

Voluntary work

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Information about the context

City and Country: Helsinki Finland

Educational level and number of students: Upper secondary,
the second year students, 18 students

Topic: Voluntary work -course

Subject domain: an applied course

Duration: seven weeks

The object: To support students to become active citizens

What I wanted to improve in my course:

...to show that voluntary work is also work for human rights

...to share and make public what students did in their
voluntary work

...to support students' collaboration by sharing their
outcomes

How were the Design Principles applied

<i>Design principles</i>	<i>Implementation in the case</i>
DP1: Organizing activities around shared objects	To investigate what is good life and how to provide it, especially to underprivileged. Various types of concrete activities.
DP2: Supporting integration between personal and collective agency and work	Collaborative visits, practical arrangements, e.g. teaching Finnish language, helping children and elders, connected to individual tasks (+ learning diary), individual outcomes were shared to all students.
DP3: Emphasizing development and creativity through knowledge transformations and reflection	Study visits, readings, interviews, concrete work, reflected in school in groups and in individual learning diaries.
DP4: Fostering long-term processes of knowledge advancement	7 weeks long process, informally several students have continued voluntary work..
DP5: Promoting cross-fertilization of knowledge practices and artifacts across communities	The course was constructed by integrating various organizations of voluntary work to ordinary course. E.g. Red Cross, PLAN, Lutheran congregation, animal rescue, family work.
DP6: Providing flexible tools for developing artifacts and practices	Blogger for sharing outcomes, facebook for sharing photos, Fronter and Wilma (official virtual school tools).

Main challenges

Networking with external organizations needs teacher's active work. It demands time and many phone calls and emails.

Organizing timetables with students, organizations, and events.

Further developments

For creating the concept map a virtual shared tool should be used.

Sharing outcomes should be on students' responsibility (a technical problem with Blogger).

More activities and responsibilities in general to students.

Course Description

We started with discussing and wondering

- 1) what we need to have good life,
- 2) which human rights protect each of those rights and needs,
- 3) who doesn't have that quality of good life, who needs protection and help,
- 4) what could be done for helping them,
- 5) what organizations we already know take care of problems.

Based on that students created together a concept map. We spent time on getting to understand what voluntary work is and what different objects voluntary work might have.

After that students decided what they wanted to get familiar with in voluntary work and what they wanted to do personally and in groups. During the whole course we visited various organizations, activities and we had also visitors at school.

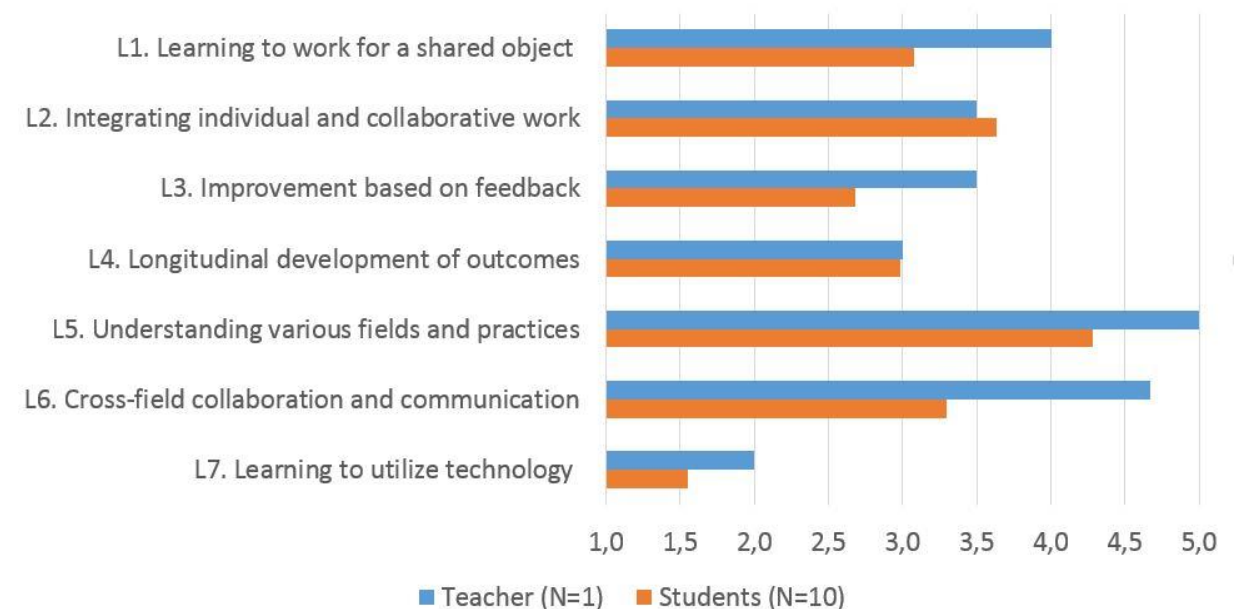
The concrete activities were e.g., helping immigrants with Finnish language, being co-organizers of an event for families, collecting money for charity in school and out of school, playing with rescued cats. Individual students were helping in various organizations, helping elderly people and collecting funding.

Learning diaries were constructed during the process. In the end students presented their own "objects of investigation". The first concept map was modified by learning outcomes, summarized in a collaborative discussion. Students told which voluntary work might interest them in the future.

<http://ihmisoikeudetmelu.blogspot.fi/p/taksvarkki-kios.html>



Teacher's evaluation and students' self-evaluation of what students have learned



Students' feedback about what was impressive during the course

- In all, the course was really nice and rewarding, visits, visitors, events.
- Impressive were certainly the stories of various people.
- All doing, e.g., helping with homework (the immigrants) and visiting an elderly person.
- Most impressive have been the stories of visitors and positive were e.g., the visit to HESY (an organization for animal rescue) and the moments of talks with the retired people.

- It was nice to get familiar with the voluntary work of various organizations which I necessarily would not have done by myself (because I didn't know about these organizations beforehand)
- A really instructive course and an astonishing fine experience
- The course was really well conducted and I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in this kind of course!