
The Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence
Experiences in Student Engagement: A Panel Discussion
TOPIC: Brain Breaks and Breathing

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Performance-Based Methods in Language Teaching

Focus: Brain Breaks and Breathing

Context: Research study:

Performance-based methods in language teaching (Spring 2021)

Goals: enhanced confidence? greater fluency?

Focus:

What? ⇒ Brain breaks & breathing: occasional, as needed

Why? ⇒ Students liked activities (evals), demand / expect more

What next? ⇒ Build into lesson / syllabus

“Brainbreak” moments

Learning anything new is challenging. Doing it for 80 minutes - on Zoom - can be extra hard. Our brains need a break to be able to process new information.

1. Set the mood
2. Camera on, camera off
3. Reach for the sky
4. Guided meditation*
5. Permission to be silly



* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44vX7ObX9a0&list=PLZRvwjK-W61e aizkztI0uo9fBFJHGx65E&index=4>

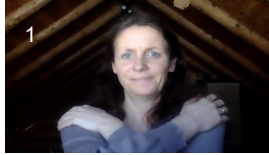
Reach for the sky, fluff the clouds
Reach for the Sky

Embrace the trees, and turn around

Touch the earth, find a stone

Give it to a friend, you're never alone

Breathing “Hands On” Exercises



1. Havening (Fox)



2. Butterfly Tapping (Fox)

3. Small / large breathing circle (Hippe)



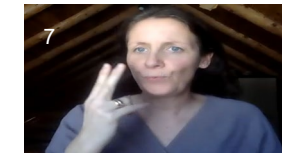
4. Hand tracing (Drinko)

5. Five wishes & candles (Drinko)

6. Giving instructions

with guided breathing (Hogg)

7. Fake cigarette (Drinko)



[Link to short video with the exercises](#)

Breathing: Background

If I had more time, I would tell you:

Breathing...

- happens 20,000 x per day, controllable to a certain degree (carbon dioxide wants out) (Bryson). You just do it. You just cannot not do it.
- = a conscious stress *response*, not a stress *reaction* (Kabat-Zinn)
- enlarges your window of tolerance between flight/flight and homeostasis as you activate the parasympathicus (Alana, Fox) bottom up (v.d.Kolk)
- = accepting (in) and letting go (out) (“Yes, and”; Drinko)
- “creates neural connections that potentiate access on demand to brain parts that foster **creativity, innovation, well-being, compassion, nonviolent communication, resilience, problem solving, critical thinking, and happiness, and reduce stress and anxiety**” (Neuroscience, p. 81)
⇒ **WHO WOULDN'T WANT THAT?!**

Sources

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