

## ***Shakin' the classroom***

### *Spreading alternative knowledge sharing methods*

#### **Please briefly explain the knowledge sharing method/approach/tool.**

What are the main processes?

Kinesthetic learning is a part of a complex movement in pedagogy that aims to experiment with more active, fun, multisensory and interdisciplinary learning methods. It stresses the importance of full-body movement to process new information. Much of research has confirmed the value of using multiple senses, as well as having students stand up and move their bodies while learning (for a broader discussion see Mobley & Fisher 2014). It serves not only particular types of learners (i.e. kinesthetic), but also adds excitement, change and memorability to the whole classroom.

Kinesthetic learning methods come in many forms, shapes and sizes. They have been successfully implemented in various university settings from natural sciences to architecture, business, and social sciences. They range from students sitting at their pedal desks or chewing gums, over rotating around the room to learn planetary motion, doing experiments, walking around college; to creating full-scale buildings from their own designs. Some of kinesthetic approaches are more about dealing away with the stress of sitting (in which situations students can use standing desks, or fidgets for their legs or hands), while others are using kinesthetic approaches as a core of a teaching method. Here we will be presenting a latter type.

#### **PROCESS**

1. Take one theoretical claim or empirical finding that can be represented by a graph or scale.
2. Present finding or a theoretical claim to learners.
3. Ask them to imagine classroom (or a part of it that is not occupied by chairs) as a graph.
4. Ask them to stand up and assume one position in the graph that corresponds with their experience or situation or attitude or belief.
4. Ask (some of) them to explain their position. How does it feel to occupy such social situation or why do you assume such attitude?
5. Encourage them to question one another about their explanations.
6. Possibly, ask them to reconsider their position and assume other place.

#### **EXAMPLES**

Topic: European Integration

Students assume position on a scale in which a required number of years until Serbia will join EU is placed from one year to never. Different students usually take different positions and their placement is not just a consequence of their knowledge of EU integration but also their attitudes towards it. It is why this is a fruitful ambient to debate not only pragmatic politics and bureaucracy of EU integration steps and requirements, but also different citizen attitudes towards the process as well as its goal - EU membership. Often, after the debate, students change their position, due to new information about the process as well as their change of attitude in case in which initial attitude was overly performative or extreme.

Topic: Bourdieu's cultural field

Bourdieu's complex theory of cultural field and its position to other fields (financial) can also be interpreted in space, where students assume different locations according to their cultural tastes (which part of the field they visit for example). Additional role-playing tasks can be given to illustrate various positions in the field.

#### **OUTCOMES**

I have no scientific data, nor personal testimonies to report here, but only anecdotal comments by participants. Students mostly report that the method has brought a different dynamic in the classroom. Being able to stand up and move around feels welcome mostly. It is also very common that such exercises stay in their memory much longer than lectures normally would.

**In what ways does that method bring change or represent an alternative to existing or dominant knowledge sharing settings and methods?**

This is just one possible example of the kinesthetic approach. Common to all kinesthetic approaches is that they represent an alternative:

- a) to a sedentary classroom;
- b) to ignoring various types of learners some of which don't find sitting, listening and viewing as a best way to learn;
- c) to favouring students who are at ease with speaking and having a verbal interaction with their peers and instructors;
- d) in some cases, to a learning style in which information flows only one way, since kinesthetic learning can produce a much more active learning environment in which more learners are finding things out for themselves and others;
- e) from one perspective, kinesthetic learning if used on a regular basis can represent a strong argument against digitalisation of learning and rapid spread of mass online courses (MOOC) since it justifies use of actual co-presence in a physical classroom.

**If possible, please briefly explain the context in which the method has been developed.**

Who were the main actors? What were the main reasons/motivations/inspirations behind the creation? Which previous developments have influenced it? If relevant, in what ways did the method/tool develop or change over time or in different locations/context?

Since this is a wider approach, not one particular method, contexts vary, but we could say that it has been developed within formal education settings to offer an alternative to the dominant sedentary learning environment. It has evolved in schools with younger children, but has so far spread out all the way to university and vocational training of adults.

**In your opinion, what kind of settings and participants is the method best suited for?**

E.g. age, educational level, cultural and professional background, etc.

Kinesthetic approaches and methods could be used in all teaching settings. This particular approach is more suited to academic and university settings and in fields that find it harder to involve learners' bodies into their learning activities. In physics and engineering for example, many theories and learning processes are already incorporating movement, so there is perhaps no need for such approach.

**Are there any limitations?**

Are there any requirements or limits in terms of location, number/profile of participants, tools and devices, time constraints and other? Are there certain skills, sensitivities or relations that need to be developed or assumed for the method to be successfully applied? Are there any contexts for which this method is not best suited?

How useful the method is really depends on the knowledge that wants to be shared. It is not universal, it stems from the theory in focus or a piece of empirical finding, so it is very important to find a theoretical or empirical claim that can be visualised as a graph. It is also very important to find a topic that provokes debate. There is no point in just having students assume place on the

graph. It is about being in relation with others and trying to understand their position and explain ones own.

### **What are your experiences with the method?**

In case you have tested or experienced the method beyond its primary environment, what are your experiences? Would you change anything or suggest further development?

I have met one kinesthetic method at a ENCATC conference in London when it was hosted by the Goldsmiths University. One local professor has shared her experience with it when working with arts management students. I have been experimenting with it in various other settings with students of cultural tourism and cultural management.

### **Could you provide any relevant testimonies?**

If possible, please provide testimonies, reflections and statements about the method from its authors and/or users.

See reference list.

### **Additional references**

If possible, please provide additional links, materials, instructions and other relevant content.

Culp, B., Oberlton, M., & Porter, K. (2020) Developing Kinesthetic Classrooms to Promote Active Learning, Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, 91:6, 10-15, DOI: 10.1080/07303084.2020.1768178

Mobley, K. & Fisher, S. (2014) Ditching the Desks: Kinesthetic Learning in College Classrooms, The Social Studies, 105:6, 301-309, DOI: 10.1080/00377996.2014.951471

The Kinesthetic Classroom: Teaching and Learning through Movement | Michael Kuczala | TEDxAshburn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41gtxDfY4s>