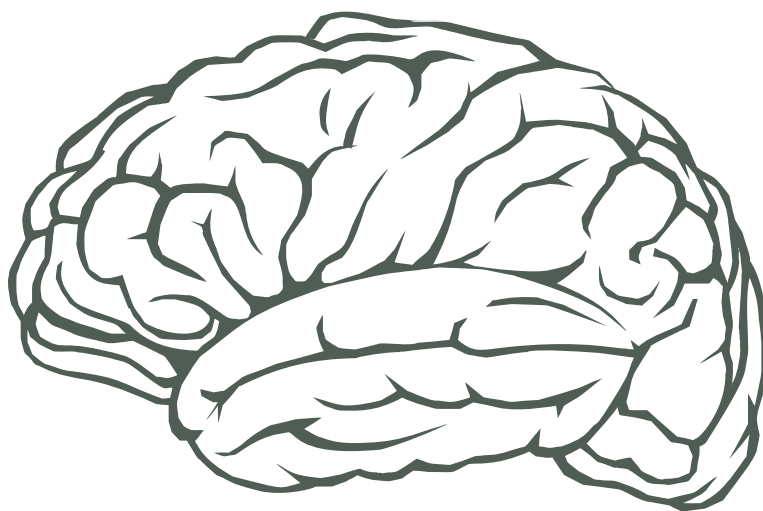


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# Incorporating Emotional Intelligence into Foreign Language Teaching

An approach to teaching speaking skills

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Erasmus+ Programme  
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An Emotionally-intelligent Approach to  
teaching Speaking in a forEign Language

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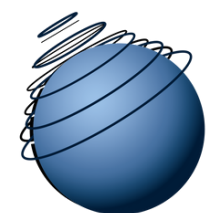
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In recent years, the concept of **Emotional Intelligence (EI)** has been gaining recognition as an important soft skill to have across many sectors, education being one of them. For the purpose of this handbook, emotional intelligence will be defined as the ability to perceive, control, and express one's emotions. EI affects how we perceive ourselves and others around us and has a great influence over interpersonal relationships.

When it comes to language learning specifically, emotions play an incredibly important role in how we interpret those around us, deal with frustrating experiences, and express ourselves. Historically, the foreign language classroom has not always taken the emotional state of learners into account. In fact, some of the most relied upon methods of language instruction have been known to cause great stress, especially when it comes to speaking.

For example, between the 1500s and 1800s, the Grammar-Translation Method was used in formal teaching. This approach to formal language tuition focused, for the most part, on the technical features of language such as morphology, syntax, a profound knowledge of

grammar rules and their memorisation, and vocabulary and the meaning of words. It was entirely a teacher-centred methodology employing authentic texts, grammar books, and a focus on the written language. One big issue with this method was that it ignored the importance of speaking, so much so that when students tried to apply their knowledge in the real world, they were barely able to speak at all, even after years of study.

Many more methods of foreign language teaching have cropped up and been dismissed over the years due to some shortcoming in one way or another. The communicative approach of the late 1980s and early 1990s is the approach we often see in teaching materials today. The communicative approach holds the belief that it is the message, not the form, that has importance when communicating. Learners are allowed to make mistakes, as long as the mistake does not interfere with their message; this creates an environment that fosters confidence as learners know that it is not the end of the world if they make a mistake.

Today, in the post-COVID era, there is a growing acknowledgement that teaching languages has been changed forever with more classes migrating to Learning Management Systems such as Moodle. An innovative approach to teaching is required, one based on EI with as humanistic a touch as possible. Nowadays, the value of applying and heightening one's emotional intelligence has become almost commonplace in many places of work and education. Language learning is no exception, and this handbook intends to present how emotional intelligence is related



to language learning and also provide practical activities which apply this approach that teachers can use immediately in their classrooms.

Because the scope of language learning is so broad, this handbook will focus on only one of the four essential language skills: speaking. Speaking stands out among the other core language skills as one that is both especially important and especially difficult to master. For those who intend to learn a foreign language to enter the worlds of work or education, speaking is a skill that typically evokes immense anxiety in adult learners (Esmaeeli et al., 2018). Those with a good command of their speaking skills in a foreign language have been shown to be able to integrate better into a host society due to increased opportunities for employment and socialisation with locals (Zorlu & Hartog, 2018; Fernandez-Reino, 2019). Conversely, those with poor speaking skills are less likely to find employment or socialise in the target language.

This booklet has been written within the framework of the Erasmus+ project “An Emotionally-intelligent Approach to teaching Speaking in a forEign language,” or “EASE” for short. The goal of the project is to improve the effectiveness of adult education in a foreign language by applying an emotionally-intelligent approach to teaching speaking skills.

This handbook is intended for use by foreign language teachers of adults who wish to include more emotional intelligence in their lessons in order to reduce learner anxiety and encourage the development of speaking skills. The academic literature on the topic is plentiful, and a synthesis of the current research is provided in each section of the booklet.



# EI Theory and its Connections to Teaching Speaking in a Foreign Language

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## EI in the Foreign Language Classroom

Many language teachers use or have used some elements of the many methods and approaches popularised over the years, but until recently, the personal and emotional content in the form of EI is still not a focus in teacher training courses today and the communicative approach does not explicitly intend to foster EI among the students – it is merely a by-product. A ‘human’ element is still lacking in today’s teaching materials, and this has become especially important in the COVID and post-COVID era where many learners experienced isolation and a serious lack of human interaction.

Of all the linguistic skills to acquire, speaking is arguably the one that requires the most emotional awareness in order to successfully achieve a high competence in this skill. In recent years, researchers have come to realise the important role that emotions play in learning, especially in learning speaking skills in a foreign language. Emotions have been known to override the learning process and make language acquisition near impossible when they are not

properly regulated.

Speaking is known to be the most stressful and tiring aspect of language learning for adults, contrary to children who tend to use the same methods of acquiring their second language as they did their first. Often, children do not feel the embarrassment or shame in mispronouncing a word and will often freely experiment with grammar and vocabulary in play. However, learning a language as teens and adults can be an extremely stressful experience. They are putting themselves in a situation that they cannot control, but emotion management while dealing with frustrating experiences can mitigate these challenges.



## Benefits of Applying EI to Speaking Instruction

The overarching benefit of applying EI techniques in the foreign language classroom is the increased ability among students to manage and tolerate situations that are stressful or frustrating. Those with high levels of EI are not as easily defeated by difficult situations and are more likely to persevere in the face of adversity, especially when it comes to speaking in a foreign language (Esmaeeli et al., 2018).

Given that speaking is a common stressor for adult learners, having a greater ability to deal with that stress undoubtedly allows the learner to

overcome their negative feelings about the situation and continue trying. To support this point, one study found that there is a predictive nature between one's EI and their speaking ability when coupled with reflective thinking (Afshar & Rahimi, 2016). In short, students with good levels of EI who engage in self-reflection can accurately be predicted to also have a good command of their speaking skills. What this implies for the foreign language teacher is that equipping students with the emotional tools to overcome challenges can therefore increase their chances of success when attempting a speaking task.

Furthermore, the use of EI teaching techniques in the foreign language classroom has also been known to foster self-confidence among the students. Teachers

who embed EI aspects into their speaking lessons create an environment where students feel welcome to express themselves, unafraid of judgment and free of embarrassment.

The atmosphere of being *allowed* to struggle and knowing how to express it can also foster a sense of self-confidence within the students; they know that even if they struggle, they are able to reach out for support from their teacher or fellow classmates. Teachers are thus encouraged to create an atmosphere where trial and error is supported; students who are not afraid to make mistakes are less encumbered by their feelings of embarrassment and more willing to attempt to use new vocabulary, grammar, expressions, and generally experiment with language.

In turn, this self-confidence also has the potential to create motivation within the student. Someone who feels that they are successfully able to express themselves and communicate their message to the listener will feel good about this fact; they know that if their message



was not lost, even with errors in pronunciation, grammar, etc., then they must be capable of successfully communicating in the target language. They feel the confidence and thus the motivation to continue learning and experimenting with new words, forms, and expressions.

Another added benefit of EI applied to teaching speaking skills is the **reduced learning-related anxiety felt by the learners**. Because learners with good levels of EI are better able to overcome difficult situations, they experienced reduced anxiety as a result. They are sure that whatever problem they encounter is surmountable, so they do not worry when meeting hardship.

One of the reasons for this is that teachers who create an open and accepting environment for their students make themselves approachable, that is, students feel comfortable enough to ask questions and receive feedback without feeling ashamed or embarrassed.

This is especially true of pronunciation; students who have a good rapport with their teacher tend to be more comfortable receiving feedback on pronunciation than those who do not have a good rapport with their teacher (Sajad & Saeed, 2017).

Foreign language teachers should therefore do everything they can to establish a positive rapport with their students knowing just how much it can affect their learning journey. A **humanistic approach to teaching** allows for the creation of interpersonal relationships in the classroom, among both teachers and students, which are conducive to learning and cooperation. Such an atmosphere allows for 'ego boundaries' to be challenged, meaning that students can put down their walls and be open to making mistakes and learning from them (Sajad & Saeed, 2017).

## Application in the Classroom

Embedding EI into speaking activities could begin with processes the teacher employs in class. For example, the following behaviours should be encouraged in class and followed by teacher and student alike. These include the following:

**Treat people well.** It should go without saying, but respect and empathy can go a long way. Showing gratitude and making people feel valued are base-level requirements for treating people well and establishing a positive atmosphere in the classroom.





**Focus on one thing at a time.** Do not overwhelm the learner with too much information; cognitive overload prevents the learner from absorbing information and can be a source of stress.

**Provide the vocabulary to be able to express oneself clearly.** It is important to teach students the words to be able to properly express themselves, so focusing on emotions vocabulary and discussing emotional concepts can give them the tools to do so.

**Give clear and consistent directions.** Giving directions that are too complicated can make them shut down before even starting the task. Take their language levels into account and try to limit the number of steps in any given activity.

**Take responsibility for failure.** As an example to the students, the teacher should be prepared to take responsibility for something that they have not done right. Admitting to a mistake and being willing to make up for it lets the students know that it is ok to make mistakes and that they can be overcome.

Show personal commitment to the subject and class. Students are often able to read the 'energy' of the teacher; if they realise that the teacher does not want to be there, then neither do they. Commitment can have a knock-on effect, so teachers should demonstrate their commitment to the class whenever they can. Simply greeting them with a smile is a start.

**Involve everyone in the task and do not push too hard.** Tasks should be designed where the participation of everyone is required and no one can just take a back seat to learning. On the other hand, where a student feels extremely uncomfortable with a task for any reason, do not force them to do something they are uncomfortable with. Know the difference between encouraging participation and forcing it.

**Focus not only on details, but also on the bigger picture.** Providing context as to why they are learning can be a source of motivation for the students. Focusing too much on small details can be discouraging and make them lose sight of their end goal.

**Employ differentiation strategies in class.** Good teachers know that no two learners are alike, so it is essential to make sure that their lessons take different learning styles and levels into account. Designing activities that allow students of varying levels to participate means encountering less discouragement for those on the lower end of the spectrum, and motivation to go above and beyond for those on the higher end.



**Promote peer teaching and learning.** A foundation of creating positive rapport in the classroom is to allow students the opportunity to work together and learn from each other. With the proper emotional management tools in place, the students should feel open to receiving feedback from each other, as long as it is given in an appropriate way.

Provide constant encouragement during speaking and pronunciation activities. As a huge source of stress for the learner, giving feedback on these activities can be a sensitive matter. Try balancing out the negative comments with positive ones during such tasks so that the learner is not weighed down by feelings of failure and embarrassment.

**Vary the interaction patterns between learners, technology, and teacher.** Lessons that do not switch up these patterns can get monotonous and thus bore the learner, and boredom is certainly at the forefront of emotions which create barriers to learning. To keep engagement and motivation at its height, switching between teaching and learning mediums is a good practice.

**Avoid singling anyone out.** During post-task error correction, one way to reduce embarrassment is to draw the whole class' attention to an issue without saying whose mistake it was. The person who made the mistake will know it was their work, but not feel like the whole class is judging them for it.

**Demonstrate empathy.** It is important for teachers to show students that they understand their struggles and that they know learning a foreign language is not easy. Not only will this add to the positive rapport between teacher-student, but also make the student feel more comfortable admitting the difficulties they are encountering.



# Breaking Down Emotional Barriers to Learning

When we talk about overcoming emotional barriers in language learning, the first thing we must do is identify the existence of these possible socio-emotional barriers. Too often, the learning of a second language (L2) is only related to cognitive and/or subject-specific aspects (grammar, pronunciation, etc.), but other aspects that may be hidden behind the failure in the acquisition of a foreign language are not always taken into account.

Perhaps as a reference we need to go back to the Affective Filter hypothesis which reflects the importance of

emotional aspects in the process of second language acquisition (Krashen, 1987). This refers to certain affective (in other words, emotional) variables which prevent or facilitate the learner being more or less receptive to receiving the language. Different variables affect the intensity of the affective filter, and consequently, the degree of input the learner is able to receive. Depending on the degree of affective filtering present in the learner, more or less comprehensible input will be acquired. In this sense, if the message is not understood, the emotional component of the student may be affected; they may feel stress, anxiety or insecurity.

According to Krashen (1987), the variables related to success in second language learning are: motivation,

self-esteem, and anxiety. These three attitudinal factors can be measured from the learner's internalised emotional factor and the one developed in the classroom itself. If the level of the filter is high or intense, even if the learner understands the message, a high degree of input will not be acquired, as the information will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition. Conversely, if the affective filter level is low, the learner will acquire more input and be more receptive to receiving the language.

To reduce the negative effects of the affective filter, we have the following recommendations related to each variable:

1. **Motivation:** the activities implemented should be of interest to the learner; they should be creative, relevant, authentic, and always taking into account the learner's prior knowledge, learning context, and goals.
2. **Self-esteem:** certain assessment tools and mechanisms should be used for self-assessment, giving feedback to learners, and peer assessment.



3. **Anxiety:** a clear procedure and strategies to help with learning activities should be conveyed. For example, show rubrics before the activity and always give examples of the task. Likewise, real, meaningful and contextualised communications should be carried out so that the student is more predisposed to participate.

Other authors such as López and Morera (2017) point out that learning is nothing more than the combination of two important factors: the affective and the cognitive. Furthermore, Goleman (1995) in his landmark book *Emotional Intelligence* points out additional factors that influence oral performance, including self-esteem, risk taking, empathy, attitudes and motivation.

Self-esteem and confidence are crucial factors in any kind of learning,

and this especially applies to oral performance in a foreign language. Self-esteem is what gives learners the power to speak in a foreign language. We will discuss this topic further in the section on confidence-building while speaking.

It has also been found that risk-taking behaviours are associated with oral performance in language learning (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). Students who err on the side of caution generally are more reserved about trying out new vocabulary words, grammar forms, and expressions. Generally, risk takers (and by association, extroverts) tend to experiment more with language and achieve higher levels of oral performance. If teachers encouraged more risk-taking linguistic behaviours in their students, they

could help to break them free of the anxiety that holds them back. Activities which encourage creative expression can bring out more risk-taking linguistic behaviours as students are asked to manipulate language in creative ways.

Furthermore, empathy also has an influence over oral performance in a foreign language. Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of others and is considered a key to successful communication, even in one's native language. It allows interlocutors to put themselves in the other person's shoes and helps to establish a positive rapport with others. Learning to speak in a foreign language is largely a social activity (working in pairs and groups, presenting to the class, etc.) so it is important to have a mutual understanding of each other among the students; this will encourage them to accept corrective feedback more easily and avoid misunderstandings.

Moreover, learners' attitudes certainly affect their level of language acquisition, both negatively and positively. Students with a negative attitude towards speaking activities will not benefit nearly as much from them as someone who enjoys them. Learners' attitudes towards themselves can also create a barrier to learning if they have low levels of self-esteem,



as described above. Teachers are therefore encouraged to shift students' perspectives where their negative attitudes are getting in the way of learning; this can be done in a variety of ways, including reflective thinking which will be discussed in a later section.

## Anxiety Reducing Strategies in the Classroom

In general, educators have two options when dealing with students who experience anxiety. They can:

- Help them learn to manage the anxiety-provoking situation
- Create a less stressful learning context

It should also be noted that there is sometimes a mismatch between

students' and teachers' perceptions of classroom anxiety, with students tending to express a stronger opinion of its prevalence.

On the other hand, as noted above, one of the main roles of language teachers is to facilitate effective conditions for language learning by ensuring that the classroom climate encourages interaction between learners without experiencing anxiety, which will depend to a large extent on the interpersonal relationships between the teacher and learners (and between learners themselves). This will be discussed further in detail in the following section.

Other strategies that a teacher can use in the classroom to reduce student stress have to do with

## Demotivating Factors

Foreign Language teachers should be aware of factors which cause students to lose motivation and thus create barriers to learning. One study concluded that the following were the top demotivating factors in oral production in a foreign language ((Mendez Lopez & Tun, 2017):

- Peer comparison
- Corrective feedback
- Lack of classroom community
- Anxiety about public speaking
- Negative self-perception
- Test anxiety

giving corrective feedback, which has been identified as a demotivating factor in language learning and is thus a sensitive topic



for learners. Teachers must be careful with the way they give corrective feedback so that it does not damage a student's sense of self-confidence. One strategy teachers can use is selective error correction; this is when a teacher does not point out every single mistake a student makes, but rather focuses on the major ones. Too much criticism is bound to demotivate the student, whereas focusing on a few key points can actually be a positive learning experience for them. It is advisable as well not to interrupt the learner when they are speaking as this can throw them off their train of thought and make them nervous.

Small group work also provides a suitable context for learners to work on their speaking in the target language. Small group work or work with familiar interlocutors proves to be a low-stress activity in which learners seem to feel

competent and comfortable in communicating orally in a foreign language. Inter- and intra-group synergy tends to be greater than the sum total of individual efforts, meaning that when grouped together, students can fill in each other's gaps in knowledge and learn from each other. Teamwork provides learners with the opportunity to receive feedback from their peers, practise answers beforehand, and ensure that they are correct or acceptable, all of which results in reduced anxiety and increased participation and learning.

Cooperative group learning has the ability to create a more positive affective classroom climate while individualising instruction and increasing learner motivation. There is sufficient evidence that

cooperative learning, when compared to competitive or individualistic learning experiences, is more effective in promoting intrinsic motivation, which leads to less anxiety, greater engagement in the task, more positive attitudes towards the subject, and a more cohesive relationship between peers and the teacher.

In summary, the following is a non-exhaustive list of anxiety-reducing strategies to lessen the affective filter in language learning:

- Helping learners to understand that episodes of language anxiety are most likely transitory and will not necessarily become a persistent problem
- Building self-esteem and self-confidence in learners who have developed anxiety as a persistent trait by providing them with opportunities for them to perform well in the language classroom
- Encouraging moderate risk-taking in a calm, non-threatening environment
- Reducing competitiveness in the classroom
- Avoiding comparing students to each other or anyone else
- Making the goals of the class very clear and helping students develop strategies to achieve those goals
- Encouraging students to relax through music, laughter or



- games
  - Offering rewards that are meaningful to learners and that help to encourage the use of language
  - Enabling learners to recognise the symptoms of anxiety and identify the beliefs they hold about anxiety
- 

## Creating an Open and Accepting Atmosphere in the Foreign Language Classroom

So, we have established how important emotions can be in the learning process, but how exactly do teachers create a classroom atmosphere that helps to minimise the affective filter? Every person is an individual, so the definition of a 'good' learning environment will vary from person to person. Nevertheless, there are similarities in learning that are common across the board. One thing most learners have in common, for example, is the effect of a positive and accepting learning atmosphere in the foreign language classroom.

The importance of a positive classroom climate on the willingness of students to learn is now undisputed. It is determined by the quality of the relationship between teacher and student as well as by the relationship between the students themselves. Both teachers and

students are responsible for creating an atmosphere that enables a feeling of security and thus satisfaction, an atmosphere that is free of stress and anxiety (Méndez & Fabela, 2014).

While teaching, it is impossible not to notice that learning involves more than just being exposed to new information. At the beginning of a new year or term, teachers have the responsibility of establishing a classroom environment that is favourable for helping all students



work cooperatively in order to learn, feel safe and be comfortable as a member of the class. Classrooms that encourage emotional well-being create an atmosphere for both learning and emotional development. A warm classroom environment can lead to increasing students' confidence, their level of comfort in the class, and the potential for positive relationships to develop within the class. A good rapport between teachers and students is essential for a positive classroom climate and can lead to greater accomplishment.

One of the most important criteria in establishing a positive learning atmosphere is pleasant human interaction. When people treat each other with mutual respect and goodwill, learning simply takes a

different form (Hannah, 2013). Moreover, praise can work wonders. When teachers offer praise instead of constant criticism, students feel valued and enjoy learning more. As a result, students are not only more motivated to actively participate in the course, but also express their opinions more freely on various topics and interact with each other during speaking opportunities. They actively listen to each other, ask supplementary questions and try to communicate their thoughts despite language barriers.

Although giving praise and compliments can boost the learners' confidence, it is important not to lose sight of giving corrective feedback when a student makes a mistake, so be careful not to instil a false sense of confidence in your students where they believe they are at a higher level than they truly are.

Overall, teachers should be able to observe their students' behaviour and body language to gain insight into their emotional state; they should be able to recognise when an activity brings enjoyment and knowledge to their students, and likewise, when a lesson may be losing their interest or causing them too much stress. Understanding these signals can keep them more engaged when you recognise the need for adjustment in your lessons.

A good guidance model for implementing a positive learning climate is Seligman's (2012) PERMA Model, which identifies five elements that, together, help to create a sense of personal wellbeing:

1. **Positive emotions:** can be reinforced through gratitude activities, e.g. writing down good things that happened recently which have sparked positive emotions.
2. **Engagement:** can be achieved through encouraging students to focus on the present moment and to facilitate moments of flow, a state of intense focus on the task at hand. e.g. discussions, creative exercises, challenges, etc.
3. **Positive relationships:** can be facilitated through ice-breakers and regular team-building exercises





4. **Meaning:** can be achieved through making students aware of their values and character strengths

5. **Accomplishment:** a sense of accomplishment can be fostered through setting clear and achievable goals for their learning experience

It is also important to note that a teacher's role is much more than simply being a source of academic learning for the students; they also facilitate the psychological growth of the students. In this context, we want to underline a few tips for identifying students' emotional states and encouraging the development of EI:

Encourage eye contact: there is a mind-body connection associated with empathy.

Learn to recognise facial expressions: the teacher can show pictures of faces and ask students to read what emotion is being expressed.

Notice posture: invite students to notice the posture of others and what it indicates about their mood.

Name that emotion: even the act of naming the emotion one is seeing or feeling can help them understand it. Is this person happy, irritated or confused?

Recognise tone of voice: much like the expression on our faces, our tone of voice can convey a lot about our feelings (sometimes even more than we intend to

## Characteristics of Emotional Intelligence

An essential component of teaching is building strong relationships with and among students taking into consideration **five characteristics of emotional intelligence** which, according to Goleman (1996), consist of:

1. **Self-awareness:** recognising how your emotions affect those around you.
2. **Self-regulation:** staying in control of your emotions
3. **Motivation:** understanding *what* you want to do and *why* you want to do it.
4. **Empathy:** being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes
5. **Social skills:** the art of making an emotional connection with communication

show). Foreign language class is the perfect opportunity to explicitly discuss tone.

Listen for understanding: encourage students to listen with the intention of understanding rather than just completing the activity.



Now let's look at some concrete examples that can help create a pleasant atmosphere. A book written by Aff et al. (2014) provides fifty methods, practical tips and suggestions that strengthen the student-teacher relationship and create an accepting learning atmosphere. The authors apply neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) techniques to their strategies which have been extensively studied and proven to be effective.

One suggestion they give is to use **linguistic precision**. The words that teachers choose unconsciously trigger feelings in students that either help or hinder learning. Often, students directly associate the teacher's words with other concepts and content those make it easier for them to acquire the

new information. Because of this, teachers should pay attention to the expressions they use. It is better to replace "must" or "should" with "may", "can" or "want". Words like "sure," "calm," "natural," "easy," but also "master," "solve," "easy," "good," "yes," and "joy" or "enthusiasm" trigger positive chains of associations. Especially with new content, teachers should make sure that the words surrounding the lesson create pleasant associations.

Another piece of advice concerns **mistake-friendliness**. Mistakes reflect learning states and learning processes, so the teacher should make sure that the classroom is a mistake-friendly learning space and they should set a good example by developing a positive 'mistake culture.'

Furthermore, we can also use ice breakers, concentration games, 'getting to know each other' activities and role-playing games in order to create an open atmosphere in the FL classroom. For example, we can ask the students to use the (first) letter of their name to name a feeling that they often feel. (Peter-pride, or Maria: M- motivation, A- anxiety, R- relief, I-isolation, A-anger) Afterwards, the students can talk in groups or in pairs about the situations in which they have had these feelings.

Other similar games like the autograph game (Find someone who,...), Bingo, Two truths and one lie, 5 numbers about me, Find 10 things in common, The hot seat, "Would you rather", etc. are some common activities which provide a relaxed and open atmosphere and can be played at almost all language levels. These types of activities can be fun and can help students to feel comfortable. They break down barriers that might exist between students and make it easier for students to communicate with one another.

In addition, teachers can show pictures of people in different situations and students can verbalise what the people might be feeling. This can spark discussions about



other situations in which people would have similar feelings. After that, students can formulate questions about these pictures and conduct an interview on a partner. For example, they can ask, “when was the last time you felt as annoyed as the woman in the first picture? What did you do?”

Furthermore, for advanced levels teachers can also prepare roleplay activities with different situations associated with strong feelings such as anger, joy, frustration, fear, dissatisfaction etc. Some example situations could be making a complaint, winning the lottery, getting angry with the neighbours, or any situation that would typically evoke emotion. After the role play, students can reflect in groups on the feelings and report on their own experiences.

Another activity for advanced learners could be to tell a story together. Each student can say one or two sentences and the next student should continue the story. If you want to increase the difficulty of the task, you can divide the students into two groups. One

group will write down words that they will show to the others while telling the story. The second group will tell the story, but while speaking they will have to incorporate the words shown by the other group into the story. This activity not only supports students' creativity, but also encourages collaboration and demands active listening.

It can be said that creating an open and accepting atmosphere is the basis of a successful lesson. Teachers should therefore assume the role of researcher in their own classroom first. Before employing strategies to overcome foreign language speaking anxiety, foster motivation, and increase foreign language performance, teachers should get to know their students and their attitudes toward oral production to shed light on the emotional barriers that may be holding them back when it comes to their willingness to engage in speaking activities.



# Increasing Fluency using an EI Approach

According to linguistic research, a high level of EI is associated with a high level of fluency in oral production (Afshar & Rahimi, 2016). To increase adult learners' fluency, foreign language teachers should integrate EI activities into their lessons not only to increase EI within their students, but also themselves. Speaking lessons should ideally be connected with activities that evoke emotions so that the learners feel compelled to speak more and improve their oral production skills.

So, how does one increase both the EI and fluency of learners? First, let's start with a classic definition of fluency as stated by the linguist Skehan (2009);

fluency is defined as "the capacity to produce speech at a normal rate and without interruption." Note that fluency refers to how well a learner communicates meaning rather than how grammatically accurate their speech is. Learners can therefore be fluent without necessarily being accurate when speaking, so it is an important distinction to make when discussing oral production.

## In the Classroom

There is a variety of activities that can be implemented in the foreign language classroom which apply EI techniques to increase fluency. For example, teachers can run **self-reflection workshops** that help students understand their emotions surrounding different aspects of language

learning and navigate solutions to the issues they are facing. During the sessions, students will be able to engage in an in-depth reflection of their own fluency and what causes them difficulty. This will differ from individual to individual; for instance, some students will discover that they are too worried about accuracy to speak quickly, some will realise that they tend to translate directly from their mother tongue, and so on.

Additionally, teachers should embed opportunities to build interpersonal relationships into their fluency activities. Students who worry about judgment from their peers are much less likely to feel comfortable and confident in their speaking, leading to hesitation and a lack of fluency in their speech. They may become so nervous to speak in front of people that they stutter or seemingly forget how to speak, causing great disruptions in their fluency.

## Tips for Teachers: Fluency Activities Using EI

One way to improve fluency is to give students preparation time for speaking activities. For a student



who gets nervous before a speaking activity, allowing them some rehearsal time can work wonders for their confidence and their ability to communicate fluently. Students should be given enough time to write their answer in advance, or at least mentally prepare it, before being asked to speak (if preparation time is appropriate for the activity). This prepared speech will help them not only feel more comfortable before speaking, but also during because they know they can rely on what they have prepared if they falter or forget what they were going to say.

Having a response prepared also allows the brain to focus more on fluency rather than being distracted by accuracy. A teacher could, for example, ask the students to prepare

an answer to a discussion question that they will share with the class. Before sharing, the teacher can go around and correct any mistakes before the student actually speaks. This means that the student doesn't have to worry about accuracy as it was already pre-approved by the teacher, so they can mentally tend to other aspects such as speed and pronunciation, leading to better fluency.

Furthermore, teachers can use the power of repetition, especially when combined with pair work. One such activity you can implement involves doing a dictation paragraph working in partners. The teacher can identify 2 paragraphs from any text that is suitable for their students' language levels, appropriately cite the source, and leave some lines

underneath for the writing part. Make sure that half of the papers have 1 paragraph, and the other half has the other paragraph. Distribute the papers so that each pair has the 2 different paragraphs and make sure that they cannot see what's on the other's page. Then, the partners dictate their paragraphs to each other as the other writes them down. This should be repeated for as many times as it takes for both partners to write every word of the paragraph.

Naturally, the students will correct each other's pronunciation if there is a communication barrier. Furthermore, the more they read their paragraphs aloud, the more confidently and fluently they will read them as they repeat them more and more. Not only does this activity improve fluency, but also students' relationships with each other if the corrective feedback is given gently. On the other hand, harsh feedback can create a negative atmosphere, so it is suggested that the teacher do a brief lesson on appropriate feedback if this might be a concern in their particular class.

Moreover, students' fluency tends to increase when they are talking about a topic that is emotional, whether it's something they are passionate about (like a cause) or something that brings up fond memories. Even



negative emotions can be a catalyst for fluent speech; anything that evokes emotion in the learner makes them more motivated to communicate their message and worry less about accuracy than speed.

We will discuss the value of reflective thinking in the following section, however it should be noted that this is a valuable tool for improving fluency. If students can identify their emotions surrounding their language fluency and discuss their thoughts openly, together the class can come up with solutions or strategies to overcome their difficulties. This can be done with any language skill.

Lastly, a positive rapport among everyone in the class supports fluency as well; feeling at ease allows the learner to drop their guard and speak freely without worrying that their teacher or classmates are harshly judging them. Giving students plenty of opportunities to work in pairs and groups can help to establish this rapport in the classroom, and this helps to break down any emotional barriers that might impede them from speaking fluently (Klippel, 2011).

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## Confidence-Building While Speaking

Because of the emotional factors involved with speaking in a foreign language, it is a common occurrence for adult learners to struggle with confidence. As teachers, it is important to instil the confidence our students need to be able to express themselves orally. Speaking in front of people, even in one's native language, can be nerve-inducing indeed, and public speaking has been a recognised phobia for many years. Adult learners may have a mental list of worries, such as not knowing enough words, having imperfect grammar, or pronouncing something incorrectly, leading to difficulty with or even avoidance of speaking.

When adult learners engage in a speaking activity in

their foreign language class, they experience a range of emotions that may impede them from being able to perform at their best. Nervousness stems from a fear of failure, and learners without confidence can become overridden with nerves when they must speak in the language they are learning. This anxiety can even become so extreme that it takes a physical form such as trembling, blushing, sweating, and the inability to maintain eye contact.

Suffering from anxiety can cause



slow or inaccurate speech and an inability to concentrate, which only exacerbates their confidence issues and starts a vicious spiral of negative emotions surrounding speaking activities. Once trapped in the cycle, it makes it difficult for students to tackle their fears and try speaking again, which in turn can cause issues in their personal and professional lives which may depend on their communicative abilities. A person may even give up entirely if their anxiety gets the best of them. Therefore, teachers of a foreign language should strongly consider incorporating practices into their daily teaching which fosters self-confidence among the students.

Thankfully, there are strategies teachers can implement in the classroom which work to build

students' confidence and consequently, decrease their anxiety about speaking in particular. Below is a list of strategies to do just that.

### **Decrease students' self-criticism**

As was discussed in the section on creating a positive classroom atmosphere, establishing a mistake-friendly culture can support your students' confidence. Without the fear of judgment and harsh criticism, they can feel confident that whatever mistakes they make will not be the end of the world for them, and in fact can be a great learning opportunity. Trying to flip your students' perspective on mistakes from something to be feared to a new learning opportunity can help increase their confidence when doing speaking activities.

Teaching them that mistakes are normal and that everyone has a different strengths and weaknesses can allow students to accept themselves and feel confident that if they practise enough and find what works best for them, they will be able to overcome the difficulties they have been encountering.

### **Reflect on negative thoughts**

*"What are people thinking about me?"*

*"What if my face turns red?"*

*"What if they ask something I don't know the answer to?"*

*"What if I pronounce something incorrectly?"*

During a speaking activity, a flurry of worries may be rushing around in your students' heads, impeding the learning process and making it extremely difficult to take in new information. Teachers are therefore encouraged to imbed reflective thinking exercises into their lessons. Students should be able to identify the negative thoughts surrounding a specific issue and discuss potential solutions with their teachers and peers.

They can engage in activities like splitting up their worries into things they can and can't control, which may help to relieve anxiety. They can ask themselves questions such as,



“who can I ask for help with this problem?” “So what if my face does turn red, then what would happen? Will worrying about it change that?” and “What are my language learning goals in the bigger picture?” Engaging in reflective thinking about negative thoughts can help students feel more confident in themselves once they identify steps they can take to overcome obstacles. More information on reflective thinking in the classroom will be in the following section.

### **Establish goals and create a learning routine**

Speaking of reflection, setting long-term and short-term goals can build students’ confidence as well. Sometimes, students may underestimate themselves and not realise that a goal of theirs is actually

achievable; on the other hand, some students can also overestimate themselves and experience frustration later down the line when their goals aren’t achieved as easily as they first thought. That is why it’s important for teachers to help students engage in realistic goal setting and manage their expectations when it comes to language learning. Realising that what seemed like an unachievable goal is actually reachable can be a very confidence-building experience for learners.

Moreover, teachers can also support students in creating a learning routine that aligns with their personal goals. If a student’s end goal is improving their grammar, the teacher can suggest some ways of improving and possibly some resources for practise outside of the classroom. It may seem time-

consuming, but this individualisation of the learning process instils even more confidence in students when they can see a clear path to achieving their learning goals.

### **Take physiological factors into account**

Let’s not forget the influence that physical aspects such as regular breathing and proper posture can have on learners. Practising mindfulness in class can actually increase your students’ perceptions of themselves (Ghasemi et al., 2020).

### **Use authentic materials in class**

The use of materials such as books and films directly from the target language community has been found to support the confidence levels of language learners (Ahmed, 2017). Learners who are exposed to natural speech and understand it tend to have better self-perceptions when it comes to their own language skills. If they have heard a word or phrase used in its regular context, they do not have any doubt that what they are saying is accurate. Furthermore, exposure to authentic audio or audio-visual materials also helps learners grasp pronunciation, leading them to feel more confident when pronouncing words themselves. They are also better able to recognise and understand various accents within the target language





community. Lastly, reading helps learners acquire many new vocabulary words, so using authentic sources as texts can also inspire confidence in your students when they find that they know how to use more and more words.

The overarching advice here is to ensure that your students have the right perspective about their own learning journeys; understanding that mistakes are learning opportunities and that everyone learns at different

paces are the stepping stones to creating an environment that supports self-confidence among the students. It should not be the case that they are terrified and crippled by the thought of going out into the world and interacting with a native speaker; some nervousness is natural, of course, but it should not be preventative. Rather, students should gain a sense of self-confidence in your class that will give them the courage to be able to successfully use the language outside of the classroom.

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## Reflective Thinking in the Foreign Language Classroom

According to 20th century philosopher John Dewey, reflective thinking is an act of searching, hunting, and investigating to discover material that clarifies a doubt (1933). The purpose of reflective thinking is to create worthwhile ideas. One of the details highlighted by John Dewey in his work was that, in general, people tend to overthink without ever taking action. Therefore, reflective thinking is important because it frees one from hasty, impulsive, or purely routine activities. Reflective thinking allows us to discern affective, blind, and impulsive action from intelligent action; it also helps us to identify consequences in advance.

Using reflective thinking in a classroom can be a transformative factor in social behaviour, giving

students new ways of thinking and interacting. Also, rather than moving from one lesson to the next, reflective thinking can help students recognise their strengths and weaknesses. In this way they can learn to organise and communicate their thoughts, and they can evaluate if they really understand. As a teacher, it is important to promote analytical skills and encourage students to become more curious, autonomous, and aware.

Teachers are often not aware of the type of teaching they are doing, or



of their decision making in the classroom. They often tend to develop a series of routines, habits and work strategies automatically without stopping to reflect on them. Teachers who self-reflect can identify and better understand problems and difficulties, allowing them to react, examine and evaluate their teaching methods and make decisions about changes they need to make to improve their attitudes, beliefs and teaching practices.

It is important not only to reflect on teaching, but also on the classroom environment. If teachers actively reflect on what is happening in their classrooms, it allows them to discover whether what they teach corresponds to what their students learn. Reflective thinking will offer the teacher a better

impression of the classroom environment and practices. This level of self-awareness will lead to professional growth in their teaching, and thus make appropriate assessments and decisions.

For foreign language students to be able to bridge the gap between theory and practice, it is necessary for teachers to help them foster reflective thinking. Also, as a foreign language teacher it is important to help students find different ways of thinking without having to translate the language they are learning.

Students should be provided opportunities to actually think in the language they are learning. Typically, learners of a foreign language translate everything from their native language to their target language, which is mentally taxing and frankly not a sustainable

way to learn language. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to implement activities that involve some form of critical thinking in the target language. This may be a thought-provoking discussion, a debate, or a problem-solving activity in groups. The main takeaway is to create a stimulating learning environment where students are not just receivers of knowledge, but active participants in their learning.

The use of practice in reflective thinking is related to experiential learning. Students should first be taught to think about what they have learned or done in class, and then analyse it and decide how they would do it differently the next time. These theories can be from what they have learned academically, or from their own personal experience.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of some strategies teachers can use to stimulate reflective thinking in the classroom:

- Stimulate thinking by asking students open-ended questions.
- Provide different opportunities for decision making, such as problem solving, looking at scenarios with different outcomes, getting them to choose different solutions and reflecting on their results.
- Encourage students to participate through social



- networking groups, chat, forums, etc., thus creating a group debate and stimulating critical and collaborative thinking.
- Encourage students to ask themselves “*what next?*” This will make students link the learning to their future personal or professional goals.

Sometimes it can be difficult for students and teachers to work on reflection, especially in a busy academic context; however, it is essential not to stop practicing it, especially if the circumstances are difficult. It is not necessary to take a lot of time in doing this as even 5 minutes may be enough to start a reflection. Teachers can offer short reflections to make student engagement easier and more

manageable, ensuring that students focus on the things that are important for their learning development.

Reflective questions that teachers can give to their class can be as simple as:

- *What did you learn in class or in your class group?*
- *Did the class motivate you?*
- *Did you feel sufficiently engaged?*

- *What was the best part about today’s class, and what was the worst?*
- *Did the teacher help you achieve your goals?*
- *How effective was your learning?*
- *In what ways do you want to continue learning?*

These reflective questions can be asked at the end of the week or after each lesson. Students need to be offered strategies that can work for them when they are learning a new language that they do not understand or if there is a communication problem when they are learning.

When learning a language, sometimes insecurities can arise, and this can make it difficult for learners to check their mistakes. Therefore, teachers need to highlight that when learning a language, it is important to reflect on their own use of the language and how they learn it best. Students will be able to have better more developed goals if they reflect on their own learning.



# Conclusion

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It is clear that emotions can create barriers and pathways to learning which we as teachers must learn to manage. Teachers who ignore the emotional aspect of learning, especially when it comes to one of the most stressful language skills, are taking away an opportunity from their students to relieve a lot of the difficulty and pressure they may experience when attempting to improve their speaking skills in a foreign language. Using EI to improve the learning experience isn't just a nice idea that gets briefly inserted into

every teacher training course, but an essential part of teaching that can make or break a student's learning experience.

The following section of this booklet contains practical lessons which apply many of the theories and suggestions discussed above for language levels A1 – C1 on the CEFR scale, including activities on confidence building, reflective thinking, emotion recognition, and more.

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## Part II: Lessons

The practical lessons that follow are organised and structured in the following way:

- **Language level** – ranging from A1 (beginner) to C1 (advanced) on the CEFR scale
- **Method** – the type of activity; roleplay, dictation, pair work, etc.
- **Format** – either face-to-face, online, or sometimes both
- **Language focus** – which linguistic features are being practiced within the skill of speaking (pronunciation, intonation, asking questions, giving advice, etc.)
- **Materials** – what you will need to conduct the lesson (pens, paper, white board, projector, etc.)

These lesson plans and materials are merely suggestions, thus you should feel free to adjust them in whichever way you feel is most fitting for your personal teaching context and your students' needs.



# Lesson 1

**Language Level:** A1

**Method:** Pair work

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Pronunciation (target phonemes are /i/ and /i:/)

**Materials:** The materials will be the [Oxford Pronunciation chart](#) (the students can also download the app as well). Also, enough green and purple cards for each student to have 1 of each color.

## Teacher's Notes

- 1 The teacher elicits one word from the students' L1 or co-language. The instructor attempts to pronounce these words to demonstrate the use of the coloured correction cards; they students are encouraged to correct the teacher should they make a mistake. The learners are then presented with the target sounds, and learners using the picture cards, identify the sound;

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- 2 The learners break off into pairs and practice the target minimal pairs;

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- 3 The learners are presented with two sets of FLASH CARDS A and B each containing 20 words each containing the target sounds. Learner A shows the card to learner B, and vice versa. If an error is committed, it should be corrected by their peers by using the green card and correctly repeating the word using the phonemic script on the reverse of the card;

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- 4 The two groups of pairs join making four students, and each new pair selects ten cards and the process is repeated with peer correction;

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- 5 The group comes together to form a circle. A volunteer holds up a card and clockwise the students take turns to say the word. Finally, the teacher reviews errors on the board.

**NOTE:** The EI aspect of the task is reducing the chance of embarrassment felt by pronouncing a word incorrectly; the teacher puts themselves in the position of the students in an attempt to mitigate the embarrassment felt by incorrectly-pronouncing a word. In addition, error correction is done using non-standard colours; red has always been associated with error, so in this case, purple will be CORRECT and green will signify TRY AGAIN.



# Lesson 2

**Language Level:** A1

**Method:** Pair work

**Format:** Face-to-face, also suitable for online

**Language focus:** Future tenses

**Materials:** Paper, writing utensils

## Teacher's Notes

1

This activity will examine what motivates your students to want to learn English while practising talking about the future using will and going to. First, start with a group discussion as a warmup activity. Display the following question: "Why do people learn other languages?" and discuss with the class. Common answers should be for work, education, fun, and necessity.

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2

Next, ask the students to write down their responses to the following questions. Give them around 5 minutes to prepare their answers. You may want to provide sentence frames if they are on the lower end of the A2 level, such as "If I keep learning English, I will be..." and "5 years from now, I will/am going to be..."

- Why are you learning English?
  - If you keep learning, what will your life be like a month from now?
  - What about a year from now?
  - What about 5 years from now?
- 

3

Ask the students to get into pairs and tell them they will be practising active listening. Each student is to ask their partner the 4 questions above and listen closely to their responses. They can take notes and ask their partner to repeat if necessary. They should be prepared to share their partner's answers with the class.

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4

At the end, at least one student per pair must share their partner's answers. They should talk about their partner's reason(s) for learning English and what they plan to do with it in the future. Students should be encouraged to ask follow-up questions to engage in some spontaneous discussion.



# Lesson 3

**Language Level:** A1

**Method:** Partner work

**Format:** Face-to-face

**Language focus:** Emotions vocabulary

**Materials:** Printed cards/images with different emotions, plain paper and pens

## Teacher's Notes

1 The teacher should present the students with a series of pictures or cards with images reflecting different emotions.

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2 The teacher will present different emotions in the foreign language and students will have to determine which image corresponds to the emotion the teacher is presenting.

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The teacher will present the following emotions one by one:

- 3
- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| • Bored      | • Fun         |
| • Admiration | • Pain        |
| • Happy      | • Angry       |
| • Love       | • Afraid      |
| • Anxious    | • Surprised   |
| • In love    | • Lonely      |
| • Disgusted  | • Sad         |
| • Confused   | • Embarrassed |
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4 Students will try to guess each emotion as the teacher presents it based on the picture cards and the teacher will tell them if they are right or not. In this discussion, students will develop their vocabulary by investigating each of the emotions.

**NOTE:** Creating a class discussion and working with emotions will help the class to recognise and differentiate between them. This is basic foreign language learning: they will first acquire the emotional language necessary to understand what happens to them on each occasion, and also to be able to express and understand what others are feeling.



# Lesson 4

**Language Level:** A2

**Method:** Group discussion

**Format:** Face-to-face, also suitable for online

**Language focus:** Adjectives to describe people

**Materials:** paper, writing utensils, jar or container

## Teacher's Notes

1 Write the following four categories on the board under the title "Relationships": someone you get on well with, someone you find annoying, someone you admire, and someone close to you. The people chosen should be different for each category. They can be famous people or people the students know personally.

2 On small pieces of paper, the students write down the names of their people for each category and add them to the jar. In the meantime, write descriptive words and discuss their meanings under each of the 4 categories. Words to describe someone you admire, for example, could be successful, talented, etc. Words to describe someone you find annoying could be frustrating, selfish, and so on. Keep going until you have at least 5-7 words for each category.

3 Encourage students to write down the words they were not familiar with before. Students who feel nervous about speaking can prepare by writing down everything they plan to say beforehand and asking the teacher to review it for accuracy - this will help to establish confidence and break down any barriers caused by embarrassment.

4 You as the teacher can also participate in this activity by adding some names to the jar. Using anecdotes from your own life can increase the positive rapport you have with your students, so they are likely to appreciate your participation.





# Lesson 4

5

Write the following four categories on the board under the title “Relationships”: someone you get on well with, someone you find annoying, someone you admire, and someone close to you. The people chosen should be different for each category. They can be famous people or people the students know personally.

**NOTE:** This activity allows the students to learn a bit more about you and each other and helps to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom. It can be extended into a homework assignment by asking the students to choose and describe new people for each of the 4 categories. The students will describe their chosen people in writing as preparation for the next day. The following day, repeat the activity first thing in the morning as a warmup activity with the new names the students brought in.



# Lesson 5

**Language Level:** A2

**Method:** Pair work

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Discussing feelings and emotions related to music

**Materials:** 6 pieces of music, audio equipment; Interactive White Board (IWB); Whiteboard, Chalkboard; copies of the listening grid

## Teacher's Notes

- 1 The teacher pre-teaches a diverse selection of emotive vocabulary; the teacher displays the vocabulary and the teachers asks the learners to work in pairs and decide which emotions are positive and which are negative; use two emojis: 😊 for positive emotion(s) and 😞 for negative emotion(s); depending on the teacher's discretion and the ability of the learners, the teacher could ask under what circumstances someone would experience a given emotion;

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- 2 The students are asked to choose their favourite piece of music from their phone storage, Spotify or YouTube. They then play an excerpt from the piece of music and then explain why they like the piece;

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- 3 The teacher then demonstrates a numbered-six-box grid. The teacher then plays their favourite piece of music and writes words (verbs, nouns, adverbs) in the box related to emotions, feelings, and anything else that may come to mind whilst listening to music;

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- 4 The numbered-six-box grid is then distributed to each student. The students are told that each box represents one piece of music. They are told they will listen to six pieces of music and they are to write their thoughts, feelings, and emotions in the appropriate box;

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- 5 Depending on the level and competency of the class, the teacher can pre-teach vocabulary related to the music;

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- 6 The teacher explains that the class is to relax and listen to the music. They are to write whatever comes to mind and focus on the feelings and emotions the music provokes;



# Lesson 5

7 The music is played once. The class listens to the music and they begin completing the listening grid;

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8 The class is given two minutes to prepare their notes without speaking to other students;

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9 The class then form pairs or small groups to discuss the notes they made;

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10 The teacher reforms the class. And then elicits from the student their thoughts, opinions, and feelings regarding the music.

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11 Reflection: the class discuss their thoughts of the task, the music and their emotions and feelings that the music provokes. All of Goleman's 5 components of EI are drawn together in the reflexion task. Throughout the lesson, learn are encouraged to examine their emotions and feelings with regard to the pieces of music and reflect on these in the context of the groups and group feedback sessions; the idea is that by sharing their thoughts with the class they can consider how their feelings on a piece of music equate with other class members ideas on the same piece of music and stimulate debate.

Example listening grid:

1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.

**Optional Extension activity:** this could also be made into a kinaesthetic activity with students miming to the music or creating a drama skit.



# Lesson 6

**Language Level:** B1

**Method:** pair work

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Modals, modality; could be, may be, might be, must be; *They could belong to ... because; They might belong to ... because ...;*

**Materials:** pictures of shoes and boots (male, female; work, casual, sports, dress; children's, teens, and adults); jobs and professions; or realia

## Teacher's Notes

1

The teacher brings in some of their shoes and asks the class what they might be used for; the teacher can bring in casual, sports / pastimes and formal shoes including flip-flops and carpet slippers;

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2

The teacher then asks the students:

- *How many pairs of shoes do you have?*
  - *When do you wear them?*
  - *Do women have more shoes than men?*
- 

3

The teacher shows the students a picture of some footwear, and the teacher elicits from the students what type of shoe it might be, who it could belong to and what type of job this person may have, etc.

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4

The teacher introduces another picture and example sentences with the target Forms. The students choose the sentence which they believe match the footwear; the learners may need to justify their reasons and opinions with examples. The teacher could also play Devil's advocate and suggest that the old pair of boots could belong to a teenage girl, and the lobster claw shoes belong to a man, but they would need to say why they believe this and give reasons and examples.

For example:

*This pair of shoes might belong to a businessman because ...*

*This ballet shoes may belong to a dancer because ...*

*These shoes could belong to a builder because ...*



# Lesson 6

5

The class is then given a handout containing pictures of at least six pairs of shoes (See example) and the students discuss amongst themselves who the footwear belongs to. The teacher is free to choose additional pictures of shoes; you do not need to be limited to four pictures; the type of shoes can be selected at the discretion of the teacher. The recommendation is that footwear be chosen and assumptions challenged. The class reform and the learners discuss their findings and justifying their opinions.

This lesson supports Goleman's 5 Components of EI *Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Empathy, Intrinsic-Motivation and Social-Skills*. It seeks to challenge assumptions regarding who uses certain types of footwear. It is aimed at debating the learners' own presumptions about who would use certain types of footwear/footwear and hypothesise as to who could use a type of shoe and why.

**Optional Extension Activity:** the teacher could ask about styles of men's and women's footwear, but this is at the teacher's discretion. This activity could be use with any piece of clothing including hats, shirts, etc.

## Example Shoes:



# Lesson 7

**Language Level:** B1

**Method:** Partner work

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Speaking about strong emotions

**Materials:** White board/chalk board, computer, PowerPoint or another slideshow software, and a projector

## Teacher's Notes

1

The teacher introduces 'strong feelings' vocabulary by displaying a photo or video of someone who is feeling a strong emotion. The students try name the emotion(s) they see, then the teacher reveals the actual vocabulary word. After they are revealed, the words should be written on the board so they are visible to the students throughout the lesson. Which emotions and how many you choose are up to the teacher, depending on class size and timing.

- Note: as this is for B1 level, vocabulary should be appropriate and not too basic – not just 'happy' and 'mad,' but stronger words like 'thrilled,' 'enraged,' 'overjoyed,' 'terrified,' etc.).

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2

The students get into partners .

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3

Then, the teacher presents the same slideshow, only displaying one feeling at a time. The students take turns asking each other about a time where they felt that emotion. Sentence starters can be given to the students as well ("Was there ever a time when you felt...?" "When was the last time you felt...?" "The last time I felt \_\_\_\_ was ..."

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4

Students are encouraged to ask follow-up questions during this activity – "How long ago was this?" "Why did you feel that way?" etc. The goal is to find out as much information as possible about the cause of that emotion.



# Lesson 7

5

After each emotion, students will volunteer to share what their partner said with the class. Each student must volunteer at least once. This will encourage active listening during the activity because they know they will have to repeat it later. This will also serve to build rapport between students as they share their life experiences, and emotional intelligence as they learn to recognise emotions in others and articulate their own.

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6

At the end of the lesson, the teacher will reinforce the vocabulary learned by displaying 5 'ordinary' sentences on the board. The partners then take turns saying each sentence using the tone and intonation of the various emotions they were just introduced to. For example, a sentence might just be 'Some people prefer cats over dogs.' The students would take turns saying that sentence in an exasperated tone, a thrilled tone, etc. This will help to solidify what was learned.

**Optional extension activity:** The following day, students could bring in photos of themselves (or someone else if they don't feel comfortable) feeling a strong emotion, either physically or using a mobile device. The other students can take turns guessing which emotion they were feeling at the time and saying why they think that, then the student whose picture it is can reveal the truth about what they were feeling and the story behind the photo.



# Lesson 8

**Language Level:** B1

**Method:** Partner work

**Format:** Face-to-face

**Language focus:** Storytelling

**Materials:** none

## Teacher's Notes

- 1 The teacher will ask the class to sit in a circle.

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- 2 The teacher will then choose a student to start the activity.

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- 3 The student has to say a sentence to begin a story. To keep it relevant, this could be linked to somebody learning a new language, or any other topic you think will inspire your students to speak.

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- 4 Then, each student will add a sentence to the previous ones, and so begins the creation of a group story.

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- 5 As each sentence is added, and as the stories get longer, the students will have to engage in active listening and repeat the whole story as it is mentioned previously by their peers. If the students lose the story at any point, they can start again by creating another one.

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- 6 At the end, the teacher will do a whole group reflection on the story created, and the use of the foreign language used to construct this story.

**NOTE:** Not only does this storytelling activity encourage active listening, but it also works to create a positive rapport among students; oftentimes the stories created are amusing and create a sense of community in the class when they have all worked together to create it.





# Lesson 9

**Language Level:** B2

**Method:** Partner work

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Expressing problems, giving advice

**Materials:** Template printed on paper, writing utensils

## Teacher's Notes

1

Tell the students that today, they will be taking a walk in each other's shoes. The purpose of the activity is to practice expressing problems and giving advice, along with showing empathy. If necessary, pre-teach some vocabulary related to problems/advice and give sentence frames such as "If I were you, I would..." and "You might want to consider...". The sentences frames given can also focus explicitly on showing empathy; for example, "That must be really difficult for you...." and "I can see how that could be discouraging...."

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2

Give each student a copy of the template shown below. Once they have their templates, each student writes about their worries, frustrations, difficulties, and fears they have in relation to language learning. This should take about 5 minutes and they should be as detailed as possible. It is important to let them know that their answers will be anonymous so they can and should be as honest as possible.

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3

Collect and redistribute the papers randomly. Each student should have a different person's responses.

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4

Give the students another 5 minutes to analyse the problems on the sheet they were given and write some potential solutions in the box below it.



# Lesson 9

5

At the end, students who feel comfortable enough to share their problems with the class should do so, and the person who wrote advice for that problem should say it aloud. Other students are also free to give advice on how to overcome the difficulties described.

---

6

Lastly, engage the students in a whole-class discussion about what the most common difficulties are in the class and what they can do to solve them.

**Note:** This activity works on eliciting empathy and creating a positive rapport between students. Most of the difficulties expressed are likely to be shared by others in the class. Learning that many other people share the same challenges as them can create a sense of comfort and relief in the class.

## Template:

Worries, frustrations, difficulties, and fears you have about learning English

Potential solutions



# Lesson 10

**Language Level:** B2

**Method:** Reflection, presentation

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Presentation skills

**Materials:** Plain paper, colouring pencils/pens, computer, Internet and projector

## Teacher's Notes

1

Before starting this activity, the teacher will play a video to the class explaining first what a brand is and showing some examples so that students have some basic knowledge about branding before preparing their own brand. For example, the following video could be played to the class, through a projector/SMART screen : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKIAOZZritk>

---

2

Once everyone has a basic understanding of what branding is, and has seen some examples, it's time to 'brand themselves.'

---

3

The teacher will hand out plain paper and colouring pencils/pens to each student. This will allow them to open up their imagination and let their creativity flow. The teacher will ask students to write and draw what their personal brand would look like or be called. They should create a brand that describes them.

---

4

1. To guide learners on how to develop their own personal brand, they should consider the following:
  - Think of words and images that describe who you are.
  - Take into account your experiences, what you have lived through, your personality, etc.
  - Identify what makes you different from others.



# Lesson 10

The teacher should also offer the students some basic questions to help them brand themselves:

5

1. *What are your main beliefs and values?*
  2. *What skill set can you offer?*
  3. *What is your message?*
  4. *How will your brand make people feel?*
  5. *What impact does your brand have on other people?*
  6. *What is your niche?*
  7. *What problem do you solve with your brand?*
  8. *What makes you different from other students?*
- 

6

The teacher will give the class 20 minutes to complete this activity.

---

7

Once all students have successfully completed the activity, the teacher will ask each student to go to the front of the classroom and present their personal brand, aiming to answer each of the questions above.

**NOTE:** This will help to establish an open and accepting atmosphere in the class as well as encourage the students to develop empathy when learning about what is important to their peers. Additionally, the reflection element of the activity supports the development of EI.



# Lesson 11

**Language Level:** B2

**Method:** small group work

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Second conditional; *If you were ..., how would your life be different?*

**Materials:** TASK CARD A and B; Interactive White Board; White Board / Chalk Board

## Teacher's Notes

1

The teacher should prepare as many *TASK CARD A*s and *TASK CARD B*s as they need for their particular class. The class will be given biographical information on *TASK CARD A* relating to a character. The characters given should be as different as possible from the student in terms of gender, career, family, etc. Each student will then read and memorise information about their character and be prepared to speak as that character.

---

2

The students then get into pairs and introduce themselves to their partner giving the following information that is contain on *TASK CARD A*: Name, age, marital status, living arrangement, profession, hobbies, family, and likes/dislikes.

---

3

The pairs then swap partner; they are given 5 minutes to prepare questions to obtain the information about their partner's assumed character using structures such as *What do you do in your free time? What does your wife/husband/partner do? What's your partner's name? What things do you like? Etc*; teacher monitors;

---

4

The teacher distributes *TASK CARD B* to each student; the task cards will have one question formed in the Second Conditional; the questions include:

- A. If you were a 22-year-old woman, how would your life be different?
- B. If you were a 45-year-old male garbage collector, how would you vote and why?
- C. If you were a 50-year-old divorced mother of two, how would your life be different?
- D. If you were a 23-year-old undocumented migrant, how would your life be different?
- E. How would your life be different if you were a 27-year-old female vehicle mechanic?



# Lesson 11

4

THINK ABOUT! Safety in the street / personal safety; family expectations; societal expectations; peer expectations; expectations regarding dress and comportment, etc.

The learners are given 5 minutes to make notes on how their life would be different if they were the character on the task card.

---

5

In pairs or small groups, the students answer their respective question giving reasons, opinions, and examples;

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6

The class reform and discuss the outcome of STEP 5 in a class discussion; the teacher may write the following prompts, or variations of them, on the board:

- i. *Do you see yourself as a typical example of your gender? Why or why not?*
  - ii. *What habits are deemed acceptable for women but not for men? Explain.*
  - iii. *Can men wear pink clothing? Why or why not?*
  - iv. *How different would your life be if you were YOU but the opposite biological sex?*
- 

7

Reflective activity: the class discuss their thoughts of the task, the themes and their respective characters and talk about the issues of gender roles.

The biographies and task cards can be adapted at the teacher's discretion to take into the sensibilities of the class. Depending on sensibilities and age of the class, characters can be in same-sex relationships; mixed-race couples; non-conformist irregular professions; different religion or nationality, etc.

This lesson supports Goleman's 5 Components of EI: *Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Empathy, Intrinsic-Motivation and Social-Skills*. By assuming the character of a member of the opposite biological gender and partnering with someone from that gender the components of *Self-Awareness*; in addition, attempting empathise with their peer they will, to some extent, attempt to understand motivations, feelings and concerns and hopefully relate better to them. Overall, the need to do well and learn new material and ways of expressing yourself will be stimulated by the *Intrinsic Motivational* aspect of Goleman's IE. Especially assuming an opposite gender in discussion would be challenging for some but would appeal to Goleman's *Self-Regulation*.



## TASK CARD A example

**Name:** Scott

**Age:** 55

**Gender:** Male

**Marital status:** Happily married for 30 years

**Family:** Wife, 2 teenage children (13-year-old son and 17-year-old-daughter), 1 dog and 2 cats

**Living arrangement:** 3-bedroom suburban home

**Hobbies:** Participates in the local rugby team. Secretly loves baking cupcakes but is embarrassed about it.

**Likes:** Sports in general but especially rugby, grilling meats, throwing parties, crime documentaries, going to the pub with mates, The Beatles, Great British Bake-off

**Dislikes:** Bland food, loud concerts, nosy neighbours, waiting in long queues, household chores, rap music, hot weather, the kids bringing home pets without asking

## TASK CARD B example

If you were a 22-year-old woman, how would your life be different?



# Lesson 12

**Language Level:** C1

**Method:** Pair work

**Format:** Face-to-face, or online

**Language focus:** modals and lexis for hypothesizing

**Materials:** Interactive white board, computer, projector, and slideshow pre-prepared with photographs related to extreme poverty and wealth and the spectrums associated with lack of money or possession of wealth

## Teacher's Notes

1

The teacher introduces several 'strong feelings' vocabulary items to the class related to a photograph of a poverty-stricken area. The teacher elicits additional vocabulary from the learners. The students look at the photo and with the help of the vocabulary discuss what it might be like living in such an environment; this step is designed to appeal to Goleman's *Empathy* component of EI by attempting to understand how others feel.

2

The students form pairs and are given 6 additional photographs related to the subject of poverty and wealth. The learners discuss their feelings regarding the visual content of the photos; they are to hypothesise as to what life could be like for the people who live in such circumstances and examine such areas as:

- Health
- Education
- Work and career
- Relationships
- Leisure
- Food
- Money and debt
- Law
- Old age
- Language

This step of the task is aimed at appealing to Self-Awareness, Empathy, Social Skills, and Self- Regulation.

3

The class come together and present their ideas in front of the whole class, and debate the themes in Stage 1; this aspect of the lesson supports Self-Regulation with regard to debating the ideas in step 2.

4

Individually, the students select one of the 6 photographs, and create and assume an imaginary character, rich or poor, who inhabits the environment in the picture and prepare to present a '*Day in the Life,*' of this imaginary character; this aspect of the lesson weighs heavily toward the students' ability to empathise and relate to people living within a particular context.





# Lesson 12

5 The class splits into pairs and discuss their character with their classmate.

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6 The class reforms and the students present their character; steps 5 and 6 support Goleman's *Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Social Skills* by allowing the students to discuss their feelings towards their character, presenting and discussing their character with a partner through relationship building with their classmate.

---

7 Reflection: the class discuss their thoughts of the task, the themes and their respective characters and talk about the issues of poverty and wealth in their respective context. All of Goleman's 5 components of EI are drawn together in the reflexion task, especially the emphasis on *Intrinsic Motivation* and its emphasis on personal growth.



# Lesson 13

**Language Level:** C1

**Method:** Group work

**Format:** Face-to-face, but applicable to online as well

**Language focus:** Discussing attitudes of the past.

**Materials:** White board/chalk board, computer, PowerPoint or another slideshow software, and a projector; presentation material with sample advertisements and / or TV advertisement on YouTube

## Teacher's Notes

The teacher asks students what they think about a selection of the following issues giving a reason for their opinion. The teacher is free to choose which themes depending on the class dynamic and sensibilities, or the teacher may wish to use their own themes.

- 1
  - Unmarried mothers
  - House husbands
  - Religion
  - Decriminalisation / legalisation of all narcotics
  - Abortion
  - Same-sex marriages / partnership
  - Divorce
  - Illegal immigration
  - Empire
  - Modern-Day Slavery (MDS) / Trans-Atlantic Slavery / Slavery in general

- 2

The teacher focuses on what the attitudes would have been at various times in the past, for example, the 1990s, the 1930s, or the 1840s; the teacher will ask the class to think about what attitudes to the themes in Step 1 may have been in the time periods above. It is at the teacher's discretion as to which time periods to use and themes to discuss.

- 3

The teacher shows the class various advertisements from the 1950s, 60s and 70s (see example advertisements); It is at the teacher's discretion as to which advertisements to use.



# Lesson 13

- 4 The class then breaks off into pairs and discusses the advertisements and what they say about the prevailing attitudes of the era giving reasons and opinions;
- 5 The class is reformed and the groups provide their feedback to the rest of the class, and the points discussed.

**Optional Extension Activity:** The students could discuss what aspects of today's moral outlook could change in the future. Based on how attitudes have changed over the last 50 years, for example.

**NOTE:** This lesson supports Goleman's 5 Components of EI Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Empathy, Intrinsic-Motivation and Social-Skills. It seeks to challenge assumptions regarding people attitudes in the past using advertisements. It is aimed at debating societal changes and changes in attitudes from one generation to the next and attitudes that are currently held in different societies nowadays. The learners' own feelings will be challenges and it is expected that diverse opinions and debate will follow with regards to gender, race and societal expectations of men and women.

## Example advertisements

(Source: *The Guardian*)



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