Teachers’ Beliefs affect Classroom Dynamics

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A Story
Aim

To explore common beliefs around language learning

&

Share strategies and tools to counteract unproductive ones
Overview

Beliefs around language learning:

1. Are these student’s or teacher’s?
2. Are these common across classrooms or idiosyncratic?
3. Are these productive or unproductive?
4. Can these be creatively and resourcefully used?
A belief is a proposition held consciously or unconsciously, is evaluative (accepted as true by the individual), and is imbued with emotive commitment influencing their actions (Michael Borg, 2001).

Abdolahzadeh and Nia (2014), noted that “language learners’ expectations are developed prior to their experiences, and are also influenced and shaped by their beliefs.”
Types of Classroom Beliefs

Three types:

1. Beliefs about Learners - Are students receptacles · empty vessels · clients · partners · individual explorers?

1. Beliefs about learning - Is it a quantitative increase in knowledge · memorization · the acquisition of facts, or procedures?

1. Beliefs about themselves – Do teachers' cognitions like attention, memory, categorizing, thinking and problem-solving affect?

(Xu, L. 2012)
Rapport Building

Know something beyond general introduction about your partner. Eg.

a) Would you rather go swimming or hiking?

b) Would you rather read or go shopping, if you had some time?

c) Would you rather eat Mexican food or drink exotic Ethiopian coffee?

d) Would you rather walk or ride a bike around the campus?
Belief Hunt

Discuss with partners to bring out few beliefs around language learning. Example:

1. I believe that students can’t write a decent essay.
2. They can’t think critically.
3. They listen carefully to the instructions.
4. They want to work hard.
5. They do not get the instructions.
Perspective

Tram anecdote

Categorize into:

1. ‘Very productive, so let me share with others’

2. ‘Productive, so doesn’t need any revision’

3. ‘Unproductive but I can’t do anything about it’

4. ‘Unproductive but can be amended’
Hands On

My use of the unresourceful beliefs:
1. (a) They hate listening tasks – (b) I will give them (c) the freedom to listen or not.
2. (a) They do not take feedback constructively – (b) I will give them (c) the choice to decide which feedback they want.

Strategy or Tool:
a) Choose any one of your unresourceful beliefs.
b) Add a personal pronoun as the subject an action verb to it.
c) Think of a creative action plan around it.
The Story
References

- Wang, T. & Rajprasit, K. (2015) Identifying Affirmative Beliefs about English Language Learning: Self-Perceptions of Thai Learners with Different Language Proficiency, English Language Teaching; Vol. 8, No. 4; 2015 ISSN 1916-4742 E-ISSN 1916-4750 Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education.