



ACTIVITY: 'EASTER ISLANDER'

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: For pairs
SPACE: Room for pairs to stand opposite each other
RESOURCES: Nil

The aim is to quickly expose students to a situation where they must regulate their emotions.

The result should be class discussion about the importance of thinking strategies and emotion regulation to a strong Sense of Control.

1. Break the class into pairs.
2. Have partners stand back-to-back. On your count of three, they are to turn and face each other. When they do, they must look their partner square in the eyes and remain stone-faced, solemn, and silent as the heads on Easter Island.
3. Whichever partner breaks into a smile or laughs loses the round.
4. Winner is the best out of three or five rounds – up to you.
5. An alternative approach is to break the class into small groups and have a starting pair. The winner of the round then faces another member of the group, and that winner faces another member, and so on. You can then have overall group winners face one another – ousted smilers and laughers can provide good-natured heckling to help break any stalemates.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- How easy or difficult was it to keep a straight face? Did your reaction seem voluntary or involuntary? Why do you think that was?
- What thinking strategies did successful 'stone facers' use?
- Brainstorm and list some potentially stress-inducing, real-life situations – both positive and challenging – and likely impulsive reactions to them. Then list whether those reactions were helpful/constructive or not. If not, what alternative responses might have served better? What **thoughts** might lead to those more positive outcomes?
- Brainstorm some common/everyday situations where you may need to regulate your emotions and take time to think clearly before you react (e.g. the bus is late; or someone pushes into a queue ahead of you). What might occur if you don't regulate your emotions?
- Consider re-doing the activity with this new knowledge – and some new thinking strategies – in hand.