

Positive self-talk neck massage circles

1. These are things that successful English learners say to themselves (Rost 2005)
Write the sentences on the board.

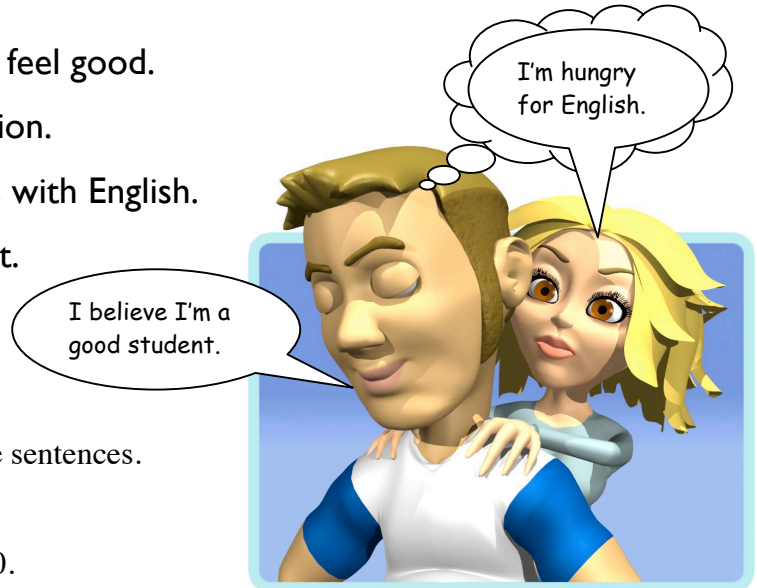
Learning English makes me feel good.

Learning English is my passion.

I believe I will have success with English.

I believe I'm a good student.

I'm hungry for English.



2. Each student chooses one of the sentences.
It can be any one they like.
3. Students work in groups of 8-10.
They stand and make a circle.
4. Students walk slowly in their circle. As they walk, they slowly massage the neck and shoulders of the person in front of them. They repeat the sentence over and over (They say in the 1st person – “I’m” not “You’re”, etc. They are acting as their partners’ innervoice as well as saying positive sentences [to] themselves).
5. After a few minutes, they reverse directions and partners.

Notes: This is a nice tension-release warm-up before something stressful like a test. Of course, it is important that the students are comfortable with physical contact with each other. If you have them choose their own group, this is usually not a problem.

In the presentation referred to, Rost used the sentence, “I’m addicted to English.” I changed it to “hungry” as my own students didn’t understand using “addicted” in a positive way.

Tim Murphey initially introduced me to the “neck massage circle”. I was very skeptical, perhaps especially because I am a male teaching in a women’s university. I didn’t want anything to appear inappropriate. However, I found that when approached with a sense of “we can all enjoy this together”, students love it. If I am going to demonstrate with a student, I always choose someone who I know will be comfortable with me touching her. I also ask if it is OK. There has never been a problem.

Reference: Rost, M. (2005) Generating Student Motivation. Paper presented to meeting of ThaiTESOL, Bangkok Thailand. January 2005.