Willingness to change attitude

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Willingness to learn/change depends on self motivation (aims, needs, values) of the learner and on the competence of the teacher who respects the rules of effective teaching to adults. Adults learn (D. Demetrio 2006) if they are motivated by the following needs:

- Adaptation (in order not to find oneself in the situation of pressure put by new circumstances and aspirations)

- Transformation (to modernise one's habits and to give them a direction)

- Reproduction (to confirm and consolidate the knowledge acquired)

Adults learn if they find themselves, expectedly or unexpectedly, in the surroundings connected with love, work, play or grief.

Both families belonging to minority groups at school as well as teachers find themselves in an existential situation, requiring changing habits on both sides, the patterns of thought and actions. The need to face the challenges of intercultural education motivates both parties to seek common solutions.

Teachers and parents' objectives (good education for all), needs (adaptation, transformation and reproduction) as well as values (good of the child, democratic coexistence standards) may motivate both parties to get involved in mutual cooperation and self-development within intercultural dialogue at school.

Motivation refers to our desire to communicate appropriately and effectively with others. In communication with strangers avoiding anxiety is an important motivating factor. As our anxiety becomes high it leads us to avoid communicating with strangers. But most of us want to see ourselves as nonprejudiced and caring people. We may, therefore, want to interact with strangers to sustain our self-concept. Holding

both attitudes at the same time is not unusual. To reduce anxiety, we must to be mindful and tolerate. To reduce uncertainty, we must to be able to possess the skills to gain knowledge of others and their culture. (W.B. Gudykunst)

It is important to include in educational process the knowledge about an ambiguity and to let learners to express their anxiety and uncertainty in contact with strangers.

EXPERRIMENTAL LEARNING THEORY (D. KOLB)

David Kolb's learning styles model and experimental learning theory are acknowledged as fundamental concept towards our understanding and explaining human learning behavior, and towards helping others to learn.

Kolb's learning theory sets out 4 distinct learning styles, which are based on four-stage learning cycle. 'Immediate or concrete experiences' provide a basis for 'observations and reflections' these `observations and reflections` are assimilated and distilled into 'abstract concepts' producing new implications for action which can be 'actively tested' in turn creating new experiences.

While planning teachers and teachers-parents training courses is important that educational process represents a learning cycle or spiral where the learner `touches all the bases`, a cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting.

Cognitive attitude, which is a component of intercultural competence is shaped on the basis of the following epistemological principles:

1. Learning about a different culture is always a two-directional action and phenomenon, it is an interaction of the culture we learn about and of the one which learns about ours
2. Intercultural communication is the reason of the cultures change, it is a kind of exchange – being ready to respond to the presence of other forms of existence.

3. Each form of learning about other cultures is also an opportunity to learn about own culture. (D. Bouchet)

Pedagogic principles and methods

PRINCIPLES FOR ADULT LEARNING (J.K. VELLA, 1995)

An adult learning is best achieved in dialogue. Following principles and practices are ways to begin, maintain and nurture the dialogue:

*   Needs assessment: participation of the learners in naming what is to be learned.

*   Safety in the environment and the process. We create a context for learning. That context can be made safe.

*   Sound relationships between teacher and learner and among learners involve respect, safety, open communication, listening and humility.

*   Sequence of content and reinforcement. Basic concept is: from easy to difficult, from simple to complex.

*   Praxis: action with reflection or learning by doing. (look D. Kolb theory)

*   Respect for learners as decision-makers. Adults need to understand that they themselves decide what occurs for them in the learning event. They are learning what they need for their context.

*   Ideas, feelings and actions: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learning.

*   Immediacy of the learning. Research recognizes that adult learners need to see immediate usefulness of new learning: the skills, knowledge, or attitudes they are working to acquire.

*   Clear roles and role development. Education is never neutral. The educator is always passing on values. It is important to be aware in what values we work out of when training and educating others. When we are open with learners they become confident. This is beginning of the empowering process, which is the real purpose of education. (P. Freire)

*   Teamwork and use of small groups.

*   Engagements of the learners in what they are learning.

*   Accountability: The design of learning events must be accountable to the learners. The learners in teams are accountable to their colleagues and to the teacher. They are accountable to themselves to recreate the content so it really is immediately in their context. (J.K Vella)

Motivation

12 principles of getting the best out of people (L.A. McGinnis):

1. Expect the best from people whom you lead
2. Be aware of other people's needs
3. Put the level of excellence high
4. Create the environment where a mishap does not mean a loss
5. If someone goes in your direction – join him
6. Make use of past experience in order to encourage success
7. Show appreciation and praise achievements
8. Apply both positive and negative reinforcement
9. The necessity to compete apply sparingly
10. Praise cooperation
11. Allow brainstorming in the group
12. Try to maintain a high level of your motivation

Methods:

*   Teamwork

*   Group discussion

*   Role plays

*   Simulation games

*   Visual moderation

2