

# Development of the student-teacher relationship and social-emotional competence in English Language Teaching

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The objective of this e-book is to bring relevant material for the training of English teachers in terms of socio-emotional aspects, addressing the student-teacher relationship, semiotic mediation, the application of the ethics of care in the teacher's conduct, and the development of socio-emotional teaching skills described in the BNCC.

We will present central ideas such as (a) Affect in English Language Teaching; (b) Socio-Emotional Learning; (c) Rapport, its concept, importance, and applications; (d) Mediation and Semiotic Mediation; (e) Social-Emotional Competence at BNCC.

Each section will have questions for reflection about readers' experience as students and teachers. You will also be able to analyze a variety of materials about each of the topics. Scholars, videos, and pictures to promote discussion. In addition, at the end of them, we will see sample activities that promote the ideas proposed so you can develop materials yourself.



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# **Section 1**

## **Affect in English Language Teaching**

## Section 1

# Affect in English Language Teaching



## Time to Think

- Remember when you were a learner, what were the most difficult aspects of learning a language to you?
- In your opinion, do learners' emotions affect their learning process? How so?
- What is the role of emotions in the process of learning a language?
- What is the teacher's role in helping students evolve?
- How can the teacher make learning more affective?

In this first section, we will discuss affect and its role in language learning. We will get into what different authors have already discussed about the topic. We will also discuss some of your experiences and try to make sense of how that can guide us to a more affective practice.

## Section 1

# Connecting experience and ideas

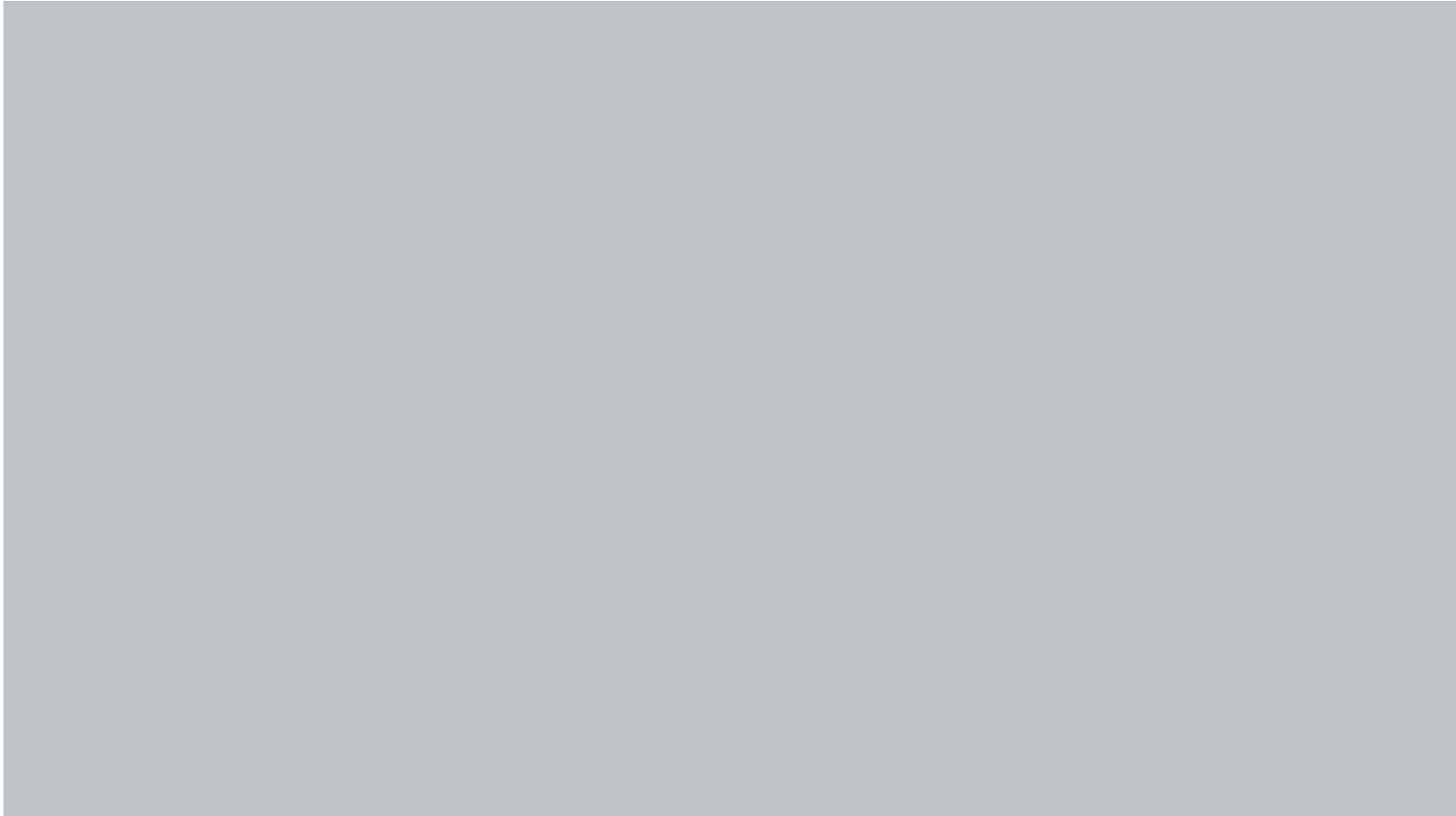
## Affect, Emotions and Learning

How do you define emotions? What are the emotions that come to your mind when you think of learning? There is an important difference between affect and emotion. An Affect is a term that encompasses a broad range of feelings that people can experience. An Emotion is an intense feeling that is short-term and directed to a source. Jane Arnold (2009) in *Affect in L2 Learning and Teaching* uses them interchangeably.

She defines affect as “essentially the area of emotions, feelings, beliefs, moods, and attitudes, which greatly influences our behavior.” Oatley and Jenkins (1996) say that “they are the very center of human mental life.” We will do the same and use both terms interchangeably in this section because we want to talk about the most commonly used notion of feelings, which tend to be for most people, our emotions. The feelings that we have in a daily basis.

You will watch a video about emotions and answer the two following questions:

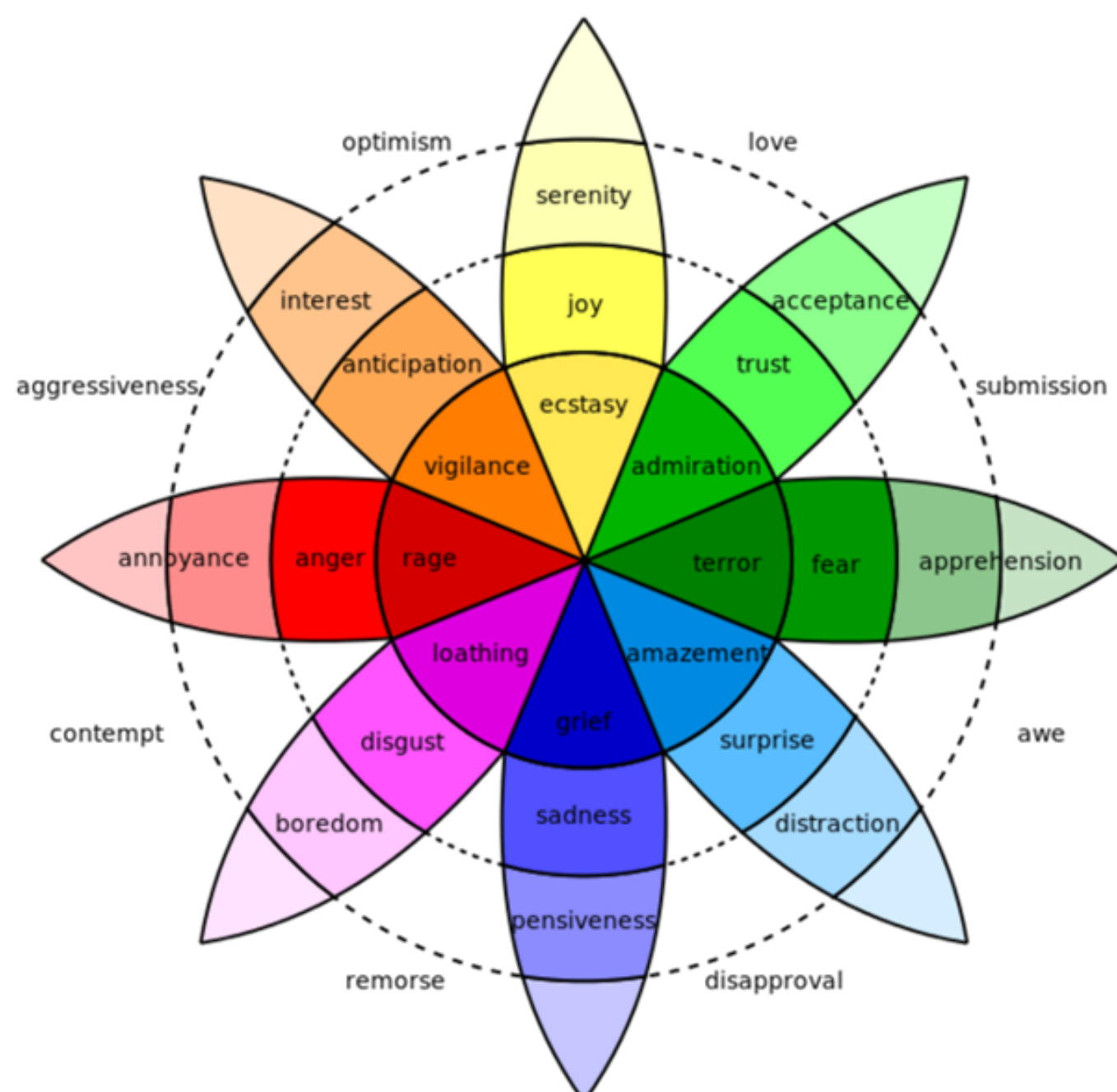
What is the purpose of our emotions?  
What is the role of emotions in our lives?



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X40IMVctSJE>

Could you relate to some examples shown in the video? Can you think of one example for each emotion that was positive to you?

Below, there is an image of a wheel diagram of emotions made by Robert Plutchik in 1980 with eight basic emotions and its eight derivative emotions each composed of two basic ones.



Source: <http://www.fractal.org/Bewustzijns-Besturings-Model/Nature-of-emotions.htm>



- Which of these feelings have you felt in a classroom? In which circumstances?
- Did you ever intentionally promote any of them as a teacher? How? Why?

Let's take a look into this excerpt from Jane Arnold (2009, 145) in 'Affect in L2 Learning and Teaching':

“

“A useful starting point for conceptualizing affect in the area of non-native language (L2) learning is Earl Stevick's (1980:4) affirmation that “Success [in language learning] depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom.” What goes on inside people refers to individual factors such as self-esteem, anxiety, inhibition, willingness to take risks, learning styles, self-efficacy, and motivation. What goes on between people, the relational aspects, has to do with classroom transactions, where an attitude of facilitation and concern with group dynamics are extremely important (Arnold and Brown 1999). Speaking of the affective side of language learning, Scovel (2000) notes that emotions might well be the factor that most influences language learning, and yet he points out that affective variables are the least understood by researchers in Second Language Learning. In part, this may be because research in the field is often of a quantitative nature, and affective aspects of language learning may not always be easy to deal with in a quantitative research frame.”

”

- Why do you think Scovel “notes that emotions might well be the factor that most influences language learning”?
- How do self-esteem, anxiety, inhibition, willingness to take risks, learning styles, self-efficacy, and motivation relate to language learning?

Match the concepts mentioned by Arnolds with their definitions:

1. Self-esteem	( ) the need or reason for doing something
2. Anxiety	( ) a feeling of embarrassment or worry that prevents you from saying or doing what you want
3. Inhibition	( ) the way that different students learn
4. Willingness to take risks	( ) an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future
5. Learning styles	( ) proceed in the knowledge that there is a chance of something unpleasant occurring.
6. Self-efficacy	( ) belief and confidence in your own ability and value
7. Motivation	( ) a person's belief that they can be successful when carrying out a particular task

Definitions taken from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

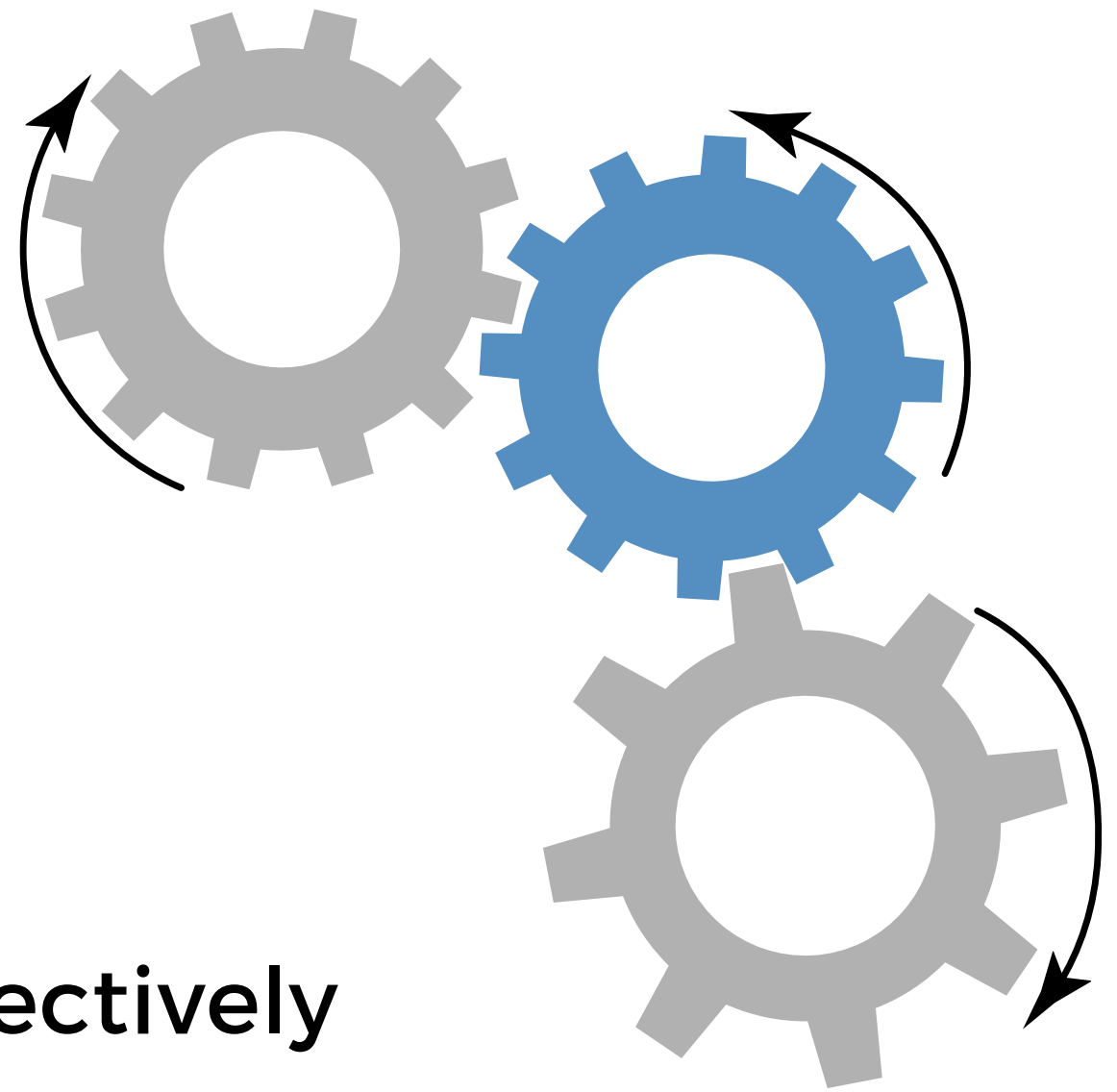
Arnolds also talks about the communicative competence of second language learning related to the affective aspect.

What are some ways to promote 'L2 self-confidence, intergroup attitudes, intergroup climate, and personality factors that favor the construction of WTC? What role can affect play in this area?

— “ —————

The relationship between learning and affect holds for any classroom and any subject, but with non-native language learning it is crucial, given that students' self-image is more vulnerable when they do not yet have mastery of their vehicle for expression –language. Undoubtedly, the main function of language is communication. As teachers we may have communicative goals built into our syllabus, we may design activities for communication, but often our students do not develop communicative competence. One explanation for this can be found in the area of affect. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998:547) consider Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in a second language as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2,” and argue that the main goal of learning programs should be to create in students this willingness. In their model there is a strong connection with affect of the majority of the factors which they found led to WTC, such as L2 self-confidence, intergroup attitudes, intergroup climate, and personality factors. Thus, if we want our students to communicate, to be willing to use the language they are learning, we do indeed need to take into account the many ways that affect will facilitate or undermine this goal.”

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# Ideas and Practice

## Strategies for teaching affectively

When we think of affect in an English classroom, we tend to think of teaching young learners, where it is common to see teachers engaging in songs, physical activities, and a closer relationship with their students. However, even with other age groups of students, how can we promote a more affective learning environment? We will see some strategies that might guide you on certain practices.

According to Patricia Miller (2012), “a teacher’s effectiveness depends on his or her demonstration of the affective characteristics. These are inborn in some of us, but they are also within the grasp of most teachers. Most of us want to be encouraging, enthusiastic, and available, but we just have to be reminded once in a while. The classroom management techniques of peace and fairness are often overlooked, but they can be crucial to effective teaching. These are not techniques that require training, but again, simply awareness. The specific teaching skills of creativity and challenges are associated more with the types of materials and activities, and their level and appropriateness. Ease and facility in these two areas come with experience and familiarity with the syllabus and materials.”

# 1. Get to know your students

It is important for your students to relate to you, to know that they can trust you and that they can share their opinions and tastes with you. For a meaningful and safe environment, teachers must share some aspects of their lives so that students feel that they can share about their own too. When introducing vocabulary about family members, for example, show a picture of your own family, of families of popular TV shows; ask them if they know the characters, if they like them so that you get to know their tastes, likes, and dislikes. When you nurture this kind of engagement from students and interaction in class, you are promoting their motivation and feelings of excitement, joy, happiness. You learn about your students and they learn about you. It helps you to create a meaningful bond that enables learning. We will also talk about that in the second section of this material (rapport).

If students experience success and are stimulated in class, they feel good emotions and want to continue learning; they have the extra strength to face the challenges of learning a new language.

“The principal way that teachers can influence learners’ motivation is by making the classroom a supportive environment in which students are stimulated, engaged in activities that are appropriate to their age, interests, and cultural backgrounds, and, most importantly, where students can experience success”

(Lightbown and Spada, 2018)

## 2. Discuss students expectations and help them assess their learning

Most students arrive to the classroom filled with insecurities and unrealistic expectations of learning a language. It is crucial you have an initial conversation with your students about their expectations and probable misconceptions about their learning process so that when frustration comes, they are able to self-regulate and adjust their goals. Share with them the goals of the lesson and what is expected of them to each step of their learning.

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“Prepare your students for what is going to happen. Tell them the aims of the lesson so that they will know what they are going to learn. Then summarise the lesson at the end, so they have a sense of accomplishment and realise that they have achieved certain objectives. Don't be vague about tests: explain in detail the types of tasks they will contain and the topics that will be covered. Students feel safe when they know what to expect, and they feel motivated to study for tests when they know what it is that they have to revise.”

Katarzyna Wiacek

————— ” —

Some textbooks bring self-assessment charts that students can use to evaluate how they are doing in the areas they are expected to develop linguistically. Let's take a look at one of these charts from a Textbook for A1 learners:

### Learning skills assess your progress

1 Complete the progress questionnaire for Units 1–4.

**My progress: Units 1–4**

**1** Check (✓) the option that is true for you.  
 My progress in Units 1–4 is:  
 Excellent  Good  OK  Not very good

**2** Check (✓) the place on the line for you.

listening	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
reading	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
writing	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
spelling	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
speaking	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
pronunciation	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
grammar	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>
vocabulary	<b>EASY</b>	<b>DIFFICULT</b>

**3** Complete the sentences with words from part 2.  
 I need to review:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source: Life 1 Workbook, Second Edition. Helen Stephenson, David Bohlke.

When students evaluate their own progress, they are able to take responsibility for their learning. Once they are in charge of their own learning process, they are able to achieve different levels of motivation and engagement in class. The teacher then becomes a facilitator of the students' learning process.

### 3. Give students positive feedback.

Most students are just looking to be accepted, to be liked. They either admire their English teachers, or they don't even know who they are. Regardless of the way they feel about you, remember to give them positive feedback. If you are planning for their success in your lessons, they will succeed and when they do, don't forget to say nice things. Katarzyna Wiacek in *Strategies for student motivation* (2015:31) says:

— “ —————

“Don't forget to give lots of praise when you see that your students have worked really hard. It doesn't matter whether what they did was complete a simple grammar exercise or produce a complicated argumentative essay. If they deserve approval, express it. I still remember how one of my students perked up after hearing me say how good their work was.”

————— ” —

Being able to give your students proper feedback can be quite challenging. You can either take notes of their successful language or give them immediate feedback while they are doing the task. I particularly like report cards with personalized messages for each student and/or parent. Having students self-evaluate their work and discussing that with them, praising their effort, and offering them tools to better their learning is key to promoting an affective approach to teaching English.

## 4. Have fun.

Most students are just looking to be accepted, to be liked. They either admire their English teachers, or they don't even know who they are. Regardless of the way they feel about you, remember to give them positive feedback. If you are planning for their success in your lessons, they will succeed and when they do, don't forget to say nice things. Katarzyna Wiacek in *Strategies for student motivation* (2015:31) says: If the teaching of English and the learning of English is fun, both the teacher and the student will be engaged and have positive feelings in the classroom. However, what is fun for me might not be fun for someone else, right? How can we then have fun in the classroom? The answer is the first strategy. Find out your students likes and dislikes. Even on the smallest details, students will have things in common among themselves that might be just enough for you to work with. Patricia Miller in *Ten Characteristics of a Good Teacher* (2012:38) states:

— “ —————

“The humor of one of my teachers had the effect of alleviating my nervousness—of reducing my affective filter. There was a rapport among the students and the teacher because we were all laughing together. We had a good time learning, and we made a lot of progress because we were not afraid to make mistakes; we could take chances. As Krashen would say, the affective filters of the students were low, facilitating acquisition.”

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- Have you ever had a teacher like that? One that made everyone laugh and have fun together?
- What kinds of activities did he or she bring to class?
- Do you think that helped your learning process? How so?

Although having fun with students is important, it is relevant to point an important aspect of humor in class:

— “ —————

“Laugh with them, but don’t laugh at them. It is natural for learners to make mistakes, so if your students make errors, don’t mock them. Correct them and continue the lesson. Accept your students’ ideas. Remember that they haven’t necessarily had the same experiences as you, so their knowledge of the world will be different. You are one of the people who will introduce them to new life experiences.”

————— ” —

Katarzyna Wiacek points out something extremely important. If we do not use humor in the right direction, we might end up causing other feelings in class, such as fear, rejection, and embarrassment. To avoid those things, it is essential that teachers get to know their students really well and be cautious about the kind of humor they bring to class. We do not want this strategy to backfire on us.

## **Section 2**

# **Social Emotional Learning**

## Section 2

# Social Emotional Learning



## Time to Think

- What is the definition of Social Emotional Learning?
- What are the social-emotional aspects that can interfere in learning?
- What is the role of emotions in the process of learning a language?
- What is the teacher's role in helping students evolve?
- How can the teacher make learning more affective?

In this section, we will discuss the rise and development of the term Social Emotional Learning and its role in language learning. We will get into what different authors have already discussed about it. We will also discuss some of your experience and try to make sense of how that can guide us to a more affective practice.

# Connecting experience and ideas

## Defining Social Emotional Learning

“Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—this is not easy.”

(Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV, Section 5)

In the beginning of my career, I was stuck with the feeling of responsibility that it is to become a teacher. Our students look up to us, consciously or subconsciously they judge our behavior and mirror what they think is good. They not only expect answers on the subject we teach but also want to connect with us on an emotional level. The relationship we build with them is unique and the impact we make on their lives may be life-lasting. Social-Emotional Learning takes that into consideration and the development of students’ social-emotional skills.

To begin with, let us analyze some literature on the topic. Elias et al in *Social and Emotional Learning, Moral Education, and Character Education: A Comparative Analysis and a View Toward Convergence*, shows us the evolution of SEL (Social Emotional Learning) with time:



“The Consortium on the School-based Promotion of Social Competence (1994) emphasized the importance of integrating cognition, affect, and behavior to address developmental and contextual challenges and tasks. Prior to this point, the study of intelligence, emotion, and social relations tended to be separate; with Sternberg and Gardner’s work, it became clear that these phenomena were related to one another (Mayer, 2001), although others (e.g., Piaget and Dewey) had noted these interrelationships much earlier. Aristotle’s words suggest that humans have long been interested in how best to manage their emotional and social lives. Most recognize that their emotional reactions to events have significant impact on their social interactions and effectiveness. Many have considered the question of how individuals or groups of individuals might acquire more effective ways of regulating their emotional responses or social relations. Others prefer to frame the question in terms of how individuals or groups learn to guide their behavior in correct or virtuous ways. Many have looked to traditional educational environments as places to make progress towards these aims. Indeed, as one of the primary cultural institutions responsible for transmitting information and values from one generation to the next, schools have typically been involved in attending to the social-emotional well-being and moral direction of their students, in addition to their intellectual achievements.” (2007, p. 250)



## Primary Conceptualizations of Social-Emotional Learning/Emotional Intelligence Skills

The Salovey and Mayer (Brackett and Geher, 2006) approach to emotional intelligence:

1. Accurately perceive emotions in oneself and others and in one’s ambient context,
2. Use emotions to facilitate thinking or that might inhibit clear thinking and task performance,
3. Understand emotional meanings and how emotional reactions change over time and in response to other emotions, and
4. Effectively manage emotions in themselves and in others (“social management”)

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Bar-On’s five key components (1997):

1. Be aware of, to understand and to express our emotions and feelings non-destructively.
  2. Understand how others feel and to use this information to relate with them.
  3. Manage and control emotions so they work for us and not against us.
  4. Manage change, and to adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature.
  5. Generate positive affect to be self-motivated.
- 

Goleman (1998) and CASEL’s (2005) five clusters of SEL, each of which is linked to a collection of skills:

1. Self-awareness.
2. Social awareness.
3. Self-management.
4. Responsible decision-making.
5. Relationship management.

## CASEL's Elaboration of Social and Emotional Learning/Emotional Intelligence Skills (Kress & Elias, 2006):

### 1. Self-Awareness

- Recognizing and naming one's emotions
- Understanding the reasons and circumstances for feeling as one does
- Recognizing and naming others' emotions
- Recognizing strengths in, and mobilizing positive feelings about, self, school, family, and support networks
- Knowing one's needs and values
  - Perceiving oneself accurately
  - Believing in personal efficacy
- Having a sense of spirituality

### 2. Social Awareness

- Appreciating diversity
- Showing respect to others
- Listening carefully and accurately
- Increasing empathy and sensitivity to others' feelings
- Understanding others' perspectives, points of view, and feelings

### 3. Self-Management and Organization

- Verbalizing and coping with anxiety, anger, and depression
- Controlling impulses, aggression, and self-destructive, antisocial behavior
  - Managing personal and interpersonal stress
  - Focusing on tasks at hand
- Setting short- and long-term goals
  - Planning thoughtfully and thoroughly
- Modifying performance in light of feedback
  - Mobilizing positive motivation
  - Activating hope and optimism
    - Working toward optimal performance states

### 4. Responsible Decision-Making

- Analyzing situations perceptively and identifying problems clearly
- Exercising social decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Responding constructively and in a problem-solving manner to interpersonal obstacles
- Engaging in self-evaluation and reflection
  - Conducting oneself with personal, moral, and ethical responsibility

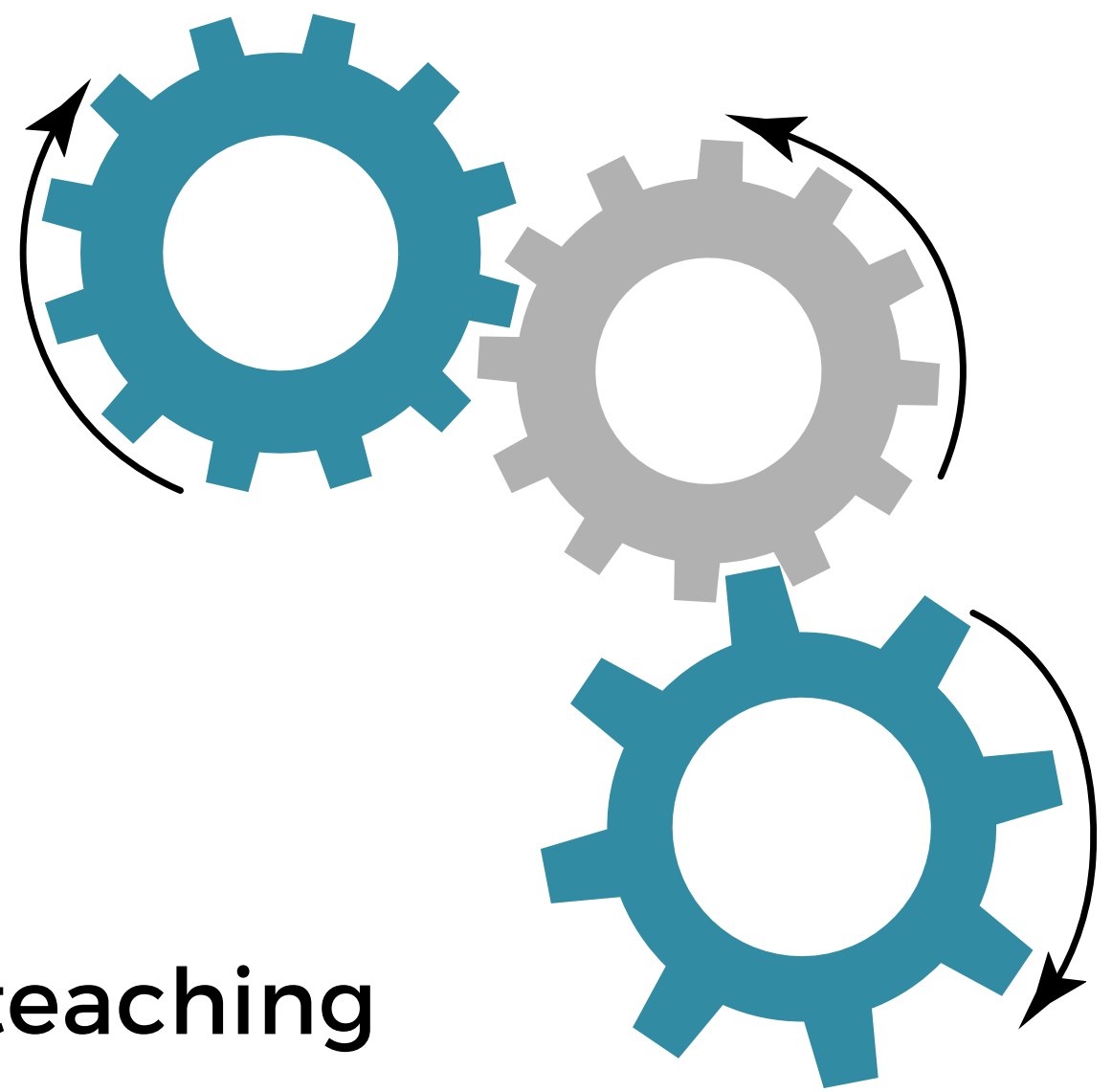
### 5. Relationship Management

- Managing emotions in relationships, harmonizing diverse feelings and viewpoints
- Showing sensitivity to social-emotional cues
  - Expressing emotions effectively
    - Communicating clearly
  - Engaging others in social situations
    - Building relationships
    - Working cooperatively
- Exercising assertiveness, leadership, and persuasion
- Managing conflict, negotiation, refusal
  - Providing, seeking help

Adapted from Social and Emotional Learning, Moral Education, and Character Education: A Comparative Analysis and a View Toward Convergence. Elias et al (2007)

In groups, we will analyze the different perspectives of Social Emotional Learning and discuss:

- Which of these abilities have you developed throughout your life?
- Do you have all/most of them? How did you develop such skills?
- Can you think of classroom activities that you have already done related to the development of such abilities? Tell us about some of them.
- How could you incorporate the content you teach to this theory?



# Ideas and Practice

## Developing strategies for teaching

Why is SEL important? Emotions play an important role in how and what people learn. Care and affection provide a foundation for deep, lasting learning (Elias, Zins, Weissberg et al., 1997).



“In a climate of ever-growing concern about academic achievement, attending to emotions was emerging as a matter of at least as great an emphasis as cognition and behavior. In a landmark book that brought together the research evidence about SEL and academic success from all fields, Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) concluded that successful academic performance by students depends on (1) students’ social-emotional skills for participatory competence; (2) their approaching education with a sense of positive purpose; and (3) the presence of safe, supportive classroom and school climates that foster respectful, challenging, and engaging learning communities. It is the totality of these conditions and the processes they imply that are now best referred to collectively as social-emotional learning, rather than continuing to view SEL as linked entirely, or even mainly, to a set of skills.”

Elias et al (2007) p. 252



Our social-emotional skills are seen by literature as an outcome of the interaction we have with our family, school and society. Learning happens through the development of these skills and achievement of intrinsically related set of goals. Learners who have the social-emotional skills developed since early education can have long-lasting effects not only in school, but also in their relationships throughout life. Now, how can we transform these goals into classroom practice?

When I was in my teaching practicum in college, I tried to connect some of these goals to the topics discussed with my students at the time. I will then present some of them here and we will try to mirror them into your own reality.

When I was in my teaching practicum in college, I tried to connect some of these goals to the topics discussed with my students at the time. I will then present some of them here and we will try to mirror them into your own reality.

Activity	Competences	Production in class
Emojis and students' roles	Recognizing Feelings and Emotions	<p>Mediator: Teacher modeled the activity by sharing her emotions and roles through pictures of her personal life.</p> <p>Content of Mediation: sharing emotions and different roles we have in life</p> <p>Artifacts: Teacher modeled the activity by sharing her emotions and roles she has in her life.</p> <p>She asked students to draw emojis that represented their feelings and asked them to choose from all the roles they have in life, their favorite.</p>
Stages in life	Self-knowledge and empathy	<p>Mediator: The teacher modeled the activity so that students knew how to do each activity</p> <p>Content: images, textbook, song activity, eliciting background knowledge</p> <p>Students had to work in groups to come up with characteristics of each stage of life.</p> <p>They focused on adolescence and produced a poster with images they found in magazines about themselves and presented it in groups, trying to find what they have in common that defines them.</p>
Relationships	Cooperation	<p>Mediator: Teacher monitors the students' work when they work in groups, facilitating anything they might need when doing the tasks</p> <p>Content of Mediation: discussion about relationships and emotions emerged from interactions.</p> <p>Artifacts: Crosswords, Cutting and Gluing pictures in posters, different tasks students had to do in class were conducted in form of group work. Students had to work together to accomplish the tasks the teacher asked.</p>



In the activity where they had to share their emotions and roles in life, the teacher provoked students to reflect on such activity in their everyday life. They analyzed two pictures from the book that was part of an advertising campaign in Canada that reflected two teenagers' identities. The textbook used for the activities was Circles 1, by Kirmeliene, Viviane; Pereira, Carolina; Hodgson, Elaine; Ladeia, Rita, published by FTD in 2017. The units used were Identity, Love, Diversity, Nutrition and Gender Equality



Handmade collage by Martin O'Neill Source: Circles - 1 page 10

Students had to discuss their meanings and relate that idea to their own identities, in their notebooks they had to use English words they knew to define who they were. The task was: "People often struggle to find their identity - that is, to discover who they are. Copy the diagram into your notebook and use it to write down some ideas- don't think a lot about your answers."



Circles 1 page 12.

Students were able to use the words they knew in English to do the activity and also asked the teacher for help so that they could use the words they wanted. Most students were able to use at least five words that described them. They discussed their ideas in groups, allowing their peers to get to know them better as well. Although they used the words in English, the discussion was done in their first language, Portuguese.

After attempting to describe their own identities, students had to analyze a picture of different stages of life (Birth - Infancy - Childhood - Adolescence - Adulthood - Old Age). They also worked in groups to discuss what the main characteristics of each stage of life (biological, psychological, and social characteristics) are in their opinion. Students were allowed to go the board to write a comparison chart.



Source: ([https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwispaThuJ\\_IhUqJrkGHUD8A30QjRx6BAgBEAQ&url=](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwispaThuJ_IhUqJrkGHUD8A30QjRx6BAgBEAQ&url=))

Students discussed the answers on the board and reflected together about the stage of life they were going through and how that affected their identities. Students also compared the characteristics on the board to a definition on the book of adolescence extracted from the World Health Organization website.



The following table shows the outcomes of the students' development of the tasks in class.

Activity	Response
Emojis and students' roles	Students were able to represent their feelings through different tasks. There were discussions about They drew at least two emojis and chose a word that represented their identity better.
Stages of life	Students engaged a lot in group work. They had to describe the emotional, physical and psychological characteristics of each stage of life. They did it first in first language then later we transformed it into English. Students worked together and wrote the information on the board. Each group worked with a different stage of life and all of them shared their answers with the class. Students were provoked to analyze <u>all</u> them comparatively and focus on Adolescence. We spent three classes working with the characteristics of adolescence and how the learners feel about the things they have been going through during this stage of their life. Students shared their feelings, we worked with different modes (song activity, poster production and presentation) and they engaged in all the activities.
Love & Relationships	Students worked with different definitions of love in different cultures. They also had to talk about their ideas of healthy relationships and how to handle difficult ones. Students produced their answers and discussed them in groups. They had to work in most of the activities in groups.

# **Section 3**

**Rapport**

## Section 3

# Rapport



## Time to Think

- Think about the best and worst teachers you have had in all your school life. What were they like?
- Why were they so remarkable?
- What qualities do you find most important in a teacher? Rank the five most important ones.
- Which characteristics do you think you need to develop to become a better teacher?
- Have you ever become friends with your students? How much do you know about your students' personal life?

In this section, we will discuss the student-teacher relationship. What is the role in the learning process and what are some ways to facilitate learning through a healthy, caring relationship with our students? The concept of rapport is key to better understanding this process and drawing strategies to create a safe and respectful atmosphere in our classrooms.

# Connecting experience and ideas

## Defining Rapport

The set of skills that define what a good teacher is for each of us is different. Our ideas of what learning should be like are formed by our own perceptions of the world and each of us brings a background of learning experiences. We might not come to an agreement on what the most important characteristics are. However, we are likely to agree that every teacher must be patient, helpful, and respectful.

Rapport is defined as an overall feeling between two people encompassing a mutual, trusting, and prosocial bond (Catt, Miller, & Schallenkamp, 2007; Faranda & Clarke, 2004; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000).

Brandi N. Frisby & Matthew M. Martin (2010) Instructor-Student and Student-Student Rapport in the Classroom, *Communication Education*, 59.2, 146-164. DOI: 10.1080/03634520903564362

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H. Douglas Brown (2007) defines rapport as a connection a teacher establishes with students. He recognizes that it is an unsteady concept, a relationship built on abstract concepts such as trust and respect, which can lead to students' feeling capable, competent, and creative. For him, it is an essential aspect to create positive energy in the classroom. Jeremy Harmer in *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (2015) indicates that when a teacher establishes rapport in a classroom:

”

“The level of respect, humor and safety is almost palpable, and though it is difficult to describe exactly what is going on, even a casual observer of a class where there is good teacher-student rapport would agree that there is something special about the relationship between the people in the room” (HARMER, 2015)

“

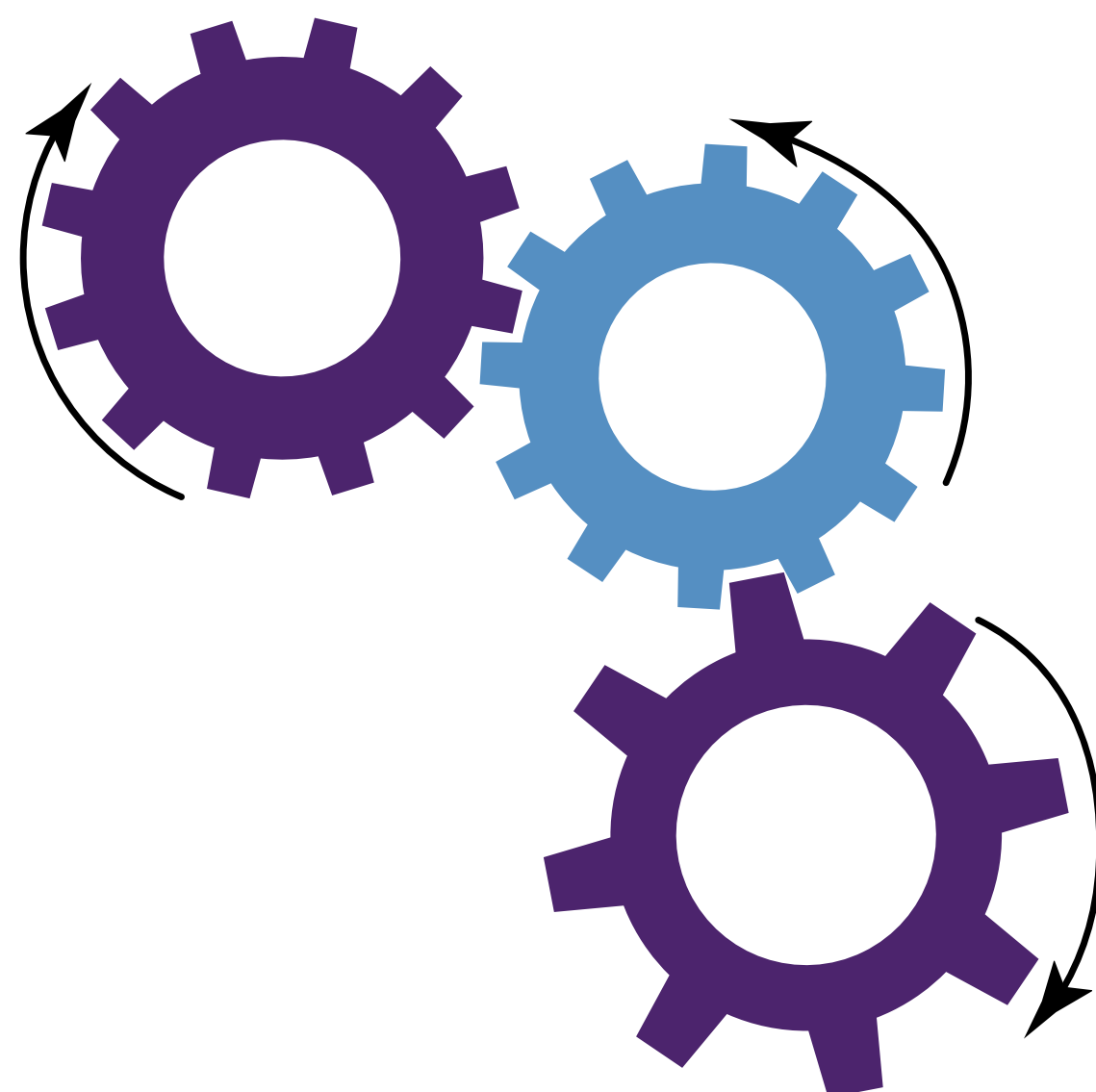
In the attempt to describe the nature of rapport and its behavioral correlates, Tickel-Deegnen and Rosenthal (1990) point out the intricacies of the relationships in many different fields, such as marketing and medicine. Mutual attentiveness, positivity, and coordination are three interrelated components of it, which can be related to the topic of establishing rapport and development of learners' social-emotional competence in English language teaching. Behaviorist and constructivist approaches considered the importance of emotions in language teaching even though they were more concerned about how language acquisition happened cognitively.

Humanist and social interactionist approaches have contributed even more to the development of methods and practices that considered individuals' thoughts, feelings, and emotions as vitally important to human learning and development. (WILLIAMS and BURDEN, 1997). Humanistic approaches contributed to a more holistic view of learners, in which learners' social-emotional aspects are highly valued and the individual's search for personal meaning is considered relevant and powerful to human education. Such approaches are connected to social interactionism, which states that we are born into a social world; therefore, learning happens through interaction with other people.

Brown (2007) specifies teachers' actions that can build rapport and relate to students in a meaningful way. Showing interest to each student as a person, giving them feedback on their individual progress, openly soliciting, listening, and valuing students' ideas, feelings, and opinions. Developing a wish for students' realization and achievement, working with them, and using humor to guide them and engage them to become better learners and succeed in learning. A teacher who shows genuine pleasure and concern, verbal and nonverbal variety or praise, and fosters students' intrinsic motivation. In the same direction, Harmer (2015) says that:

“in classes with good rapport, anything is possible because the students think their teacher is a good teacher. They trust the teacher to be even-handed, and they know that they will be listened to with interest. This means that, as soon as possible, teachers should get to know who their students are because, as an eleven-year-old once said, ‘a good teacher is someone who knows our names’ (Harmer:2007:26).” (HARMER, 2015)

- Why should we worry about the development of rapport in our classes?
- Have you ever thought about the importance of your relationship with your students?



# Ideas and Practice

## Developing strategies for establishing rapport

What do students think about rapport? Do they notice it? What do they expect from their teachers regarding their relationship?

”

Students have reported that rapport is an essential characteristic of an effective teacher (Catt et al., 2007; Faranda & Clarke, 2004; McLaughlin & Erickson, 1981; Perkins, Schenk, Stephan, Vrungos, & Wynants, 1995). Although students report that rapport is essential, relatively little is known about rapport when compared to other relational variables in the classroom (e.g., immediacy). Moreover, previous rapport research focused on student perceptions of instructors. The classroom setting is not an environment restricted to one-on-one interaction, and the dynamics and perceptions of multiple relationships should be considered. Scholars (Dwyer et al., 2004; Frymier, 2007) called for further examination of student-to-student interactions at the university level. As such, this study examined the role of rapport between instructors and students, and between the students in the classroom, to understand more about the impact this positive relational process can impart on learning outcomes. Coupland (2003) argued that building rapport can have positive effects on the classroom environment. Specifically, it can structure and encourage social interaction by reducing anxiety (Coupland, 2003; Jorgenson, 1992). Bean and Eaton (2001) noted that schools implement programs that are intended to enhance feelings of a connected classroom environment for students to develop feelings of attachment and reduce dropout rates. Similar to instructor rapport, rapport with fellow classmates may also foster perceptions of a positive classroom environment.

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Have you ever watched the movie “Freedom Writers” (2007)?



Photo taken from: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0463998/>

- What is it about?
- What is the context of the students and the teacher?
- Watch a short excerpt of the movie and take notes of the social aspects of the students' context.

- Did you ever experience something similar in your practice? What was it like?
- Why did students hate each other so much when they had lots of deep and emotional experiences in common?

Teachers have a critical role in enabling interactions and modeling supportive behaviors in the classroom (Fassinger, 2000; Johnson, 2009; Karp & Yoels, 1975). We can show affection and warmth to facilitate a sense of connection in the classroom through communicative behaviors. Beattie & Olley, 1977; Voelkl, 1995), caring (Teven & McCroskey, 1997), support (Rosenfeld, 1983), and inclusiveness (Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2004).

Schaps et al. (1997) argued that teachers can build a positive classroom environment by developing relationships with their students. Students who interact frequently with an instructor earn higher grades, are more satisfied and are more likely to return to school in subsequent years (Wasley, 2006). However, the teacher's behavior alone is not enough in order to promote rapport. Student behaviors are as important as the teachers' in classroom environments (Nelson & DeBacker, 2008). A comfortable classroom atmosphere and peer relationships enhance positive student results. Specifically, Nelson and DeBacker (2008) reported that peer climate predicted achievement, belongingness, and academic efficacy.

Benson, Cohen, and Buskist (2005) found that in classes where teachers established rapport students were more likely to attend class, pay attention, and enjoy the subject matter. Frisby and Martin (2010) found that teacher rapport emerged as a significant predictor of cognitive and affective learning. Granitz, Koernig, and Harich (2009) linked rapport with enhanced learning, attention, motivation, attendance, and involvement for students. The authors concluded, “one of the key traits of a master teacher is the ability to foster student rapport” (p. 52).

We will now watch another excerpt of the movie “Freedom Writers” and see the outcomes of the work of Ms. G with her students:



Photo taken from: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0463998/>

- How did she manage to establish such a deep relationship with her students?

- Is it possible to influence our students' lives that much? Did you ever experience such a strong bond with your teachers/students?

Let's read a suggested activity for building rapport from the English Teaching FORUM Journal and try to come up with a similar activity for your own teaching context.

## **Section 4**

# **Mediation and Semiotic Mediation**

## Section 4

# Mediation and Semiotic Mediation



## Time to Think

- Think of a skill you have, such as cooking, playing sports, or musical instruments. What was your learning process like?
- Did you develop such skills by yourself or with the help of others?
- List people and/or tools that guided you in your learning experience.
- Do we learn exactly what we are taught? Did your classmates develop the same skills as you did?
- What is the role of emotions in the result of the learning process?

In this section, we will discuss a sociocultural view of language learning, mainly developed by Vygotsky, a Russian author of a remarkable theory of mental development. We will discuss the impact of his theory and terms such as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and mediation.

# Connecting experience and ideas

## Vygotsky and his work

Although the topic of developing social-emotional competencies in education has not been debated by authors like Vygotsky and Feuerstein, their contribution towards such construct is the concept of mediation. For them, mediation enhances and enables effective learning experiences through someone who plays the role of mediator, a significant other, often a parent, teacher, or peer. This significant other can be anyone, but according to an affective approach to language teaching, we could infer that it would be someone with a good rapport established with the learner. A bond is essential for establishing a safe and nurturing environment, where mistakes and development could be easily perceived. According to Burden (1997), mediation overlaps and complements scaffolding in many ways; the mediator plays an important role in learners' lives, finding ways of helping them to learn. Not only the Vygotskian view of mediation for effective learning is essential for this paper, but also his view on how language is a key element in a meaningful learning process and how collaborative work provides opportunities for it to happen.

“The process of second-language teaching is grounded in the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, which emphasizes meaningful interaction among individuals as the greatest motivating force in human development and learning. In this theoretical framework, the concepts of meaning and mediation are considered as the two essential elements affecting an individual's learning of a second language. Suggestions are offered for enhancing students' second-language learning in their regular classrooms by applying sociocultural theories to practice. Socioculturally based implications for classroom teaching include bilingual instruction, focus on pragmatics, literacy instruction based on drama, inclusive learning environments, instruction based on children's interests, and the teacher's role as a facilitator mediating between students and their second-language learning environment.”

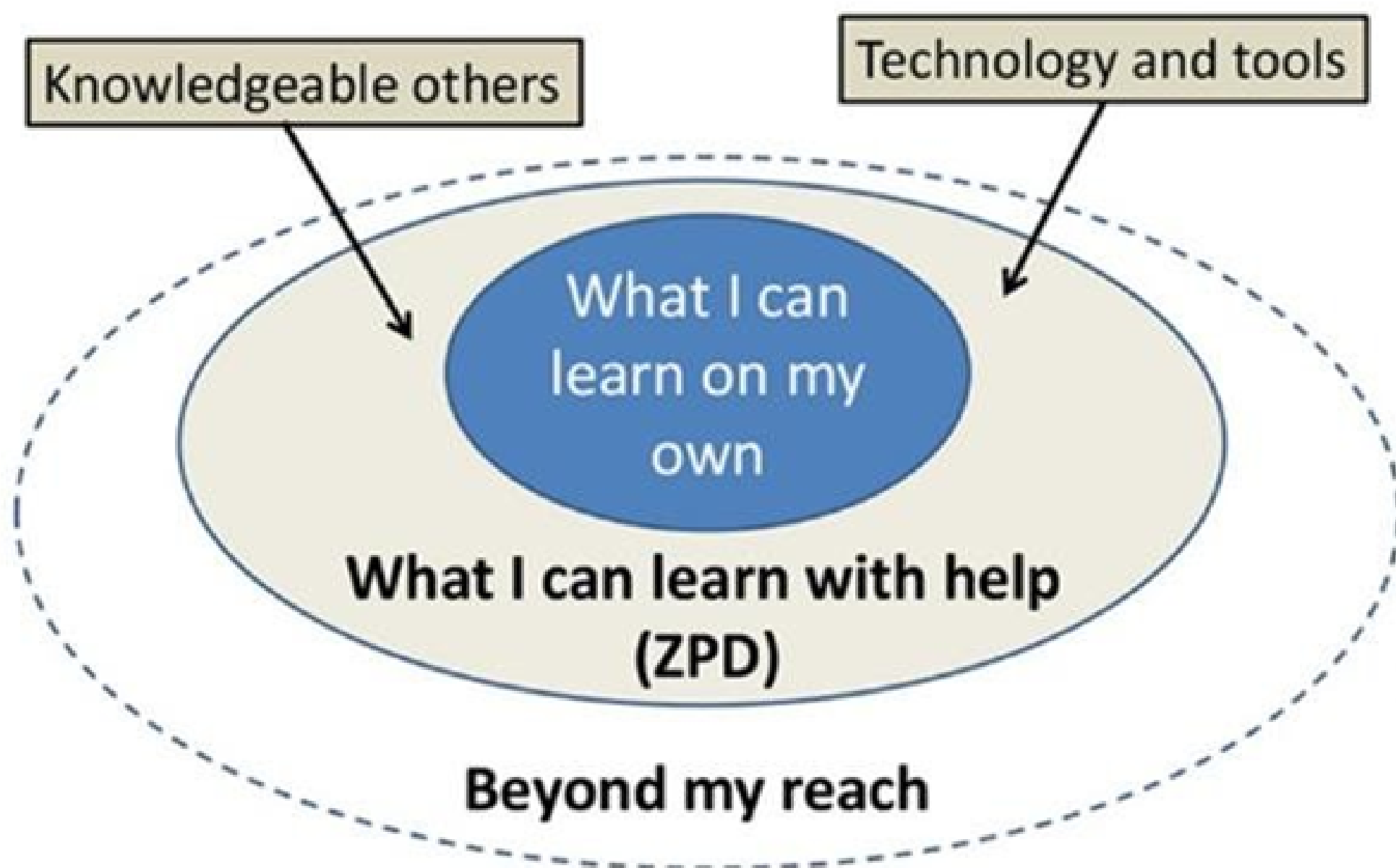
Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning is a social process rather than an individual one, and occurs during interactions between individuals. In Bruner's original work on scaffolding in child language development (1985), he drew on the Vygotskian notion that social transaction and interaction, rather than a solo performance, constitute the fundamental vehicle of education. In emphasizing the social and cultural basis of learning, his work differs significantly from views that have dominated Western thinking about education. He argued that learning involves a communicative process whereby knowledge is shared and understandings are constructed in culturally formed settings.

Vygotsky (1978: 86) argued that the ZPD is a key element in the learning process, and he defined this as:

”

... the distance between the actual development level (of the learner) as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

“



Vygotsky -Zone of Proximal Development Source: (McLeod, 2018) from more knowledgeable others, technology and the tools.

While educational experiences should not be completely beyond the capability of the learner, Vygotsky's notion challenges the traditional concept of learner 'readiness' by suggesting that it is the teacher who is largely responsible for initiating each new step of learning, based on their understanding of what students are able to do. However, it does mean that when introducing new concepts, the teacher is responsible for the sequencing and pacing of learning, and for challenging students to extend their current levels of understanding. The notion of the ZPD also challenges teachers to maintain high expectations of all students, while providing 'contingent' scaffolding in order to assist learners to complete tasks successfully. Gibbons (2002) argues that, as far as possible, all learners, including second-language learners, need to be engaged with authentic and cognitively challenging tasks. It is the nature of the support – customized support that is responsive to the needs of particular students – that is critical for success.

Vygotsky wrote in 1932 (Vygotsky, 1982-84, vol. 4, p. 281):

It is through the mediation of others, through the mediation of the adult, that the child undertakes activities. Absolutely everything in the behavior of the child is merged and rooted in social relations. Thus, the child's relations with reality are from the start social relations, so that the newborn baby could be said to be in the highest degree a social being.

Vygotsky argued that, from the point of view of mediation by social stimuli, mental activities are analogous to physical labor: as a form of human labor, they too reach higher levels through mediation by artificial stimuli; their structure to changes, and in time they too affect the environment in which we live. As he put it (Vygotsky 1981: 137), the mediation of mental activities by means of semiotic tools...

... alters the entire flow and structure of mental functions. It does this by determining the structure of a new instrumental act just as a technical tool alters the process of a natural adaptation by determining the form of labor operation.

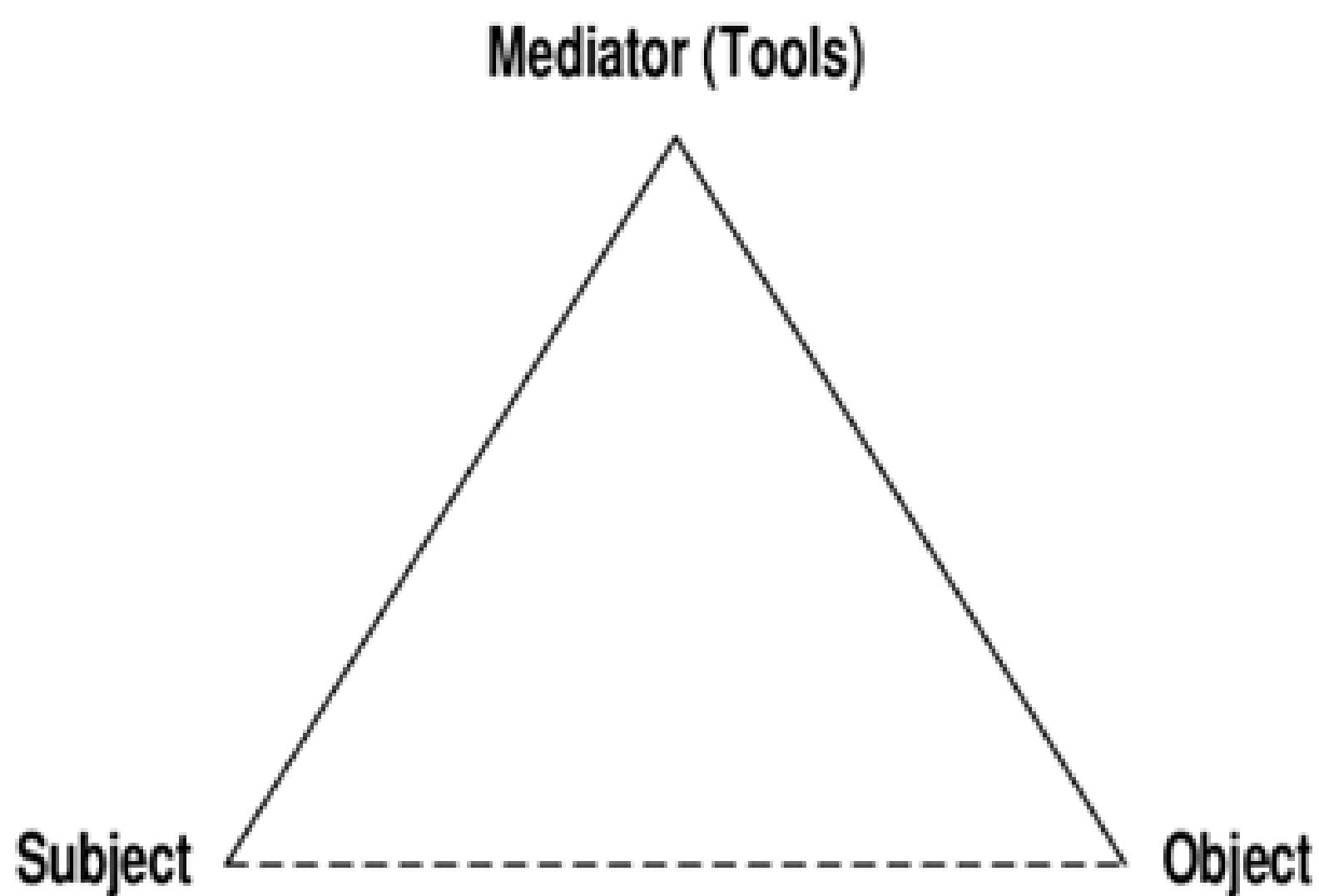
According to Vygotsky (1978: 40):

Vygotsky wrote in 1932 (Vygotsky, 1982-84, vol. 4, p. 281):

”

The use of signs leads humans to a specific structure of behavior that breaks away from biological development and creates new forms of culturally based psychological processes.

“



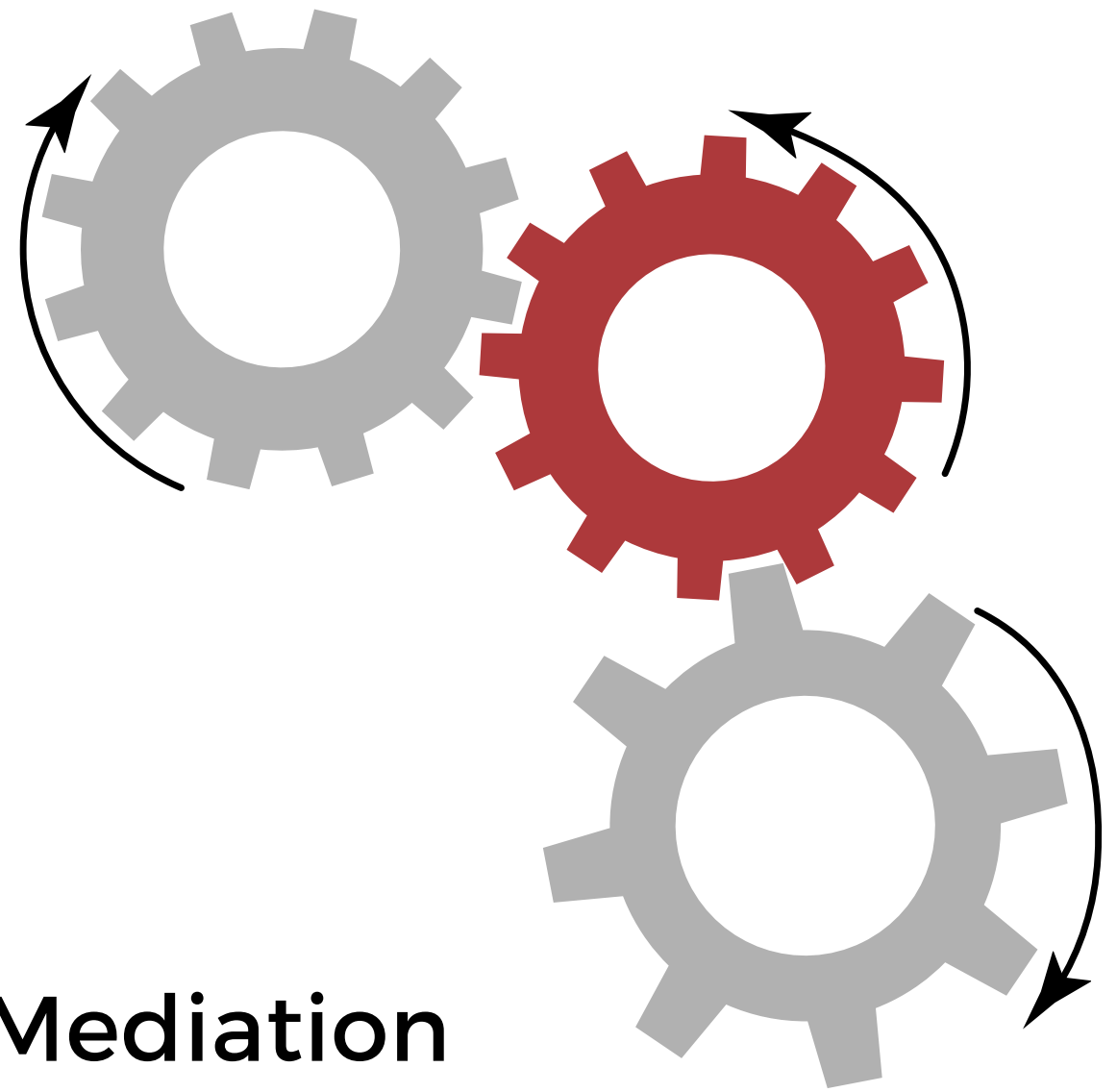
Mediation Model (Vygotsky 1978)

- Have you ever thought about the influence of the teacher's speech (mediator) in the learning process?
- Can you think of ways (mediation) to help/guide students reach the object of learning?



# Connecting experience and ideas

## Scaffolding and Semiotic Mediation



Look at the following picture and imagine how you can relate it to teaching and learning:

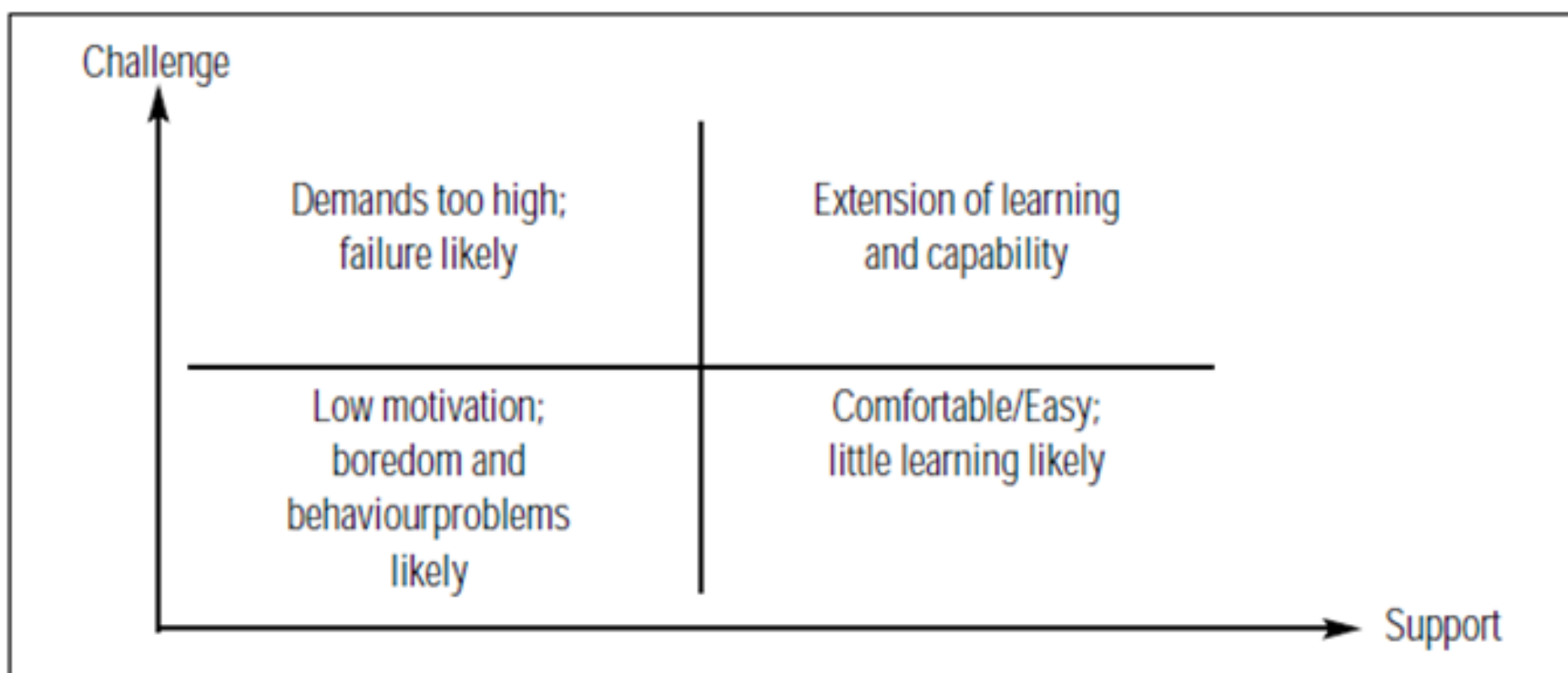


Source: <https://www.hseblog.com/in-respect-of-scaffolding>

Jennifer Hammond and Pauline Gibbons in the second chapter of “Teachers’ voices: Explicitly supporting reading and writing in the classroom” entitled “What is scaffolding?” give us a historical perspective of the term.

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) were the first to use the term scaffolding as a metaphor in the learning context. They used the term to describe the nature of parental tutoring in the language development of young children. They showed that parents who were 'successful scaffolders' focused their children's attention on the task at hand and kept them motivated and working on the task. Such parents divided the task into manageable components and directed their children's attention to the essential and relevant features. In addition, these parents demonstrated and modeled successful performance, while keeping the task at an appropriate level of difficulty. In this way, the parents provided support through an intervention that was tailored to the demands of the task and determined by the child's ability to complete it. Bruner (1978: 19) describes scaffolding as Vygotsky wrote in 1932 (Vygotsky, 1982-84, vol. 4, p. 281):

... the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom taken in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill she is in the process of acquiring.



Source: Adapted from Mariani, L. (1997). Teacher support and teacher challenge in promoting learner autonomy. *Perspectives* 23(2), Italy.

In *Semiotic Mediation, Language and Society: Three exotripic Theories* -Vygotsky, Halliday and Bernstein, Hasan (2002) highlights the contributions of the Vygotskian concept of mediation and offers an extension to a notion of semiotic mediation. She links the development of consciousness to linguistic semiosis, expanding mediation to a four-process factor: the mediator (someone who mediates); content/force/energy released by mediation (something that is mediated); the 'mediatee' to whom/which mediation makes some difference; and the circumstances for mediation, being the means of mediation (modality) or the location (site in which mediation might occur).

Hasan makes us reflect on mediation taking into consideration the complex semantic relations that it encompasses. Not only the action of mediating but also the analysis of the content, the tools, the means, and the mediator become part of the nature of mediation. The teacher, for instance, has his or her concrete and abstract tools to impart mediation are part of the equation. Hasan develops each of these aspects of mediation, including the fact that this process can mean that the mediatee may or may not respond as expected to mediation, which is something that has to be taken under consideration for this research. For the purpose of developing rapport, it is crucial for the teacher to see him or herself as a mediator and the role of his or her speech in the classroom, but it is also important to think that “the semiotic tools, the modality of language is crucial” (HASAN, 2002).

As Webster, Beveridge, and Reed suggest (1996: 42), teaching and learning are constructed ‘as a social enterprise which draws on the immediate resources of the participants’ – that is, both teacher and students. As learners talk through a problem, or as they ‘talk their way to understanding’, they are developing the ‘thinking’ tools for later problem-solving – tools which will eventually become internalized and construct the resources for independent thinking. Such a view of learning also recognizes that both teacher and students are active participants in a collaborative learning process and thus moves away from the well-worn debate around teacher-directed versus student-centered learning. Vygotsky has argued that the external dialogues in which learners take part are gradually internalized to construct the resources for thinking – outer speech eventually becomes inner thinking.

## **Reflecting about learning**

- What activities can promote student-centered learning?
- What activities we have done during our course that enabled student-centeredness?
- Read the article: “Destroying the Teacher: The Need for Learner-Centered Teaching” BY ALAN C. McLEAN and discuss what your impressions are about the text.

## **Section 5**

# **Social Emotional Competence and the BNCC**

## Section 5

# Social Emotional Competence and the BNCC



## Time to Think

- What is the BNCC?
- What are the ten general competencies that it entails?
- How can we relate it to the theory we have discussed?

In this final section, we will examine an official document published by the National Education Committee of Brazil in 2017, the National Curricular Common Base (BNCC in Portuguese), which covers many different subjects and concerns in basic education, including ones related to empathy, collaborative work, and perception of one's emotions and identity.

# Connecting experience and ideas

## Social-Emotional Competence and the BNCC

The need to take a more affective approach to education has risen in recent years. Not only in Brazil, but also in other countries, educators have been studying and analyzing emotional factors to learners' educational experience. Our emotions and feelings influence the way we learn and due to the increased early diagnosis of anxiety and depression in students, the learning of emotional competencies has also caught the interest of educators and governments. In 2017, the National Education Committee in Brazil published a National Curricular Common Base (BNCC in Portuguese), which covers many different subjects and concerns in basic education, including ones related to empathy, collaborative work, and perception of one's emotions and identity.

Considering previous research, it is also important to highlight that social-emotional competencies have been recently addressed in the latest official document for Brazilian education: the National Curricular Common Base in 2017. The NCCB (BNCC in Portuguese) is a normative document for public and private educational institutions, a mandatory reference for the elaboration of school curricula and pedagogical proposals for the teaching of children and elementary education. Among other topics, the document comprises ten general competencies that have to be developed from kindergarten through high school. It is a guiding material based on the most relevant recently published research on the areas of learning science, pedagogy, and psychological development, prepared by a committee appointed by the Brazilian Ministry of Education and by a study conducted by Michaela Horvathova, a researcher Center for Curriculum Redesign. Among the ten general competencies presented in the document, we have chosen two of them to analyze and categorize as social-emotional competencies.



We can see in the picture all the competencies proposed in the BNCC, they reflect the goals of the country to enable learning in many areas. The ones focused in this study are numbers 8 and 9. Number 8 is self-knowledge and self-care and number 9 is empathy and cooperation. In comparison to SEL competencies proposed in the United States, in general terms we can say that the Brazilian government's concern to promote a standard to high-quality education considered emotions and social-emotional skills to be important and relevant for educators to take into account. In the text, both competencies are defined and had their goals explained. Number 8, which encompasses self-knowledge and self-care, is defined as "get to know oneself, understand and appreciate oneself in human diversity". Its goal is to promote care in physical and emotional health. Recognizing one's own emotions and the others, with self-analysis and ability to deal with them. Number 9 is defined as "exercise empathy, communication, resolution of conflicts and cooperation." Its goal is to have people respect you and promote respect to others and human rights, welcoming and valuing diversity, not having prejudice of any kind.

The topic of the development of emotional competence has had increased interest in recent years as stated in the introduction. Such interest has not only appeared in Brazilian normative documents, but also in other countries, such as the United States and England. In an attempt to promote success in students' school lives, they have created guidance documents such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) in England and SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) in the United States.

An article published in 2014 called "The development of socioemotional skills as a path to learning and school success for basic education students" by Anita Abed also discusses the role of mediation in Reuven Feuerstein, and synthesizes a study commissioned by the "Conselho Nacional de Educação - CNE" (MEC) in Brazil, 2013 on UNESCO about an intentional insertion of educational practices aimed to develop socio-emotional skills as a path to academic success in basic education. A lot has been discussed about this topic worldwide and locally. The Brazilian educational system poses a challenge for teachers to transform the guidelines of the BNCC into practice through classroom activities and real-life interaction with their students.





# Conclusion

This e-book discusses the role of emotions and the relationship teachers and learners establish in the field of English language teaching. Theories related to the development of rapport and social-emotional competence are presented and discussed alongside with the current documents brought by institutions and governments in different countries, the BNCC in Brazil and two specific competencies described in the document related to the topic. The aim of this e-book is, answer the following questions: Can we develop social-emotional competence in an EFL class and establish rapport through mediation and semiotic mediation? Are students able to realize the efforts made by the teacher to establish rapport and develop their social-emotional competence? This e-book has already been used in a training session online to have its content reviewed and improved. We hope that it can raise awareness of the importance of developing learners in a more holistic approach and can also help teachers develop activities and make use of semiotic mediation to bond with learners and help them achieve social-emotional competence.



# Answers:

## Section 1 - page 8

Emotions	What are they good for?	The social context of emotions
Fear	Helps you avoid potentially dangerous things around you	Survival, avoid dangerous situations
Anger	Release energy/prepare you to fight	Being hurt emotionally or physically
Disgust	Evolutionary mechanism to protect us from eating poisonous food	Avoid rotten food/ avoid people and behavior we disapprove of
Sadness	We don't know for sure	Capacity for empathy and compassion
Happiness	Lack or absence of all negative emotions	Good plate of food/ promotion at work/ sitting alone

## Section 1 - page 11

1. Self-esteem	( 7 ) the need or reason for doing something
2. Anxiety	( 3 ) a feeling of embarrassment or worry that prevents you from saying or doing what you want
3. Inhibition	( 5 ) the way that different students learn
4. Willingness to take risks	( 2 ) an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future
5. Learning styles	( 4 ) proceed in the knowledge that there is a chance of something unpleasant occurring.
6. Self-efficacy	( 1 ) belief and confidence in your own ability and value
7. Motivation	( 6 ) a person's belief that they can be successful when carrying out a particular task



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