A PRODUCTIVE LEARNING MODEL IN THE DEBATING PROCESS

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Abstract. *Basing on the analysis of pedagogical/psychological theoretical findings, the publication describes the specifics of youth productive learning. The aim of the article is to characterize the specifics of the learning process of 10th-12thgrade students, justifying the regularities of the productive learning process and pedagogical possibilities that ensure a purposeful and active cognitive process, revelation and problem learning, as well as the student's self-realization in the debating process. Interest, motivation, learning goals, action, responsibility, collaboration, and reflection are the components of productive learning, which are described in the publication. The theoretical and empirical research questions have been analysed and updated in the article, highlighting the issues of productive learning.*
Keywords: *young people, debating, components, model, productive learning.*

Introduction

Nowadays, there is the search for interconnections between what the individual or the community can and should do, acquire and learn. The Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020, developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, highlights the vision of quality and inclusive education: “Education is as an organic part of our everyday life - conscious choice and hobby, not burdens and frustrations. It means knowing and learning more and faster, more accurately, learning together regardless of social, economic or health condition. Learning with a pleasure, with a help of teachers and teaching staff, who are authorities. Also it is important to be motivated and combine learning and study choices with personal and social interests” (Latvijas Republikas Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2013, 13).

In the rapidly changing world, the amount of information and competences to be acquired is constantly increasing, e.g., complex problem solving, ability to work in a team and effective communication, work with a lot of information and abilities to create new knowledge and orient in the global technology world are emerging as well. The effectiveness of individual action has become one of the main requirements in today's society and competence is a determining factor in the characterization of each person. National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia (2015) has emphasized the competence approach in general education, defining competence as “the individual's readiness for life in a changing world, as well as the ability to use knowledge, skills and attitudes in solving problems in changing real-life situations and ability to adequately use learning outcomes in a given context (education, work, personal or socio-political) (Valsts izglītības

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satura centrs, 2017). Changes in the field of education in Europe have created new challenges. Learning approaches based on core competences and learning outcomes, which today form the content of education in the biggest part of Europe, also are causing the major changes in teaching. The teaching of entirely new or rather new areas of learning content that are either cross-curricular or integrated in other subjects requires particular methods as well as changes in the organization and culture of school work (Eurydice, 2012).

However, it must be admitted that the information students' gain outside school is often not related to the learning content, which is acquired at school. Students spend a lot of their free time communicating with each other both face-to-face and virtually and in the most cases their topic of conversation is not a compulsory learning content. And the question is: *What should be changed and how to change it*?, and *How to make the compulsory learning content personally significant to the learner?* It can be concluded that, if there is no individual qualitative change in every student, the learning process will not be complete.

Fink (2013) believes that changes should not only occur in the attitude of students towards the learning process, but also in the students' personal life and the society as well (Fink, 2013). Therefore, "formulation of attitude gains importance - why should we do this? It is essential for the youth to see the reason for all the activities, to understand-why? And we must take into account that the attention of students is becoming increasingly unstable and therefore more and more new approaches/methods should be applied" (Latvijas Skolu psihologu asociācija, 2012, 27). However, the presence of new approaches and methods in the classroom is effective only in a situation in which the young person understands the need for acquiring the particular learning content.

The publication highlights young people's learning opportunities, emphasizing components of productive learning: interest, motivation, learning goals, action, responsibility, collaboration, and reflection on learning. The aim of the article is to characterize the specifics of the learning process of secondary school students, justifying the regularities of the productive learning process and pedagogical possibilities that ensure a purposeful and active cognitive process, revelation and problem learning, as well as the student's self-realization in the debating process.

Characteristics of the essence of productive learning

Defining learning, Zull (2004), Atkinson et al. (1993) emphasize learning-led changes. A teacher, biologist and biochemist James Zull (Zull, 2004) believes that "when we are learning, we are changing. We learn to do something new, or we learn to do something better or stop doing something at all. Learning clearly creates change. Changes may be invisible and may be significant. Learning can also completely transform life" (Zull, 2004, 68). It must be admitted that student

is in the center of the learning process and each student is unique with his/her individual learning style and the world is revealed differently to each of us (Marton, F. & Booth, S., 2009, 1-14).

Institute for Productive Learning in Europe has also focused on researching productive learning, emphasizing that productive learning can occur if:

- the link between the learning content and the real life situation is ensured;
- individualized approach to each student is implemented;
- theory and practice have been bonded.

In addition, a positive change in attitudes towards learning at the social and communicative level, self-confidence, responsibility, self-reliance, mutual trust, self-confidence, self-confidence have been described as the result of productive learning (Böhm, Borkenhagen, Mirow, & Schneider, 2011,41 -57).

The analysis of theoretical knowledge confirms that the components of the productive learning model in the debating process are formed by the interest, motivation, learning objectives, action, responsibility, collaboration, and reflection on learning. For 10^{th} -12^{th} grade students learning begins with personal interest about learning content. And in addition, when organizing the learning process, the teacher must be aware that young people will soon apply their knowledge in life, they will use their full potential in the society as they are becoming aware of the structure of it (Brighouse, 2009, 40). And also young people can "understand the learning outcomes and the multidisciplinary nature of the themes, the possibilities to solve problems and make decisions" (Rutter & Rutter, 1993, 253).

Unfortunately, it must be admitted that 10^{th} -12^{th} grade students have a lack of motivation and therefore their learning process very often becomes insufficient. Lack of motivation becomes a main reason for the students' low academic abilities and achievements, as well as for reluctance to learn. Moreover, the lack of motivation at this age can be defined as consequences of the counterproductive learning process (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2014). Education researcher Maggi Savin-Baden and Claire Howell Major emphasize that the successful implementation of the learning process is based on a motivated student (Savin-Baden & Major, 2004). Also, according to Institute for productive learning in Europe, learning begins with an interest and other essential elements of a productive learning process:

- highlighting problems and needs;
- civic awareness of the situation;
- creativity and innovation and creation of a personalized learning strategy (Böhm, Borkenhagen, Mirow, & Schneider, 2011, 41-57).

The study of Youth Opportunities, Attitudes and Values (n = 1063) highlights that interest is becoming an important precondition in the formation process of motivation (Excolo Latvia, 2013, 33.-38). It must be recognized that

interest is essential not only in promoting motivation, but also in the learning process as a whole. It directly influences the needs of cognition and the formation of positive emotions on the subject, action and topic (Hidi & Baird, 1988; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Hidi, Baird (1988) and Hidi, Renninger (2006) highlight the necessity to promote learner`s individual interest, which can be developed from the situational interest as well (Hidi & Baird, 1988; Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

Individual interest can be characterized by its sustainability, it becomes an individual's attribute and manifests as a genuine interest in a particular area, problem, discovery, situation, etc, while situational interest can be characterized as a sudden and short passion.

And for teachers important question is: *How the situational interest can be transformed into an individual interest?* Harackiewicz, Hulleman (2010) finds it necessary to create a learning situation in which the student will have both positive emotions and new knowledge and skills (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2010). The regulation of emotions in the learning process is emphasized by Benavides, F., Dumont, H., Istance, D. (2012) and teacher, biologist and biochemist James Zull (2004). “Learning causes physical changes in the brain. However, to generate these changes emotions are required. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to consider the emotion-causing factor choosing the methods used in the teaching process. The process of creating and constructing knowledge student does himself/herself is the most essential for producing positive emotions. And at the same time, positive emotions contribute to the process of creating and constructing of the new knowledge. Even if the learner makes mistakes in the knowledge creation process, they are important in the future learning process” (Zull, 2004, 70-72).

Another significant component of productive learning process is setting goals and awareness of goal setting is important not only for a student but also for a teacher. Researchers of the Institute for Productive Learning in Europe emphasize the important problem of the learning process nowadays – the mismatch between student`s individual learning goals and goals set by teacher/school authorities (Böhm, Borkenhagen, Mirow, & Schneider, 2011, 41-57).

Researchers Gerard Seijts and Gary Latham (2005) point out that goals in the learning process can be divided into learning goals and performance goals. Learning goals are set in order to achieve long-term results, while performance goals are focused on short-term results-specific and activities/tasks (Seijts & Latham, 2005). Setting learning goals and the development of competence are more important than grades in the report. Setting learning goals fosters creativity, discoveries, thinking “beyond the frames”. While in the process of setting and achieving performance goals, efforts are concentrated only on accomplishing a specific task/activity concentrating on a short-term success. The teacher's productive action would be to encourage students set learning goals even if the

student focuses on the implementation of specific short-term activities. Thus, the acquisition of competences would be promoted (Seijts & Latham, 2005, 124).

A student who sets long-term learning goals and implements them, develops competence in different learning situations, creates knowledge, strengthens belief and makes discoveries, while student who implements performance goals, e.g., basically focuses on writing a test successfully, well or brilliantly and does not focus on long-term results, including development of competences. Learning occurs in an action-a set of activities where the goals are implemented through learning strategies, unique learning situations and independent learning, the processes, where students develop their individual learning habits and self-control. According to the psychologist John Biggs (1978) learning activities can be implemented in three stages „a stage of presage", „a stage of process", and „a stage of product" (Biggs, 1987, 18).

Responsibility is also a component of productive learning process as it promotes self-initiative, active participation and civic position. Responsibility determines and guides human behavior (Oshana, 1997). However, a very important aspect of the learning process is its social nature, as learning occurs when "knowledge is constructed in social dialogue" (Benavides, Dumont, & Istance, 2012, 2). Therefore social responsibility gains significance.

The teacher and psychologist Raymond Wlodkowski (2008) emphasizes that the implementation of social responsibility in the learning process contributes to "consolidation of processes in society and in education", which includes: awareness of the diversity of opinions or "common truths", the search for deeper meaning and the opportunities of knowledge society, critical reading and writing skills in the era of technology, and challenging values, biases and behavioral styles, as well as self-education, research skills, creating ideas, participation in projects, etc. (Wlodkowski, 2008, 92-93). The teacher and researcher Sheldon Berman (1990) emphasizes not only the necessity of acquisition of social responsibility competences, but the need for specific action as well (Berman, 1990), which can be implemented through self-initiative, active participation and civic position.

The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1990) draws special attention to the importance of individual and social self-realization and communication, as well as individual and collective achievements. He emphasizes that the learning process takes place in the process of collaboration with others and the world around. Thus, the learning process is realized through discoveries of purposeful and persistent work and continuous communication, interconnection and cooperation (Freire, 2005, 73-74).

Interest, motivation, goals, action, responsibility and collaboration are important components of the learning process, as well as reflection on learning, which includes analysis of the results, self-assessment and self-realization. The authors of the publication wish to highlight interrelation between all components,

becouse acquired knowledge and skills provide positive emotions that strengthen interest or leads to new interest, thus motivation is promoted and new goals are set and the process is continuing (see Figure 1).

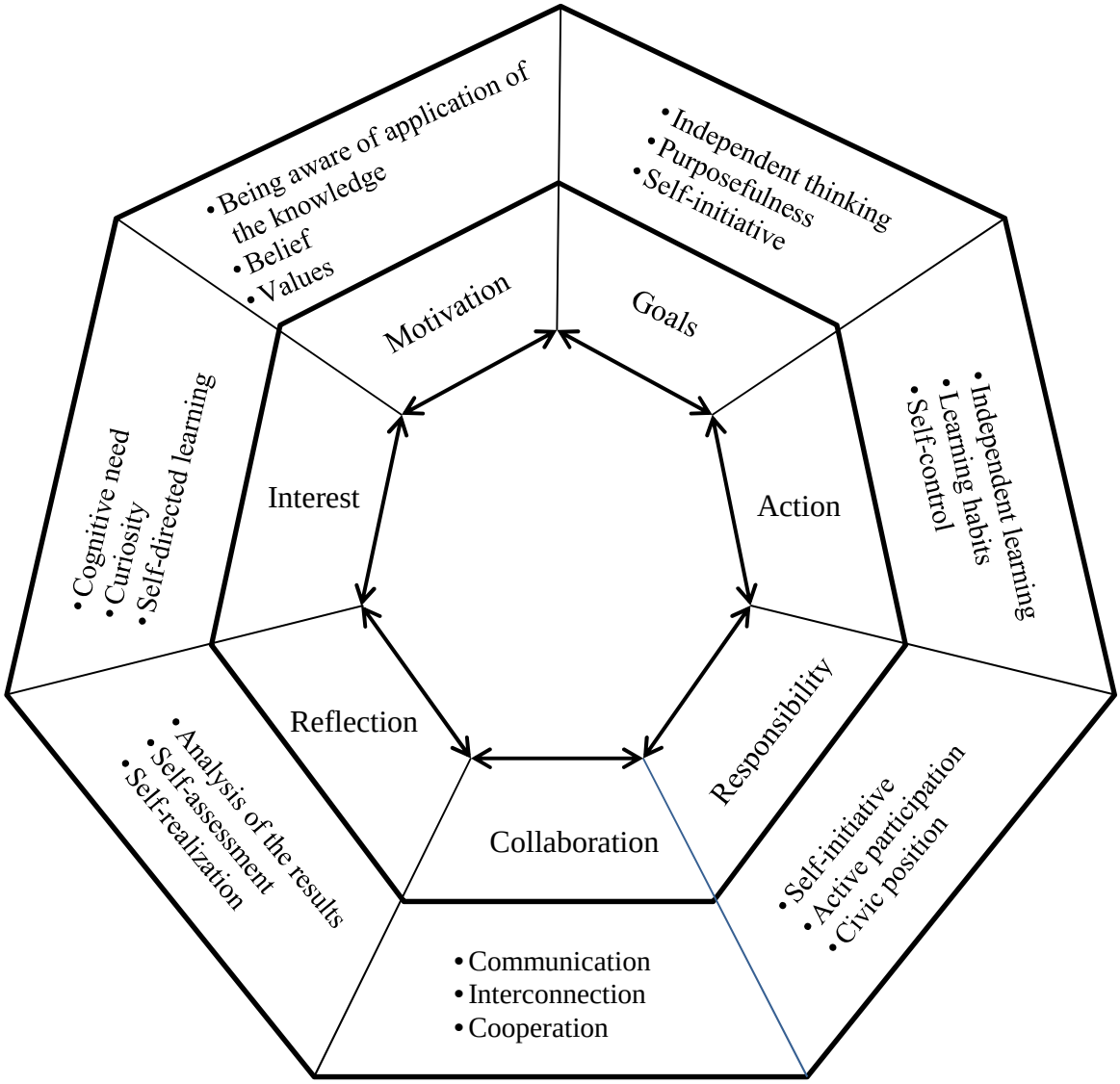

Fig.1. **A productive learning model**

Implementing productive learning in the process of debating for secondary school learners

The way of 10th-12th grade student`s thinking can be characterized by "a higher degree of generalization and abstraction" (Čehlova & Grinpauks, 2003, 20). This is the age young people become interested in causes, explanations, arguments and assertions of different issues. Students can draw reasoned conclusions, link phenomena and facts. They develop the ability to use the potential of logical memory; intellectual activities get more active, independent

and creative character and "students` curiosity cannot be satisfied without certain generalizations, arguments and evidence" (Čehlova & Grīnpauks, 2003, 20). However, it is extremely important for young people to link the content of learning with the current processes in society (Selvester & Summers, 2012). This can be done through using learning method-debating in the learning process. Debating helps students develop the democratic and cooperative competences that lead to becoming the active member of civic society in the future (Brighouse, 2009, 40). Looking for new approaches and methods that promote productive learning, it must be admitted that "the best way of improving society is to become a part of it: being aware of what is happening in the local community, in the country, in the world, and being engaged in these processes. Only a few are able to change the world while sitting at home and watching television" (Koens et al., 2002, 80).

Therefore, in the pedagogical process, when planning and implementing a unique learning situation, students` interest in the content of learning and formation of motives through using a variety of learning methods should be promoted. Debating is one of the learning methods in which the learning content is linked with the current events of modern life and the factors of personality of the youth. The National Center for Educational of the Republic of Latvia provides an explanation of the learning method debating: "... the teacher (or students) offers a statement/problem/resolution to discuss. Two students or groups of students have the task to defend two opposing views using argumentation. Debating can be organized as an event that takes place under certain conditions" (Kursite, 2005, 72). Debating can also be called a cognitive game (Easterday, 2012).

The biology teacher Gilbert Proulx (2004) emphasizes the raise of students` interest in the process of debating, recognizing that a teacher who chooses to use learning methods-debating in a classroom makes learning more interesting to a student, thus contributing to successful learning process (Proulx, 2004, 26-33). In the process of debating and the preparation for it, students` behavior and their learning habits are determined by skillfully designed learning content. During the debating learning content (necessary for the defense of the resolution facts and arguments) is discovered by students in co-operation with a teacher or other experts, purposefully acquiring new knowledge and updating the interdisciplinary link. However, it has to be admitted that the learning method-debating in the education system of the Republic of Latvia is mainly implemented in extra-curricular activities: school debate clubs, events (regional and national debate tournaments) organized by NGO "Debašu centrs". Thus, mainly talented students and students who have a motivation to engage in extracurricular activities are involved in debating process.

Conclusions

1. The world is revealed in different learning environments: at school, in the society, in a virtual environment. Learning leads to the change in growth. A student is in the center of a learning process, the one who learns both individually and in groups in order to reach learning goals.
2. Student who sets long-term learning goals and implements them, develops competence in different learning situations, creates knowledge, strengthens belief and makes discoveries, while student who implements performance goals does not focus on long-term results.
3. In order to transform the situational interest into the individual interest, it is necessary to create a unique learning situation that is purposefully capable of acquiring cognition and curiosity. This can be successfully provided by the learning method debating. Debating contributes to the background of positive emotions, which is beneficial for acquiring knowledge, skills and competences.
4. Social responsibility gains great significance in the learning process. It promotes self-initiative, active participation and civic position. However, not only acquisition of social responsibility competences, but the need for specific action is important as well, which can be implemented through self-initiative, active participation and civic position.
5. Each learning problem is unique; therefore, it is necessary to create an authentic learning situation for each topic finding the most appropriate learning methods. It must be admitted that learning method debating can be transformed into a learning process depending on the theme to be learned, putting emphasis on research, collaboration, presentation, individual or group work and other significant personal growth enhancements.
6. The analysis of theoretical knowledge confirms that the components of the youth productive learning model in the debating process are: interest, motivation, goals, action, responsibility, collaboration and reflection. There is an interrelation between all components, e.g., acquired knowledge and skills provide positive emotions that strengthen interest or leads to new interest, thus motivation is promoted and new goals are set and the process is continuing.

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