

**NEWSLETTER No.2**  
**ELMO - Enhancing Learning Motivation**  
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**LTT -1 Emotions in learning**

**LTT -2 Learning atmosphere, teacher personality, bondage,  
group dynamics (=social learning)**

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## Increasing learning motivation through emotional learning

### What Does Emotion Have to Do with Learning?

We only think deeply about the things we care about. Helping students care about what they are learning is both difficult and complex, but it appears to be essential for the development of truly useful, transferable, intrinsically motivated learning. Sharing with our students the critical importance of being emotionally connected to (for example, being interested in, caring about) what they are learning to make what they are learning meaningful and useful, however, may be the first right step. Emotions are not add-ons that are distinct from cognitive skills, but rather become a dimension of the cognitive skill itself. If the emotion connected to the cognitive skill is positive (for example, interest), then the skill will be enhanced; however, if the emotion connected to the cognitive skill is negative (for example, fear), then the skill will be encumbered. (Immordino-Yang 2016).

Emotionally stressful school environments are counterproductive because they can reduce students' ability to learn. Self-esteem and a sense of control over one's environment are important in managing stress. Highly evaluative and authoritarian schools may promote institutional economy, efficiency, and accountability, but also heighten nonproductive stress in students and staff. Schools should focus more on metacognitive activities that encourage students to talk about their emotions, listen to their classmates' feelings, and think about the motivations of people who enter their curricular world. Activities that emphasize social interaction and that engage the entire body tend to provide the most emotional support. Games, discussions, field trips, interactive projects, cooperative learning, physical education, and the arts are examples (Sylwester 1994).

Minimizing the emotional aspect of learning may be encouraging students to develop the sorts of knowledge that inherently do not transfer well to real-world situations. Memories are contextual. School activities that draw out emotions—simulations, role playing, and cooperative projects, for example—may provide important contextual memory prompts that will help students recall the information during closely related events in the real world (Sylwester 1994). Emotions are the shelves upon which the cognitive glassware is placed (the china shop analogy). The knowledge gained needs emotional support to be made useful and applicable in the real world.

#### Sources:

Immordino-Yang, MH. 2016. *Emotions, Learning, and the Brain: Exploring the Educational Implications of Affective Neuroscience*. NY, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc, pp. 208.

Sylwester, Robert 1994. *How Emotions Affect Learning*. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct94/vol52/num02/How-Emotions-Affect-Learning.aspx>

### ELMO LTT-1 Activity in Germany 10.-14.06.2019

From 10.06.2019 to 14.06.2019 the first of the Learning-Teaching-Training Activities within the ELMO project took place at the Centre for Adult Education of the Stephansstift in Hannover. Participating partner countries were Estonia, Lithuania, Spain, Turkey, Bulgaria and Germany. The aim of the activity was to present methods for emotional learning and to reflect together. The participants were welcomed by Ronja and Marissa.



Learning by doing was the pervasive idea throughout the workshop. We started with two icebreakers after introduction of the program of the workshop. Icebreakers gave the good start to the workshop as the participants could already get into conversation with each other at the beginning of the first day.

Expectations of the participants were written by them on cards. This method gave a good overview of participant's goals they wanted to achieve as the workshop output. Most of us

expected new impressions, exchange and new contacts, new methods to motivate learners to learn and inspiration for new projects. In order to make the emotions of the participants visible during the workshop, an emotion barometer was provided on which the participants could stick points on the emotional states they felt during the day.

In the end of the first session a brief sum-up was held. At first it was clarified why warming-ups are important at all and which processes they promote in learning. The aim of this discussion was to present Warming Up methods that trigger positive feelings.

Then we turned to the topic "Learning motivation". The participants answered certain questions (e.g. *what motivates me? I can (not) learn well if... etc.*) by means of a dice game. Surprisingly some of us expressed the need for calm and tidy working atmosphere, some need time pressure on the contrary. This method gave a good example of differences in learning skills and styles between different learners. The importance of finding one's own topic that one learns interesting was emphasized.

After the implementation of some methods they were evaluated by the plenum. The participants switched from the player/learner perspective to that of the teachers and look at the method from trainer perspective and shared our experiences with other group members. Questions like where and how to find different methods, what emotions used methods provoke and what was the meaning of each method to participants, which target group the method is suitable for and how it could be adapted were under discussion.



The workshop in Hannover was targeted to practical work mainly. Besides practicing emotionally loaded different teaching and learning methods, the lecture was given by Renata Dias Mundt. She introduced first the subject of emotional learning and explained the neurodidactic basics of learning. She emphasized the connection between the part of our brain that is responsible for emotional reactions and the part of the brain that is responsible for remembering. Learning is therefore effective when it is coupled with positive emotions and the memory of what has been learned triggers a pleasant feeling. Renata clearly structured the facts about how the brain learns and which problems often arise in normal teaching settings if this insight is not considered. In the second part of the workshop Renata presented how to create these assumed situations. She presented several simple games that are particularly useful in the context of language learning.

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The third day was considered especially interesting by participants as it focused on the topic *The role of humor in the learning process*. The topic was introduced by Ronja with the playing of different video clips. Each of them showed a different genre of humor. After that we had a group work in smaller groups discussing on the topic “What's funny to you?”. We found out, that people's sense of humor is amazingly different. The World Café method was used and subsequently evaluated to discuss the topic in a wider circle. We asked ourselves what humor is and what are its limits. What learners can't laugh about? How to use humor in class? What are the participants experiences of using humor in learning? The main output of the discussion was that humor is very diverse phenomena and it should always be placed in context. Teacher has to take into account the students' sensitivities, and it is always best to joke about yourself. The method World Café was well suited to take up the topic and to encourage the participants to deal with one of the questions. All we agreed, that if there had been more time, all of us would have visited all the question islands once.

The performance we enjoyed very much was given by the member of our group Gerd Fisher. His topic was “Tips for Teachers” and as we were aware, that he is a very experienced teacher, we were expecting just a commented list containing *do's* and *dont's* for colleagues. He really succeeded to surprise us, starting with a role play where he presented autocratic, unfriendly and patronizing type of a teacher. He grabbed a group member who didn't know his role in this “play” at all. All us were shocked first but realized soon, that what he was really doing, was demonstrating the behavior of the most unpleasant and unproductive model of a teacher. In the



end he unmasked his acting and his program was renamed "Teachers Mistakes". He explained to us from his many years of experience in schools what you can do wrong as a teacher and how you can prevent or improve this. It worked perfectly!

The last topic of our workshop was self-confidence. Ronja first worked with the participants on what self-confidence is and how to strengthen it, both as a teacher and as a learner. Another method what we applied was "Skilled Hand Exercise". The purpose of this method is to describe your

strengths and give examples of related success stories in your life. Here the participants worked individually and in groups of two. Due to the very personal experiences, the results were not presented. The lesson learned from this exercise was, that everyone has personal strengths, everyone can be very good in something and make a big success.

The last component of the seminar was the feedback to the participants. It was clarified what we should pay attention to when giving and taking feedback. In the foreground is the appreciative attitude when giving and not commenting on received feedback. The *Johari Window* was also introduced: every person has a certain "blind spot" in which there are qualities that others perceive in you, but which you are not aware of yourself. Feedback often aims at this point. The



blind spot must be considered both when giving and when taking feedback. We may find qualities in others about which the other person is not aware and because react with surprise.

The method used was "making compliments": each person received and gave a compliment to someone in the group. This method created a very pleasant atmosphere. The participants agreed that this method is a very good way to strengthen

people's self-esteem and promote group cohesion.

Besides teaching-learning activities the guests from neighborhood schools were visiting our meeting and introduced their teaching experiences. The teacher Tamme de Riese from the



neighbouring special school visited us. He reported descriptively from his experiences and from practice of the work with social-emotionally limited children and young people. The participants could ask questions and discuss with the teacher. The question how to increase the motivation of disadvantaged pupils to learn even on a small scale was of great interest. The presenter particularly addressed routines and the promotion of individual strengths, what creates esteem and

lets the self-confidence of the pupils grow. Two more representatives of local educational community visited our workshop: Christina Volkmann and Reent Stade from the Corporate Communications department of the Diakonie umbrella foundation. They invited workshop participants to a guided tour of the campus of the Stephansstift, where the Centre for Adult Education is located. Our hosts showed us the different buildings and reported on the origins and development of the Stephansstift. At the beginning of the second workshop day the participants were officially welcomed by Matthias Stahlmann, Managing Director of the Centre for Adult Education. He explained the special features of the home adult education centre and particularly addressed the democratic and participatory basic ideas of adult education.

The workshop in Stephansstift, meetings with colleagues and study visit were very instructive and inspiring.



## ELMO LTT-2 Activity in Madrid, 05.-07.11.2019

From 05.11.2019 to 07.11.2019 the second Learning-Teaching-Training Activity within the ELMO project took place at the Marcos Ana Library, one of the institutions that cooperate with the Popular University of San Sebastián de los Reyes, in Madrid. The Spanish Federation of Popular Universities (FEUP) was the host organization for the event. The focus of this LTT activity was on social learning.



The participants were welcomed by Isabel Esteban and Montserrat Morales on behalf of the Popular University of San Sebastián de los Reyes and FEUP.

Emilio Jurado was the first speaker. In his presentation 'The Dark Side of ELMO', he contrasted the educational model described in ELMO against the on-line learning model in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The idea was observing the flaws found in on-line

learning (isolation, lack of interaction and, therefore, lack of motivation) and how the ELMO learning model covers those needs with its approach to enhance learning motivation.

The second presentation was delivered by Concha Lobejón, educator and coordinator of the Women Area of the Popular University of Palencia (PUP). In her presentation 'Women's Testimony: Dreams, hopes and memory', she talked about two courses developed at the UPP: *Women's Classroom* and *Women's History*. She explained the programmes designed for the courses, the products developed through the courses, the methodology, the different activities that take place within the courses, and how they enhance motivation for the participants.

After lunch, there was a welcome address by the local institutions of San Sebastián de los Reyes (SSR). The attendants were Juan Andrés Tovar Mena, vice president of FEUP; Narciso Romero, Mayor of SSR; Miguel A. Martín, Deputy Mayor of SSR; and Tatiana Jiménez, Deputy Town Councillor for the Department of Culture of SSR. In their speeches, they talked about the Popular Universities, their history and the institutional commitment they have in supporting them and their work for the benefit of the citizens. The local press came to the facilities to cover the event, and it was on the local news. It was agreed that FEUP would pass the video on to the rest of the partners once it had been translated into English for further dissemination.

On the second day the morning started with a workshop on group dynamics. Isabel managed the workshop. She wanted to recreate one of the activities she carries out in the courses she teaches. Each participant was given a piece of paper and they were asked to write 3 words that described what adult education means to them. After they were all finished, Isabel took the cards and swapped them so that each participant would get a different one. The task for the participants was describing what adult education is using the words written by the other participant and expressing those ideas as if they were theirs. Afterwards, they had to reveal whether they actually agreed with those ideas and, if so, to what





extent. The concept behind this activity is to enhance empathy within the group, which is a key element for motivation.

The following presentations were delivered by Martina Pérez and Ana de las Heras, educators at the Popular University of Logroño (PUL). Martina told the participants about the Parenting Area developed by PUL, which is a whole programme of courses created to support parents, and especially women, during the pregnancy and the first years of parenting. Martina talked about her own experiences as a mother and how that sparked the idea to create those courses and build up a community around them. She also talked about the importance of emotions and emotional support for the mothers, and how it is a key element for them to learn to understand their own emotions and why they feel the way they do. That way, they have managed to create a collective learning experience that enhance motivation.

After the break, Ana presented the Spirituality Area developed by PUL to the partners. The contents of that area have nothing to do with religious belief, but about finding the underlying dimension of a person's consciousness and connecting with it. To that end, the PUL provides courses and on meditation, mindfulness, yoga, relaxation and other aspects related to that journey through spirituality. There is also an annual international forum, which has experienced a remarkable increase in the number of participants.

To give the participants a glimpse of that journey, Ana conducted an activity with the participants. First, they had to simply listen to a recording of sound that she played and keep on listening until the sound faded. The second time, they had to listen to the same sound and raise their hand when they could not hear it anymore. The third time, they had to do the same but with their eyes closed. After each time, the participants discussed their feelings regarding the experience: calm, anxiousness, consciousness, attention, etc.

After this exercise, Ana asked them to spend one minute in silence, just listening to the sounds around them and paying attention to them as if those sounds were completely new to them, as if they had never felt anything like that before. She encouraged them to let their mind and feelings wander and acknowledge those changes without trying to control them. At the end of this short activity, some participants stated that they had been able to contact that underlying dimension within their consciousness. A brief discussion followed regarding the role of spirituality in modern society and why it is important for people to be trained in such matters and how it is crucial in order to acknowledge and manage our emotions.

After lunch, there was a scheduled visit to Sala Martín Chirino in order to see a photography exhibition developed by Agrupación Fotográfica S.S.R., an association comprised by previous students of the Popular University in SSR.

For the last day of workshops, Isabel provided some more information regarding the history of the photography association responsible for the exhibition visited the previous day. After that, she moved on to give some insight to the history of the Popular University of SSR and the different courses, activities and facilities they provide for the participants. After that, there was a discussion regarding the way adult

education is approached in the participating countries of ELMO. The partners explained how the field is structured in their countries, for instance, regarding funding. This gave the participants a better idea of the work each partner of the project performs in the field of adult education and life-long learning.

Isabel proceeded to talk about a specific program developed by the Popular University of SSR called *Active Spaces*. For this programme, they have created three different cultural areas. There is a different cultural activity pertaining these areas in SSR every week. Isabel explained that the participants of this programme get to attend a course in which they learn about the cultural activity and get some theoretical background, then they attend the cultural activity, and, afterwards, they receive further information and relevant sources in case they want to keep on learning about that specific subject. Isabel expressed that this engaging way of approaching culture has been very beneficial for the motivation of the participants and they always have a high turnout.

After the presentation, there was a round of questions that the participants used to obtain more information regarding the structure of the programme. Isabel proposed that this model could be implemented in other communities and countries.



The closing statement was performed by Isabel Esteban and Montserrat Morales, who conducted an evaluation session as a conclusion for the event. The participants were asked to say something they enjoyed and something they thought could be improved regarding the seminar, so that it could all be considered for the following international meeting in Bulgaria. Overall, the participants agreed that they would have liked a more interactive approach to the sessions to enhance participation, and that both the organisation and their experience had been positive. To conclude, all partners agreed on the dates for the last LTT meeting, which will be held from March 31<sup>st</sup> to April 2<sup>nd</sup> in Bulgaria.

