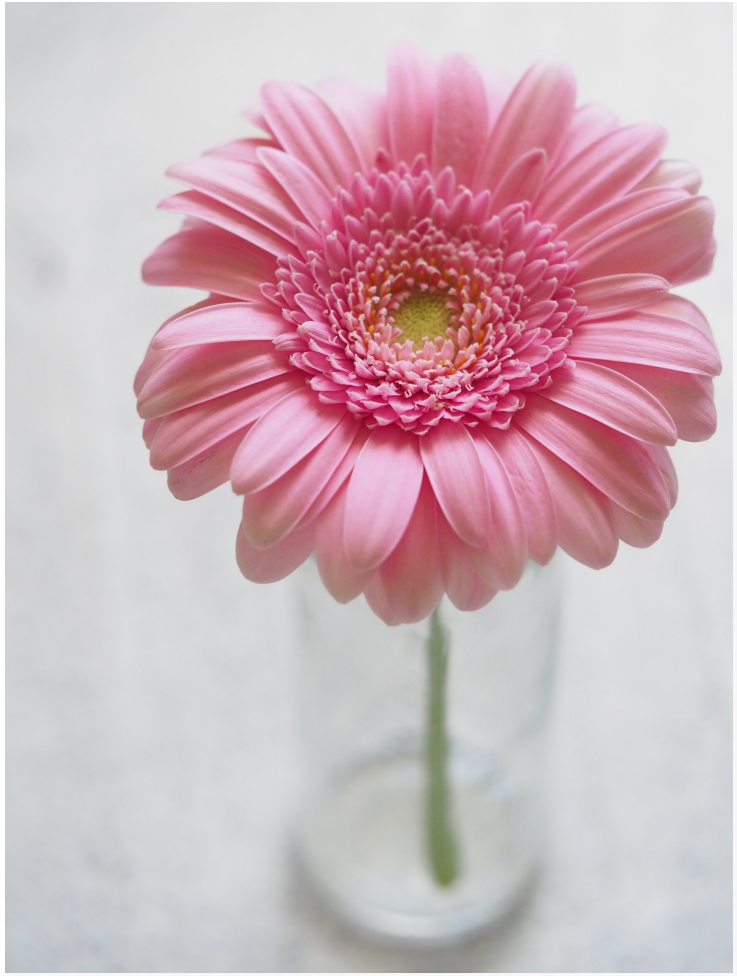


Emotions in language learning

Sachiko Nakamura
Center for English as a Lingua Franca
Tamagawa University

JSLARF Symposium July 1-2, 2023

By the end of this talk,

You will...

01

be equipped with pretty decent knowledge about emotions

02

understand how powerful emotions can be in L2 learning

03

become interested in integrating emotional aspects to your future research

04

think about your teaching practice from a different viewpoint

01

What is this thing called “emotion”?

Psychological constructionist models

Emotions are mental events that are constructed in the mind of an individual by making internal sensations and external sensations meaningful while reinstating prior experiences that are similar to the present context (Barrett, 2016; Gendron & Barrett, 2009; Hoemann et al., 2019; Lindquist, 2013).

in affective neuroscience

What?

VIRTUAL
SLRF 2020
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
SLRF
2020
PLENARY SPEAKERS
Expanding Networks:

5
4
3
2
CENTER FOR ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA
CENTER FOR UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS
Active Learning Zone
Self-Study Zone
TAMAGO Lounge
Conference Room 1-4
Meeting Room
Faculty Lounge 1-2
1
2

OMG this is scary.

Anxiety

OMG this is awesome!

Excitement

The control-value theory of achievement emotions

Experiencing a discrete emotion is a multifaceted phenomenon involving affective, cognitive, physiological, motivational, and expressive processes (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun & Stephens, 2012).

in educational psychology

For example?

Experiencing anxiety before giving a presentation

- uneasy feeling (affective)
- worries about what might go wrong (cognitive)
- dry mouth (physiological)
- wishes to run away (motivational)
- nervous smile (expressive)

Emotion Regulation and Strategy Instruction in Learning
Sachiko Nakamura (in press)

Book series

Springer Texts in Education

02

L2 emotion research: How are we doing so far?

Not too bad.

Not too bad.

Foreign language classroom anxiety
(Horwitz et al in 1986; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012)

Foreign language enjoyment
(Botes et al., 2022; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014)

Boredom in L2 classroom
(Nakamura et al., 2021ab; Pawlak et al., 2021)

03

Wouldn’t L2 learners experience emotions other than anxiety, enjoyment, and boredom?

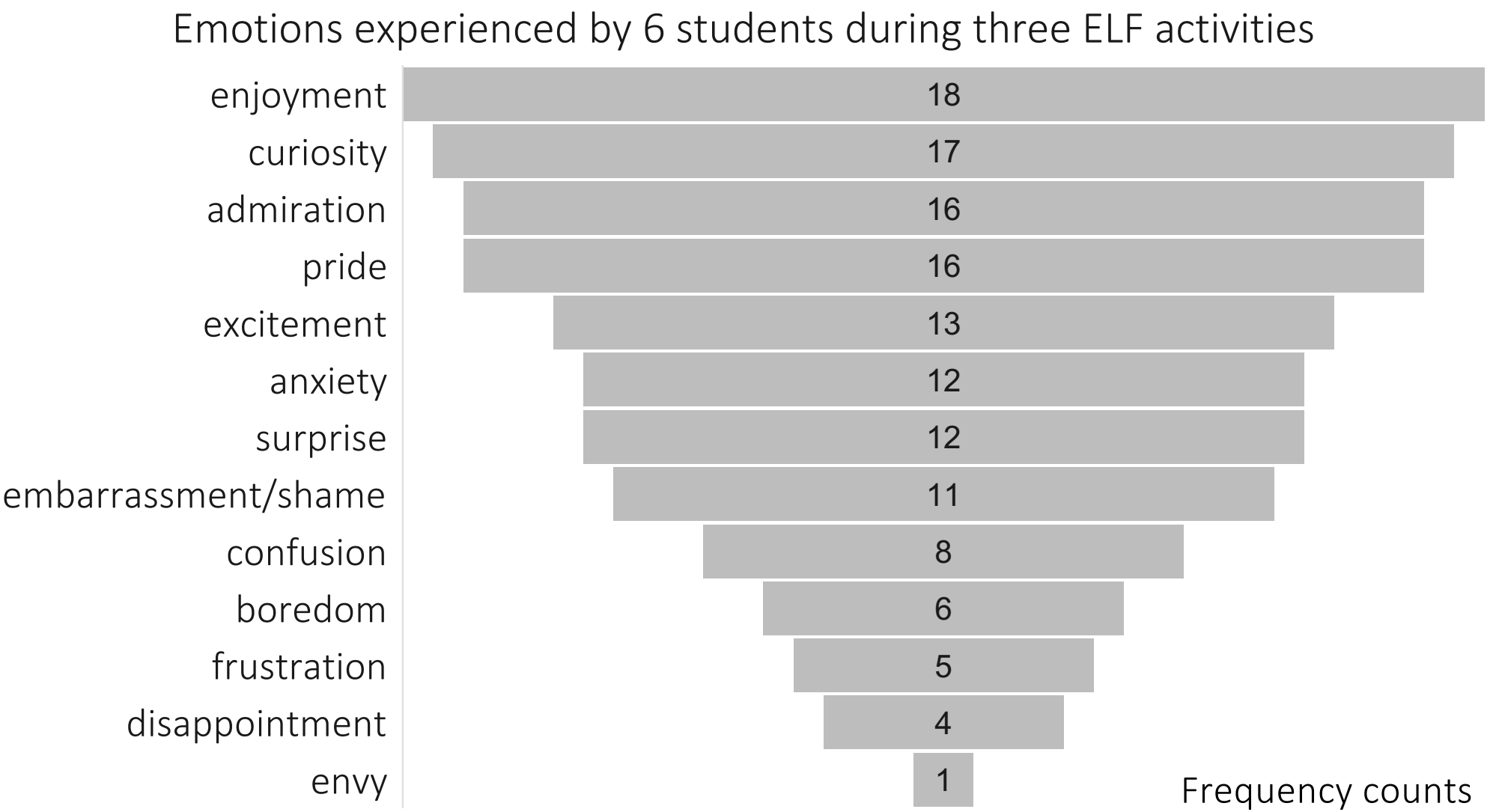
Of course,

YES!

Davari et al., 2020; Imai, 2010; Littleton & Nakamura, in preparation; Nakamura, 2018; in press; Sampson, 2018; Shao et al., 2023; Teimouri, 2016, 2018

Littleton & Nakamura (in preparation)

- Small-scale exploratory study investigating the types of emotions and antecedents experienced by six Japanese university students
- During three common classroom activities in English classes
- Questionnaire, observation, & post interview


Emotions experienced by 6 students during three ELF activities
enjoyment
curiosity
admiration
pride
excitement
anxiety
surprise
embarrassment/shame
confusion
boredom
frustration
disappointment
envy
18
17
16
16
13
12
12
11
8
6
5
4
1
Frequency counts

04

Are emotions *that* important in L2 learning?

Absolutely,

YES!

Arnold, 2011; Botes et al., 2022; Dewaele, 2015; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Nakamura, in press; Nakamura et al., 2022ab; Pawlak et al., 2021)

Akiyama, Nakamura, Uchihara, & Saito (2023)

- Mixed-method study to examine the L2 speech comprehensibility development of nine L2 Japanese learners (7 from the U.K., 1 from Singapore, 1 from HK) through a task engagement framework
- Paired with L1 Japanese speakers in Japan studying English
- Engaged in topic-based conversations once a week for 10 weeks via Zoom (9 sessions in total)
- Examined 18 engagement variables as predictors of comprehensibility development
- Ran Spearman Rho correlation

Analysis of 18 variables as indicators of engagement

Dimension	Variables	Definitions/Operationalizations
Behavioral	1. Time on task	Length of time the speaker was taking the floor
Cognitive	Asking questions 1. To learn about each other's culture 2. For bonding 3. For other purposes	1. Questions about each other's culture (e.g., "Is it the same in Japan?") 2. Questions asked to get to know each other (e.g., "What's your favorite class?" 3. Other types of questions (e.g., asking about an image)
	4. Self-repair	4. Occasions where the speaker attempts to make changes to what is being said (self-corrections, self-repetitions, self-reformulations, self-replacements, and false starts)
	5. Lexical search	5. Occasions where the speaker verbally indicates he/she is searching for a word (e.g., "What is it called?")
	Negotiation of meaning 6. Using TL only 7. Using code-switching	6. Negotiation of meaning using only the TL 7. Negotiation of meaning that used bilingual resources

Analysis of 18 variables as indicators of engagement

Dimension	Variables	Definitions/Operationalizations
Social	Responsiveness 1. Repetition 2. Peer completion 3. Commenting	Instances where the speaker reacted to the interlocutor by 1. Repeating 2. Completing 3. Commenting on previously expressed ideas (Trofimovich et al., 2021)
	4. Recasts	Reformulation of an erroneous utterances into a more target-like form while preserving the original meaning (Mackey, 1998)
	Linguistic scaffolding 5. Using TL only 6. Using code-switching	Language support provided (1) voluntarily by the L1 speaker even when there is no trouble source or (2) in response to L2 speaker's request for language support
	7. Backchanneling	The response token or turn continuer acknowledging the speaker's utterance (e.g., uh huh, yeah, sure, I see, okay) (Trofimovich et al., 2021)
	8. Overlaps	Simultaneous speech

Analysis of 18 variables as indicators of engagement

Dimension	Variables	Definitions/Operationalizations
Affective	1. Enjoyment	Answer to the question “I enjoyed today’s session.” on a scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree-strongly agree)
	2. Satisfaction	Answer to the question “I am satisfied with my performance.” on a scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree-strongly agree)

Variables that had the strongest correlations with comprehensibility development

1			

Variables that had the strongest correlations with comprehensibility development

	Engagement variable	r	Interpretation
1	(Partner's) Asking cultural questions	.68	The more cultural questions the partner asked, the further comprehensibility developed

Variables that had the strongest correlations with comprehensibility development

	Engagement variable	r	Interpretation
1	(Partner's) Asking cultural questions	.68	The more cultural questions the partner asked, the further comprehensibility developed
2	(L2 learner's) Time on task	.67	The more time the learner took the floor, the further comprehensibility developed

Variables that had the strongest correlations with comprehensibility development

	Engagement variable	r	Interpretation
1	(Partner's) Asking cultural questions	.68	The more cultural questions the partner asked, the further comprehensibility developed
2	(L2 learner's) Time on task	.67	The more time the learner took the floor, the further comprehensibility developed
3	(Partner's) Overlaps	.62	The more overlaps the partner used to show engagement, the further comprehensibility developed

Variables that had the strongest correlations with comprehensibility development

	Engagement variable	r	Interpretation
1	(Partner's) Asking cultural questions	.68	The more cultural questions the partner asked, the further comprehensibility developed
2	(L2 learner's) Time on task	.67	The more time the learner took the floor, the further comprehensibility developed
3	(Partner's) Overlaps	.62	The more overlaps the partner used to show engagement, the further comprehensibility developed
4	(L2 learner's) Enjoyment	.50	The more the L2 learner enjoyed the conversation, the further comprehensibility developed

05

Are all positive emotions good and negative emotions bad for L2 learning?

Not necessarily.

Boekaerts & Pekrun, 2015; Chastain, 1975; Ellis, 2012; Kleinmann, 1997; Nakamura, in press; Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun, et al. 2017 Scovel, 1978

Claims in educational psychology

- **Anger** can generate motivation to exert effort to avoid failure (Boekaerts & Pekrun, 2015).
- **Anxiety** could lead to the promotion of extrinsic motivation and rigorous learning strategy use, which could result in a positive learning outcome in a long term (Pekrun, 2006).
- **Relaxed contentment** resulting from success could hinder immediate motivation to reengage with learning (Pekrun, et al. 2017).

Empirical evidence?

Vignettes

about emotions and learning

Nakamura, in press

Learners and teachers

of various nationalities

06

How do we best research emotions?

Ask.

Barrett, 2004

Ample research evidence

Neuroscience & Psychology

Barrett, 2004, 2006; Cacioppo et al., 2000; Mauss & Robinson, 2009; Russell et al., 2003

There is no consistent correspondence between emotions and specific peripheral physiological responses.

“As a result, there is no known objective, external measure of the subjective, internal events that we experience as anger, sadness, fear, and so on. If we want to know whether people feel these emotions, we have to ask them.”

—Barrett (2004, p. 266)

07

What can we do with our students' emotions as teachers?

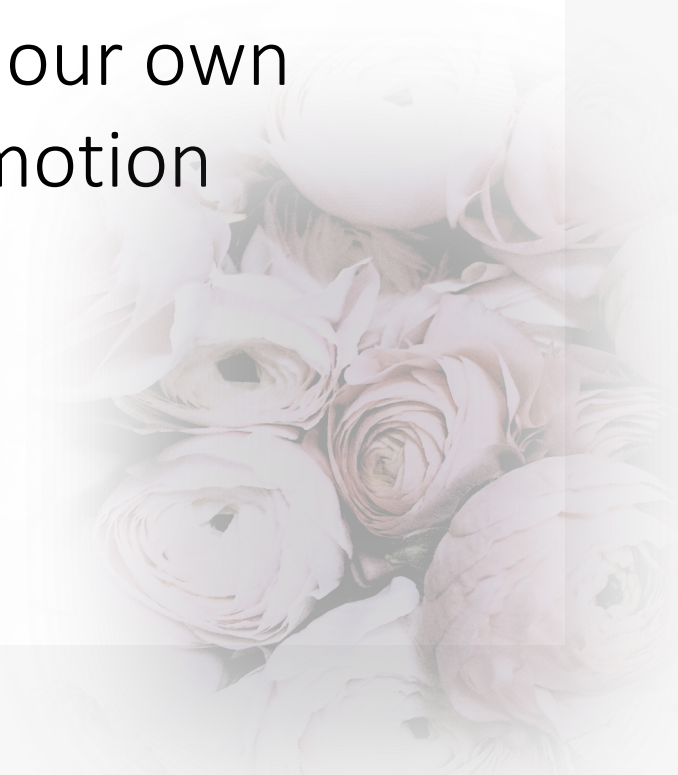
Emotion regulation strategy instruction

Meta on emotion regulation: Aldao et al., 2010; Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017; Webb et al., 2012;

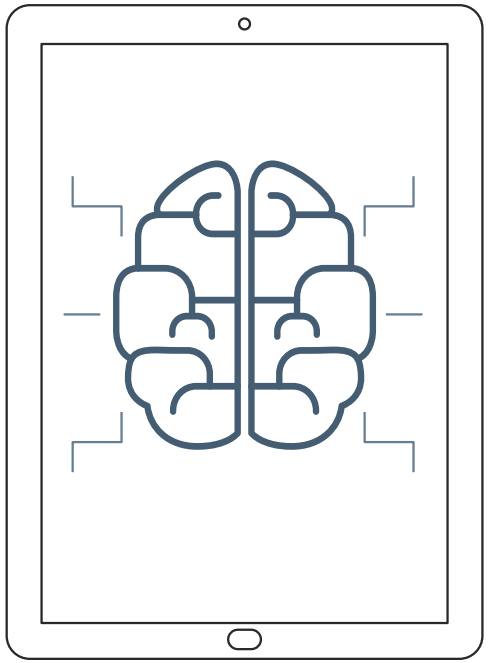
Meta on strategy instruction: Hassan et al., 2005; Plonsky, 2011

Strategy intervention: Bielak, 2018; Kralova et al, 2017; Mostafavi & Vahdany, 2016; Nakamura et al., 2022b

We can up- and down-regulate our own emotions through the use of emotion regulation strategies.



A mini strategy instruction demonstration



Reappraisal

I don’t know the person sitting next to me.

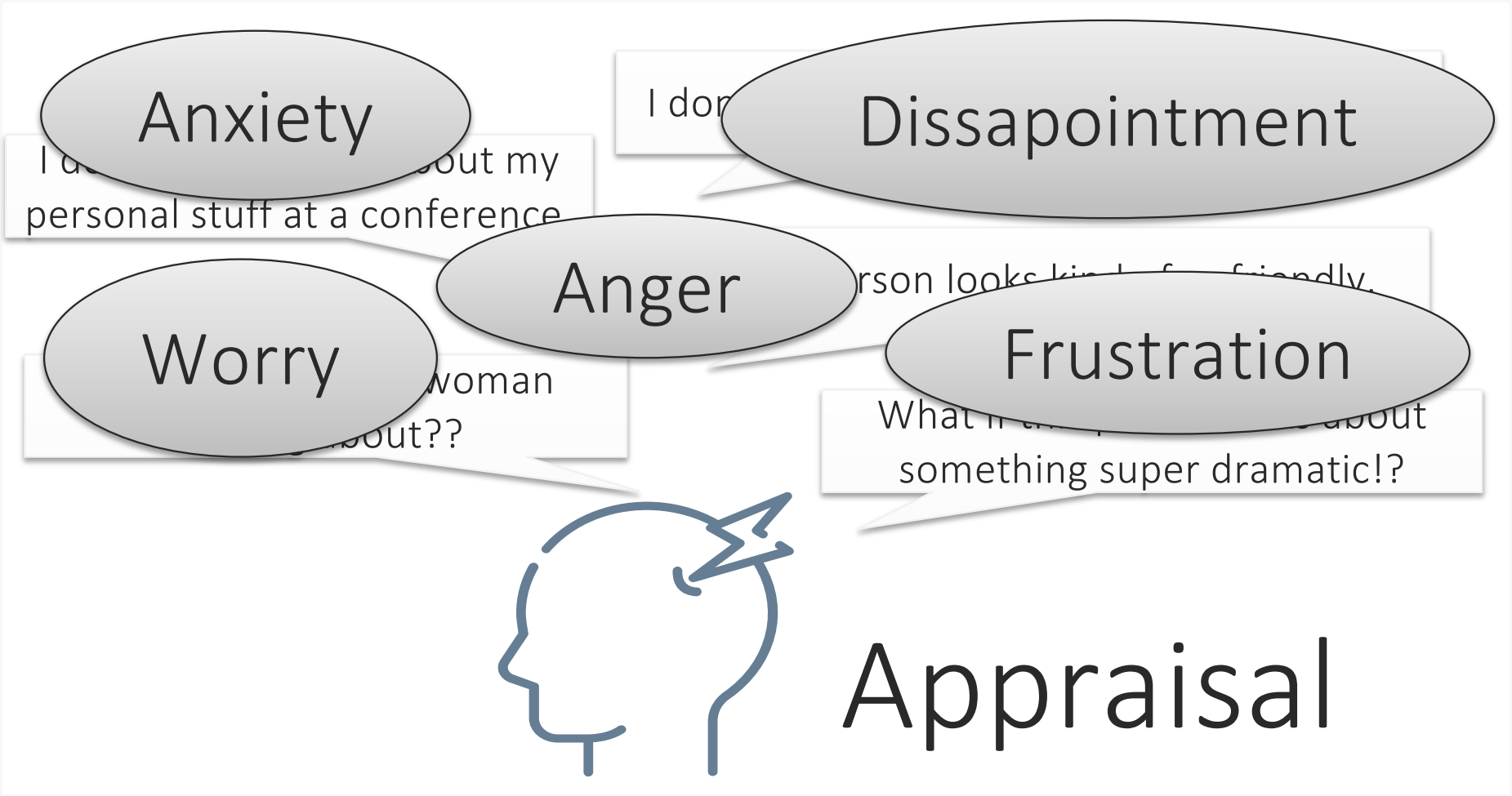
I don’t want to talk about my personal stuff at a conference.

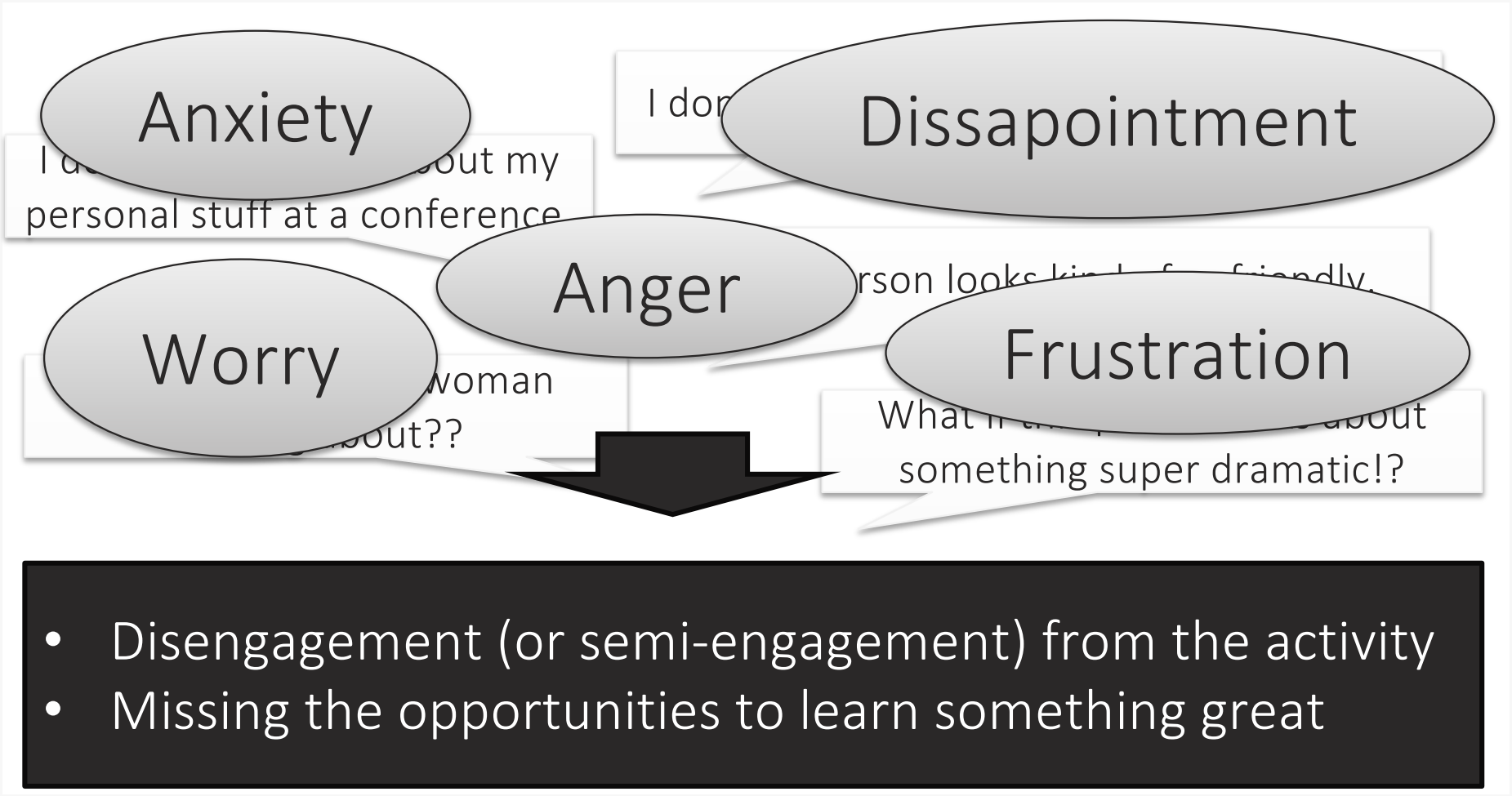
That person looks kind of unfriendly.

What is this crazy woman talking about??

What if this person talks about something super dramatic!?

Appraisal


Anxiety
Dissapointment
Anger
Worry
Frustration
personal stuff at a conference
something super dramatic!?
Appraisal



- Disengagement (or semi-engagement) from the activity
- Missing the opportunities to learn something great

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REappraisal

I don’t want to talk about my personal stuff at a conference, so let me enjoy what others would say ☺

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What is this crazy woman talking about? –something ground-breaking?

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REappraisal

I don't want to talk about my personal stuff at a conference, but let me enjoy what others would say ☺

I don't know the person sitting next to me, so it's a great chance for me to network with other cool people!

That person looks kind of unfriendly.

What is this crazy woman talking about? –something ground-breaking?

What if this person talks about something super dramatic!?

REappraisal

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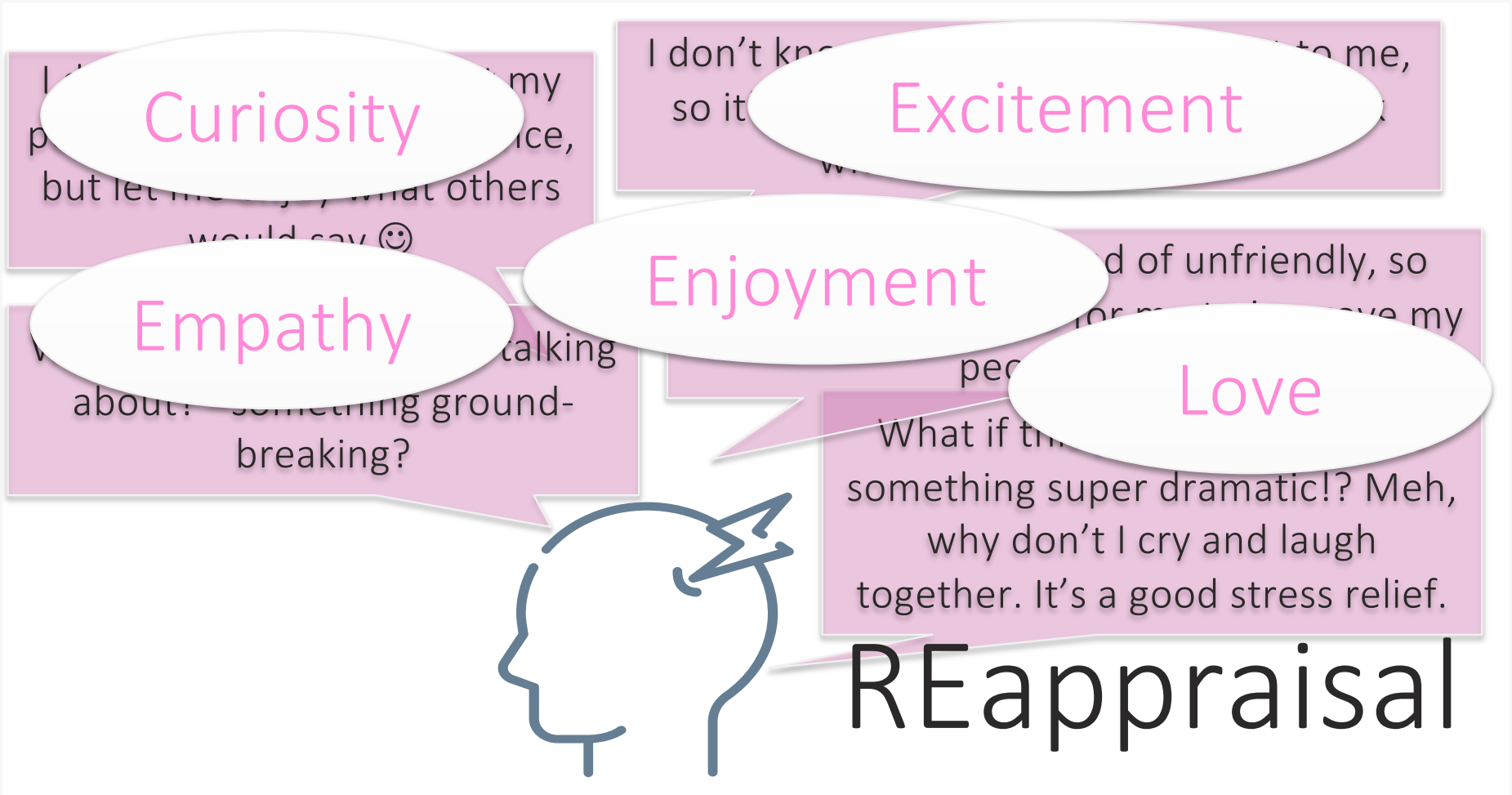
What is this crazy woman talking about? –something ground-breaking?

What if this person talks about something super dramatic!? Meh, why don’t I cry and laugh together. It’s a good stress relief.

REappraisal


Curiosity
Excitement
Enjoyment
Empathy
Love
breaking?
something super dramatic!? Meh, why don't I cry and laugh together. It's a good stress relief.
REappraisal

- Engagement in the activity with positive emotions
- Increased opportunities to learn something great

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Thank you!

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Emotion regulation = learners' capacity to understand their own emotions, use emotions as a source of energy, as well as modify or temper aspects of the emotional experience when they interfere with the pursuit of important goals (Boekaerts, 2011; Boekaerts & Pekrun, 2015)