

As obvious as this is in the average writing class, with students who are borderline bilingual it can easily be forgotten, and inadvertent use of vocabulary, analogies, and allusions beyond their scope can leave them confused and often too reserved to ask what was meant. Thus, an ever-present mindfulness of my EFL population, even with the most fluent students, controls my enthusiasm to use language too far beyond their abilities without "teaching" it.

### Results

The end point of the above analysis was a more specific, accurate and comprehensive understanding of the weak links in my classroom techniques for teaching self-editing and revision. In past evaluations and modifications of my teaching methods that were less systematic I found the changes enacted in my class management techniques, as well as in course content and presentation somewhat helpful, but the data I based them on was less thorough and the modifications I made less often produced the desired result.

### Implications

Course curriculum and student mastery of course objectives can be further enhanced with the application of the action research techniques. Modifications made by gathering data in a systematic manner seem to result in a more accurate understanding of what needs fixing. For example, my self-editing groups had been going well overall, but gathering data from several sources helped me to discover the weaknesses in my approach in a very pointed and thorough fashion.

Also, the 5-step self-evaluation process is a convenient hands-on approach that doesn't require separate, isolated research to discover what's most classroom friendly. It can be incorporated in to one's day to day teaching, acting as a kind of automatic maintenance system.

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### The role of affect in language learning with implications for teaching in Japan

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Affect, as defined by psychologists, refers to emotions "and an even wider range of phenomena that have anything to do with

emotions, moods, dispositions, and preferences" (Arnold, 1999, p. xi). Educators have used the term 'affect' in slightly different ways. One definition, offered by Dulay, Burt and Krashen, states that "one's 'affect' toward a particular thing or action or situation or experience is how that thing or that action or that situation or that experience fits in with one's needs or purposes, and its resulting effect on one's emotions" (Stevick, 1999, p. 44). Experience indicates that affective teaching can improve the attitude and learning capacity of students of any age.

### Affective language teaching

What, then, is good affective language teaching? How can we foster positive emotions in the classroom and bring students more in touch with their own feelings as well as those of others? Answers to these questions range from simple strategies usable in any classroom to entire courses utilizing the materials and approaches of psychological counseling. In seeking to teach affectively, some teachers simply follow the common sense advice found in a generation of method books promoting learner-centered curricula:

- a. Choose materials which give students a sense of security, enhance their self esteem, and allow them to express their personalities (Arnold, 1999, p. 12).
- b. Allow learners to share in decisions about course content, objectives, and rules (Aoki, 1999, p. 144).
- c. Get to know students as individuals; really listen to and value their contributions; praise their efforts (Moskowitz, 1999, p. 179).
- d. Pair and group individuals so that all members of the class become acquainted and develop mutual acceptance (Dornyei, 1999, p. 167).
- e. Address various types of intelligence in each lesson to foster self-esteem in those with lower linguistic aptitude; e.g.: use TPR for those with bodily kinaesthetic intelligence, music for those with musical intelligence (Puchta, 1999, p. 257).
- f. Minimize failure by breaking lessons down into small easily-understandable parts which build upon each other (Arnold, 1999, p. 13).
- g. Devise various types of evaluation so that students with varying intelligences receive recognition for their abilities (Kohonen, 1999, p. 292).

Other teachers consider good affective teaching already to be a part of a number of respected and established language teaching methods. These include the following:

- a. *Gattegno's Silent Way*, in which students are totally engaged in lessons silently taught by the teacher using colored rods, charts and gestures;
- b. *Total Physical Response*, which makes learning more efficient by incorporating the body and movement into the process;
- c. *Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach*, which minimizes stress with simple models, indirect error correction and stimulating activities, such as music and games, which can enhance students' receptivity.;
- d. *Lozanov's Suggestopedia*, through which students indirectly acquire language via the subconscious in a relaxing, stress-free atmosphere;
- e. *Cooperative Language Learning*, in which carefully structured cooperative tasks (information gap activities) require students as a group to listen and contribute to the development of a group product, simultaneously reducing anxiety and increasing motivation and self-esteem;
- f. *Community Language Learning*, based on Curran's counseling-learning model of education, in which students relate to each other positively as members of the same group and are freed from stress and fear of communication failure thanks to the assistance of a teacher-translator; and,
- g. *Global Issues*, which start in the classroom at the personal and interpersonal level to promote a feeling of community and a culture of peace which are then extended in focus to the national and world levels.

#### Affective courses

Still other teachers design their own affective courses employing the activities and techniques of group counseling. Such courses concentrate on establishing the class as a cohesive group and together building the self-esteem and empathy of each member. Two activities taken from Moskowitz illustrate:

- a. *I like you; you're different*: For homework, students write three positive and unique things about themselves on a card provided by the teacher, e.g.: 1. I am a good cook; 2. I was on TV when I was eight; & 3. I was a 'shogi' champion in my hometown.

The teacher reads each card aloud. Students suggest three possible student identities and the whole class votes on the one most likely. The mystery students reveal themselves and answer a few questions from classmates related to the card. This activity helps students learn about each other and promotes self-esteem.

- b. *Fortune cookies*: In groups of four, each student writes a positive fortune for another group member, folds it with the student's name on the outside of the paper and puts it in the center of the group. In turn, each student takes the designated fortune, reads it aloud and reacts to it. To end, each group chooses one fortune to read to the class. Laughter and good feelings toward classmates ensue from these positive wishes. (Moskowitz, 1999, pp. 190-191)

Humanistic activities can also put learners in contact with their inner selves. A sample activity designed by Mario Rinvolutri follows:

*Stage 1*: The teacher asks all 27 students to step inside a circle of rope and pulls the rope, at waist level, tighter and tighter. Students close their eyes and are asked to dwell on their feelings in the situation.

*Stage 2*: Students fill the board with expressions describing those feelings. The teacher asks students to explain to the class what they wrote. Such a step thoroughly involves students and allows them to express both positive and negative emotions. (Rinvolutri, 1999, pp. 198-199)

Visualization is another technique which can bring learners closer to their inner feelings. For example, the teacher asks students to picture an object or place in their minds and, in response to the teacher's questions, to visualize it in even greater detail. A possible follow-up is to have students describe the visualization in a written paragraph or orally to another student who will ask questions and attempt to draw it. Teachers can choose images for various purposes, including helping students to: a) forget their problems temporarily, b) work through their anxieties, or c) build self-confidence. Arnold suggests that "there are many ways the imagery can be incorporated into the classroom to support learning" and feels that "both the cognitive and affective aspects of the language learning process can benefit" from such activities (1999, pp. 275-276).

Entire courses can be taught using such self-esteem and personal exploration activities, if carefully chosen and sequenced. The courses

succeed based on the *cumulative* effect of the activities. As Rinvolveri cautions, "Humanistic exercises are not fillers for Friday afternoon.... When teachers use humanistic activities in this way, out of context...., [learners may] often find them upsetting and irrelevant" (199, p. 1998).

For most teachers, the type of affective course they present will largely depend on the flexibility of their curriculum, the size of their classes, the cooperativeness of their students, and the amount of preparation the lessons require. There are as yet not affective language textbooks available which are based on humanistic counseling strategies. A number of intriguing affective language teaching activities are described in the newly published *Affect in Language Learning*, but any course composed of mainly affective learning exercises is likely to be demanding of the teacher's preparation time.

### Culture and learning styles

One further consideration regarding affect and language learning is the connection between culture and learning styles. Are there, for instance, optimal affective techniques for teaching language to students of Japanese culture? Is the cooperative learning method, as sometimes suggested, a more effective strategy with Japanese than other approaches would be in a group-oriented society?

The literature on culture and English language learning styles comes primarily from countries such as the United States, which has a number of minority groups studying together, most notably, African-American, Mexican-American and Native American. Guild cites seventeen studies on U.S. ethnic minorities, including Griggs and Dunn (1989), which lead to the conclusions that "a relationship does exist between the culture in which children live and their preferred ways of learning" and that this relationship "is directly related to academic, social and emotional success in school" (Guild, 1994, p. 17). Yet within each minority exist "variations among individuals...as great as their commonalities" (p. 19), making it inadvisable to attribute any particular learning style to all individuals within a group. While these conclusions are likely to be true for classes in Japan as well as for multi-culture classes in the U.S., further research on Japanese language learning styles is needed.

Far less debated are the following conclusions regarding culture and learning:

1. Teachers need to respect students' culture and be sensitive to it.

The literature cautions that if teachers study their students' cultures, they must be extremely careful not to be misled by stereotypes. Foreign language teachers living in Japan who interact with Japanese in their native culture everyday should have a decided advantage in dispelling such stereotypes.

2. Foreign teachers should also be aware that their own culture's expectations may be putting their students at a disadvantage.

For example, research indicates that native English speaking teachers favor active participation by students in class, where as Japanese students may be accustomed to a passive role (Sasaki, 1996, p. 237). To be successful, teachers must structure classroom activities that respond to students' strengths. If the teacher's cultural predisposition puts students at a disadvantage, it seems reasonable for the teacher to strike a compromise and meet students halfway with activities which require less individual participation.

3. In all cultures, facial expressions of the teacher are an essential part of communicating with students and conveying meanings within the classroom. Teachers must be aware that, cross-culturally, facial expressions can be seriously misunderstood.

Though perhaps it is well-known that, in Japan, direct eye contact is considered very aggressive, a recent study on facial expression yields further insights for teachers in Japan. For example, when Toshiki Shiori, U.C. Irvine visiting professor from Japan, showed 123 medical students in Japan "photographs of expressions that virtually all Americans recognize in the same way" (Emmons, 1998, p. E1), the Japanese students identified expressions of happiness and surprise correctly. However, three-quarters of the students interpreted anger on a photographed face to mean disgust or contempt. Shiori and his associates caution that more subtle expressions of are even more likely to be misunderstood.

Teachers would be well-advised to accompany their negative facial expressions in class with explanation, such as, "That makes me angry," because unwittingly sending the wrong affective messages to an entire class can not only seriously interfere with learning but also undermine the goals of affective teaching. By the same token, foreign teachers should also question their own judgement of students' facial expressions. Shiori and associates expect to find a similar degree of misunderstanding when they study Westerners reading Japanese facial expressions.

## Implications

Even if there is consensus that the best teaching methods can neither solve all classroom problems nor suit all learners, the instructional pendulum tends to swing from one teaching approach to another. It does so only to replace one set of problems with another. A logical way to address diverse learning needs in our students is to apply diverse teaching strategies. Affective teaching then would take its place in Japanese language classrooms along with other successful teaching strategies.

Affect has been linked enhanced language learning when students feel positive, optimistic, self-confident, and in touch with their own emotions as well as those of others. Affective teaching techniques can range from traditional, student-centered methodologies to humanistic counseling strategies. Research on culture and language learning suggests that individuals within a culture, though sharing certain characteristics, still may exhibit a variety of learning styles. Affective teaching, while not a panacea for all teaching problems, holds the hope of improving the attitudes and, consequently, the performances of both students and teachers alike - of making good classes better.

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## Learning & commitment: An NLP perspective on the purposes of teaching

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### Isocrates and Demosthenes

In the fourth century BC, Isocrates and Demosthenes were considered the greatest political orators in Athens. Their styles could not have been more different. Isocrates was a publisher of pamphlets whose aim was to educate, to encourage people to learn and to make clearer judgements based on their learnings. As a speaker he had a smooth, regular style, but he despised extravagant claims and orators who distorted the truth to gain some effect.

Demosthenes, on the other hand, was interested not so much in what was "true" at present, as in what could be "made true" by the actions he advocated. Accused at times of dishonest dealings behind the scenes, he was none-the-less admired for his ability to convince others to dream great dreams, and go out and act on them. Demosthenes' speeches were dramatic, varied in style, and motivational. The story goes that when Isocrates spoke, people said "Great speech!", but when Demosthenes spoke, they said "Let's march!" (Saunders, 1970, pp. 13-21).

### Learning or commitment

In developing excellent teachers, are we aiming for them to support learning or commitment? Do we want their students to *understand* something, or to *do* something? Some teachers are exceptionally good at getting their students to learn information, and to understand it. Some are great at motivating their students to study on their own, to achieve success, and to put ideas into practice. Increasingly today, we see that students who are not motivated are at high risk of giving up on education, and starting a pattern of life-long failure. But then, many of those with low motivation don't seem to find it easy to actually learn things when they try. Where do we start?

We believe that both aims (learning and motivation) are equally important. But more than that, we believe that both teaching styles can be