

Your Creativity, Your IMPACT

The Awe-Inspiring Rainbow Walk

Por Adelina Sánchez Centeno

elevate
education to empower



Adelina Sánchez Centeno

Bio

Is a university teacher, researcher, international speaker, and founder of Elevate Education to Empower®. She holds an MA in Applied Linguistics (UNRC) and a certification in Applied Positive Psychology (TFC-USA). With over two decades of experience, she created the ELEVATE+ Model to bridge the science of human flourishing with real-world ELT practice.



Institution: Elevate Education to Empower



Level: Adaptable from Primary to Adult ELT (A2 to C1)



Students' ages: 6–99+ y/o



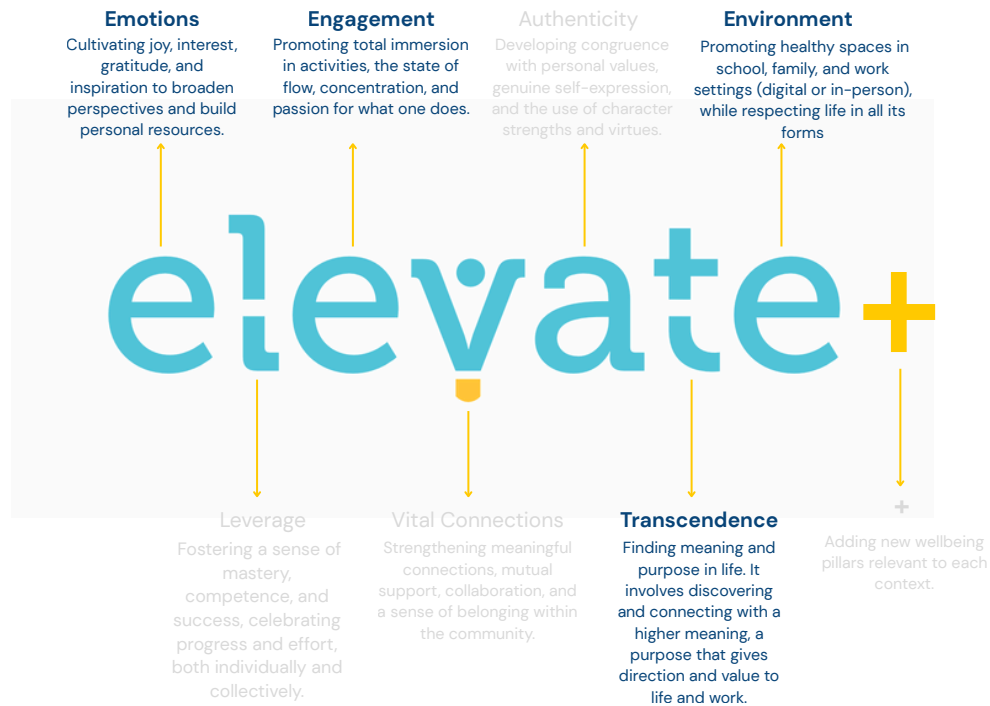
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The ELEVATE+ Activity

Which ELEVATE+ Pillar(s) does this address?



Objective:

- **Cultivate the Positive Emotion of Awe:** Encourage students to slow down, practice mindful observation, and experience wonder through the beauty, vastness, or micro-details of nature in spring.
- **Expand Cognitive & Behavioral Capacity:** Grounded in Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory, the activity aims to expand students' cognitive openness, elevate emotional wellbeing, and broaden their thought-action repertoires.
- **Foster Mindfulness and Connection:** Connect classroom learning to outdoor environments, promoting emotional resilience and personal wellbeing.

Linguistic & Communicative Objectives:

- **Enrich Descriptive Language:** Develop and apply nuanced, sensory vocabulary (e.g., *vibrant, intricate, delicate, luminous, subtle, radiant*) beyond basic color names.
- **Promote Expressive Output:** Guide students in synthesizing their experiences through creative writing, such as a 3-line Nature Haiku.
- **Encourage Authentic Communication:** Provide a safe, supportive setting for students to share their personal moments of awe and emotional responses in English without immediate fear of error correction.

The Science of Awe (For the Teacher):

Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory: Explain to your students that positive emotions—such as joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love—don't just feel good; they serve a vital evolutionary purpose: they broaden our minds and build resources.

Unlike negative emotions that narrow our focus (survival mode), positivity opens us up to new ideas, makes us more resilient, and connects us with others. This creates an upward spiral: a positive emotion leads to a constructive action, which in turn generates more positive emotions.



STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Contextualization

Spring is the season of renewal, vibrant colors, and natural growth—the perfect backdrop to cultivate Awe in your ELT classroom. Grounded in Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory, awe expands cognitive openness, enhances creative vocabulary, and broadens students' thought-action repertoires.

Warming Up

1. Multi-Sensory Priming (Before the Video)

- **The "Notice the Unnoticed" Warm-Up:** Before hitting play, ask students to look around the room or out a window for 15 seconds to spot one tiny detail they usually ignore (e.g., light hitting a leaf, a tiny reflection). This pre-frames their attention to look for micro-details during the video.
- **Somatic Connection:** Explicitly frame vocalizations (the "oohs," "aahs," and sighs) as emotional and physiological releases.
- **Prompt:** *"Awe isn't just a thought; it's a feeling in your body. When you see something breathtaking, let your voice respond automatically."*

The "Awe Sound Scale": Introduce a quick visual or sound guide before watching:

😮 "Oooh" = Awe and Curiosity

😮 "Woaaah" = Wonder

😮 Exhale or Sigh = Relief and Peace

Physical Posture Shift: Invite students to adopt an "open posture" (uncross arms, lean back slightly) while watching, as expansive physical postures mirror and reinforce cognitive broadening.

Now that the atmosphere is set, show this awe-inspiring video

Video: [The Beauty of Earth](#)



Descripción paso a paso:

Scaffolded Post-Video Micro-Discussion (Bridge to the Walk)

- **Word Bank Integration:** Right after the video ends, record their immediate reactions on the board to build a shared "Awe Word Bank" for the walk.
- **Target Prompts:**
 - *What specific moment made you want to sigh or say 'woah'?*
 - *How did your chest or mind feel when you saw that scene?*
- **Set the Walk Intent:** Connect the video back to the seasonal theme: *"We saw the vast beauty of Earth on screen. Now, we are stepping outside into Spring to find that same wonder in the tiny details right under our feet."*

1. **Preparation:** Take students outside equipped with the Awe-Inspiring Rainbow Checklist (find it here). Challenge them to find natural items matching every color of the rainbow, focusing not just on looking, but on noticing micro-details (e.g., textures, patterns, shades). If they are adult students and have a phone, they can take a picture.

2. **Provide expressive descriptors:** vibrant, delicate, intricate, vast, breathtaking, subtle, luminous.

3. **Pair students up outdoors to share their "Awe Find."** Create a safe, supportive space for them to express feelings of peace, curiosity, or wonder in English without fear of error.

[Download the Worksheet](#)

Part 2: Creative Language Output

Back in the classroom, students select one item/moment from their walk and create:

- A 3-line Haiku 

Line 1 (What you see): _____

Line 2 (How it feels): _____

Line 3 (Your emotion): _____

The Elevate Challenge: Real-World Connection

Facilitate a quick reflection:

How did stepping outside and noticing details change your energy or focus today?" Connect nature observation to daily wellbeing. Encourage students to do an "Awe Minute" at home during the week—stepping outside, finding one item of natural wonder, and writing down 3 descriptive words in English.

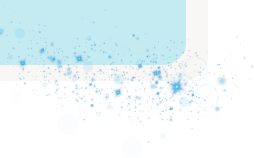
Impact and Reflection: The Voice of Experience

Impact on Students:

When students step outside into nature, their posture shifts and their stress levels drop. Implementing this activity was awesome; my students felt calm and inspired. When they came back to the classroom, they were eager to express their awe in English. The natural setting provided an authentic, awe-inspiring environment where students could use the descriptive language we had presented—such as 'vibrant,' 'delicate,' and 'breathtaking'—to articulate their discoveries. It moved them from passive language learners to active, curious observers of their world.

Teacher Reflection: Teacher's Tip for Elevating Classroom Wellbeing

Grounding this lesson in Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory proved to me that positive emotions aren't just 'nice to have'—they are essential cognitive catalysts. Watching students gasp in wonder at a tiny leaf pattern or smile while sharing their discoveries reminded me why I teach. Cultivating awe in the classroom elevated not only my students' engagement and language output, but also my own energy and passion as an educator. "Positive emotions like awe don't just feel good in the moment; they broaden our students' openness to learn and build lasting psychological and linguistic resources." — **Adelina Sánchez Centeno**





Advice for Colleagues (Implementation Tips)

Pre-Walk Vocal Priming: Do not skip the warm-up video! Allow students to express awe vocally (with sighs, "ooohs," and "wooooows") during the warm-up stage. This normalizes emotional expression and physically relaxes them before writing.

Focus on 'Micro-Awe': Remind students that awe doesn't require a grand mountain view; it can be found in tiny things like a hard-working ant or an intricate leaf pattern.

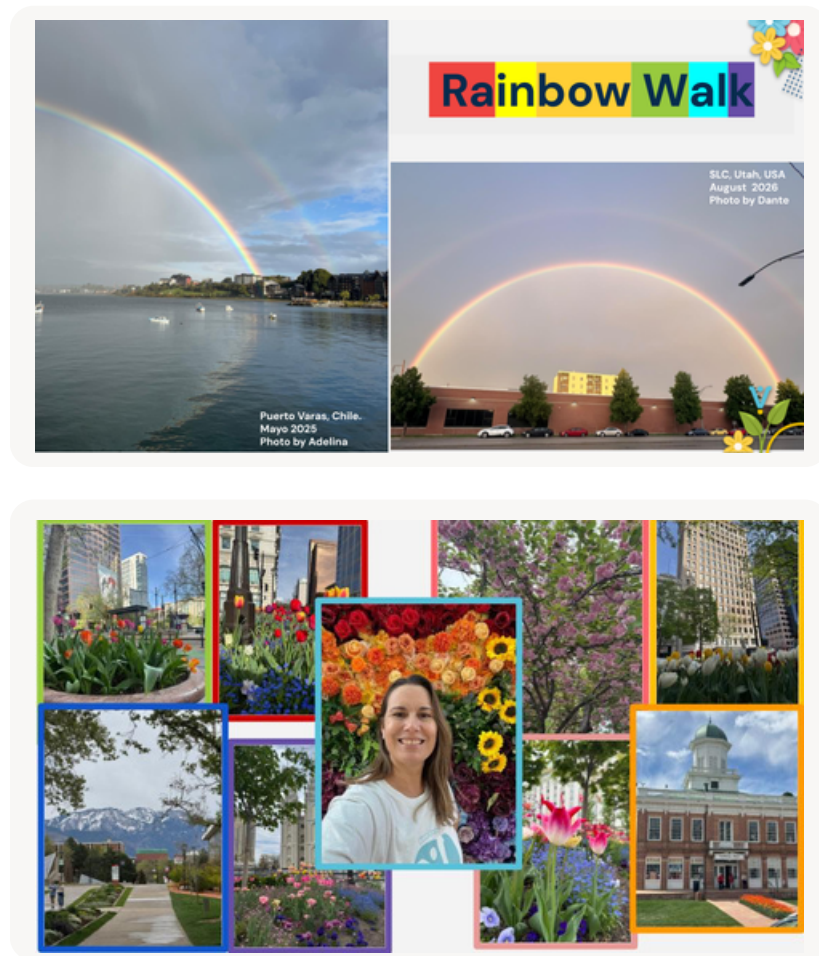
Manage the Sensory Transition: Before leaving the classroom, establish clear behavioral boundaries (e.g., "We are walking silently for the first 3 minutes to tune in our senses").

Error Treatment: During the outdoor walk and pairing stage, validate and prioritize fluency, emotional expression, and sensory connection over immediate grammar correction. Save language feedback for the post-walk writing phase.

For Teens & Adult Learners:

Barefoot Grounding (Earthing Walk): Where safe (such as a clean lawn or park area), invite adult students to remove their shoes and walk barefoot for 2–3 minutes. This grounds their focus, deepens sensory awareness, and relaxes the nervous system before writing.

Macro-Photography (Digital Awe): Allow adult/teen learners to use their smartphones to take close-up macro photographs of their discoveries. They can present their photos to a partner or post them on a shared digital board (e.g., Padlet) with an expressive caption or their Haiku.



References

- Fredrickson, B. L. (1998). What good are positive emotions? *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3), 300–319
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- Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition and Emotion*, 17(2), 297–316.
- Sánchez Centeno, A. (2026). Elevate Education to Empower®: The ELEVATE+ Model for Wellbeing and Flourishing in ELT. Conference presentation at ARTESOL 2026

Call for Submissions!

Do you have an activity that brings the **ELEVATE+** pillars to life? Whether it's a 5-minute check-in or a full-hour project, we want to see it!

Submit your activity [here](#)

let's elevate education together!



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