

Give and take: creating opportunities for trust and bonding in a foreign language classroom

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I. INTRODUCTION

Aim to show what *give and take* means:

- o Kinds of collaborative trust forming behaviors that lead to laughter
- o Interactive use of shared knowledge to create intimacy

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Were do Socrates and Plato fit in?

The bond created between teacher and student lasts a lifetime, even when the two are no longer together... (The Symposium)

- o Foreign language classrooms - places for self-disclosure using a new code
- o Face threat and Social vulnerability (Goffman, 1984)

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II. Theoretical Background

- o Social and biological underpinnings of language - not just innate grammatical principles - An interactional instinct (Lee et. al, 2009)
- o *Primary trust and bonding (children and caregivers) > second language trust and bonding (adults) What's changed?*
- o Brain plasticity - social affiliation, trust and bonding are adaptive (Perdersen, 2004, Simpson, 2002, Mikulincer, 2002, Siegel, 2001)

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III. Research questions

- o Is social trust and intimacy built in this adult FL classroom? If so what do instances of this look like?
- o Are opportunities for bonding created? How?
- o What kind of social ecology is built in this classroom?

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IV. Methods and setting

Qualitative approach

-Talk and social theory (Erickson, 2004)

- o Participant observation (8 weeks - 2 hours/wk)
- o Semi-structured interviews
- o 2 Learner journals
- o Supplementary video-recording (3 hours)

Setting and participants

-1 male teacher and 29 students (21 f/8 m) in beginning Spanish (Sp 2) classroom at large public university in California

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Example 1 - Coaxing participation and identifying



- Positioning of body in classroom space
- Voice pitch rises when students have trouble
- Identifying with students “I sleep late every day.”
- Relative, intermittent and repeated positive assessments

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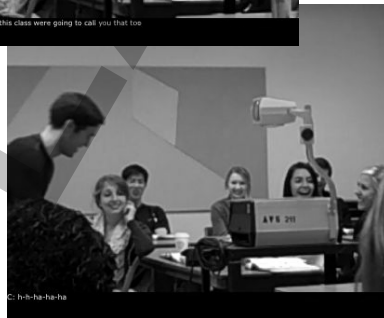
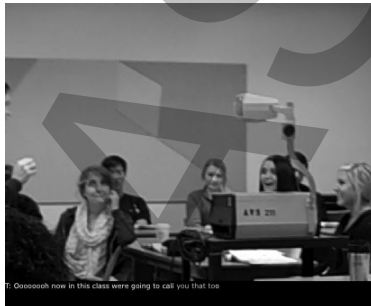
Example 2 - Getting students to talk by asking, joking and walking toward them



- Potentially *risky* teacher reaction (rolling eyes)
- Brings rest of class “into the fold” through facial expression and questions
- Despite laughter, keep on asking
- Best possible assesement
- Facing/walking toward students to prolonge interaction

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Example 3 - Using knowledge of family to create intimacy



- What’s in a nickname?
- Potentially embarrassing
- Subjective experience is used to create inter-subjectivity
- Shared laughter

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Example 4 - Dealing with errors through laughter - intimacy by reusing a family nickname



- Going beyond “yes” and “no” matters
- Disfluency is managed with humor - social empathy?
- Re-use ‘locally relevant’ knowledge of one another
- Shared laughter

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Example 5 - Managing errors through questions - student/teacher use previous shared experience



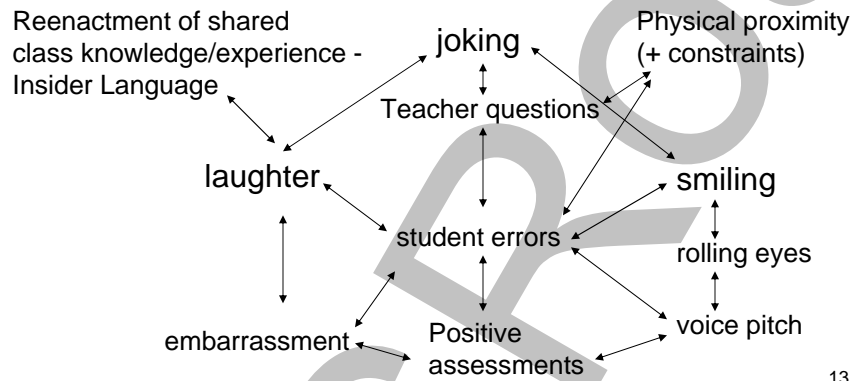
- Managing errors with a question
- Physical proximity
- Interactive public re-enactment of previous shared experience
- Joking - Playful facial expressions, intonation and gesture
- Shared laughter - indexes being “in on the joke”

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V. Conclusions

Social empathy and trust

Sharing subjective experience → Intersubjective



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VI. Other implications

Laughter's endorphin "kick" (Dunbar, 2004)

Oxytocin associated with stress reduction and encourages social interaction (Leng et al., 2005)

Laughter increases altruism between strangers - may enhance sense of group identity (Van Vugt et al., 2010)

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