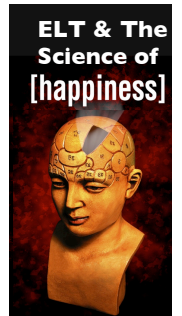


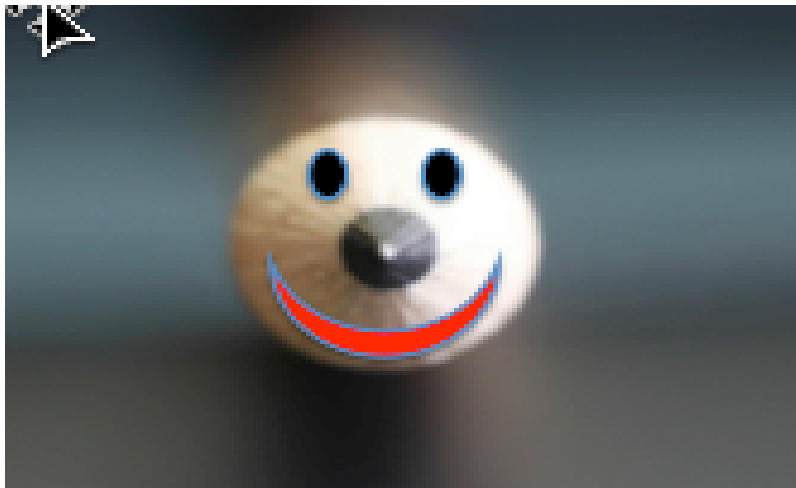
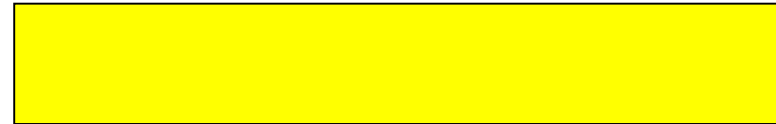
# Smile writing

An experimental\* activity

\*experimental = a little strange



\_\_\_\_\_ (name) is



great!  
wonderful!  
brilliant!  
a super student!  
fantastic!

Put your pencil in your mouth horizontally (-----).  
Write the sentence: "(your name) is (good adjective)."  
Can your partners read what you wrote?

Yes, it is a silly activity. But part of the good feeling is because your mouth is in the shape of a smile. That releases positive chemicals in your brain.

# Lesson plan

1. Write the sentences on the board or up this on an OHP/PPT.

Make sure they know the meaning of the adjectives.

(I present this as just sort of a silly warm-up. Afterward I explain the science behind it.)

2. Demonstrate yourself:

Put a pen or pencil horizontally in your mouth.

Place a piece of paper on a book or notebook. Try to write your name.

After you write your name, add “is + an adjective” (*interesting?*)

3. Have the students try it.

4. Then have them look at partners’ papers to see if they can read them. ‘When they do, of course, they are telling the partner something positive.

4. Most have a pleasant experience. Part of this is just because they are doing something silly.

Dr. Madan Kataria (founder of the Laughter Clubs Movement in India), explains that something else is happening.

The way you are holding the mouth is similar to a wide grin. **The physical position releases endorphins (“Feel good” neurotransmitters)in the brain.**

## Follow-ups

• People often mirror facial expressions they see. If you smile, people smile back. If you frown, people frown back.

Invite the students to try each one at least five times (outside of class, with strangers). What ideas does this give us for establishing positive rapport? (Nivens 2000 cites Lundqvist and Dimberg 1995 on this.

• Do a “laughter circle” (1) chanting “HO HO Ha Ha Ha” about 10 times, (2) then deep breathing, (3) then they just laugh [artificial at first, it evolves into real laughter: *Fake it ‘til you make it.*]. This is from the Kataria book, below. See more ideas in the “Laughter” section of [www.ELTandHappiness.com](http://www.ELTandHappiness.com)

Reference: . Kataria, M. (1999) *Laugh for No Reason*. Mumbai: Madhuri International (http://www.laughteryoga.org/)

Nivens, D. (2000) *The 100 Simple Secrets of Happy People*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Lundqvist, L. and Dimberg, U. (1995) “Facial Expressions are Contagious. “ *Journal of Psychophysiology* 7:186