

PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES

THE EFFICACY OF MOOD TRACKING TOOLS IN ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN ESL REMOTE CLASSROOMS

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Student engagement and participation are crucial factors in successful language acquisition. ESL teachers constantly strive to create positive learning environments that motivate students and encourage active participation. This article investigates the emerging concept of mood tracking tools as a potential strategy to enhance engagement and participation in ESL remote classrooms.

John Hattie, a leading figure in educational research, emphasizes the importance of "visible learning" – where students can see their learning progress. Mood tracking tools offer a form of "visible emotional learning," allowing students to become aware of their emotional state and how it might impact their learning [1, p. 37]. This aligns with Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory, which suggests that students with a positive self-perception and a belief in their ability to learn are more likely to be engaged and persistent in the face of challenges [2, p. 17–18].

Mood tracking could empower students to identify emotional barriers to learning and seek support from the teacher. Potential benefits may include:

- **Increased Self-Awareness:** studies suggest mood tracking can prompt students to reflect on their emotions and how they might influence their learning. This self-awareness can empower them to identify emotional barriers and develop coping mechanisms.

- **Improved Communication:** mood tracking tools can offer students, especially those hesitant to speak up, a non-verbal way to express their feelings to teachers [3, p. 518–562]. This can lead to earlier identification of student struggles and more targeted support.

- **Enhanced Engagement:** some studies suggest a link between positive mood and increased engagement in learning activities [4, p. 16–24]. Mood tracking tools could potentially help teachers tailor lessons to create a more positive and engaging classroom environment.

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– **Teacher Support:** by identifying students who might be feeling anxious, stressed, or disengaged, mood tracking data can inform teachers' instructional practices and provide opportunities for targeted support.

While the research on mood tracking in educational settings is still emerging, the potential benefits for student well-being and communication are promising [5]. By using a real-world example, let's look at the following case study scenario proving the enhanced collaboration in ESL learners.

<i>Teacher</i>	Teaches ESL classes to a group of energetic teenagers
<i>Challenge</i>	Teacher wants to encourage collaboration, communication and speaking skills beyond simple dialogues in the classroom
<i>Solution</i>	Teacher implements a mood meter activity at the beginning and by the end of the lesson activities. Students use the interactive digital Mentimeter tool to anonymously define their mood (on a scale from 1-5 / how do they feel today) and expectations before the lesson starts (what is the expectation before lesson / what do they already know about subject), and to reflect on their learning experience after the lesson (how they feel after the lesson / what did they learn / whether lesson made sense to them / whether lesson was tough / whether they enjoyed the lesson / what they would like to improve further going / whether they still have questions after lesson)
<i>Results</i>	Teachers observes increased engagement of students at the beginning of the lesson, that feel open to share their mood and opinion, as well as set their expectations before the lesson starts. Teacher also observes increased motivation towards lesson engagement and participation. Students reflect on the lesson outcomes and whether it met their expectations, whether they enjoyed the lesson.
<i>Reflection</i>	Teacher finds that mood tracking fosters self-awareness and communication skills. Furthermore, it helps them to reflect on their individual students' goals when it comes to learning English. It also helps to identify the areas of improvement within their study path dynamic. Additionally, it strengthens the teacher towards further digital literacy enhancement within ESL classroom environment.
<i>Future Directions</i>	Teacher plans to explore integrating the mood meter data with peer evaluation forms to provide students with more specific feedback on their educational path. Additionally, to continue with the mood tracker adoption and further-going usage.

This example clearly illustrates how mood tracking tools can be implemented both in remote and face-to-face ESL classrooms to address different challenges and potentially improve student engagement and well-being. It's important to note that mood tracking should be used ethically, with student privacy always as a priority.

Once selecting among the wide range of mood tracking tools and developing within your ESL classroom environment, it is important to consider the following factors once choosing a right one:

- **Class Size:** for larger classes, tools with real-time feedback and visual appeal might be better.

- **Technical Skills:** choose a tool with a user-friendly interface for both you and your students.

- **Language Support:** ensure the tool interface itself supports multiple languages for your ESL learners.

- **Privacy and Security:** prioritize tools with strong privacy features and clear student data handling practices.

By experimenting with different tools and considering student feedback, you can easily find the most suitable option to integrate mood tracking effectively in your ESL remote classroom [6].

To summarize, below are examples of digital mood tracking tools that are suitable for ESL remote classrooms:

1. Mentimeter [7]:

Pros: user-friendly interface / real-time anonymous feedback from students / pre-made templates for mood tracking / integrates well with Zoom and Google Meet.

Cons: may require some initial setup for creating custom mood tracking questions / limited language options for the interface itself (might not be ideal for all ESL learners).

2. Google Forms [8]:

Pros: free and easy to use for creating simple mood tracking forms / integrates seamlessly with Google Classroom / supports multiple languages for the form itself, catering to diverse ESL learners.

Cons: lacks the visual appeal and real-time feedback features of Mentimeter / may require students to switch between platforms if not using Google Classroom / limited data visualization options.

3. Padlet [9]:

Pros: free and versatile online collaboration tool / can be used to create a virtual mood board / allows students to anonymously add their mood for real-time feedback.

Cons: requires some initial setup and explanation for students unfamiliar with Padlet / less structured than dedicated mood tracking tools / may not be ideal for large class sizes due to potential for visual clutter on the board.

Mood tracking tools present a novel approach to fostering a positive learning environment in ESL classrooms. By carefully considering the challenges and implementing them thoughtfully, ESL teachers can explore the potential of mood tracking tools to create a more supportive and engaging learning experience for their students.

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