LEARNERS AND LEARNING:
The importance of affect
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FACT: Many students lack motivation, find classrooms irrelevant, make little process in learning, may not become useful members of society.

FACT: Many other students show enthusiasm in the classroom, learn the language well, take away from their classes very important life skills as well as language skills.

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FACT: Sometimes, no matter how hard we prepare our material, our classes are unsuccessful.

FACT: Sometimes we can experience the magic of seeing deep and lasting learning going on in our classes.
Affect refers to a wide range of phenomena that have to do with emotions, moods, dispositions and preferences.

(Oatley and Jenkins)
The mind without affect isn’t really mind at all.

(Joseph LeDoux)
The dinosaurs of the future will be those who try to live and work only from the head.

Dr. Robert K. Cooper
THE TRIUNE BRAIN

(Dr. Paul MacLean)
Brain Activity in States of:

- High Challenge, Low Stress
- Stress, Anxiety, Threat or Induced Learner Helplessness
The truth of the matter is that about 99% of teaching is making students feel interested in the material.

(Noam Chomsky)
Success in learning depends less on materials and techniques and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom. (Earl Stevick)

- Success in learning depends less on things — and more on people — and the affective side of learning
Affect in language learning

Individual factors
- motivation
- anxiety
- learning styles
  - self-concept, self-esteem

Relational factors
- crosscultural
- classroom
IN A PET SHOP

A: You are the shop assistant

B: You want to buy a tropical fish. Ask how much it costs, how to take care of it, etc.
CARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE ACTIVITIES

- They have personal meaning for students
- They are examples of real communication
- They take into account mind, emotions and the body
- They offer choice
- They facilitate good group dynamics
Technique is what the teacher uses... until the real teacher is there.

(Parker Palmer)

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“To know” and “to do” is part of being a good teacher...

but above all “to be”.
Lecturer
Teacher
Facilitator

knowledge of the language, of methods
...and of ways to create a
psychological atmosphere
conducive to high quality learning

It includes the consideration of what
happens inside and between the
people in the classroom.

(Adrian Underhill)
After a class that didn’t go well, what do you do?

- Complain to your colleagues
- Get in a bad mood
- Blame the weather, the students or... yourself
- Eat chocolate

Will any of these help you?

What can help you?

**REFLECTION**
LEARNING

EXPERIENCE

REFLECTION
Process of reflection

- Think of a situation where things didn’t go very well.
- Remember all the details about what happened and how you felt.
- Investigate reasons for behaviors.
- Generate multiple explanations for what happened.
- Decide what changes could be made so in future situations things could go better.
LANGUAGE OF EMPATHY

Positive situations:
  How wonderful (exciting, nice...)!
  I’m really happy for you.
  Well done! Good job! Wow!
  Congratulations. That’s terrific!
  That’s the way to do it.
  You are really lucky.

Negative situations:
  Oh, dear! That can’t be.
  Oh, no! What a problem!
  That’s too bad. I’m so sorry.
  What a pity! Poor you.
  How awful (terrible, dreadful, embarrassing...)!
A very good friend is coming to visit you.

Your flat has been broken into again.

Today is your birthday.

Someone stole your wallet/handbag.

You have just been given a 20% raise in salary.

You have a terrible toothache.

You’ve just won a free trip to anywhere you want to go.

You lost your keys and can’t get in to your house.
Exchanged in ELT conversation class in Seville, Spain

Teacher: Antonio, what did you do last weekend?

Juan: I goed to a big party and met Shakira.

Teacher: No, I went to a party. Carmen, what did you do last weekend?
Active Listening

To do:

- Empathize, don’t judge
- Listen with attention to what the speaker is saying, to both the verbal and non-verbal language.
- Show interest and understanding
- Stay with the speaker – don’t interrupt
The Chinese verb ‘to listen’

耳
眼
心
you
undivided
attention
Revell and Norman 1997
Learning is first intermental – between minds that interact – and only later does it become intramental. (Vygotsky)
Group dynamics: study of the life and functioning of groups

- Forming
- Consolidating
- Performing
- Problem-solving
- Ending
to live together as brothers...

as fools.

or we will die together

We must learn

(Martin Luther King)
We must learn to live together as brothers....

or we will die together as fools.

(Martin Luther King)
We must learn to live together as brothers…. or we will die together as fools.

(Martin Luther King)
a) Before the year ends, think what you would wish for your classmates. Choose at least two of them and send them a note with your wishes.

Dear ____________

b) Comment in class on the notes you have received.
Group Dynamics and Language
Learning: An affective matter.

- Attentive, relaxed students learn better.
- An emotionally secure atmosphere encourages students to speak.
- For effective interaction it is important for students to get to know each other.
- Group dynamics influences how we feel in the classroom and that influences what we learn.
Using only the textbook greatly limits your capacity to participate in innovative and creative teaching.

Leo Van Lier
To be sure it is a fair test, I'm going to give you all the same task. All you have to do is climb that tree over there.
Multiple intelligences, multiple ways to learn
Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf

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Roald Dahl, *Revolting Rhymes*
Activating Mental Imagery

- Having different sensory experiences without an external stimulus.
- Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting in the mind (with the mind’s eye, the mind’s ear...)

![Illustration of a person with a thought bubble containing a musical note.](image-url)
It is impossible to think without mental pictures.

Aristotle
I postulate images as the basis for mind.

Antonio Damasio

(winner of Príncipe of Asturias Prize for science, 2005)
In language learning work with mental imagery can:

- Increase learner’s cognitive skills, their memory and their creativity
- Enhance their motivation
- Strengthen their self-concept
- Help to focus their attention
- Improve their reading and listening comprehension
- Provide things they want to say when they speak or write
Paivio’s Dual Coding Theory and second language learning

It is especially important to learn the second language in association with appropriate nonverbal referents – either visible or in imagery – which represent the knowledge of the world. (Alan Paivio)
I consider the concept of the ideal self the most powerful and versatile motivational mechanism. When we think about our ideal self - the attributes we would like to have -, it helps us to formulate goals for our future and to reach them.

Zoltan Dörnyei
Doug Brown’s Visualization Game

Visualize yourself speaking the language fluently and interacting with people. Then when you are actually in such a situation, you will, in a sense, have been there before.
I ALWAYS HAVE SOMEONE TO TALK TO IN ENGLISH
What was Sara wearing?

What happened when Michael came in?
POSITIVE QUALITIES

love
harmony
beauty

goodness
compassion
understanding

confidence


courage

cooperation

friendship

determination

order

serenity

happiness

joy

gratitude

generosity

light

energy

enthusiasm

vitality

humility

patience

loyalty

freedom

optimism

peace

wisdom
The end?
No, it’s only the beginning
We all create many images.
Let's tune in to the ones that take us where we want to go.
Tom: What did you use to do when you were a child?

Mary: I used to play games with my sister.

Did you play football when you were little?

Tom: No, I lived in the country and there was no one to play with.

Mary: When did you move to the city?

Tom: We came here when I was 15. Did you live here when you were little?

Mary: Yes, I did.
You are worried about your students’ attitudes towards English. You want to promote a positive feeling towards the language and you need to know what your students’ attitudes are.

Tools
questionnaires, video/audio tapes, interviews with students, student or teacher journals, conversations with colleagues