

**CONTROLLING EMOTIONS 1. DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY**

Objective: Students will be able to recognize that some things are out of their control and that when they happen, they need to make the best of the situation.

WARM UP

Write on the board *Spelling Bee* and divide it with a line in the middle. Write a letter A on the left and a letter B on the right. Also, divide the class into two teams, A and B. Explain to students that the main goal of the Spelling Bee is to have fun. Choose beforehand a series of words that your students learned recently or vocabulary that needs to be reinforced. Have one student from each team go to the board and spell orally two different words. If both get the word correct, give each team a point. If only one spells the word correctly, then that team gets two points and the other teams gets nothing. For large groups you may want to have students from each team go to the board and actually write the words. You could also make it faster by giving them 10 seconds to spell each word.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with or you may ask them to copy it in their notebooks.
- 2 Ask students to get into groups and study the diagram in the handout. Invite them to remember a problem or a difficult situation they experienced last week. Allow some time for students to recollect the situation.
- 3 Now that they have chosen a problem to work with, you can read together the text in the diagram. Tell them they will fill in the spaces of the diagram individually.
- 4 Explain that they must follow one of the paths by answering as honestly as possible. As students work, walk around the class offering help if needed.

- 5 Then invite students to share their diagrams with the members of their group and ask each other different questions to know more about the situation they went through, what they did, and how they felt about their decisions. Allow enough time for students to share their experiences.
- 6 Now, focus students' attention on the proverbs. Read them out loud as the class follows the text silently. Ask students to discuss the proverbs in their groups. As a whole class activity, have a few students share their opinion about them. Ask if they know of other proverbs that communicate the same idea. Ask them to think of different problems to fill in the spaces.

WRAP IT UP

- 7 *What are things that make you worry excessively? How does worrying excessively help you to solve problems? How helpful is it to know the difference between problems that have solutions and problems that don't?*

Have students discuss the questions in small groups first, then as a class. Give them some time and then ask some volunteers to share their answers with the whole class. You can explain that sometimes we face problems that don't have a correct or incorrect solution, but the important thing is the way we face them and how we feel after that. Sometimes what matters is the learning process we go through when experiencing difficult situations because it helps us mature.

TEACHING TIP

Spelling Bees are competitions in front of an audience that are common in English speaking countries. However they are not a common spelling activity for Spanish speakers. One of the reasons is that Spanish speakers tend to spell words in syllables a lot more than letter by letter. Consider this when doing spelling activities since these activities should positively challenge them, and depending on the class, you may want to have students write the words instead of spelling them out loud.

CONTROLLING EMOTIONS 2. TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Objective: Students will be able to recognize their reactions when feeling anxious so they can learn how to stay calm in stressful situations.

WARM UP

Write on the board the words *Fortunately* / *Unfortunately*. Explain their meaning and usage if necessary. Tell students to gather in small groups. It is important that each group has an uneven number of students. Then explain that they are going to make up a story in which each member of the group will advance the story by adding a sentence using the adverbs *fortunately* and *unfortunately*. Have students perform the activity taking turns. For example:

Student A: Yesterday, I went to the movies.

Student B: Fortunately, there were seats available.

Student C: Unfortunately, I forgot my wallet.

Student A: Fortunately, my friends had enough money to buy my ticket.

Student B: Unfortunately, I never found my wallet.

Student C: Fortunately, I was able to pay my friends back.

Allow students to do two stories before finishing the activity. Then invite one or two volunteer groups to role-play their stories. Ask them to not try to memorize or write their dialogue. They should improvise with a new short story. Encourage them to use body language, facial expressions, and gestures to emphasize their acting.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with, or you can also project it.
- 2 Ask students to study the first part of the handout *My reactions*. Allow some time for students to answer individually. Elicit from them some situations they might have experienced and what they did.

3 Then ask two volunteers to read out loud the definitions of anxiety and deep breathing. You can also ask if they are familiar with these concepts. Try to share some real experiences so students know everyone struggles with these emotions once in a while.

4 Now, explain to students that they're going to do a relaxation exercise that helps them feel at ease when needed. Invite them to read the instructions so they know what the activity will be about. Suggest students put away their things. Then begin reading the instructions out loud in a calm rhythmical manner.

5 Let students write their experiences and thoughts about this activity on the space provided in the handout.

WRAP IT UP

- 6 *What are your physical reactions when feeling anxious? What do you usually do when feeling anxious? What should you do and what should you avoid doing?*

Have students discuss the questions in small groups. Give them some time and then ask some volunteers to read or explain their experience with this activity. Ask them if they think this exercise can help them calm down their physical reactions when stressed. You can explain what self-regulation is, that is the ability to understand and react to their own needs in an rational and favorable way.

TEACHING TIP

Consider using the deep breathing exercises when you anticipate that students may be anxious, for example, when the exam period is coming. It is also a good idea to make it a habit. This could be before or after an exam or Monday first period or even Friday last period. If you make it a habit, you will most likely notice that students are able to concentrate better and that they work with a better attitude. Additionally, this exercise can even help you clear your mind, even if you are only guiding it.



CONTROLLING EMOTIONS 3. THIS IS JUST TO SAY...

Objective: Students will be able to identify the difference between a politically correct apology and an empathetic one.

WARM UP

Write the word *apologize* on the board. In small groups, have students make as many new words as they can using the letters of *apologize* without repeating any of them. Consider eliciting one or two examples before they start brainstorming the words. Advise them to start with simple one letter words like: *I* or *a*. Then, they can move on to two or three letter words, such as: *go*, *pie*, *lap*, and so on. You may finish with four letter words like, *goal*, *loop*, *pile*, *pool*, *pole*, *leap*. To make the activity more dynamic, give students two or three minutes to come up with the words.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with. You may ask a volunteer to read the introduction and the Step by Step section out loud, so they know what will be expected from them to do.
- 2 Invite volunteer students to read out loud the difference between empathy and apologizing, and encourage a class discussion.
- 3 Individually, have students think of famous public issues they can recall involving apologies they consider were honest and empathetic. They can also recall personal situations where they were honestly sorry. Invite them to analyze the characteristics that this kind of apologies have.
- 4 In small groups, ask students to brainstorm different public apologies that the public opinion considered insincere. They could be from politicians, actors, any famous people, or they could also be personal situations. Allow time for students to write them in the space provided.

- 5 Ask students to read the poem “This is Just to Say” by William Carlos Williams and have them discuss if the poem sounds like an honest apology showing remorse or empathy.
- 6 Then, ask students to write their own “This is Just to Say” poem. All poems should be about a personal situation, and they should show an honest and empathetic apology. A variation of this activity is that you ask your students to rewrite the original poem in a way that shows empathy. Help students with any vocabulary they may need. Ask some volunteers to share their poems.

WRAP IT UP

- 7 *Is it difficult for you to apologize? How do you think empathy influences your apology? Do you think it is difficult for a person to apologize in public? Why? What do you usually do and how do you behave after doing something wrong?*

Have students share and discuss their answers in groups, then as a class. Then, still using the #MeToo Movement as an example encourage them to speak up their minds about it. Explain that some men are part of the movement because they have been victims themselves. Some people did publicly apologize, but unfortunately, not all apologies seemed to show genuine empathy. To conclude this activity, ask students if they think an apology is necessary for any situation where there is a victim and why.

TEACHING TIP

“This is Just to Say” by William Carlos Williams is a poem that started out as an actual note to his wife. It takes about 20 seconds to recite and has no regular rhythm or syllabic count, no rhyme, no punctuation other than line-breaks, and three stanzas. Point this out to students so they can write their own poem but tell them to respect the three stanzas. Another important fact is that Williams thought poetry should be rooted in reality and evoke familiar feelings.

CONTROLLING EMOTIONS 4. ANXIETY TRIGGERS

Objective: Students will distinguish the difference between fears and anxiety by analyzing their own fear and anxiety triggers.

WARM UP

Write on the board the following common fears that make people anxious: spiders, dogs, loneliness, flying in an airplane, deep water, heights, public speaking, sickness, exams, death. Ask students to work in small groups. Read the common fears out loud and ask students to number the fears from 1 to 8; number 1 being the scariest and number 8 being the least scary. They may want to add one or two things that cause anxiety for them if they wish. After students have completed their list, ask them to compare it with another group. Have a class discussion on the things that make them feel anxious.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with, or you can also project it. Encourage students to share their thoughts about anxiety or even their experiences.
- 2 Ask a student to read out loud the text on their handout.
- 3 Have a volunteer read all the common anxiety triggers before they begin scoring each situation. Elicit from students some examples of fear vs. anxiety. Check that all students understand the difference and give further explanation if needed.
- 4 Ask students to work in pairs and brainstorm other anxiety triggers they may know. Have them write those down at the bottom of the list.
- 5 Explain that they should score each situation individually. Give students enough time to complete the activity. Once they finish, invite them to share their scorings and compare their answers.

- 6 Invite students to read the positive ways to tone down their anxiety triggers. Check their comprehension.
- 7 In their pairs, have students discuss their experiences when feeling anxiety. Invite them to share the thoughts they usually have and how they impact their general mood and physical health. Encourage them to be supportive and empathetic to each other and share any good advice that has helped them when dealing with fears or anxiety.

WRAP IT UP

- 8 *Do you think your thoughts and mood begin to change before getting anxious? How can your thoughts deepen your anxiety? Is there a way for you to manage those thoughts? How do you deal with the situation once you're near it or in it?*

Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs. Have some volunteers share how they felt performing the activity. Remind them that self-regulation implies knowing yourself so that you can react more appropriately when facing difficult situations and thus lessen the negative impact in your life as much as possible. You can end this activity by sharing a personal experience in which you turned anxiety in your favor.

TEACHING TIP

Summaries are a fantastic way to help students reflect on the objective of a lesson and provide great comprehension and fluency practice for them. The ability to synthesize a class will help students to better remember the lesson and the topic taught. For you, the teacher, it is a way to encourage writing and helps you check any comprehension or writing production problems. For this class, you could ask them for a summary of what anxiety represents or what others said about their anxiety triggers. Another option is to have students summarize the difference between anxiety and fear.