



DÉMUTH Ágnes

University of Szeged
Gyula Juhász Faculty of
Education Institute of Vocational
Higher Education
Hungary
tumiga@jgytk.u-szeged.hu

Attempt for the innovation of the traditional teaching techniques

Summary

Four years ago, as a parent I had the opportunity to have a look into the life of a primary school in a city of the Illinois State (USA) for two years; moreover, into the life of a school of children with different cultures and mother tongues. Ten years later I could get to know the vocational educational system of a high school in Washington DC enabled by the American Teachers Union. However, the American students had much less information on the area of general information—compared to the Hungarian students—but they were not biting their fingernails, they were not worried, they were natural, confident on the air. Nowadays it is of high importance because one can understand the main point of the education based on competence. Starting from

the fact that the development of a personality means the extension of abilities with the acquisition of new information mostly, the role of the teacher is to explain the curriculum. Their task is to pass on the information. Naturally, their starting point can be that the personality of the students can get richer if they are only building on their activities. However, in this case the educator will have to build on the fundamental needs of the students, namely on their curiosity. Let them provide situations for the students in which on the basis of the intrinsic motive (need satisfaction)—they can discover the world on their own, look for the explanations, understand the contexts they discovered. On the basis of the same curiosity—interests—they should form groups and finish the curriculum with the help of the school library, the computer park they can use anytime and continuously. In this way, the natural concomitant of the lessons is the debate, the argumentation, the continuous feedback concerning the performance of the students, the cooperation. I would like to report about my experience regarding the possibilities of “shuffling” these forms of work into the classes and lectures at the higher education for those who are interested and in the hope that they will develop and improve them.

Keywords: competencies; method of explaining by questioning; include the teamwork into the lecture; including the project into the lecture

„History”

The concept of the competency-based education got outlined for me twenty-four years ago. My children were attending a school in the State of Illinois for three and a half years. There was a different attitude to the studying. The school library was at the disposal of the students continuously, they also meant the “sainthood” of the lessons in another way. The main point of studying was the independent collection of information even that time. The children received different points of view to the topic of each lesson. During the lessons the students who had the best communication and cognitive performance in the class collected information to them. They were studying from each other, by the indirect control of the teacher. However, the Internet was not available at that time either!

They were studying through considering the rules of development and improvement to the utmost. The teachers used the rules of the coexistence when different students were working on the different subjects alone.¹ The rule of activity was realised when performing the new parts of the curricula because not only the “explanation” of the students who prepared for meant the activity but the audience could also put some questions and argue during the performance.² As one can study from the experimental situation for the conservation, the students can study from each other most effectively than from the person with prestige, namely the teacher who stands well above them in respect of the professional knowledge. The questions, the argumentation, the persuasion belonged to the important part of the process of studying.

The specific way of thinking, the different quantity and quality of information urged the teachers in the case of students from different social environment to take the speciality, the individuality into account. They appreciated the intention, effort, too, not only the “final result” but also the real performance were taken into consideration while assessing. However, the fact also contributed that the students and the parents did not receive the feedback with marks but textual assessment where the students are in comparison to the optimal level.³

Returning home, I tried to test the possibilities during the afternoon occupations in the resident home. When I was a child we also used the method of studying in pairs that I also remembered. The students who were studying better and easier, understood the correlations faster and helped the others who advanced more slowly and had difficulties with the understanding and the comprehension. As there were children of different age in each group of students, I assigned children of the second class, who have already been reading well, to the children of the first class who were only forming the mechanic level of reading. The self-confidence of the students with negative self-estimation has improved by the fact that they could experience that they know something what the others do not yet. The easier curricula meant a practice in the reading for them as well. The self-confidence that increased this way made the studying of the curricula of the second class easier and faster.⁴

The average school results of the group improved that year by 1.2. There were other results, too. The cooperation made the team spirit stronger.⁵

On different considerations I changed my job in two years. I came to a vocational

¹ Salamon, J. (1994): The achievement of cognitive processes (A megismerő folyamatok fejlődéslektana) Akadémiai Kiadó, Bp.

² Cole, M & Cole, S. (1996): The Development of Children (Fejlesztéslektan) Osiris, Budapest

³ Heacox, D. (2006): Differentiations in Education and at Learning. (Differenciálás a tanításban, tanulásban) Szabad Iskolák Alapítvány

⁴ Buzás, L. (1980): The Teamwork (Csoporthmunka) Tankönyvkiadó, Bp

⁵ Kagan, S. (2004): Cooperative Learning (Kooperatív tanulás) Ökonet, Bp

secondary and trade school where I taught Hungarian for bricklayers, tilers, electricians and other older skilled labour workers who wanted to pass the final examination —on distance-studying course.

I used the method of groups at least once a week. I usually formed heterogeneous groups, first of all on the basis of the students' being motivated on different levels, their performance, and their social status in the group.⁶ They had to approach and analyse the same literary work on different points of view. The one point of view was always the question: what kind of human values, phenomena, activities that are important for the human beings are represented by the literary work. It took a year till the students realised that the text understanding makes the studying of the profession easier, too. I could not have a resounding success, 30 percent of my students could improve their performance by 40 percent before the end of the year, reveals from testing. Nevertheless, I could reach that 70 percent of my students joint the lessons. The time that I had to spend with disciplining, decreased by 80 percent, and the fundamental conceptions were performed by 97 percent of the students.

Because of the falling-off I could start with the essential work in these classes in the second year. In the classes of 20-25 students we were working with the project method, although, we did not call it this way back then, we only treated it as teamwork. At the beginning of the year, three of four students could undertake a literary work on their own. They had the duty to introduce the rise and explanation of a work of art from the point of view of the bibliography of the author, the historic age, and the origin and of the human rights. This way the students could state different opinions about the same work of art. They could see that they also have a different opinion about a work than the literature critics. Namely, it became an own experience that each work of art reborn whenever a person reads and explains it. They did not study it from me but they had their own experience. As a result, the colleague who was specialist and the chairman of the final exam at the same time assessed the performance of my students to 4.3 as against my 3.4. The colleague laid down in the official report that she has not had any case like this yet, i.e., the students not only analysed the obligatory poems to the subject but they proved their thoughts by analysing poems of their own selection and based on their own work.

In the second class of the trade school I used a personal curriculum in the grammar lessons. I tried the method here, namely it did not matter on the basis of which curricula the students could obtain the knowledge. If they understood it they were able to use it in the case of any curricula as well. We worked on the basis of the book of Exupery: *The little prince*. Instead of the frontal class work I used the means of differentiation in 90 percent. We practised reading with those students who had difficulties with the mechanical reading; the students assessed the performance of each other. I also divided the perfect readers into two groups. Those who had a wider vocabulary rewrote each paragraph of certain chapters in different styles; those who read less had only the duty to find synonyms, synonym expressions for repeating words in certain sentences of each chapter. I took the *Concise Dictionary of the Hungarian Language* and the *Dictionary of the Hungarian Synonymous*, the *Collection of the Hungarian idiomatic and proverbs* to the lessons. The students studied the use of them. On another occasion the students were collecting word classes, they defined, explained them on the basis of the exact examples, it means, they had to exercise the thinking operations of the making comparison, the ranging into groups and the naming of relations. They had to declare about the thinking operation itself, too: they had to explain on which considerations they put the words into each group.

⁶ O'Neil – Drillings (1994)(Eds.): *Motivation. Theory and Research*. Hillsdale, New Jersey, Hove, UK

The work started very slowly. It took a month till the students understood, if they were ready to think they could also come to the conclusions on their own that they could only learn by reading the text of the textbooks till now. I did not know whether I had successfully identified the problems that originated from the use of the limited lingual code⁷ and I established the competence feeling in those students who were able to forget the experience of failure of 8 years.

The honoured reader cannot find any reference to the special literature because I discovered it on my own. (But, because I had to comply with the requirements of science, subsequently, I gave some references.) Not as if I was proud of it afterwards. I introduced my own experience just for making clear: any teacher who cares for his/her job, who does not blame the laziness of the students and their not being interested for the lack of success of his/her work, can attain this. The self-criticism, the positive attitude can make the work of the teacher successful. Of course, those who are reading methodological trade papers regularly can or could do their work faster. According to the studies of Ivan Falus and my experience the teachers of this type were in minority so far.

It may seem to be curious and shocking but I have to admit that I did not get acquainted with the concepts like hidden curriculum,⁸ lingual code, competence-feeling and motive when I attended the University and received my diploma but, in respect of the profession, I was in a more advantageous position than my class-mates who were “only” studying for teachers. My other field of study was pedagogy. Theoretically I had much more comprehensive information than my student-mates at the faculty of arts or those of the natural science. It was compulsory for us to read the *Pedagógiai Szemle* (Hungarian trade paper) then. At that time and later as well, I found these articles too scientific that could be translated into the everyday practice with difficulties. I met the maze of terminologies with unclear meaning, mathematical statistical calculations in the articles that were indigestible for me then. I needed extra time and energy to understand the main point and to translate them into the everyday practice. Those that I could understand have proposed that I have already used in the practice. Of course, it was good to maintain my self-confidence and humour to make experiments. It became clear that not the quantity of the time that is spent with the children but the quality of the common activity could put them into a disadvantageous or advantageous situation. I found different principles for the explanation why it is worth having my students work different ways.⁹ I became acquainted with the psychological thinking actions, I understood the difference between the concept and the scheme, I studied the operational and functional differences of different storages of the memory. When I came to the higher education I already knew all of them and the study of the special literature was obligatory as well.¹⁰

Innovative ambitions in the higher education – beginning

I had a teaching practice of 20 years and grounded knowledge of psychology when I started my activity at the Department of Psychology of the Juhász Gyula Teachers' Training College. I held the usual obligatory psychology courses for teachers. I could only lead seminars then because as a teaching assistant I could not hold lectures. On the basis of the reading of the studies and the books of Ferenc Lénárd and my personal experience I knew it from the beginning that the principle of activity was valid in the higher education, too. A half

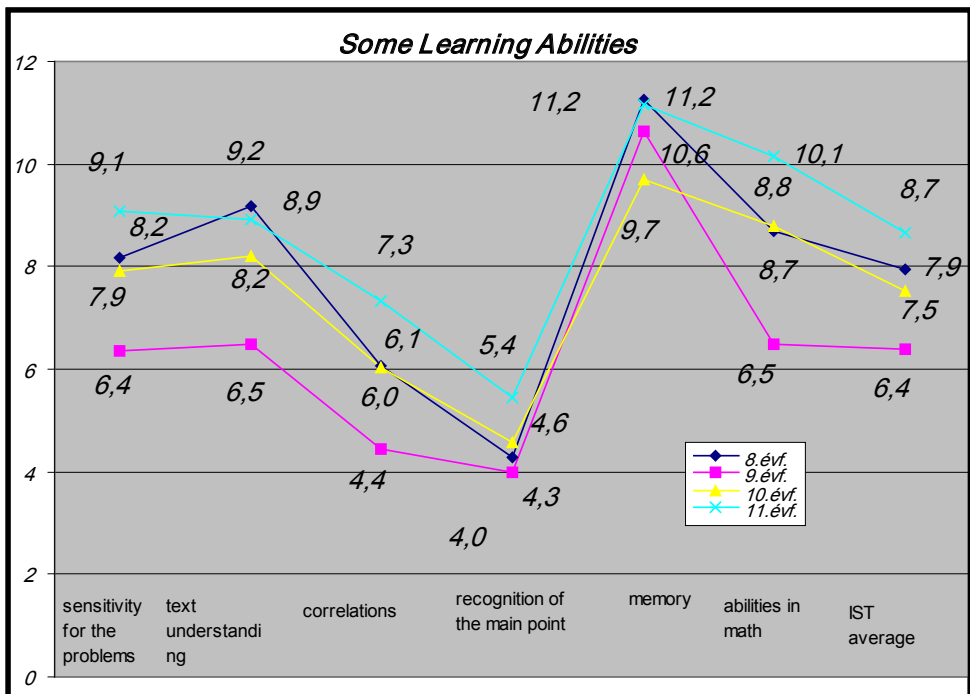
⁷ Bernstein, B. (1975): *Class Codes and Controls*. Routledge & Kegan

⁸ Szabó, L.T. (1982): *The „Hidden Curriculum”*. (A „rejtett” tanterv) Oktatáskutató Intézet, Bp.

⁹ Gage, N. & Berliner, D. (1991): *Educational Psychology*. Fifth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Comp. Boston...

¹⁰ Lénárd F. (1979): *Development abilities in the classroom*. (Képességek fejlesztése a tanítási órán) Tankönyvkiadó, Bp.

of year was enough to make it certain that the results of my researches in connection with the study are not only valid for the students in the public education. (The continuous studying is missing, the students do not devote enough time for studying, over-studying is missing, and students do not look for contexts between the subjects either that are built on each other).¹¹ The number of students increased continuously, the two basic abilities that are necessary to the intelligent, independent work: the ability for the recognition of the contexts and the emphasizing of the main point left well behind the desirable level by the students who were studying on the teachers' branch as well. The students brought different performances on them that were measured in the elementary and the secondary school.¹² Here you can find a graphic to illustrate the above mentioned arguments.



I thought that the teachers could not teach to think, if they had difficulties during the exercise of the activity of thinking.¹³ As the higher education is not the scene of the development of the abilities but it assumes that it only has to have the still existing abilities of high level operated, it was not easy to find the kind of solution that can provide both functions at the same time. The practice was born this way, namely the students worked on the theoretical material that was delivered on the lectures worked up in the seminars. They could cite by using their notes for example the ideas of certain psychological schools about the personality,

¹¹ Démuth, Á. (2002): Difficulties of learning – type of a schools. (Tanulási nehézségek, iskolatípusok) In: Módszertani Közlemények 2.(pp. 70-74.)

¹² Démuth, Á. (2002): School achievements, learning difficulties, learning habits connection with some learning abilities PhD. Dissertation Debrecen

¹³ Démuth, Á. (1999): Teacher's opinion about learning habits and techniques. (Pedagógusok vélekedése tanulási szokásokról, módszerekről) Módszertani Közlemények 1999. 1.(pp. 48-51.)

later they had to look for the similarities, differences among the ideas. They had to support their statements by arguments. Their other job was to explain, define general psychological concepts (memory, imagination, motion, and thinking). They looked for exact examples for these concepts. For example: „Recall from the events of their life when they were very happy and so angry that they were almost busted by the anger! What did they feel what kind of “symptoms” they had? The students recorded the steps of the process of thinking on the basis they have heard: analysis, comparison, naming of relations, generalisation.¹⁴The concept “required” and “sufficient” could only explain 32 percent of the students, in spite of the fact that in mathematics one can hardly get along without the understanding of these concepts. To clear them I used the differences between the meaning of core meaning and the prototypical. The method was the mixture of the evolving by questioning, the explanation and the argument. From the groups of 30 persons in general 15 percent of the students cooperated actively but the number of the “permanent” speakers ran only to 10 percent.

Problems, difficulties

The students do not necessarily choose the lecturers but rather the time of the courses. There are courses that can be taken only in one single point of time. Therefore, it often happens that the students who like this way of working are obliged to take up lessons published for other points of time. The first four weeks of each course is spent on the new students’ “getting accustomed” to the new type of work.

Because of the high number of the students and the composition of the students that changes continuously can the teamwork only be formal as there is no possibility to recognise the different abilities of the students (law of coexistence). Although the students can be divided into groups but to form the real teamwork one needs 8 weeks at least. My surveys pointed at gloomy facts. From 30 students maximum 3 students were working in a team during their career until now. Only every third of them were working in teams regularly but they did not know the main point of the teamwork, the cooperation as a concept.¹⁵ They do not know the sense of the duty-roles of the group.

When the seminar is closed with a colloquium the students are not ready to study the special literature during the year. The activity can only be based onto those facts and theories that are introduced at the beginning of the lesson by the teacher. The students put the conclusions into words with colloquial expressions. They often come to the conclusion that they do not have anything more to look after. However, it is not possible to clear up all details of the complicated system of contexts in 90 minutes.

Because of the theoretical dominance of the education – lectures the initiatives of the “lonely fighters” are rather considered as a curio and not as a general practice. The students often use their self-protecting mechanism. As a result, the development of the self-knowledge is decreasing. They receive the possibility but it does not become the part of their daily practice that is especially recommended in the case of a future teacher, in my opinion.

Development of the forms and contents in the training of adult-teachers (andragogy)

I have been teaching adult-teachers at the Institution for Adult Education of our faculty for three years. My duty is to introduce the students the process of the establishment, development, operation and the changing of the personality, the relating theories in the full-

¹⁴ Redfield, D. and Rousseau, E. (1981): A meta-analysis of experimental research on teacher questioning behavior. *Review of Educational Research*, 51 (pp. 237-245..)

¹⁵ M. Nádasi Mária (1986): *Collectiveness and differentiation at the classroom (Egységesség és differenciáltság a tanítási órán)* Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest

time and the correspondence course as well. The purpose is to enable students to recognise the “social other”, to detect their needs so that they can help them in the self-realisation. If the students can meet these requirements they become acquainted with the most important statements of social psychology; one can make the effect relatively calculable that they will exercise during their work, if they take these regularities into consideration.¹⁶ The purpose is the acquisition of knowledge: the development of the ability for the adaptation of theoretical information in practice – transfer, according to the laws of activity. The ability will develop – competence from the facility, if the suitable activities are operated, carried out by the personalities themselves. The purpose in connection with the full-time and the corresponding students is the same. The question is: whether it is a possibility, an allowance and a must to use the same methods in the case of the students with different practical experience during the education.

Development of the forms and contents in the training of the andragogs – full-time students and corresponding students

The BA training of the *full-time students* of the andragogy faculty means the bigger challenge for me. As I have already indicated before, at present we still have to educate students who have already entered the young adulthood as far as their age is concerned but the majority of them is not mature enough yet, the most of them are living in the period of the identity-confusion, their identity has not developed yet, there are fighting with the lack of self-knowledge. What is more, their school experience does not contain practical and theoretical knowledge for studying that is based on teamwork and independent collection of information. They know the social character of the “listening listener” that is based on the dominance of the frontal class work and the explanation of the teacher. Only 64 percent of the students presume to know its dominant studying style, 89 percent of them have some problems with taking notes, at the same time only 27 percent of the students have problems with studying methods.¹⁷ The majority of them believe that they can recognise the correlations and can emphasize the main point. The inconsistency between the two sides does not mean any cognitive dissonance for them; therefore, it cannot come to any change. The teacher can draw the attention to the insufficiencies but the information related cannot come to the part of the metacognition without any “own experience”. Therefore, the situations when the student cannot avoid meeting the problems have – ought to be integrated into the process of the lectures and the of the practical course mark. I have found the notion and the practice of the *interactive lecture* for them. /I do not ride on someone’s coattails! In the American higher education the kind of occupations has already been a tradition, essentially. (The introduction of the method you can find: below)/ The other form is the lecture that is built on the teamwork, while the third one is based on the project work. All of the methods have in common that they need much more time and organizational work than the traditional lectures. Moreover, it is also necessary that the lecturer knows - at least on the minimum level - the different scope of interest of the different students, their different cognitive styles, the different levels of their communication abilities. The lectures that are built on the team and project work of the students can be only built from the fourth week of the term-time as the students have to have some time to found the teams and gather information in the special literature and to cooperate

¹⁶ Démuth, Á. (1998): Learning habits, learning difficulties and the management of the class. (Tanulási szokások, tanulási nehézségek és a „tantárgymenedzsment) Módszertani Közlemények, 5. 195-201.p.

¹⁷ Nagy J. (2007): Criteria-oriented pedagogy based on competency *Kompetenciaalapú kritériumorientált pedagógia*. 2007 Mozaik Kiadó, Szeged

outside of the lessons. It is not only about the fact that the students have to study the most important parts of the special literature on their own. The principles of the cooperation within the team have to be also introduced (roles and duties in the team; uniformity; introduction of the correlations; level of the critical thinking). One also has to draw the attention of the students that it is not about the reading of a ppt.-material when they are performing their thoughts. They would rather have to do their best that the duty is to illustrate the lecture notes through examples and on the basis of opposing the different points of view to each other; they would have to “provoke” a discussion. Mediating and moderating – facilitating is their duty. They are developing and improving the competences on which their future will be built. (With this work I also prepared the work of the MA course trainings actually.)

In case of the *corresponding students* I usually use the same methods, however, with certain differences. The majority of the students are adults. Most of them (about 65 percent) are working with colleagues together, they are the middle level managers or they are leading their own enterprise. They have some experience how important it is that they recognise and take into consideration the reactions, emotions of other people. This is an advantage, sometimes a disadvantage. It can lead to a wrong attribution. It makes the work more difficult by making them susceptible to handle the special literature on a selective way. They are also focusing on the theories during their work that prove these explanations. As there are less contact-lesson than in the case of the regular students’ one has to ensure the specific elements of the distance learning, e.g. the continuous contact with the assistance of the Internet. As the corresponding students meet each other only very frequently, too, - only during the contact-lessons. This form also has a great importance if the students want to keep contact with each other. The students can experience the importance of the activity that is necessary for the work in the future on the basis of their own experience. Therefore, there is a bigger chance that those students will also use the possibilities provided by the technique that have not done so yet. (Even the students confirm the significance of it, e.g. they report on establishing an own E-mail address, they made possible the use of the Internet at home as well.) They inquire about the utility and authenticity of the websites by the teachers. (We can be happy about it, but regular students who find a page that fits to the subject as far as its content is concerned they refer to it immediately.)

It is clear even now that the information that are available on the homepage of the institution have to be summarised in a uniformed auxiliary material for the students that can be refreshed and developed on the basis of the latest experience continuously. It extends the work of the teachers with further duties.

Development of the forms and contents in the training of the andragogs – advantages and disadvantages

The active participation of the students by the introduction and processing of the curricula can assist the development, establishment, becoming a habit of the useful methods of learning, the cooperation, the development of the communication abilities, especially the ability of disclosing, at least theoretically. In the practice the work of the regular students of that nature is influenced by the experience of “other” courses as well. This type of work that we use on the psychology courses does not equal to the concept of the recent we usually use in higher education. As they have the kind of experience they are susceptible to forget, to leave the purposes out of consideration that is connected with the form of the activity. I can also be said that they make the duty easier in cases when they have to work in a team. Instead of the introduction of a theme from many sides, from different approaches that are

opposed to each other theoretically, each member of the team introduces one point of view. Practically, we can listen to a series of short lectures that are independent from each other. Therefore, the facilitating of the discussion means that the lecturers inquire about the opinion of the audience in connection with the lecture they have heard. The low level of the above mentioned two learning abilities (recognition of the contexts and of the emphasizing of the main points) become obvious in these cases. Therefore, just the main point, the cooperation does not develop during the work. One can also see their lack of conflict and problem solving abilities. It is a general tendency that the students handle the raising of a problem as a job. It is so, however, they become acquainted with the differences between the job and the problem in connection with the divergent way of thinking. Although, it is belonging to this part of the subject, that they form a job into a problem.¹⁸ Otherwise, this kind of job is belonging to the controlling at the end of the year too, I continuously mention it, and theoretically the students ought to know about its importance. Unfortunately, I experience the force of the habits against the intention of changing. It means that the possession of the information does not become knowledge; the level of the application has to be improved.

One possible way is that the students have to act so actively during even more courses and lectures. It could have been realised already for four courses, although, three from them have already been of a course character from the beginning. Because of the difference of the type of the course the students think that the activity is only included in a specific type of courses. Our institution wants to change this. For the time being we are just changing our experience but the efforts were made that the above-mentioned type of working appear in the lecture of each course, even if not in this quantity. First of all it is not the question of the knowledge of didactics, it rather depends on the character of the personality of the teacher. (Many times it depends on the fact how many lessons the teacher has, as in case of a high number of lessons the teacher cannot have enough time to prepare for these kinds of courses.) If this type of work was general, it would also become for the students as a matter of course that they have to prepare for each lesson in one form or another.

On the basis of the above mentioned it is obvious that students could learn from each other practically, under the supervision of the teacher.¹⁹ Just this possibility means the biggest difficulty during the process of collecting the information. If the students receive the mark on the basis of the quality and quantity of their activity in the lessons, everybody has to perform once. In case of a class of one hundred students it means that a student can come to a performance in front of the big audience only once. „It follows”—for the students—that they only listen to the performance of their classmates but do not make any notes. As a result, they will only have some knowledge about those subject matters that they have processed on their own. I try to decrease this danger by obligating students ~~have~~ to submit a written report about three topics (on the basis of points of view that were given beforehand) that contain what they have heard at the end of the course. My other methodical trial is that the audience also has to access what they have heard. The question is when this assessment should happen: directly after the performance or after the listening of all performances. Should they tell their opinion in words or in writing? According to my experience that the immediate assessment in words, is less effective. Two-three, usually active, curious students tell the most important remarks. The others „wait out” and they do not work and think on their own practically. That is the

¹⁸ de Bono, E. (1993): *Teach your child how to think*. Penguin Books

¹⁹ *Development by Differentiation – cooperative Learning (2003)*(Differenciált fejlesztés – kooperatív tanulás) (Ed.: Hunyadi Györgyné) ELTE Tanító és Óvóképző Főiskolai Kar, Bp.

reason why I am testing a new method. They have to take part in the communication skills training when they are learning the psychology of the adulthood with the above-mentioned methods. During this training we are practising among others the providing and receiving of feedbacks. The students can learn: what is the difference between the critics and the assessing feedback. The part of them we have practiced I build into the points of view of the assessment. The works of the students become the part of the assessment of the communication training. I have used this method for the first time this year; therefore I have only limited feedback and experience. The direct purpose is that the students collect experience that the different courses are connected to each other and the knowledge they have obtained on the one they have to and can connect it to the other as well. This is in conformity with the effort of our institution that the students receive comprehensive subject matters to the final exam: not the university exams of each courses be repeated but the looking for and the recognition of the correlations should dominate during the process of learning.

Until now I was talking about the difficulties. We have to mention the advantages as well; otherwise there could not be any sense of the experimenting. The method enables to draw the attention on the students who performed well that is one important element of the support for the gifted students. It is worth offering the scientific activity in the circle of students who have already drawn the attention to themselves. The selection of the students who are suitable for the MA training is possible, too. I mean that the students who are suitable for the studies on a higher level can receive a feedback, a confirmation that they are suitable for further studies. For the others the experience is also of feedback value and it can assist them by the reorganisation of their career orientation without having to face a failure.

The „working into” the different partial subjects can help students to choose the *theme of their thesis*, to learn methods of examination to it and collect some experience. They can learn how to *refer to* the statements of the special literature as far as the content is concerned, how to *argue – convince – influence* in connection with a specific subject. They can try in a „sharp situation” that they have already practiced in the communication skills training in the form of a „structured job”. This way they can obtain a *routine*. Practically, it means the sphere of concepts of the „*subject concentration*” (However I regard it as an unlucky expression). The terminologies that we also use on other areas of science with a different content usually have the consequence that the user identifies the note-row with the content of the terminology of the area of science that is used more often. As the concentration associates—relates to the sphere of concepts of the attention, in the everyday language, its psychological explanation became well known and used but in pedagogy it has the contrary meaning. It would be more practical to use the expression of coordination. This terminology suggests that one has to look for and introduce the correlations and connections between the different subjects.

They are obliged to make a difference between the facts and the emotions; they have the possibility to recognise the operation of their self-protecting mechanism while they are assessing the work of each other. It helps students to develop their realistic self-knowledge, their professional identity-knowledge, to improve their self-criticism. The use of the conditional has of great importance. All of these advantages appear indirectly, not an „outsider who does not know me” „bets the boots” (it is a slang of the students which means that somebody tells me what I should think about what I have heard). The attitude (the knowledge about myself) will not change if there is not developing any cognitive dissonance in the personality. However, if students think about themselves that their cognitive and communication abilities

are working on a high level but they cannot face them with practice, their own activities, the self-acceptance remains without any development. If the negative feedback comes from the environment it can be neglected easily by the method of pooh-poohing („they do not even know me, they give an opinion about me on one appearance”).²⁰ While, the students face their lack of exercise on their own, they can owe the failure to the „external reasons”, there can be a chance that they can improve themselves. Its precondition is of course that they can hear as much as possible: „We cannot know at first try perfectly what we have not practiced.” Only the personality who is success - and performance-oriented can do this but in the long run those who are failure-avoiding can also change their aspiration level that can lead to the change of their performance motivation, too.

Remarks

The use of the method needs time, of course. In the traditional form of lectures, I mean the explanation, information-delivery; one can advance faster, that is sure. The examples, order of ideas that were told by the students can be used very well during the control. By the final examination it is enough to revive the suitable situation of the lecture; the student can associate the facts, definitions, order of ideas. That is a matter of course. The information gets stored not only in the semantic memory but on the basis of the experience in the situational memory as well. We also have practised the method of learning this way: on the basis of exact examples, in the inductive way, one can often arrive at the right solution.

The method is also suitable to detect the communication ability of the students; to develop their ability for giving information. It is a typical mistake that often occurs that the verbal formulation is inaccurate; it gives ground for several interpretations. At this point I usually ask the audience to tell how they understand what they have heard. They can face the basic learning – communication mistake indirectly that the first interpretation of a sentence often means the single one for them, too.²¹ On the basis of these cases students can formulate on their own that the loose wording can cause communication trouble in science and public language as well that can stop the successful communication. Lecturers who use this method ask for a feedback regarding the interpretation what students have heard more often during the traditional manner of lecturing, too. I do not have to emphasize what an enormous role it is playing in the understanding.

The method can be used by the introduction of the parts as well. The deductive method is especially useful during the interpretation of each definition. With the Ppt. the interpretation of the exteriorised definition is also possible. The basic element of the learning process is that students are able to choose the fundamental conceptions; the correlations between them can deliver students to understand, to remember what they have learnt. I usually tell them directly as well that the learning of the curricula is consisting of these steps. When they sit the final examination they explain what they want to say on the basis of the same order. The use of the method not only serves that the lessons are more varied. The activity of the students also serves the wilful increase of the attention, too and it can be divided to those phases in advance where „only the body” of the students is present because of the attention getting tired.

The method of Socrates can also be used to develop the critical way of thinking. During the course it can also be used by the introduction of the kind of theories that means the alternatives of each other. Of course, it provides a good service as well, if one has to

²⁰ Johnson, D. (1981): Naturally acquired learned helplessness: The relationship of school failure to achievement behavior, attributions and self-concept. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73, 174-180.

²¹ Szőnyi G. (2005): *Groups and Training Groups (Csoportok és csoportozók)* Medicina, Bp.

introduce the innovative rework of a previous, partial theory or it is about the introduction of two notions, theories that are close to each other as far as their contents is concerned (because of the homogeneous hindrance they can be mixed up in the memory). The method that is used at this point enables the identification of the psychological and logical operations, the recognition of their order of completion. If the lecturers have the students told it consistently and they name the operation on their own, the audience can enter into the possession of the method of the successful collection of information. However, according to my experience the students themselves do not use the method –they learn on the basis of habits –during the control it means some help for the students who took part in the lectures, if we tell them: with which fundamental conceptions which operations has to be exercised. Many times, it is not even necessary to name the operation the situational memory helps again. Of course, if the lecturer thinks that it will turn out by the examination what the student did not learn, what they do not know, he/she will not use this method by any means. However, in my opinion while the students have to learn the curricula of fifteen courses bi-annually they will need some help on the examinations. (Take it into consideration only once: how many fundamental conceptions, facts, and data should students learn one day at school! Then, let's multiply it with four at least! In lack of practical experience, the system of scheme that is relating to the curricula they really need some help. Who has not prepared, who did not use the over-learning (continuous learning, repeating, practising, in the course of time again and again), the help is in vain for them. In case of the students who have learnt this way the recall of this kind can improve their mark by one or two. Not to mention that the news of this possibility is spreading among the students sooner or later and we can motivate the students indirectly to attend the lectures.

(Include the teamwork into the lecture)

To the course of the psychology of adulthood there is no textbook that is ordered as compulsory reading and from which the students could learn all the basic or majority of the necessary information. In the higher education where the notion of „THE” textbook should not be used, there are only books, lecture notes. It is useful to use **team-work** that is included in the lectures, if different authors are discussing the same topic from different points of view, attitudes or—as it is true for this course—one has to read each piece of many books so that the student can receive a general idea even in connection with one partial subject. It is especially useful to use this method, if the way of examination is a practical mark. (For me it is unexplainable how one can obtain this form of assessment with a paper at the end of the course.) The job requires a very careful preparation, it is essential that the *list of themes that can be offered, at least with the compulsory reading together*, is ready by the first meeting. The students usually select from the topics in the first lesson and they write their name to the one that is suitable for them. The list also has to include the *date* when the *introduction* is expected to be held. The *points of view of the assessment* also have to be worked out until this point of time.

The groups will be formed by the teacher, not during the lesson, of course. If the teacher has already worked with the participants previously as well he/she can form the groups consciously. The teacher can form the groups on the basis of the *communication abilities*. In this case it is suitable to form *heterogeneous* groups. The groups have to include self-confident students, those who can recognise the correlations, emphasize the main point very quickly and punctually and those who are operating on this area on a less developed level as they have practiced the verbal communication less than the others. Of course, in the lack of information the teacher can use the basis of *volunteer ship* when forming groups. In this case,

the secondary, indirect purpose that students get to know each other more thoroughly will not be fulfilled. It has a bad influence on the development of the structure of the groups of the whole class because it makes the still existing connections stronger. We almost exclude the development of the communication network becoming more organized.

To be able to avoid the collective slacking it is worth to *assess* the performance of the group on the basis of the *mosaic method* right from the beginning. It means: either all group members receive the mean of the marks of each group member they received for their performance or the mark of the performance of the lowest level. Therefore, the students *cannot help cooperating*, coordinating and sharing their ideas. The introduction of the topic can last for maximum twenty minutes by each group. They have to work on a dual point of view. The one is the short *introduction* of the *curricula*. The other one is that they have to *urge the audience to discuss*. They either have to tell their „own experience” that is opposed to those they have heard or they have to make their selection in the introduction the way that the lecturers themselves can *involve* their school-mates into the form of the final conclusion/sentence.

During the practice this form has been perfected as well. In the first semester, when I used it, I did not calculate with the possibility that students only listen to me and make their assessment, the curricula itself will not be noted and practically, each student knows just the part of the curricula they have worked on. That is the reason why the controlling part is in the last lesson the students have to summarize the most important statements of a partial topic *in an essay of half page* that was worked out by one of their classmates.²² The summary has to be finished by the name of the authors of at least two *special literatures*.

Having listened to the work of the group I also introduce *my own summary* as well. Therefore, I can reach that the students can also learn the statements that might be left out. The lecturers can receive a feedback from the exactness and objectivity of their work.

(Including the project into the lecture)

The project work was defined by many people and in many ways. I regard it as a special case of teamwork. teamwork is a job, the project means the problem. The groups are formed according to the sphere of interest and thorough knowledge of the members on the basis of volunteer ship. They choose the subjects free and they can also decide on which partial subjects, which special literature, visual aids they use, which theory and practice of which science they introduce in their work. The method is suitable for students starting to adjust to the requirements of the final examination.²³ During this form of work they can practice the search for correlations regarding the content of the different courses, e.g. when, why could emerge the long-life learning as a demand, what kinds of cultural historical, art historical, philosophical, education historical relationship they have/can have. The preparation and the assistance of this need much more time and energy of the teacher than the preparation of the team-works. Just for the reason because it is lucky if the team-works, the lectures of the teacher, his/her “improvements” harmonize with the material that was introduced in the project. As the students choose the partial subject on their own it would be necessary— on the basis of the ready parts of the project —to rework or complete the curricula during the semester that is worked out in advance. Of course, one can also realise this kind of work

²² Barczy, M. (1997): The effectiveness of the group's and the variation of the personality (A csoportok hatékonysága és a személyes változás.) Animula Kiadó

²³ Sharan, Shlomo (1984): Cooperative learning in the classroom: research in desegregated Schools, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale – New Jersey – London

without taking into consideration the above mentioned but in this case the use of the method can seem to be *L'art pour l'art*, auto telic. I am sure that the honoured reader has already heard about this method, I list the phases of the work just to remember. Here you are:

Choice of subject – setting the target; preparation of the plan; data collection; processing of the subject; introduction of the product; assessment of the product; introduction of the product widely

The teacher has only the role by choosing the subject that he/she offers the summary of the lectures of the course. The teacher has to be present at the meeting of the group when the students formulate the target, when they agree upon the partial subject. From their age the regular students do not have any experience how complicated even a partial subject can be. They are inclined to the shallow thinking. The job of the teacher— with formulating some questions, if possible — to draw the attention of the students to it. Especially, he has to provide some help by the formulating of the target. The target that is too general makes the work in the course of progress impossible but the students may not find it out on their own and they do not know why they cannot show up any results. By collecting the data it is advantageous, if the teacher gives some essential facts —just by the naming of the possibilities, not of compulsory character —to choice of the sources. He/She also plays a key role during the processing, in case of a halt he/she provides some help for the participants of the project to divide each job to partial ones; he helps to put the “workers” on the way to the modelling (to order the coherences of the partial jobs and the partial subjects in a graphic, maybe to construct a wall of problems).²⁴ In the lack of the model and the strategy one cannot reach the target he/she has set.

Closing remarks

With my essay I intended to transmit my experience. I am sure that many of us want to improve not only the content of the training in many ways but its methods as well. In the above mentioned I did not extra emphasize the possibilities that are provided by the Internet. In my opinion all of the teachers have up-to-date information for example about the special literature that can be reached online, they regularly involve the new scientific result into the curricula. I have not mentioned the Skype and the Messenger services either, as the leaders of the subject must use these possibilities. Of course, they can also be used during the organisation of the team and the project work. I hope that we also expect students to use them during the execution of their everyday work.

I did not hide the difficulties either. I also had a secondary purpose. I wanted to mark that the quality of work of the teacher cannot be measured how many national and international publications they have, how many times they were invited to lectures as a guest, how much time they spent abroad. Of course, the publication of the experience and the scientific results is very important as well. Although, in my opinion: the methodical creativity during the training is of the same importance at least, if we are talking about the application. However, in the professional CVs (Although, I had to fill in at least six different types in the past five years) I did not meet a rubric where I was asked to give information accordingly. It means that others were not asked either. Although, as we can see from the above mentioned the use of the new methods needs much time. I did not even mention the self-control, the continuous improvement, modification, I only referred to them. The time that has to be devoted to the trainings of this kind will never be less —significantly shorter — by the fact

²⁴ Petriné Feyér, Judit (2004): *Problem-focused teamwork (A problémaközpontú csoportmunka)* Gondolat Kiadó Kőr: ELTE, Bp

that the method becomes perfect, it settles. I do not wonder that much more know the methods than as many of them use it practically. I can hardly accept the opinion, although I know that everybody has the right to think what he/she wants, that the teacher “uses” these methods who is “lazy” to prepare for the lesson. It is not difficult to see that just the opposite is true. The question is that beside the force to research and to publish; to write tenders, to take part in international cooperations, to participate in scientific and faculty, university public life, how much time can be devoted to the improvement of the method. I did not intend these thoughts for complaints, just for raising a problem, maybe there are some among us who can find a method — procedure — strategy that enables the practice of the “eight-hour work, eight-hour rest and eight-hour entertainment”.

Innovációs törekvések a tradíciós tanítási módszerek terén

Összefoglaló

Négy éve lehetőségem nyílt két évig betekintést nyerni egy Illinois állambeli általános iskola életébe. Az iskolát eltérő kultúrához tartozó és eltérő anyanyelvvel rendelkező gyerekek látogatták. A későbbiekben megismerkedtem egy középiskola szakoktatási rendszerével Washingtonban, az American Teachers Union-nak köszönhetően. Annak ellenére, hogy az amerikai diákok a magyar diákokhoz képest kevesebb ismerettel rendelkeztek műveltség terén, nem aggódtak, hanem magabiztosak és nyugodtak voltak. Manapság ez nagy jelentőséggel bír, hiszen a mai oktatás a kompetenciára helyezi a hangsúlyt. Abból a tényből kiindulva, hogy a személyiségfejlődés feltétele a képességek fejlesztése, az új ismeretek befogadásának érdekében a tanár feladata a tananyag megértetése. Feladata az ismeretek átadása. Az oktató a diákok alapvető igényeire kell, hogy építsen, a kíváncsiságra. Olyan helyzetet kell előállítani, amelyben az alapvető belső motiváció kielégítése a mozgatórugó, a diákok maguk számára akarják felfedezni a világot, magyarázatokat keresni, megérteni a környezetet, amelyre ráleltek. Ugyanezen kíváncsiságra és érdeklődésre alapozva csoportokat kellene alkotni és a tananyagot az iskolai könyvtár és a számítógépes park segítségével elsajátíttatni. Ilyen módon a tanórák természetes velejárájává válhat a vita, az érvelés, a folyamatos visszajelzés a diákok fellépésére vonatkozóan, valamint a kooperáció. Meg szeretném osztani az olvasóval tapasztalataimat arról hogyan lehet ezeket a tanulási munkaformákat az órán, illetve az előadásokon alkalmazni annak reményében, hogy elősegítsük a diákok fejlődését és előrehaladását.

Kulcsszavak: kompetencia; kérdés, csoportmunka alkalmazása az órán; projektmunka alkalmazás

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