

Script: stimulate learning through dialogue and interaction

Hi! Welcome to the module about learning through dialogue and interaction! In this module we'll provide you with insight to what dialogue and interaction is, about why you should invest time in this as part of an engaging and rich learning environment and how you can get started with your daily practice. Let's take a dive!

Interaction

When you encourage and promote interaction in your classroom you are creating an environment in which students learn to share their ideas, perspectives, and emotions. They explore and investigate other's ideas, perspectives and emotions and allow their thinking, feeling, and acting to grow and evolve as a result.

Other's ideas can be other persons' ideas, but also books', cartoons', online videos', articles', movies', objects', animals', plants, ... For this interaction to be an engaging and rich learning environment we need to support students in practicing respectful interactions, listening in an active way and be curious about the other.

Dialogue

So that's where dialogue comes in. Dialogue is a specific way of interacting. This highlights many differences and creates the opportunity to have a constructive debate. Why should you invest in dialogue and interaction in your classroom? Why is it part of an engaging and rich learning environment? The classroom is a mini society, a melting pot of different ideas, feelings, and actions. It's a playground, where students can play with and learn how to 'deal' with others.

You can make this a safe environment where every student can learn at their own pace and in their own way. They develop habits of respectful interaction, they experience the value of interaction and dialogue and as a result feel confident about themselves, their learning and in building a community. Or not.

Moreover, if you use societal issues as a basis for learning, you need to be able to grasp the concept of interaction and dialogue. Because societal issues are complex, there's no 'one fixed answer' and everybody has different norms and values.

So, to be able to work with and learn from societal issues, students need each other to help explore and investigate different perspectives, knowledge, norms, and values, ... and to explore solutions to tackle the issues. This is what students

must do in their daily life anyway: deal with societal issues. So, shouldn't we help them to do so?

How to let dialogue and interaction happen

OK, so now the million-dollar question arises: How do you get started with dialogue and interaction in the classroom?

Open-ended questions

One way to stimulate dialogue and interaction is by using specific questioning techniques. Formulate your questions in an open-ended way. For example, don't ask: 'Is plastic soup a problem?', instead ask: "What do you think about plastic soup?" or 'What could plastic soup be about?'

Questions that spice up the interaction

Present students with questions that provoke further thinking and by doing that spice up the interaction. You can find a list of example questions in this module like "Do you agree, don't agree or have doubts about it? Why?", "How would you explain this?", "How does this make you feel?" and so on.

Reformulate or summarize answers

Check if your students understand the subject by reformulating or summarizing what you've heard and checking if that's what the student meant.

Bring different opinions

Collect different opinions from your students by working with statements like "Every school should ban everything that's made of plastic" and let them discuss amongst themselves. You could also give them a dilemma to choose from like 'Plastic only creates pollution and should be banned in schools' OR 'Plastic is indispensable and helps us at school so it should be maintained'. They must choose one statement and explain their choice. By listening to the arguments of others they can decide to take another position.

Scaffolding

To support students in having dialogue and creating habits of respectful interaction scaffolds such as conversation starters are helpful. You can find them in this module, along with discussion guidelines. Furthermore, you can incorporate digital tools such as a digital whiteboard or digital sticky notes. It makes the conversation visible, values all opinions and gives students the opportunity to develop their opinion at their own pace.

Last but not least, working methods can be extremely handy to support dialogue and interaction and at the same time help tackle a societal issue. You will find

several working methods in this module to get you started such as 'Hoop in'. You might notice that they often combine several aspects that are mentioned in this video.

I suggest you try them out cause, ...the proof of the pudding is in the eating!

Thank you for watching!

