

CHAPTER 12

MAX for Enhancing Students’ Analytical Skills

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INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has transformed the way people live, work and study while Education 4.0 is the approach to learning that has to go hand in hand with the developments of Industrial Revolution 4.0. The top 10 skills necessary for students in 2020 stated in The World Economic Forum (2016) were complex problem-solving; critical thinking; creativity; people management; coordinating with others; emotional intelligence; judgement and decision making; service orientation; negotiation; cognitive flexibility (World Economic Forum 2016). Education 4.0 is becoming the primary approach to learning that aligns itself with the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Therefore, aligning teaching and learning methodologies, approaches, and strategies with the skills necessary in the future is of fundamental topicality in the preparation of both teachers and students. The changes brought about are inevitable, therefore, it is high time to consider “education for the future” taking into account these transformations and acknowledging the transformations taking place at all levels. Within all these transformations, learners’ autonomy, and the related phenomena (self-directed learning, etc.) are taking the central position within the new education 4.0 paradigm.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The term learner autonomy implies conscious and deliberate efforts to develop individuals who have the ability to participate to some extent in all aspects of their studies. Learners’ preparedness involves learners assessing motivation and confidence to make necessary decisions, whereas learners’ capability involves learners possessing necessary skills to accomplish the choices which are made during the learning process. Learners are able to gain autonomy only when they possess necessary knowledge, skills, motivation, and confidence.

Moore (2010) emphasises that not only are learners obliged to have the capacity to take control over their learning, but the learning environment should

also provide them with an opportunity to gain autonomy. He mentions that to gain learner autonomy, not only are learners required to have or develop a set of personal qualities, such as confidence, enthusiasm, taking and accepting obligation, and ability to take initiative, but they should also possess a set of academic skills to identify learning goals and processes, understand how to evaluate learning, manage well-grounded conceptions of learning, apply a substantial number of learning approaches, organise learning and to be well-motivated to learn autonomously. Mackness (2011) explains that learner autonomy enables learners to become successful in learning; however, they should possess a certain set of abilities to gain autonomy, such as taking responsibility for own learning, monitoring, and evaluating own learning, flexibility in making decisions, reflectiveness with high-level of metacognition, being proactive, critical, analytical, and constructively critical, filtering and selecting the required information. However, possessing the aforementioned skills and abilities cannot be sufficient for learners to gain autonomy and achieve success in learning since it is a teacher who plays the leading role in promoting learner autonomy by creating the appropriate learning environment and developing the required skills. Enhancing the role of a teacher as a facilitator to promote learner autonomy, Sykes (2014) suggests the following four strategies be integrated into the course:

1. Teachers should establish a relationship with their future students and learn their needs and preferences before the course begins.
2. Teachers should encourage learners to monitor themselves while doing tasks.
3. Teachers should encourage learners to summarise the key points of the task.
4. Teachers should encourage learners to develop their own quizzes which are necessary to develop the ability to assess, combine and utilise what has been learnt.

EXPLANATION OF THE TOOL

MAX (Motivation – Acquisition – Extension) is a tool that enhances students' analytical skills based on autonomous learning theory, in which self-management approach is dominant and benefits from students' motivation, acquisition and extension. In this tool, after the determination of time and items to be taught, the aim is to elicit different opinions from the students about what they have learnt/found out (learners' motivation), what they want to try out (the evidence of acquisition) and what they would like to examine more in detail (learners' readiness to extend the acquired, to apply in practice).

- Aims of the tool – 1) to develop students' analytical and reflection skills; 2) to analyse, synthesize and evaluate the information obtained in accordance with particular teaching aims and objectives.

- Expected outcome – depending on the type of MAX – it can be to determine the level of students’ motivation, acquisition, and readiness to apply the acquired in practice.
- Allocated time – from 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the depth of the question, could also take more time. If combined with follow-up see below, it can take additional 30 to 40 minutes.
- Setting, place layout – there are no special requirements concerning the setting, students can fill in the offered handout on their own after the activity (feedback or reflection MAX), or before the activity (opinion and learning check-up MAX), but it should be done alone.
- Organization questions – students should be explained the procedure of the use of the tool, the evaluation criteria if MAX is going to be assessed, and they should be given enough time for completing MAX on their own.
- Necessary materials – teacher’s prepared handout or online assignment. Depending on the aim, the teacher can choose among several types of MAX.

Several types of MAX: for finding out students’ opinion, for checking students’ learning, for receiving the feedback on activity; for checking students’ understanding.

Reflection MAX

(describe each mentioned thing clearly so as if one has not been present at the class would also benefit from this information or you yourself will be able to recall the situation from the description)

3 things I found out / ideas learned (Motivation)

V

V

V

2 things / ideas that inspired me professionally that I would like to try/use in teaching in near future. Please, describe why (Acquisition)

V

V

1 thing / idea that was attractive, but it still needs to be worked on (Extension)

V

Feedback MAX

(describe each mentioned thing clearly so as if one has not been present at the class would also benefit from this information or you yourself will be able to recall the situation from the description)

3 things I will remember about today

V

V

V

2 things I will try out

V

V

1 thing I want to ask, as it was not clear

V

Opinion MAX (describe each mentioned thing clearly and support by facts)

3 things you like about group work

V

V

V

2 things you consider significant to make group work effective

V

V

1 thing that bothers you about group work

V

Learning check-up MAX (describe each mentioned thing clearly and support by facts)

3 things you liked about the story

V

V

V

2 things you disliked about the story

V

V

1 thing you would like to ask / you would like to change if you were the author

V

- Number of participants – there are no restrictions concerning the number of participants, from one to hundreds.
- Role of students – active participants.
- Role of teacher – active analyser of information received.

- Steps to use the tool – students fill in the handout and submit / hand in; teacher analyses to see the students' motivation, acquisition, and extension.
- Assessment – the possible assessment for Learning or Check-up MAX could be based on the Taxonomy of cognitive field (Benjamin Bloom taxonomy's updated version Anderson & Krathwohl, 1995-2000).

The entries of MAX can be assessed in the scale from average to outstanding and individual feedback provided to students.

1. Remembering – recognizing or recalling knowledge from memory to produce or retrieve definitions, facts, or lists, or to recite previously learned information – (average)
2. Understanding – constructing meaning from different types of functions be they written or graphic messages or activities like interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, or explaining – (almost good)
3. Applying – carrying out or using a procedure through executing or implementing in situations where learned material is used through products like models, presentations, interviews, or simulations – (good)
4. Analysing – breaking materials or concepts into parts, determining how the parts relate to one another or how they interrelate, or how the parts relate to an overall structure or purpose. Mental actions included in this function are differentiating, organizing, and attributing, as well as being able to distinguish between the components or parts. When one is analysing, he/she can illustrate this mental function by creating spreadsheets, surveys, charts, or diagrams, or graphic representations – (very good)
5. Evaluating – making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing. Critiques, recommendations, and reports are some of the products that can be created to demonstrate the processes of evaluation – (excellent)
6. Creating – putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole, reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing. Creating requires users to put parts together in a new way or synthesize parts into something new and different creating a new form or product – (outstanding)

■ Follow-up

The entries of Reflection and Feedback MAX should not be graded by mark, but the tutor could always facilitate the development of students' analytical skills providing the feedback using the descriptors of above-mentioned Taxonomy of cognitive field.

The entries received from students can also be cut in pieces: three things, two things and one thing, and students in groups could be asked to rate the responses according to the descriptors of Taxonomy of cognitive field.

Or students could be organized in three groups, the first group receives all the slips of three things; the second group receives all the slips of two things and the third group – the slips of one thing and groups are asked to classify them, label, and explain their reason (see concept formation steps).

■ Students' feedback on MAX

- ✓ *“Next, I consider success in this course by writing a MAX assignment. This enabled me to make self-analysis and look from another perspective to myself and motivated me for the further improvement of my professional competence.”*
- ✓ *“The other thing that I consider as a success of this course is the experience of writing MAXes. Initially, it was very hard to understand the idea of reflecting on each seminar. I thought it was lengthy and time-consuming. Still, the last lecture changed my mind. First of all, I finally understood the importance of writing MAXes. Second, through these three-previous works, I gradually realised how to write the appropriate feedback. Initially, I wrote my work as a reflection of what was done and what I have discovered and how I will use it. My first work was more like a retelling of the lecture. Then, having analysed the first work and made relevant conclusions, I understood what the primary purpose of the MAX work was, to reflect on your feelings and gain knowledge during the seminar. Thus, I elaborated the second MAX and tried to combine both my reflection of the conference and my feedback on what I have learned and how it will contribute to my personality and my profession. And lastly, in the last MAX, I already tried to reveal all my thoughts and my emotions when we were attending workshops, because I still consider that that was a valuable experience both for the development of my professional identity and methodologically for the development of my professional experience. Undoubtedly, someday I will use this approach on visiting the true representatives of their profession with my class because only true professionals can inspire to realise oneself in the profession. Finally, I consider the experience of writing MAXes as the success of this course because it gave me the idea how to use this approach in my future Master thesis. I assume that I will use MAX as a method of gathering empirical results in the context of my work. With the help of MAX, I will find what motivated my presumed research sample, what feelings they had at the time of the implementation of my research as well as their feedback and thoughts about the experience.”*
- ✓ *“In my opinion, MAX as an evaluation tool is useful for evaluating myself, my lessons, and for my students. Also, to use MAX as an evaluation tool for*

the course is useful, but I would recommend that given grades on MAX is contra-productive. I always thought about how much I should write and what I should write in order to get a good grade”.

■ Visualized examples (the works of students)

Student No. 1

3 things / ideas I learned (**Motivation**)

- The seven levels of personal consciousness by Barrett were an interesting topic. This model is a framework for understanding how individuals and organisations develop and grow. I understood that I am at the level of transformation.
- Evaluation of my professional competences was challenging to do. I think it is useful to look back and evaluate what things have you gained during these 2 years of studies. It helps to realize the skills that still need to be improved and reminds that there is always a place for development.
- Making a whistle was really amazing because I like doing creative activities like this one. Working with clay again brought back some nice memories about some moments of my life when I have worked with it making little statues, candlesticks, and small bowls. The manager of the study and artist Helga Ingeborga Melbärde is a very interesting and charismatic person. Her positivism really encouraged and supported during this workshop. It was really great to see how happy and enthusiastic some course mates became when hearing their whistles' first sounds. I absolutely will try out making whistles at home too.

2 things / ideas that inspired me professionally (**Acquisition**)

- Aim activity I have already done several times, during *FranklinCovey* course “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”, in my daily life and also with my grade 4 students at school. I have already used to setting aims and then setting tasks for reaching them. This skill is useful for children to gain awareness of how aims are formulated, how one can reach them, and also that aims should be measurable and tasks or a task should be concrete and measurable. We have done it already since February. They usually set their aims for a month, and they set 2-3 aims – personal and connected with their studies at school. At the end of month, they reflect back whether they have reached their aims or not.
- Inner/outer circle discussions are great because they are person-centred. Everyone has a chance to speak up and also – to listen. I would like to use it in my work, but it won't be possible to do with primary grades from 1 to 3 but it could be used with grade 4 with a very easy discussion

topic or questions given for getting information from their group mates in a very limited period of time.

1 thing / idea that was attractive, but it still needs to be worked on (**Extension**)

- The evaluation of competences was difficult too, I think that I could have improved some points with more appropriate examples from my experience.

Student No. 2

3 things / ideas I found out/ I learned (Motivation)

- I found out that if I set clear goals, which can be measured, attended, time-phased and which are specific and realistic, then I am able to achieve them easier as if they are too broadly formulated, unmeasurable, unrealistic, and unspecific. Before this lecture, I set the goal that I want to have a better relationship with my mother. Therefore, I set the steps to phone her once a week and text her two times a week and to talk with her about her feelings, experiences, and life. I achieved my goal because I set these clear and specific steps. In the future, I want to set specific, realistic, and clear steps further to achieve my goals in daily life and within my profession.
- During talking about the three artefacts, I learned that people are developing their professional identity because of turning points in their life, for example, when they are changing schools, going abroad, or feeling unsatisfied with their situation. When I talked about my artefacts, I realized that my development of professional identity is based mostly on changing the schooling institution. My first professional development happened when I entered the vocational high school to be a kindergarten teacher and an after-school-care centre educator. In this stage, I was in the status 2 – Moratorium. I had a sense of who I am, but I was not sure who I wanted to be. Therefore, I wanted to get to know it. When I entered the university college for teachers, my next turning point happened. I was in status 3 – Foreclosure – in my professional development. I knew who I was, and I knew what I wanted. I wanted to be a teacher. Therefore, I created plans which I wanted to follow. Now, I am between status 3 and status 4 – achievement, because I am still establishing plans and developing myself, but I also want to finish my master degree, so I am working on my plans, but I have not achieved them yet.
- I learned that there are seven ways teachers learn. They are learning from institutions, research, ideas, analysing their own teaching, and inspirational examples. Besides, they are learning intuitively and as an adult

sharing their experiences. I found out that I learn theory from institutions, for example, about learning theories, teaching styles and methods, professional development, and subject-specific issues. My learning outcome depends on introductions and how professors give the knowledge further. In the bachelor's degree, I was like a blank paper, I had no experiences and ideas about being a teacher. Therefore, it was easier for me to learn. Whereas, now if I hear topics in lectures, which I already know, it will be more difficult for me to learn. In addition, I found out that I am not learning from research because I am not interested in it, but I think I should start reading scientific papers to learn from those and to develop my professional identity. I think, as a teacher, I always have to develop myself and be updated with new methods and theories. These methods and theories I only know through reading research papers. Moreover, I found out that I am learning through analysing my own teaching. After every German lesson, I talk with my colleague about the lesson and think about what I could improve.

2 things / ideas that inspired me professionally (Acquisition)

- The creative workshop, where we draw sketches, inspired me professionally because I learned that it is important to try out things, not always thinking about what other people might think about me, there is always space for improvements, and that everyone is an individual. In future, I want to try out more different teaching methods because I also learn from ideas and if I get doubts about what I am doing, I will ask my colleagues for honest feedback. Until now, I wanted to try out something, but then I stopped because I had doubts about it and felt uncertain if I had done the correct thing.
- The wheel of motivation tendencies inspired me professionally because I learned 14 motivation tendencies (acceptance of authority, orderliness, being demonstrative, autonomy, belonging to a group, introspection, accepting help, dominating, helping, tolerance to the new, persistence in reaching a goal, heterosexuality, aggression, feeling guilt, and motivation of achievements). I found out that I have a high tendency for orderliness, autonomy, belonging to a group, introspection, dominating, helping, tolerance to the new, persistence in reaching a goal, feeling guilt, and motivation of achievements. On average, I had the points: acceptance of authority, being demonstrative, accepting help, heterosexuality, and aggression. Therefore, I can conclude that I have high motivation tendencies. The motivation tendencies – tolerance for the new, motivation of achievements, persistence in reaching a goal, orderliness, helping, and introspection are helping me in my profession in daily life, but dominating and autonomy have in some situation's negative effects. I want to

be independent in making decisions and perform in my profession, but then sometimes I have problems being cooperative. Also dominating, to be the leader of a group and to make decisions instead of others, is not a positive aspect of working together with a colleague in one class. Therefore, in future, I can develop my professional identity when I give others as well the chance to say their point of view and to be the leader of the group.

1 thing / idea that was attractive, but it still needs to be worked on (Extension)

- The idea of going to a museum about the history of education and teachers was attractive to me, but it still needs to be worked on, because I heard and learned already a lot about the history of education and teachers, but in my teaching I am not aware of using teaching methods which came up in the past. Therefore, I want to read more about the history of education to gain more ideas which I could use in class.

Student No. 3

Three ideas I found out to be motivating

1. The first thing I really liked was the “My strengths” worksheet. There were some unfinished sentences like “I like about myself...”; “I am good at...”; “People can rely on me because...”; “One good thing about me...”; etc. Sometimes, I think we have to remind ourselves of our strengths. We are so busy in life’s hustle and bustle that we forget about ourselves, what good qualities we possess and how to reflect them. On difficult days, remembering positive things can motivate us to cope up with stress and can help us to focus on our diligence. Some of the unfinished sentences, however, were difficult to answer. Those were like “This year better than last year I have dealt with...” or “One of the aims I am currently trying to achieve is...”. I would say the former one I couldn’t answer as I felt I haven’t dealt with anything so difficult so far and the latter one was quite obvious as all of us are trying to complete our studies. Similarly, I can’t answer on somebody’s behalf like “they like me...” or “those who know me are happy that I am...” Different people have different opinions about the same person. So, I was not sure how to answer them. However, all these sentences made me feel that I have achieved a lot and I am capable of doing a lot of things other than studies.
2. I like the explanation about motivation tendencies. Some of the tendencies, however, I think help you become a better person. We have a very close society, so for me, belonging to a group is a necessary thing. Whenever we celebrate some functions or have some celebration together, we

try to appreciate each other's work and give regular compliments. That encourages us and we also try to help each other in difficult circumstances. I have seen that some of the people from our nationality who are married to the locals come in order to make their kids show the importance of our festivals so that they can adapt to both the local as well as the Indian culture. Besides this, I have found that 'Aggression' has motivated me to face some challenging situations. Like professor was telling about getting aggressive when your kids are being criticised for something, I have felt the same on many occasions and I have taken action against it not just to prove my point but also to show to my kids that they should not believe everything that others are saying about them, instead they should rely on their strengths, and they shouldn't let their morals down.

3. The third thing that inspired me was the workshop of making 'Clay whistles'. The task required a lot of patience and skilful hand movement. As I am not artistic by nature, the job was quite difficult for me. I was constantly asking for help from one of my colleagues or the professor. Accepting help was not a difficult element for me as I wanted to accomplish my job. I noticed that all of us were contemplating on the job very seriously and we were constantly examining our whistles after every few minutes. Everyone was putting their best to make it work. All this dedication made me think about what makes people try to accomplish something? Is it the competition to show I am the best or is it the real pleasure that you can get after achieving something. The other part of the activity I really enjoyed was the conversation. While the process was going on, we were chatting constantly to each other. In the end, I knew a lot about some of my fellow colleagues.

Two things that inspired me professionally

1. The first thing that inspired me was when the professor showed that priority between social skills and academic skills is important, and we should not ignore them. I agree that social competences play a major role for a person to be successful. Unlike India, where grades are given importance and every child is expected to excel in the academic field, my husband and I think that extracurricular activities like playing piano, singing, playing football, going out with friends, are as important as getting marks in various academic spheres. So, we don't press our children to be the best in the class, instead we pay attention to their moral and communal development. We have noticed that our children are flourishing both physically and intellectually. I think it is important for the parents to understand that modern day children can't thrive on traditional education, and they should have some additional awareness about the things around them.

2. The second thing that inspired me was the story by our fellow colleagues about accepting help. I agree that sometimes we don't have to force people to accept our help. Sometimes, it's best to let the students try themselves and let them see the outcome themselves. But in other cases, you have to reach yourself to offer them any help. I have seen some of my students in the class are very shy. They won't ask even if they haven't understood the task completely and they won't even come to me. In the beginning, I was unaware of this problem and their grades were going down. But now I know and whenever I offer help, they accept it and I have seen that they are not as weak as they seem to be.

One thing I would like to work upon

I was encouraged by motivation tendencies explanations, but I can say that some of the tendencies for me are fairly strong and they are "Tolerance about new things", "Persistence in reaching goal", "Achievement motivation" and "Working in a group" and those are the tendencies I would like to work upon. Although it's not bad to set a goal and work hard to achieve it, for the past few months, I have been ignoring my family to complete my home assignments and to manage my job. My family members don't complain, instead they provide me their full support. But somehow, I feel guilty being a mother and a housewife. It is also affecting my health and I can see that I get tired too soon and want to relax. Probably, spending time with my family and friends is what I'm looking forward to. But other tendencies like tolerance and belongingness to a group, I take it as an asset and admire my own culture as well as I am quite capable of adapting to a new culture.

Student No. 4

3 things that, as a result of the course, have changed in me as a person, as a professional, as a representative of a society

One thing that changed in me as a person is my attitude towards the concept of how other people see me. During the first lecture we were told that the answer to the question how others see me reveals the ability to analyse your personality as a whole. It was impossible for me to answer this question at the beginning. However, when we completed a task called "Johari windows" I had a chance to know that other people see several qualities in me which I thought I did not possess. This was a revelation and now I have a wider vision of myself.

The thing which changed in me as a professional is my attitude towards the students. I always knew that teachers have to study all their lives, but I forgot how it feels to be a student. While performing all the activities

in this course I tried to attach their meaning to my students' feelings and behaviour. This was done because of the lecturer's questions and suggestions to apply this or that aspect to the school context, which made me think in this perspective. Thus, completing a task about motivational strategies and analysing myself, I realized that my students might be different people and might think differently, therefore I have to be aware of such a possibility and be sensitive to them.

As a representative of a society, I have realized the importance of teachers in social life and community formation. Based on the experience of the first Latvian teachers of the 19th century who made the first steps in education development, I now realize that modern teachers are responsible for developing, enlightening, and educating this and future generations, forming society values, attitudes and moral beliefs. Therefore, after the words of Professor Krūze who stated that teachers have a very high position because they perform an important mission, deal with children raising and upbringing I realized that teacher's status should be raised in the society.

2 things to be considered as the success of this course

The first thing which I evaluate as the success of this course is the opportunity of developing new skills and overcoming challenges. I have tried out new skills and overcame a challenge of drawing and demonstrating my imperfect pictures to the spectators. Furthermore, what I value the most is the chance to develop creativity which every person has to have in everyday life. However, routine, and monotonous set of activities to be performed in an ordinary life deprive a person to spend much time on creative activities which turn into "flow", a process when one enjoys doing the thing and does not notice time. Surprisingly, my feedback about the art class was classified as "flow" during the feedback analysis activity. Therefore, I believe that the success of the course is the given chance to experience flow and satisfaction.

The second thing which I consider as the success is the multi-faceted approach, I have implemented to analyse my personality and teacher's identity from various perspectives. I would never do such a deep examination of myself without being given such an opportunity within the course. Firstly, I have discovered which stages of development I have gone through and which stage I occupy now. So far, I have gone through "diffusion" when I did not care much what was going to happen, and finally got to the "achievement", having a clear aim, understanding and a plan of what to do. Secondly, I have analysed seven ways I have been learning as a teacher during my professional life and which ways I have implemented in my professional practice, which now make me feel more

secure about the actions I perform. Thirdly, I have investigated which areas of teacher's development have been covered in my work and these are "skills" and "knowledge" and I have realized that at present I'm developing "attitude" and "awareness". Finally, having completed the checklist "you and your profession", "you and your school", etc., I have got a possibility to find out the areas which I have thoroughly developed, and which require more attention in the future. Therefore, the success in completing all these activities is the whole picture of me as a professional teacher and a plan of the steps to be taken in the future.

1 thing / recommendation for the improvement of this study course

I would recommend providing an opportunity to get acquainted with other teachers' identity stories. It could be an interesting experience to know how other people made their ways to become teachers, what the life stories were, how it happened that they had chosen this kind of profession and what their feelings about it are. I believe that any personal story is unique and when a person presents it in a written form, they have a chance to give minor details together with the important events that influenced their lives. In my life, I quite often ask my colleagues how they feel about being teachers and how it happened to them to become a teacher. However, I suppose that a written story might reveal deeper retrospection of personal life. Furthermore, any written work requires reading as all writers need a reader. Therefore, to write and present your teacher's identity story would be more stimulating and inspiring work if the writer knew that it would be read by a larger audience. It would also contribute to the development of belonging to a community of the teachers of this, previous and following courses, maybe even generations and would improve the well-being and positive stance of everyone connected with this profession.

CONCLUSION

The tool introduced in this chapter may be used in all the education cycles and can be integrated in different subject areas. It is relatively easy to implement in any classroom provided it requires minimal preparation. The autonomous learning approach encourages both active participation and reflections on the activities the participants are engaged in, while the reflection theory underlying this tool is crucial within the personal, academic, and professional development. The tool introduced in this chapter tackles the issue of the development of learner autonomy alongside the other skills, such as analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills among others.

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