

REDEFINING YOUR EFL TEACHING BY EMPLOYING THE FIVE-E SYSTEM INTRODUCTION

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Abstract

Objectives: Imagine that you are alone in a room with nothing to do. No cell phone, no book to read or TV to watch, no other people to talk to. Just you and your thoughts for 15 minutes. How will you feel? How much can your brain tolerate? How long can you endure this boring environment? What are you going to do? Sure, you're going to search for something novel and stimulating as you will feel bored. Remember that I'm only talking about 15 minute-period. So, as teachers, we should realize how boredom impacts our students whose brains always seek engagement, stimulation, choice, movement, meaning and novelty and many other things so as not to feel bored. Some teachers still insist on using traditional methods of teaching with today's students. According to modern research, yesterday's methods worked well for yesterday's students. But today's students have different brain. They spend much more time on TV and on the Internet so their brains need a different learning environment. One that is enriching with sound, images, animation, movement and social communications. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 22 (1): January – February 2021: AJOPY-S1-04.*

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Introduction

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So, as teachers, we should realize how boredom impacts our students whose brains always seek engagement, stimulation, choice, movement, meaning and novelty and many other things so as not to feel bored.

Some teachers still insist on using traditional methods of teaching with today's students. According to modern research, yesterday's methods worked well

for yesterday's students. But today's students have different brain. They spend much more time on TV and on the Internet so their brains need a different learning environment. One that is enriching with sound, images, animation, movement and social communications.

Therefore, we, as teachers, will not be able to enhance learning unless we study how students' brains work and know well how to create a positive, energizing and organized learning environment for students. That's why you should consider employing the five-E system

The central point in this system is to understand that learning is neither a mechanical nor simply an intellectual process. It is like what happens in a chemical factory – or inside each one of us as we digest a meal, a complex and dynamic process. All parts of the system play a role and the more students

contribute to the class, the more profound and meaningful their learning is.

This system focuses on incorporating five —E elements in every classroom: Emotion, Examples, Energy, Exercise, and Euphoria. If we can include these simple elements in our classes, we will be better prepared to meet the true needs of our students.

Each element has an important and motivational effect on your journey to redefine your teaching in the classroom and on your students' learning as well. But, what is the importance and effect of each element and how to apply it in your EFL teaching. Continue reading to know.

Emotions

Emotions are the core elements that make us human. They are what make each of us unique and creative beings. No one can deny this simple fact.

Emotions are highly important because they have a great deal to do with how we remember and process new information.

Without emotions, the brain doesn't learn much or retain anything. It is the passion to learn, which nurtures the pursuit of gaining knowledge and developing skills.

Neuroscientists tell us that if we want our students to learn, we need to incorporate more emotions in the lessons because emotions make us mentally alert. The brain remembers the emotional components of an experience better than any other aspect. Ideas and experiences that are tied to strong emotional context will last much longer in our memories and are recalled with greater accuracy than neutral memories [1-3].

How to employ the element "Emotions" in your EFL classes to enhance students' learning

Use body language effectively.

The presence of facial expressions when teaching lexical items adds emotions to the situation. It might not seem so important — but it is.

You need to differentiate the volume and clarity of your voice, use gestures, eye contact and eyebrow movement effectively. Every detail of body language helps students get emotionally involved in the learning process.

Students have a very complex system called "mirror neurons" working in their brains. These "mirror neurons" allow them to mentally simulate or —act out every single thing they see another person does.

So, if I teach a term and do so with a smile on my lips and with raising happily my eyebrows, my students' brains will simultaneously simulate these facial expressions.

This connection between teacher, student and the neural simulations will help students perceive and store the information in their long-term memory.

Create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom.

Friendly and cheerful classroom atmosphere can motivate students and nurture a feeling of comfort that relieves stress and helps students reach the emotions that motivate them to learn and feel the need for self-improvement.

The brain is not just a thinking organ; it is also a very emotional one. How we learn depends on emotions, perhaps more than anything else. Emotions are a sure way to spark, maintain, and expand the learners' interest in and love of language learning.

Examples

Most language teachers complain that students forget most of the taught material only hours after learning.

For those who teach vocabulary, it is a frustrating reality. Neuroscientists confirm this reality. So, the question is how do we get our students to remember the lexical items hours, months, or years after we have taught them? The answer is by having students offer examples for the content being studied immediately.

It engages them in the lesson and the skill. The more students contribute to a class, the more they learn and remember what they have learned. In this sense, we can say that the best education is one that is rich in student contributions.

How to employ the element "Examples" in your EFL classes to enhance students' learning

Give & ask for example sentences for lexical items:

Let's say, for example, you are teaching five new lexical items. First, I recommend you write them on the board and present each one at a time through a series of example sentences and then elicit the meanings of them from students. After that ask the students to give you example sentences of their own using the lexical items on focus.

These procedures allow students to hear, see and produce the new items a number of times and will have a number of positive results such as:

- Engaging and encouraging the students to use the items.
- Helping the students become risk takers, and it is very important for language learning success to be risk takers.
- Teaching the students how to and how not to use the items. This creates a kind of comfort with the use of the items.
- The repetition of using the items in a concentrated period will help students begin to transfer the terms to their working memory and then to their long-term memory.
- There is a strong possibility that the students will personalize their example sentences, that will help

evoke more emotions and personal interest in the lexical items.

Model Activities and assignments.

According to what I have said about the "mirror neurons", modeling activities and homework assignments is very important for your students.

It is also very beneficial and rewarding to use a student-volunteer to help model class activities. Getting the class or some members of the class, involved with modeling is very important for learning through imitation and giving examples.

Energy

A classroom with a high energy level is essential for students to learn. If there is no energy or excitement at the moment of learning, information presented will not begin its journey to the long-term memory.

Learning that engages as many senses as possible provides students with options and choices that increase their energy and motivation level and help items learned to be transferred easily into their long-term memory.

How to employ the element "Energy" in your EFL classes to enhance students' learning

Nurture an intrinsic excitement and personal interest in the topic you teach.

Show enthusiasm for these topics. The more the teacher shows enthusiasm for the topics and skills covered in the class, the more students will be interested in the class.

Use competition

Little kids like to compete, and teens are no different. Whether they play sports or games on the Wii, they always try to outstand so, why not introduce some friendly competitions into the EFL classroom? Games are easy ways to do this, but you can also have them compete in any activity.

Play songs to improve listening comprehension.

If you play only the audio that typically comes with course materials, your teens may tune out and not hear a word but if you play songs that they like or are interested in, they will be motivated.

Have video lessons

Videos have great potential in the EFL class. Thanks to recent advances in technology, we no longer need to have a TV or DVD player in the classroom to teach a video lesson. A laptop or the IQ board will do the job for the class, with no need for a speedy internet connection as you can have video files already

downloaded to your device.

To keep teens focused and enthusiastic on the task, choose short interviews, movie trailers, music videos, or how-to videos on YouTube.

Exercise

Physical exercise is essential for a healthy learning environment. It is said that a classroom without exercise is like living a day without smiling. You can live a day without smiling but your brain, heart, and soul will suffer - perhaps more than you can ever imagine.

Exercise makes the brain function at its best, however we usually neglect exercise and physical activities in most, if not all, EFL classes.

Exercise and movement are important for learning and memory, too. In order to create better brains, improve classroom environments, and enhance education, you need to facilitate as much movement in the class as possible without disrupting the learning process.

More benefits of movement and doing physical activities:

- Optimizing the readiness for the brain to process new information by being alert, focused, and motivated. Exercise enhances focused attention to the material in question.
- Helping strengthen the connections and communication among existing neurons creating a great opportunity for learning and memory to grow quickly.
- Increasing oxygen and glucose, making students feel fantastic and refreshed.

How to employ the element "Exercise" in your EFL classes to enhance students' learning

Do stretching and minimal exercises at the beginning of each class.

Repeat these exercises when needed to keep students fresh, alert, and focused.

Ask a student or certain ones to exercise in class.

Ask students in need of oxygen to do stretches, quietly run or walk in place, do knee bends, or any other physical exercise that offers a healthy dose of oxygen and glucose to their brain.

Clap.

Another very simple yet energy-full activity is getting students to clap for their classmates when one gives an impressive, correct, or creative answer to a question. The act of clapping also gets the blood moving, and the excitement naturally stimulates the brain.

Stand & answer.

Having your students stand up to answer a question or even ask a question may seem old thing, but in fact it provides students with great energy and enthusiasm. It keeps students sharp, focused, alert, ready to solve problems on the spot and engaged in the lesson.

Without doubt, exercise is the key to both physical and mental health. To help students reach this end and have fun at the same time, I suggest to get them up and move in class; and, to reinforce this, I encourage you to have them do actual research on exercise and its wonderful effects on the brain.

Euphoria

Euphoria is a state or a feeling of intense happiness and self-confidence. Happiness appears in thinking, saying and doing.

The link between happiness and learning is reinforced by neuroscience — students learn when they are happy, when they are motivated, when they feel enjoyment.

It is no secret that happy students learn better, and research studies indicate that there is a clear link between happiness and learning in the brain.

And, most importantly, having happy teachers usually means having cheerful and eager learners in the classroom.

Teachers who smile, use humor, have a joyful behavior and feel real pleasure in their work generally have high-performing learners. When teachers feel and show happiness in the classroom, their students, through their mirror neurons are simulating each and every moment. That is when the teacher is happy, his or her students become happy, too.

And, physiologically speaking, the more laughter, the more oxygen produced in the brain and the greater motivation and enhancement created for focused attention and learning [4,5].

How to employ the element "Euphoria" in your EFL classes to enhance students' learning

Incorporate humor and personal attention within the class.

Humor and paying special attention to certain

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students nurture a sense of feeling —at home, and relieve stress. It also helps students reach the emotions that motivate them to learn and feel the need for self-improvement.

Change negative states.

You can do that by changing activities frequently, providing choice, keeping the challenge level high and paying attention to physical needs (e.g., moving, stretching, drinking water). And, be supportive by providing frequent feedback.

Use games to make learning fun.

Making learning —fun! is really the only way to inspire the students to become passionate about their own education. The teacher can do that by playing games with students. Only when students spend enjoyable time in the classroom, they become excited and enthusiastic to learn [6-8].

Celebrate the learning.

We always neglect or forget to celebrate the learning, although it is a critical step for optimal learning. Like the athletic team who celebrate their hard work after each win, learners need to feel acknowledged for their efforts. Celebration can add an element of fun to the process, and evokes a feeling of happiness in learners.

So, be sure to finish each lesson with some kind of a celebration or acknowledgment. Simply, reward or thank high achievers in the classroom at the end of each lesson or weekly, and giving a small party at the end of the semester to celebrate achieving learning goals and acknowledge top students in all activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I think if we consider the previous five elements in our teaching, we will help our students achieve the learning objectives. Even if you use just one of these elements, you will help spark the desire of students to learn and motivate their brains to work well.

Take action now and redefine your teaching according to this system. Students should take something away from each class. If not, then we are doing them a grave injustice.

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