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Interactive Teaching Methods Support Diversity and Students' Educational and Social Inclusion

Abstract

The study entitled *Interactive Teaching Methods Support Diversity and Educational and Social Inclusion* analyzes the influence of interactive methods on the class of students as a social group, under the conditions of their presence in the didactic act, respectively the changes that occur in the learning process of students as a result of their use. The research method used was the semi-structured interview. The sample of participants consisted of 25 secondary school students. The research results provide information about the educational and social effects experienced by students as a result of integrating interactive methods into lessons. Specifically, freedom of expression and action, the realization that each person is unique, and the fact that human diversity is natural are benefits that accompany the presence of interactive methods. Indeed, the feeling of belonging to the group, the feeling of educational and social inclusion, the increased cohesion of the group of pupils, and the confidence in one's potential are the results of teamwork, the encouragement of free expression and dialogue, which are characteristic features of interactive methods. The learning process also undergoes essential changes, with interactive methods positively impacting the understanding of new information. School motivation and interest in learning are also enhanced by encouraging free, open expression. In conclusion, secondary school students' diversity and educational and social inclusion are supported by using interactive teaching methods.
Keywords: interactive teaching methods, diversity, educational inclusion, social inclusion.

1. The issues studied

We all observe the uniqueness of each educational approach. The people determine it, the time, the place, the information, and the values on which the

action is constructed. The uniqueness of the educational act is an expression of diversity.

The diversity of human beings, the incredible ways in which they can express themselves and act, their knowledge, their level of openness towards others, and their level of creativity all combine to express a new product. Today's human being is a being who seeks information, adapts what he possesses, and creates, in turn, and who expresses the idea of diversity in everything he does. These attributes of today's human beings are even more strongly present in today's teachers, who are fully aware that the harmonious development of children requires practical, well-thought-out actions tailored to each individual.

Interactive methods and teaching strategies are designed to support understanding new information, active learning, dialogue and cooperation, education, information, practice, and searching for the best possible working options. A didactic activity is also appreciated in terms of the teaching methods it proposes, and the proper selection and integration of these methods generate attractiveness and effectiveness. The method can also be seen as "a way of action, a tool with which pupils, under the guidance of the teacher or independently, acquire and deepen their knowledge, form and develop intellectual and practical skills and abilities, aptitudes and attitudes" (Bocoș, 2002, p. 122). In modern didactics, "the teaching method is understood as a certain way of proceeding, which tends to place the pupil in a more or less directed learning situation, which comes close to identification with scientific research, the pursuit and discovery of truth and its link to the practical aspects of life" (Chiș, Ionescu, 2001, p. 126).

Interactive methods lead students to be placed in situations of debate on a topic they are interested in, using different arguments that help them decipher the problem, understand its content more efficiently, and develop critical thinking concerning what they read or the information they receive. By using interactive methods, students can express themselves more easily, both orally and in writing, and argumentatively express a point of view. "Interactive methods are aimed at optimizing communication by observing inhibitory tendencies that may arise within the group" (Pânișoară, 2003, p. 140).

Interactive methods combine with engaging learning. "It is desirable that pupils' active and interactive involvement and (inter)active learning should help them to discover the pleasure of learning, which can give rise to positive feelings – of confidence in their potential, desire for knowledge, fulfilment, et cetera." (Bocoș, 2002, p. 63). These methods encourage interaction and socialization among pupils. They often involve working in small groups or pairs, which stimulates the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences, as well as the confrontation of opinions to clarify the situation and identify solutions. The effective use of interactive methods presupposes getting to know the educational group as a whole, getting to know each pupil, and focusing on the meeting topic. Only

a correct projection of the situation in which these elements coexist makes it possible to choose the best teaching methods capable of activating the pupils and generating "light", results and satisfaction for each pupil, inclusion in the working group facilitating social inclusion. In other words, the involvement of the pupils positively influences the educational group in the direction of the idea of equality of its members, equality of access to education being desired to be accompanied by equality of process and outcome.

2. The general aim of the work

This research aims to study the effects of interactive teaching methods on the social group class of students and the learning process.

3. Research methodology

a. Specific objectives pursued

1. *To identify at least 3 significant influences of interactive methods on the class of students as a social group under their presence in the teaching act.*
2. *To observe at least 5 changes in students' learning process due to integrating interactive methods in the teaching process.*

b. Instruments used for data collection and study participants

The research is qualitative. The primary method used to obtain data is an interview. The interview we applied was semi-structured and contained 10 items. The sample of participants consisted of 25 secondary school students from Timisoara, Romania. The selection criterion for the students forming the group of interviewees is to be secondary school students (grades V – VIII). They, having been informed about the topic and purpose of the interview, expressed their willingness to participate in the study. Because they were minors, their parents were informed about the content of the interview and the purpose of the interview in order to find out their children's opinions on the subject of the research topic. It was understood that, with the help of the interviews, we want to identify the student's perspective on using interactive methods in the classroom and what influence their presence as part of the class collective has on the learning process. Parents gave their informed consent for their children's participation in the study.

The interviews were conducted individually face-to-face and involved interaction dialogue for about 10-15 minutes.

c. Presentation and interpretation of results concerning the objectives pursued

The first question addressed to the students was, "Are you familiar with the concept of interactive teaching methods?" 80% of the respondents answered yes without hesitation. The others needed further explanation to give a positive answer.

Asked to give examples of at least 3 interactive teaching methods, 60% of the respondents answered, 15% needed support, and 25% could not formulate answers. Brainstorming, cube method, clusters method, I know/ I want to know/ I have learned, and R. A. I. method (Answer. Throw. Ask) were the most frequently present in their examples. Among the answers given, we mention other methods: the Jigsaw method (mosaic), the "Change the pair" method, the Lotus flower technique, et cetera. The fact that most students gave examples of interactive methods shows that they are present in the classroom, know how to work, and what each teaching method offered as an example entails.

Regarding the frequency of using interactive methods, the opinions of the interviewees were varied. 35% of the respondents reported using them often, 40% said they use them occasionally, and 25% said rarely.

Romanian language and literature came first when asked which school subjects they use the most. 80% of pupils mentioned this subject. Other subjects mentioned were Mathematics, History, and Biology. Most school subjects found a place in their explanations. When asked if there were subjects that did not require the presence of interactive teaching methods, the answer was unanimously "yes", and there were various examples. It is worth noting that in Romanian language and literature classes, intercultural methods are present without exception. All pupils interviewed also learned subject-specific information through interactive teaching methods.

How do interactive methods influence learning? Positive or negative? The pupils unanimously answered "positive". Asked to be explicit, to say how they learn if interactive methods are included in the lessons, the pupils' answers were mainly: "better" and "easier". "When I talk with colleagues, what we learn seems simpler," and "When we use new techniques, I am more interested in learning" are other answers from the interviewed students.

Asked, "What concrete effects does the presence of interactive teaching methods have on the process of learning new information?" the pupils gave the following answers: "It helps me to understand better", "I work in a team with other colleagues, and I like it", "I had a good time", "we helped each other", "I was curious", "I didn't think I could do it, but I did it", "I spoke without fear", et cetera. Through their explanations, the pupils addressed the multiple effects of interactive methods in teaching activities, from their impact on learning to their influence on group cohesion and well-being socialization. It is worth noting

that learning and socialization are interconnected. Using interactive methods, pupils learn, communicate and work together. They are interested, work, participate together, and mobilize much better. The motivation for learning is also different. Interest in the topics discussed will increase if interactive methods are integrated into the lessons. Each teaching method engages them, dis-inhibits them and increases their self-confidence.

What effects do interactive methods have on one as part of the group of pupils? Some of the answers to the previous item were repeated for this question. In part, the answers given to the question that emphasized the relationship between interactive methods and the learning process are repeated, albeit in different words, in this question, which relates interactive methods to the way of being in the school group. Without exception, students express positive feelings. The most frequent answer refers to freedom of expression. The most frequent response is that they feel at ease and are not afraid to speak and have opinions. The pleasure of working together, of learning one-word teachers who frequently introduce interactive methods in their lessons." The most common answer was "involved". Other answers: "modern", "open", "empathic", "intuitive".

Asked to answer the statement: "Interactive methods make me…", pupils gave a variety of answers: "pay more attention", "talk", "speak", "freely", "know more", "ask", "collaborate with colleagues" et cetera.

The Presentation of the data obtained as a result of the interview allows us to express structured information concerning the first objective of the study: to identify at least 3 significant influences of interactive methods on the class of students as a social group under the conditions of their presence in the teaching act. Freedom of expression and action is the main effect students feel if the teaching activity involves interactive methods. Increased school group cohesion is another result of the presence of interactive methods. Pupils feel they belong to the group and act as such, developing much better relationships with their classmates, dialogue, cooperation, teamwork, and being a real presence during the teaching activities. Increasing the unity of the educational group is the third significant effect of the presence of interactive methods. Through their specific features, they enable pupils to spend time together, to get to know each other better and to act, taking into account the opinions of others. Through the diversity of forms of expression, interactive methods work against segregation, supporting diversity in all its forms and nuances.

The study's second objective, Observation of at least 5 changes occurring in students' learning due to integrating interactive methods into the teaching process, communicates positive data on the relationship between learning and interactive teaching methods. A better understanding of new information is supported by self-confidence, which positively influences school motivation and in-

terest in learning. The reduction of stress and rigidity of teaching action through dialogue and cooperation are consequences of interactive methods.

4. Limitations and recommendations

The sample of study participants is limited in number. 25 secondary school pupils expressed their views on the impact of interactive methods on them as an educational and, therefore, social group, i.e. on school learning. In another vein, only secondary school pupils were asked to provide answers.

The interview contained 10 items, limiting the perspective on interactive methods' impact on teaching. Making the items more fun would give a better picture of the subject. Of course, the presence of other research methods would also be a good omen.

Our recommendation is to expand the sample of study participants in two directions. We encourage increasing the number of participants. We also believe that the information would be more prosperous in content if, in addition to secondary school pupils, primary and secondary school pupils and students participated in the study. The expert opinions of teachers would complete the picture even better, and their expertise and experience would undoubtedly add value to the investigation.

5. Conclusion

The research conducted on interactive teaching methods and the effects they have on the classroom and the learning process in secondary education (grades V–VIII) allows us to conclude that each teacher influences their development on several levels., by the responsible way in which he/she prepares his/her meetings with students, In designing educational activities, the best decisions must be taken, taking into account the diversity found in each educational group. Thus, considering the group's characteristics and the lesson's theme, the teacher proposes a teaching strategy, specific methods, and the student's experiences, determining the selection of the most appropriate elements.

The research data showed that interactive teaching methods have a positive effect on the cohesion of the educational group, have a beneficial influence on the diversity of modes of expression and action, encourage dialogue and cooperation between pupils, and positively impact educational and social inclusion. In terms of the learning process, interactive methods are correlated with increased interest and motivation at school, the desire to know, to communicate

and to take on ideas from other colleagues, and equality at a group level is re-flected in the quality of education.

To summarize, diversity and pupils' educational and social inclusion are strongly supported through using interactive teaching methods.

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Interaktywne metody nauczania wspierające różnorodność oraz edukacyjną i społeczną integrację uczniów

Streszczenie

Prezentowane badanie wspiera różnorodność oraz integrację edukacyjną i społeczną, analizuje wpływ metod interaktywnych na grupę uczniów w akcie dydaktycznym, a także zmiany zachodzące u uczniów w procesie uczenia się. Zastosowaną metodą badawczą był wywiad częściowo ustrukturyzowany. Próba uczestników składała się z 25 uczniów szkół średnich. Wyniki badania dostarczają informacji na temat efektów edukacyjnych i społecznych doświadczanych przez uczniów w wyniku włączenia metod interaktywnych na lekcji. W szczególności wolność wypowiedzi i działania, świadomość, że każda osoba jest wyjątkowa, fakt, że ludzka różnorodność jest absolutnie naturalna, to korzyści, które towarzyszą obecności metod interaktywnych. Z pewnością poczucie przynależności do grupy, poczucie integracji edukacyjnej i społecznej, zwiększona spójność grupy uczniów, wzrost pewności siebie i wiary we własny potencjał są wynikiem pracy zespołowej, zachęcania do swobodnej ekspresji i dialogu, które są charakterystycznymi cechami metod interaktywnych. Proces uczenia się również ulega istotnym zmianom, a metody interaktywne mają pozytywny wpływ na zrozumienie nowych informacji i motywację. Zachęcanie do swobodnej, otwartej ekspresji wpływa na zwiększanie zainteresowania nauką. Podsumowując, różnorodność, a także edukacyjna i społeczna integracja uczniów szkół średnich, są skutecznie wspierane przez optymalne wykorzystanie interaktywnych metod nauczania.

Słowa kluczowe: interaktywne metody nauczania, różnorodność, integracja edukacyjna, integracja społeczna.