

## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN EFL CLASSES**

**Ozlem Yagcioglu**

Full-time instructor, Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir, Turkey

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**ABSTRACT:** *There are many approaches to teach English effectively in English foreign language classes. Students can learn English effectively, if the instructors pay attention to social and emotional learning while teaching new subjects to their students. This study deals with the approaches on social and emotional learning. The definition of social learning and the definitions of social and emotional learning will be given. Sample classroom activities will be shared. The role of the social and emotional learning in EFL classes will be handled. Websites, books and exercises will be suggested to promote social and emotional learning.*

**KEYWORDS:** Social Learning; Emotional Learning; Sample Classroom Activities; EFL Classes; Websites and Books.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Teachers and instructors use many different approaches and techniques to teach English to the students in ESL or in EFL classes. Learning a foreign language via social and emotional learning approach can help learners to be more motivated and happy learners. In this study, I tried to find how my students could become better and happier learners with the help of social and emotional learning approaches. Different classroom activities to increase my students' foreign language learning skills were used via social and emotional learning approaches.

### **Theoretical Background**

#### **What is Social Learning?**

Social Learning is defined in the online Encyclopaedia Britannica as:

*“ Social learning, in psychological theory, learning behaviour that is controlled by environmental influences rather than by innate or internal forces. The leading exponent of the concept of social learning, often called modeling, is the American psychologist Albert Bandura, who has undertaken innumerable studies showing that when children watch others they learn many forms of behaviour, such as sharing, aggression, cooperation, social interaction, and delay of gratification. ”*

As Johnson (2014:1-2) states that;

*“ Humans learn to speak, use tools, and to behave appropriately in social situations mostly by observing and imitating others. This is the essence of social learning theory (sometimes called observational learning). This theory falls under the category of behaviorism because it involves observing the behaviors of others and the rewards and punishments that result from those behaviors. Future behaviors are then based on these observations as we learn from vicarious reinforcement and punishment.*

*Cognition plays a part in social learning in the form of expectations. After observing a model we expect that if we behave in the same way we will get rewarded or punished similarly. Instead of having to go through the long trial and error learning (incremental learning) where we gradually eliminate the incorrect responses, we are able to benefit immediately from observing the success or failure of others (insightful learning). Some prefer the term, social cognitive learning theory. Here learning is defined as a change in mental processes that creates the capacity to demonstrate different behaviors that occurs as a result of observing others.*

*Social learning involves learning vicariously. Vicarious learning occurs when we learn by imitating or observing others. Enactive learning occurs when we learn by doing. We learn best when both are combined: observe others and learn by doing. In the classroom, this would mean that students would be able to observe somebody engaged in academic or social tasks and then be given chances to experiment or apply what they have learned.”*

Here, we understand that the observations we do around us play great roles in our teaching and learning methods. Thus, people who our students and we meet are important to have good steps in our lives. People around us can change the way we see and they can change our moods as we often observe them. We can also change our students’ thinking styles as they often observe us.

As Steels (2003: 136) indicates:

*“Social learning enables active learning. The learner can initiate a kind of experiment to test knowledge that is uncertain, or fill in missing holes. The mediator is available to give direct concrete feedback for the specific experiment done by the learner. This obviously speeds up the learning, compared to a passive learning situation where the learner simply has to wait until examples arise that would push the learning forward.”*

In this paragraph, it is understood that the active learning is crucial in social learning. We can also understand that it is important in teaching foreign languages and the English language as active learning increases the innovations in foreign language education .

Heyes (2012:194) denotes:

*“If there were distinct social and asocial learning mechanisms that evolve independently, one would expect social and asocial learning abilities to be unrelated. For example, species that are good at social learning should be no more likely than poor social learners to be good at asocial learning.”*

As it has been mentioned by Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005:117):

*“Specifically, ethical leadership is related to consideration behavior, honesty, trust in the leader, interactional fairness, socialized charismatic leadership (as measured by the idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership), and abusive supervision, but is not subsumed by any of these.”*

In this paragraph, it can be understood that the ethical leadership can be promoted via social and emotional teaching and learning techniques as the leaders should have communities via social networks and social interactions.

Reed, Evelyn Cundill, Fazey, Glass, Laing, Newing, Parrish, Prell, Raymond and Stringer (2010: 1) state that;

*“In summary, researchers have defined social learning in multiple, overlapping ways and confused social learning with the conditions and methods necessary to facilitate social learning or its potential outcomes. We emphasize the need to distinguish social learning as a concept from the conditions or methods that may facilitate social learning, e.g., stakeholder participation, and the potential outcomes of social learning processes, e.g., proenvironmental behavior. Building on this discussion, we propose that if learning is to be considered “social learning,” then it must:*

- 1- Demonstrate that a change in understanding has taken place in the individuals involved. This may be at a surface level, e.g., via recall of new information, or deeper levels, e.g., demonstrated by change in attitudes, world views or epistemological beliefs;*
- 2- Go beyond the individual to become situated within wider social units or communities of practice within society; and Occur through social interactions and processes between actors within a social network, either through direct interaction, e.g., conversation, or through other media, e.g., mass media, telephone, or Web 2.0 applications.*

*As such, social learning may be defined as a change in understanding that goes beyond the individual to become situated within wider social units or communities of practice through social interactions between actors within social networks.”*

### **Social and Emotional Learning**

Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 115) lists the following issues as the top key points on positive emotional learning:

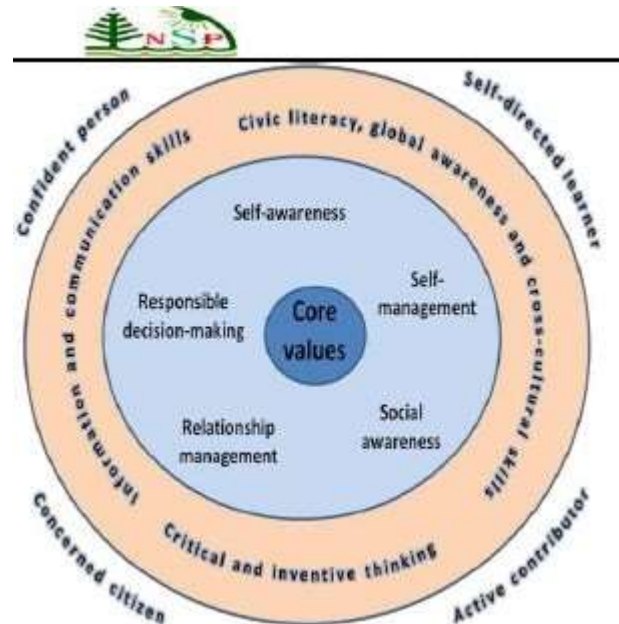
- “- A significant and highly characteristic aspect of DMC is the positive emotional tenor and unique sense of joy and satisfaction exhibited by those caught up in the current.*
- The feeling of pleasure experienced within a Directed Motivational Currents is not a giddy, temporary sensation of happiness as experienced through every day ‘fun’ activities, but rather stems from a complete feeling of connectedness with an individual’s core understanding of who they really are.”*

These top key points show the readers the role of positive emotional feelings and the feeling of pleasure in learning. Teachers and professors consider these key points and they should pay attention how their students can learn the new subjects with the feeling of pleasure and joy while they are teaching in their classes.

As it has been mentioned by Ee and Cheng (2013:62) :

[https://www.academia.edu/6067042/Teachers\\_Infusion\\_of\\_Social\\_Emotional\\_Learning](https://www.academia.edu/6067042/Teachers_Infusion_of_Social_Emotional_Learning)

“ According to the SEL Framework adopted by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008) in Singapore (see Figure 1), the five SECs are self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision making. As students’ SECs are enhanced, they should be able to acquire the skills, knowledge and dispositions to help them face future challenges”.



**Figure 1 Social-Emotional Learning Framework in Singapore**  
Source: Ministry of Education, Singapore

Damjanovic and Kravcik (2008:1718-1719) state that;

[https://www.academia.edu/4600063/Using\\_Emotional\\_Intelligence\\_in\\_Personalized\\_Adaptation](https://www.academia.edu/4600063/Using_Emotional_Intelligence_in_Personalized_Adaptation)

“Each person learns differently and needs to develop own learning skills in his or her own way. This is a reason why we explore using emotional intelligence (eQ) in learning on the Web (Web-based learning). The main technological challenges and requirements for the next generation Web and Grid systems can be fulfilled by using emerging technologies, such as:

- **The Semantic Web:** This represents the idea of having data on the Web defined and linked in a way that can be used for more effective discovery, automation, semantic integration, metadata annotation, and reuse across various applications (W3C, 2001).
- **The Semantic Grid:** This attempts to extend the Semantic Web approaches and solutions to take into account Grid characteristics.
- **Knowledge Grid:** This offers high-level tools and techniques for distributed knowledge extraction from data repositories on the Grid.
- **Adaptive Web systems:** These are able to adjust to different user requirements and to manage sources of heterogeneity.

- **Peer-to-peer (P2P) architecture:** *This considers a set of protocols, a computing model, and a design philosophy for distributed, decentralized, and self-organizing systems.*
- **Ubiquitous computing (pervasive computing):** *This describes distributed computing devices, such as personal devices, wearable computers, and sensors in the environment, as well as the software and hardware infra-structures needed to support applications on these computing devices.”*

As Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich and Gullotta (2015:6-7) state that:

<https://www.guilford.com/excerpts/durlak.pdf>

*“ SEL programming enhances students’ capacity to integrate cognition, affect, and behavior to deal effectively daily tasks and challenges (Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competence, 1994). Like many kindred approaches, the CASEL domains include knowledge, skills, and attitudes that comprise intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence (National Research Council, 2012). These include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making:*

*1. Competence in the self-awareness domain involves understanding one’s emotions, personal goals, and values. This includes accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations, having positive mindsets, and possessing a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy and optimism. High levels of self-awareness require the ability to recognize how thoughts, feelings, and actions are interconnected.*

*2. Competence in the self-management domain requires skills and attitudes that facilitate the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors. This includes the ability to delay gratification, manage stress, control impulses, and persevere through challenges in order to achieve personal and educational goals.*

*3. Competence in the social awareness domain involves the ability to take the perspective of those with different backgrounds or cultures and to empathize and feel compassion. It also involves understanding social norms for behavior and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports.*

*4. Relationship skills provide children with the tools they need to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, and to act in accordance with social norms. Competence in this domain involves communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking help when it is needed.*

*5. Finally, responsible decision making is a competency domain that requires the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse settings. Competence in this domain requires the ability to consider ethical standards, safety concerns, accurate behavioral norms for risky behaviors, to make realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and to take the health and well-being of self and others into consideration.*

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

The participants consisted of 62 (sixty two) university students at Dokuz Eylul University in the city of Izmir in Turkey. Their ages ranged from 18-23.

### **Teaching Procedure:**

The participants were asked to reply to the following questions during the 1st and the 2nd week of their class hours:

- 1- Which high school did you finish?
- 2- What is the name of your hometown?
- 3- What are your hobbies and pet-peeves?
- 4- Do you like listening to music?
- 5- What are your future plans?

According to the answers of these questions, different classroom activities were used to increase social and emotional learning in my class hours and to motivate them effectively.

### **Sample Classroom Activities**

#### **1. Using pictures and photos:**

This activity was used to warm up the lesson and to use some new words.

#### **2. Using motivational quotes:**

This activity was used to promote social and emotional learning and to bring positive ideas in their lives.

#### **3. Using conversational exercises**

This activity was used to let them speak English as much as possible during the class hour and to bring enthusiasm and joy into class hours.

#### **4. Using speaking activities**

This activity was used to increase my student's pronunciation skills and to increase social learning

### **Sample Classroom Activity**

#### **Sample Warm-up Activity:**

The following photo was used to ask questions at the beginning of the lesson:



**Picture 1. A happy group**

Students were asked to talk about the photo which was shown above. Firstly, they were asked to talk with their friends who were sitting next to them for 2 or 3 minutes. Secondly, they explained what they talked with each others to the whole class.

**Sample Classroom Activity for Listening and Understanding/Pronunciation:**

Students were asked to listen to the following songs at the beginning of class hour for 3 minutes and after listening to these songs they were asked how they felt themselves and which words they remembered from the lyrics of the songs they listened to:

**Happy- Pharell Williams:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6Sxv-sUYtM>

**Michael Bublé- Save the Last Dance for Me:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAjfB0XfjA>

**Sample Classroom Activities on Using Quotes:**

The following quotes were given and asked them to talk about them with their partners:

**Making Others Happy**

As it has been mentioned by Picone (2008:5):

*“ There is a reason we do volunteer work bring flowers to a friend in the hospital, or buy a special gift for someone we love when we’re out of shopping: It makes us happy. Sometimes in fact, being kind and considerate to others actually benefits us more than the people we’re helping.*

*Even if our activity starts out as a chore or an obligation, rather than something from the heart, it can become a joy to us, as well as to those who benefit from our efforts.*

*Is there something I can do to delight another person today? It doesn't have to be big or spectacular. A simple message expressing how much I appreciate someone's friendship can be very powerful."*

**Quote:** "Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself."- (Emerson, 2008: 5)

### **Smiling**

As it has been mentioned by Picone (2008:9):

*"Physiologically, it's been shown that smiling can make us feel happy, even if we are forcing the smile deliberately. Regardless of the science, it makes sense to smile, whether we feel like it or not. A smile energizes our brain as well as our muscles. And we don't want our face to settle into sadness.*

*As silly as it may seem, I am going to remind myself to smile regularly today, and then I'll see what happens."*

**Quote:** "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." (Hanh, 2008:9).

### **Day by Day**

Picone (2008:11) denotes that;

*"Next week, next month, next summer... that's when the good times will come. But right now we're just trying to get through today, and maybe tomorrow, and, with luck, the day after that.*

*Let's not miss our lives while they're happening. We can make choices about what we want to do right this morning. Sure, the garbage still needs to be taken out and work has to be done, but even in the rush of the everyday we can take time to appreciate what we have.*

*I'll give myself a few minutes to appreciate a beautiful sunrise, the comfort of my warm bed, the sheer joy of a baby's laugh, or even the pleasure of solitude-whatever my life holds today."*

**Quote:** "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." (Dillard, 2008:11)

### **Sample Classroom Activity**

#### **What am I grateful for?/ What am I excited for?**

Before this classroom activity, an orange coloured cartoon and a red coloured cartoon were put onto the white board of my classroom. Students were given 5 minutes to think what they were grateful for and what they were excited for. Half of the students of the class wrote what they were grateful for and the other half of the class wrote what they were excited for. They wrote their answers on pink coloured and yellow coloured small papers in 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, they were invited to the white board of the classroom with their partners in their classes and asked each other questions to find why they were grateful and why they were excited. After replying their partners' questions the ones who wrote the answers of being



gratefulness pasted their papers on the orange coloured cartoon and the other answers were pasted on the red coloured cartoon.

### Sample Classroom Activity

**Unit 1 Wordpower like** (Edwards, Gairns, Redman, Rimmer, Ward and Oakley, 2015: 252)

#### *A- Answer the following questions*

1- *What kind of films do you like? Can you give examples?*

*horror                      action                      comedy                      sci-fi*  
*crime                      drama                      musical*

*'I like action films like James Bond.'*

2- *What was the last film you saw?*

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3- *Was it like another film you've seen?*

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4- *What was the story like? (exciting?funny?boring? difficult to understand?)*

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5- *What did the actors in this film look like?*

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6- *Do you think your partner should see it? Why/Why not?*

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### Objectives

1. To give students the chance to practice English as much as possible
2. To teach students how to learn new words with pair work activities
3. To increase social and emotional learning in class hours
4. To help students to be more positive while learning new topics in their class hours
5. To make students more talkative and active during the class hours
6. To help students to be happy or happier learners while studying their lessons

## **FINDINGS**

### **Data Analysis**

According to the results of the classroom activities and the questions which were asked during the 2016-2017 academic year, the following results were found:

- 62** students indicated that learning motivational quotes or talking about motivational quotes made them happy while learning new topics
- 56** students indicated that doing exercises on using the words they learn on their course books made them effective learners
- 62** students indicated that telling each other what they were grateful for and what they were excited for made them more enthusiastic during the class hours
- 62** students indicated that talking about the pictures or photos on happiness would make them more talkative and active during the class hours.
- 62** students indicated that the speaking exercises which were done during the class hours improved their pronunciation skills

### **Students' Attitudes**

Classroom applications in this study were conducted in four different classes in the English Preparatory Classes Department at Dokuz Eylul University in the city of Izmir in Turkey during the 2016-2017 academic year. In each of these classes, there were university students from different faculties at Dokuz Eylul University in the city of Izmir in Turkey. Students in these classes accepted learning the topics and words with the help of different classroom activities such as quotes, pictures, photos, exercises, games, etc. They enjoyed attending the classroom activities which were used in their class hours and they told they were very happy while attending those games.

The same classroom activities were asked to do in two different classes in the same department of the School of Foreign Languages at Dokuz Eylul University, but students in those classes did not want to attend these classroom activities. Therefore, the results of my three classes in the School of Foreign Languages at Dokuz Eylul University were considered.

### **Students' Perceptions**

62 university students participated the classroom activities during the 2016-2017 academic year and all of them found the teaching tasks very useful. They realised that the classroom activities which helped them to learn the new issues socially and emotionally made them happier and more active learners. Their fluency and communicative competence increased rapidly day by day.

## **CONCLUSION**

Up to here, definitions of the social learning, social learning theory and emotional learning have been given. The role of social and emotional learning in EFL Classes has been handled.

Classroom activities which can promote social and emotional learning has been suggested. Students' perceptions and attitudes in my own teaching classes have been told.

Pictures, photos, positive quotations, vocabulary exercises, songs and healing music can help students who learn English as a foreign language while learning English in their course hours. Positive ideas will always help learners to make them more active and happy learners. Their participations to the class hours can increase day by day and they attend their courses full heartedly and enthusiastically.

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## APPENDIX

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