

**DIDACTIC COMMENT TO THE VIDEO CLIPS MADE FOR THE NEEDS OF NEWHORIZON PROJECT BY:**

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## Introduction

For the needs of the NewHoRRizon project and for achieving its main goal – RRI, we have formed learning opportunity that enabled young children in heterogeneous groups (considering gender, age, pre-knowledge, language, social background, interests, level of autonomy) to acquire first-hand experience about IBL (inquiry based learning). The children are familiar with this form of work but the content of discovery was new to them. During the IBL, the children were discovering natural characteristics of different material performing measurement, which the children adapted according to their needs and based on the available material.

## Beginning of didactical story

The educator animating the puppet Fridolina activated learners' thinking process strikingly and briefly. Children responded without any hesitation and posed no additional questions but immediately started with the action. Carefree and without any fear, they have offered their immediate help. They have responded to the unified instructions, which they understood as time for open learning in a form of pure and true amusement. With a full responsibility, great effort and suitable to their age, they have carried out the educator's work plan.

The young ones took the learning initiative as soon as the voice was given to them and got the chance to do so. Learning process was in full swing and the classes were overwhelmed by open learning spirit – by the spirit of play, play as the most popular and useful natural learning method for all ages not only for childhood.

## Action based classroom learning – learning from each other

By watching and observing this kind of learning opportunities, one can easily realize that the learning process suddenly reflected high energy, wish for discovery, inquiry and experimenting. Learning turned into a learning action, which is actually a naturally organized play whose intention or aim is to make the puppet Fridolina happy and to be part of this delightful moment (us as a community).

### **A lesson turns into an organized play**

The learners simultaneously adapted the learning lab-oratory to their desires. They have manipulated, tested and observed materials and used tools directly in the playing process. They have learned in different ways and thus created learning community within the learning environment. Spontaneous play has gradually turned into the learning magnet (attraction) for an individual as well as for the whole community. The transformation happened as soon as one could feel a pleasant learning atmosphere and a creative spirit, which no one disturbed.

### **Research questions within play**

In a pleasant and friendly environment, the children spontaneously developed and adopted the IBL method as the highest form of play. The research questions arose during a spontaneous play and at the same time, as feedback the questions marked the forms of play. Along with the research questions, the children's heads were producing the answers as well. Play shapes their inner discourse and social speech, a higher form of play that stimulates/develops the mind so that a child can perceive spontaneously the higher cognitive level of understanding of what is observed, tested and experienced. The learners analyse and summarize systematically and precisely the entire process, they test it and re-observe it because everything that they find good, they like to repeat and try again and again until they get tired of it. Usually, this happens when they are satisfied with an answer (it is the right answer at a particular moment).

### **Learning from each other**

They support and encourage one another; they discuss and compare their findings with others. It amuses them and awakens their curiosity, which automatically leads them to the open observation and comparison of experience and findings with others. Without restraint, they share what they have found out, their newly gained knowledge, and use it in new learning play/ situation which are not limited in time. They constantly take on new challenges that appear and exceed the Fridolina's request because they are satisfied; their learning needs are met without any feeling of embarrassment or restrictions. Courageously, they add or remove, classify and build up various relations between material and tools. Spontaneously and carefree, they measure, encourage one another and enjoy. So much activity is going on at once that educators have trouble to perceive, not to mention to recognize the fundamental didactic features. To carry out a qualitative assessment is therefore reasonable to record the learning process from time to time to be able to provide better feedback for feedforward in the future.

### **The peak of discovery**

Mixed and complex inner discourse and social dialogue have created the peak of inquiry, discovery along with the gradual transformation of spontaneous (research) questions into sophisticated, proven, tasted and composed ones compared with those at the beginning of the play – the process of self-identification of the first/beginning phase of learning. The phase of self-diagnosis was now over. The phase in which limbs were measuring and creating led the actors to the amazement, intensive action and to the peak of thinking and



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simultaneous action engaging all the senses, emotions and the whole body. The learners did not disturb each other (even though they were quite numerous); everyone was able to find his/her own space for thinking and reaching the understanding, growing intellectually. On the contrary, pleasant and friendly co-existence in place and time brought them together and linked their thoughts, and thus they self-upgraded and assessed the achievements. Everyone was on a quest to discover new and innovate old, already attained knowledge.

### **Feedback to educators**

At this point, if not before, the educators sensed and formed the feedback from children in their learning process. If not before, now the educators became part of the learning community (they were intrigued), at least we did. If at first, the educators were separated from mental processes of children, now, they caught their train of thought, not interrupting the children with their corrections or ideas. In such an important engagement, the children simply cannot/must not be interrupted, disturbed because they follow their thoughts and they do not mind if you join them as a pupil who share their knowledge with others.

### **Thinking process**

Inner motivation/desire followed the learners' train of thought and led to its source/origin/inspiration. They began to create patiently and adapted the quality of play/amusement which they mixed (spiced up) with releasing (expression) / discharging. For, in this way, the learners keep or adjust the liberty/openness of learning in order to make the play/learning/adapting holistic. With the openness/tranquillity, we can totally devote to creation. The learners perceive it as the continuation of the learning opportunity for expressing deeper understanding or recognition. Natural learning does not bother the children, they do not feel weak, quite the contrary, they feel excitement (energy) for personal and thus mutual progress.

### **Learning overhang**

With the feeling of attaining the peak of thinking process, the play ends. The learners feel relieved, it seems as if they stop for a moment but the situation is afterwards followed by the flow of thoughts – self-reflection. Pleasant feeling leads to the new learning action – reflection with friends and the puppet or educator and later on, in the afternoon, it probably (frequently) repeats or continues within the family. With the reflection, if not before, the children direct their thoughts and harmonize them with other people's thoughts. The reflection leads them to the significant discoveries that the learners express openly to one another as they exchange experience in a pedagogic communication and in the process of learning from each other. It is not a form of a report/reporting (reporting is not interesting for children as they are retrogressively oriented towards understanding of the entity to be able to continue the future of learning). Meaningful and complementary pedagogic communication does not exchange the past; on the contrary, the reflection is an extremely intensive discourse between the learners based on the experience. They do not only reflect on the content or results but also on the method – play as the most powerful method of learning, amusement. By reflecting, the children assess the quality of the experienced learning enjoyment, a pleasant, inspiring, desired and happy play that they will repeat voluntarily and invite also others, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents etc. to join them. They will even invite their favourite toys.

### **The most powerful learning method is the perfect play**

This sort of experience enable children to realize that learning is actually playing; it is something that amuses us and makes us happy. Through experience, the children discover which forms of amusement/learning do



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they like the most and those forms of learning gradually become their personal learning style. The play of self-questioning (and posing questions to others) enables them to recognize their own value, the quality of autonomy in the process of becoming independent, autonomous. Despite being little, it makes us big, exceptional, unique and thus perfect and satisfied, self-actualized, healthy. Self-questioning and self-discovery within a social learning community, the children recognize the magical power of a question that bares an answer, or more answers, one better than the next, every day different one(s). The discovery play is thus never boring. It is in fact never ending story of life-long learning. The questions that are sometimes inner and quiet, sometimes loud and in a form of spontaneous loud explanation do not make us weak; on the contrary, we gradually become strong thinkers, brainbox because we know where the answers (findings) are hidden. The answers and question that we like to discover are first admired intimately, only after we domesticate them, we share them with others. Sensing this sort of learning, self-recognition or natural development enable the children to perceive the environment as open learning experience. The best learning methods are the answers to the most interesting, funny, unusual and wise or funny research questions. This is the best experience that a kindergarten, primary school or any education institution can offer, of course, along with the qualitative support of educators who assess a child during the process of self-development, encourage him/her and if necessary, remind him/her of self-preservation (his/her own safety and the safety of others and nature).

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## Video Clip rating

The two video clips show two different approaches considering the learning environment and/or the educator. In the first video clip, the learning environment is [primary school](#) where a teacher loosens the children, gives classic instructions for learning, and thus opens the possibilities for learning – discovering in a heterogeneous learning group of mostly the youngest children who entered the school for the first time.

In the second video clip, the learning environment is a kindergarten. The educator encourages open learning. The seriousness of the educator can be confirmed by the puppet which represents a form of external encouragement, yet, in a dialogue with inner desire. The educator is not merely a simple puppet animator, she is the encourager who challenges and/or asks for help (as the children would if they would need one) and communicates in their language the overall goal that becomes common thread of the inquiry thus discovery - a desire to understand the situation, event. The puppet gives meaning to the experience. The puppet assesses the learning process. The children do not perceive it as a disturbance, quite the contrary, they think of it as their lighthouse (it is still there and it is still interested in what it requested, thus, I still have time to play). If necessary, the puppet provides brief regular feedback: it encourages, suggests and therefor guides through the critical period, shows interest in play and discovery. The puppet is principally not interested in the content but in the children's thinking, their recognitions. It guides toward multisensory perception and regular expression of thoughts in a way that the process is not interrupted. The puppet assesses intensively the happening and individual activities within a group or of an individual child; it seems, however, that it waits for the help. It uses terminology in a dialogue – notions that children operate with as a product of play. It asks only if it is necessary or it asks for explanation but it prefers to do it while reflecting and not during the process of intensive learning. The puppet expresses its amazement if it sees that a child has lost the thread of discovery so (s)he is able to regain his curiosity. The puppet has a vital role in reflecting over findings and during the process of assessment. In addition, the puppet also plays an important role in celebrating the outcomes, which are a form of mutual evaluation. We show all the respect to the knowledge in public and perform for the parents or wider community.