



MENTAL HEALTH IN THE TEACHING WORLD

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WHAT WE'LL TALK ABOUT

- Mental health definition and statistics
- Young Learner coursebook material research
- B2 level visual content analysis research
- 'Specific language' usage in class
- The Snow Girl



WE'RE BACK IN PERSON!!!!

Finally!!!

A FEW STATISTICS ON TEACHERS

77%

experienced symptoms of poor mental health due to their work

72%

are stressed (rising to 84% for senior leaders)

46%

always go into work when unwell (rising to 54% for senior leaders)

42%

think their organisation's culture has a negative impact on their wellbeing

54%

have considered leaving the sector in the past two years due to pressures on their mental health

STATS CONTINUED...

- 75% of teachers experienced work related behavioural, psychological or physical symptoms.
- The most common were insomnia (56%)
- Depression, anxiety or panic attacks (47%)
- Tearfulness, forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating (40%)
- These statistics are **pre**-Covid Pandemic.

THE STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE

- 2018 survey found **1/5th** of students have a mental health diagnosis, and over **1/3** report psychological distress. (Insight Network, 2018)
- 2018 study showed **1 in 10** primary aged children had mental health problems, rising to **1 in 7** for 11-16 year olds, and **1 in 6** for 17-19 year olds. (NHS Digital, 2018)
- These are pre-Covid details, no large scale study on pandemic.
- By July 2020, estimates that mental health has worsened by 8.1% during the pandemic, but much more for young adults and women. (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2020)

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

- No universal definition.
- It is a person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. Mental health is a dynamic state of internal equilibrium which enables individuals to use their abilities in harmony with universal values of society. (Galderisi et al., 2015)
- The charity Mental Health Foundation state if you're in good mental health, you can:
 - make the most of your potential
 - cope with life
 - play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends. (Mental Health Foundation, 2019)



ONE THING THAT ISN'T CONSIDERED...

- What about the coursebook material we use?
- Does the coursebook material we use in class have an affect on our learners mental health in any way?
- An analysis of the linguistic representation of affect in ELT Coursebook Materials. (Hall, 2020)

AN ISSUE IN ELT MATERIAL...

- Arnold (1999) says affective aspect of ELT completely absent.
- Dewaele (2017) says two of the earliest adjectives people learn in English is happy and sad....then nothing else.
- CEFR says B2 level students expected to be able to convey degrees of emotion.
- ...What about A1, A2 and B1?



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

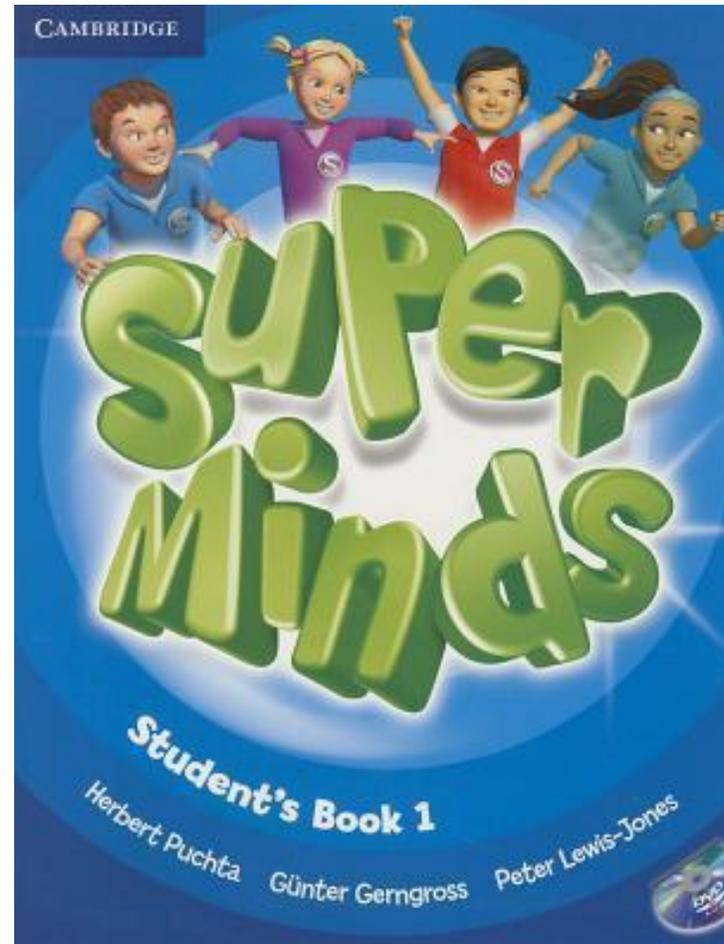
- What is the relationship between emotional vocabulary and the contents of material being taught at a Young Learner level?
- What is the relationship between emotional vocabulary and the proficiency level of English in coursebook material in reference to the CEFR?
- How can the examination of these relationships be useful for English Language Teaching curriculum and material development?

HOW THE VOCABULARY IN BOOKS WAS CHECKED.

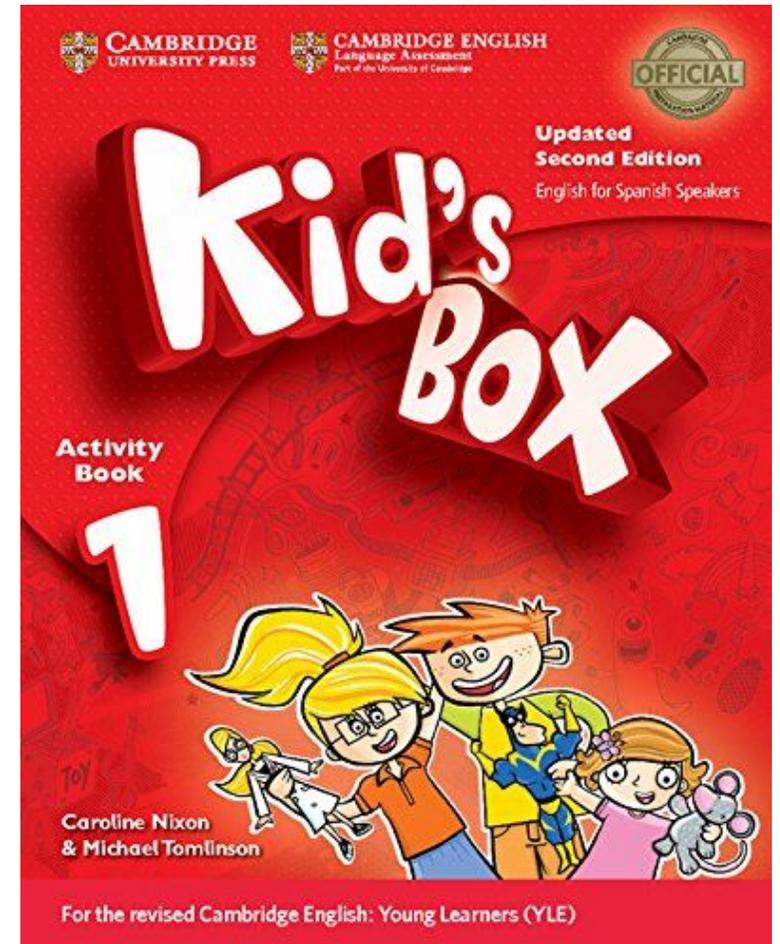
- To check any of the language was emotionally laden, three different sources were used, these were the Dictionary of Emotions (Ryan, 2014), Emotionality in Free Recall paper (Anooshian and Hertel, 1994) which had a list of emotionally laden words, and the Language of Emotions paper (Johnson-Laird and Oatley, 1989) which came with a list of 590 emotionally laden words.
- William James said there is no single coherent outcome by analysis of words referring to emotions (1890) although it is subjective, there can be potential lists developed. An example here would be table means nothing at an emotional level for the vast majority of people, however the word party, while not directly emotive, would have a positive emotive variance.

YOUNG LEARNER BOOKS

For those who have used them, would anyone like to offer an opinion on how these books might make students feel?



Super Minds 1-5



Kids Box 1-5

N-WATCH

- Across all 10 books, very little emotionally laden vocabulary (checked off against an emotional dictionary, and two published word lists)
- The 4th book in each series actually had the highest learner level of emotional vocabulary.
- Overall Super Minds had a much greater range of challenging emotionally laden vocabulary compared to Kids Box.
- Use of 'not' showed much higher level of difficulty compared to using an antonym.

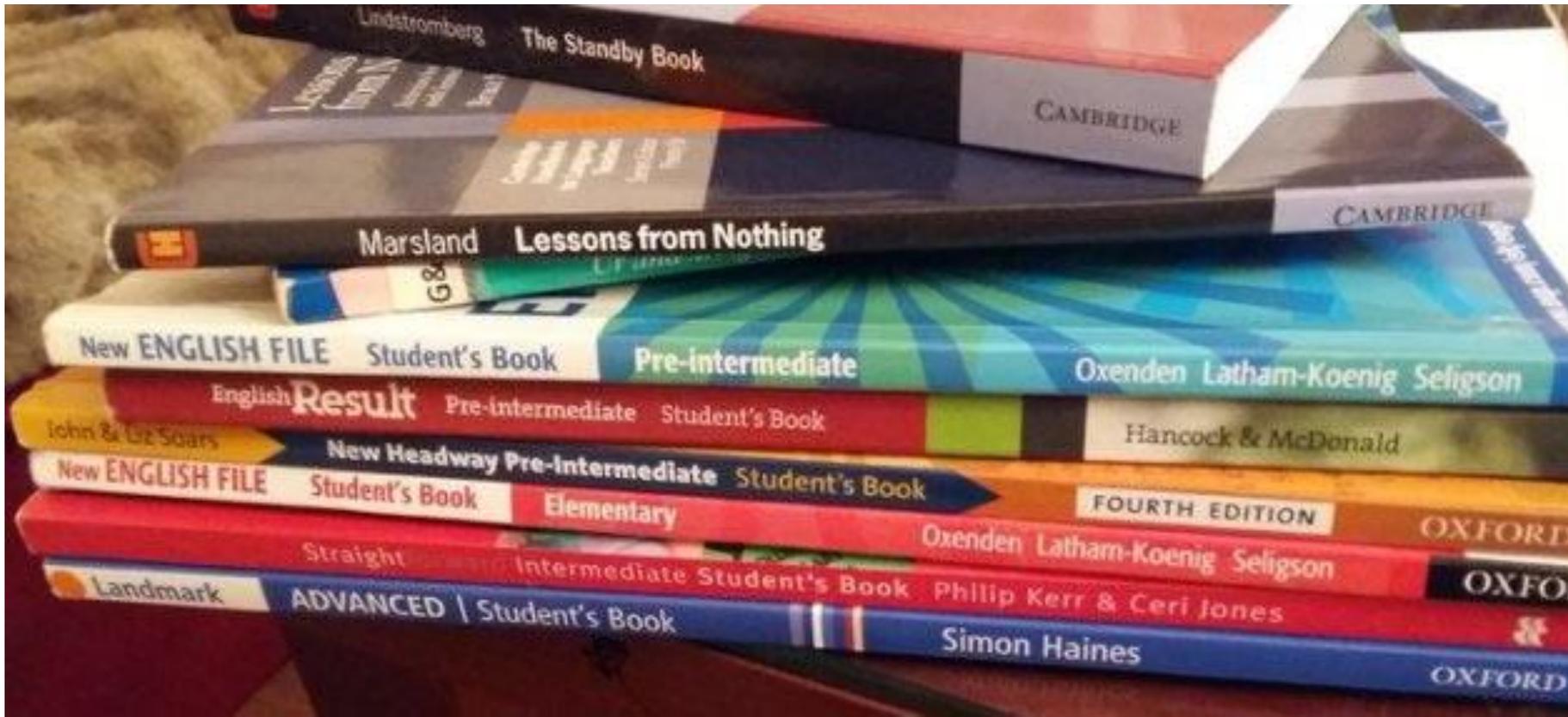
N-Watch
File Edit Analyse Vocab View Macro Window Help

Analysis Options Enter input here: Get stats for selected item Get stats for entire list Vocab: CELEX

| ITEM | CELEX | CELEX_W | CELEX_S | EST_FRQ | FAM | AOA | AOA2 | IMG | IMG2 |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|------|
| problem | 267.32 | 248.61 | 506.15 | -1 | 596 | 367 | -1 | 411 | -1 |
| happy | 135.36 | 135.66 | 131.54 | -1 | 621 | -1 | 258 | 511 | -1 |
| love | 353.07 | 368.67 | 153.85 | 620 | 619 | 303 | 251 | 569 | 503 |
| great | 666.54 | 660.96 | 737.69 | 631 | 588 | -1 | 295 | 390 | -1 |
| best | 345.64 | 350.12 | 288.46 | 587 | 600 | -1 | 241 | 324 | -1 |
| okay | 41.62 | 30.66 | 181.54 | -1 | 555 | -1 | 346 | 269 | 246 |
| excited | 30.50 | 31.69 | 15.38 | -1 | -1 | -1 | 328 | -1 | 507 |
| good | 962.29 | 933.13 | 1334.62 | 659 | 621 | -1 | 185 | 374 | -1 |
| bad | 209.78 | 207.59 | 237.69 | 627 | 592 | -1 | 166 | 388 | -1 |
| impress | 8.77 | 9.28 | 2.31 | -1 | 527 | 466 | -1 | 299 | -1 |
| amaze | 0.84 | 0.90 | 0.00 | -1 | -1 | -1 | 383 | -1 | 492 |
| boring | 22.57 | 21.93 | 30.77 | -1 | 641 | 275 | -1 | 293 | -1 |

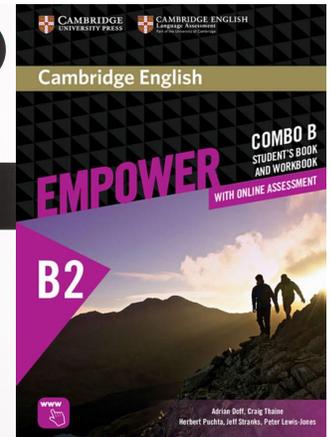
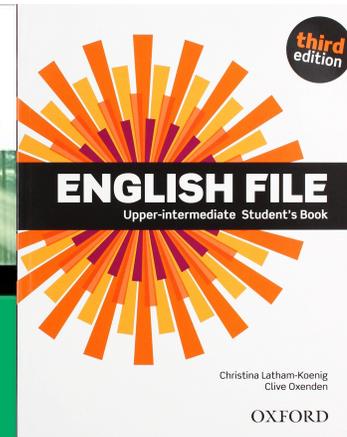
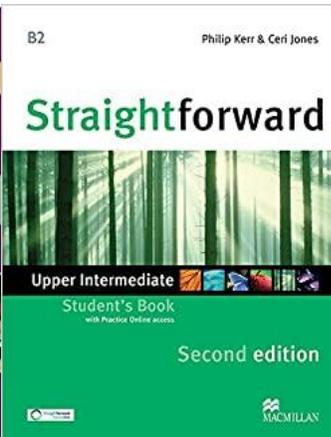
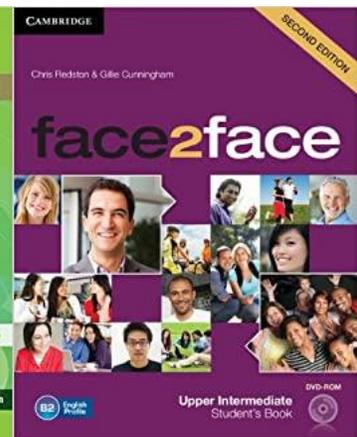
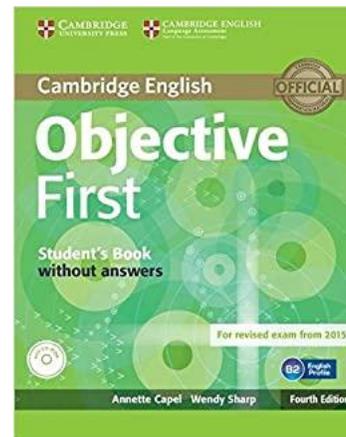
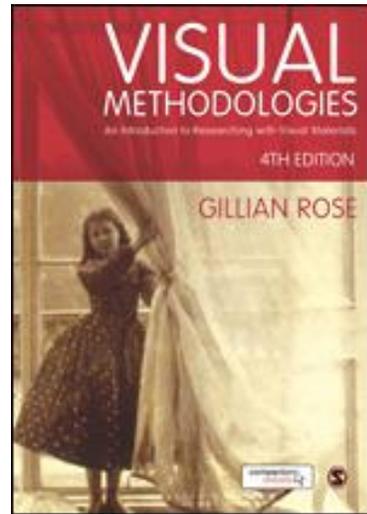
GROUP WORK!

- For the craic... what are the coursebooks we have used in the past (or still use), that you have an opinion on, and why – there is no wrong answer.
- ...Because saying ones we like is too dull.

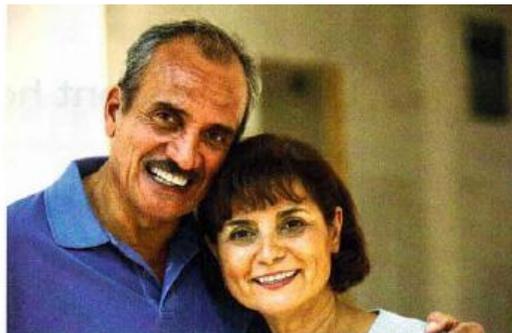


VISUAL CONTENT ANALYSIS

B2 LEVEL BOOKS



CODES



From Face2Face Upper Int.

Image overall +

Text (2 positive terms, 3 negative terms) -

Overall score ~ **Neutral**

Across all books a total of 608 data points.

6 a Read about Guy's parents, Bernie and Ellen. Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Sometimes there is more than one possible answer.

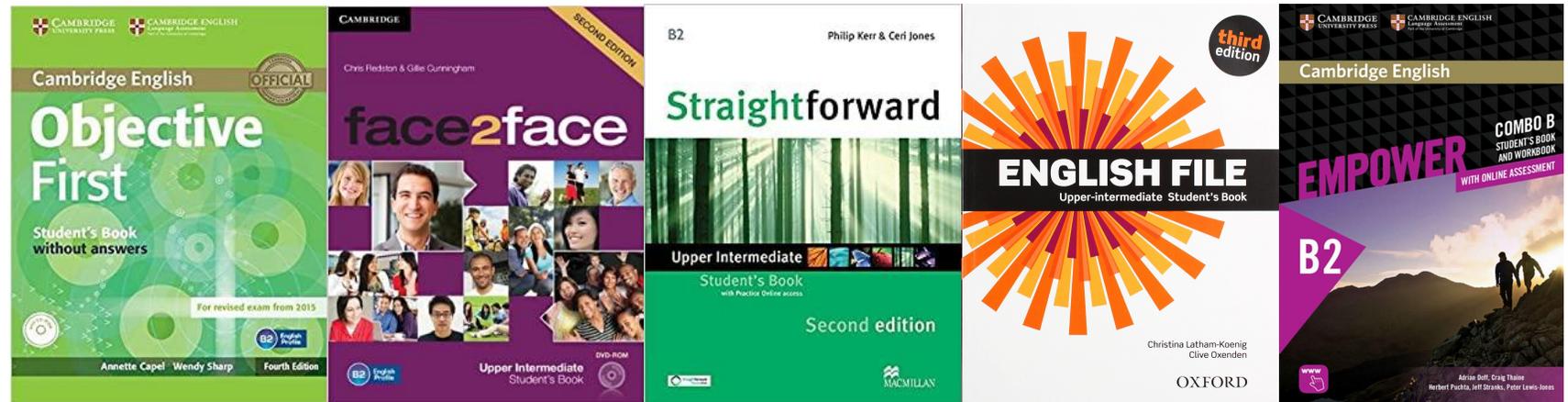
Bernie and I ¹ wanted (want) to buy a place before we ² started (start) a family so **most days** we ³ work (work) 12 hours a day to earn extra money. **More often than not** when we ⁴ got (get) home from work, we ⁵ are (be) so tired that we ⁶ don't have (just have) a sandwich. We ⁷ seldom (seldom watch) TV in the evening and we ⁸ don't go (rarely go) to bed later than 10 p.m. However, **once in a while** Bernie ⁹ takes (take) me to a local café for a treat. Bernie ¹⁰ told (always tell) Guy how hard life ¹¹ was (be) back then, and it's true, but **most of the time** Bernie and I ¹² were (be) happy, though **every now and again** I ¹³ get (get) upset because we ¹⁴ didn't have (didn't have) much money. Then in 1981 we ¹⁵ bought (buy) a small apartment and ten months later we ¹⁶ had (have) Guy. Now that we have more money we ¹⁷ eat (eat) quite often. And **every so often** we ¹⁸ go (go) to a restaurant we ¹⁹ love (love), called Sam's, even though Bernie ²⁰ says (always say) we can't afford it!

b Work in pairs. Compare answers.

| Code | Meaning |
|------|-------------------------|
| ++ | Strong positive valence |
| + | Weak positive valence |
| ~ | Neutral valence |
| - | Weak negative valence |
| -- | Strong negative valence |

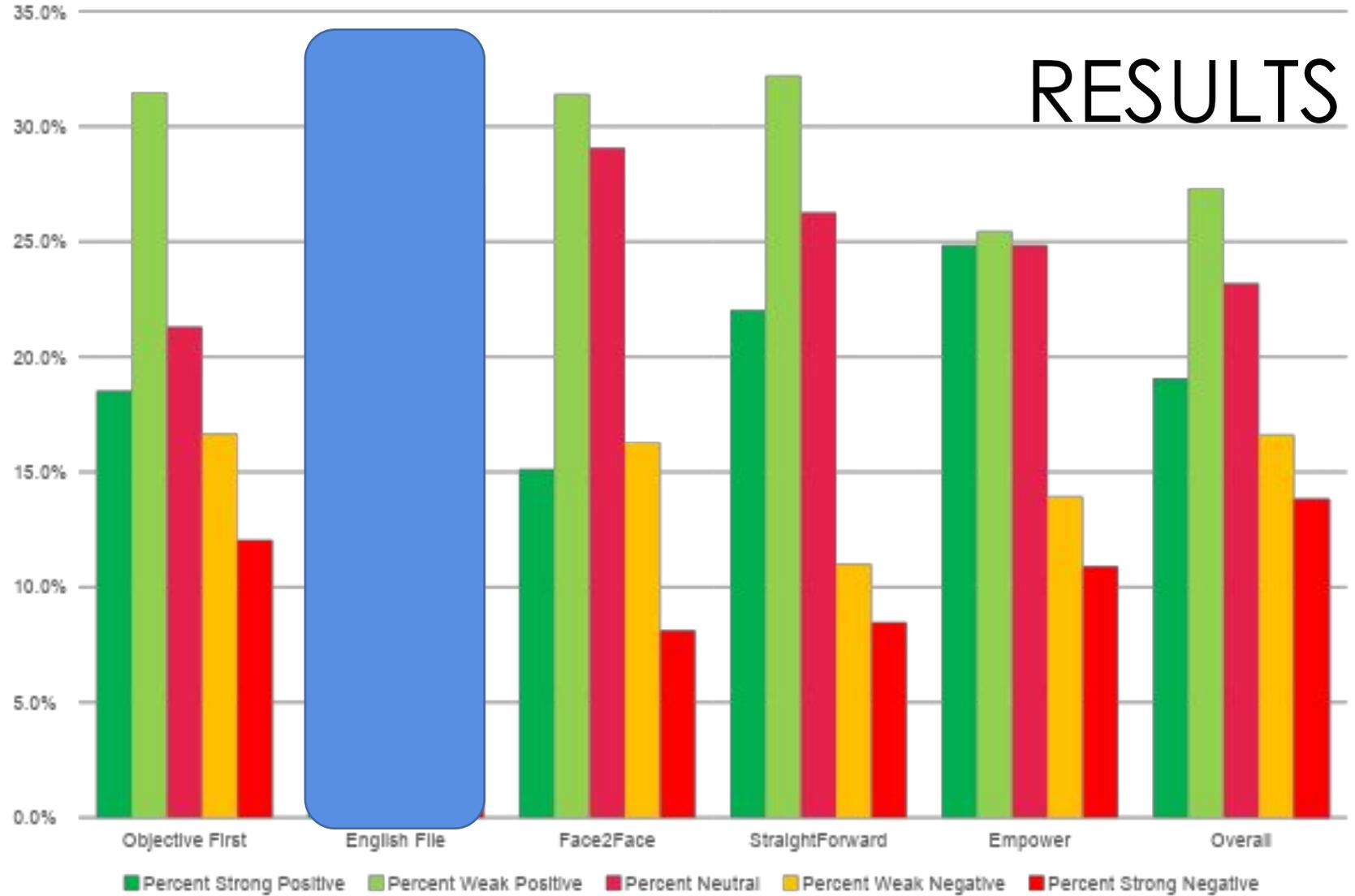
BEFORE I SHOW THE RESULTS...

- This isn't saying one of these books is better than the others, or one is worse than the others, it is looking at the affective representation and therefore is only focused on the affective contents of the book, as per the visual analysis methodology rules set out from the literature.
- Anyone want to make any predictions?



Overall Percentage Valence of Each Book

RESULTS





WHAT THIS MEANS

- Teachers need to bring more awareness into the classroom.
- Directors and Heads need to be more aware of what is in their material and how that may affect students' learning.
- Coursebook material needs to implement emotional material into lower level and younger learner material.

QUESTION. WOULD YOU TEACH THIS READING? WHY / WHY NOT?

Part of his Personality.

A sales executive has taken her ex-boss to an industrial court claiming that his swearing forced her to quit her job. For over six months Martha Johnson, 43, put up with the foul language of Jack Slater, managing director of a transport company, and his deputy, Darren Wiggins. Both men swear continually, the court was told.

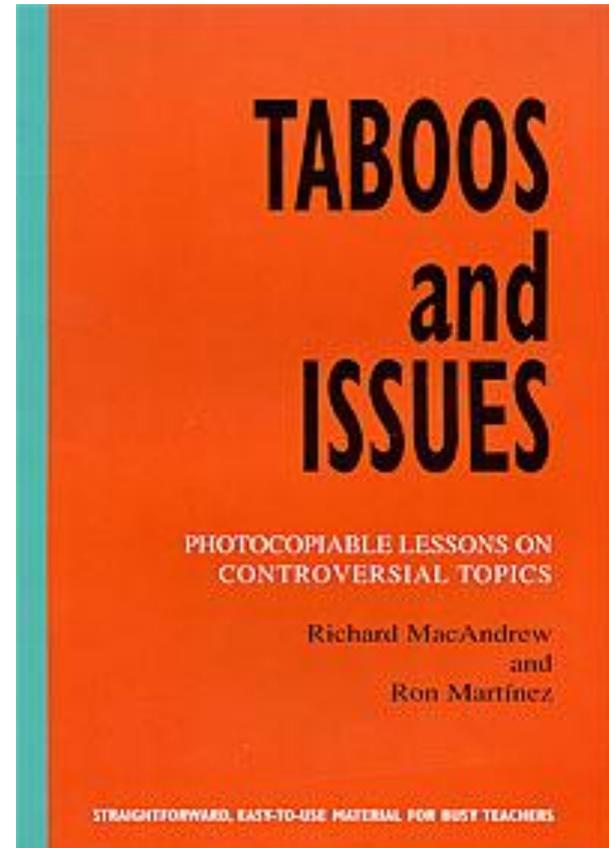
Yesterday Ms Johnson of Worthing, Sussex, who has recently taken up a new job, said, "I had a really wonderful job with the company but I just had to do something about the awful language. At least now I am in a place where people show respect for each other."

Mr. Slater told the court that bad language was part of his personality and also common in the transport business. "I can't stop swearing," he said. "I'm the fucking boss. My workers would all think I was fucking soft if I stopped swearing."

During the hearing the judge had to warn Mr. Slater several times about his language. The case continues tomorrow.

THE SOURCE?

- Taboos and Issues, McAndrew and Martinez, 2001.
- Does knowing it's a book on controversial topics change your answer to if you would teach it?



WHY STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SWEARING

- Can be the first words we pick up in our target language outside the classroom yet don't figure in teaching material, we need to familiarise learners with them through authentic material. (Dewaele, 2004)
- Swearing is also seen as a constructive response to handling pain(Stephens, Atkins and Kingston, 2009)
- Alleviates social distress(Philipp and Lombardo, 2017)
- Sometimes when it happens in class it should be called out. Other times, we should praise it. (Bress, 2008)

SNEGUROCHKA / THE WHITE MAIDEN / THE SNOW GIRL

An older couple who cannot bear children wish to have a daughter, and one night in darkest winter the wish comes true, and they get a daughter made of snow.

She is loved by her family and village and is incredibly popular. However when the spring weather starts, all the children of the village celebrate the coming of the new season by jumping over a bonfire.

To the sadness of her parents, the snow girl wants to take part, knowing that she will melt and disappear, but says to her loving parents, that even though she will disappear now, she will always be there with them. She then jumps over the fire and disappears.

When would you use this in the classroom? What topics / teaching points?

STORYTELLING – THE GREAT LEVELLER

- Acts as a means of mental health support. (Mannell et al., 2018)
- Helps develop resilience (East et al., 2010)
- Successfully used in mental health recovery (Nurser et al., 2018)
- Is seen as the key to empathy (Manney, 2008)
- And it gets young learners excited for reading again (Hall, 2021)

ANXIETY AND SPEECH ISSUES

- In language learning, the term Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) has been coined. It causes high levels of negative attitudes towards the target foreign language, which can interfere with future learning and performance (Dewaele, 2012).
- Especially important in teen years - a raised affective filter develops, increasing self-consciousness, feelings of vulnerability, and a lowered self-image which carries on into adulthood. (Elkind, 1970)
- Extra planning, preparation and rehearsal of the language has had a positive effect with students (Gregersen, Macintyre and Meza, 2014).
- Extra planning time for any form of creative language use, whether it is speech or text form has worked (Hird, 2019).

THE SITUATION

- Two early teen students in a class of strong B1 learners had speech and anxiety issues, and were slightly weaker than the rest, and they knew it.
- Introduced two puppets to the class “for the craic” with the plan of having them as class characters.
- Students would answer questions in silly voices as the characters, ‘becoming the characters’, having fun with wrong answers, speaking in front of the whole class.
- Then the puppets were removed... (Hall, 2022)

Cause I ain't got a pencil

by Joshua T. Dickerson



I woke myself up,
Because we ain't got an alarm clock
Dug in the dirty clothes basket,
Cause ain't nobody washed my uniform
Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark,
Cause the lights ain't on
Even got my baby sister ready,
Cause mama wasn't home
Got us both to school on time,
To eat us a good breakfast
Then when I got to class the teacher fussed at me,
Cause I ain't got a pencil

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THANKS FOR LISTENING

- Questions?

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