# The importance of training EFL teachers for affect teaching strategies

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## Dissertação

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I would like to start by thanking my mother who taught me the real meaning of affect. Wherever you are, I hope that you are proud of the affect I have given to all those who sat in my classrooms, while I attempted to make magic and to help transform their learning process into a very pleasant one. I miss you.

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# Index

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify whether there is a relationship between the use of affect teaching strategies and consequently an increase in the language learning motivation/proficiency. Raising teachers' awareness to the relevance of affective issues is a priority, which will be reflected in the creation of a supportive classroom atmosphere in which learners can be encouraged to do better, to work harder in an effort to reach their full learning potential. However, prior to understanding teachers', learners' perceptions needed to be analyzed to be able to confront both.

A screening model was used in this qualitative research study. Additional tools like questionnaires were also applied in order to: (a) establish a relation between teaching strategies which promote affect and students' reactions to them; (b) study EFL teachers' concrete perceptions on the concept of teaching strategies which promote affect; (c) understand if and how EFL teachers are applying affect teaching strategies while specifying which ones; (d) establish the importance of integrating affect in EFL teachers' training.

Since Russia initiated a full-size military invasion into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, millions of Ukrainians were forced to flee to neighboring countries (mostly women and children). The hosting countries, including Portugal allowed for Ukrainian learners immediate integration in their national schooling systems, thus changing educators' teaching realities. This has led me to reflect on the relevance of affect in a situation of war/refugee crisis. It became therefore relevant to understand to what extent ELT teachers felt prepared to embrace this new multicultural and sensitive educational context and to question if EFL educators specific training on refugee affect teaching strategies is not a current necessity.

## Abreviations

| EFL | English as a foreign language |
|---|---|
| EFLT | English as a foreign language teaching |
| FL | Foreign language |
| FLL | Foreign language learning |
| ALM | Audiolingual Method |
| CEFR | Common European Framework of References for languages |
| MPLC | The mixed-proficiency language class |

## Title

The importance of training EFL teachers for affect teaching strategies

## Keywords

Affect teaching strategies, EFL learning and teaching, affect, motivation, self-esteem, foreign language proficiency, magical teaching, teachers' training, refugees' affect teaching, refugee learners

## Introductory note

After researching most of Professor Jane Arnold's impressive lifelong investigation work on the role of affect in L2 teaching and learning, I felt compelled to contact her and kindly request her opinion on my dissertation proposal. After searching for some time, I finally came across a direct email contact and, hesitantly, I sent this most highly regarded EFL Professor (and affect teaching investigator) an email. It took precisely 11 minutes for Professor Jane Arnold to reply and make magic for me. I glared in disbelief at the email for a while. Just the simple fact that I got an answer made me feel that I mattered, that I was worth that attention, and the feeling was inexplicable. Professor Jane Arnold had read and commented on my proposal which was, as one can easily imagine, extremely motivating. Her kind gesture proved her to be someone who faces teaching as a mission, who altruistically embraces any possibility to facilitate others' emotional and consequent cognitive growth.

Teaching is one of the noblest acts of love, and caring is a condition irrefutably associated with the act of loving. Professor Jane Arnold cared and shouldn't this in fact be transversal to all teachers and teaching realities?

"True love begins where you no longer expect anything in return". Saint- Exupéry (2019)

## Introduction

As teachers, who devote most of our lives to education, we have felt magic either happening or failing to happen, in many classrooms (including our own). Despite it being hard to explain, classroom magic is undoubtedly real although it cannot be seen or touched. This dissertation will therefore attempt to study how teachers can in fact "make magic" happen in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms and how affect plays a vital role in that same process.

It is very hard to quantify or explain feelings. As such, and understandably, many of us hesitate to address concepts as vague as classroom emotions during educational courses or even in terms of research. Nevertheless, one must take into consideration, the fact that the key to true educational change might rely on that same affective magic.

Accepting that affect can be vital for EFL learning in the classroom, is truly important even though one tends to associate learning exclusively with the cognitive side of the process. According to Young (1999) when faced with a problem, brain activities only have the ability to focus exclusively on one thing: the problem at hand. Consequently, the cognitive processing capacity is short-circuited by emotions, which in turn can monopolize the brain's function to the extent that it can override conscious brain activity, thus compromising the so called cognitive capacity. Jensen (2005), mentions that the affective side of learning is the critical interplay between how we feel, act, and think. He describes that there is no separation of mind and emotions; According to him, thinking, learning and emotions are all connected. Schumann, (1994) cited in Arnold-Morgan (2007, p.4), goes even further when presenting proof that "in the brain, emotion and cognition are distinguishable but inseparable." One can consequently assume that affect is an integral and not dissociable part of cognition. Hence, a positive environment empowers the brain to place itself in an optimal state for learning by reducing stress and maximising interest and engagement. According to Arnold-Morgan (2007) in large part, this state is generated by the teacher, through the usage of one of many tools especially teacher's discourse.

DeFelice (1989) describes a moment in which she observed a young student teacher take the stand in a classroom. The author added that although she was doing a competent job, there was no life, no energy, no – the word that kept coming to her mind was - magic. She added that perhaps it was simply due to the fact that she was new at the task. But then she had seen this same type of competent, yet lifeless presentation, from teachers (including herself) who had much more experience. She believed that there was more to the lack of magic than simply inexperience. It was evident to her that the young teacher was doing what she had been taught to do. She had watched her attend endless hours of education courses in which they had

covered everything from skills, to lesson plans and classroom discipline. But, as she witnessed her struggle, it occurred to her that they had never even addressed the topic of how to immerse the mechanics of teaching with the energy required "to transform pumpkins into coaches, mice into horses, and technicians into teachers" (p.640). Considering Defelices's point of view, one is led into questioning if the novice teacher had ever been introduced to the wide scope of affect teaching strategies during those endless hours of educational courses that she attended, and to what extent these could have played an important role in the act of "creating classroom magic"?

When confronted with the need to define what exactly characterizes an affect/magic teacher, one might conclude that what apparently seems to be an easy question, proves to be very challenging to answer. The reality is that it is all tied to one's ability to respectfully deal with human emotions although it has never been an easy task. Teachers' genuine concern on ensuring the learners' well-being, comfort, sense of security, integration, relaxation and subsequent emotional stability, seem to be crucial marks when attempting to clarify the concept of affect teaching.  The previous combination of factors will allow the learning process to take place naturally and more spontaneously, therefore opening way for cognitive development. According to Chomsky (1988) cited in Arnold (2011, p.10): "the truth of the matter is that about 99% of teaching is making students feel interested in the material".  This is proof that affective teaching needs to be a central part of language teaching and learning. Arnold (2011), questions why language teachers need to add attention to affect when they already need to pay attention to so many things in their work. According to the same author, the simplest answer is that whatever teachers focus on in a particular context, attention to affect will make their teaching more effective.

Brooks (2007), goes even further when mentioning that teachers have a significant impact on their students, which will not be transitory but rather permanent. In the article titled "Teachers Have enormous power in affecting a child's self esteem", Julius Segal, cited in Brooks (2007), studies the factors that might help children who have been neglected and grew up in abusive homes. Segal writes:

> From studies conducted around the world, researchers have distilled a number of factors to enable such children to beat the heavy odds against them. One very relevant factor turns out to be the presence in their lives of a charismatic adult – a person with whom they can identify and from whom they gather strength. And in a surprising amount of cases that person turns out to be a teacher (p.12).

Segal proceeds to emphasize that the teacher's magic works in less extreme cases as well, in fact possibly in all cases.

DeFelice (1989), describes that the novice young teacher that she was observing, presented impeccable lesson plans, knew her subject matter, incorporated a good anticipatory set into her lesson, provided modeling for her students, included a variety of evaluative techniques, and even managed to have good control over her students. All was perfectly organized but lacked a touch of magic. Scovel (2000) considers that emotions might well be the key factors, which most influence language learning. Yet, he highlights that researchers struggle to study the affective variables since they are not quantitative in nature, making them the less reliable to be understood.

Hopefully, this dissertation will help many EFL teachers to affectionally care and make magic happen in classrooms all around the world. Now, more than ever, these affect teaching strategies should be prioritized. In regard to the current conflict in Ukraine, the Portuguese government has made available several aid programs and services to support these citizens who are moving to Portugal as can be seen in Governo (2020). As such, children and teenagers from Ukraine, with an age range between 6 and 18, will immediately be integrated into the Portuguese schooling system. These young learners will be granted exactly the same rights as those who are in Portugal legally. Several extraordinary measures for the integration of these foreign learners in schools have been defined, for instance: (i) progressive integration into the Portuguese curriculum, (ii) reinforcement of Portuguese language learning and (iii) creation of multidisciplinary teams, including specialized teachers/technicians, psychologists, social workers, interpreters and monitors, to welcome this group. Nonetheless, one is led into questioning to what extent Portuguese teachers are ready to deal with abruptly uprooted and consequently emotionally distressed learners. More than ever, the need for training on how to apply vital affect teaching strategies arises. Undeniably, these Ukrainian young learners desperately need "school magic". What they truly do not need now is to be regarded as an extra burden by an unprepared teaching force.

# 1.   Theoretical background

The current chapter aims to offer a short historical perspective of language instruction which will incorporate the contextualization of the study of emotion/affect in the language learning process.

A good starting point might be the need to recall that what is currently being done in Portuguese language classrooms is based on discoveries resulting from investigation carried out in several disciplines and subdisciplines, which when combined explain the process of language learning. During the last decade, for instance, where there has been a growing tendency to explore the development of humanistic psychology and alongside this movement, teachers have witnessed affective factors in education gradually gaining more and more relevance. According to Young (1999), language learning is no more than the symbiosis between the study of language and the study of all that constitutes the humankind. The author still adds that in order to understand how one learns a new language, there is a need to simultaneously study how the body, mind and emotions fuse, thus opening way for self-expression to happen.

During the mid–twentieth century, the perspective was quite different though. Two major disciplines (psychology and linguistics) were the greatest contributors to the foreign language teaching pedagogy. During this period the "what" questions were emphasized in research endeavors, like for instance what are the similarities and differences across languages? According to Young (1999, p.14), "language learning, in the context of both materials and classroom practices, focused on contrasting the native language and the foreign language being studied."

The Audiolingual Method (ALM) which dominated language teaching during the 50s, 60s and 70s reflected both a descriptive and contrastive analysis approach to learning and a Skinnerian view. Skinners' book *Verbal Behavior* (1957) portrays language learning as a controlled practice of verbal learners under carefully designed schedules of reinforcement. The author strongly believed that, as can be seen in Skinner (1957), it was possible to predict and control human learning and that what was observable could be examined and validated. The ALM sustained the idea that emphasis should be given to oral practice, with a strong focus on pronunciation, repetitive drills and memorization. Learners were therefore not usually allowed to freely express ideas as their participation was reduced to pattern repetition, hence avoiding errors that could be transformed into bad habits. In 1959, Noam Chomsky argued that language learning could not be merely restricted to observable stimuli and its associated responses, nor to a mere description of language.

Meanwhile, Rivers (1964) published a book named *The Psychologist and the Foreign Language Teacher*, in which she challenges previous investigations for neglecting mentalistic domains of questioning into language learning. Cognitive psychologists defended that the combination of meaning, understanding and knowing (cognition) had a significant role in language learning and in justifying human behaviors. Soon after, cognitive psychologists started exploring human behavior motivations as well as the deeper structures of languages. Consequently, scholars moved from solely building descriptive knowledge, to providing explanatory knowledge. The inquiry domains were therefore no longer reduced to questioning "what" but gradually started interrogating "how".

The basis of the so called Schema Theory was also developed during these decades, as can be seen in Bransford (1979). In essence, this theory explains how knowledge is organized within the human mind. It also states that knowledge is but basic units of memory, which are related to each other and consequently allow the existing knowledge to be used as a way of giving meaning to new knowledge and vise versa. Schema theorists defend that in order to understand what we see, hear or read one needs to make assumptions based on preexisting schemata.

By the 1980s, the dominant theory was based on cognitive research, however brain scientists started recognizing that this type of research only partly explains how the brain functions. In fact, it exclusively studies the part related to thinking and reasoning. Although language learning theories had progressed substantially, emotions had been neglected up to this stage. In 1984, Robert Zajonc's research cited in Muncy (1986), proved that affect, also referred to as emotions, had primacy over cognition. Emotions, according to the same author, exist before cognition and can also be independent of cognition. As such, emotions stopped being regarded as a result of cognition and gradually started gaining ground on their own. Investigators started questioning why there were differences between language learners and their respective language learning processes. Fortunately, and according to Young (1999), today emotion has gained parity with cognition.

The education field has undergone significant change over the last decades, resulting in a focus shift from teachers and teaching to learners and learning. This change has been reflected in many ways in language education. As evidence of this gradual transition one can mention The Northeast Conference, which took place in 1990, cited in Oxford (1994) entitled "Shifting the Instructional Focus to the Learner". During this event, foreign language classroom affective domain was addressed alongside with other major educational areas as follows:

- ✓ Attending to the affective domain in the foreign language classroom, presented by Elaine Horwitz;

- ✓ Language learning strategies and beyond: a look at strategies in the context of styles presented by Rebecca Oxford;

- ✓ Child development and academic skills in the elementary school foreign language classroom presented by Nancy Rhodes, Helena Curtain, & Mari Haas;

- ✓ The exploratory years: foreign languages in the middle-level curriculum presented by Anne Nerenz;

- ✓ Learning foreign language in high school and college: should it really be different? Presented by Thomas Cooper, Theodore Kalivoda, & Genelle Morain;

- ✓ Foreign language proficiency and the adult learner presented by Katherine Kulick.

By that time, Nunan (1995) cited in Mutlu (2008) included new keywords in his investigations which had also started emerging, such as "the learner-centered curriculum". Tudor (1993) cited in Wejira (2019) additionally refers to the "learner-centeredness in language education" as an example of how this shift started taking place.

Yet, prior to the beginning of this transition, Dulay and Burt (1977) cited in Nath, Mohamad & Yamat (2017) had already referred to affect factors as an important filter to language input. Stern (1983) carried out a series of studies and concluded that affective factors played the same significant role compared with cognitive factors in SLL. Further on, Krashen (1985) proposed the "Affective Filter Hypothesis", which backed up the notion of learners' factors, described as non-linguistic aspects, which may greatly influence the language learning process and influence proficiency levels of second language learners. The "Affective Filter Hypothesis" proves that learner's motivation, self-esteem, attitude and anxiety are the four major affective factors which have an impact on FLL (foreign language learning). When merged, these factors, act as a filter, which can encourage or block language input. Nonetheless, affective factors besides comprising learners' individual factors, also regard the affect between learners and between learners and teachers.

Since the late 1990s, studies on affective factors have escalated. For instance, in Arnold (1999), affective factors are explored from the different perspectives, including that of students, teachers and teaching. So, this development in the field shows the importance that researchers attribute to this factor.

The sprouting field of affect teaching strategies and affective factors promptly made connections between psychological personality constructs and FLL, ensuring implications and applications to classroom teaching methodology. According to Brown (2014), all these investigators pointed affective factors as having a significant role in foreign language teaching and learning, hence it becomes fundamental to understand what is meant by the term affect and proceed to explore the notion of what each affect factor entails.

## 2. What is affect?

Possibly the best way to explain the concept of affect is to refer to Stevick's (1980, p.4) perspective which asserts that "Success [in language learning] depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analysis and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" cited in Vaíllo, Brígido, & Camiñas (2019). The author is touching on the relevance of acknowledging emotions in foreign language classrooms, referring to learners' emotions, teachers' emotions and general classroom relational emotions. The 'inside and between' that Stevick (1980) addresses, reflects what is implied in affect: "inside", refers to learners' individual emotions, mirrored as the individual personality factors (self-concept/self-esteem, motivation, attitudes, anxiety, inhibition, learner styles…) while "between" refers to the relational aspects, which evolve between all the participants in the classroom – between students and additionally between students and teacher as well as between teacher and students and furthermore, as mentioned by Arnold (2009), even possibly between learners and the target language and culture.

Nonetheless, it should be made clear that affect teaching strategies are often misunderstood. According to Arnold (2011), one belief that should be deconstructed is that attention to affect is not just making students feel at ease. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hooper-Hansen (1999) cited in Arnold (2011), points out that teaching which takes affect into consideration and is based on humanistic and holistic principles, must be extremely rigorous. Affect teaching strategies cannot therefore be reduced to a question of telling students "you can do it!"

Arnold (1999) sums up the concept of affect as being something related to features of emotion, mood, feeling or attitude which can condition behavior.

## 3. Affective Factors in EFL

When one refers to affective factors in foreign language learning, we are acknowledging the emotional factors which can influence the students' learning ability. These can have either a negative or positive effect on the process. Negative affective factors, which are also called affective filters are key concepts commonly addressed in theories about foreign language learning.

Affective factors may be as important for successful language learning, if not more so, than the cognitive capacity or ability to learn. Teachers who master affect teaching theories have the capacity to reduce negative factors, develop positive ones and empower learners to actually reduce anxiety and become enthusiastic while experiencing foreign language learning. Teachers

can, for instance, promote activities to build a positive group dynamic, allow students to make decisions regarding several aspects of the course and select activities that are appropriate and motivating for the age groups, thus attending learners' interests.

### 3.1. Self-Esteem

The history of self-esteem as a concept began with two well known theorists in psychology who were possibly the first to address the subject, namely George Herbert Mead and William James, both cited in Mead (1934). In that same reference, one can find what is, most likely, the first official definition of self-esteem given by William James, who stated that self-esteem was the equivalent to one's success divided by his or her pretensions. In other words, feelings of self-worth are a result of the successes an individual reaches balanced by how well the person had expected to perform. For instance, if the individual had expectations to do extremely well on a test (being that his or her pretensions are obviously high) and scores 90%, then the person's self-esteem should be high. If, on the other hand, the individual expected to do very well on a test and then scores a 45%, the person's self-esteem should be low. In order to increase the total sum of one's self-esteem, it is therefore crucial to boost success or diminish expectations of achievements. According to Shahnama & Tajan (2001), this concept continues to currently influence the understanding of self-esteem. Self-esteem is therefore considered as one of the major affective factors since a learner's success or failure can greatly depend on the degree of their self-esteem.

Being so, self-esteem should not be regarded as another addition to an overburdened curriculum but rather as a natural part of it. Brooks (1991) mentions that self-esteem refers merely to an individuals' combination of feelings and thoughts which are related to their sense of competence and worth, to their ability to make a difference, their capacity to meet and overcome challenges, their willingness to learn from both success and failure and ultimately to their ability to view themselves and others with dignity and respect. Understandably, these feelings end up guiding our actions and in turn the outcome of these same actions can influence our feelings and thoughts. Rubio (2007) cited in Liu & Bao (2021), refers to self-esteem as a social and psychological phenomenon through which a person evaluates his/her competence and own self according to (a set of) values.

This particular affective factor is so relevant in EFL learning that no cognitive or affective venture can be implemented without a certain degree of self-confidence, or belief that one is capable of actually carrying out any activity successfully.

Self-esteem, from the perspective of Brown (2014), according to the situation, can be classified into three levels: global self-esteem, situational self-esteem and task self-esteem.

- Global self-esteem - related to the general assessment a person makes of one's self, referring to macro evaluations that one makes throughout time, on variable situations.

- Situational self-esteem - also called specific self-esteem, refers to a situation experienced, like for instance, an event during a foreign language learning context.

- Task self-esteem - often correlated to specific tasks, refers to one's self-evaluation ability in a particular aspect of the process, like speaking, writing, or carrying out a specific classroom activity.

For learners, especially foreign language learners, self-esteem plays a quite significant role, because they are deprived of their most common way of expression, their discourse competence in their own native language. They might feel vulnerable when exposed to an atmosphere where only an unfamiliar language is being used.

Various studies, including Gardner and Lambert, (1972); Nogueras & Rosa, (1997); He,(1996) cited in Shahnama & Tajan (2001), have proved that self-esteem is a determining factor in ensuring foreign language learning success. Therefore, if students lack confidence in their abilities and feel unable to perform certain tasks, they will not be able to succeed in learning a second language. According to He, (1996); Stevick, (1990); Brown, (2000) cited in Arnold (2009), learners with low self-esteem and who display negative emotional perspectives or reactions such as worthlessness and uselessness about themselves, will not reach the stable frame of mind that is required to focus on learning. Besides, learning a foreign language is difficult for many learners, especially when they interiorize that they are unable to learn well. Those learners most likely have fewer chances of succeeding.

For learners who have stronger self-esteem and who are more confident, language learning transforms itself into a less anxious, more motivating and pleasant experience. Learners naturally become more active in class and make consistent efforts to seize each opportunity to learn and apply the language. However, students who lack self-confidence may frequently feel anxious when requested to carry out, for instance, a specific communicative task. Students' low self-esteem may constitute a barrier to the extent of not allowing them to participate in the classroom activity or to speak in the target language. This situation may become increasingly worse if students eventually lose their interest in learning a new language. A learning atmosphere where a healthy general self-esteem is felt can therefore increase the learners' potential to the large extent.

The founder of the International Council of Self-Esteem, Robert Reasoner (1992), developed a model of self-esteem based on five components which are usually dealt with in the classroom: Security (knowing that we are safe, physically and emotionally), Identity (knowing who we are), Belonging (knowing others accept us), Purpose (knowing what we want to do and achieve) and Competence (knowing we can). As teachers we are constantly given the possibility

to develop these five components simultaneously while promoting students' foreign language skills.

## 3.2. Motivation

Brown (2014) argues that there are various definitions of motivation. In psychology, for instance, motivation refers to the internal mechanism by which people are stimulated to take certain actions in pursuance of meeting specific needs. In foreign language learning specifically, motivation is viewed as the learners' desire and impulse to learn the target language, providing him or her with the power and drive to learn. From a behavioral perspective, motivation is correlated to the fact that people are anticipating a reward, as opposed to a constructivist perspective, where motivation highlights the pressure felt according by social context alongside with the individual and personal choices.

Arnold and Douglas (1999), bisect motivation into two types: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. According to these authors, extrinsic motivation alludes to the desire to win awards or avoid punishment. It is based on external factors such as grades, money, prizes and awards being exclusively related to the outside world. For instance, a clear example of extrinsic motivation is what many parents tend to do, promise to reward their children if they reach a desired goal, as for example get a good grade. This is a widespread phenomenon all over the world which is also applied by many teachers.

According to Deci (1975), intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to investing effort for which there is no observable reward except for the activity itself, therefore not leading to an extrinsic reward. There is a direct relation between intrinsic motivation and people's internal needs, or the internally fruitful consequences, like the feeling of competence, of achievement and self-determination. Maslow (1943) defended that intrinsic motivation is considerably more important than extrinsic motivation, because from his perspective, human needs can be classified as fundamental basic needs, proceeded by psychological needs, and finally by self-fulfillment needs. In his pyramid-shape hierarchy of needs, one can find the physiological necessities placed at the bottom, while the self-actualization necessities are located at the top. Once a certain need is fulfilled, it becomes natural to push ourselves to higher level of performance. Although this is transversal to various realities it undoubtedly applies to any teaching and learning reality.

Most likely, students who are moved by extrinsic motivation will focus primarily on the rewards than on the task itself. While, on the other hand, students who have intrinsic motivation will pay close attention to instructions on how to accomplish the task and on how to best execute it. This attitude facilitates the process of learning new things, especially language, making learners more persistent and more perseverant, displaying the necessary determination to execute the specific task.

When discussing classroom motivation, it is unavoidable to address the concept of choice. Arnold (2011) explains how choice is inherently motivating. When one is obligated to do something, a constraint in the feeling of autonomy will be consequently felt, failing to reach the stage of intrinsic motivation. One way teachers can motivate learners while simultaneously responding to diversity is to find ways of including choice in their classes. This can be done through presenting several group projects proposals, thus giving the learner the possibility to choose, or by involving different kinds of skills in classroom activities, once again ensuring that learners are offered several options.  Learners are also given varied homework assignments options being that these can be valid ways of recognizing learner diversity and even enriching our classrooms. Arnold (2011) points out that diversity should, then, also encourage learners to develop their own learning resources by providing them with increasingly open-ended tasks that may involve working in restrictive (small) cooperative groups, in order to allow them to develop social responsibility in a community of learners, thus opening way to responsible citizenship education as highlighted by the CEFR - Common European Framework of references for languages, as can be seen in the Council of Europe (2001).

## 3.3. Anxiety

Foreign language learning can sometimes be a traumatic experience for learners. The number of students who regularly report that they are anxious language learners is very high. According to Worde (1998) cited in Zheng (2008), one third to one half of students examined in his studies confirmed experiencing debilitating levels of language anxiety. Anxiety is possibly the biggest affective obstacle a foreign language learner can face. Broadly speaking, and according to Spielberger et al (1983), it can be described as the subjective feeling of nervousness, tension, worry and apprehension, sadness and unease usually associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system. Unfortunately, there is a very high probability of those high levels of language anxiety being associated with low levels of academic achievement in foreign language learning. Socially speaking, learners with higher language anxiety tend to avoid interpersonal communication more frequently than less anxious learners.

MacIntyre cited in Zheng (2008) described language anxiety as the concern and negative emotional reaction triggered when learning or using a foreign language. In the same manner, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1991) cited in Macintyre & Gardener (2006) portrayed foreign language anxiety as a distinct and complex lack of self-perceptions, feelings, beliefs, and behaviors related to foreign language learning which arise from the singularity of the language learning process. Moreover, these authors consider anxiety as a major concerning set back to foreign language learning. Learners who become anxious in the second language learning context will be less successful than those who do not. In foreign language learning, affective factors play a significant role. A solution might possibly be to address the class in a

more diversified and relaxed mode, arousing students' interest, soothing any existing tension or anxiety, and even helping to stimulate enthusiasm to learn the language.

Besides the three factors described above, affective factors also include inhibition, attitudes, empathy, risk taking, outside affective factors, the relationship between the students and the teacher, and that between the learners themselves, among others.

## 4. Is affect already being formally addressed in the national schooling system?

Fortunately the Council of Europe (2001) - common European Framework of Reference for Languages already wisely encompasses since 2001, among all the competences involved in language learning, the existential competence (savoir-être), which is essentially based on elements of the affective domain: values, beliefs, attitudes, motivations, personality factors (such as self-esteem, self-confidence, anxiety…). According to the Framework, these aspects significantly influence language learners, not only in their communicative acts, but also in their ability to learn. Nonetheless, there is still a long way into reaching the ideal balance between the cognitive and affective approach to teaching.

Addressing concepts of the existential competence gives teachers the possibility, as referred by Arnold & Brown (1999, pp. 2,3), "to also educate learners to live more satisfying lives and to be responsible members of society". In other words, attention to affect connects to broader social goals while granting teachers with the possibility to "magically" help transform lives during the process of teaching English as a foreign language.

Even so, when reading through the OCDE's report of 2020 – OCDE (2020), it becomes clear that the main challenges facing the teaching profession in Portugal at the moment are fundamentally the following: an ageing teaching workforce, high job instability and a teachers' lack of certain skills. The proportion of teachers on temporary contracts in 2017-18, ranged from 17% in primary education to 21% in secondary. Additionally, fewer than 1% of teachers were aged below 30 and 22% of teachers in this survey reported a strong training need for teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting and in understanding the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching.

Solid reflection should be given to the fact that teachers play a vital role in society. Therefore, ensuring their financial and consequent mental stability should be prioritized, in order to make certain that their focus is exactly where it ought to be: on their learners. Teaching and helping to raise happy, strong-minded and complete individuals, who go through life thinking collectively rather than individually, who are willing to accept and embrace difference and are available and feel empowered to also positively contribute towards changing others' lives for the best, must be faced as an integral part of EFLT (English as a foreign language

teaching). Teachers' unstable working conditions should be regarded as a preoccupying reality. From an empirical point of view, and according to what is often seen and heard on the media in the Portuguese teaching reality, their working conditions seem quite unstable. Examples such as the following are often brought up: temporary contracts, uncertain placement policies, dubious career progression criteria, unclear teachers' evaluation processes and the constant increase in bureaucratic paperwork, which should be reviewed. The same also seems to apply to their training needs.

Education plays a crucial role in widening learners' horizons and, broadly speaking, in 'humanizing' them. According to Byram (2013) acting interculturally implies specific skills, attitudes and knowledge that need to be learnt. Still, from the author's perspective, it additionally requires a predisposal to suspend deeper values, even if temporarily, in order to be able to understand, relate and empathize with the values of others that seem to be incompatible with one's own. Preparing students to become intercultural speakers entails the act of being critically and culturally aware and involves analyzing and trying to understand cultural paradigms. Consequently, teacher need for training for teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting  must be seriously considered. This kind of training would currently be extremely useful in order to ensure, for instance, that Ukrainian children refugees feel welcome and supported in this critical post traumatic adaptation period. From an affective teaching perspective, it is also fundamental to develop learners critical cultural awareness, which Byram (2013) refers to as being crucial to encourage students into getting involved in changing the world around them. Allowing for that to happen presupposes acknowledging teachers' need for further training in multicultural settings, thus making sure, for instance, that teachers are more qualified to help integrate young Ukrainian refugee learners, ensuring that they are accepted and understood, rather than being mistreated or discriminated against.

Other facts worthy of taking note and which can also be found in the OCDE's report of (2020), that cannot go without saying, are that despite the job insecurity and precarious conditions under which many Portuguese teachers work, learners in Portugal still view several components of their school experience favorably, such as: they feel well supported by their teachers and reveal an above-average sense of belonging. These might be indicators that teachers in the Portuguese teaching system have already, to some extent, succeeded in creating a positive affective environment. This might be justified by Portuguese culture, which is, in its nature, I would say, protective and caring.  Further investigation would be interesting in order to explore to what extent cultural habits play an important role in instinctively applying affective teaching strategies in classroom context.

## 5. Is there a direct relation between affect and cognition?

Stern (1983) cited in Arnold (2011) stated that the affective component has at least an equal contribution (often even a stronger one) to language learning, than the cognitive component. As such, when teachers give attention to affect in their teaching practices, it must not mean that less attention should be given to cognition. Although affective learning is sometimes contrasted with cognitive learning as if the two were totally disconnected, research has presented evidence of it not being true. According to Bless & Fiedler (2006) cited in Arnold (2009), empirical evidence indicates that affect has a direct influence on cognition, clearly influencing the way learners think. Neurobiological research Damasio (1994) & LeDoux (1996) cited in Arnold (2011) have made it clear that reason and emotion should not be considered independent as indeed, they are inseparable in the brain as well as in the learning process. Jensen (2005), gives a good example of the complementary nature of the two functions when he explains how one's logical, cognitive side may tell us to set a goal but it is our emotional side that stimulates us into taking action in order to work towards the goal.

Emotions are then considered to be the propelling force that pushes us into accomplishing objectives. In educational contexts it is important to keep in mind that feeling, thinking and learning are inextricably linked. LeDoux (1996) cited in Arnold (2011), refers to two very important areas of activity which can be directly and strongly affected by emotions: attention and the creation of meaning, both of which are essential components of the learning process.

## 6. Research questions, methodology, tools & participants

The central goal of the research revolved around determining if there is a need to integrate affect in teachers' training as a factor which may improve learners' proficiency. In order to do so, it became necessary to study if there is a relationship between affect teaching strategies and learners' motivation and level of proficiency. A survey was applied to 100 random participants who have studied English as foreign language regardless of their age, gender or location (see questionnaire I). This will be used as a screening model in this qualitative research study. According to Karasar (2012, p.77), "Screening models are the research models aiming at describing a past or present situation as it is/was without attempting to modify, or influence them."

As a means of understanding teachers' perspectives on what they consider to be teaching strategies which promote/stimulate affect, a qualitative survey was used (see questionnaire II, which was applied to 20 EFL teachers). That same survey was used to

determine how affect teaching strategies are currently being applied by EFL teachers. Teachers were presented with practical situations and given the possibility to state exactly what actions they were taking in order to ensure the affective integration of Ukrainian refugee learners. (see questionnaire II).

## Goals

General goal: Establish a direct relation between the impact that promoting affect teaching strategies in language learning can have on learners' proficiency and desire to learn.

Specific goals:

- ✓ Understand L2 learners' past learning experiences and how these have affected them and their desire to continue learning;
- ✓ Understand affect and its importance in school contexts;
- ✓ Explore affect promoting teaching strategies;
- ✓ Study & explore concrete affect promoting teaching strategies currently being applied by EFL teachers;
- ✓ Establish the need for EFL teachers' training regarding the promotion of affect.

## Research questions

- ✓ Is there a relation between the promotion of affect teaching strategies and learners' willingness to carry on learning an L2 language?
- ✓ To what extent do EFL teachers understand the concept of affect teaching strategies?
- ✓ How is the implementation of affect teaching strategies currently taking place in EFL classroom contexts?
- ✓ Is there a need for specific EFL teachers' training regarding the development of affect teaching strategies?

## 7. Procedure of the study and analysis and interpretation of data

Questionnaire I was applied to 100 random participants on Google Forms, as an attempt to establish if there is a relationship between affect teaching strategies and foreign language learners' motivation and consequent level of proficiency. It was built with a specific moment in mind. I recall a period in which I was placed at a new school and as usual I prepared a "get to know you" questionnaire which was given to every student. One of the questions was "what is your favorite subject", and to my astonishment, 90% of the class answered history. I later found out that the history teacher had invested on a custom-made wardrobe with outfits of the most notable Historical figures. The school board had agreed to reserve some space for the teacher to

get dressed and undressed prior to and after every class. It was common to find Napoleon walking around in a school corridor, Hitler having coffee in the school cafeteria or a Roman senator sitting in the library. All the students waited anxiously by the classroom door anticipating who could possibly be teaching them on that particular day. No one missed classes and the students' motivational levels exceeded all expectations. Another question that my questionnaire included was "what would you like to do in the future?". Not surprisingly, many answered "to become a History teacher". So, what exactly was this History teacher managing to do? He found a brilliant, creative way of making magic! He could have gone to class and told a student to read or discuss a theme and just go home after that, but most likely that was not what he desired. He wanted to inspire and he did so exclusively because he cared. I am absolutely sure that his students have not forgotten him, even though twenty years have gone by, and nor have I.

Sven Birkerts, 1994 in Calvin, W.H (1996 p.61) describes in the book *How brains think* an enlightening example of how emotions function in the mind, stating the following:

> I often find that a novel, even a well-written and compelling novel, can become a blur to me soon after I finished it. I recollect perfectly the feeling of reading it, the mood I occupied, but I am less sure about the narrative details. It is almost as if the book were … a ladder to be climbed and then discarded after it had served its purpose.

One can assume that the history teacher is still perfectly remembered by his learners, who naturally recall how he made them feel. There are several indications that attention to affect can bring many positive changes to the L2 classroom and that the foreign language learning and teaching processes can become more effective if addressed affectively.

## 8.   Analysis of the data collected through the appliance of questionnaire I

For the sake of studying learners' perspectives on how affective issues impacted, both positively or negatively, their learning process, questionnaire I was answered by participants from a wide range of ages, namely 31% between the ages of 16 and 24, 25% between the ages of 25 and 34, 33% between 35 and 54 and 21% between 55 and 80, as shown in figure 1.
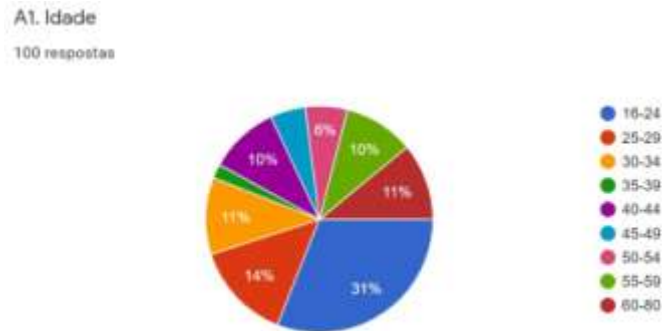
A1. Idade

100 respostas

- 16-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-80

Fig. 1

Gender wise respondents are quite balanced with a total of 52% female and 48% male, as can be seen in figure 2.



A2. Sexo
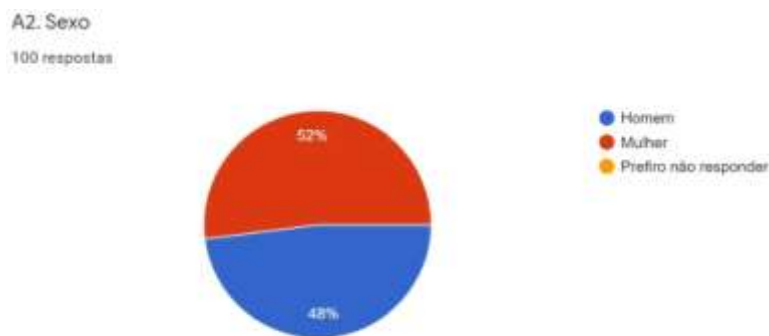
100 respostas

- Homem
- Mulher
- Prefiro não responder

Fig. 2

In terms of origin the answers registered display a wide range of locations, mostly within Portugal. Setúbal stood out with a total of 44%, alongside Lisbon that registered 33%. Answers from 17 others districts were also recorded, as displayed in figure 3.



A3. Distrito de residência

100 respostas

- Aveiro
- Beja
- Braga
- Bragança
- Castelo Branco
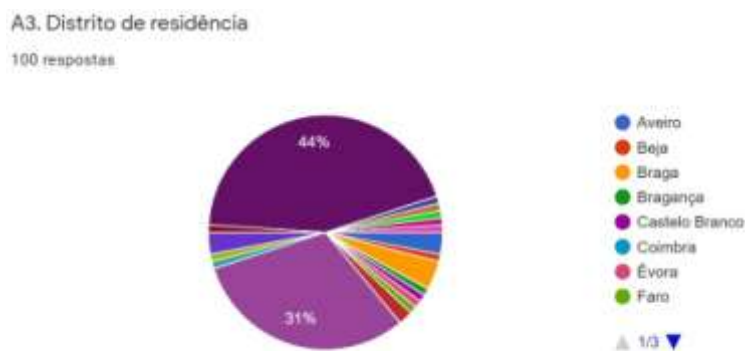- Coimbra
- Évora
- Faro
- 1/3

Fig. 3

When analyzing the respondents' nationalities, according to the information exhibited in figure 4, one verifies that 98% are Portuguese, which ensures that the answers were contextualized with the national teaching reality.

A4. Nacionalidade

100 respostas

- ● Portuguesa
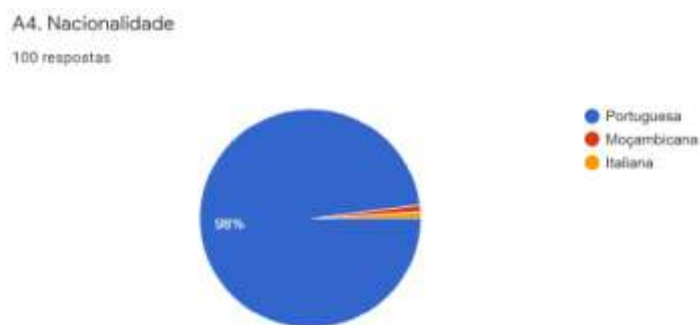- ● Moçambicana
- ● Italiana

98%

Fig. 4

When queried about which foreign languages participants learnt at school, English prevailed over all the rest with an attendance of 99%, followed by French (66%), Spanish (15%) and finally German (8%), as can be seen in figure 5.



B1. Quais foram / são as disciplinas de linguas estrangeiras que frequentou / frequenta no seu percurso escolar?

100 respostas

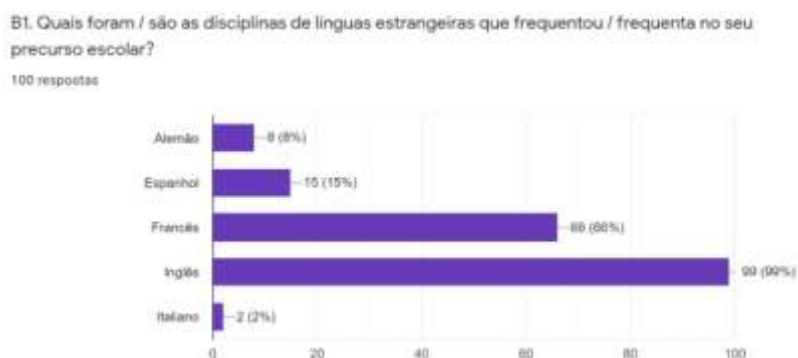| | |
|---|---|
| Alemão | 8 (8%) |
| Espanhol | 15 (15%) |
| Francês | 66 (66%) |
| Inglês | 99 (99%) |
| Italiano | 2 (2%) |

Fig. 5

Despite the fact that 99% of the participants attended English classes, only 65% selected English as their favorite foreign language, while 31% picked French as their subject of choice. In practical terms, 34% of the learners who studied English as foreign language, opted for other foreign languages as their favorite, which might be an indicator that for some reason their learning experience could have been more positively impacting, as shown in figure 6.



B2. Das disciplinas de linguas estrangeiras que frequentou ou frequenta, qual foi a que mais gostou?

100 respostas

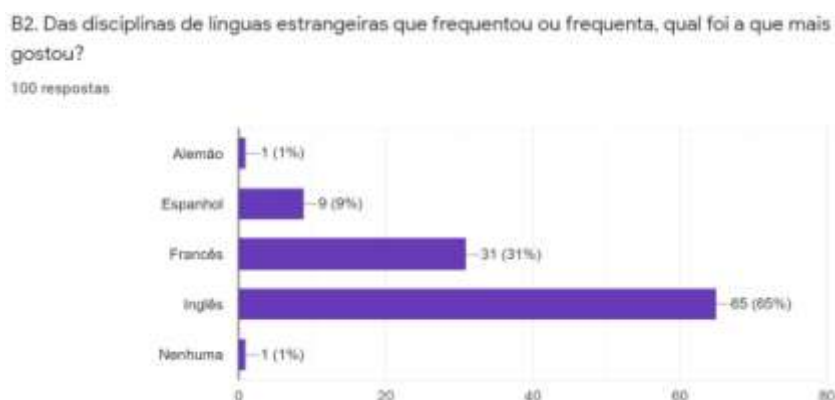| | |
|---|---|
| Alemão | 1 (1%) |
| Espanhol | 9 (9%) |
| Francês | 31 (31%) |
| Inglês | 65 (65%) |
| Nenhuma | 1 (1%) |

Fig. 6

Regarding their fluency in English (after attending EFL classes), 11% of participants account for being fluent, while 25% classify themselves as mastering the language either well or

fairly well. 31% indicate that their level of fluency is reasonable, while the remaining 33% consider their level of fluency as being low, very low or extremely low. The results are even, hence displaying a success rate of at last 50% in attaining reasonable levels of fluency in English as a foreign language, which can be regarded as an encouraging indicator, as displayed in figure 7.



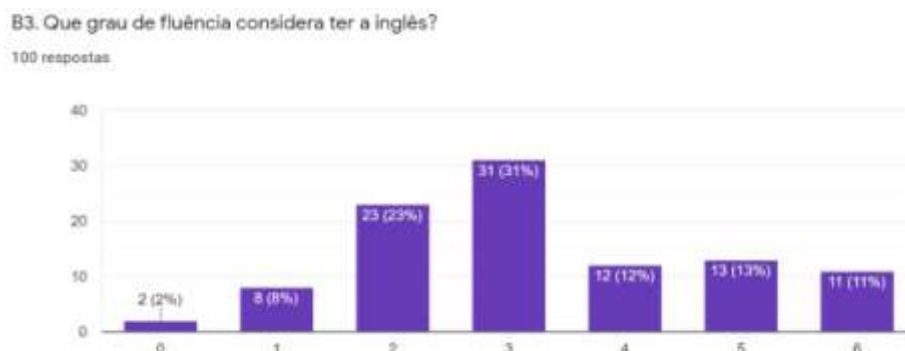B3. Que grau de fluência considera ter a inglês?

100 respostas

Fig. 7

Participants highlighted five learning factors which they considered as crucial to ensure success in learning English as a foreign language: teachers' dedication (60%), their own motivation (52%), the music that they listened to (45%), the movies and series they watched in their free time (43%), the empathy the teachers showed towards them (37%), which is reflected in figure 8.



C1. Dos fatores que se seguem selecione os que foram mais relevantes no seu processo de aprendizagem de língua estrangeira. (Máximo 5 opções).

100 respostas

Fig. 8

Considering the great relevance of the data here generated, each feature selected will be separately analyzed according to its prevalence.

### Factor 1 - Teachers' dedication

According to the results attained in the questionnaires, teachers' dedication stood out as the most crucial component when attempting to achieve the academic engagement needed to ensure EFL learners' success. Dedicated teachers seem to have the power of transforming themselves into inspirational educators who help to build brighter futures for learners and share important values, thus helping prepare learners for life beyond the classroom. This sort of

dedication not only improves their lives, but contributes towards gradual transformation of the world into a better place. Tramilton (2019), defends that there are several qualities that dedicated teachers commonly display, namely: (i) justice and fairness, meaning that they do not play favorites and treat everyone in an equally respectful manner; (ii) accessibility, referring to the importance of learners lack of fear to approach the teacher; (iii) strong organizational skills, since learners need a structured atmosphere, where stability and predictability make them feel secure, thus allowing them to learn effectively; (iv) empathy which allows teachers to sense learners' emotions, while attempting to understand what they might feeling; (v) intellectual curiosity, or in order words, being fascinated by the concept of learning, which in turn, will most probably reflect on to learners; (vi) have high expectations of their learners, encouraging them to 'reach for the stars' and not to settle for anything less, and (vii) effective interpersonal communication skills, which are essential for being a good teacher. In essence, and according to the same author, dedicated teachers open way for learners to be able to flourish in an educational environment that is friendly, warm and non-threatening, or, putting it in another way, in an affective environment.

### Factor 2 - Learners' own motivation

After teachers' dedication comes learners' own motivation. Participants highlighted intrinsic motivation as being an essential ingredient to facilitate EFL learning since it seems to transform the act of learning into a natural, spontaneous, enjoyable and interesting activity. Brook's (1991, p.28) states that "learners who possess high self-esteem believe that, in great part, their own efforts and ability determine their success". On the other hand, the same author defends that if learners believe that their achievement is based on fortune or luck (e.g. I was lucky or the teacher made the test easy) "their motivation and self-direction will be tenuous at best". If learners believe that they have little, if any, control over their learning ability, they will not invest themselves in their learning tasks, thus lacking a sense of ownership or responsibility for all that happens within the classroom. Brooks (1991) still argues that these learners will most likely feel that school is being imposed upon them (e.g. I can't wait for the weekend or I don't like school but I have to go). Thus, affective factors such as self-esteem & motivation seem to be intertwined, interdependent and extremely relevant when attempting to create a healthy and functional learning atmosphere.

### Factor 3 - Music

Music can also have a very beneficial role when attempting to improve learners' language skills. Gomez (2021) argues that while listening to a song, learners can (i) easily pick up new words which will widen their lack of vocabulary, (ii) improve listening skills, (iii) get a glance of what it is like to speak as a native (lyrics often make use of figures of speech, slang,

metaphors and symbolism), (iv) facilitate the improvement of pronunciation, (v) simplify the discovery of different accents, the possibility to pick up grammar rules and exceptions and utterly provide learners with the opportunity to understand other cultures and affective values.

### Factor 4 - Films and series

After music, participants accentuated watching films and series as a way of autonomously learning a foreign language. There are several reasons why a film can be an excellent learning and teaching tool from… to… . So, when considering what a film can add to the individual learning experience, Donaghy (2014) enumerates various motives why films can be excellent resources for those who aim to learn a foreign language, including the following aspects: (i) It is a pleasant and motivating way to learn EFL; (ii) it exposes learners to authentic and varied language; (iii) language is used in 'real' situations and in interactive contexts, (e.g., real-life conversations); (iv) it exposes learners to native expressions and natural speech flow; (v) it allows learners to interpret verbal and non-verbal  messages which are incorporated in the visual context (in many cases affective messages); (vi) It assists learners' comprehension enhancement through the usage of visual supports, like gestures or facial expressions. Furthermore it can be a means of emotional and affective education.

### Factor 5 - Teachers' empathy

37% of participants stressed the relevance that an empathic teacher can have when attempting to learn an L2. In fact, all educators ought to consider the importance of incorporating empathy into instruction, being that it can have immediate positive classroom results, which can even become transversal to the school community. To begin with, teachers need to embrace the idea that they are constantly being observed and that, in this sense, they must ensure that they model empathy through their own actions. Sornson (2014) defines empathy as the central piece of a great affective classroom culture. According to this author, empathy allows students to understand each other, which aids in building friendships based on healthy relationships of trust.

Being an empathic teacher entails the need to be able to establish a caring relationship with learners. Mendes (2003, p.3) cited in ASCD (2003) states that every student with whom he "consciously made an effort to establish a rapport or a caring relationship demonstrated dramatic improvement in behavior, effort and performance". Having rapport means that two people are alike emotionally, cognitively or physiologically, even if the similarity is but temporary. Knowing learners' concerns and interests is certainly a way to build rapport. The author describes an episode which I am going to quote in full, that perfectly illustrates what a caring teacher / learner relationship should entail:

With pursed lips and a furrowed brow, Julie strode into class. She sat down, slammed her books on the desk, and said, "I hate this class!". On hearing her remark, the teacher looked up and saw that Julie was not happy. He took a deep breath and walked slowly towards her. squatting down next to her desk.

"Julie, you're really upset. What's wrong?" He asked.

"It's not fair. I hate this!" She paused. He waited. "We had a stupid pop quiz in math last period. I didn't have time to study last night because we had to pick my grandma up from the airport and got home late."

He acknowledged her frustration, took another deep breath, and said, Julie, just hang in there today. Do whatever you can. It's tough to have that happen first thing in the morning.

As class began, He noticed that Julie sat dazed at her desk. After about 15 minutes, she opened her notebook and began to participate. When the bell rang, she left without a word, which wasn't unusual for her; she rarely spoke when she entered my class and never made eye contact.

The next day, Julie was the first to arrive in class once again. As she passed by her teacher, she smiled at him and said exuberantly, "Good morning, Mr. Mendes."

"Good morning, Julie," he replied.

"So, what are we going to do today?" she asked. He gave her a thumbnail sketch. When class began, she actively participated. When class was over, she passed by him and said enthusiastically, "Have a good day, Mr. Mendes." The next day and every day thereafter she greeted him, participated in class, and left with a goodbye. She raised her grade from a *C* to an *A* that semester.

Mendes (2003) cited in ASCD (2003), goes even further when stating that learners do respond just because teachers care, and also because they like their teachers. Some educators want students simply to respect them rather than to like them. But earning learners' respect does not seem to be enough, as they need to perceive that teachers care and are found of them, as people. As such, the same author reinforces that learners will work harder for someone they like than for someone they merely respect.

Other relevant factors to ensure learners' success in mastering the foreign language were brought forward by participants in question C.1.1. (see Appendix A). The following section contemplates the overall suggestions given by respondents as well as a brief analysis of each proposal.

(i)     The relevance of one's personal satisfaction when learning a foreign language. Thus mirroring, as described by British Council (2003) an intrinsic motivation to learn, one that comes from an internal force such as interest in language learning;

(ii)    The awareness that English is recognized as a lingua Franca. According to Nordquist (2000) the term *English as a lingua franca* (*ELF*) refers to teaching, learning and making use of English as a common means of communication used between speakers of different native languages;

(iii)   The perception that children acquire language through interaction without needing to learn it. Birner (1994) asserts that it is very easy for a child to acquire more than one language at the same time, as long as they regularly given the possibility to interact with speakers of those languages;

(iv)    The realization that being surrounded by people who speak the target language facilitates the EFL learning process. As stated in Inlingua (2018), it has been suggested time and again that cultural immersion is possibly the most effective and fastest way to learn a new language;

(v)     The benefit of having a professional motive to learn the language or a desire to sound like native speakers, both acting as extrinsic sources of motivation. This kind of motivation, according to British Council (2003) is based on external pressures such as the need to speak English for work;

(vi)    The relevance that reading can have when learning a foreign language. From Vincent's (2015) perspective, it is one of the most effective ways to consolidate and understand grammar and to increase vocabulary. The author reassures that the more learners read, the faster their spoken English will improve**.** Reading additionally allows learners to mature their intercultural awareness, widen their sensitivity towards delicate situations and develop the capacity to think critically.

(vii)   The perception that learner autonomy is a very important factor in foreign language learning. As stated by Little wood (1996, pp. 429-432) cited in Rao (2018) "Success in language learning is significantly influenced by learner autonomy, and how much progress a language learner makes, indicates how much he or she can take charge of his or her own learning".

(viii)  The ability to sense the relevance of empathy and the dangers of fear in classroom context. Sornson (2014) clarifies that when teachers show empathy towards their learners, they make them less afraid of any physical or emotional harm. Consequently, they do not feel the need to focus exclusively on concerns related to their own well-being. This grants them the possibility of noticing the well-being of others, while focusing on their own learning tasks.

Most of the contributions above, despite their validity, are not the epicenter of this research and were therefore only analyzed superficially and will not be further looked into in this dissertation.

In an attempt to study participants' perceptions regarding their own level of fluency after having attended foreign language classes, question D1 requested them to classify their foreign language learning experience as excellent, very motivating, reasonably motivating, indifferent, not really motivating and, finally, as frustrating or traumatizing. As such, 32% considered their FLL (foreign language learning) experience reasonably motivating. 25% classified it as either excellent or very motivating and 8% considered it to have been indifferent. On the other hand, and to some concern, many participants felt that their FLL experience was either not motivating at all (17%), frustrating (9%) or traumatizing (10%), as can be seen in figure 9.



D1. Quando pensa na sua experiência de aprendizagem de idiomas estrangeiros em contexto escolar, como a classifica?

100 respostas

- Excelente
- Muito motivadora
- Rozoavelmente motivadora
- Indiferente
- Nada motivadora
- Frustrante
- Traumatizante

Fig. 9

Furthermore, respondents were asked to specify why they had classified their learning experiences as they had done in question D1. The data generated was extracted, translated, transcribed and grouped into each category accordingly, in order to allow a better understanding of participants' choices as is displayed in Appendix B.

When one regards point number 1 of Appendix B, that lists the comments made by participants who classified their learning experience as excellent, three main aspects stand out, , the relevance of teachers' quality, learners own motivation / effort and the real need to learn the foreign language. These variables were seen, from learners' perspectives as being essential ingredients when it comes to transforming a FLL experience from… into an excellent one. Brooks (1991, p. 94) speculates on how wonderful it would be "to teach in a classroom in which fears and doubts are minimized, in which students are less hesitant to attempt new and difficult tasks, are more secure in offering opinions and answers and more open to engaging in discussions without worries of being judged or ridiculed." The author goes beyond and states

that an affect / self-esteem teacher has the power to create such a safe, caring and consequently productive environment. In fact and overall, participants' comments show evidence of that being a feasible possibility.

In the same line of thought, those who categorized their learning experience as having been very motivating (see point 2 of Appendix B), highlighted teachers' dedication, professionalism, competence, friendliness and enthusiasm as necessary components to transform the foreign language learning experience into a motivation one. These, in turn, and most likely, will lead learners into feeling the desire to learn more. Brooks (1991) asserts that teachers who use affect teaching strategies in school settings help learners develop a feeling of enjoyment and pride for learning, which they will happily recall later on, but for that to happen, it is fundamental that educators serve as models taking pride in what they are teaching. Attention was additionally called to other relevant factors such as the reduced number of learners in class which facilitates interaction and group dynamics, the pleasant classroom atmosphere and the fact that they actually succeeded at learning the FL (foreign language). Once again in this group, teachers and affect teaching strategies assume a primordial role, alongside with group dynamics and personal success.

When analyzing the comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as reasonably motivating (see point 3 of Appendix 2), it becomes clear that opinions are divided. While on the one hand, there is a group which pinpoints positive aspects, such as: good and empathic teachers and dedicated educators who made a point of motivating learners and who really wanted students to learn. Nonetheless, one can also observe that less positive remarks start sprouting at this stage, including: difficulty in learning the language which caused motivational constraints; teaching methods that were too formal and not dynamic / boring classes that focused mainly on reading, grammar exercises and writing; lack of opportunity for oral production and social interaction; a lot of theory and very little practice; lack of teaching persistence; learners' feelings of fear, anxiety, self-consciousness and frustration and the need for more FLL teaching hours.

Not many comments were made by participants who classified their L2 learning as indifferent (see point 4 of Appendix B). Some argued that they did not have anything good or bad to highlight, while others stated that there were other subjects which were more appealing to them. There was still one participant that made reference to teachers' allegeable lack of competence and yet another who blamed the feeling of indifference on his own lack of effort.

The number of comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning experience as frustrating, (see point 5 of Appendix B), focused mainly on lack of motivation, little progress in language learning and lack of oral production practice. On the contrary, and

raising a red flag and some serious apprehensiveness, one can find 16 comments under the category of traumatizing. Consequently, it becomes evident that many learners unfortunately associate FLL to a disturbing, "non-magical" and even traumatizing experience. The reasons stated in the comments revolved around several areas, including: FL learners' learning difficulties; the insecurity and anxiety felt during FL classes; feeling invisible and ridiculed by the teacher; very strict and un-motivating teachers' posture; lack of teachers' dedication, empathy and concern; ironic teachers who discriminate; difficulty in understanding what was said or read in the target language, or in expressing themselves orally; lack of natural aptitude for language learning; absence of family or community members who could speak the language, to back them up. Nonetheless, a particular area of concern (attending to the learner's age), resides in the information provided by a participant, who makes use of the word "repulsion" to describe how he/she felt during ELT 4th grade classes and describes systematically leaving most ELT classes in tears.

It is a harsh reality to face the fact that there might be learners undergoing physiological constraints caused by what might be happening inside one's classroom. Participants who fell under the last category made reference to feelings of insecurity, sadness, anxiety and even humiliation, which will be further looked into as the analysis of the present dissertation progresses. Yet, anxiety is too frequently mentioned, thus deserving a special emphasis. According to Liu & Bao (2021) learners' anxiety can only be overcome once they feel relaxed and comfortable in class. For that to happen, teachers should attempt to get to know the learners, not only their proficiency level, but also their characters or personality types.

Thus, addressing affect teaching strategies which might be helpful when attempting to reduce learners levels of anxiety becomes significantly important, as for instance: (i) the teacher setting different goals for learners based on their various proficiency levels. If learners become aware that they have made some progress, they will be more motivated and inclined to learn language; (ii) praising learners for making sincere efforts to try out language. Compliments are helpful when it comes to lowering learners' anxiety and inhibition; (iii) giving learners some outdoor speaking assignments that do not expose them in front of the entire class; (iv) have them share anxiety issues or fears in groups; (v) laugh with the learners; (vi) play pedagogical games to make learners feel more relaxed; (vii) find ways to share teachers own fears regarding learning, as was, for instance, brilliantly done by Defelice (1989) when she describes that at a given stage in her life she decided to take piano lessons. With very high expectations she sat at those piano lessons imagining how soon she would master the art of beautifully playing music. Shortly after, she started feeling frustrated, disappointed and embarrassed and her great expectations started vanishing as her fingers failed at producing the sophisticated melodies that she heard in her head. She felt even more mortified when she saw many young children

mastering the piano with seeming ease. Soon, it occurred to her that her EFL learners were possibly feeling exactly the same. She proceeds to explain that their shared frustration (hers and theirs) was the catalyst that allowed learners to trust her enough to make mistakes in front of her, and allowed her to experiment new teaching techniques. From there on, their work became energized. After all, she had just become their ally in the struggle to learn and according to the author, energy comes from engaging in that struggle.

Bao and Liu (2021) argue that a healthy relationship between teachers and learners is also very significant when attempting to reduce learners' anxiety. If a learner dislike a teacher, it will be very difficult for him or her to relate or enjoy the subject the educator teaches. Caring about learners and having patience is essential to help decrease anxiety levels. A heart full of compassion can help the learners master the knowledge more easily. Healthy relationships between teachers and learners can reduce the learners' anxiety levels, arouse their motivation, help correct any bad behaviors and thus lead them to success in language learning.

Question D3 requested that participants select the motives why their learning experience was not a positive one. Once again, teachers' attitudes (35%) stood out alongside with teachers' lack of empathy (35%) as being the reasons for substantially reducing ELT "magic". Carl Rogers (1983 p. 105-6) cited in Arnold-Morgan (2007), makes reference to the need to promote real, meaningful learning in the classroom and that reaching this goal is, in great part, dependent "not on things such as specific skills or scholarly knowledge of the teacher, or course planning or teaching aids, but rather on certain attitudinal qualities which exit in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner." It becomes relevant to question ourselves to what extent are teachers currently aiming to build strong personal relationships with their learners and if they are in fact trying, to what extent are they actually managing to succeed.

The lack of natural aptitude for languages (which is addressed in the analysis of question D5) was also highlighted (28%) as being responsibly for transforming their FLL experience into a negative one, as can be seen in figure 10. On the contrary, and according to the data collected, most participants consider to have had the appropriate family support and stimuli, which is a very good indicator that might again be related to Portuguese caring cultural habits previously mentioned

D3. Caso a experiência de aprendizagem não tenha sido positiva, selecione das causas, as com que mais se identifica.
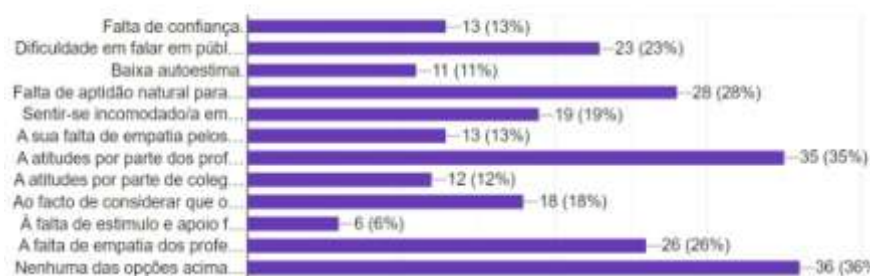
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Fig. 10

Question D4 invited participants who had had a positive L2 learning experience to select the reasons why they considered that it helped them reach their goals. The results obtained through the data analysis were quite even, which clearly shows that a positive learning experience is based on an amalgam of factors. Cook (2008) cited in Arbitrer (2013, p.1) asserts that "The salient contribution of each factor is different among learners because each learner acquires L2 through different learning experiences". Nonetheless, the reasons which attained the highest percentages were: natural aptitude for languages (24%); the empathy felt towards the teacher (24%); teachers who made learners feel confident and determined (20%); having supporting teachers (19%) and easiness to communicate in other languages.


D4. Caso a experiência de aprendizagem tenha sido positiva, selecione das afirmações que se seguem, aquelas com que mais concorda. O seu interesse pela aprendizagem de linguas relacionou-se com:
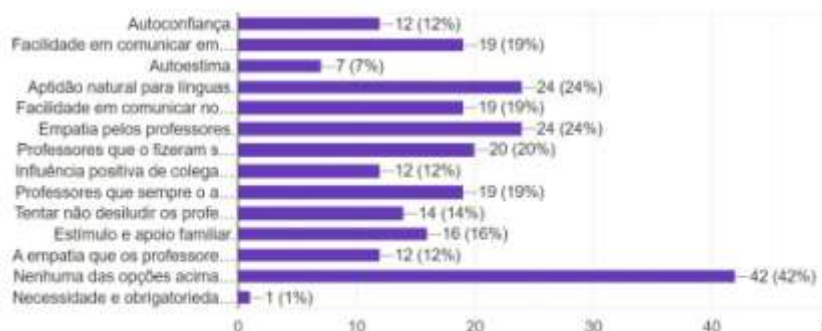
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Fig. 11

When questioned about the relevance of the way in which L2 teachers carry out their duties, most participants classified it as being fundamental to ensure learning success (81%), 13% considered it certainly relevant and the remaining 6%, either regarded it as being moderately or not at all relevant, as can be seen in figure 12. According to the data generated it is unquestionable that learners' acknowledge how important a teacher's role is. From another perspective, further reflection should be given to question to what extent are teachers really aware of the relevance and of the impact that their role can have on learners. Brooks (1991, p.125) asserts that affective self-esteem teachers "recognize that the impact that they have on

students may not always be apparent at first but can last for a lifetime." According to the same author, it is extremely pertinent to highlight that when affect teaching strategies are applied educators can integrate what they teach with how they teach. This skill will in turn enable teachers to simultaneously shape minds and touch spirits, thus positively impacting the way their learners feel about themselves and see themselves for the rest of their lives. As Brooks (1991, p. 125) states, "having such influence is truly a rare privilege" that teachers must embrace with utter care, especially when the world is undergoing major changes unseen in a century.



D5. Considera que a forma como os professores de lingua estrangeira desempenham o seu papel é:

100 respostas

- Fundamental para o processo de aprendizagem
- Certamente relevante para o processo de aprendizagem
- Moderadamente relevante para o processo de aprendizagem
- Indiferente para o processo de aprendizagem
- Não é de todo relevante para o processo de aprendizagem

Fig. 12

In order to understand participants' beliefs regarding people's natural aptitude to learn foreign languages, 93% stated that there are in fact people who display a natural aptitude to learn foreign languages, as shown in figure 13. The remaining 7% either believe that there are people who maybe do, or that do not at all.

Horwitz (1987) & White (1999) assert that foreign language learners do not come to class without preconceived notions about the nature and process of foreign language learning. They bring along several presumptions about what language learning is and how a foreign language should be learned. When looking at the data collected in question D6, one can easily understand that most participants have preconceptions (strong beliefs), regarding learners ability to learn a foreign language, being that 83% defend that there are learners who have a greater natural aptitude to learn a foreign language. These preexisting preconceptions (known as beliefs) are claimed to have great influential impact on learners' approaches and behaviors in their own learning process. Furthermore, Mantle-Bromley (1995), cited in Abdi & Asadi (2015), argued that learners who display a positive attitude and realistic language-related beliefs are most likely to have a more productive general attitude and outcome in learning compared to those who have negative attitude and mistaken beliefs. Similarly, Mori (1999) also cited in Abdi & Asadi (2015), claimed that positive beliefs can compensate for learners' limited abilities. In contrast, Horwitz (1987) worried that some mistaken or erroneous beliefs may sabotage learners' success in language learning.

D6. Acredita que há pessoas que têm uma maior aptidão natural para a aprendizagem de idiomas estrangeiros?
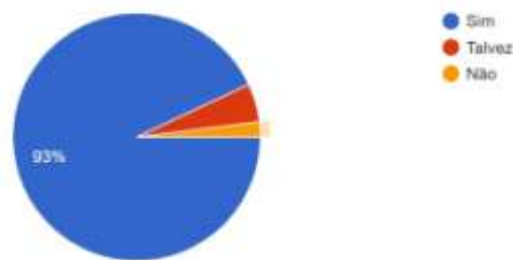
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Fig. 13

Immediately after, participants were inquired about their beliefs concerning children aged between 4 to 6 and their ability to learn a foreign language after moving to a foreign country. 77% of respondents believed that the child would have no problem learning the language, 12% stated that maybe a child would have some difficulty, while only 11% considered that it would not be easy for a child to learn the foreign language.

Contrastingly to participants' beliefs regarding the natural aptitude for language learning displayed by older learners, 77% seem to consider that this age group (4-6), who is most likely to have no strong beliefs about foreign language learning or any expectations regarding their learning process, would have no real difficulty in learning a foreign language (see figure 14). What participants might mean to say is that they suppose that children are at an age where it is still easy to acquire a language rather than learn it.

Research suggests that learners' beliefs about foreign language learning are intertwined with factors such as personality, identity, self-concept, self efficacy and other individual differences according to Epstein (1990) cited in Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005). Yang (1999), White (1999) and Bernat (2014), cited in Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005), assert that, for instance, learners may be directly influenced by their perception of success in learning and levels of expectancy.



D7. Acredita que uma criança de 4 a 6 anos a residir num país estrangeiro, terá dificuldade em aprender o idioma desse país?
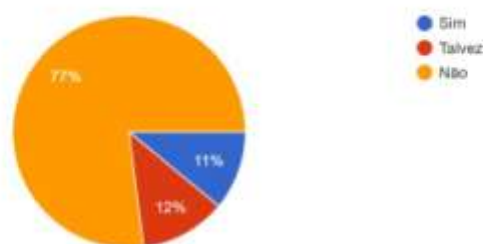
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Fig. 14

It becomes therefore necessary to explain that a language can either be learnt or acquired. Krashen (2009) claimed that children and adults can 'acquire' languages naturally and one does not need to 'learn' grammatical structures or vocabulary through imitation, or memorisation, to attain proficiency. Exposure to language in human interaction is an asset to value. With language acquisition, the contextual understanding of the language is gained through immersion and practical use, whereas with language learning, emphasis is placed on the theoretical knowledge of language and knowing the rules. [1]

Teachers play a very important role in helping to deconstruct any negative self-beliefs learners may display, as these can fiercely compromise their progress. Thus, encouraging a realistic and positive view of oneself is fundamental. However, only when one experiences real achievement in using the foreign language in a meaningful communication process, can one's self-esteem be empowered. Truly effective learning experiences will inevitably have a healthy impact on learners' self-esteem. As Reasoner (1992) emphatically asserts, it is not about plainly telling learners that they are fantastic because in the long-run efforts of that nature are useless.

In order to understand participants' beliefs regarding children's natural aptitude to learn foreign languages, they were expected to select from the options given, the ones that they believed had a stronger influence in ensuring success as can be seen in fig. 14. 70% expressed that being surrounded by people who only speak the foreign language is possibly a great facilitator when it comes to FLL. 60% considered that the need to be able to communicate is also very relevant and 50% highlighted the fact that children, contrarily to adults, are not afraid to make mistakes. Brooks (1991) reinforces the need to create a school climate in which learners face mistakes as experiences to learn from. In fact, and according to the same author, mistakes are not only to be accepted but also to be expected. Teachers must, therefore, tell their learners that they should not feel defeated by mistakes, as these are an integral part of the both their learning process and their own growth.

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[1] As a sideline remark, it would be rather interesting to study how Ukrainian refugee learners, who are currently being integrated in the Portuguese schooling system, either learn or acquire the Portuguese language, and how well they succeed at doing so.

D8. Selecione os fatores que considera que influenciam favoravelmente a aprendizagem de crianças que mudem de país de residência.
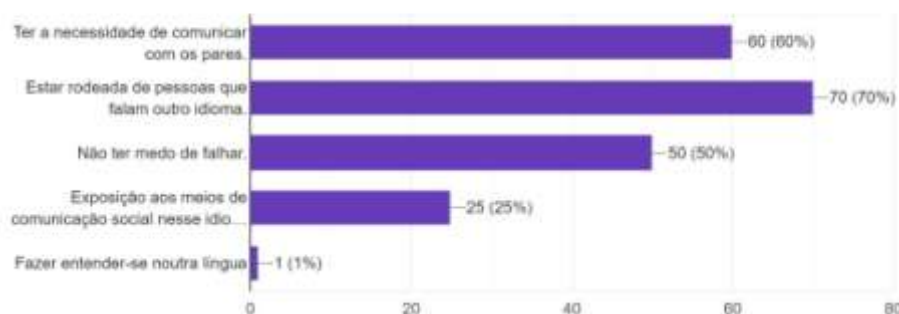
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Fig. 14

Question D9 inquired if respondents recalled any positive moment that took place during an L2 class, being that 73% stated that they did not, as can be seen fig. 15.
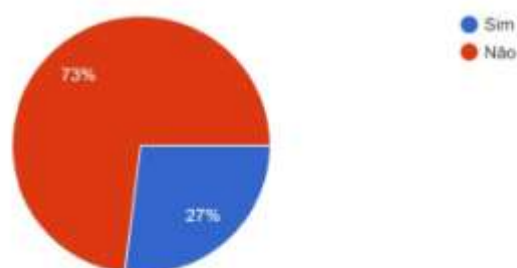


Fig. 15

For further understanding of what kind of positive experiences the remaining 23% of respondents recalled, their description of those moments was analyzed, being that some very interesting aspects were described in question D10. The majority of the situations reported are directly related to teachers' actions that fostered learners' self-worth. This alerts to the relevance and need of communicating to learners that teachers believe in their potential and their importance, thus revealing that they care about them. As Kidder (1989) cited in Brooks (1991) eloquently observes, a good teacher can give a learner at least a chance to feel that she is worth something. According to the same author, "good teachers put snags in the river of children passing by, and over the years, they redirect hundreds of lives" (p.13). That in itself is magical. Some of the following comments listed reflect moments that learners recall and that made them feel "as being worth something": the kindness expressed by some teachers; having been invited to the kindergarten teacher's wedding; a teacher who willingly taught learners after class; a teacher who invited learners to write about their weekend activities thus giving them a chance to describe and share their reality; being publically praised after giving a speech about pollution; a 9th grade teacher that stayed longer after classes helping a learner in need, who in turn felt

obliged to do better as a way of expressing his gratitude while simultaneously making the teacher happy; teachers' dedication, good-mood and tranquility; attending fun and productive classes; an excellent 7th grade teacher who helped raise the learner's grades; a student who was given the possibility and responsibility to help tutor her classmates prior to assessment moments.

Some other comments made by the learners, which described positive moments that had been experienced during foreign language classes, include: having foreign friends and a colleague teaching everyone Bulgarian; a learner who managed to publically read reasonably well out loud; a trip to London; a positive internship abroad; the interaction between learners in a student exchange program; having had contact with foreigners and having visited foreign countries; being able to think in a foreign language; having passed an oral production exam with three examiners.

It is worthy to highlight that most of the comments listed by participants do not make reference to foreign language technicalities, but rather to emotions felt mostly when attaining success in FL oral productive situations. Eyring (2002, p.334) cited in Ortiz & Cuéllar (2018) states that "teachers wishing to humanize the classroom experience treat students as individuals, patiently encourage self-expression, seriously listen to learner response, provide opportunities for learning by doing, and make learning meaningful to students in the here and now".

From Brook's perspective (199, p.32), these teachers who succeeded in creating good memories were possibly very good at spotlighting "islands of competence". The author states that every learner in this world possesses at least one small "island of competence", making reference to "an area that has the potential to be a source of pride and achievement". He uses this metaphor as a symbol of hope and respect and as reminder that all learners have areas of strength which can end up empowering them. When strengths are spotlighted rather than deficits, learners are more likely to be motivated. Brooks (1991, p.32) considers that even though all learners deserve to have their islands of competence displayed, it is a more urgent need for those who lack confidence in their learning ability. The author states that "how successfully these islands are cultivated will depend upon the creativity, caring and sensitivity of teachers" (p.32). According to him, affective self-esteem teachers are able to locate and cultivate at least one island of competence, which can serve as a catalyst for many more. When using this affect teaching strategy, learning will most likely become exciting and this excitement will end up being shared equally between learner and teacher, while transforming the environment into a very pleasant one. It is unclear to what extent Portuguese teachers strive to understand learners "islands of competence" and if training is this area should is viewed as a priority.

The number of learners, or former learners, who answered questionnaire I and recalled a remarkably positive moment (27%) was much lower compared to the percentage of learners who recalled a negative experience lived in an L2 class (45%). This does not necessarily mean that in fact they have experienced many more negative moments, since according to Warner (2007) negative emotions like fear and sadness trigger increased activity in a part of the brain that is directly linked to memories. These emotionally charged memories unfortunately are preserved in greater detail than positive (happy) or more neutral memories, but they may also be subject to distortion. Consequently, the comparison of percentages becomes irrelevant and the focus of the analysis shifts therefore to the content of the experiences listed. Nonetheless, one cannot disregard the fact that more than half of the participants recall having had negative experiences, many of which took place many years ago.

Brooks (1991, p.13) brings forward some highly interesting questions, which teachers should seriously reflect upon. When considering the belief that teachers have the power of influencing and redirecting lives, educators must question themselves regarding "what are the roads we can take with our students, and what is our final destination?" When the teaching journey is over "what undeniable memories do we hope to have been stored by our students to serve as road maps for their future journeys?"

D11. Na sua experiência como aprendente de idiomas estrangeiros, recorda-se de algum momento negativamente marcante?
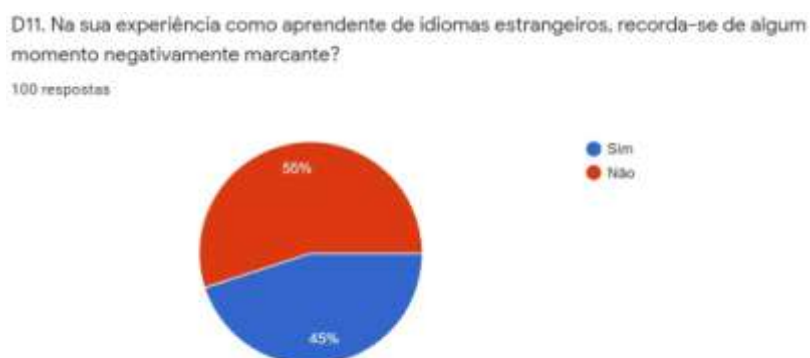
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● Sim
● Não

Fig. 16

Question D12 aims at understanding what kind of negative experiences participants have allegedly experienced. The data collected was translated and according to the relevance of the situations registered, grouped under five categories as can be seen in Appendix C, including: (i) teachers' behaviors considered to have had a negative impact; (ii) classmates' behaviors that participants consider to have had a negative impact; (iii) institutional situations which participants consider to have had a negative impact; (iv) personal experiences that participants consider to have had a negative impact and (v) consequences felt by participants. Each category consequently will be addressed separately.

Analysis of teachers' behaviors that participants consider to have had a negative impact on them and on their learning process

When looking at Appendix C, (which is based on the data collected from question D12), one is led into questioning how some of the answers reflect behaviors still occurring in the present era. Nonetheless, before analyzing in depth most statements (listed by participants as FLL experiences which had a negative impact on them), it becomes essential to keep in mind that teachers are human and that therefore they make mistakes and feel frustrated at times, as suggested by Birzer (2017). Frustration, according to the same author, is most likely a reflex of how upset a teacher might feel when learners act as if they do not want to listen, make an effort to learn or become productive society members and it can be quite unsettling for teachers. Moreover, when they are rude, verbally or physically aggressive and talk back, (displaying a total disregard for teachers' work), it can be very disturbing. It is thus valuable to highlight that the analysis of the participants' answers in this dissertation is not an attempt to crucify teachers for their mistakes, but rather a way of reinforcing that mistakes are part of every teachers' continuous learning path. Unfortunately though, teachers' mistakes have the potential to leave irreparable damages on learners' self-esteem while simultaneously impacting their learning potential negatively. As such, acknowledging mistakes and understanding their short and long term consequences is of utter importance.

## Teachers' aggressive behaviors

This study utilizes the term *teachers' aggressive behaviors*, when meaning to refer to "any behavior directed toward another individual that is carried out with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm" as stated by Andrerson & Bushman (2002, p.28) cited in Suryaningrat et al (2020). Aggressive behaviors can be used as a defense mechanism, or in other words, as an instinctive way of protecting oneself. Nonetheless, regardless of their motives, educators must try to control their impulses, even when learners prove to be challenging to manage.

## 1st - Yelling at learners

At times one might feel that yelling at learners is possibly the only solution. Even though screaming can be momentaneously effective, it will possibly have an enduring affect on learners' in the long run. Many children will apparently calm down when they have been yelled at, but one must be aware of the underlying feelings of sorrow and hurt that might linger. From Halseth's (2022) perspective, feelings of hurt after being yelled at might either last for a short while or for longer. In many cases, the aftereffects can last a lifetime. Children don't frequently express how hurt they might be feeling, so teachers might not be able to recognize the harm

they might have caused. According to Halseth (2022) after shouting at a learner there is a strong possibility of teachers immediately noticing some short-term psychological consequences on learners including anxiety, withdrawal and aggression. Healthline (2016, p.1) asserts that "yelling in general, despite the context in which it takes place, is an expression of anger, which scares children leaving them to feel very insecure". In the present study some participants made reference to being yelled at as a teacher's behavior that impacted them negatively and which they obviously still recall. There is even one participant who makes reference to having the worse grades ever during the school year in which the teacher was constantly screaming in class.

## 2nd - Humiliating and belittling learners

Humiliation is also an aggressive behavior. Most of us can most likely recall a situation in which we were humiliated by a teacher just as many participants in this study did. Regardless of our age, if we focus on recreating that moment, it will possibly still make us draw back. There is even a possibility that no matter how long ago the incident took place, we have not yet found a way of forgiving that teacher who inflicted feelings of hurt on us.

According to Ellis, (1998) there are teachers who belittle learners in classroom context and make use of "put-down" statements to learners. Some examples are put forward by the author, as for instance when the teacher uses phrases like: "we've already spoken about that;" "If you'd paid attention, you'd now know the answer or "that is not relevant". Many participants also experienced situations in which they felt belittled by teachers remarks, as for instance: "you were not born to learn English"; "your presence or absence in class makes absolutely no difference to me"; "you can't even speak proper Portuguese how can you possibly speak English?"; "your grade is ridiculous" (…). The teachers who allegedly did this talked down at learners, embarrassed and humiliated them in front of everyone for superfluous motives. Some respondents stated that they felt that teachers deliberately pretended not to hear some of their questions and others mentioned that teachers made use of depreciative terms in order to describe individual learners (e.g., "stupid," "lazy" "dumb"). Other respondents felt laughed at while struggling to get their message across (even during oral presentations). Brooks (1991, p.21) asserts that "when children are told by significant adults that they are lazy and unmotivated, they typically begin to believe these judgments and the impact on their self-esteem can be devastating". Again, we are overall facing teachers' aggressive behaviors which have the ability to destroy any healthy teaching environment. Teachers (in many cases plausible) frustration cannot allow them to drift apart from their true mission. Teachers need to be reminded of how magical teaching can actually be and how important their role is and how much responsibility it entails. Adapted from Ellis (1998) cited in Arnold (2011).

One participant made reference to the physical aggression he was submitted to by his teacher which is obviously classified as an aggressive behavior. Hughes (2022, p.1) describes a scene in which she was physically punished at school at a tender age, as follows:

> When I was a child I went to school in South Africa. This was the late 1970s. At school, the teachers would hit us. It was called getting the cane, the cane being a long, flexible stick. This tradition, exported from a Dickensian Victorian English model, was very popular with some teachers. They were seen as terrors: you didn't want to get the cane from them. There was one teacher in particular who would use the cane a lot. We were all petrified of him, and we hated him at the same time.

Neurobiology explains that learning is overall an emotional matter as stated by Tyng et al (2017). Therefore, the success with which new information is processed greatly depends on the emotional state of the learner. Anyone who is in a state of fear or panic, sets the brain on a fight or flight mode and consequently cannot properly absorb information, less allow for intellectual expansion of higher order thinking such as being able to synthesize, be creative or evaluate. If students fear being verbally abused or hit, they are obviously distracted with that concern and in no state to integrate new information safely and harmoniously.

There should be no other way of perceiving corporal punishment, except to regard it as an institutional child abuse, and for this reason, fortunately, it is forbidden and penalized in many countries. It would be ideal to think that most schools around the world also regard corporal punishment as an atrocity but unfortunately, and according to 2019 statistics presented by Hughes (2022), only 53 countries actually ban corporal punishment formally.

It is consequently of utter importance to call attention to how learners look up to adults as role models, being that in many cases, those adults are teachers. The values, behavior and language used by teachers, send out a message about what is acceptable and should be valued in society. Hughes (2022 p.2) highlights that "If physical punishment is a norm, the message is that violence is acceptable, and if violence is acceptable, then multiple forms of physical abuse can become mainstream". Physical punishment unfortunately models a brutal perception of society and may well lead young people into beating others.

According to Cuartas et al. (cited in Hughes 2021, P3) corporal punishment has long term psychological effects, leading to psychological maladjustment. Beating learners in schools can scar them for life and can have serious neurological effects, similar to those endured after severe maltreatment.

The questionnaire respondents also made reference to other types of teachers' aggressive behaviors, like for instance crumbling a learner's essay paper for allegedly being incomplete.

## 4th- Lack of teachers' reassurance

Other factors mentioned by participants as having had a dreadful impact on them, involved lack of teachers' reassurance. From Ellis's (2000) perspective, foreign language learning in classroom context is highly interaction-dependent and distinctly influenced by teacher behavior, requiring frequent teacher confirmation. As such, it becomes vital to take this factor into account, especially *perceived teacher confirmation*, which is but learners' perception of receiving acknowledgement, as valuable individuals, from their teacher. As educators, we are constantly sending verbal and non-verbal messages, possibly even unintentionally, to learners who receive them, perhaps unconsciously, making them feel either "real or unreal, accepted or rejected, valued or scorned, understood or misunderstood, humanized or objectified", as referred to by Sieburg (1985, p. 188), cited in Mora & Fuentes (2007).

Ellis (1998) cited in Arnold (2011) distinguishes between several categories of behavior patterns, which are all directly related to verbal and non-verbal affective aspects of teacher discourse. Some classical examples used to describe what she refers to as a "confirming teacher behavior " and the ways in which these teachers demonstrate interest in learners and in their learning progress, include: (i) giving constructive oral or written feedback on learners' work (e.g., suggesting ways to improve or stating why work has or has not met the expectations); (ii) demonstrating that the teacher knows learners' names; (iii) communicating interest in understanding whether students are actually learning; (iv) demonstrating willingness to get to know learners; (v) providing oral or written praise or encouragement on learners' work; (vi) establishing eye contact during class lectures; (vii) communicating that he/she believes that learners can do well in the class, (viii) smiling; checking regularly on learners' understanding ("Is that clear?", "Have you got any questions?" "Are you ready to move on?" "Did I make myself understood?"); (ix) being approachable; (x) making appropriate use of facial expressions; (xi) tending to opt for a interactive teaching style; (xii) making room to listen to learners points of view, including issues related to assessment and grading and (xiii) feeling the need to communicate the practical and useful application of course material in learners' lives.

The confirming teachers understand, as stated by Arnold (2011, p.4) that "the nature of teacher discourse has a great influence on students' participation and assimilation of instructional content".

## 5<sup>th</sup> - Giving up on learners

Some participants referred that they were hurt because they felt that the teacher gave up on them or even showed embarrassment for their lack of EFL knowledge (eg. "the teacher gave up on me"; "the teacher asked me not to participate in an activity in which we had to interview an invited foreign guest"). By helping the weakest or even the most troublesome learner, teachers are most likely helping them to change their attitude, their perception of teachers, of the school, of themselves and of others. Giving up on learners should never be an option, since if teachers do not continue to help and encourage all students, then they could be, according to Lynch (2020) setting up learners for future failures. If teachers and other trusted adults give up on believing in them, then it will become difficult for them to also find reasons to believe in themselves. Therefore, giving up on learners is just a way of letting them know that it is acceptable for them not to try or simply act out, as a consequence of teachers not doing anything to help or to stop them.

## 6<sup>th</sup> - Discriminating learners

At least two participants mentioned that they felt discriminated against by the teacher. According to the Council of Europe (2017), schools must tackle discrimination by promoting democracy, respect for human rights and citizenship. Nonetheless, and in order to successfully implement this, teachers must start by setting the example. According to the same source, by discrimination one means "treating a person badly or unfairly on account of one or more personal characteristics", such as language, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, nationality, social origin, disability or sexual orientation. There are two main forms of school discrimination including:

- direct discrimination – treating a learner less favorably than one would treat another learner in the same situation, e.g., a school refusing to admit a student because they are not Portuguese.

- Indirect discrimination – applies a learners' provision, criterion or practice in the same way for an entire group which might unfairly be disadvantaging to some group members, e.g., a school uniform policy banning headgears for girls and boys may unfairly disadvantage Muslim girls and Jewish boys. Fortunately, no form of conscious and deliberate discrimination can be acceptable under no circumstances. There is definitely no "magic" in discrimination.

## Classmates' behaviors that participants consider to have had a negative impact on them and Teachers' inaction towards classmates' inappropriate behaviours

Teachers are well aware that learners misbehave occasionally, and that misbehaving is an intrinsic part of growing up. Even so, measures need to be taken in order to ensure that their behavior does not harm others' emotional or physical integrity. Some participants mentioned feeling hurt by teachers' inaction regarding classmates' inappropriate behaviors, like for instance a teacher ignoring classmates' racial provocations toward others which took place during class. Some of the comments registered include the following classmates inappropriate actions: (i) being made fun of (even during oral presentations); (ii) being mistreated as a consequence of their lack of proficiency in EFL; (iii) being called dumb due to their inability to speak English; (iv) being hit on the neck by colleagues when they did not answer appropriately in English; (v) being told that black people are incapable of speaking 'proper' English; (vi) being laughed at because of their pronunciations.

In this kind of situation it becomes necessary to talk firmly with those who are misbehaving while making it clear that certain behaviors can and will not be tolerated. Nevertheless, teachers must ensure that their dignity is left intact. We are working on building solid, balanced and mentally healthy human beings, so, we must correct and explain why that is inappropriate and not acceptable. When addressing this kind of situation, one should get down to learners' eye level rather than speak to them from far away or from a higher standing point. At the same time, it is important to remember to validate and acknowledge respectful behavior while attempting to solve the problem. It seems that teaching can be an easier task than educating, although educating while teaching can make all the difference.

Arlond (2011) defends that learners must be regarded as active participants, whose language competence can be enhanced if at the individual level they are guided to learn metacognitive and metalinguistic skills and strategies, while at a social level, they develop the ability to communicate effectively in group situations which require co-operation and interaction. From an empirical point of view, although there has been an attempt over the last decades to work on classroom co-operative strategies, there might still be a lot of work to be done in order to ensure that learners totally respect their classmates, school faculty and everyone else outside the educational context.

## Institutional situations which participants consider to have had a negative on them and on their learning process

Only one comment was registered which falls under this category, nonetheless it is worth exploring on it, since it is very relevant. "Finding totally different levels of language

fluency grouped in one same class, being that a small mistake is seen by many as a huge monster".

In spite of positive efforts made by teachers to make learners communicatively competent, many challenges surface in a foreign language classroom. The mixed-proficiency language class (MPLC), which describes a situation that involves students with different language proficiency levels, (beginner, intermediate, and advanced), being placed in the same class in order to receive language instruction, represents a challenge for teachers. According to Elizondo (2003), in this type of group, some learners are at beginner level with very little ability to communicate while others are at an advanced level, thus being able to handle barely any communicative situation. Between those extremes, one can still find learners with an intermediate level of language proficiency, learners who can engage in basic communicative situations, understand main ideas and have short fluent interactions. In such a complex scenario, teachers need to "become jugglers, moving pieces harmoniously and cleverly to accomplish successful instruction providing all the students equal opportunities for learning (p.112).

## Consequences felt by participants

Many participants (despite only having been asked to describe a situation experienced in an L2 classroom which had a negative impact on them), ended up but also adding comments regarding how that specific situation made them feel. As such, all these comments were filtered and the first list comprises those which are directly related to anxiety, namely: Feeling highly anxious and displaying all the symptoms associated to the condition (ability to "hear" their own heart beat; sweaty hands before answering questions or reading out loud; panic attacks experienced prior to oral presentations; breaking out in cold sweats; giving up on oral presentations; feeling high stress levels and refusing to participate). Other consequences registered include: frustration; lack of motivation; inability to understand or communicate (to express themselves or to make themselves understood) and poor assessment results. The data extracted is but a confirmation of all the theory addressed previously during this dissertation, reinforcing how distressing EFL classes can become and how even learners' physical stability can become compromised.

When analyzing the answers given to question D13 ("during your entire educational path, who was the teacher who you recall as having had the most positive impact on you?"), one realizes that many answers include the names of the teachers and in most cases the subject that was taught by each educator. Thus, it becomes relevant to clarify that the names of the teachers and subjects taught were disregarded, being that all the attention was given to the motives why the participants described these teachers as being the ones they currently still recall with more fondness, as can be seen in Appendix D. The study of these answers allows a better

understanding of what qualities learners truly appreciate in teachers. Appendix D displays a long of all remarks made by participants, nonetheless, the methodology used in order to analyze the teachers' qualities that were highlighted in participants' comments, was to select a key word or concept from each sentence as a means of synthesizing the essential features, as follows:

> Empathic; impacting; dedicated; concerned; good; smiled; asked "how are you?"; sweet; kind; always available to help; motivating; enthusiastic; able to encourage; made learners feel comfortable; didn't give up; games; fun activities; worked insistently; great communicator; tender voice; expressed emotion and love; passionate; positive energy; taught innovative concepts; genuinely happy; opened new horizons; spoke exclusively in English; great human being; with a big heart; caring; wrote motivational notes; loved teaching; created wonderful sharing moments; made me believe in myself; someone who was adored; made time fly; made wonderful descriptions; truly wanted learners to learn; "incarnated" different characters; did not criticize excessively; believed in me; loved what he did; is still a reference in my life; valued learners opinions; took learners' contributes seriously; facilitated the understanding; made me believe that I could speak; pushed me further; created a relaxed teaching environment; made me willingly invest 1000% in that subject.

After reading through the features or actions that were highlighted, it becomes clear that the role of affective factors cannot be underestimated. In fact, the majority of the qualities listed are directly related to affective factors.

Consequently, and from what can be observed, it seems important that teachers attempt to build rapport with their learners. According to Mendez (2003) cited in ASCD (2003) in order to do so, a teacher needs to genuinely desire to build a real connection with their learners. It becomes essential to create strategies to be able to transform experiences so that they arouse learners' interest rather than frustration. Knowing their interests and concerns is a way to build rapport as well as calling learners by their names during classes and acknowledging their responses. Ensuring that teachers are physically placed on learners' level when speaking to them and equaling their tone of voice or speech rate when positive, are also strategies which will most likely, contribute to build rapport.

Teachers' voices can also aid in building rapport. As language teachers our voice may well be our most important tool but unfortunately, and according to Kathleen (1998) teachers rarely receive any training in this specific area. The voice is among educators' main vehicles for

ensuring language input, while being simultaneously a way of presenting ourselves. If we are happy, tired, overwhelmed, exhausted, angry, pleased, students will quickly perceive that, and will end up being influenced either positively or negatively. There is also an affective side to teachers' discourse which is communicated to learners prior to their voice. In this vein, Maley (2000 p.8) affirms that "quite simply we are our voices. Our individual voiceprints are every bit as distinctive as, and a great deal more public than, our fingerprints... Others judge us by them. It is through our voices that we tell others who – and how – we are".

Teachers should also pay attention to eye contact, vocal affect, facial expression and proximity when attempting to build rapport. It is essential that these elements are taken into account in classroom context since, as Ellis (2000) affirms, teachers both verbal and nonverbal channels are responsible for helping in learners content assimilation and relational success. Furthermore, and according to Bau and Liu (2021) teachers should additionally tell the students explicitly that they do indeed believe in them, both verbally and nonverbally. These authors defend that teachers' attitudes are very relevant in the students learning process, especially when learning an unfamiliar language.

According to Arnold (2011, p.3) "affective learning will be accomplished most successfully in a classroom in which a climate of 'unconditional positive regard' has been established". In a classroom context, this concept applies to the teacher's ability to accept his/her learners, showing respect for their value and worth as individuals. Arnold (2011, p.3) gives the example of a learner who turned in a messy assignment a couple of days late. A teacher should address the issue by saying "I know you can do better" instead of "you are really messy and lazy".
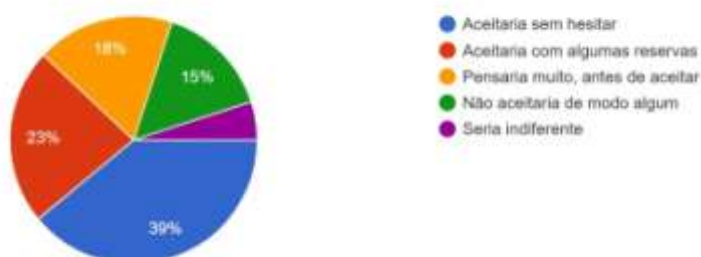
Overall, ELT teachers must feel passion for the act of teaching as well as feel passionate about the English language. When educators love their profession they are certainly going to pass that enthusiasm on to their learners and create a better learning environment for them, possibly even a magical one.

Question D14 aims at understanding if and why the respondents would either accept or deny the possibility of attending a totally free of charge English as a foreign language training course. 39% stated that they would accept without even giving it too much consideration and 23% would accept with some reluctance. Nonetheless, 18% say that they would have to give it some serious thought before accepting and 15% made it clear that they would not accept the offer, under no circumstances. Again, the information was extracted in order to perceive why these participants would refuse to accept the offer. In fact, and to no real surprise, the participants who answered that they would never accept, (even if free of charge), the possibility of attending an EFL course, were mostly the ones who described their learning as either

frustrating or traumatizing. Chastain (1988, p.167) cited in Farhum & Rad (2011), explains that "experiences that have positive results tend to be repeated and those with negative outcomes avoided. Those that are associated with success are approached with confidence and those associated with failure or displeasure are approached with reluctance and distaste."

D15. Se neste momento lhe fosse oferecido gratuitamente um curso de idiomas...
100 respostas



- Aceitaria sem hesitar
- Aceitaria com algumas reservas
- Pensaria muito, antes de aceitar
- Não aceitaria de modo algum
- Seria indiferente

According to University of the People (2021), a teacher's mission needs to be based on 'a want to help others'. Their purpose as educators must go way beyond teaching for recognition or for a paycheck, but rather as a way of reflecting their passion for youth and education. Teachers must honestly believe in the power of education and in the relevance of providing learners with good role models. These are the underlying beliefs that make them "magically" move mountains.

Portuguese public schools are currently embracing Ukrainian refugee learners who are joining the school communities, and who most likely have experienced trauma and therefore have very disturbing memories associated to having left their homes and to the journey that followed.

Besides all the other challenges, these learners are now confronted with the need to face classes without a single familiar face and most likely, with hardly anyone able to speak their language. For learners who come from refugee families, starting at a new school, represents a very acute challenge of fitting in. In many ways, the task faced by teachers is also very demanding. Educators' goals must encompass the desire to make them feel welcome, to encourage interactions, to provide support and to make sensitive assessments about their overall needs including: their wellbeing, their language needs and their learning needs.

This dissertation addresses the overall advantages that integrating affect teaching strategies in ELT classes can have. Nonetheless, and given the unfortunate war currently happening in central Europe, from an empirical point of view, it becomes relevant to specifically address refugee affect teaching strategies which might be extremely helpful for ELT teachers. As such, and also as a means of facilitating teachers' conceptualization of a theme as

intangible as affect teaching strategies, questionnaire II addresses affect teaching strategies directed at a particular currently relevant target (refugee learners), considering that it becomes easier to materialize (or not) the need for precise teachers' training in this field.

## 9. Analysis of the teachers' questionnaire

The first question of the teachers' questionnaire, aimed at attempting to understand whether educators have a clear perception of what is meant by affect teaching strategies (see link to questionnaire II). The results reflect that their awareness is ambiguous, since 30% stated that they did not have a concrete idea of what is meant by affect teaching strategies and an additional 40% believed that they possibly understood the concept (although some uncertainty is implied in the option 'maybe'). Only the remaining 30% were certain that they knew what is actually meant by affect teaching strategies, as can be seen in figure 18.



1. Is the concept of "affect teaching" clear to you?
20 respostas

● yes
● maybe
● no

Fig. 18

Teachers were then questioned if they had ever felt the need for training in affective teaching strategies and the data collected made it very clear that they believed so, for only of them 20% thought that they did not really need it, as is shown in Figure 19.



2. Have you ever felt the need for specific training in affective teaching strategies?
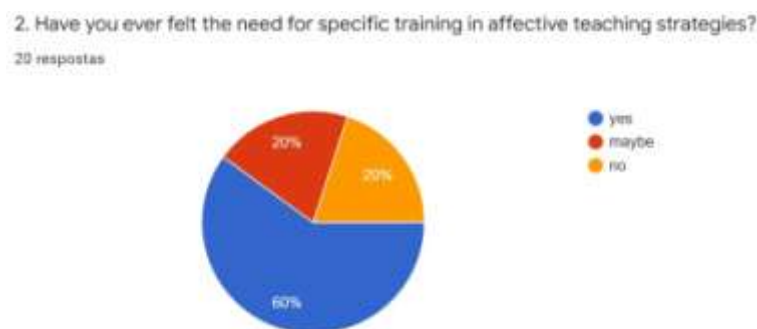20 respostas

● yes
● maybe
● no

Fig. 19

The data gathered from the answers to question number three reflects that 45% of teachers consciously attempt to apply affect teaching strategies, 40% consider that they maybe

do so, and the remaining 15% do not attempt to apply this kind of teaching strategies (at least consciously), as reflected in figure 20.



3. Do you often attempt to apply affect teaching strategies?
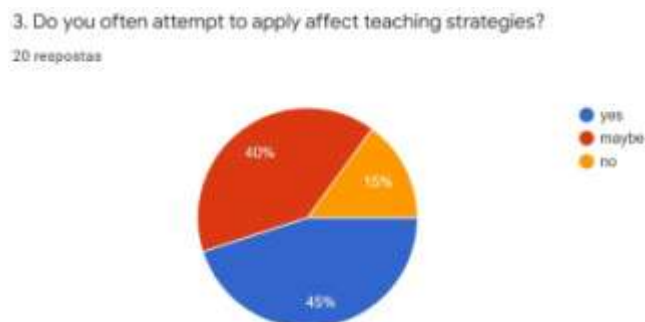20 respostas

- yes
- maybe
- no

Fig. 20

Question number 4, requested that the teachers, who had answered yes to question number 3, described the ways in which they applied affect teaching strategies during ELT classes. The feedback was very encouraging because many affective relevant insights were addressed, including:

- Making learners feel important and respected;
- Talking the time to talk to them;
- Giving them positive feedback and reinforcement;
- Ensuring that in the classroom everyone respects everyone else;
- Attempting to know what students' interests are through engaging activities in which they express their feelings/motivations;
- Minimizing the importance given to mistakes;
- Communicating directly;
- Being a role model;
- Encouraging a classroom code of conduct;
- Promoting inclusive attitudes and speeches;
- Reinforcing positive behaviors;
- Attempting to ensure individual teaching;
- Trying to apply exercises related to their interests;
- Giving positive feedback with affect;
- Allowing for interactive instruction to take place;
- Writing kind notes to learners.

This particular qualitative data is very revealing, nonetheless it is important to highlight that only 8 among the 20 teachers (40%) answered. Besides this, all the responses given are in the affective domain and are therefore, valid affect teaching strategies. This information is in line with the results attained by the OCDE's report of 2020, as mentioned previously, in which

Portuguese learners view several components of their school experience favorably, such as feeling well-supported by their teachers and revealing an above-average sense of belonging. 'Belonging' is but a sense of being somewhere where one can be confident to fit in while feeling safe in one's identity. Both the results attained through the questionnaire II and the feedback given by learners on the OCDE reports, are indicators that educators in the Portuguese teaching system are already, as mentioned previously, succeeding to some extent at creating a positive affective environment which might be related to the Portuguese caring nature.

Opinions seem to be divided when trying to figure out to what extent teachers feel professionally prepared to integrate refugee learners. 10% do not feel prepared and 45% do not know exactly what it entails, so they seem understandably apprehensive. The remaining 45%, are confident with being professionally prepared to face this challenge, as shown in figure 21.

6. Do you feel professionally prepared to help integrate and teach refugee children?
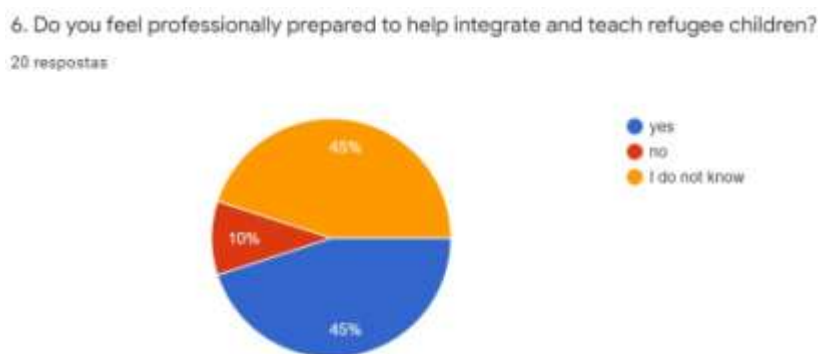
20 respostas



Fig. 21

Figure 22 demonstrates that 35% of teachers view the entrance of refugee learners into the schooling system as an overwhelming challenge and 55% as a possibly difficult task to handle, being that only 10% do not face it as a tough challenge. Again, opinions seem to be divided and there is almost a tangible perception that teachers do not really know what to expect, thus suggesting lack of preparation through training.

7. Will the entrance of refugees into the schooling system represent an overwhelming challenge to you?
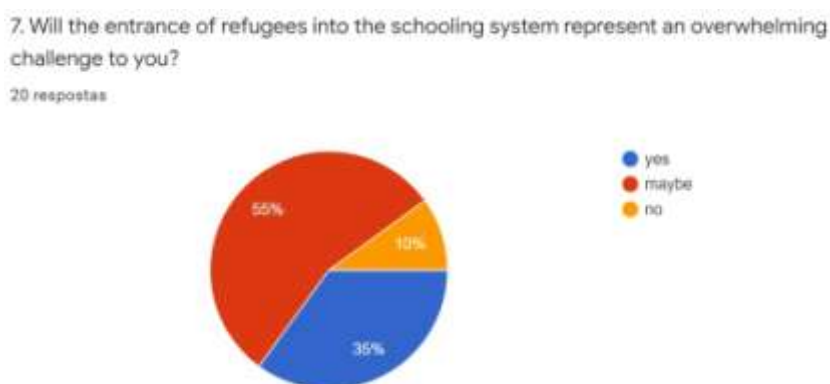
20 respostas



Fig. 22

Reinforcing the conclusion withdrawn from the data gathered and analyzed, in the previous question, 75% of teachers feel that it might be possible to articulate the entrance of

refugee learners in public schools with the remaining work overload, as manifested in figure 23. Again, this uncertainty might be mirroring lack of expertise in this kind of situation, which in turn can be seen as an indicator of need for training.

8. Do you feel it is possible to manage this situation with the remaining work overload that teachers already have?
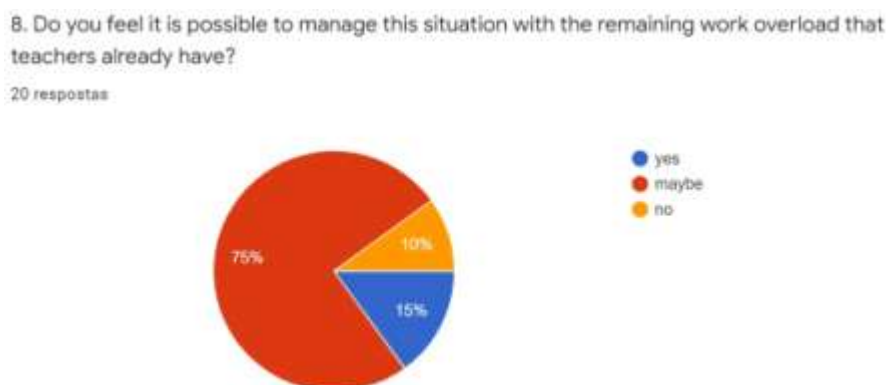
20 respostas



Fig. 23

In an increasingly multicultural and diverse society, it is now more important than ever for educators to integrate culturally responsive instruction in the classroom context. Classroom diversity will continue to grow and consequently, it is crucial to prepare learners to be able to embrace those who are different from them, while adapting to a more than ever evolving world. Taking a culturally responsive approach to teaching will foster both inclusion and multicultural awareness, thus helping learners to feel prepared to thrive in an exponentially diverse world, while simultaneously becoming better citizens. In this context teachers were inquired if they had already started preparing their students for the arrival of refugee learners. To some concern, 45% stated that they had not yet done so, while 30% felt that they may have started doing so. Only 25% reckon to have started consciously making ground for multicultural inclusion to become gradually a natural process, as displayed in figure 24.

9. Have you started preparing your learners to ensure that they are ready to welcome refugee schoolmates, displaying intercultural critical awareness?

20 respostas



Fig 24

When queried about any possible preparation of any sort for welcoming refugee actions, teachers were peremptory in stating that they had not begun arranging for any sort of integrating activities, as can be seen in figure 25. This can be seen as an indicator that teachers might be lacking guidance and instruction on how to apply affect teaching strategies, which have the

power to act as valid integration means, that in turn, will end up opening way for the teaching and learning process to run smoothly.

10. Have you begun preparing any sort of welcoming refugee integrating actions?
20 respostas



Fig. 25

Additionally, educators were asked, (in question 11), to list any possible actions that they could have started panning / developing or implementing and not one single answer was registered, which is consistent with the responses given in the previous question.

Teachers were almost unanimous (85%) in revealing their need for specific affect teaching training strategies in order to better integrate refugee learners, as shown in figure 26. The remaining 15% considered that they possibly need this sort of training and none of them believed that they did not really need it.

12. Do you consider that it would be relevant to have training on specific affect teaching strategies needed to integrate refugee learners?
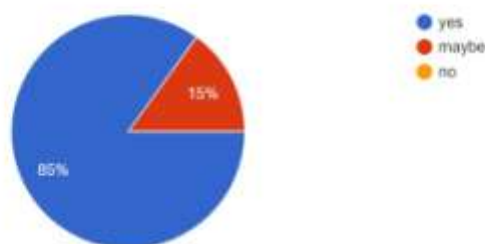20 respostas



Fig. 26

The data gathered reflects an immediate need to guide teachers in the appliance of affect teaching strategies, and as such, in an attempt to materialize the theoretical affect teaching concepts addressed throughout this dissertation (thus conciliating theory and practice), it seems pertinent to develop a concrete list of affect teaching refugee integrating strategies that could start being implemented immediately. Hopefully, this will be a valid contribution to help educators humanize their teaching practice during this particular crisis as well as in other similar situations.

**10. Practical affect teaching refugee integrating strategies and their appliance**

On Good Days

On good days I laugh

On good days I am kind

On good days I am magical

On Bad Days

On bad days I feel frightened

On bad days I feel like crying

On bad days I feel sorry

On bad days I feel like hitting


Poem by a student, from Newham Teachers' Association Refugee Week Poetry Competition

(National Education Union)

The following practical affect teaching suggestions intend to help teachers create refugee-friendly classrooms. Most affect-oriented guidelines will be beneficial to learners of all ages.  Nonetheless, some will be more appropriate for younger children. It will be up to teachers to select the most appropriate ones in their teaching situation. The suggestions are grouped under five headings, namely:

(i) Pre-induction

(i) Induction

(ii) Involving host learners in the process of integration

(iii) Creating a climate which makes refugee children feel welcome and valued

(iv) Making the curriculum accessible

(v) Organizing classrooms

Prior to addressing each category, it seems right to highlight that each new refugee learner is an individual with a unique story to tell and experience to share. Refugee learners are not likely to have had much (if any) say about ending up in a school in Portugal. Some will possibly be unaccompanied and will have left family members behind, hopefully alive. Affective education provides the key that might open the door to a new and hopefully more secure life. Portuguese schools and teachers will most likely succeed in providing a haven of stability, peace and opportunity for refugee learners. Teachers play a major role and have the power to positively impact the lives of refugee learners and their families. Their arrival provides an excellent opportunity for students of all ages to learn about sharing and caring, empathy,

kindness and respect. Affective teaching can, therefore, stimulate critical thinking, challenge and deconstruct stereotyping, avoid racism and can help to develop overall positive attitudes.

## (i) Pre-induction

Refugee learners will greatly benefit if teachers and schools consider preparing certain actions prior to their arrival, such as:

- ✓ consider writing each refugee learner a letter (especially for ELT teachers since they master the "lingua franca"), in which they should attempt to state that they are aware of how tough this entire process has been (and still is), followed by some kind of remark making reference to the pride they feel when they think of how brave need to be. It is very important to consider including clear statements ensuring them that at this school they will be protected, safe, taken care of and hopefully, happy. Additionally, it is crucial to mention how pleased the entire teaching community and other learners are to welcome him/her. It is of utter importance to spell the learner's name properly as names are part of our identity which also needs to be protected. To conclude the letter, teachers should show their availability to help. Handwritten letters are always more personal, displaying individual attention, rather than reflecting a standard procedure;

- ✓ prepare a welcoming letter to refugee learners' parents or legal guardians. As teachers, it is important to keep in mind that these adults have obviously undergone traumatic experiences and, as a consequence, their lives have changed drastically. In the midst of this unsettling confusion, they have no option but to deliver their children to the care of strangers with whom they are not even able to communicate. A letter written in English ensuring them that their children will now be properly taken care of, loved and valued, will possibly put their mind at ease regarding at least this matter. Again, it is valuable to refer how happy the school community feels to welcome that particular learner. Even if they are not able to read the letter, they will certainly find someone who is. This simple action will open doors to ensure their proximity to the school community and further interaction;

- ✓ attempt to learn a few Ukrainian words and if possible, include some expressions in the welcoming letter described previously, as well as during classes. Teaching others learners some of these words will also be a good idea. This will show that a caring effort is being made to connect with them;

- ✓ prepare other learners for the arrival of the refugees. It is important to ensure (possibly through videos and activities), that they understand how and why someone becomes a

refugee. Additionally, make sure that learners are given the possibility to consider what it might feel like to go through this kind of reality, by applying exercises such as these: imagine you have to leave your country in the next hour and you can only take a backpack with you, what will you place in it?. It is crucial to highlight that Russian learners are not responsible for whatever decisions the Russian government makes. This type of exercise helps develop learners' intercultural awareness, thus, avoiding stereotyping, xenophobic feelings and discrimination;

- ✓ stimulate learners to create welcome banners, posters, cartoons (or any other creative idea) and display them around school. Some can even be written in the refugees' own language and make use of their national colors (e.g. flags) or identifiable icons;

- ✓ request that learners run a research on Ukrainian cultural habits, music, typical dances, traditional foods, celebration dates, religion or any other relevant information to be used in the induction phase;

- ✓ ask if any learners are willing to volunteer to welcome and guide the refugee learners at school during the first couple of days (e.g. show them around, explain how lunch works, introduce them to other people). If any of them speak Ukrainian even better;

- ✓ create and use multilingual signs around the school, getting students involved in this process;

- ✓ prepare welcome questionnaires in order to get to know the learners and simultaneously to identify their 'islands of competence';

- ✓ possibly organize welcome first necessity food baskets (which can be gathered through donations) and make sure to include something typically Portuguese. It is very important that every recently arrived young learner gets a basket;

- ✓ create a 'survival' glossary of classroom and school terminologies, including words such as: book, desk, chair, break, restroom, playtime, hungry, thirsty, and other relevant words and;

- ✓ create, in articulation with other teachers, key vocabulary lists for particular subjects in both English and, where possible, the child's first language and even in Portuguese.

## (ii) Induction

At this stage one should keep in mind that:

✓ teachers and other staff members should know how refugee learners' names are properly pronounced and spelt;

✓ wearing less formal clothes might be a good option as it will possibly help to increase a feeling of 'proximity';

✓ it is also relevant to find out about any dietary requirements they might have or religious constraints / obligations and take the necessary measures to ensure that the learners are comfortable with what they eat or they are able to follow any sacred habit;

✓ it is very important to welcome refugee learners on their first day with a smile and ensure that they do not feel lonely or left out. At this stage, it is relevant to articulate with the other learners who have already volunteered to help during the pre-induction period, in order to familiarize them with the school layout, rules, routines and expectations. Making certain that they have company for lunch is very important;

✓ ensuring that refugee learners have the necessary 'tools' for homework such as pencils, pens, notebooks, school books and other necessary items, must be a priority;

✓ giving them the terminology glossary prepared previously during the pre-induction phase;

✓ applying welcome questionnaires in order to get to know the learners and simultaneously to identify their "islands of competence" can be very helpful in order to build rapport with these learners;

✓ displaying key vocabulary lists (created during the pre-induction phase) can be helpful as long as learners have easy visual access to the information;

✓ it is important to check on their well-being after break time;

✓ at first teachers must avoid talking about recent events, unless that subject is brought up by the learners;

✓ any school television not be tuned on news channels to avoid causing additional distress at school or allowing for improper remarks made by other learners;

- ✓ respecting refugee learners' right to a silent period is very wise, being that this period might sometimes last several months;

- ✓ refugee learners should be given opportunities to talk, sensitively and not initially in front of an audience of other learners, about their recent circumstances and their family history; Often, children begin to confide in trusted adults after a period of time and this can include teachers;

- ✓ ensuring refugee learners are familiar with their colleagues' names as well as with the names of key adults such as teachers lunchtime supervisors and break time staff is very important;

- ✓ holding a welcoming parents' or legal guardians' meeting might be a good idea. During that gathering, emphasize to parents or carers the importance of maintaining (in the long run) learners' first language. This is also an excellent opportunity to explain the school's ethos around inclusivity and allow parents/legal guardians / carers to raise concerns or feel free to openly clarify doubts or ask questions, and;

- ✓ establishing a parallel between teachers' own life experiences and those of learners, leading them into establishing important empathic connections. For instance, imagining the following scenario: a teacher who was born in Mozambique in 1974, and consequently forced to flee the country at a very young age with his/her family and being compelled to pack all their belongings in 2 or 3 suitcases. That could be very relevant information to share with Ukrainian young learners who are now going through a similar experience. The fact that they can regard the teacher as someone who outlived such a traumatizing event can in itself be very inspiring.

(iii) Involving host learners in the process of integration

- ✓ arrange for introductions to other same-language learners and (if possible) introductions between learners' families;

- ✓ encourage older refugee learners to provide support and comfort to newcomers;

- ✓ identify and praise learners' strengths and successes and encourage learners to start doing the same;

- ✓ involve learners in creating multilingual dictionaries, cartoons, storybooks, presentations and other resources;

- involve learners in making a film, a book, a scrapbook or a photographic record about the school that children can take home to show their families;

- structure debates or presentations about empathy, diversity, refugees, mutual respect, and human rights within relevant places in the curriculum;

- ask students to tutor the recently arrived refugee learners (e.g. teaching them Portuguese) and check on the refugee students' availability to tutor other learners (e.g. teaching them their own language, chess or any subject that is not very demanding in terms of language, as mathematics);

- create a cultural night / day / week or month, in which learners from different cultures get to share their music, typical dances, culinary skills, superstitious beliefs and general habits and routines;

- encourage all learners to contribute to the creation of a supportive and welcoming environment, and it might be relevant to listen to learners suggestions on how they feel they can make a valid contribution, and;

- implement a 'buddy' system which grants learners 'status'. This does not apply exclusively to the induction period. It must involve a range of children, be supervised and monitored and can ensure that refugee learners have, for instance, project work buddies, oral presentation buddies or science investigation. It is important to keep in mind that being 'a buddy' should not be thrust upon students without guidance and preparation. It should be regarded by learners as an honor, and perhaps the 'honor' of being a buddy should rotate among different learners, who should be chosen for different activities or times of the day. Clear expectations, proper recognition and 'high status', are likely to make buddy systems successful. Discussion about the roles and responsibilities associated with being a buddy is essential and should motivate and empower as many learners as possible into becoming more interculturally aware and receptive buddies.

(iii) Make the curriculum accessible. Refugee young learners will benefit if teachers and schools:

- make goals and expected outcomes as clear as possible;
- set different goals for learners, if possible, based on their specific proficiency levels. If learners become aware that they have made some progress (which is easier when

considering tailor made goals), they will be more motivated and inclined to learn the target language;

- ✓ break away, if necessary, from prefabricated course book material, which is designed for standardized learners. Bringing in material more open to diversity and more closely connected to learners' experience is a valid possibility;

- ✓ write learners small individual motivational notes in the target language, stimulating their curiosity to find out what is written;

- ✓ use all forms of art, drama, mime, puppets, and pictorially-based tasks – including photographs, flow diagrams, charts, storyboards or maps as useful resources to get messages across;

- ✓ ensure that any achievement in less language-based subjects (e.g., mathematics, science and PE) is acknowledged;

- ✓ set realistic goals to assess literacy and ELT language skills, and try to do it in a calm and friendly atmosphere;

- ✓ use web-based translators, bilingual dictionaries and helpful apps whenever necessary;

- ✓ maximize the use of ICT (information, communications and technology);

- ✓ use cards, draughts, chess, backgammon, dominoes, crosses and board games, which may already be familiar, perhaps in different forms, as learning resources and to encourage interaction with peers;

- ✓ play music and learn songs (appropriate for each age group);

- ✓ use pictures for labeling, sorting, matching or classifying;

- ✓ use books with strong visual content, or no words, depending on the age group;

- ✓ provide audio-visual support and other ICT based support tools, that can promote learners' autonomy.


Classroom organization, which includes:

- ✓ keeping in mind that the role of the whole school community, including parents, is to contribute to making the school refugee-friendly;

- ✓ caring genuinely about learners, showing great patience and attempting to maintain a healthy relationship with them is very important;

- ✓ praising learners for making sincere efforts to try out communicating in the target language;

- ✓ Complimenting is helpful to lower the learners' anxiety and inhibition;

- ✓ using precise and correct language in clear 'easy to understand' sentences;

- ✓ grouping refugee students with other learners who can act as language models as far as possible;

- ✓ using groups as a teaching strategy. If teachers opt to name groups, they should avoid numbering them, and choose to using colors or any other alternative that does not unconsciously imply that there is a first a second and a third.

- ✓ arranging groups carefully, for example, weaker learners should be paired with stronger learners because stronger learners tend to choose each other and to leave the weaker out. (The wise formation of groups is very important for enhancing interaction between the learners in order to facilitate learning);

- ✓ using the "Think-pair-share" suggested by Kagan (1994) where learners are first given time to think of about the answer (e.g."How could we become better human beings?"), and only after having given it some thought and sharing their ideas / practicing with a partner, will they be ready to "go public";

- ✓ encouraging all pupils to bring in personal belongings, musical instruments, artifacts, photographs, drawings or texts/poems written by themselves or others, so they can share 'stories', hobbies and interests, thus generating discussion about learners' life experiences. Fink (2003) reiterates the importance of inspiring learners into connecting the knowledge obtained in classes with their own life experiences, thus allowing this information to be used in new situations. According to the same author, frequently, students display reluctance to take part in oral production activities because they do not see any relevance between these topics or activities and their daily lives cited in Ortiz & Cuéllar (2018);

- ✓ exploring with learners non-verbal visual methods of communication, as for instance, mimic games or body language or facial expressions descriptions and interpretation, which promote vocabulary input and output;

- ✓ prioritizing interactive activities which require collaboration between learners and help them speed up English language acquisition / learning, for example, information gap activities or barrier games;

- ✓ giving constructive oral or written affective feedback;

- being creative when negotiating with older learners, who can be extremely helpful when it comes to providing free extra tuition to those in need and compensating them with an extra mark for volunteering is a possibility to be considered. The time they spend with refugee learners will also help integrate them;

- taking a child-centered approach. A 'can do' approach focused on learners' strengths, that is to say, on the so called 'islands of competence'. Research has proven, that learning and self-esteem are linked. Self-esteem is boosted by a combination of sense of worth, achievement and being valued. A focus on what refugee learners can do – as with all students – will help them learn quicker and allow other students and staff members to acknowledge more easily any 'strengths' displayed by refugee learners;

- thinking about which parts of the curriculum might need adaptation. Beware of topics that address family references and relationships. Avoid celebrating fathers' day or mothers' day as these too can become sensitive topics. Consider learners who have been separated from family members or with bereavements in their past;

- paying close attention to refugee learners' spontaneous interventions. For instance, when they answer a question incorrectly, it might be more appropriate to avoid expressions such as "incorrect" or "wrong". The best option would possibly be to say something 'along these lines': "Thank you for your contribution, which gives me the opportunity to explain (X or Y) again";

- emphasizing listening and speaking skills as language input obviously promotes language output; Consider using personal items, artifacts, clothes, toys, food, pets, and any other 'everyday' item as a teaching aid. Shopping lists, bills or bus/ train tickets and other 'everyday' documents might also be a valuable asset. The same applies to newspapers and magazines;

- forcing learners (who do not feel prepared) for public exposure (e.g. answering a question on the board or carrying out an individual or group presentation), might not be a good practice. Teachers should ask who feels prepared to do so. Nonetheless, once teachers are aware of their learners' insecurities, they can publically ask them questions, when they are certain that they know the answers. (e.g. the teacher has already corrected an exercise and realized that Vladimir answered question number 4 correctly. When correcting the exercise out loud, Vladimir should be the learner requested to answer that specific question. This kind of attitude will slowly help build his self-confidence;

- reprehending learners who are chatting in class or asking them to be silent can be substituted for strategically including their names in the teacher's speech, as for example (…) "imagine John and Sarah had to write an essay about" (…). By doing so both John and Sarah will most likely immediately stop chatting;

- encouraging or directing learners to go beyond the classroom goals by getting them to make specific commitments to study the language outside school context.

- having students list what they wish to accomplish on their own in a particular period of time might also be a good idea. Teachers can also give students 'extra credit' for their 'extra' work;

- being sensitive and reasonable towards learners' achievements is very wise. Imagining scenery in which learners proudly exhibit a cake they baked the previous day for a school event, which possibly is not the best looking cake one ever saw. Instead of saying "oh my goodness what on earth happened to that cake?", one might opt for an encouraging remark like: "great effort or great contribution";

- creating a letter box where they can find personal teacher's letters written for each one is a possibility, opening way for them to answer back and share more about themselves, their beliefs, culture, fears and so on;

- creating a suggestion box can also be interesting, especially regarding what they would like doing (activity proposals), what they would change and what they would like to learn more about, etc;

- inviting some older refugee learners, who speak the target language, to deliver a speech in class. Sharing their experience and allowing other refugee learners to realize that it is possible to 'overcome' traumatic life changing experiences can be very inspiring;

- placing learners' pictures on their respective classroom walls. Personalizing their space will most likely make them, in a sense, feel at home. Teachers can even involve learners in class or school decoration;

- keeping track of learners' birthdates and complimenting them on their day, regardless of it being a week day or not;

- avoiding any type of teachers' aggressive behaviors and try to be as empathic as possible, is crucial;

- ✓ identifying learners who are struggling to deal with their emotions is of utter importance. In those cases, school procedures must be followed for seeking psychological support;

- ✓ leaving office doors open and accessible to anyone who needs to talk;

- ✓ ensuring that any information confided in teachers is strictly confidential;

- ✓ filming school's special occasions and / or simple everyday routines. At the end of the year dedicating time to edit and create 'their' movie, (with parents or legal guardians permission), will most likely make learners feel cared for.

<div align="right">Based on National Education Union – Refugee Teaching Resources</div>

## 11. Findings and summary recommendations

This study proved that L2 learners recall (in many cases after long periods of time) teachers' attitudes which impacted them negatively. This often diminishes and eliminates their desire to proceed learning the language, that consequently displays high affective filters.

According to Liu & Bao (2021), it is a big challenge for L2 teachers to lower the degree of the affective filter for the learners. To be able to meet this challenge, teachers need continuous study and countless practice. According to the same authors, EFL "teachers can also equip themselves with more pedagogical methodology and psychological knowledge, and make endless efforts to increase the students' self-esteem, lower their anxiety, arouse their motivation, and enhance their learning efficiency" (p.6).

It seems evident that there are universal affective teaching principles/strategies which must be transversally regarded with respect, as they can serve as a catalyst to trigger self-esteem and motivation, while improving learning and creating an overall sense of safety, pride, accomplishment and well-being. Some teachers might even instinctively, and possibly based on their own past experience, personal beliefs and culture, be more sensitive to these matters. Nonetheless, many others might strongly benefit from being trained for affect teaching strategies. Even those who display a natural aptitude, would most likely benefit from specific training programs, as it would provide them with the necessary theoretical background, which in turn would open way for a deeper understanding and consistent appliance of affect teaching strategies.

In order to better comprehend the innate ability to apply these kind of strategies, it would be interesting, as previously mentioned in this dissertation, to conduct a study aiming at analyzing to what extent culture can impact the ability to naturally apply affect teaching strategies.

When analyzing the data collected from the teachers' questionnaires, it becomes evident that there seems to be an unclear perception of what affect teaching strategies really entail, and either a complete lack of knowledge regarding which affective teaching strategies to apply, or an unawareness of the sense of urgency to apply them, as shown by the inaction verified to prepare for welcoming Ukrainian refugee learners. It becomes relevant to highlight that specific situations, such as the integration of refugee learners, call for particular measures. As stated by the United Kingdom's National Education Union (2019, p.1) "teachers with clear roles and responsibilities, training and supportive supervision can ensure that schools are safe, protective spaces where children can regain a sense of normalcy following the trauma of displacement". According to the sample analyzed, it seems fair to state that teachers would be better prepared to face both 'regular' and 'specific' situations. If they attended affect training programs, it would be highly beneficial for learners, allowing them to build strong foundations around their affective connections to learning contexts, thus stimulating their continuous desire to learn.

## 12. Conclusion

Affect should be a major source of concern in the field of language learning & teaching as it embraces not only learners' individual factors, such as, learning styles, self-esteem, anxiety, inhibition, introversion / extraversion, motivation and self-efficacy, willingness to take risks, tolerance of ambiguity, but also relational aspects such as empathy, teacher-learner rapport or cross-cultural processes.

According to Arnold and Brown (1999, p.2,3), there are two primary reasons for regarding affective factors in language learning as being very relevant. The first is that taking affect into account can enhance language learning where "attention needs to be given both to how we can overcome problems created by negative emotions, and to how we can create and use more positive, facilitative emotions". The second motive is that "As we teach the language, we can also educate learners to live more satisfying lives and to be responsible members of society". In other words, attention to affect also connects to wider social goals, which entails for instance, the ability to embrace young people attempting to find a place where they feel rooted, without being underestimated or judged. During these turbulent times, teachers have a crucial part in developing a sense of belonging while opening the hearts and minds of learners. This in turn, will contribute towards the development of democratic citizens.

As key elements of the classroom community, teachers also need to be concerned with their own affective side. In the case of language teaching development could and possibly

should be conceptualized as a pyramid. At the top of the pyramid one could place techniques and activities which teachers need, to conduct their classes; knowledge would be placed underneath the language learning/teaching process to ensure these activities are appropriate, properly applied and effective; and, finally, forming the wide base, as an important foundation, would be the teachers' own personal development.

American educator Parker Palmer (1998, p.5) cited in Arnold (2011) believes that "a good teacher knows and does but, most importantly, is" and that "we teach who we are." So, in teacher training, not only does one need to work on how to teach the four skills or to present grammar and vocabulary, but it is also important to contemplate affect. If the goal is to have "real teachers" in our classrooms, affective aspects need to be learnt through training. Humanistic/affective EFL teaching is useful because in an ever more demanding and complex world, which places escalating demands on teachers, it helps them to meet those demands. It is effective because, as Stevick (1998, p.4) cited in Arnold (2019), says: "at the same time that it brings us closer to our language teaching goals, it encourages us to pursue new life goals".

One frequently reads, with alarming frequency, reports of violence and tension in schools, of teacher burn-out situations and learners' general lack of motivation. There are many problems language teachers face in their classrooms today and it does not seem that the solution is to learn more techniques or to have greater knowledge about EFL acquisition or learning. The 'magical' solution seems to rely on exploring areas related to the base of teacher education, their own personal development, which will grant them with the possibility to function more successfully in all classroom situations. As educators, teachers may not always be in a position to deal with societal factors that are at the root of much of the current situation, but they can work on what Underhill (1989) cited in Arnold (2019), calls teachers "presence" in the classroom. In other words, on the inside and between aspects of the participants, and on the impact that these affective, humanistic factors can produce in classrooms and perhaps even beyond.

The main goal of this dissertation is to contribute towards EFL teachers' awareness of how a greater consideration for the learning atmosphere and for the inner processes of both teachers and learners, which can be successfully transformational. Underhill (1999, p.131) cited in Arnold (2011), brings up the importance of this wider vision: "new techniques with old attitudes may amount to no change, while new attitudes even with old techniques can lead to significant change."

Defelice (1989, p. 642) argues that it is vital that teachers find their own personal source of energy and learn to tap into it in order to touch someone else's lives. Educators should be aware that once they have access to that energy, it will possibly transform their teaching. That

same energy comes from belief - belief in themselves and in their learners. Teachers must have a conviction deep inside that says, "I believe in me, I believe in you, and I believe that together we can learn something that can make a difference in our lives."

Krasteva (2022) wrote an article on how Italian pupils clapped and cheered Ukrainian refugee children on their first day in an Italian school, as a way of welcoming them. Teachers ought to consider that through actions like these, one has the power to start transforming 'magical teaching' into a tangible concept, one in which lives can be changed and a difference can, in fact, be made. **Questionnaires' links**

Link to questionnaire I:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1n1hhA86jUwRMaxBF4VdjCUCUq_GbC_a8RAt2HfmFBeU/edit

Link to questionnaire II:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1P586tu-wsVIDnUMEh_IhuKGHFPDxg51r8b7lxvO9IKY/edit

## Appendixes

Appendix A

| Additional factors that participants considered relevant to ensure EFL learning proficiency | Qualitative Analysis of learners' perspectives |
|---|---|
| ✓ The joy of truly appreciating learning other languages; | ✓ Considering learners' intrinsic motivation. |
| ✓ To be able to face the EFL learning process as a means of being able to communicate with a vast majority of people from other nationalities; The professional need to learn the language; traveling to countries where the target language is spoken; participating in Erasmus programs; Travelling with business purposes; | ✓ awareness that English is recognized as a lingua Franca. Understanding that professional needs can act as an external motivational factor to learn the language. |
| ✓ Starting to learn the target language at a young age; | ✓ realizing that younger children acquire the language rather than learn it. |
| ✓ Counting on parental help and having families that speak the foreign language; | ✓ acknowledging that being surrounded by people who speak the target language facilitates the EFL learning process. |
| ✓ To read books in English; to participate in theaters in English; | ✓ being aware that participating in activities that lead learners into communicating or reading in target language can be very positive. |
| ✓ To work voluntarily on their own. | ✓ Autonomous learning |
| ✓ To have great and creative teachers; the empathy felt towards the teacher (or not); Not feeling scared of teachers. | ✓ Valuing teachers and their creativity as well as the empathy felt between teachers and learners. Perceiving fear as being a major set-back in the EFL learning process. |
| ✓ The "musicality" of other languages, which can be appealing. | ✓ Displaying a desire to sound like natives which acts as extrinsic motivation factor. |

Appendix B

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as excellent (9%) |

| |
|---|
| "I had outstanding language teachers" |
| "The quality of my teachers. Extraordinary" |
| "I had an excellent English teacher" |
| "My motivation to learn the language" |
| "I studied" |
| "The easiness that I felt in adapting to another country when I moved there" |
| "Very useful for my work, contacts and for tourists' follow up" |

| 2. Comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as very motivating (15%) |
|---|
| "It was the place where I learnt the language" |
| "Due to teachers' professionalism, competence and friendliness as well as my motivation to learn" |
| "Very motivating" |
| "The excellent classroom atmosphere experienced between learners and teachers" |
| "Excellent classroom dynamics" |
| "I had the privilege of having excellent teachers" |
| "Due to the enthusiasm shown by the teachers who transformed the educational activity in a very pleasant one" |
| "Teachers were highly dedicated and the small number of learners in each class facilitated interaction" |
| "It made me feel like wanting to learn more" |
| "Because I learnt a lot" |
| "It is very good to speak a language that almost everyone understands" |
| "It was a good experience" |
| "I love languages" |

| 3. Comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as reasonably motivating (32%) |
|---|
| "Teachers always had the ability to motivate learners" |
| "Due to the experience lived" |
| "Despite having had very good teachers, I was always very shy and felt very self conscious about making mistakes while speaking the foreign language" |
| "It all depends on the way teachers teach" |
| "Because I actually never managed to become fluent in the foreign language" |
| "Because I did not have good experiences" |
| "The dedication of my 9th grade teacher" |
| "Empathy towards the ones who taught me and towards the language" |
| "At the time we should have had more EFL classes" |
| "I did not learn as much as I had wished for but I managed to build strong foundations" |
| "I had good teachers" |
| "Motivation" |
| "Think within other cultures" |
| "There wasn't much interest" |
| "The teaching methods were very formal and not dynamic at all. Having contact with the language is fundamental and that did not happen" |
| "I learnt a lot with my teachers who really wanted us to learn" |
| "It could have been better" |
| "Enjoy traveling" |
| "I struggled to learn the language and that made me unmotivated" |
| "Some lack of the practical component: speaking" |
| "It was part of the school curricula" |
| "I was self motivated in everything I did" |
| "the best way to learn is based on social interaction and living in countries where the language is spoken" |
| "I had teachers who helped me with my learning difficulties and teachers who didn't really care about me" |
| "The series I watched, and the high quantity of games that I played made EFL classes easier" |

| 4. Comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as indifferent (8%) |
|---|
| "I do not recall anything really good" |
| "Lack of teachers with competence to teach" |
| "Because there were other subjects that were more stimulating to me" |
| "There is nothing good or bad to highlight" |
| "to a certain extent teachers helped, but I had to put some effort into it. I understand English but I do not speak it (…)" |

| 5. Comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as not really motivating (17%) |
|---|
| "Lack of learning tasks or events in target language" |
| "Teachers' lack of empathy and friendliness" |
| "I did not learn a lot" |
| "The teaching methods used in the eighties were not the best" |
| "More dedicated teachers who involve learners in the themes addressed" |
| "I had a teacher who told me that I had to copy written texts, as that was the only possible way to pass. She would tell me, in front of everyone, that I was terrible at English" |
| "It was really boring, the classes were all alike, reading texts, carrying out grammar exercises but we never spoke. We only wrote" |
| "the teaching methods used" |

| | |
|---|---|
| "The fear I felt in class"<br>"We only read and wrote but we never spoke"<br>"A lot of theory and very little practice"<br>"They were regular classes"<br>"Teachers focused mainly on writing and reading and never really on speaking. It was a pity"<br>"I felt a lot of anxiety when I had to express myself, especially in English"<br>"They did not teach us to speak, just to write. The methodologies were not very stimulating"<br>"Lack of teachers' persistence towards reaching learners goals" | |

|  6. | Comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as frustrating (9%) |
|---|---|

"Due to the teaching method and teachers' lack of motivation"
"Because I felt very little progression"
"I wish that I could have had more oral practice. It was all centered in writing"

|  7. | Comments made by participants who classified their L2 learning as traumatizing (10%) |
|---|---|

"Feeling that I did not have a natural aptitude for language learning"[2]
"It felt like Chinese to me. No-one in my family speaks English and I always knew that I do not have a natural aptitude for languages"
"I felt a lot of anxiety during my English classes"
"I never managed to learn and EFL classes made me feel insecure and anxious"
"When I recall all the moments I experienced without understanding anything of what was said or read, I still become anxious"
"Feeling ridiculed and invisible in class because I struggled to learn the language"
"I had a teacher that constantly ridiculed me when I read out loud"
"I struggled to learn the language and the teacher never spent any time with me"
"I had lots of learning difficulties"
"I could not speak or express myself"
"I never understood what was said in class"
"Lack of teachers' dedication and boring exercises which were not motivating at all"
"I had a teacher who asked me how I could possibly speak English if I couldn't ever speak Portuguese (considering that I had just arrived from Cape Verde)"
"I stuttered and felt very insecure when I had to express myself orally. Yet, the teacher still made me read out loud"
"I felt repulsion towards the language during 4th grade because the teacher was very strict and not motivating. I would leave most classes crying and that feeling lasted for several years"

Appendix C

| Teachers' behaviors that were considered to have had a negative impact on them | <ul><li>Making fun of learners due to several issues like for example their handwriting;</li><li>Making fun of learners' results attained in tests / assessment moments;</li><li>Laughing sarcastically;</li><li>Laughing out loud while learners are giving oral presentations or while they are carrying out interviews;</li><li>Pretending not to hear the learners;</li><li>Yelled at learners;</li><li>Publically humiliating learners as for instance those who forgot work books or homework;</li><li>Telling learners that "they were not born to speak English" in front of the entire class (6th grade learners in this specific case);</li><li>Hitting learners on the palm of the hands with rulers as punishment;</li><li>Crumbling a composition because it was incomplete;</li><li>Being frequently absent;</li><li>Telling learners, who inform that they need to skip class, that in practical terms their presence or absence makes absolutely no difference;</li><li>Calling learner names, like dumb;</li><li>Explicitly suggesting that if learners struggle with speaking proper Portuguese how could they possibly speak English;</li><li>Discriminating;</li><li>Taking no action regarding learners' inappropriate behaviors;</li><li>Ignoring racial provocations that took place during class;</li><li>Requesting that weaker learners participate less when natives were invited to interact with them in class;</li><li>Asking learners to write compositions as punishment;</li><li>Not motivating learners;</li><li>Not reassuring learners who display high levels of anxiety prior to oral presentations;</li><li>Not giving learners, who were extremely nervous during their oral presentations, a second chance;</li><li>Giving up on trying to teach certain learners;</li><li>Lacking interest in learners;</li><li>Lack of understanding towards learners.</li></ul> |
|---|---|
| Classmates' behaviors that | <ul><li>Being made fun of by classmates;</li></ul> |

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[2]  Although the participant wrote "feeling that I had a natural aptitude for language learning", it is clear that what he/she meant to say "did not have a natural aptitude for language learning".

| participants consider to have had a negative impact on them | • Mistreating someone because they couldn't speak English;<br>• Being called dumb by classmates due to their inability to speak English;<br>• Being hit on the neck by colleagues when they did not answer appropriately in English;<br>• Telling other classmates that black people are incapable of speaking "proper" English;<br>• Laughing at other classmates' pronunciations;<br>• Making fun and laughing out loud of their colleagues during oral presentations. |
|---|---|
| Institutional situations which participants consider that had a negative impact | • Finding totally different levels of language fluency grouped in one same class, being that a small mistake is seen by many as a huge monster. |
| Personal experiences that participants consider to have had a negative impact | • Participating in as Erasmus program in Serbia. |
| Consequences felt by participants | • Learners who could "hear" their own heart beat;<br>• Learners feeling high anxiety levels;<br>• Anxiety attacks felt before oral presentations (regardless if they were individual or collective presentations);<br>• Learners having sweaty hands before answering questions or reading out loud;<br>• Learners breaking out in cold sweats;<br>• Having the worse grades ever during the school year that in which the teacher constantly screamed in class;<br>• Learners feel invisible;<br>• Learners giving up on doing oral presentations;<br>• Experiencing high levels of stress when the teacher placed any question that the learner could not understand;<br>• Feeling frustrated;<br>• Deliberate restrains in participation;<br>• Not understanding what is taught in class;<br>• Inability to interview a foreigner;<br>• Not being motivated;<br>• Not being able to read due to stuttering constraints;<br>• Inability to express themselves or to make themselves understood since they were not able to understand the questions;<br>• Poor assessment results. |

Appendix D

| Comments made by participants which describe their favorite teachers' best characteristics | |
|---|---|
| "A teacher who smiled a lot and always asked how we were"<br>"A teacher who led us into learning through games and fun activities"<br>"A teacher who faced every teaching moment with emotion, showing love for the act of teaching"<br>"A demanding teacher who rewarded learners for their personal effort"<br>"A teacher who valued learners opinions and took each learners' contribute seriously"<br>"A teacher who learners felt they could trust"<br>"A teacher who trusted my potential"<br>"A teacher who encouraged learners into reaching their goals"<br>"A teacher who created a relaxed teaching environment"<br>"A fun teacher who had perfectly planned classes"<br>"A teacher who showed availability to teach extra classes to all those who showed willingness to learn more"<br>"A teacher who made me believe that I could speak in a foreign language"<br>"A teacher who made me believe in myself"<br>"A teacher who managed to make me love history and I didn't even realize how that happened"<br>"A teacher whose tender voice calmed me down and made me feel very well"<br>"A teacher who was passionate about her job and prepared games and activities to be developed outside the classroom"<br>"A teacher who loved teaching to such an extent, that managed to transform classes into wonderful sharing moments"<br>"A teacher who taught innovative concepts with great facility and clarity, thus facilitating the understanding of their utility and the purpose of their existence"<br>"A teacher who worked insistently with learners, not giving up until everyone managed to understand the exercise and no-one had any doubts"<br>"A teacher who encouraged me to do better / pushed me further" | "A teacher who taught mostly with games and fun activities which was very motivating"<br>"A teacher who loved what he did"<br>"A teacher who taught in a way that made learning much easier"<br>"A teacher who taught me how to study. I had an excellent grade on my test and she told me that I was capable of doing everything"<br>"A teacher who listened to me which in turn made me willingly invest 1000% in that subject. Up until today that teacher is still a reference in my life"<br>A" teacher that wasn't even an English teacher (but was fluent in English) who was always available to help me with any doubts"<br>"A teacher who believed in me"<br>"A teacher who motivates and stimulates learners and does not criticize excessively"<br>"A teacher who managed to "incarnate" different characters in class"<br>"A teacher who described historic moments and made us feel as we had been there"<br>"A teacher who truly wanted learners to learn"<br>"A teacher who was a great communicator"<br>"A teacher with a great voice"<br>"A teacher who had a delightful voice and who made wonderful descriptions"<br>"A teacher that taught with passion and made time fly during those classes"<br>"A teacher who persistently wrote motivational notes on assessment papers"<br>"A teacher who was genuinely happy when learners made some progress"<br>"A teacher who was dedicated and concerned both inside and outside class""<br>"A teacher who was so good that ended up influencing my higher education choices"<br>"A teacher who opened new horizons in my life"<br>"A teacher that spoke exclusively in English during classes and whom I |

| | |
|---|---|
| "A teacher who had a great positive energy" | adored" |
| "A teacher who was always enthusiastic" | "A teacher who was a great human being with a big heart" |
| "A teacher who was sweet and kind" | "A teacher who cared and who genuinely worried about us" |
| "A Teacher who was our friends and helped us by constantly motivating us" | "A teacher who started the class with a sum up of the previous lesson" |
| "A teacher who made us not feel comfortable to clarify our doubts" | "A teacher who addressed the content in topics" |
| "A teacher who helped learners when they needed" | "Teachers who had an impact on me as a person" |
| | "A very emphatic teacher" |

Appendix E

| Answers given by participants in which they describe what they would currently tell their foreign language teachers | Number of times |
|---|---|
| "Thank you" | 10 |
| "Thank you for believing in me" | 1 |
| "Thank you for your dedication and I'm sorry that I didn't learn more" | 1 |
| "Thank you for supporting me" | 1 |
| "Thank you for transforming the subject matter into an interesting one" | 1 |
| "Thank you for the dedication and excellent creative class dynamics" | 1 |
| "Thank you for all that you taught me" | 1 |
| "Well done" | 2 |
| "Congratulations for the excellent job" | 1 |
| "You did a great job" | 2 |
| "Carry on the excellent job" | 1 |
| "I had the best teachers" | 1 |
| "I really enjoyed meeting you" | 1 |
| "I truly like you" | 1 |
| "I really enjoyed the way in which you taught" | 1 |
| "I partly owe my profession and personal success to you" | 1 |
| "You are essential in the learning process" | 1 |
| "I reached most of my goals thanks to you" | 1 |
| "Good luck" | 1 |

| Answers given by participants in which they describe what they would currently tell their foreign language teachers | Number of times |
|---|---|
| "To be patient" | 4 |
| "To try and remain calm" | 1 |
| "To be motivated" | 1 |
| "To please teach with passion and enthusiasm" | 2 |
| "To try to be more creative" | 3 |
| "That I wish that I had learnt more" | 1 |
| "To not give up on certain learners (especially those with learning difficulties) | 4 |
| "To remember that not everyone learns at the same pace | 3 |
| "To be more dedicated | 1 |
| "To be more versatile | 1 |
| "That nowadays technology is a big aid to learn English – not like in the 80's | 1 |
| "That they did not do enough | 1 |
| "I would tell my 7th grade teacher to change jobs | 1 |
| "To speak exclusively English during class | 2 |
| "To try to live abroad for some time | 1 |
| "To beware what they say and how they say it | 1 |
| "To bear in mind that teaching is wanting to see learners succeed | 1 |
| "To be kind | 1 |
| "To embrace their profession with love | 1 |
| "To remember that learners have feelings | 1 |
| "To try to promote autonomous learning outside classrooms | 1 |
| "To pay extra attention to those who are struggling to learn the language | 1 |
| "Not to value pronunciation as much | 1 |
| "That teaching should not be regarded as an obligation | 1 |
| "To be more concerned about promoting meaningful communication between learners | 1 |
| "To focus more on the speaking skill / dialogue | 3 |
| "Make an effort to make learners believe that they can reach their goals | 1 |
| "To find a way of giving learners individual attention | 1 |
| "To promote dynamic classes | 1 |
| "Not to expose learners publically (especially when one is aware of their weaknesses) | 2 |
| "Not to ridicule or laugh at learners who attempt to communicate | 2 |
| "To motivate learners (even those who are struggling to learn) | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| "To be motivated to teach the entire class and not exclusively the best learners | 1 |
| "To get to know your learners, they will most likely reflect your attitudes | 1 |
| "To try to promote international encounters / foreign exchanges / contact with target language "in a natural environment | 2 |
| "To try to find out about learners interests and create tailor made activities | 2 |
| "To be more affective towards learners | 1 |
| "To try new and more motivating teaching techniques which are not boring | 2 |
| "To remember that when a learner is scared during classes he/she will end up hating English | 1 |
| "To keep in mind that teaching a language should not be used as an excuse to discriminate | 1 |
| "That the kindness of one teacher has the power to change the behavior of an entire group | 1 |
| "That one should not allow children to ridicule or be cruel to each other" | 3 |
| "To avoid paying too much attention to mistakes made by learners in communicative situations" | 1 |
| "To be extra careful with what you say because it might mark your learners for life" | 1 |
| "To keep in mind that the weakest learners will not be weak forever" | 1 |
| "Not to regard learners who struggle to learn as aliens" | 1 |
| "To try to stimulate learners passion for languages while leaving assessment for second plan" | 1 |
| "That they could motivate learners more" | 1 |
| "To remember that to learn a foreign language is not easy for those who do not know anything" | 1 |
| "That I am very sorry to have witnessed how teachers gave up on weaker learners" | 1 |
| "That I ended up learning on my own but I remain very self-conscious" | 1 |
| "That not all children have access to private tuition" | 1 |
| "That to be a foreign language learner places them in a vulnerable and fragile position" | 1 |
| "That not everyone has a natural aptitude for languages" | 1 |
| "That I wish they had found a strategy to help me understand anything in English, a language that was totally new to me" | 1 |
| "That there are ways to 'reach' learners' with difficulties" | 1 |

Appendix E

## 13. References / bibliography

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