

ICEEPSY 2014

Modern methods of University student's activation

Sarka Hubackova^{a*}^aUniversity of Hradec Králové, Rokitanského 62, 500 03 Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

Abstract

Educationists have dealt with the problem of activity for a long time. The beginnings of their efforts are noticeable as long ago as with J. A. Comenius. Pupil's activity had been mostly explored at the beginning of the 20th century. In those days it had been taken as a necessary and important part of the process introducing to e.g. Daltonic plan or project methods. There has been a talk about so called new education. We tried conducting a small research. We took advantage of a questionnaire to explore student's attitude towards activating methods.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of ICEEPSY 2014.

Keywords: Activation of University student's; work group; blended learning; eLearning;

1. Introduction

Educationists have dealt with the problem of activity for a long time. The beginnings of their efforts are noticeable as long ago as with J. A. Comenius. He proceeds from antique experience and perceives activity as a part of nature. His pedagogical views put emphasis upon a work which enables pupils to be active and work by themselves. Pupil's position is seen as the position of a man who is independent having his rights. Com adopts the role of a teacher, whose leadership is predominant, but he requires student's activity at the same time. The process of making independent should be applicable in a gradual manner.

Pupil's activity had been mostly explored at the beginning of the 20th century. In those days it had been taken as a necessary and important part of the process introducing to e.g. Daltonic plan or project methods. There has been a talk about so called new education. (Skalková, 1971). As early as the 18th century J. J. Rousseau explains the

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +420493332302

E-mail address: sarka.hubackova@uhk.cz

education as a man's development. It proceeds from an individual's life and experience. At the second half of the 20th century activity becomes an important impulse of the further development of society. As an active man is considered such an individual who is shaping himself as well as his world. The central position takes the conception of self education which had been in background for a long time. High attention is given to pupil's group work. This form interpersonal relations between members of a group during teaching process. Activity may be conceptualized in different ways. Activity is commonly considered as an action being proper to each individual. By nature, an individual is active. From the psychological point of view, the concept of activity is being explained as a certain impulse with its own characteristics, wanting to reach specific goal. To manage that it needs more increased effort. Very important is suitable motivation, pupil's heading to a certain target and forming relations between material and pupil. (Skalková, 1971).

Activity is thought as higher effort, mobilization of mental powers and a committed involvement in the given activity, we have in mind above all the making of positive schoolwork attitude revealing itself, for instance, in student's willingness to carry on learning tasks. Activating methods may be defined as "techniques organizing the teaching process, so that the education objectives would be achieved mainly on the basis of students' own learning. At the same time, emphasis is put on thinking and problem solving." (Jankovcová, 1989).

By the educational process such a pupil is considered as active, who invests his effort and produces certain activities in a more extent measure. Just those actions enable him to get closer to a target. This target is meant as gaining knowledge. The concept of activity covers pupil's characteristics and evaluation of a pupil. His activity may be a natural or conscious one. This is given by individual's effort and follows a certain goal.

Activating techniques focus on a learner. They must satisfy an individual. He becomes an active participant of teaching process. He does not take information in a passive way only. He develops his study abilities by means of an active learning approach.

2. Activating in foreign language teaching

Preference of activity methods lies in the following facts: They excite an interest in learning to a high degree, they poster and unfold student's intensive thinking, acting and experiencing. Activating methods help cover the teaching stereotypes. As a disadvantage of these methods may be held the time needed for realization of them.

Applying the activating methods we put emphasis mostly on their asset to the well rounded pupil's personality, to the development of his independence, responsibility and creativity. These methods ensure assumptions of conscious learning, foster flexibility and creativity of thinking.

Different methods are used throughout the foreign language teaching. Very frequent is the technique of a dialog and interview. The method of a dialog is a necessary part of pedagogical communication. Its basis is the interaction relation between a teacher and a student. The dialogue is most often realized in a form of questions answers. In a higher degree we can apply a partner's cooperation of communication. Using this method partners clarify each other's standpoints. A polemic originates, the basis of which is to refute the partner's view.

The method of interview is conducted on a group basis. All participants put questions to each other, they change their views, put forward their arguments for and against, answer their questions and try solving the problem. This method is significant for practicing presentations and for formulating participant's views and thoughts. In conclusion it is necessary to sum up and review the results and to reinforce them as new findings in mind of those taking parts. It is also possible to put down these conclusions in some points.

Another frequently used method in foreign language teaching is method of problem solving. Problem solving method is considered to be the most sophisticated heuristic teaching strategy. The method is characterized by learning through trial and error.

We use more and more eLearning and blended learning in German language teaching. To activate students plays an important role also in this case. The student cannot be left in his effort alone, he must be constantly stimulated to work. The most different methods may help in individual cases. We use, for instance, listening exercises with activating tasks or assignments which students must hand in by the time given. Communication is another important kind of activation. Students of on-line courses use either synchronous communication (email, whiteboard, announcement) or asynchronous (videoconference, ICQ, Skype).

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