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Learn How Learners are Learning to Learn

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Abstract

The second presentation is about different ways of gathering knowledge' as part of the To-Gather project. How can 'the multiple identity' know and understand 'the multiple society' in a multiple intelligent way? The subject is migration. We will have short descriptions of countries in the To-Gather symposium: Slovenia, Netherlands, Denmark, Latvia and Portugal and Turkey. Societies and Europe as a whole are multicultural (NW,NE,SW,SE) as a consequence of mobility and migration. Gathering knowledge means intercultural dialogue which depends on intercultural competence. The step by step method of "To -gather" helps to develop learners "intercultural competence." Knowledge give learners access to other cultures and their discourses and introduces learners of different kinds of culture

Learn how learners are learning to learn is about different ways of gathering knowledge. Our starting point is the question How can 'the multiple identity' know and understand 'the multiple society' in a multiple intelligent way? A main problematic is mobility and migration in Europe. What makes society multiple? Each quadrant from Europe (NW,NE,SW, SE) has internalized different cultural values and codes of behaviour and could be seen as a collective bubble full of events, circumstances, groups, ideas, beliefs and people.

The multiple society or network society is a form of society increasingly organizing its relationships with and within electronically processed information networks, gradually replacing or complementing the "old" social networks of personal face-to-face communication. Sometimes it is called it 'the liquid society' or 'hybrid society'. We are living in a virtual biotope: a technological-economical system, dominated by commerce, money and power. Maybe without knowing it, we are connected to a network, a complex technological system. The chaos-theory is transferred into reality with the colonisation of the individual in and by the network-society. In the network-society every subject has to do everything. Reality and virtual reality are mixed. Post-modern heroes or idols are replacing us emotionally in soaps, sports, music or films. Our inner life is empty and we're getting bored more quickly and easily. A lot of young people are talking mobile with each other about completely nothing. It's dangerous because it makes us more capable of the 'earth-gnome'. It is a life-style à la carte, focussed on money, pleasure and consumption. The main problematic becomes young people communication and the way, how they learn and gather knowledge's.

Each quadrant also has different characteristics, called dimensions:

The first dimension is individualism/collectivism. This is a measure of the degree to which cultures prefer autonomy or group affiliation.

The second dimension is power distance, the degree to which cultures prefer a more or less autocratic structure.

The third dimension is uncertainty avoidance, about the degree to which cultures feel uncomfortable with uncertainty.

The fourth dimension is about masculinity and femininity such as rational or emotional, assertive, competitive or ambitious.

The fifth dimension is the look at the future, which is about the stress for achievement, hope and material success.

The four quadrants and five dimensions are a great starting point to understand the diversity of Europe and 'the multiple societies. To a certain extent it may explain the identity of people in a quadrant, although sometimes the differences inside a quadrant are bigger than among the quadrants. It is also important to realize that some countries don't neatly fit in their quadrant such as Poland and Belgium or Netherlands. Cultural values are deep inside us and last for a long time. Those values are linked to a quadrant but also to the individuals, who live in that quadrant. The most important becomes to understand each quadrant in Europe. Each country values are very important for each person who migrate to other country in the Europe. Music is one of the ways how to communicate with other people in other quadrants. In the same time music reminds and represents the mother country and the immigrated country.

In the learning process it is very important to get more knowledge about each country in different quadrants in Europe. Learners can see the contrasts and the similarities among the countries in Europe. Different kinds of art ,especially using music, visual arts and design, literature, drama and dancing, art works, pictures in aesthetic way help as *sense-opener* and motivational tool for becoming familiar with different topics of educational activities such as identity, migrations and mobility , the otherness.

At the end the similarities and at the same time the differences especially in every local music and art, photos, pictures lead them to the intercultural dialogue. As a conclusion this activity shows the multiple choice identity in Europe.

That can be an example of how learners are learning to learn. The most important that in this way young people can think "out of the box". Howard Gardner in his theory about "Five minds for the future" emphasizes the creative mind. A person can find new knowledge, new ideas and creative ways of thinking and unusual solutions. Otherwise he will lose his surplus value to the computer and technology and will be isolated from creative people.

When we talk about multiple intelligences and five minds for the future, we are talking about a learning strategy that fits in a multiple reality. This is about real life learning and lifelong learning, a learning strategy that's rooted in society, sustainable and meaningful for the learner. In other words: in a network-society fits network-thinking and network-learning. Network-learning is a form of education, which site of production of knowledge and ideas, their circulation and consumption is the global computers' network. The learning process is "decentralized" and proceeds online. Young people, belonging to "net-generation", can freely choose among information available, exchange their knowledge and ideas via internet and at the same time construct new ideas. The

traditional “top-down” teacher-students education paradigm is thus becoming ineffective and obsolete. This also means that we may synchronise the learner route and the teacher route. For example a sense-opener, multiple intelligences, knowledge, creative learning and systems-thinking are essential for the learner and the teacher. Music may be an important medium between the learner and the teacher. That’s why the Field of View could be personified and linked to the learning style. The learner is now situated in the middle field. The past is his own background or starting point and future is his future. The upper field is filled with learning theories and theories about society, while practice is in the lower field, down to earth or rather down to the classroom. In this way the Field of View is synchronized with and mirrored in the personal learning process. This means that there are not only many strings between the fields but also inside the fields between the person and the past, present, future, brain drops and reality.

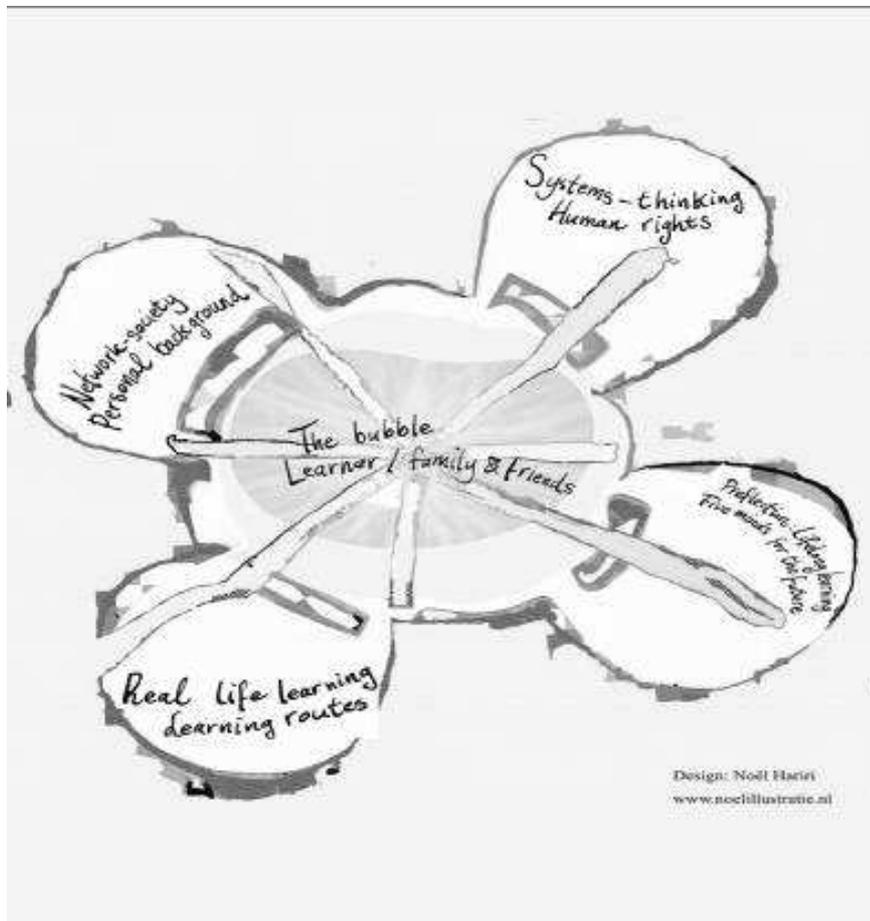


Fig. 1: Field of view of the learner (Field of view of the learner (Variation on the original idea of Henk Visser)

Learn how learners are learning to learn in multiple intelligence, flow and aesthetics way

Multiple Intelligence is an educational theory, which describes an array of eight different kinds of "intelligences" exhibited by human beings:

- linguistic intelligence ("word smart"):
- logical-mathematical intelligence ("number/reasoning smart")
- spatial intelligence ("picture smart")
- bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence ("body smart")
- musical intelligence ("music smart")
- interpersonal intelligence ("people smart")
- intrapersonal intelligence ("self smart")

Each individual manifests varying levels of these different intelligences, and thus each person has a unique cognitive profile. The learning routes of the "To-Gather" project are created in a way to stimulate a broader range of human potentials or multiple intelligences. In To-Gather aesthetics and especially music is used in many ways. It can be a sense-opener, a source of knowledge, a problem-solver, and a way of communication, creation, presentation and reflection.

Another way to look at a subject from different perspectives is 'lateral thinking' using the six hats of Edward de Bono. In To-Gather it is used for problem-solving and reflection:

Flow ('Crackled learning') is the mental state of operation in which the person is fully immersed in what he or she is doing by a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity. Flow is completely focused motivation. It is a single-minded immersion and represents perhaps the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performing and learning. In flow the emotions are not just contained and channelled, but positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand. To be caught in the ennui of depression or the agitation of anxiety is to be barred from flow. The hallmark of flow is a feeling of spontaneous joy, even rapture, while performing a task.

It is about fascinating young people through a mix of learning styles, images, and work and presentation forms. Aesthetics and especially music is a perfect tool to internalize knowledge, to give personal meaning to it, to transfer it into concrete behaviour and to create the flow.

Learn how learners are learning to learn in aesthetic way.

Henrik Bak emphasizes, that in education aesthetics apparently seems to be an item treated with ambivalence. On the one hand aesthetics as such is regarded a fundamental part of human culture and since the golden age of the ancient Greece philosophers have focused on this phenomenon as vital and essential for human existence.

On the other hand, when it comes to the role of aesthetics in practice in the schools and in educational context as such (conferences, national and international tests¹, curriculums and other.) the aesthetic subjects very often get very little attention.

Actually we observe that both in higher education and in primary, secondary and high schools the lessons in aesthetic subjects are being cut down in order to give more priority to traditional subjects such as mathematics and language.

In the To-Gather project we do not underestimate the importance of traditional skills such as language and mathematics. But we certainly want to give priority to the aesthetic approach to the learning process. In fact we claim that in order to face the rapid development of the world, the globalization and the environmental crisis the learners must be presented to the aesthetics as mind opener, which means a source bringing meaning and understanding to children and young people living in time of rapid changes and globalization.

Apart from this effort is at the same time to teach children and young people how to use the aesthetic tools as communicative and innovative tools in order to be able to research, experiment and express them.

In other words: It is important that learners of today acquire the skill that makes them able to master the aesthetical modes of expression.

Robi Kroflic emphasizes, if art experience is a kind of embodied knowledge about me and the other, then we have to find something in its inner structure that confirms its value beyond a utilitarian criteria. In the RAND study *Gifts of the Muse (Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts)* we find a further explanation of art as a communicative process:

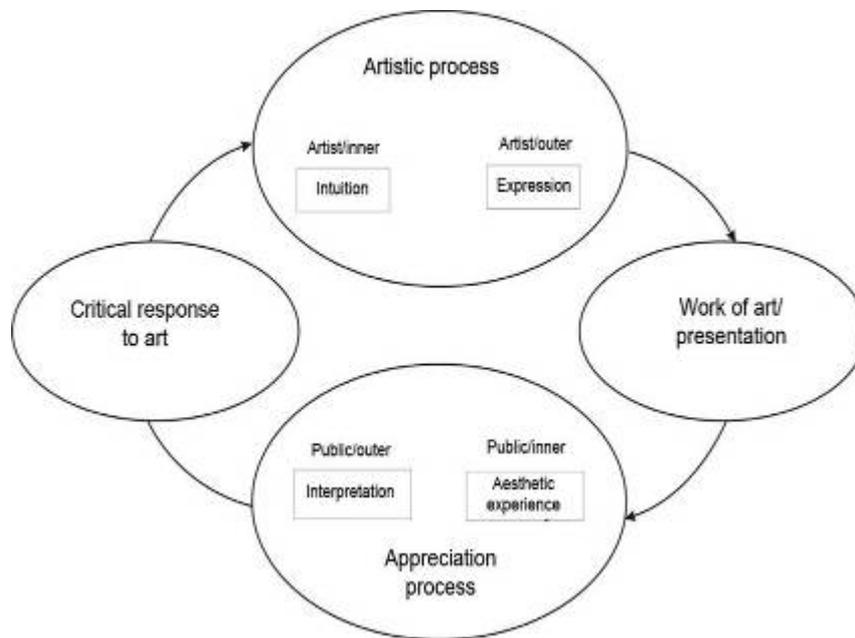


Figure 2: Art as a Communicative Process

Systems-thinking and relational pedagogy –the way how learners are learning to learn.

Systems- thinking is the process of understanding how things influence one another other within a whole. In nature systems thinking examples include ecosystems in which various elements such as air, water, movement, plant and animals work together to survive or perish. In organizations, systems consist of people, structures, and processes that work together to make an organization healthy or unhealthy. In To-Gather it is about linking society, young people and learning strategies. How do learners are learning to learn? What's the best way to learn? That's why we work with learning routes and steps. That's why we use social constructivism to let the learner deign his own world. Systems thinking has been defined as an approach to problem solving, by viewing "problems" as parts of an overall system, rather than reacting to specific part, outcomes or events and potentially contributing to further development of unintended consequences. Systems thinking is not one thing but a set of habits or practices within a framework that is based on the belief that the component, parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. Systems thinking focuses on cyclical rather than linear cause and effect.

Why is systems-thinking so important? Young people learn to know the worlds as a network, a system in which everything is connected to everything. They understand their own role and become conscious of their view on this dynamic system. It may help to handle the busload of information and to be able to really solve problems and not only to concentrate on the symptoms. The result may be that they are becoming constructors of the system in cooperation with others (social constructivism).

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