

The Essence of Interactive Methods

International Training of Trainers

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Training Educators for Non-Formal Education

Learning model based on group work and interactive methods

Experiencing - participants are involved in some kind of activity and the experience gained out of it is essential for the whole process.

Announcing – the participant shares or expresses his/her reactions and observations in front of the rest of other participant who have experienced or observed the same type of activity.

Learning model based on group work and interactive methods

group process – all dynamic actions which occur during the activity are studied, discussed and evaluated by all participants.

summarizing – it helps participants to define, change or develop the things they have learnt as a result of participation and discussion of a problem situation.

application – planning how to apply the things learnt from the activities and the gained experience.

Six levels of Knowledge

Realization – to recollect, admit and realize the existence of a certain process or problem;

Understanding – to transfer the information received from one to another form of knowledge;

Application – to apply and use the information in a new situation;

Analysis – to explore the situation by dividing it into constituent parts;

Synthesis – arranging the information in a new way

Evaluation – to make an evaluation based on explicit criteria

Main psycholo-pedagogic tasks in a certain problem situation are:

Self-awareness of the person who is being educated;

Becoming aware of the wholeness of the one's socio-psychological nature; the emotional knowledge of group-dynamic occurrences in the situation;

Correction and forming of socio-psychological skills and habits; using the problem situation as a source for learning how to communicate.

In this learning model the participants:

Encounter problems occurring in an actual situation in which they take part with the leader;

Undertake various actions in order to solve the problems through experimenting, searching, guesses, inventing;

Giving mutual feedback about the consequences of concrete types of behavior and attitude which allows them to evaluate the way they behave and the reactions from the others;

In this learning model the participants:

Together with the leader they try to summarize the things they have gone through and the gained experience, formulate hypotheses, check by concrete actions in the group and this way move forward and face new social challenges and explore and solve new problems;

Main source of motivation and energy

for learning in the group are the occurring problems as well as the intensive experience among the participants in the group and the intensive relations between them and the leader or other educational and public actors.

Traditional learning model and studying based on experience

Elements

learning unit
learning focus
character of the
involvement of the
learning person
participant's role
leader's role

leader's
responsibilities

Traditional learning

an individual person
content
cognitive

passive
listening remembering
teacher (lecturer)
presenting / assessing
to provide one-sided
communication through
lectures

Learning based on experience

a group and an individual person
content and process
cognitive and affective

active interaction
involvement participation
source of resources
facilitator / coach
to create conditions for
sharing of learning

Traditional learning model and studying based on experience

learning climate	formal with bans stressing on status	informal, stimulating relaxing, diminishing status differences
main problem of the leader	to ask the class better questions	to find a way to stimulate the members to think and ask deeper questions in order to get closer to the answers
responsibility for the results	if the student has not learned, the teacher has not taught	participants are responsible for their own studying and behavior
which needs are satisfied above all	of the person presenting the information	of the participant
a chance to transfer the things learned	usually small and uncertain	middle or high for most of the participants

Experiential Learning objectives

Affective: creating a chance for change in feelings, attitudes, values as a result of an intensive situation or learning event (experience);

Emphatic: learning about how people feel in the place of somebody else;

Development of **cognitive skills** at a high level: the ability for analysis, evaluation and synthesis; the constant feedback towards the learner guarantees that the skill will be effective in real world.

Experiential Learning objectives

Interactive: learning cannot be on a cognitive level when interactive skills are mastered, e.g. interviewing, listening, advising. Through a special structuring done by the leader, participants can experience and accept interaction from the point of view of the both sides – listening-speaking, teacher – student, parent-child, executive-subordinate;

Experiential Learning

It characterizes with the following steps:

Go through – participants take part in one or several structured experiences;

Share – participants share their perceptions, feelings and reactions;

Discuss – participants discuss models and dynamics of the experience;

Summarize – on the basis of experience participants summarize principle valid in the real world;

Apply – participants plan more effective behavior in real life situations at school, family, community.

For example, the exploration of feedback goes through the following activities:

Interactive training programs – Principles of Development

Involvement – participants should be involved all the time;

Consistency – learning should be based on previous activities;

Content – learning should be connected with the activities of the group;

Processing of experience – it is important not to ‘produce’ more facts than the participants can actually process;

Speed and rhythm – we should look for suitable speed and rhythm for group work, appropriate for the participants’ needs and the dynamics of group development;

Voluntary participation – experience requires self-revelation and sharing. In school conditions this means voluntary participation in the activities as well as in the process of sharing;

Interactive training programs – Principles of development

Data – group work always provides enough data, things happen all the time and there is always a considerable amount of things which are not fully expressed. For this reason it is not necessary to offer new activities and experiences, but to concentrate and help participants to work better on things which have already happened.

Flexibility – despite the steps mentioned when processing experience, studying in this context requires flexibility, taking circumstances into consideration and even a change of the conditions if necessary.

Learning organization

Learning is integrated into everything people do

Learning is as process, not an event

Co-operation is the foundation of all relationships

Individual themselves evolve and grow

The learning organization is creative

**The organization learns from itself; the learners
teach the organisation as well**

**It is enjoyable and exciting to be a part
of learning organisation**

Things we must do when processing experience:

- **To know exactly what we are going to work on, what our aims are with certain activity, to develop a “map” of the exercise procedure;**
- **To learn well the character of the offered activity so that we can present it to the group with clear instructions, to allay misgivings occurring and in the work process to make changes only with the group’s consent;**
- **To assign clearly the roles among participants so that there is effective processing of experience – participants, observers, presenters of the small group’s activity;**

Things we must do when processing experience:

- **To prepare an emergency plan, which means to have experience with the activity offered, to be familiar with possible difficulties when performing it as well as possible misgivings and questions of the participants;**
- **To support participants' active participation – to express freely our feelings and emotions; if they have played a role to give them enough time to get out of it; to express their impressions before drawing conclusions; to be able to form hypotheses about the things which have happened.**

Things we must do when processing experience:

- **While working to give the participants a chance to share their concern, and building up pressure which also means to provide enough time for certain activities.**
- **As activities have special purposes we should stress on their practical results. For the participants each activity is a road to themselves and to the world.**
- **Before offering certain activity we should have a clear idea about our role in its accomplishment, how involved we are going to be in the work of the group.**

We should not

- **Leave participants to plan activities if they do not have enough experience,**
- **To present too many details in certain activity – they only confuse participants and do not help for a high-grade performance and a learning effect;**
- **Offer more activities and exercises than the participants are able to absorb;**

We should not

- **Be at a big distance from the group;**
- **Use too often the same activities and exercises;**
- **Include activities we do not like for some reason or we do not find very useful;**
- **Deprive participants of enough time for discussion.**

“Icebreakers”

With them we initiate activities, demonstrate what they are going to be like, appoint those who are going to be responsible for the things happening, direct them towards the connection with future topics.

“Icebreakers”

For introducing participants and giving them the chance to get to know each other.

For breaking the ice; for stirring with quick results, unexpected information and self-revelation; for seeing familiar people in a new light for trust, creating a positive atmosphere and building a team.

“Icebreakers”

Set the model of cooperation in an informal atmosphere;

They motivate participants to work on the topic not only by the positive atmosphere but also by the directing towards some issues connected with future problems.

Group Rules

- * **Listening to each other**
- * **Mutual respect**
- **Everybody's ideas are important (everybody is important)**
- * **Not to talk at the same time**
- * **Everybody works actively**
- * **Ask for help when having problems**
- * **Work as a group**
- * **Help each other**

The Group Works

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Henry Ford

Principles of Effective Group work

The group can work successfully
if every member wants to work;

Find time to **discuss main approaches and ideas,**
to evaluate the work and to give **feedback to the group;**

Everybody in the group **bears responsibility for**
the things that happen;

We act on the basis of **common principles and values;**

Principles of Effective Group work

I accept myself and the others;

I am responsible for my actions and behavior;

I believe in my abilities and support everybody's actions;

I respect personal dignity and space;

I am ready to take a risk, do something new, take a challenge;

Principles of Effective Group work

Take mistakes as a chance for learning;

Today's problems are tomorrow's solutions;

Thinking is **directed at the processes within the group:**

Aims are important but the process is also important.

The group develops by exploring its procedures and practices

I suggest procedures for analyzing of situations and problem-solving;

Principles of Effective group work

I take **emotions as part of the work process**;

I look for balance between **effectiveness and quality of interactions** – the group will be successful and discussions will be useful if they are focused, involve the participant and develop civil competence;

I am proud of the group achievements;

Group work **is also for fun**, if it is not something is wrong.

Exercises could be

Simple or many-sided;

Short or long, lasting from several minutes to several hours

Connected with the civic education topic or not;

Directed at studying something concrete (exercise for listening to each other) or with a broader learning results;

Suggesting or excluding physical activity;

Exercises could be

With or without observers;

Led by a trainer or by the group itself or by a combination between a trainer and a group;

Directed at the individual participant or towards the group;

Relying only on participation of members of the group or involving outer contribution (experts, leaders, lecturers)

Prepared by the leader or just chosen from the leaders repertoire;

Exercises – Questions to be answered

Why do I want to use exactly this exercise?

Is it the best way to achieve the desired result from studying at this stage of group development?

Is it realistic or too theoretical?

Are the offered procedures clear to the participants?

Exercises – Questions to be answered

What is my role as a leader in the exercise and is it clear to everybody?

Are the time limits I have set realistic?

Are we going to use observers and what exactly is their role going to be?

When the exercise is over how will I understand that the participants have learned what I wanted?

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a method which gives the possibility to generate a big number of ideas for a short period of time in order to solve a problem.

The main idea behind brainstorming is to separate the moment of suggesting and creating ideas from the moment of their evaluation.

Brainstorming Rules

We do not comment and criticize suggestions made by the others;

The important thing is the quality, not the quantity of the suggestions;

We try to use and further develop the suggestions of others

All suggestions are written down in the way they were made

We start talking after the leader has told us;

The time limit for suggestions is strictly defined (usually no more than several minutes)

Problem Solving

Opens the world in front of the group and helps the participants to become a part of this world;

Represents a learning model;

Lets participants acquire social knowledge in a natural way;

Puts participants in an equal situation;

Develops logical and critical thinking and a practically directed value system;

Develops the necessary civic competences;

Consolidates the value of joined efforts in the social sphere;

Problem Solving - Steps

The first phase is defining the problem

The second phase is an analysis of the problem causes.

Identifying possible solutions. Generating alternatives.

Choosing the best suggestions.

Decision taking

Working out an action plan.

Applying the decision and evaluation of the things achieved.

Problem Solving – Key Moments

The problem solving is a process which gives the group members the chance to work together and look for creating new possibilities. The consensus at the end is a proof that effective group work can be looked at as a multitude of agreements achieved in the process.

The problems which have more than one possible solution are solved most effectively in a heuristic way – i.e. using flexible, constructive, linear methodology. However, we should remember the main principle – to constantly involve all the members.

Problem Solving – Key Moments

The idea that problem-solving is a process and the development of a set of strategies and instruments make the group members more confident, flexible and productive.

In order to solve a problem successfully we should make sure that the group works on one and the same problem, in the same phase, using the same methods at the same time.

Value Clarification -Steps

1. Preferences.

What do I really like?

2. Influences.

What influenced me to take this decision?

Am I free enough to make my choice?

3. Alternatives.

What are the possible alternatives of this choice?

Do I pay enough attention to these alternatives?

4. Consequences.

What are the probable and possible consequences of my choice?

Are these consequences socially harmful or useful?

Value Clarification - Steps

5. Action.

Am I capable of taking actions connected with this choice?

Do my actions reflect the choice I have made?

6. Framing.

Is my choice a long-term commitment?

How can I change my lifestyle so that my choice is constantly reflected in my actions?

Group work Evaluation

Permanent process;

Realized in the context of the objectives;

Determine the level of realisation (qualitative and quantitative) of the student;

Apply different methods and techniques;

Give information, necessary for correction.

Group Work Evaluation

Use different ways of acquiring information about the personal achievements of participants – their working notebooks, test forms, participation in group tasks, gaining of certain skills, self-evaluation, cross-evaluation, organisation of special evaluation sessions;

The trainer can keep a special diary (or files) where the personal achievements of every participant will be listed.

Principles of Evaluation

The learning process itself should be one of the priorities of evaluation;

To point out the progress of every participant even if it is insignificant;

To point out the efforts and achievements in the process of cooperation and to show them our support;

Principles of Evaluation

Constantly to make processes of giving feedback in the group easier by giving them regularly the chance to observe the group's actions or to get familiar with the results of its work;

To collect feedback proof – discussion recordings, posters, presentations of participants' diaries. other types of group production, documentation accompanying the development and accomplishment of projects;

Principles of Evaluation

To involve the group in this process so that it can perform self-evaluation all the time, to realize its progress, when it makes something positive and when it steps back;

To encourage participants to perform self-evaluation which will help them to learn more about themselves and their own abilities and the areas requiring improvement (a feeling for self-esteem based on a real understanding of one's personality);

Principles of Evaluation

To set an example (to model) and to show participants our personal involvement in public activities;

To formulate tasks and possibilities for action corresponding to students' abilities – during the sessions and also when self-government and extracurricular, project activities;

To turn local society into an object of interest for the students and to give them tasks which will deepen their relationship to go deeper.

Benchmarks of evaluation

- **Organisation and interpretation of information;**
- **Skills for listening to the others;**
- **Skills for processing information from printed materials;**
- **Skills for accumulating information by interviews and questions;**
- **Skills for analysis, synthesis, problem solving;**
- **Skills for evaluation of situations and problems;**
- **Skills for decision-making;**
- **Skills for presenting one's own ideas;**

Benchmarks of Evaluation

- **Skills for participating in problem solving, individual work, decision-making, implementation of action plans and defending one's personal opinion;**
- **Skills for group interaction (work with partners, participation in group discussions, skills for cooperation);**
- **Good knowledge of the matter;**
- **Motivation for participation in group work;**
- **Participation in extra-curriculum activities**
- **related to the program.**

The Trainer

- Is a lifelong learner
- Is committed to own professional development
- Is aware of and helps to manage the risks that training poses for learners
- Shares knowledge and skills for others
- Is able to keep the right balance between proximity and distance to the participants
- Is openly self-reflective and critical
- Is sensitive to the needs of the learners
- Uses content and processes congruent with available skills
- Establishes supportive learning environment

Trainer – Core Competences

- **An ability to show approval and acceptance of trainees**
- **An ability to bring the group together and to control it without limiting or damaging it**
- **A style of teaching and communicating which generates and uses the ideas and skills of the participants**

Trainer – Core Competences

- **Knowledge and experience on the subject matter**
- **Organising ability, so that resources are available and logistical arrangements smoothly handled**
- **Skills in identifying and resolving participants problems**
- **Enthusiasm for the subject and capacity to put it across in an interesting and engaging way**
- **Flexibility in responding to participants' changing needs**

Teacher and Trainer

Teacher

Trainer

Process

Less Important

Important

Task/content

Central Role

Important Role

Educ. Methods

Often frontal

Methodological mix

Communic.style

Mainly input

Range depending

Power

Absolute

Absolute-shared

The Trainer's Roles

- **Conductor**
- **Leader of a group**
- **Energiser**
- **Expert, source of information**
- **Model of behaviour**
- **Referent person**
- **Facilitator**
- **Judge and Arbiter**
- **Resource and support person**
- **Guardian of the group norms**

The Trainer should not

- **Give orders, command - "Stop complaining, This isn't such a serious problem. All you've got to do is...!"**
- **Warn and threaten - "No way for this to happen!"**
- **Moralise or start sentences with "must" or "have to"**
You have to be very cautious when you deal with such a problem in your group.
- **Give advises, solutions, or recommendations**
"It will be better if you choose another way to solve this problem."

The Trainer should not

- **Rebuke, give logical argumentation**
"You've already spent an hour trying at random to find a way out. Let's establish some order."
- **Criticise, blame, condemn**
"One can't expect better results in any kind of problem with such a noisy group!"
- **Put labels**
"This is the serious problem, and you behave like babies!"
- **Analysis, interpretation, diagnose**
"You are trying to show with what you are doing today that you simply don't care about the problem"

The Trainer should not

- **Praise, recognition**

“You are so good at it that there is no chance for you to fail”

- **Sympathy, consolation**

“I’ve been in such situation, there is nothing to fear about”

- **Interrogate, ask in round-about manner**

“Tell me more about what you’ve done, so that I can be able to answer.”

- **Withdraw, change the subject**

“It is not the right time for this problem, so let’s go back to our theme.”

Dealing with Problem Participants

- **The Latecomers**
- **The Early Leavers**
- **The Broken Records**
- **The Doubting Thomases**
- **The Headshakers**
- **The Dropouts**
- **The Whisperers**
- **The Loudmouths**

Dealing with Problem Behaviors

- **The Attackers**
- **The Interpreters**
- **The Gossipers**
- **The Know-It-Alls**
- **The Backseat Drivers**
- **The Busybodies**
- **The Interrupters**



