Using Emotional Intelligence in the ELT Classroom

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Overview

- What is emotional intelligence?

- What are emotions?

- And mood?

- How does morality come into it?

- The Growth Mindset

- How these have been used in the classroom

Do your homework

- On emotions being a largely unexplored 'continent' for scientific psychology, "…into this void has rushed a welter of self-help books, well-intentioned advice based at best on clinical opinion but lacking much, if any, scientific basis."

  (Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman Ph.D., 1996)

- Retail Therapy doesn't work. Buy experiences, not goods. Spending money on experiences has a much greater lasting affect on us than buying something new.
  (Wiseman, 2010)

Disclaimer - Please note that this book is for entertainment purposes only. The views expressed are those of the author alone, and should not be taken as expert instruction or commands. The reader is responsible for his or her actions. (Salzgeber, 2019)

Why it's needed in the classroom

- "The neurological data suggest an opportunity for shaping our children's emotional habits… At present we leave the emotional education of our children to chance, with ever more disastrous results. One solution is a new vision of what schools can do to educate the whole student, bringing together mind and the heart in the classroom."
(Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman Ph.D., 1996)

- Very poor exposure to emotion words for YL, even though 'happy' and 'sad' are introduced early at primary level.
(Jiménez Catalán and Dewaele, 2017)

- Early childhood is a period when children get their most rapid performance in terms of emotional, physical and language development.
(Er, 2013)

Your "Ohh, that class…"

- We all have one…

- In the chat box (hopefully your DoS isn't online) in a word or two, tell us about that class you had/have that were

  Unruly / Misbehaving / Often stepped out of line / Or just an absolute nightmare to teach.

- Think about what you did about it?
  Shout? Scream? Bribery with sweets? Cry in the corner? Use crowd control techniques? Cry under the table? Open the wine?

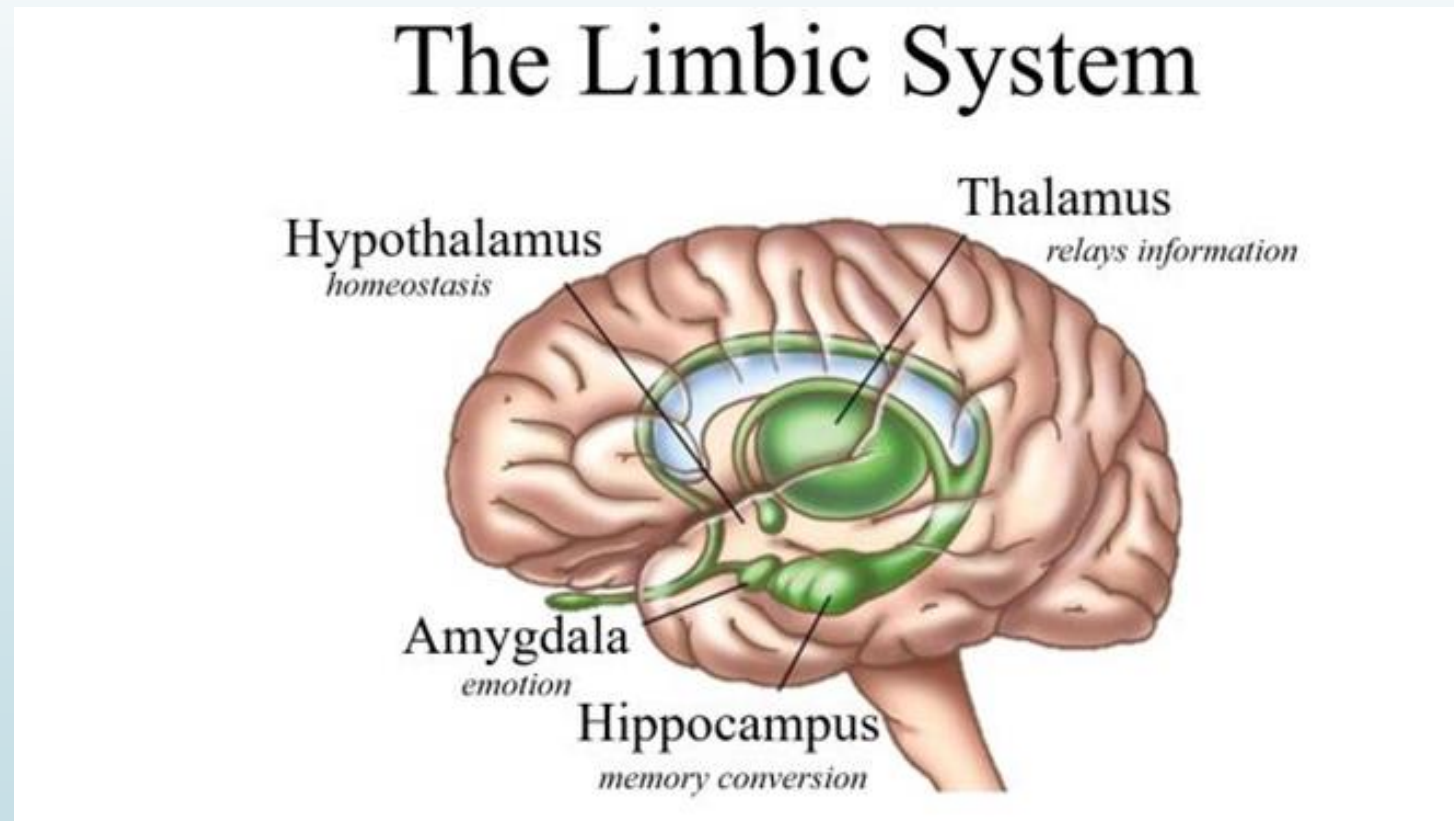- We'll cover some ideas on how to understand and improve those classes.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Research

- Through millions of years of evolution our brain stem first developed an emotional centre before it could think rationally.

- Smell developed first, then as mammals we got craving, fury, dread and love.

- Learning and memory then came in the limbic system, finely tuning the skills it already had – it now knew to avoid food that caused sickness in the past.

- Over the next 100 million years or so the cortex and neocortex increased in mass and capabilities to give us what we have today.

- All of what we have is interconnected offering us a greater range of possibilities than our nearest cousins.

(Goleman, 1996)

- "The emotional areas are intertwined via a myriad connecting circuits to all parts of the neocortex. This gives the emotional centres immense power to influence the functioning of the rest of the brain, including its centres for thought." (Goleman, 1996).

The Limbic System

Hypothalamus
homeostasis

Thalamus
relays information

Amygdala
emotion

Hippocampus
memory conversion

Emotional Memory = Total Physical Response Method (TPR)

- "The hippocampus is crucial in recognising a face as that of your cousin. But it is the amygdala that adds you don't really like her."

- Why is Total Physical Response Method so effective with learners?

- TPR is physical movement to react to verbal input.

- Reduces inhibition, lowers stress.

- Creates brain link between speech and action to boost language and vocabulary learning.

- The experiences we remember most, are those which give us a stronger emotional attachment to something.

- The brain has two memory systems, one for ordinary facts, another for emotionally charged ones.

TPR for difficult language points

- In the chat box, what are the most difficult language points for your students to learn in English?

- Some of my own – Prepositions, phrasal verbs, perfect tenses (depending on regional L1)

- (the phrasal verb nightmare is a whole other talk…)

TPR Method for Prepositions

- For Romance Language natives such as Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian and Romanian, prepositions are one of the most difficult things to master in English. (Lorincz and Gordon, 2012)

- Model – Mirror – Practice – Repeat (Rowland)

- On
- Under
- Next to
- In
- In front of
- Behind
- Between

"I can't think straight…"

- Strong emotions like anger and anxiety create neural static in the prefrontal cortex of the brain, so you cannot maintain any working memory.

- Continued emotional distress can create deficits in a child's intellectual ability, crippling any capacity to learn.

5 Domains of Emotional Intelligence

- Knowing one's emotions – Self Awareness. Recognise a feeling.

- Managing emotions – handling feelings appropriately from self awareness.

- Motivating oneself – emotional self control for self motivation and creativity.

- Recognising emotions in others – empathy, a massive people skill (we are teachers) and how to respond correctly.

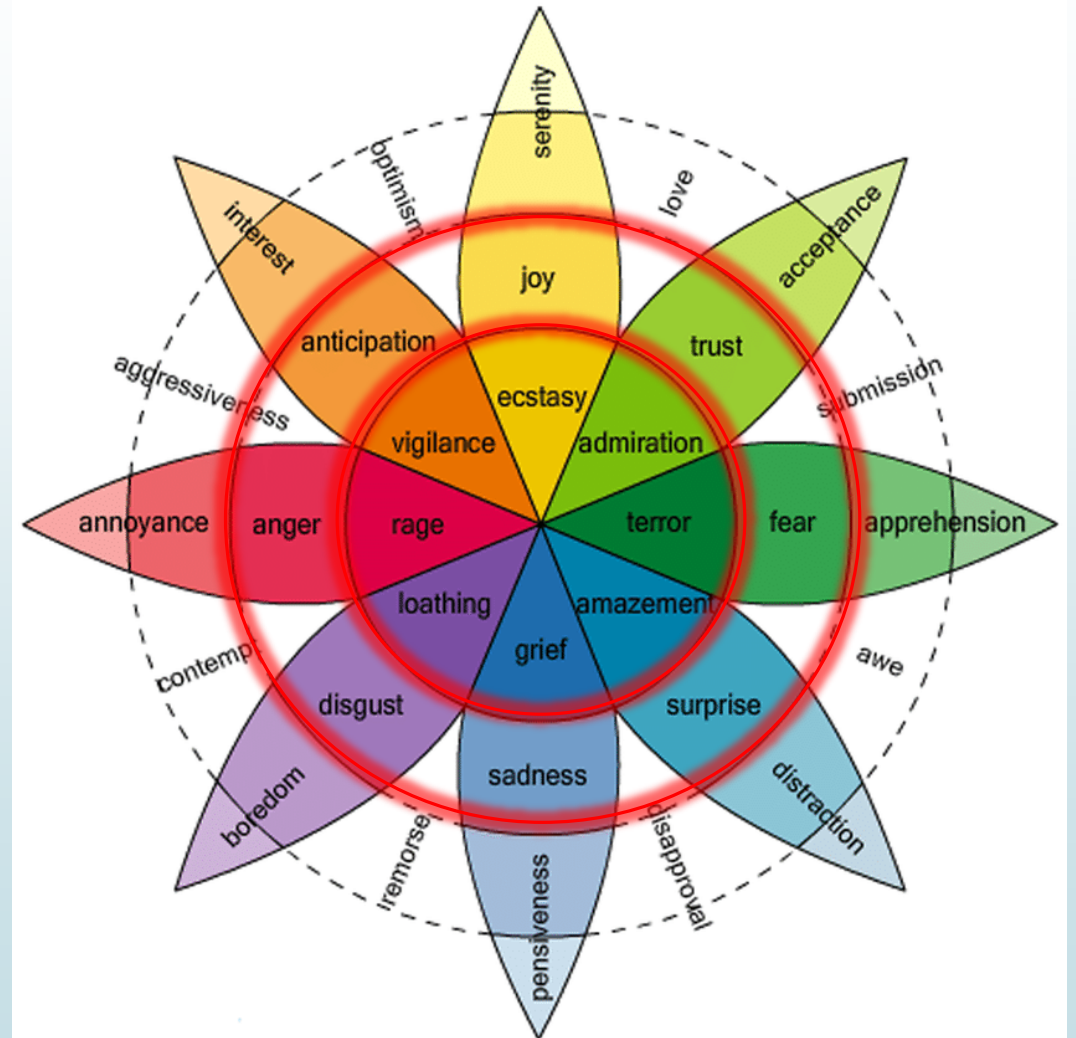- Handing relationships – managing emotions in others, social competence and ability to interact with others.

(Sternberg, Salovey, Gardner cited in Goleman, 1996)

What actually *is* an emotion?

- Plutchik's Wheel of Emotion.(1980)

  Joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, anticipation.

- All other emotional states are a stronger or weaker level of intensity of these main 8 states.

- You can move around the wheel from one state to another, but if you are in the centre, you cannot move at all, unless the level of intensity decreases.

- S's need to understand them in their L1 to have a chance of being emotionally intelligent.
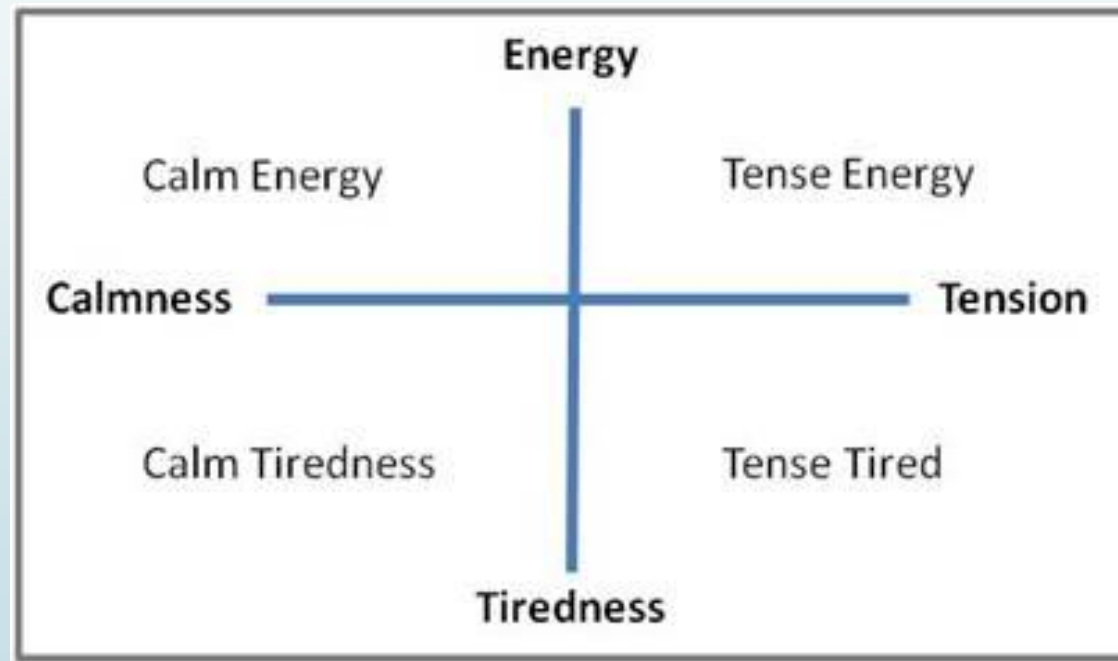
And Mood?

- The daily emotional state of our being, which has a greater effect on us than our activities, money, status and personal relationships. It is the background feeling that persists over time, less intense and longer lasting than emotions.

  (Robert E. Thayer, The Biopsychology of Mood and Arousal, 1989)

- More longitudinal than emotion. Emotion is minute by minute, mood can be over several weeks.

- Mood is to emotion what climate is to weather.

Four States of Energy and Stress
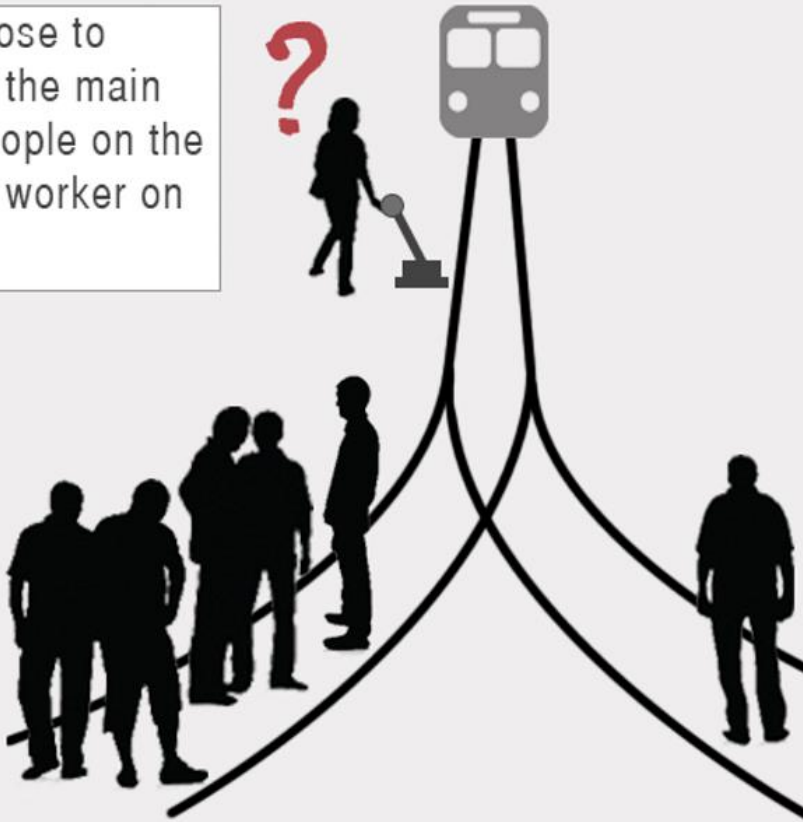
➧ You mood can be plotted somewhere on this graph.

Thayer, The Origin of Everyday Moods, 1996

And then there is Morality…

Part 2…

The footbridge dilemma

The person on the bridge can choose to push the large person onto the track, thereby killing that person but potentially stopping the tram and saving the five people further down the track.

theconversation.com

Images adapted from shutterstock.com

This one has more of an emotional connection.

In the chat box
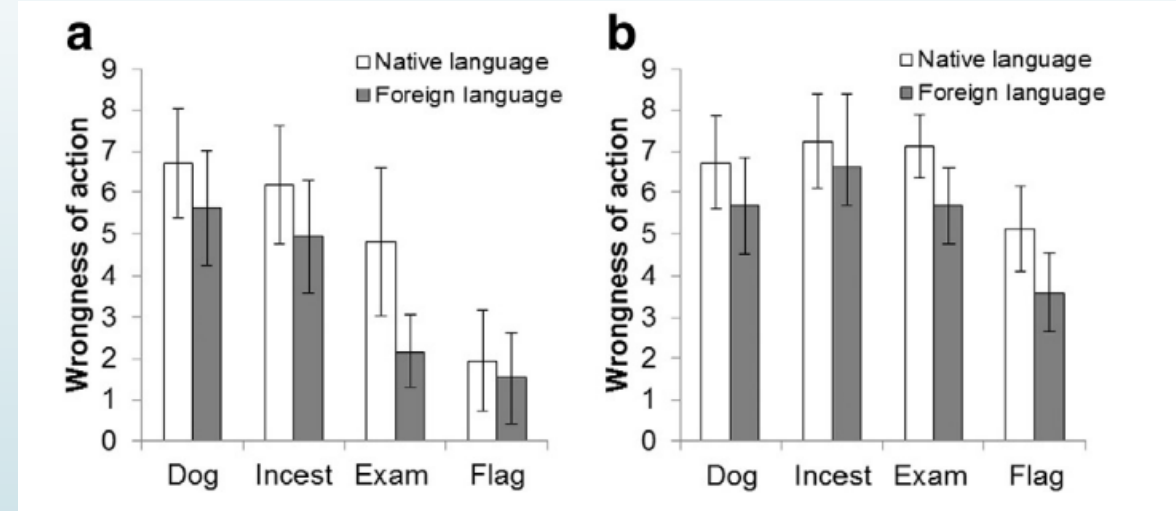
Push or not push?

Why / why not?

Why does this come into it?

- Your morals depend on the language you use.

- In part one (switch with 5 or 1 person), **80%** of people in their L1 and L2 say they flick the switch – there isn't an emotional connection there.

- In part two (bridge with large man), **18%** of people push the 'large' man onto the tracks in their native language.

- **44%** of people happily push him down when asked in a foreign language.

- When we use a foreign language, we have an emotional distance from it, as opposed to our native language. We have emotional connections to our L1 as its what we grew up around, we are less likely to have any 'feeling' towards our L2.
Costa, A., et al (2014)

We're also less judgemental in L2

- In our native language, our moral judgements go via our emotional brain.

- In our L2, we skip the emotional brain completely.

- Studies with L1 German with L2 English, and L1 Italian with L2 English showed people were less judgemental of different types of 'ethical violations'.
Geilpel et al, 2015

- This was in a European setting. Questions and results vary depending on culture. (Kaneko, 2003)

L1 provokes visceral reaction, L2 doesn't.

- Terminology used in our L1 provokes reactions from when we were picking up our native language. (Marian and Neisser, 2000)

- Taboo words or subjects (swearing) have much more sway in our native language than L2.
(Dewaele, 2004)

Small favours in the class

- "The best way to get someone to like you isn't to do them a favour, but to get them to do a small favour for you." (Wiseman, 2010)

- Classroom roles (even at higher levels), team captains, conference lanyards, 'class police', pencil person, paper person, 'the organiser'.

- All roles students can do to feel more helpful in class, not only great for students' learning to take on responsibilities but also actually makes them like the authority figure more.

The Growth Mindset

- Praise students for effort, not for their intelligence, as it encourages them to learn new things.

- Students who are praised for intelligence enjoy tasks less and tend to focus more on what/how other students are doing.

- Students praised for effort tend to score higher on future tasks, rather than students praised for intelligence.

- Students with a growth mindset have higher self regulation, grit and positive social behaviour.

- Not only in what our students do in our class is important, it's also about how we give them feedback.
(Mueller and Dweck, 1998)

- This may be down to how it goes in individual classes, the Growth Mindset has been argued against (Weisberg *et al.*, 2008) and argued for again recently (Dweck, 2019)

A scenario…A class I had.

- 10 students.
- All boys.
- Aged 12-13.
- Class 4-6pm, Mondays & Wednesdays.
- Level strong A2/B1.
- They had finished school, gone to different sports clubs, then came to the academy via a sweets shop.
- What issues might I have had (if any)?
- I specifically made a point early on in the year **not** to ask them on Mondays, "What did you do at the weekend?" **Why?**

Security.

What I did do

- To get people out of the 'inner circle' on Plutchik's wheel, distraction is one of the most powerful mood altering devices. (Zillman, 1988)

- One class on emotional intelligence graded to their level, with word maps of vocabulary (mixing Spanish with English to ensure understanding)

- 5 minute meditation section at the start of each class (they had all just come from sport then sweet shop).

- This focused on breathing techniques, everyone was much calmer, and in a much better state to learn.

- After a fortnight, students volunteered to take it in turns to 'lead' the meditation, talking the rest of the class through it.

Teen tips

Get them to grade themselves, makes them self aware of their actions in class.

B2 First	10/9	12/9	17/9	19/9	24/9	26/9	1/10	3/10
Maria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jose	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silvia	✓	✓	P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clara	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	A
Sergio	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hugo	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	S	✓
Pablo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ - Grand

B – Behaviour

A – Absent

S – *Excessive* use of Spanish

E – Excellent

P – Used phone when it wasn't needed

Young Learner scores

- Class divided into two. Points awarded at teachers discretion, at the end of each class, points awarded to the 'half' who came out on top, score goes on wall.

- Not all is lost for other team, the best behaved student on the losing team still gets a point – keeps them motivated throughout class.

- Prizes at the end of each term for top 3.

Growth and Prediction

- Before each unit test, get students to predict their scores.

- They can then plan better how to approach material in next unit.

- Good to show any early warning signs plus gives an overall idea on anything that may need covered again.

Name	Unit 1 Prediction	Unit 1 Result
Maria	70	74
Jose	79	63
Silvia	70	74
Clara	60	66
Marta	70	69
Sergio	70	38
Hugo	60	83
Pablo	65	66

The wall is the teacher's friend

- Gamification of behaviour and scores motivating for students.

- Light hearted approach to comparing against others, but not exclusionary.

- Permanent fixture throughout year so students can see their own improvement as the year goes on.

- Easy class control mechanism, for the good and bad days.

And it's not just for the students

- 10 minutes between classes allowed for registers to be filled in, which had standard details bar one item – Comments box.

- Possibly one of the best and most constructive forms of self observation I've come across.

Date	Page / Unit	Activities	Comments
17/9	P14-16, u1	Speaking, listening p15, grammar page 16	Generally good class, Antonio's pronunciation will require further work. Perhaps split up Ivan and Rodrigo for the next few classes to see how they get on with others as they are comfortable together but shy with the class.
19/9	P16-17, u1	Reading page 16, Use of English page 17	

Teacher Cheat Sheet

A5 page in my pocket at all times, making notes on little comments and remakes said by all students.

Good to bring up those comments in the future again, keeps up rapport when you ask about their dogs, family, brother or what they are reading/playing/performing in the near future.

Sergio
Supports R. Madrid
Has two brothers
Last holiday in Florida

Mattias
Loves the piano
Hamster called Barry
Eats carrots in class

Marta
Wants a bike
wk/nd walks with grandad
hates brother's cat

Maria
Grandmother V important
Dog named Sal
Hates spiders

Enrique
Plays on R's team, defence
Visited Ireland twice
loves 15's

Hugo
great with one liners
plays striker for local team
rode horses when younger

Pablo
loves masterchef
enjoys writing stories
going to London in June

Emma
Pet snake
Dog named Lobo
Village, Luanco

Cristina
Born/raised in Trujillo
wants to be scientist
loves reading Dahl

Roberto
three cats, two fish
goalkeeper for school
plays violin

Some Wise Words…

- "If you don't laugh once per class, you're doing it wrong."
Arthur McKeown

- "This job you're doing is so hard that one lifetime isn't enough to master it."
Dylan Wiliams

What we talked about

- EQ – The need to understand ourselves.

- Moods are long term.

- We see the world differently (and colder) in L2, we need to be aware of this when teaching a language.

- Feedback on effort much more powerful than saying someone is smart.

- Get students to become more emotionally intelligent in class.

- Make them more aware of themselves and their actions.

- Make it public.

Further Reading

- Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence, 1996
- Robert E. Thayer, The Origin of Everyday Moods, 1996 & The Biopsychology of Mood and Arousal, 1989
- Richard Wiseman, 59 Seconds, 2009
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Thank you! Questions / Feedback?

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