

Teacher Expert or Effort?

Grade Level: 2nd-12th ESL Classroom **Time:** 50 min

Lesson Goal: To introduce to learners the concept of academic success or failure belief systems (attributions) and their perceived controllability.

TSW: Learn about their internal success or failure beliefs.

TSW: Identify incorrect beliefs about academic success or failure.

TSW: Practice oral and written language skills.

Define: EFFORT, ABILITY, SUCCESS, FAILURE, EXPERT, SMART, SUCCESSFUL

Materials: Teacher materials from their early learning (i.e. childhood handwriting, artwork, report cards or papers that match the grade-level of their students). Notecards and tape for student responses.

Directions:

(10 min) Class Discussion

- What does it mean to be “smart” in school? Is that the same as being successful or an expert?
- Are teachers smart? Are they experts? What are students experts at? (As the class defines these concepts, record it on the board.)

(5min) Direct Instruction

- Pass out notecards and ask students to write a general topic and a question about it- the student must know the answer to the question.
- Prompt with examples such as science, basketball, pokemon, art, movies.
- As the students finish, tape the notecards to the board.

(15 min) Class Activity

- Read each question to the class, and write your personal response below. Next, have students call out their answers and record a few below that.
- Ask the student questioner “Which is the correct response?”

(15 min) Summarize and Evaluate

-Refer back to the beginning of class and student concepts of smart. Highlight the incorrect teacher response to their questions: “If teachers are ‘smart’, why did I get some answers wrong?” “If you got a question right, are you more successful than your teacher?” “If you practiced, could you get ‘smarter’ in one of these areas?”

-Share with the class your examples of your early learning years. Ask the students to evaluate why you can create, write, or perform better now than when you were younger? If they identify effort as a factor in why your skills improved, discuss with them whether effort makes you smart or makes you an expert. Does failing a question mean you aren’t smart or an expert?

Follow-up & Review:

- Have the class select a “fun” category from the topics on the board. For the next month, ask students to bring in bits of information on the topic to share with the class for deliberate daily practice.
- Build a ‘study board’ and encourage students to continue to bring in images or information on the topic. Periodically test their knowledge through oral ‘shout-out’ quizzes.
- Discuss periodically whether their experience of the information is making them ‘smarter’ in the category. “Could you become smarter at anything? Are there any limits to how ‘smart’ you can become?”
- Praise your student’s efforts, practice, and growth in relation to the topic. Use the same phrases when praising content-area efforts by students.

-Ask students to do a final ‘free-write’ on the following topic:

“What will you be better at by the time you get to _____ grade? What do you need to put effort into in order to get better at it?”