. In online courses, I post the video you are about to see during the first week of the term. I then remind students to take out their Best Possible Term plans at pivotal times during the term (e.g., before exams, during the midterm slump, and right before the end of the term).

Slide 4: VIDEO

Slide 5: And that's it! Survey data and course evaluation comments indicate that students appreciate this activity, with some reporting they plan to do it on their own in future terms.

If this activity has piqued your interest, I encourage you to give it a try. The video you just saw and corresponding transcript are available for you on the home page for this session and in the book chapter referenced on this page, and you can revise them to fit your own personal style. If this turned out to be not quite your speed, that's OK! I hope that at the very least it has strengthened your awareness of social and psychological factors that influence learning, particularly in challenging courses like statistics. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to attend the live zoom session or e-mail me. Thank you again for your time today and enjoy the conference!