

LOTUS BLOSSOM TECHNIQUE – INTERACTIVE GROUP TEACHING-LEARNING METHOD

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Abstract: *The amount and quality of the knowledge and skills acquired by students largely depend on the teacher’s professionalism, competencies and love for teaching. In the current context of training and educational activities, teachers must ask themselves some questions in order to be able to build flexible strategies for adapting to the requirements of their classes. In this context, Lotus Blossom Technique is an interactive group method that ensures success in teaching-learning-assessing. This technique stimulates students to get actively involved in carrying out their tasks; it ensures that the students put their knowledge into practice adequately in various contexts and situations; it helps students make use of their creativity and originality, as well as practice their analysis and decision-making skills at the right moment, determining all students to find solutions for different learning situations.*

Key words: *Lotus Blossom Technique, interactive learning method/technique, training and educational activity, teaching-learning-assessing.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching-learning methods are the ways in which the teacher helps students gain their knowledge, skills and abilities. Thus, “the pedagogical quality of a teaching method involves the transformation of the latter from a path to knowledge proposed by the teacher into a learning path built by the pre-schooler, pupil or student, during their formal and non-formal training, with openings to lifelong education”. (SORIN CRISTEA, 1998)

Through the active character of learning methods and techniques, didactic methodology contributes to the development of the student’s full potential. Efficient teaching and learning are founded on combining independent work with interdependent activities, as interpersonal relations within the group are the essential factor in achieving both personal and collective learning. (PALICICA, GAVRILĂ, 2007)

“Interactive methods aim to optimize communication, with an eye on the inhibitory trends that may arise within the group”. (ION-OVIDIU PĂNIȘOARĂ, 2003)

“Group learning provides students with the opportunity to practice their decision-making skills and initiative; it gives a more personal touch to work, but also a greater complementarity to skills and talents, which ensures a livelier, more active participation, supported by many emulation elements, mutual stimulation and fruitful cooperation.” (IOAN CERGHIT, 2006)

One specific trait of interactive group methods is the fact that they promote the interaction among students’ minds and personalities, with obvious results. Interaction stimulates students’ effort, being important for the discovery of one’s own capabilities and limits. In this way, students develop their teamwork skills, which are the key component of their future professional activity and life in general.

In order to prove the ideas presented above, we chose to apply **Lotus Blossom Technique** in a biology class for the 9th A form students of the “Iulia Hașdeu” National College, in Timiș County. The lesson was about the *phylum Artropoda, class Insect*. The

method is an interactive, group one, which stimulates students' active involvement in solving tasks, ensuring the proper implementation of knowledge in various contexts and situations.

DISCUSSIONS

Teaching biology through interactive methods represents a complex way to use and organize stimuli for the students.

Lotus Blossom Technique (figure 1):

- ✓ is an interactive way to work in a group;
- ✓ involves the deduction of connections among concepts, starting from a central theme;
- ✓ the central theme determines the eight secondary ideas, which are placed around the primary one, similarly to the pattern displayed by lotus petals;
- ✓ the eight secondary ideas are written around the central theme, and each of them becomes the centre of another lotus flower;
- ✓ the eight secondary ideas will become central themes for small group activities.



Figure 1 – Representation of the organization of the Lotus Blossom Technique

Methodological approach (figure 2):

- building the diagram;
- writing the central theme at the centre of the diagram;
- the students think about the ideas linked to the central theme, and then they jot them down in the circles (petals) that surround the central theme, in a clockwise direction;
- using the eight deducted ideas as new central themes for the eight quadrants;
- finding new connections for the eight central themes and writing them down in the diagram (students fill in the same way as many quadrants – lotus flowers- as possible);
- assessing the ideas: analysing the ideas and assessing the quantity and quality of the results. .

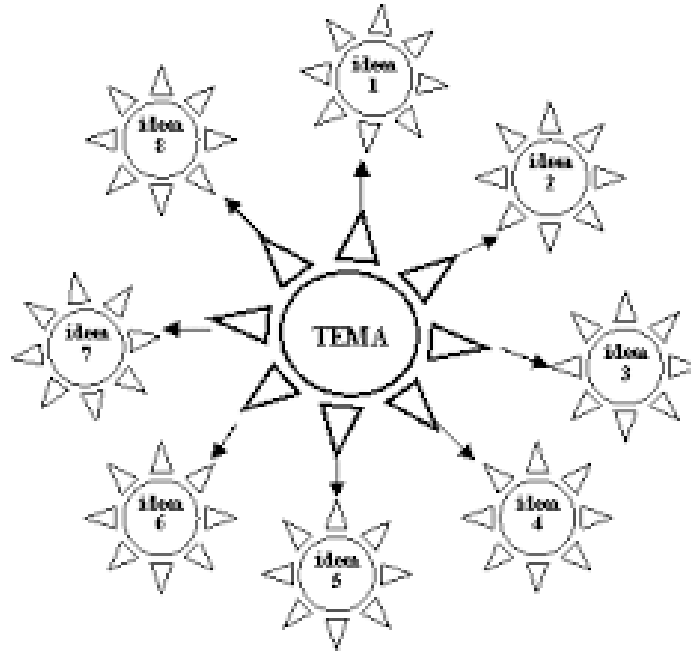


Figure 2 – The central theme and secondary ideas in the Lotus Blossom Technique

This technique develops each student's abilities to participate, collaborate and get involved in the development of their own personality.

Students will acquire new learning strategies as well as motivations for studying biology, while becoming responsible people with active participation in the life of their community, thus maintaining a balanced environment which is propitious for life itself.

List of specific verbs:

- to conceive;
- to build;
- to identify;
- to exemplify;
- to establish connections;
- to illustrate an action or a characteristic;
- to bring arguments in favour of the results they find;
- to assess;
- to draw conclusions.

Practical example of the interactive teaching method called the Lotus Blossom Technique:

Subject: Biology

9th form

Learning unit: "Animalia Kingdom"

Theme: "Phylum Artropoda - Class Insecta" (figure 3).

Group 1

Define arthropods. Classify arthropods and give two examples of species for each class. Identify the living environment for each species given as an example.

Group 2

Make a comparison between the body structure of insects belonging to orders Coleoptera and Lepidoptera. Make a drawing that identifies the differences and mention the structures.

Group 3

Using identification keys, make the identification of a species of order Coleoptera.

Group 4

Establish the metamorphosis stages of insects belonging to orders Coleoptera and Lepidoptera. Make a drawing for each situation.

Group 5

Write a free essay on the evolution of insects. You can use printed materials as well as the internet.

Group 6

How do you explain the fact that the number of individuals within a species, and the number of species within a biocenosis respectively, cannot grow infinitely? What adaptations to their environment have insects developed in the course of time?

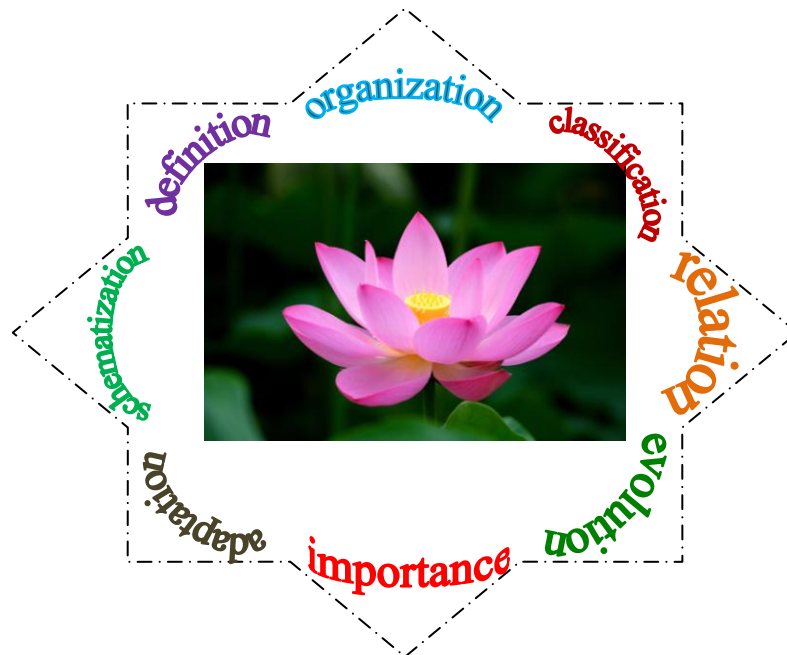


Figure 3 – Lotus Blossom Technique in lesson “Phylum Artropoda - Class Insecta” (9th A form)

CONCLUSIONS

The formative and educational characteristics that recommend this interactive method as an example of good practice are:

- it represents a way to stimulate students’ creativity, to activate cognitive skills and structures for various school subjects;
- it promotes students’ active involvement in their tasks - students become more aware of the responsibility they undertake;

- it trains each student to work, giving them the opportunity to state their opinion and have their opinion taken into consideration (OPREA, 2007);
- it emphasizes collaborative teamwork;
- it practices decision-making skills, stimulating the initiative of all students involved;
- it determines better implementation of knowledge, as well as the practicing of skills and capabilities in various contexts and situations;
- it ensures clarification of concepts and easy integration of the knowledge assimilated into the notional system, thus rendering them operational (ADAMS, HAMM, 1996);
- it encourages the use of specialized vocabulary;
- it develops the capacity to select, differentiate, compare, group, classify and illustrate;
- it highlights the capacity to understand other students' interventions, the capacity to correctly self-assess one's own sentiments and the capacity to establish relations with others (STEELE, MEREDITH, TEMPLE, 1997);
- it ensures an interactive approach to the teaching-learning-assessing activities, adapted to the requirement to customize the tasks to suit each student in such a way as to highlight and stimulate their creative potential and originality (GAVRILĂ, BOACĂ, 2011);
- it discourages speculation or learning only for marks;
- all ideas found are communicated and discussed at the end of the lesson;
- it can be successfully applied to young pupils, to teenagers and even adults;
- it is compatible with many fields of activity.

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