



**Phenomenon-Based
Learning: Beginning with
the Affective Domain
MODULE 1 LESSON 4
TRANSCRIPT**

SLIDE 1

Hi and welcome to Lesson 4 of Module 1. You've now covered six (6) of the most common triggers that block the limbic system from opening the tollbooth to joyously let information flow into the frontal cortex. (How do you like that for a quick review of the first lesson?!) How are you feeling about the techniques you already have in your back pocket to mitigate anxiety, low self-confidence, stubbornness, and the other three triggers we've explored? Do you feel a change in your learning environment just a wisp away?

If you've already begun trying out these techniques, how are your students responding to them? Have you noticed that inappropriate behaviour is becoming less and less frequent. If you haven't already noticed this, you're going to. Just take a deep breath and believe. You have learned so much more than you are aware of yet, and it's all going to take root and you are going to be amazed at the change in your students engagement and eagerness to participate.

So now we're ready for the last third of the most common triggers that weaken the affective domain, and even more important – strategies you can use to anticipate and vanquish them. Now come one, you knew I was going to get dramatic at some point, right?!

Alright, back to the pleasure of experimenting with techniques that are going to change your lives. First, as always, because it's one of the best practices – let's do a quick review of the last lesson.

SLIDE 2

How can impatience be mitigate by looking at expectations of language learning and the reality of it? If you're saying to yourself 'we always think that language learning is linear, but the truth is that the mind needs to process new information in different ways, so if our students know that in normal circumstances it takes 13,797 hours to learn a home language, they'll be more patient with themselves by the much slower pace of the classroom language', you are a rock star because that's exactly what we sang about in the last lesson.

How can stubbornness disappear by including scaffolds with different learning styles? If you're saying to yourself 'Students can be very stubborn when their learning style is not addressed, so if we include scaffolds that target different learning styles' then you are demonstrating a sharp understanding of scaffolds and the positive effects they can have. And how do class meetings bring clarity to confusion? If you're thinking "Class meetings are ideal for clarifying unexpected changes, letting students be more empowered in their wishes and comfort level" then you have processed he important subject of class meetings really effectively.

And so, now we can move on to the last three. So exciting. Let's see what the triggers are and how to anticipate and diminish them, alright?

SLIDE 3

Have you done the scaffolding activity for this video? It will help you begin processing the information that we're going to talk about, so that you'll be able to go through this lesson even more fluidly.

So if you haven't done it yet – go ahead and stop the video, take 5 minutes to do it, and then come back and you'll see how easy everything will be so much easier!

I'll be right here waiting for you!!

SLIDE 4

Have you been using this technique in your lessons – sharing and co-creating objectives with your students? If you have, you might already see a different attitude in their participation in the lessons. Please let me know in the weekly community meetings. It's one of the best parts of offering these modules – hearing about the positive changes you're experiencing.

SLIDE 5

The objective for this lesson is to look at the last three blocks that may come up for your students when facing new information, and establish tools for fighting these blocks. We're going to look at irritability, apathy and insecurity.

SLIDE 6

By now, you're familiar with the nine triggers that can weaken the Affective Domain. We've explored six of them – and more importantly, - how we can clear blocks away so information enters the brain fluidly. Now we'll look at the last three so that you have ways of solving students' challenges proactively.

SLIDE 7

The next trigger we'll look that can block learning, is IRRITABILITY. What can cause irritability? An infinite amount of causes, obviously, including things that happened before the students entered the classroom. However, some things we can do to pacify them and reduce their irritability even if it happened before they entered the classroom

**'I began teaching as most young teachers do.
I stood in front of the classroom and told people things**

Does this statement sound familiar? Have you ever thought about how you present information?

Do you *talk* to your students or do you have a *conversation* with them?

Do the students only answer *you* or is there a *circular* dynamic? In other words, do they address each other also

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This all has to do with how we see the learning environment, what our experiences were when we were students and the methodology we adopted when we became teachers. We reflect on all this and see if it's working for us and our students and make changes if necessary. It's always the right moment to reflect on what we do, though. Always.

So let's ask a few more questions!

SLIDE 8

What's the difference between teaching and learning?

I've been thinking about this questions for almost as long as I've been a teacher, and that's more than 30 years. I didn't want to stand in front of my students and tell them things. It didn't feel good when I was young and so why did I want to perpetuate the dynamic? For this same reason, I really don't like the term 'teacher' because the connotation is that our job is to tell them what to learn, expect them to learn it, and judge them on whether they can spit back the information the way we expect it.

In other words – this creates a teacher-centred environment. I don't like being told things. I like having the opportunity to process something and decide what part of it I agree with, what part is interesting, what part is necessary, what part I think could be reconsidered. I like to be involved in information, not just swallow it. If I'm like that, a lot of my students are too.

So for me, the difference between teaching and learning is that, when I walk into a classroom, my expectation is not to teach but rather to bring into the classroom materials so that my students learn. I consider the space in the centre of my students' desks the focus (not the front of the classroom), and I work hard to fill that space with information presented through different learning styles.

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Now,, I'm going to get on my soap box just for a minute, because *irritability* in students is so easily turned around just by thinking about how we view students as participants in the classroom.

This is the image we see in movies, in series, in advertisements. This is what we are told is the perfect classroom – students looking at the front of the room – at the teacher – and waiting to be called on. And if they can smile while they're doing it, even better.

However, what's really going on behind the straight backs and the forced smiles are students who are incredibly practiced in looking interested, but in reality, are every year more frustrated about being talked at all day long and having virtually no autonomy

Students who want to participate more than they are allowed, become angry, irritable, and are quickly shut down or act inappropriately.

Where did this begin?

SLIDE 10

Most teachers probably identify the Industrial Revolution as the culprit for this model. It actually started a bit before that.

In the 1800s, the Prussian king decided that he needed more malleable soldiers and more soldiers. His advisors recommended a different way to use all those taxes that demanded. They created schools not just for the wealthy, but for all the citizens. But there was a catch – obviously – the teaching in these schools was unbelievably authoritative. I mean, most of these original teachers were ex-commanders in the army. You don't mess with them!

The hords came to school to learn, but it was very rote learning, virtually only lower-level thinking, and the students needed permission to do anything or they were severely punished. Think about it – the king didn't want graduates who could think for themselves and question his judgement and decisions, he wanted boys who were used to routines, couldn't put concepts together with any alacrity and accuracy, and who were used to obeying authority. And so, yes, this turned out to be perfect for the Industrial Revolution as well, as this model would engender the perfect factory workers for assembly lines.

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Do you think this doesn't happen anymore?
What does your classroom look like?
Your colleagues' down the hall?

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We're going to end this first part of the lesson with these questions:

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Go ahead and answer these questions and think about whether you can tweak...change...adjust a few elements so that your students

- have more agency
- more participation
- are more empowered
- participate more generally

in this way, irritability will diminish and the Affective Domain will become stronger and once you've finished, I'll see you for the second part of this lesson. Two more triggers to examine. Here are the questions again...

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SLIDE 15

What did you discover about yourself and the learning environment you have created in your classroom? What surprised you? What are you motivated to change? What are you most proud of and want to explore to see how you can improve it even more?

Did you decide that your classroom is teacher-centred or student-centred? Now, no one is there to hear your answer, so please be honest with yourself.

If the model you have always used turns out to be teacher-centred, are you considering changing it so that the students have more agency, are more active in the tasks?

Truthfully, truthfully whenever teachers say to me that they are exhausted at the end of the day, I say to them – then you're doing too much work! Your STUDENTS should be exhausted by the end of the day. THEY'RE the ones who need to be doing more work than you!!! You know this content – they are the ones who need to get their minds and bodies wrapped around new information!

If we're going to be real about all this - your work is before you walk into the classroom. Theirs is WHILE they're in the classroom?

(Unless, of course, you're a pre-school teacher – then you don't stop no matter how you plan beforehand! And you are all superheros!!!)

In any case, so much of learning through PhBL projects is letting students gain agency over their learning and the only way that can happen is if you let go of the reins so tightly and give them flexibility and responsibility in their decisions. Otherwise, when they walk out of the classroom, they'll be looking for someone to tell them what to do, instead of walking tall and knowing that they have a pretty good idea of what needs doing and how to do it – or at least they know how to find the answers!

So, let's finish this lesson and explore the two last common triggers that often weaken the Affective Domain. You've got this. This is going to be so much fun!

SLIDE 16

Apathy is another important emotional block in learning. If we want our students to participate really effectively in PhBL projects, we need to be aware that in appropriate behaviour often stems from apathy. And what causes it? Well, it could be a lot of different factors.

What is often involved is our students' reaction to being told what to do all day – in class and probably at home as well. Apathy is an indifference towards what is happening around a student. This is often generated by feeling inconsequential or disrespected or generally invisible.

(CLICK) One way we can anticipate this – is to give them options in the daily schedules. At some points in the day, we can have a treasure chest of cognitively productive activities that our students will find entertaining.

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What's in the treasure chest? Well, activities that they support some aspect of the project your students are working on – something about the linguistic structure or the concept that can support them moving ahead more confidently. In this way, we can justify the time taken by any one of these activities in the chest, but we give our students the choice so that they feel a sense of power in the daily schedule.

And now, I know I'm shamelessly promoting my activities, but they are also very viable and perfect for the treasure chest. (CLICK) A card game that promotes the concept and images of the project or a general theme you think is important. (CLICK) A tabu game that involves a book, (CLICK) for the youngest learners, (CLICK) sequencing images from a popular video character, (CLICK) an interactive gratitude journal, or (CLICK) a series of images they contemplate of a video with a profound underlying message they can watch and discuss.

We can give different students turns to choose these activities, or let groups choose them, and we can even give some students the choice of playing by themselves so that have the opportunity to take a break from group work they need it.

In this way, apathy is vanquished – even for a short time in the worst of cases and for long-term in the best of cases. Our students know that they'll need to complete the projects, but they'll also have some choices at some point in the day. This is a very important message for them that they'll take with them into their lives outside of the classroom – again, a very desirable adjunct of PhBL projects.

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The last most common emotional trigger that can very well be challenging your students from working on projects fluidly, is Insecurity.. You may be thinking - “Why are these students screaming? They don't look insecure?” And yet, their reaction could very well be coming from a place of insecurity. Let's explore the possibility, alright?

As educators, we make thousands of choices a day. We spend hours creating lessons – in this case projects – so that our students can have a innovative learning experience.

However, What I've seen over and over again, is that the BEST intentioned teachers – the very BEST – often find that their lessons quickly turn into chaos because they don't have something so simple in place that it's hard to believe – the norms and consequences of the class.

And when I mention this to them, most of the time they say to me – yes, yes, I have them.

(CLICK) I put up a sign on the first day of class, we went over them, and no one pays attention to them. Alright. Fun fact: Biologically, we have an attention span of about a day $\frac{1}{2}$ - and that's when something was repeated within 8 hours of the first time presenting it. By November, or December – seriously even in October, there's no way we can expect our students to remember what the norms and consequences were (CLICK) even if they are posted on the wall (they're just visual noise by that time) – especially if they had no part in creating them.

And without a really clear understanding of what the norms are – and even more importantly what the consequences are, teachers *react* instead of *act* – not a great dynamic. And so the teacher is also insecure because she doesn't know how to handle different situations fairly and the students are insecure because they don't know how different situations are going to be handled fairly – and they're watching us! Remember in the last lesson when we talked about another trigger – confusion? –this is often because authority treats students differently? Students are watching and are affected by the differences we might dole out consequences!!!

SLIDE 19

The really positive side of this is that there is a solution: learning goes up when students sense that they are in a safe environment – that the teacher has thought about the learning environment he wants and has put the tools in place to make sure that vision become reality. How do we do this?

(CLICK) We grab onto that positive side and make positive norms and consequences – (and we'll go into positive reinforcement more in Lesson 5...and we co-create them. (CLICK) And we ask our students to sign them. And we ask their guardians to sign them. And we repeat them often and we reconsider them if necessary. And we ... and this is the most important... we follow through with both the norms *and* the consequences as unilaterally as possible. Our students are watching!!! And we discuss any inconsistencies at class meetings.

SLIDE 20

In short, we treat them as a sacred part of our learning environment, because they are – they are the backbone of the learning environment. If we don't have these in place and if we don't follow them religiously – yes, I'm getting on my soapbox! – we might as well forget about the projects, because our students need to feel safe, protected, valued, and norms and consequences are at least 50% of this. No exaggeration. Many teachers tell me that what most worries them about project-based learning is that they won't be able to handle students working autonomously. This solves so many of these challenges. You'll find these norms and consequences in the folder for this lesson and the activity is devoted to you exploring your beliefs about them, and then creating your ideal situation through reflection. Have fun with this. You're going to see huge changes.

SLIDE 21

So now we've reviewed the nine most common emotional triggers to learning that may make assimilating new information difficult for your students – and tools for you to dissolve triggers so that you have a strong Affective Domain.

So, go ahead and do the activity and formative assessment for this lesson and see how much you've assimilated and how much of this important information you can pass on. And see you soon for Lesson 5 where we'll explore different ways to embed positive reinforcement in our projects. Can't wait to see you there!