



Measuring Flow: Comparing different approaches

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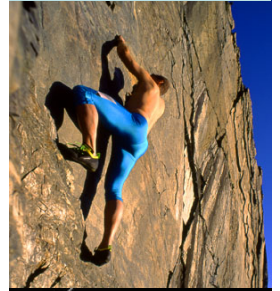
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4th EPPC, Opatija July 1st-4th

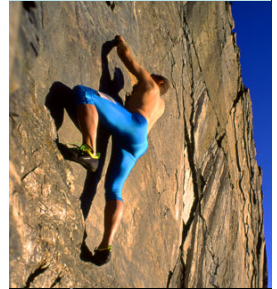
Aims

- To compare different approaches to measuring flow experiences
 - DRM using Flow simplex
 - ESM using Challenge skill ratio and Experience Fluctuation Model (EFM)
 - Jackson and Marsh FSS (flow state scale)
- Raise some critical ideas about the challenges in studying experience



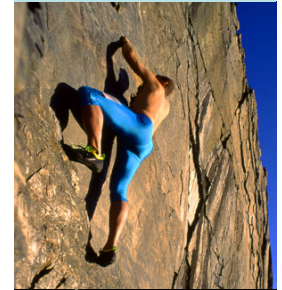
The flow experience defined

- “.. optimal experience (flow) requires a balance between the *challenges* perceived in a given situation and the *skills* a person brings to it” (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988)
- “The flow state, a positive experiential state, occurs when the performer is totally connected to the performance, in a situation where personal *skills* equal required *challenges*” (Jackson and Marsh, 1996)
- “...the simultaneous experience of *concentration, interest, enjoyment, control and involvement* is definitional to the experience of flow” (Schmidt, Shernoff, and Csikszentmihalyi, 2007).
- Flow “is defined as a short-term peak experience characterized by *absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation* (Bakker, 2008)
- Variations in theory and even more so empirically...
- “... there are no strict rules, and, depending on the interest of the researcher, other combinations may be appropriate (Hektner, Schmict, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007, p. 96)

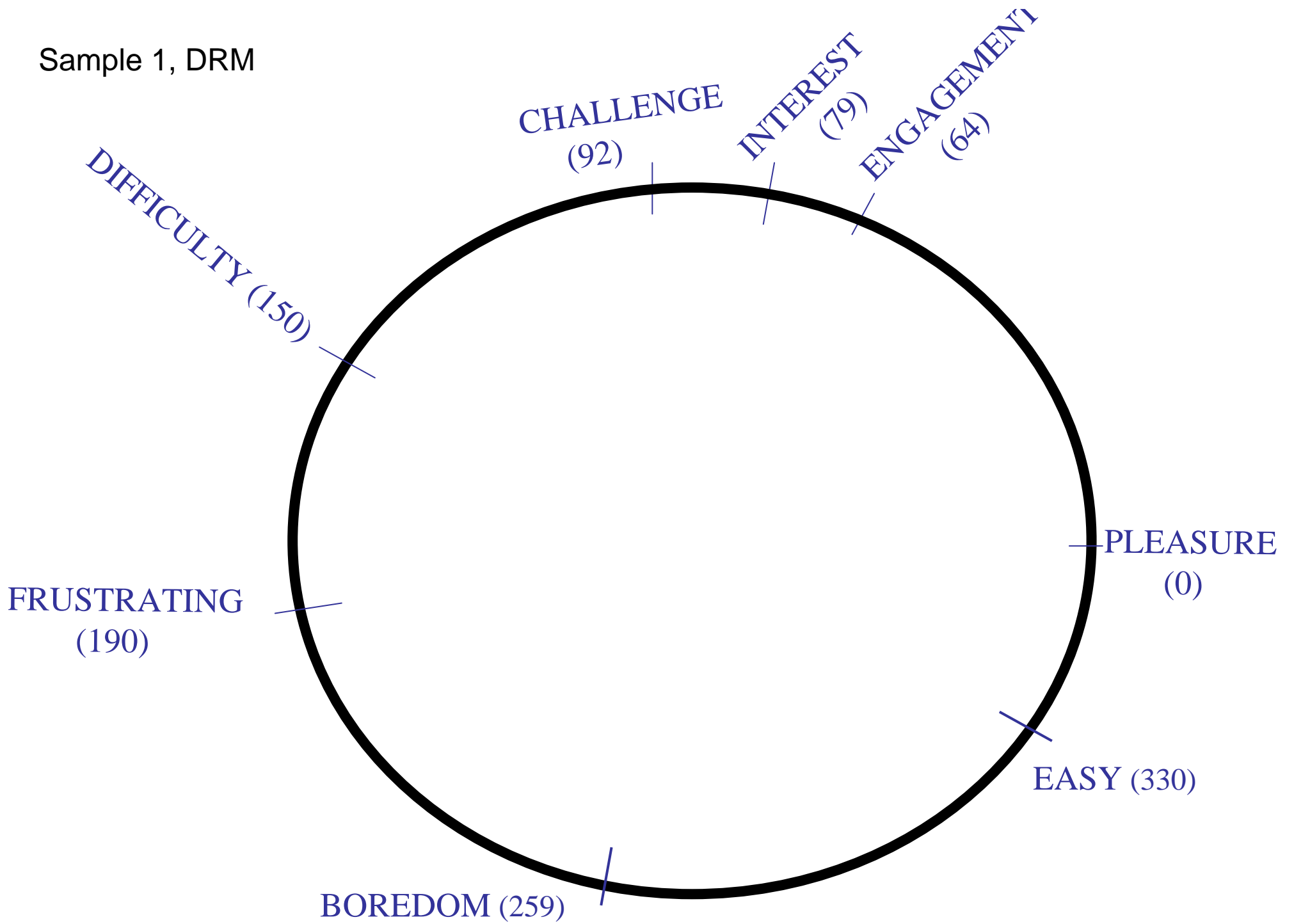


Method

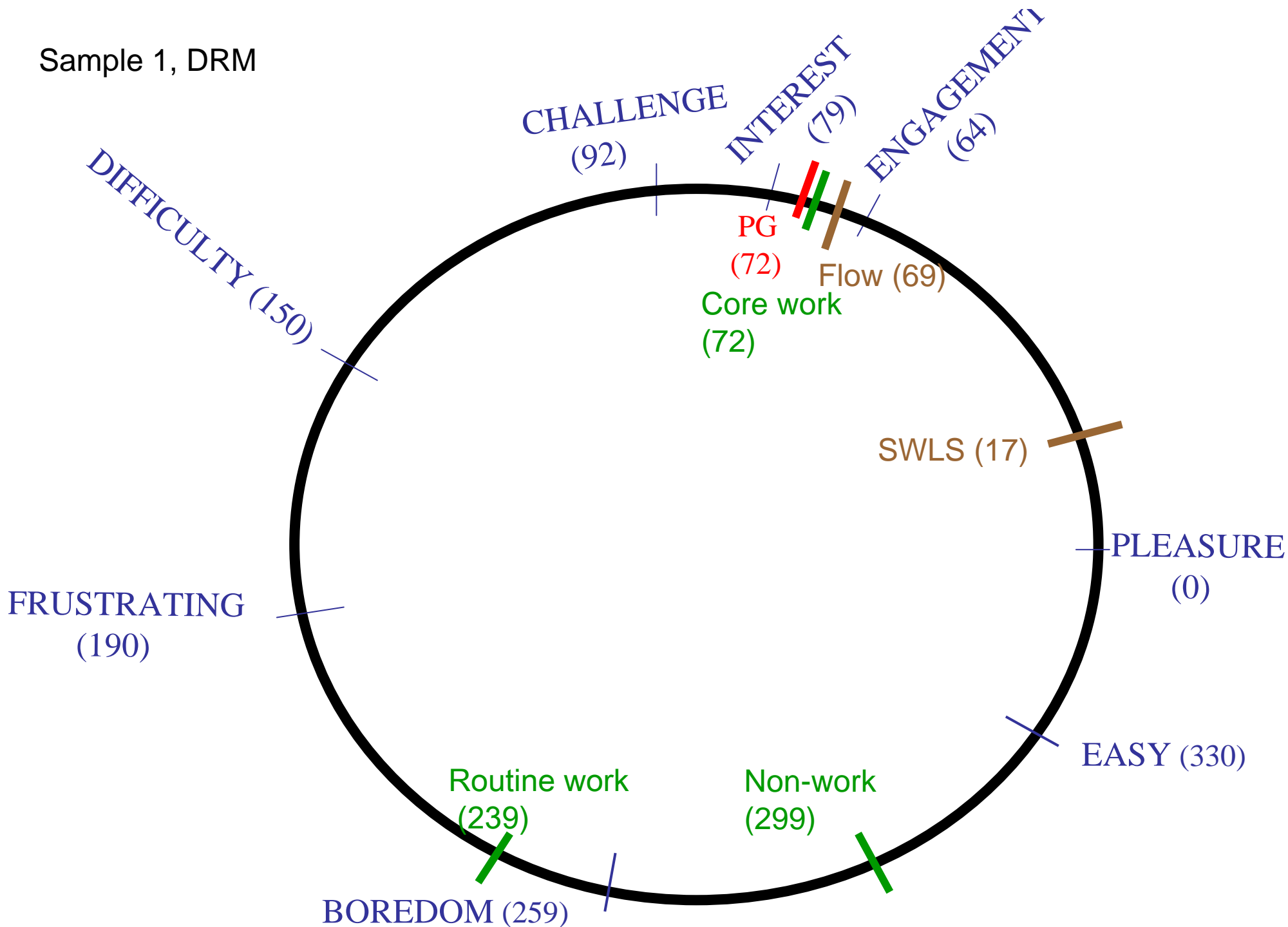
- Sample 1:
 - members of Occupational Health Services in Norway (N = 465), mean age = 48, females = 65%
 - Day Reconstruction Method (Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Swartz & Stone, 2004; four episodes)
 - Measures included challenges, skills, emotions
- Sample 2:
 - Norwegian Folk High School students (N = 264), Females = 63%, Mean age = 19 years (range 16 to 25)
 - Experience Sampling Method (between 8 and 16 episodes for each student)
 - Measures included challenges, skills, emotions, perceived mastery
- Sample 3:
 - Sampled in Greece and Norway (N = 540), females = 50 %
- Analyses included Pearson's correlation, Factor analysis using P-chained technique (simplex analysis)



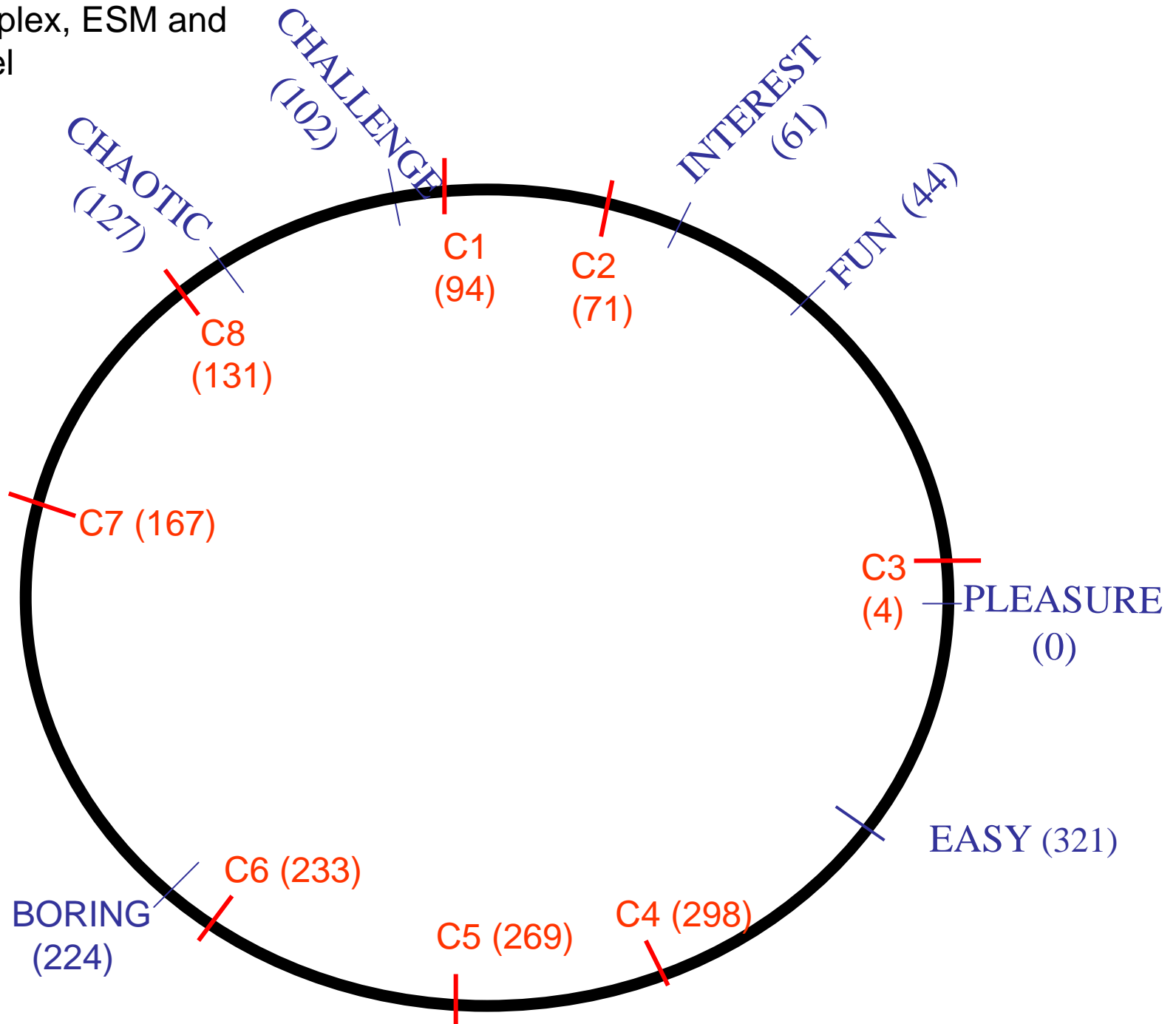
Sample 1, DRM



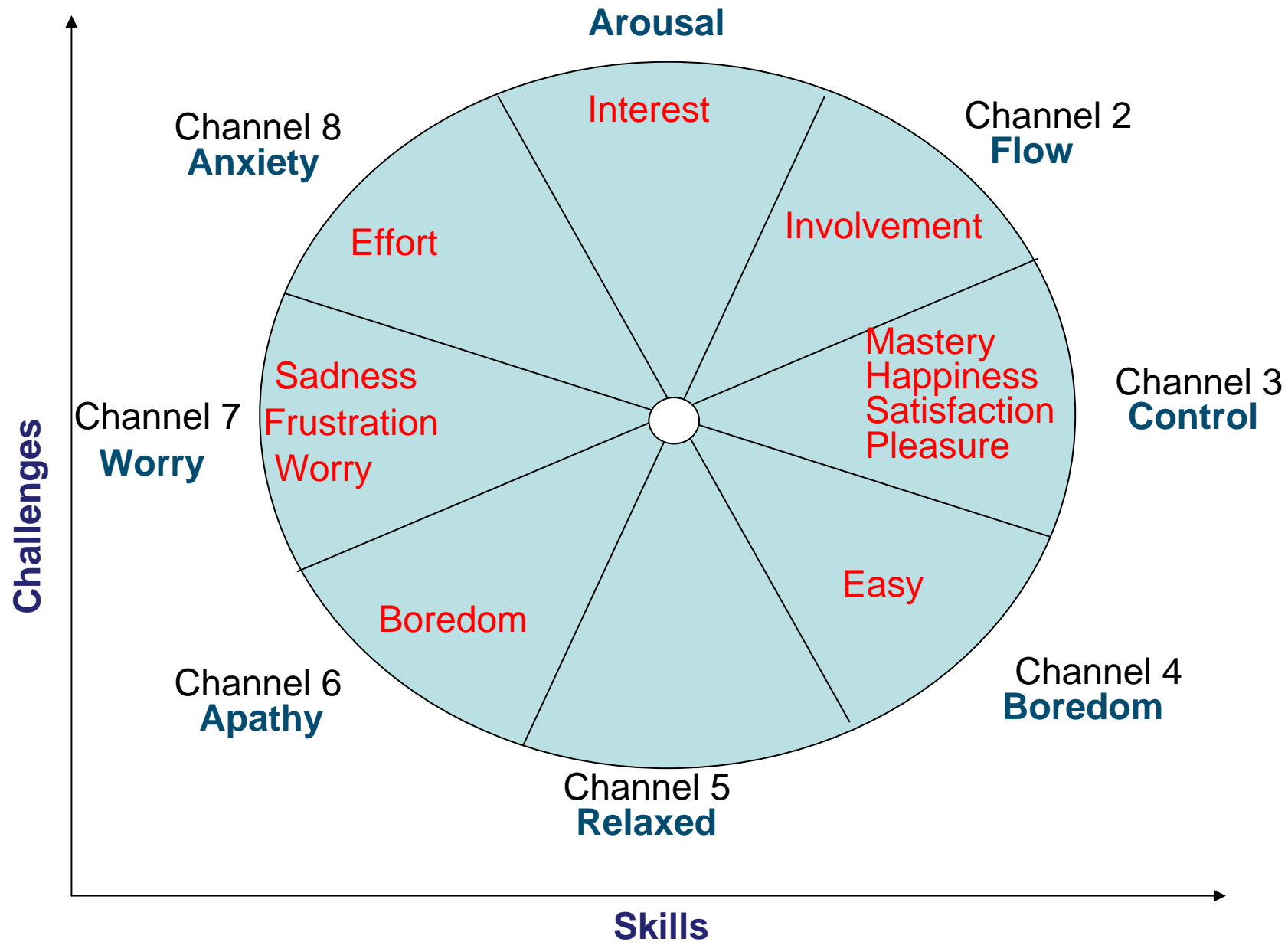
Sample 1, DRM



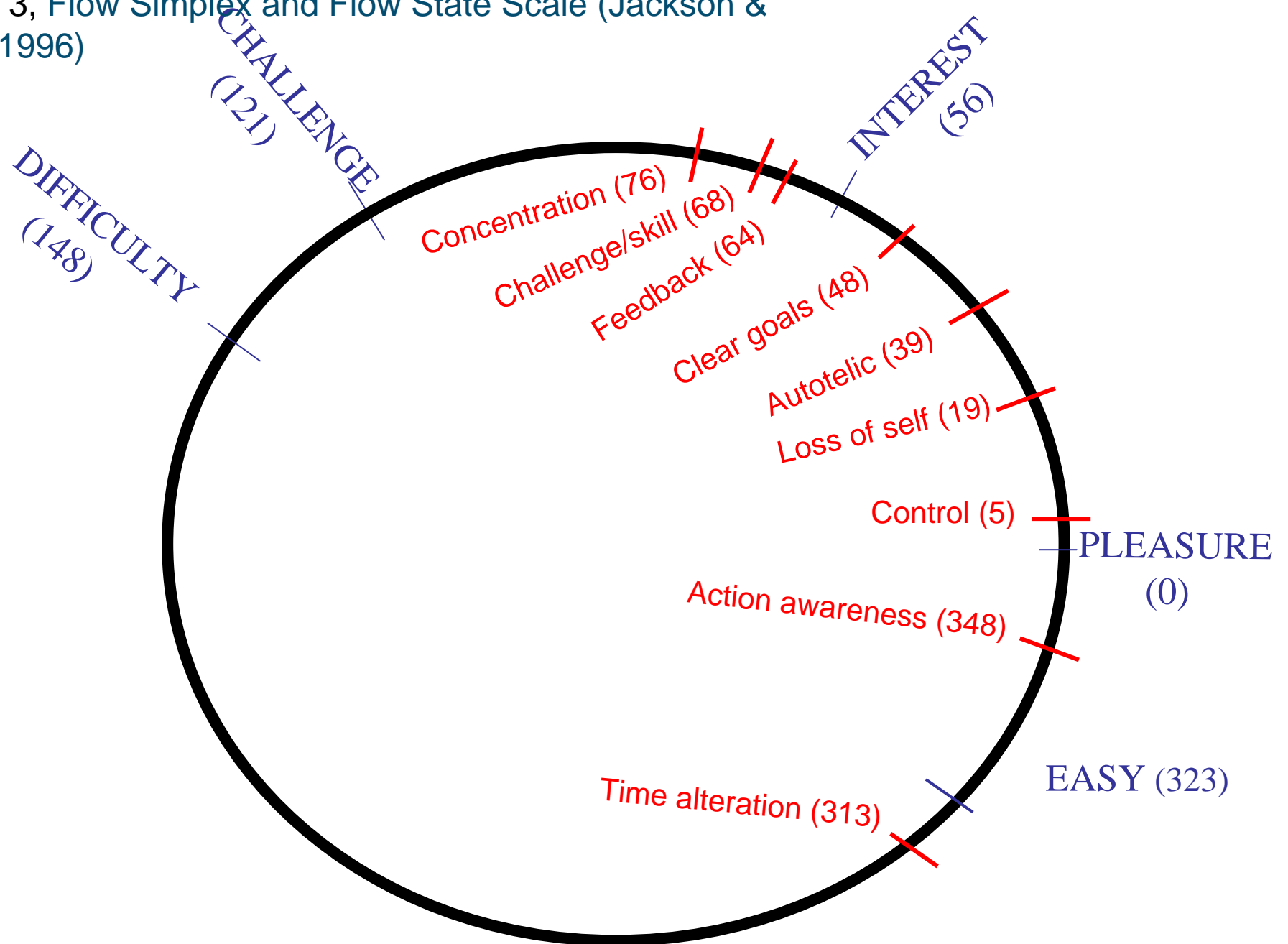
Sample 2, Simplex, ESM and fluctation model



The CSR and experiences

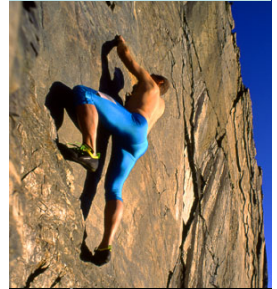


Sample 3, Flow Simplex and Flow State Scale (Jackson & Marsh, 1996)



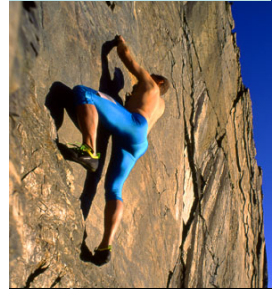
Results – different approaches

- Core work seem to foster flow experiences (perceived as interesting and engaging)
- CSR works to predict interest/concentration
- The fluctation model analyses only the CSR in relation to the pre-defined channels, but the simplex analysis shows that sampled experiences and emotions do not fit very well with the channels.
- The flow state scale does not seem to measure one thing called flow, but a whole range of different experiential qualities



Concluding remarks

- Similarity: focuses on the dynamic interaction of person and environment, and based on the interest in “the good life”
- Difference:
 - psychometric approach
 - Theoretical basis in emotion theory
 - Treatment of circular representations of experience
- Results show that the different approaches used *empirically* explain flow quite different, even though they theoretically are quite equal
- Measuring both emotions (flow simplex) and challenge-skill-ratio may be more sensitive to predict real flow experiences



- Thank you for your attention!

