

# Hi everyone! I'm Laura Glez and I would love to share with you all my experience during the Training Course "Brain Gain" for youth workers that took place in Desenzano del Garda, Italy in May, 2022.

The project's aim was to provide new tools for implementing activities in the educational field through neuroscience.

The first step was to understand how our brain works, which factors are decisive for the learning process and what can be done to improve the impact of the educational activities on the young public.

The key is our **brain plasticity**, also known as neuroplasticity, what's this? It's the brain's ability to change and adapt, in this sense, our brain's physical structure can change thanks to experiences or memories. This is translated into an amazing idea: **learning is a lifelong process!** Nevertheless, we learned about the different phases of the brain's development and a crucial moment at the age of 12 years old, something to take into consideration because it's an important stage to enhance the progress of the students.

While teaching it is essential to take into account different factors such as the **emotional connection** and the **environment**. During the training, we discovered the difference between emotions and feelings. Emotions are our primary reactions and they can not be modified, there are 6 types of emotions: surprise, joy, fear, disgust, anger and sadness. Through our mental processes, we transform these emotions into feelings. We have to pay attention to the body language for recognizing them. Why is so that interesting? Because **positive emotions** can influence **positive results** in the classroom such as increased concentration and better memory.

All these concepts meet together in the **Montessori Method!** This educational system emphasizes the kid's independence and learning by doing. Kids are unique individuals with different interests in base on their age. They learn by playing and we see it with our own eyes during the visit to the school Fly High, where they were learning basic mathematic operations in an open "market": some of them were the buyers while others were the cashiers, learning in an independent and funny approach. Their hands are an instrument of their mind, this concept of experiential learning is the base of youth work in my sending organization Hyvärilä Youth Center where kids learn non-formal education outside of the classroom.

In addition, we discovered some useful tips such as **giving instructions in a positive way**, for example instead of “Don’t cry” we could say “This looks really hard for you, let me help you to understand what’s going on”. Our brain simply does not like to hear **no for an answer**, so it is important to instruct them in a positive way.

This training mixed theoretical parts with practical exercises and visits to different institutions in an idyllic location with an amazing group of international youth workers. I’m sure that I’ll put in practice all the knowlegde while creating and instructing activities for young people.

I would like to thank my sending organization Hyvärilä Youth Center for this opportunity, all the professionals that made this training course possible and the lovely participants.

And as we learned:

Our **brain** works as a **network** and we will work as a network to implement activities and make more successful the learning process for everyone.



Laura Glez  
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