

Explain to me

From Phase 2: Evaluation of pre-concepts

Phase 2 methods are suitable for activating and questioning the existing ideas of the participants based on an introduction to the subject of heterogeneity in schools. Thus, the aim is to activate the participants' so-called pre-concepts.

a) General information

Time frame: Phase of a lesson, 15-20 minutes

Social form(s): Pair work, plenum

Number of people: Even number of participants

Short summary: The method Explain to me works with selected topics that are very important to know and understand. The group is divided into two smaller groups. The topics are written down on a piece of paper and pinned on the back of a chair. Participants of the first group are sitting on the chairs and do not see the paper. The participants of the second group sit in front of them. As the participants of group two know the topic written on the back of the chair of the person in front of them, they talk about the topic, explaining it, giving personal views about it and pre-knowledge. The participants of the first group listen without asking questions. The participants of the second group move on from chair to chair until they have explained all topics to the participants of the first group. At the end, there is a feedback of group two in the plenum about the explained topics that leads into a discussion on the topics in general.

b) Description of the method (preparation, working steps, aim)

To use the method, you need topics written on paper, Sellotape and a chair for each group member in two lines or circles (always two chairs in front of each other). On this basis the following working steps take place:

1. Divide group into two groups: listeners and explainers.
2. Every listener takes a chair and sits on it.
3. The explainer gets a paper with an opinion and pins it on the back of the chair of the listener.
4. One explainer sits in front of each listener and has three minutes to express his*her opinion on the topic.
5. The listener only listens and doesn't express any opinion.
6. After three minutes the explainers rotate to the right side.
7. The explainers rotate until they are back to the first listener.
8. Everyone goes back into the plenum.
9. Each listener sums up and talks about the different opinions she or he heard about in the plenum.

The method is used to get an overview about the pre-knowledge of topics in a group. The lecturer learns about the pre-knowledge of the participants and can adapt future content of teaching. Participants maximise their participation in a face-to-face context. Participants learn to summarise different views

and give an overview in the plenum. The advantage of this method is that personal views can only be linked by the listeners but not in the plenum to a specific person and are therefore kind of anonymous. There is no right and wrong. In the plenum the summarised opinions can be discussed.

c) Reflecting questions on how to implement the methods in programmes for (recently) immigrated and refugee teachers

How can the participants and lecturers contribute their knowledge in a way that does not culturalise?

As the listener sums up the common sense in the group there are no personal views that have to be stated. The listener is talking about opinions of others and not his*her own opinion. It is crucial that the summary of the opinions is not judged in a way that connects certain perspectives to cultural belonging.

What must be considered so that this method does not lead to stereotypes and/or discriminatory categorisations?

The lecturer has to be very careful about commenting the opinions, even though they might contain stereotypes and prejudices. The lecturer has to see them as a pool of pre-knowledge of the group as the basis for discussion. As the listeners and explainers know each other, the listeners should avoid to tell names while they are summing up in the group discussion.

How to work with this method in a language sensitive way/how to include multilingualism?

In this method the topics/opinions can be chosen by the language level of the group or a bit above if possible. It is always adaptable to the language level of the group. If one explainer and one listener share a language other than the dominant course language, the explanation can be held in this language.

How to use this method in a participatory way?

The topics (at the back of the chairs) are provided by the lecturer, the opinions are by the members of the group. As an adaption the topics could also be chosen by the participants.

Possible variations of the method

The listeners can have the opportunity to ask one question to better understand the opinion of the explainer if needed.

Possible application (for other contexts, e.g. schools)

This method can be used in universities as well as in schools without being modified.

Tips

The lecturer should make sure that the pairs of listeners and explainers have a comfortable distance to each other for everyone to ensure an environment of security for everyone.

Example/possible topics

Topics could be specific basic and human rights or anti-discrimination laws. For example, the participants can discuss the right of 'freedom of speech' according to the method and thus express their knowledge and opinions about its importance as well as possible limitations (for example in the case of discriminatory speech acts).

