Methods, evaluations and feedback

Nordplus project "New and Old Democracies"

2012 - 2014

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Methods

The following methods are part of the result of the work made of the participants in the Nordplus supported project »New and old democracies« from September 2012 to September 2014.
We have chosen the most important methods used at our partner meetings.
Because the project has been involving 5 different partner countries with different pedagogical traditions the methods will appear in a different way. All the methods have been tried during the project and the participants have found them usefull.

The Cultural Mosaic

The purpose – Why?

- Sometimes when we talk we misunderstand each other despite using the same words.
- The same words may give different associations to different people.

Hence the purpose is

- To facilitate debate speaking from images discussing our associations/point of view.
- To bridge gaps and promote dialogue/better understanding between or within groups.

The Cultural Mosaic is a debate game, which bridges and enhances dialogues through the creation of a common understanding. Despite we use the same words we may have different associations and by using the deck of cards the participants will be inspired to initiate a debate starting from individual or common associations through images.

How to use The Cultural Mosaic – A Quick Reference Guide

1. Choose the theme(s) you wish to focus on.
2. Pick a deck of either the printed debate cards from Folkevirke or the free online version to download and print.
3. Divide the participants into groups of 4-6 persons.
4. Introduce the questions the group(s) should focus on.
5. Each participant choses 2-3 debate cards they find fitting the theme and question.
6. Each participant tells the other group members about the chosen images (e.g. associations or experiences and/or traditions linked to the image and theme).
7. While the images are being discussed all group members can add their own experiences and associations linked to the various images.
8. The group agrees on 3 cards they feel covers and illustrates the group discussions within the theme/question.
9. The group shares the chosen images with the other groups and explains why the cards were chosen and the link to the question(s) debated (as a tool to share the main points of the various group discussions between the groups).
10. A common discussion between all groups may be facilitated to share points of views, ask questions and elaborate on the individual group discussion.

Ideas for setting up for the debate

There are many ways to use the material and below you will find a few suggestions for the various themes – but you may as well yourself add more or amend the below to fit your need and purpose.

- Invite for a study circle to debate the theme: »What is typical Danish« using the poster as invitation and the flyers for the participants to ensure all has a common understanding and knowledge of the theme. The questions listed in the flyer can be used to kick start the debate. If you wish to study and explore the theme further the flyer contains a list of literature.
- Place the full amount of cards from the theme: »Solidarity« (or any other theme chosen) with

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the image facing up on a large table. Initiate a debate using the questions from the flyer. This way of using the material may be beneficial for use in larger groups and/or workshops.

- Kick start a debate during for instance parent-teacher meetings at school, kindergarten or youth clubs. Initiate the debate asking the participants to pick images they find relates to their image of »family« and discuss using the questions of the flyer or other themes relating to family and family life.
- Exhibit the posters at the local library and share the flyers with the guests to encourage spontaneous discussions among visitors.
- Language schools and organisations working with integration and culture may find the »Culture« and »Tradition« themes useful to facilitate and initiate discussions. It is important to know, understand and discuss the traditions and culture of any new society one may become a part of. Opening up for dialogue and discussion will as well allow room for pointing out both similarities and differences from own cultural background.
- The theme »Tradition« can be useful when facilitating dialogue and debate among and between generations. How many and which type of traditions are important to keep and pass on and do we allow room for creation of new traditions? Use the cards as starting point when initiating debate between different generations.

Decision making Tree

Goals of the activity are

1. Elaborating learners knowledge about the issues choosen for analyse.
2. Developing learners teamwork and analytical skills.
3. Enhancing learners presentation skills.

The activity can be arranged with the groups of 3-30 participants. The time needed for the activity depends on the number of participants but cannot be less than approximately 30 minutes even if there are only 3 participants.

Participants do need prepared »Decision making Tree handout« or they can draw it following facilitator's instructions by themselves.

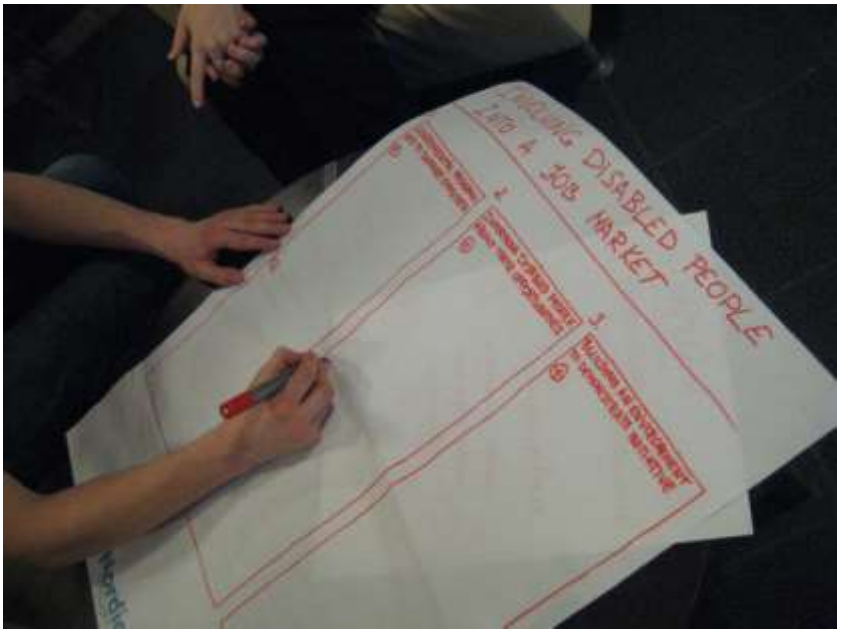
Description

1. Facilitator will formulate together with the learners/participants a problem that needs a solution.
2. The participants will form discussion groups consisting of 3-10 people.
3. All the groups will discuss three alternative ways for solving the same formulated commonly problem.
4. Each group will »document« on the »Decision making Tree handout«

[1] their three alternative ideas for solving the problem, so that the strengths and weaknesses of each solution will be listed on the handout. So all together – three alternative ways of solutions to solve the problem will be examined by each group on the handout in written form.

5. Out of three alternatives one will be voted by the groupmembers as the best solution.
6. The groups will introduce all the alternative ways offered by the group to the other groups explaining the strengths and weaknesses of each solution and summarizing why the winning solution was voted in the group to be the favorite solution.
7. Finally – general discussion about the process of the work done in the groups and about the offered by the other groups different solutions will follow.

[1] NB! The handout should be large enough and preferably in landscape format offering sufficient space for analyzing each solution's strengths and weaknesses.



The democratic dialogue

Goal of the activity
Educate people to be good democrats.

Description
In Denmark we have a tradition for the democratic dialogue dating back to the 19th century.
In 1849 Denmark got a free constitution. It was the result of cooperation between well-educated citizens who wished to have a share of the powers held by the King. The King yielded the powers voluntarily, and on June 5, 1849 Denmark became a democratic state. Parallel to writing the new constitution, the fathers of the constitution were discussing how to educate the Danes to become active citizens and democratic people.
Many of the ideas originating from these deliberations form the basis of the teaching and education as it is practiced in Denmark today.
In the 19th century 80 percent of the Danish population was country people. The ideas of N.F.S. Grundtvig regarding education of the Danish country people were of great significance to the democratic development in Denmark.
N.F.S. Grundtvig lived from 1783 to 1872. He was educated in theology and acted as a clergyman at various places in Denmark. He spent his last active years as a vicar at Vartov, a parish in Copenhagen. He has written several hundred hymns, which are still being sung in Danish churches and at high festivals in Danish homes and schools. Besides his religious activities he was a politician and a member of the Danish parliament. In his speeches and writings Grundtvig worked actively to educate good Danish democrats. He claimed that it was easier to acquire new knowledge in one's youth – not in one's childhood. The way to educate was through »the living word«. In Grundtvig's opinion a free and active adult education should not build on books and teachers' authority, but on the interaction of equal conversation between student and teacher – the democratic dialogue. These ideas and thoughts were realized at numerous folk high schools which sprang up all over Denmark, the first one in 1844 close to the Danish/German border in Rødding. At these schools the Danish youth gathered and received an education that made them active citizens in the Danish democracy. Folk high schools still exist all over Denmark. Here Danes congregate from country and towns and take part in lectures, discussions and study circles dealing with a wide spectrum of subjects. Common to all the folk high schools is that the education is liberal. The education is non-formal meaning that the students do not pass an examination at the end of the course. Today Danes from all social classes and of all ages attend the folk high school education. They live at the schools and the courses last from one week to one year.

Description of Educational methodology Debates

Goal of the activity
To practice debates for learning.

Description
Debate is the educational program teaching a culture of speech, application of psychological laws, principles of logic. Debates are useful both for teachers and for students in gaining the experience of speaking up and listening. Making beforehand researches on interesting and important debate topics debate participants deeply study a new knowledge and get a lot of information for everyday use.
Debating by students on educational context is the conversation in time frames between two teams of participants (supporting and contradictious ones). An estimation of

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arguments makes a court consisting of one or more judges. The task of participant team is to persuade the court in advantage of its arguments over ones of the opponent team. Each team is prepared for debating both on the supporting and contradictious view of discussing item. Thus they train to lead the debates as the argument of opinions but not of persons.

Debates are here hold in three languages – Latvian, Russian, English, which gives and advantage of improving language skills along with developing the skills of speaking out and gaining new information. The participation in debates of the representatives of national minorities in Latvia provides the process of integration in Latvian society and creates an advantageous environment for cooperation.

The participation in debates helps

- To present, reason and defend one's opinion.
- To be tolerant and respectful to opponent's point of view.
- To develop critical and analytical way of thinking.
- To improve communication skills and attentive listening.
- To work with different information sources and materials, to perform a research work.
- To develop skills of arranging of materials and ideas.
- To develop public performance and persuasion skills.
- To develop language skills and speaking other language.

The main principles of the educational debates are

- To practice debates for learning! – Developing is most important than triumph. Debates provide the developing of necessary skills for living in modern democratic society.
- To debate with respect to the opponent! – Respect is an overall idea of the debates. The debates as an action start with human's curiosity. Debaters on different opinions are searching together for true answers, and they have to be proper in arguments, substantiation and interrogation answers.

Intercultural Group work

Goals of the activity are

To enhance students' cross-cultural capability and increase their sense of belonging.

Description

If teachers ask students to tackle assessment tasks and projects in groups, it can lead to rich learning experiences. Group work in culturally diverse groups can enhance students' cross-cultural capability and increase their sense of belonging. However, these outcomes are neither inevitable nor easily achieved – they rest on teachers' pedagogic interventions (Montgomery, 2009) and when these are absent, much less positive outcomes are common as Australian researchers Summers and Volet (2008) found when they surveyed home and international students.

S-G-T analyzing

Goal of the activity is
To develop an organization.

Description
S-G-T ANALIZING.

S = situation here and now in the organization.
G = goal for our developing.
T = tasks and tools to reach the goal and improve the situation.

General description
The group /individual describe the situation as best as possible.
Then it's time to describe the realistic goal.
And see what tools that is available and what tasks that must be done.
Thought discussion and analyzing the participants see what is realistic and what is not realistic to work with. This is also the normal basic way to write a political case from administration to political, democratic treatment in local council and committees in Sveio and Norway.
Method we use in developing of organizations.

The study circle as the workshop of democracy

Goals of the activity are
The participants will acquire a knowledge which enables them to partake in the democratic process and thereby influence their own life conditions.

Description
A study circle can be defined as a group of people who, by the independent efforts of each participant, look at various subjects based on specially selected study material.
The participants of a study circle get the opportunity of learning to know themselves and recognize own talents and limitations in interaction with the other members of the group, despite the differences of social classes and age-groups that may exist. During the process many talents are brought to light. The aim of the study circle work is to examine a common subject which is of interest to all the group members. In this way they acquire knowledge and understanding of political, cultural, and social connections. The participants will acquire a knowledge which enables them to partake in the democratic process and thereby influence their own life conditions.
The tools of the study circle are dialogue, discussion and argumentation – all of these being expressions of conversation which form part of the democratic way of life.
Dialogue. Conversation between two parties expressing their views on a well-defined subject. Remember they do not have to agree on the subject!
Discussion. An exchange of opinions between several parties.
Argumentation. A demonstration of proof to be used in the dialogue and discussion. An argument is said to be logically valid if the conclusion is built on premises – conditions – that are all true.
The purpose of a study circle is to motivate the participants to put in an independent effort, as well as to learn how to analyze and evaluate. The total benefit of the efforts of the group cannot be measured, since the results and conclusions of the work will be different for each member of the group, even if they are based on the same facts, because the members have different personal experiences, attitudes and backgrounds. It is natural to assume that a study circle will be more dynamic the more different its members are. On the other hand, the members should not be so different that they do not understand each other. This could be the result if their backgrounds are culturally different, if for

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instance they come from different countries or profess different religions and thereby have different social and ethical norms.
In a well-functioning study circle all contributions have equal value, and the conversations take place according to a fixed set of rules that leaves room for each member of the group. On top of the experience, the members increase their self-worth and ability to formulate own views. They get the experience of navigation which is necessary for taking part in the social life.
The study circle may be called the workshop of democracy.

The »Zoom-method«

Goal of the activity is
Co-operation.

Description
Explanation of the methods »Zoom and rezoom«.

This method is a hands-on visual group activity that focuses on collaboration, communication and problem solving.
This activity can be applied to a diverse group without a common spoken language.

- This game is based on the intriguing, wordless, picture books »Zoom« and »Re-Zoom« by Istvan Banyai which consist of 30 sequential »pictures within pictures«. The Zoom narrative moves from a rooster to a ship to a city street to a desert island and outer space. Zoom has been published in 18 countries. The Re-Zoom narrative moves from an Egyptian hieroglyphic to a film set to an elephant ride to a billboard to a train.
- To create the game from the book, separate the picture pages of the book into one page sheets and laminate or place in clear plastic sleeves to protect them and prolong usage.
- Hand out one picture per person (make sure a continuous sequence is used).
- Explain that participants may only look at their own pictures and must keep their pictures hidden from others.
- Encourage participants to study their picture, since it contains important information to help solve a problem.
- The challenge is for the group to sequence the pictures in the correct order without looking at one another's pictures.
- Participants will generally mill around talking to others to see whether their pictures have anything in common. Sometimes leadership efforts will emerge to try to understand the overall story.
- When the group believes they have all the pictures in order (usually after ~15 minutes), the pictures can be turned over for everyone to see.

Facilitator's notes

- Works with any age group, including corporate groups.
- Can be done indoors or outdoors.
- Once the challenge is finished, allow everyone to see the pictures and encourage participants to sort out any mistakes in the order (can be done on a table or the floor), then let everyone walk around view the pictures in sequence so they understand the full story.

Variations

- Use as a novel icebreaker by handing each participant a picture on arrival. When everyone has arrived, explain that each person is holding part of a story and that the group task is to find out what the story is by putting their pictures in sequence.
- Use a time limit to increase difficulty and enhance focus on teamwork.
- Team performance can be measured (e.g., for a competition) by counting how many pictures are out of sequence.
- If there are a few more people than cards, then pair people up.
- For larger groups, if there is enough people then have 2 or more groups running the activity at the same time or use a sequence of cards to suit the group size.
- For smaller groups, try disallowing talking. This increases the difficulty and creates the need

for expressive sign language. In general, allow large groups to talk because there is enough complexity sorting out all the pictures.

- Another way to increase complexity with small groups is to give each person more than one picture.
- To reduce complexity for young groups (e.g., pre-school), allow a small group to look through all pictures and organize the story from beginning to end.

Processing ideas

- There is usually much potential for debriefing and discussion.
- Why was it hard to get the story together?
  (Everyone had a piece, but no-one had the big picture).
- What type of communication was used in attempting to solve the problem?
- What communication methods might have worked better? e.g., Imagine if, at the outset, the group had taken the time to let each person describe his/her picture to the rest of the group. What would have happened then? Would the solution have been found faster? What prevented such strategies from being considered?
- Did you try to »second position« (i.e., see one's communications from the perspective of others)?
- What kind of leadership was used to tackle the problem?
- Who were the leaders? Why?
- What style of leadership might have worked best?
- If you were to tackle a similar activity again, what do you think this group could do differently?
- What real life activities are similar to this activity?

References

- Banyai, I. (1995). Zoom New York: Viking/Penguin.
- Banyai, I. (1998). Re-Zoom New York: Viking/Penguin.

The activity often takes around 15 minutes (depending on the selected approach and number of participants).
The method is fun and very effective on condition that all elements of the method description are respected.

The Portfolio-Method

A portfolio may contain manuscripts for lectures, - short films, posters, photographs, magazines, interviews and a lot of other things. The contents of the portfolios show, what each and every of the participants has performed in order to achieve the aim of the project. The part of the portfolio which has common interest will be put on the website.
This means that members from the participant's organization shall be engaged in collecting material.
The Portfolio-Method is in itself an evaluation method. The method can be described as a systematic collection of the participant´s work and other forms of documentation, which taken as a whole draws a picture of the development of the project. When we arrive at a common definition and understanding of the theme and thereby at a common goal for the project, each partner´s portfolio will later reveal the amount of ideas, efforts and progress achieved by each participant in order to reach the common goal.
The product of the project is currently evaluated and tested in the participating organizations in between the meetings.

Tree evaluation

With this evaluation method, people realize that they are a part of the learning process of themselves and the others.

- The participants get a drawing of a tree with a lot of puppets.

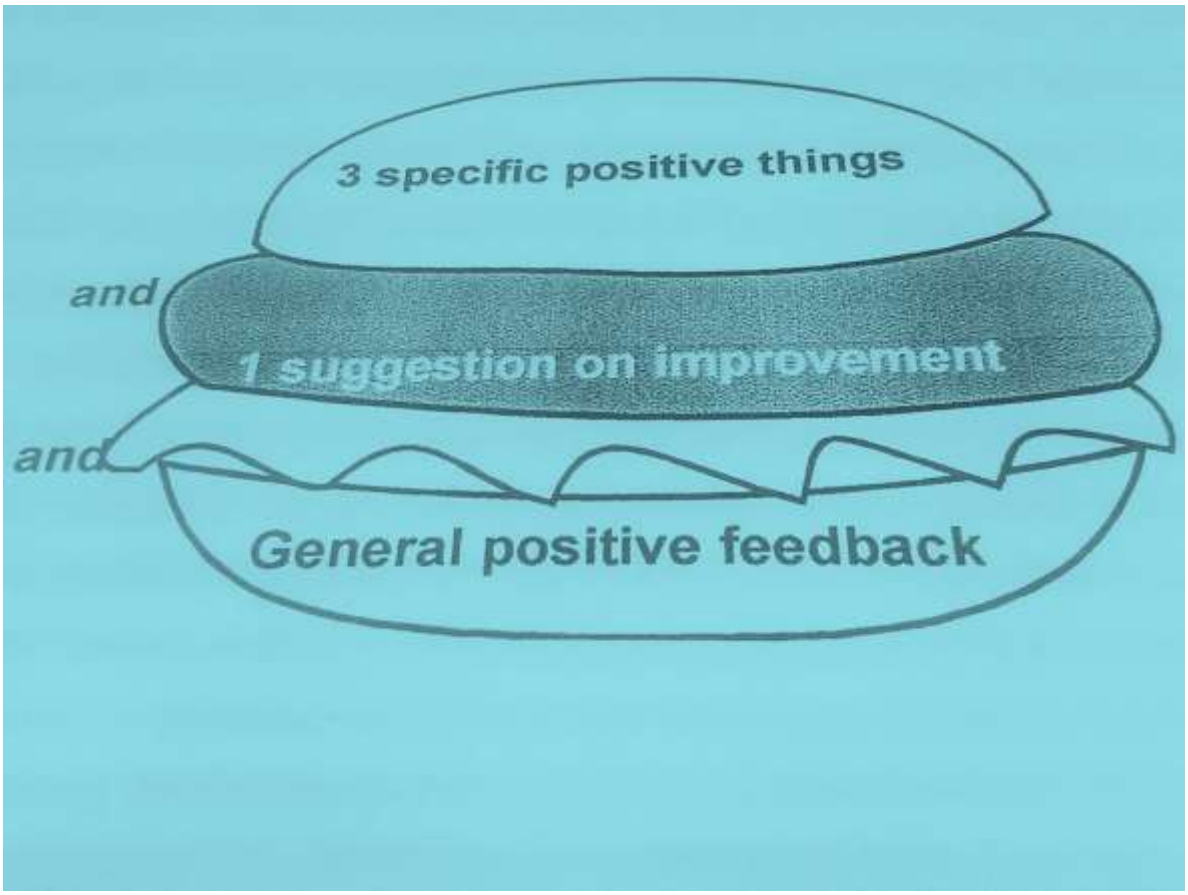
- They fill in individually witch position correlates with their situation within the group.

- They motivate their choice for the entire group.

Everyone is able to deal his choice with the group and realizes how important his role is within the learning process.
We realize that language is an important element for participation. It is necessary that we help each other and find more interactive workshops.

The Sandwich Model

This is a method to report back and create growth. The model consists of:



Lack of feedback has been identified as one of the top 3 barriers to effective work performance (along with performance expectations and skills). The most common mistakes while giving feedback are: judging and criticizing, not recognizing positives or, on the contrary, avoiding giving feedback because of person´s discomfort (e.g. fear of hurting somebody´s feelings).