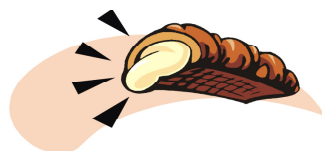


Choco Ninja



Before class: Prepare two pieces of chocolate (or another candy or fruit or something similar) for each student. It is important that they be individually wrapped (the candy, not the students).

In class: Surprise the students by giving everyone two pieces of candy. Tell them to eat one slowly – enjoying every bite. You may want to do this as an “eating meditation.” See the “Eating a blueberry with mindfulness” activity in the “Mindfulness- notice good things when they happen” section of this website. Modify that script.

Have them talk about/ notice that it was nice receiving the surprise. Also, taking the time to really notice the good taste is part of enjoying good things as they happen.

Tell them that the other piece is for someone else – someone not in this class. For example, are there people at school who help them who often don’t get thanked? My students have suggested people like department secretaries, the cleaning staff, bus drivers, etc. Perhaps even someone they don’t know who looks like they could use cheering up.

Alone or in pairs, they walk up to the person they are going to give it to. They ask (in the recipient’s native language), “What time is it?” After the person replies, the students say, “It’s snack time.” They give the person the candy. The person will probably be surprised. The student just smiles and says, “I’m the chocolate ninja.” And disappears (or at least walks off quickly).

Notes: OK, this is a bit strange (essentially I am encouraging my students to be strangers with candy.). I live in Japan which is famously safe. It may not be appropriate everywhere. Still, when I mentioned the activity to some teachers in New Zealand, I was told about the custom of “chocolate fish” which is really quite similar. “Chocolate fish” are fish-shaped marshmallow-filled chocolate candies.

English teacher and singer **Brian Cullen** has written a song “**Random acts of happiness**” that includes a bit about Choco ninja. You can hear it on Youtube.com. Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/cullenRandomActs>

Test days are a great time to bring chocolate, cookies, etc. I sometimes pass out a copy of an article from the Washington Post (<http://tinyurl.com/3de4mp>) that points out that students who have a high calorie diet on test days do better on the tests. Of course, in our case, just doing something nice like passing out cookies helps students relax and puts them in a good mood/frame of mind for the tests.