

Questionnaire on Heterogeneity in Schools

From Phase 3: Information on topic and content

The methods of phase three are designed to support participants in acquiring information and technical background knowledge. The focus is on factual knowledge (e.g. statistics on inequality of opportunity in education in Germany, Austria or Sweden).

a) General information

Time frame: About 45 min and the time needed to conduct surveys outside the regular teaching hours

Social form(s): Group work

Number of people: Learning group

Short summary: Participants develop their own questionnaire based on a study of the "Index for Inclusion" by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow 2002, which is a tool for schools to reflect on their performance regarding the aim to provide inclusive education. In doing so, the participants first learn about the Index for Inclusion in detail and reflect on the underlying values and goals. By systematically deriving their own questionnaire from the Index of Inclusion, the participants secondly reflect on the necessary steps to implement inclusion in practice. Subsequently, the questionnaires can be used by the participants to evaluate the openness towards inclusive education of an institution (e.g. the internship school as well as the programme in which they participate) in terms of an inclusive understanding of dealing with heterogeneity.

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

The participants create their own questionnaire based on an intensive study of the "Index of Inclusion". The Index for Inclusion is a set of indicators divided into three dimensions (A Creating inclusive cultures, B Producing inclusive policies, C Evolving inclusive practices), which are again divided into two sections (A.1 Building community A.2 Establishing inclusive values, B.1 Developing the school for all, B.2 Organising support for diversity, C.1 Orchestrating learning, C.2 Mobilising resources), which are again subdivided into 5 to 11 indicators. Each section contains up to eleven indicators and the meaning of each indicator is clarified by a series of questions.

For example, here are the indicators of the topic to create inclusive cultures, policies and practices, with the questions arising from one of the indicators in each case (Booth & Ainscow 2002, 39):

- Everyone is made to feel welcome.
- Participants help each other.
- Staff collaborate with each other.
- Staff and participants treat one another with respect.
- There is a partnership between staff and parents/carers.
- Staff and governors work well together.

- All local communities are involved in the school

From the multitude of these indicators, the participants are now asked to identify those target dimensions that are most important to them and to develop their own questionnaire.

Given the scope of the index for inclusion, it may be helpful to first select, together with the participants, a dimension, section or indicator on which they wish to focus. Also, different groups could work on different dimensions, sections or indicators.

The joint discussion of the questions already leads to a wider understanding into what is necessary for shaping a school life open to heterogeneity.

When the own questionnaire is completed, participants can now use it to – theoretically and practically – examine different educational institutions with regard to inclusion. They can, for example, examine their internship school, ask practising teachers about their school or simply evaluate schools where they previously worked based on memory. The various results are then compiled and discussed within the group.

The aim of this method is to adopt a self-review approach to analyse their cultures, policies and practices and to identify the barriers to learning and participation that may occur within each of these areas. Hereby, the participants decide on their own priorities for change and how to evaluate their progress. The method may be used as an integral part of existing development policies, encouraging a wide and deep scrutiny of everything that makes up a school's activities. The Index takes the social model of disability as its starting point, builds on good practice, and then organises the Index work around a cycle of activities which guide schools through the stages of preparation, investigation, development and review.

In a broader sense, the method can enable participants to contribute in communication and communities of all persons involved in schools in order to achieve high standards of openness to heterogeneity.

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?

By creating their own questionnaire, the participants actively deal with the Index for Inclusion and work out the criteria for dealing with heterogeneity that are most important to them. The variety of different indicators for including heterogeneity within the index for inclusion allows the individual perspectives of the participants to be heard without running the risk of promoting one-sided views.

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

It is important to clarify that the method expects a lot of initiative and responsibility of the participants and that the contributions of each participant are equally valued. At the same time, it must be reflected that even helpful questionnaires and catalogues of criteria can also reproduce categories of difference and thus must always be critically questioned and reflected on. In this context, it is also important that the lecturer allows space for deeper reflection.

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

The questionnaire could be designed and answered in different languages. If possible, it might be useful to form language groups.

How to use this method in a participatory way?

It is important to create an atmosphere in which everyone feels free to bring in their perspectives, interests and requests. The participants should be involved in the planning, teaching and evaluation of the method.

Possible variations of the method

There are possibilities of variations of the method, for example participants can discuss or create their own questionnaire based on their needs and can differ from group to group and from course to course.

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

The method can be adapted to other contexts, for example to the school context by taking into consideration the need to prepare the material for students' level.

Example/possible topics

As described above, the overall topic is heterogeneity and inclusion in school. Below is an example of a possible questionnaire on the subject with questions chosen and derived out of different indicators of the Index of Inclusion

Questionnaire on heterogeneity in schools:

- Is the first contact that people have with the school friendly and welcoming?
- Is the school welcoming to all students, including students with impairments, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers?
- Is the school welcoming to all parents, carers and other members of its local communities?
- Do students seek help from and offer help to each other when it is needed?
- Are supportive friendships actively encouraged?
- Do students share rather than compete for friends?
- Do students avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist and other forms of discriminatory name-calling?
- Do students feel that disputes between them are dealt with fairly and effectively?
- Do staff treat each other with respect irrespective of their roles in the school, class, gender or ethnic background?
- Do staff address all students respectfully, by the name they wish to be called, with the correct pronunciation?
- Are all students, parents, carers given an opportunity to be involved in decisions made about the school?

(The questions are extracted from: Booth, T., Aiscow, M (2002): Index for Inclusion – developing learning and participation in schools. <https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Index%20English.pdf> [29.02.20].)

Furthermore, single topics can be specified. For example, the Index for Inclusion offers many subcategories that can be explored in detail. In addition, perspectives on heterogeneity and inclusion that go beyond the Index of Inclusion can be introduced into the questionnaire together with the participants.

d) Further information

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education: Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in school. Available at: <http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/inclusion-index-explained.shtml> [29.02.2020].



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