

Segment 1: What is the Affective Filter?

The Affective Filter hypothesis embodies Stephen Krashen's view that a number of “affective variables” play a role in second language acquisition.

These variables include motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition.

Low motivation, low self-esteem, and high anxiety can combine to “raise” the affective filter and form a “mental block” that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is up, it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place. The student needs to also receive messages that are comprehensible in order to acquire new knowledge.

Segment 2: Students Using Discussion Norms in Class

When you’re teaching social studies and helping ELLs develop English, structured discussions are priceless. In this video, the Spanish speaking teacher is establishing norms for student talk. Observe how, when signaled, students turn and talk with their partner, and then turn back to face the teacher when she signals.

Teacher: OK, quiero que ahora piense. Vamos a pensar, ¿qué lugares pueden ser estos que nosotros vimos, que yo encontré en la computadora, donde yo puedo ir a nadar porque hay agua, ¿verdad? Quiero que volteen con su compañero y hablen con su compañero sobre qué lugares pueden ser estos, a qué lugares puedo ir a nadar. Hable con su compañero; hable con su compañero; vamos a hablar con nuestro compañero. Qué lugares pueden ser estos, qué lugares son. Abigail, hable con su compañero. ¿Qué lugares pueden ser?

Students: The lake, the ocean.

Teacher: Muy bien, voltee para acá otra vez por favor. Véame otra vez. Yo escuché algunos niños que estaban nombrando los lugares a los que podemos nosotros ir a nadar y los que yo encontré.

Translation

Teacher: OK, I want you to think. We’re going to think, what places could these be that we saw, that I found in the computer, where I can go for a swim because there’s water, right? I want to turn to your classmate and talk to your classmate about what places can those be, where can I go for a swim. Talk to your classmate, talk to your classmate, let’s talk to our classmate. What places could these be? What are these places? Abigail, talk to your classmate. What places could these be?

Students: The lake, the ocean.

Teacher: Very good, turn this way again please. Look at me again please. I heard some kids that were naming places where we can go for a swim and that I’d found.

Segment 3: Using Sentence Stems and Paragraph Frames in Social Studies

In this video, the teacher uses a simile summary strategy to help students develop English proficiency.

Instructor: We are actually gonna incorporate a little bit of Language Arts today in History class. I am gonna teach you something that you may already know, but you’re gonna learn again right before TAKS test in eighth grade Language Arts class. You are gonna be tested on this, so you already have an idea of what your teacher is going to talk about at the end of the school year. Does anybody know what a simile is, though? What is a simile? Does anybody know? Kaylee?

Kaylee: It's where you use "like," "as" to—to show how something relates to another thing.

Instructor: Okay, what are the two words that you said? It's when you use what?

Kaylee: Like and as.

Instructor: Like or as, right. Like or as. So today's objective or today's sentence stem says this blank is like the Albany Plan, because as a group, you guys are going to finish this sentence stem. What I'm gonna do, of course, you don't know what the Albany Plan is right now, but what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna teach the Albany Plan, gonna tell you what it's all about, and then I'm gonna go around each group, and I'm going to give—put this in the middle of the group, and one of you guys is gonna pull something out of this—of this bag. You may pull out a stress ball, you may pull out a skeleton, and I won't tell you what the other things are. But then what you're going to do is you're gonna put down this skeleton is like the Albany Plan because . . . , and then you're gonna be creative and write your sentence stem, okay? All right, so we're gonna start our simile summary. You need to go to page 24 in your notes.

And one person needs to take something out of this—all right, you get a tank. A stress ball. A hammer.

And a rubber ducky. All right, so I think you were looking for that one, Jose. I think you like the rubber ducky. He knew it was in there. All right, so you're gonna write down this rubber ducky, or if you have the rubber ducky or a tank or the stress ball or this hammer, is like the Albany Plan because Be creative, talk to each other. Everybody in your group should have the same answer, and we'll share them right now.

Student 1: It's like the Albany Plan because . . .

Student 2: It won't work if you take it apart.

Student 1: Yeah.

Instructor: So you guys have worked on your simile summary. Here's what I want you to do. I want all you guys in your group to point to the person with the shortest hair in your group. Point to the person with the shortest hair in your group. Okay, well, pick someone. You guys need to pick someone. I want that person to practice it. I want that person to read it to the rest of the group to see if they agree with what you all said.

Student: Okay, you've got to practice how to say it.

Student: All right.

Instructor: Jose, practice it with everybody.

Student: The rubber duck is like the Albany Plan because . . .

Student: . . . they join together.

Student: They join together, and they join together and they make, like, a bigger—

Instructor: Okay, that should be enough time. So I want you to point to that person again. I want to know who that person is. Okay, okay, okay. This group over here? Great. All right, let's start off back here. You guys had a stress ball. Jose, what did you guys write down?

Jose: The ball is like the Albany Plan because Benjamin Franklin stressed the colonists were—

Instructor: Come again? I need to you to say it loud and clear, please, for the whole class.

Jose: The ball is like the Albany Plan because Benjamin Franklin stressed that the colonists should join.

Instructor: Oh, great. This stress ball is like the Albany Plan because Benjamin Franklin stressed the colonies to join together. Brilliant!