
Activities to Help Build Social Intelligence

Vocabulary-Building

Grade level: Upper primary - intermediate

Purpose: Increase vocabulary related to emotions

1. Divide the class into teams of five(ish)
2. Ask each team to come up with 3 words to describe positive emotions, and/or 3 words to describe negative emotions (based on their own experiences, or something they've seen/read)
3. Write two headings on (white board/chart paper/electronic projection): Positive Emotions and Negative Emotions. (For duplicates, substitute an emotion word of your own)
4. Once there are at least 10 different words on the board, scatter the individual letters on the board
5. Ask each team to come up with as many additional emotion-related words as they can, using the individual letters, but without repeating the words already listed
6. The team that comes up with the most words is the winner

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What is This Person Feeling?

Grade level: Primary - Intermediate

Purpose: Build mind-reading skills (the ability to read others' emotions)

1. Show students a photograph of a person
2. Ask students to come up with different words to characterize what they thought the person was feeling (if needed, direct students to facial expression, posture, gestures - body language)
3. Record words on (white board/chart paper/electronic projection)
4. Challenge students (in groups/partners/individually) to tell a brief story about how the person in the picture is feeling, and why
5. Explore the stories and the rationale (based on what they see in the picture)
6. Extension: use as the basis for dramatic play

Mind Reading

(Requires electronic viewing device with headphones/earbuds)

Grade level: Junior/Intermediate

Purpose: To exercise social intelligence

1. Ask students to imagine that they're going to ask their parents for something special (e.g. permission to sleep at a friend's house, more time for video games, a cell phone, etc.)
2. Pose the question: Would you ask your parents for this if you saw that they were in a bad mood, or would you wait until they were in a good mood?
3. Ask students to share how they would know if their parent was in a good or bad mood
4. Divide the class into two groups. Pre-select a clip for viewing (e.g. from a Big Bang episode). Half the class watches it with no volume; the other half watches it with volume. Both groups record what they think the main characters are feeling (one chart for each main character)

CUES	DESCRIPTION	What the behaviour indicates the person is feeling, and why I think so
Facial Expressions		
Tone of Voice		
Gestures		
Body Posture		
Body Movements		
Other (describe)		

5. After viewing, have the two groups compare notes (they should have similar results)
6. Follow-up by discussing the important role of reading affect cues