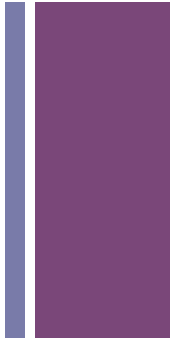


+ Activities that Promote Mindfulness and  
Empathy in the Language Classroom  
National Teachers Conference  
ELT Beyond Skills and Knowledge  
Instituto Guatamalteco Americano  
November 4 and 5, 2013

Abstract:

What do teachers and learners need in order to thrive and to engage in joyful learning in the classroom? Earl Stevik states that "that success in the language classroom depends less on materials, techniques or linguistic analysis, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" and further elaborates that "the most important aspect of "what goes on" is the presence or absence of harmony: it is the parts working with, or against, one another." In this workshop we will consider and do activities that help learners and teachers develop skills in mindfulness (the ability to pay attention to the present moment without judgment) and skills in empathy (the ability to truly understand or imagine the depth of another person's feelings and needs, two key elements that contribute to harmony inside and between the people involved.





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## Activities that Promote Mindfulness and Empathy in the Language Classroom

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- 35 minutes on mindfulness
- 35 minutes on empathy
- 10 minutes for questions and comments



Do you teach **ENGLISH** to students?

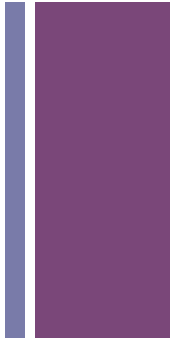
OR

Do you teach **STUDENTS** English?

# + Beyond Skills and Knowledge... what do we need?

"Success in the language classroom depends less on materials, techniques or linguistic analysis, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom...the most important aspect of "what goes on" is the presence or absence of harmony: it is the parts working with, or against, one another."

-Earl Stevick

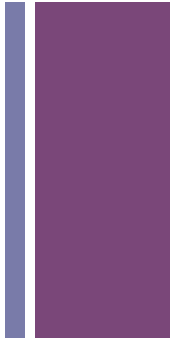


# + What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means **paying attention** in a particular way: **on purpose**, in the **present moment** and **nonjudgmentally**.

This kind of attention nurtures greater awareness, clarity and acceptance of present-moment reality. It wakes us up to the fact that our lives unfold only in moments.

-Jon Kabat-Zinn



+ Which of these might help your students?  
(Documented Benefits of Mindfulness)

INCREASED	DECREASED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* emotional regulation<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* social skills</li></ul></li><li>* ability to pay attention<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* working memory</li></ul></li><li>* planning/organization<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* self esteem</li></ul></li><li>* sense of calmness<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* relaxation</li></ul></li><li>* self acceptance</li><li>* quality of sleep</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* test anxiety</li><li>* Hyperactivity<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* impulsivity</li></ul></li><li>* Negative emotions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Anxiety</li><li>* Depression</li></ul></li><li>* anger management problems</li></ul>

# + Why mindfulness in school?



- Saves time in school
- Helps students focus and pay attention.
- Improves the learning environment
- Students are calmer and the class accomplishes more
- Improves students' ability to respond rather than react
- Improves students' ability to empathize with self and others.



+ Mindfulness activity #1  
How many thoughts in a minute?

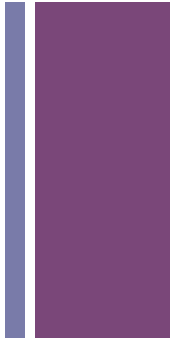




# Partner share Mindfulness activity #1

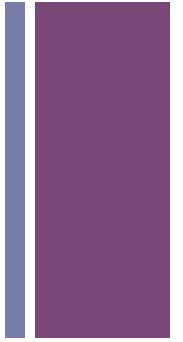
How many thoughts in a minute?

- How was this activity for you?
- How many thoughts did you have in a minute?
- What did you notice?
- What affect did this activity have on you?



# + Mindfulness activity #2

## Follow your breath



Close your eyes

Breath in

follow your breath as it goes through your nose, down your throat, into your lungs.

Breath out

Follow your breath as it leaves your lung, through your throat and out your nose (or mouth).



# Partner share Mindfulness activity #2

Follow your breath



- How was this activity for you?
- Was it easy or hard to follow your breath?
- Did you have other thoughts? Did you bring them back to follow your breath?
- What did you notice?
- What affects did this activity have on you?

# + Mindfulness activity #3

## Eating mindfully

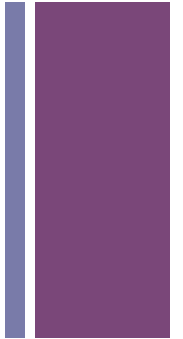


- Get your chocolate or piece of candy or nuts and please wait until everyone is ready.
- Mindfully open, look at and SEE the candy or nuts.
- Mindfully eat the candy or nuts
- Notice as much as you can about the candy and your experience eating the candy.
- When you feel you are finished... try to notice something else.. Keep noticing until Mary calls the time.



# Partner share Mindfulness activity #3

## Eating mindfully



- How was this activity for you?
- Was it easy or hard to eat mindfully?
- Did you have other thoughts? Did you bring them back to noticing your experience?
- What did you notice?
- What affects did this activity have on you?

# + Mindfulness activity #4

## Walking mindfully

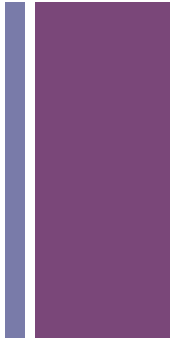


- Stand up.
- Walk slowly (do not look at anyone else as you do this)
- As you walk, notice your feet and legs.
- How do they work as you walk?
- Breath. Walk slowly, focusing on your feet and legs



# Partner share Mindfulness activity #4

## Walking mindfulness



- How was this activity for you?
- Was it easy or hard to walk mindfully?
- Did you have other thoughts? Did you bring them back to follow your breath?
- What did you notice?
- What affects did this activity have on you?



# + Mindfulness activity #5

## Listening mindfully



- Breath. Notice your breath
- Listen to the bells.
- Notice what you hear. Notice how and where you hear it.
- Notice when the sound disappears.....
- Raise your hand when the sound has disappeared for you.



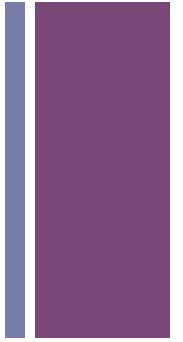
# Partner share Mindfulness activity #5

## Listening mindfully



- How was this activity for you?
- Was it easy or hard to eat mindfully?
- Did you have other thoughts? Did you bring them back to noticing your experience?
- What did you notice?
- What affects did this activity have on you?

+ thoughts on mindfulness???



- What is interesting to you about mindfulness?
- What questions do you have at this point about mindfulness?
- What role might mindfulness play in your classroom?

# + empathy



- We give our full attention - our presence - to have respectful and/or compassionate understanding
- Empathy does not mean agreement – it means seeing/hearing and understanding
- Empathy means DEMONSTRATING understanding NOT giving giving advice, fixing, suggesting..

# + Empathy or sympathy?



“Where” am I when I am listening?

Am I leading or following?

Am I in my feelings or am I trying to understand the other person?

# + Empathy is...

- Like standing in someone else's shoes
- Understanding the feelings and values/needs of another person's perspective at a particular moment
- An internal choice to see from a different point of view, to understand another side of a story.
- A state of being fully present to each other's feelings and needs.
- Not agreement, but rather a willingness to fully understand how things look from someone else's point of view.

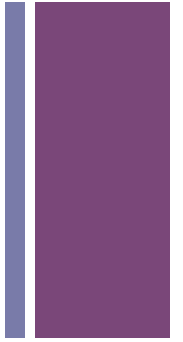


## + Empathy

Intentional kindness towards oneself and/or others by taking into account one's feelings and needs and then intentionally acting to help get those needs met in a way that everyone's needs can also be met.



# + Lens of universal human Needs

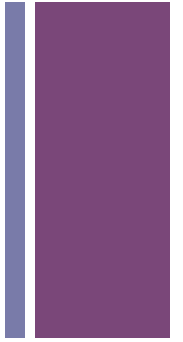


Words that describe  
life-serving energy  
that motivates and  
sustains us.



+ Some Universal human needs (not strategies!)

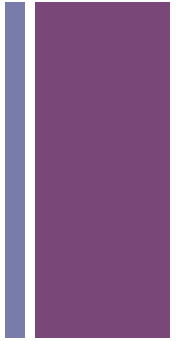
Food Health Movement Safety Rest Order  
Peace Stability Trust Freedom Choice Ease  
Independence Power Space Spontaneity Leisure  
Relaxation Humor Joy Play Pleasure Connection  
Affection Appreciation Attention Closeness  
Companionship Harmony Love Support  
Acceptance Care Consideration Empathy  
Kindness Respect Celebration Inspiration  
Meaning Belonging Communication Cooperation  
Authenticity Creativity Learning Effectiveness  
Accomplishment



## + Empathy activity #1

### Identifying your own needs

- Look at the list of needs on the next slide.
- Choose 2-3 that are your top needs **RIGHT NOW!**
- Talk with your neighbour about your needs.



+ What are your top 3-4 needs right now?

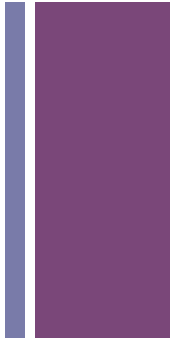
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## + Empathy activity #2

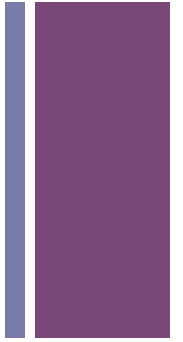
### Identifying students' needs

- Look at the list of needs on the next slide.
- Choose 2-3 that are your students' top needs
- Talk with your neighbour about what your students need and why.



+ What are your students' top 3-4 needs?

Food Health Movement Safety Rest Order  
Peace Stability Trust Freedom Choice Ease  
Independence Power Space Spontaneity Leisure  
Relaxation Humor Joy Play Pleasure Connection  
Affection Appreciation Attention Closeness  
Companionship Harmony Love Support  
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Accomplishment



# + Discussion of empathy activities 1 and 2



- How were these activities for you?
- Was it easy or hard to identify needs?
- What did you notice in terms of identifying needs?
- What affects did these activities have on you?



## Empathy activity #3

### Guess the “annoying” students’ needs



- Write down the names of 3 students that you find challenging in your class.
- With a partner briefly share about ONE of your students with a partner and together guess 3-4 needs that student might have.
- The other partner shares one story
- If there is time, another person can share.

+ What might that “annoying student” need?

Food Health Movement Safety Rest Order  
Peace Stability Trust Freedom Choice Ease  
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## + Discussion of empathy activity 3



- How was this activity for you?
- Was it easy or hard to identify needs of your “annoying” student?
- What did you notice about yourself in thinking about that students needs?
- What affects did this activity have on you?

# + Empathy activity #4

## Four choices

1. Hear/see/think through the lens of judgment and respond

by **BLAMING  
ONESELF**

2. Hear/see/think through the lens of judgment and respond

by **BLAMING  
THE OTHER**

3. Hear/see/feel through the lens of non-judgment (observation) and respond with genuine curiosity and

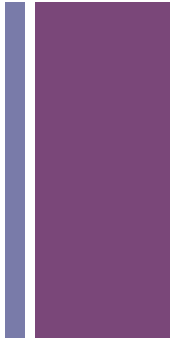
**EMPATHY  
TOWARDS  
ONESELF**

4. Hear/see/observe through the lens of non-judgment (observation) and respond with genuine curiosity and

**EMPATHY  
TOWARDS THE  
OTHER**

## + Preparation for empathy activity #4

- Write 2 things you are happy about in your classes
- Write 2 things that you are not happy about in your classes



# + Empathy activity #4

## Practice the Four choices

1. Hear/see/think through the lens of judgment and respond

by **BLAMING  
ONESELF**

2. Hear/see/think through the lens of judgment and respond

by **BLAMING  
THE OTHER**

3, Hear/see/feel through the lens of non-judgment (observation) and respond with genuine curiosity and

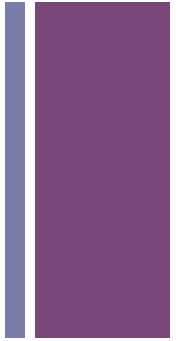
**EMPATHY  
TOWARDS  
ONESELF**

4. Hear/see/observe through the lens of non-judgment (observation) and respond with genuine curiosity and

**EMPATHY  
TOWARDS THE  
OTHER**

## + Thoughts on Empathy????

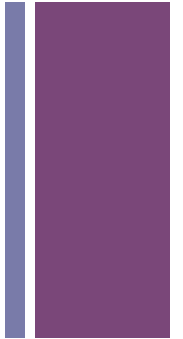
- What is interesting to you about empathy?
- What questions do you have at this point about empathy?
- What role might empathy play in your classroom?





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## Questions? Comments?



- How was the last 80 minutes of your life for you?
- What was useful to you from this workshop?
- What other questions or comments do you have?



Thank YOU!!

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THANK YOU!!

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