Active Learning Environments

Ulla Salomäki, European Bridges Consulting Erasmus+ course on Action Methods Improving Motivation and Quality in the Learning Environments 7-11.7.2015, Portugal
(Active) Learning Environment (LE)

A Definition:

"The learning environment refers to the entirety of the learning related physical environment, psychological factors and social relationships. In this setting study and learning take place."

(Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004, p.16)
Active Learning

Active learning
An Umbrella Term for:
- Enquiry learning
- Project work
- Student centred learning
- Discovery learning
- Problem solving
- Small group work
- Cooperative learning
- Experiential learning
- Computer assisted learning
The use of concrete materials and direct experiences

Willingness to handle the problems which are open

Student-centred learning

Focus on Learning Process

Active Learning in Practice
“What is the best way to learn and where it should take place?”
Differences between traditional “curriculum approach” and “learning environments approach”

“Curriculum”
• Teacher centred
• Focus on teaching
• Curriculum (maths, history, biology…)
• Delivery of information
• Controlling, closed questions

“Learning environment”
• Collaborative
• Focus on learning
• Problem based, real life as starting point
• Construction of knowledge
• Open questions requiring application of knowledge
Emotional Learning Environment

Emotions affect all the learning process and academic output:
- Attention
- Perception
- Working memory and problem solving
- Judgement and reasoning
## Social Emotions at School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggers</th>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discomfort in the school system (threat)</td>
<td>Insecurity (fear)</td>
<td>Dropping out (flight)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulties with certain subjects (obstacle)</td>
<td>Frustration (anger)</td>
<td>Criticizing the system (attack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure (loss)</td>
<td>Deception (sadness)</td>
<td>Demotivated (withdrawal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprimand and contempt (aversive situation)</td>
<td>Humiliation (disgust)</td>
<td>Detachment (rejection)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative feedback to a student (repulsion)</td>
<td>Contempt</td>
<td>The student reply disrespectfully to his teacher (condescending)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unexpected results</td>
<td>Amazement (surprised)</td>
<td>Irritation (orientation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success and encouragements</td>
<td>Enthusiasm (joy)</td>
<td>Motivation, interest (approach)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out of all six basic emotions only one is positive.

It's crucial to develop the emotional intelligence to maximise all the emotions that are derived from joy.
Pedagogical background of the exercises

The origin of the exercises

1) Games that have been used among Scouts and in youth work

2) Getting to know, contact- and expression exercises that have been used in different relationship-, therapy- and creativity training

3) Co-operation and adventure exercises that are used in adventure trainings among scouts but nowadays also among businessmen and workplace trainings

4) Action methods which the trainers themselves have created
The methods are used

* so that the learning could happen also in other levels than verbal and intellectual level
* repeatedly so that the good feeling grows in the group after each exercise
* to create groups in which people want to belong
* to give repairing experience in the group
* to keep the working atmosphere in positive emotional area
Action Methods and Pedagogy

Methods are used for educational purposes

IMPROVING THE WORKING ATMOSPHERE AND MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING

and they differ from the “just having fun” through

Didactic REFLECTION

At first experience and after that reflection:

What happened and what did we learn? → transferring the experience to everyday life

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References

Goffin, S.G & Tull, C.Q. 1985. Problem solving encouraging active learning. *Young Children* 40 (3)


Hämäläinen S, Häkkinen K. 1995, Teachers and Students as Active Learners. University of Jyväskylä Department of Teacher Education, Research 58.


References
