



Association exercise

Enhance cross-disciplinary dialogue through association exercises based on the interpretations of either a topic or various photos.

PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

Association exercises can be used to uncover and discuss differences and similarities between the teachers' preconceptions. The underlying idea is that the topic or photos elicit different thought associations by the teachers, which can give an insight into the different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds of the teachers. These insights can help to make it clear that people rarely understand and interpret subjects in the same manner.

The exercise works well in the beginning of a collaboration process to facilitate a dialogue and develop a shared language about values and disciplinary rationales in the teacher team. In addition, it can enable a better awareness of the limitations and blind angles of the different disciplines represented amongst the teachers.

GUIDANCE

In the following are described two examples of how you can carry out an association exercise:

1. Interpret a chosen topic, e.g. a complex societal challenge represented by a news article. Ideally the topic should to some extent be relatable for the teachers.

- Each teacher starts by individually writing down his or her disciplinary interpretation of the topic.
- Then the teachers share their notes with a colleague (2 by 2) and they compare and discuss.
- In plenum: Present findings and discuss challenges, opportunities and further cooperation.

2. Association exercise with inspiration cards with **photos**. You will need a large amount (30-40) of various photos, which you spread out on a table or on the floor.

- Each teacher are to individually choose a photo that best represents the teacher's own discipline
- Afterwards each teacher present and explain in plenum and get feedback from the other teachers. Focus is on further cooperation.

WORTH CONSIDERING

It is a good idea to write down on a whiteboard or similar the discussions that take place in plenum to enhance the common understanding and dialogue.

PREPARATION

Depending on which of the three exercises you decide on you will need to prepare either a chosen topic or a collection of various photos. You might consider creating your own collection of photos or possibly borrow a set of photos from the library.