



Education and Culture

Socrates
Grundtvig



Attract Participation and Increase Motivation
of Young Male Language Learners

TOOLBOX

Love Language! How to Attract Participation
and Increase Motivation of
Young Male Language Learners



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LOVE LANGUAGE!

HOW TO ATTRACT PARTICIPATION
AND INCREASE MOTIVATION OF
YOUNG MALE LANGUAGE LEARNERS

PREFACE

Creating a positive language learning atmosphere

The "LoveLanguage" project aims at increasing the curiosity to learn a foreign language, to increase the motivation of foreign language learners and to keep young male learners interested in order to prevent their drop-out.

The project partnership has primarily developed this trainer's tool box to offer language course providers and their trainers and tutors attractive methods, exercises and worksheets for young male language learners by introducing learning contents that reflect male interests and to provide tools concerning the underlying principles referring to the special requirements of the following target groups: Educational drop-outs, ethnic minorities (especially immigrants and Roma), long-term unemployed young adults, socially marginalised persons.

On the basis of selected innovative didactic approaches described in the handbook, these tools take into consideration the outcomes of the partnerships experiences and pilot testing analysis: Therefore creating a positive learning atmosphere is of particular importance in terms of the individual success and avoidance of drop outs. Entertaining exercises and target group oriented contents further promote the language acquisition of male students, who often are capable to concentrate not longer than +/- 40 minutes. The tools allow for flexible utilisation according to various specific requirements and levels of language acquisition.

The handbook "Love Language! How to Attract Participation and Increase Motivation of Young Male Language Learners", as a complementary product addresses key actors for lifelong learning and language learning training policies in order to inform people responsible for the design of adult education measures and stakeholders in education policy on how to induce motivation among persons who, for various reasons, have hitherto been reluctant to take up foreign language learning.

The LoveLanguage courses are aiming to raise interest, reach and attract the target group, to avoid dropping-out and to raise sustainable motivation. Therefore the teachers and trainers as well as training providers must realize that each student is unique and that learning styles of students often differ. Consequently, teachers need to adjust their teaching to the needs so that every student is able to meet the goals and expectations. The LoveLanguage

Handbook introduces didactical approaches and concepts that have been tested and/or researched within the LoveLanguage partnership and succeeded in reaching the target group. They focus on raising motivation and respecting individual learning styles, propose content integrated learning and self-directed approaches. They challenge teachers and learners to reflect on their role and their responsibility for the learning process as well as for the learning success.

The classes should be small enough to provide the personal attention each student needs. To better utilize time and materials, students, staff, and administration should cooperate.

The training location should be a place which is comfortable and inviting to all students, but besides the classroom where the main lessons will be held, the LoveLanguage approach also challenges training providers, teachers and coaches to provide and offer flexibility. In view of our students' prior, often negative, second language educational experiences, the LoveLanguage courses propose to flexibly integrate a variety of learning environments. The LoveLanguage Toolbox offers a variety of examples on how to diversify learning places and environments in order to raise motivation and provide experience in having fun with language learning. It is necessary that trainers and teachers repeatedly make their aims of using different locations transparent and obvious and therefore overcome those structural barriers which are based on and associated with negative pre-experiences and the fear of many male language learners of continuing failure and discrimination.

Due to the experiences shared within the LoveLanguage partnership, the design of each single course should take into account that

- The level of the units should be carefully adjusted to the students' skills, if it was too high our students lost interest instead of feeling challenged.
- The subjects of the units need to produce interest. Our students preferred subjects like: computer games, internet - surfing, books, etc. Teachers and trainers used to overestimate the student's interest in (theoretically) topics dealing with sport.
- The duration of the units needs to be carefully adjusted to the students' capacities. Often our students were capable of concentrating no longer than 40 minutes.
- The selection of tools and exercises should consider possible deficits in social skills such as low self-confidence and feelings of self-consciousness, which might be based on negative learning experiences. At the beginning our students mainly preferred to

work in written form. Initially they were afraid to speak in the foreign language.

The LoveLanguage Toolbox therefore contains some exercises, which are foreseen to promote the development of the students' social skills. They focus on working with students expressing low self-esteem and that have rarely experienced self-presentation.

The students will experience working in small teams and prepare for self-presentations. According to the level of the foreign language skills, these exercises could but mustn't be elaborated in the foreign language.

Teachers, coaches and training providers should jointly aim at developing a feeling of respect, trust, and partnership between students and teachers. In such an environment, students will be given the opportunity to express themselves, and their self-confidence will rise. They will become aware of the fact that they can keep up with the group and reach their aims in language learning.

Coaching competences such as communication skills are central to building positive relationships with the students and there already exists a lot of literature on this so we will just highlight some key points. It is vital to actually listen to what the students are saying. Teachers and trainers should try to make sure they understand by confirming what they have understood.

Gender-fair teaching challenges educators to recognize and accommodate different learning styles. Teachers, trainers and training providers who focus on helping students should be knowledgeable about the effects of gender, particularly its impact on the vocational education of their target group. Sensitivity to gender means taking gender into consideration in all activities.

Males learn their sex roles in sandboxes, playgrounds, schoolrooms, camps, churches, and hangouts, and are taught by peers, parents, brothers, sisters, coaches, teachers, and just about everybody else. They feel the pressure of the "boy code" in the classroom as much as anywhere else, and it is very detrimental to their education, from the way boys are often labelled as "troublemakers" and as "hyperactive" to their fear of expressing themselves in the classroom.

A gender-sensitive course concept helps male language learners to reflect their experiences and attitudes concerning learning, and to empower their "integrative" and "instrumental" motivation. Another important task of gender-sensitive language teaching is to support

those who have chosen an individual line which may in some kind be untypical to their gender. In order to achieve their full potential as individuals, the students should become aware that many of the limitations on and expectations of men and women are social constructs and that, therefore, they may have to challenge or reject established traditional sex roles.

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