

Situation Analysis Method

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: Part of a lesson

Social form(s): Group work

Number of people: 4-25

Short summary: The Situation Analysis Method is a useful tool to raise awareness to specific situations and bring participants to reflect on them. The method can be based on a film clip (see 4.3.2), a picture, a written observation or a transcribed conversation sequence (e.g. of a classroom, where the teacher-student interaction should be first described and second analysed).

b) Description of the method

A situational analysis pays attention to the integration of any kind of case material in order to facilitate the description of social processes and interactions, e.g. in the class. A related problem where situational analysis would appear to be applicable concerns the difference between people's beliefs and acknowledged acceptance of certain norms on the one hand and their actual behaviour on the other. As a method of integrating variations and exceptions into descriptions of regularities, situational analysis, with its emphasis on process, might therefore be especially suitable for the study of non-homogeneous schools.

When using the method, different people or groups can have a different focus:

1. in observing/reading different people (e.g. one or more group(s) is/are taking a closer look on the teacher, one or more group(s) is/are taking a closer look on the students) or
2. on chronological sequences (e.g. one group is taking a closer look from minute 0 to minute 2/first part of the sequence, one group is taking a closer look from minute 3 to minute 4/second part of the sequence, etc.).

In the end the discussion should be together.

The situation analysis is useful to on the one side raise awareness to social situations and activate participants to reflect on them. On the other side the method offers the opportunity to reflect on one's own expectations by practicing the division between observation (step 1) and interpretation and discussion (step 2), respectively to experience how difficult it is to divide between these two steps.

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 using multilingualism when applying this method, culturalisation within the learning group can be prevented. Participants can reflect (e.g. by language comparison) on the use of language and the way a situation is described with regard to possible culturalisation.

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

It is important to look critically at stereotypes that may arise when analysing different situations. For example, it may happen that characteristics or motives are attributed to certain actors due to their age, gender or origin. Especially when situations are analysed which seem to be based on an intercultural conflict, there is a risk that simplifying stereotypes are reproduced. Here it is important to constantly and critically question one's own patterns of interpretation.

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

The method can be used in a multilingual way when different focus can be discussed in different language groups.

How to use this method in a participatory way?

The participants might bring their own film clips or pictures that can be observed, described, interpreted and discussed.

Possible variations of the method

The method can be based on a film scene, a picture (for example a photo), written observation, conversation sequence.

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

The method can be used in schools by taking into consideration the age and experiences of the students.

Examples/possible topics

As described above transcribed conversation sequences can be analysed. Here, school situations can be systematically analysed with regard to teacher-student or student-student communication. It is also possible that the participants write an observation protocol of situations in their school internship in order to analyse them with the help of the situation analysis method. But also films about school life can be analysed, whereby it must be ensured that the teaching situations shown are fairly realistic.

d) Further Information

Claire Davis and Elizabeth Wilcock (2003): “Teaching Materials Using Case Studies” Available: <http://www.materials.ac.uk/guides/casestudies.asp> [29.02.2020]



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