



REFLECTION TOOLS FOR TEACHER QUALITY

Title

UNIVERSAL STANDARDS

Aims

The aim of this tool is to stimulate reflection on the concept of the “good teacher”, to confront the participants with different opinions on teacher quality and finally to see whether “universal standards” can be derived.

Target group

The target group for this tool can be teachers, student teachers and teacher educators

Description

In a (preferably mixed) group of teachers. the participants will be asked to reflect on their own understanding of a ‘good teacher’, to share their thoughts and to see if any definitive and shared statement on teacher quality can be made.

Methodology

This is an interactive session where the facilitators initiate tasks with the participants and their responses are shared and discussed. There is no presumed result – it will depend on the thoughts and reflections of all concerned

Step A: Individual and shared reflection

The participants are divided in groups of 4-6.

Each participants is asked to reflect individually on his/her own understanding of “a good teacher”.

Next the participants in each subgroup share and discuss their reflections, identifying similarity and differences.

Finally, the group selects three to four qualities that they agree upon and write them on a flipchart.

Step B: Developing a universal standard for a good teacher.

The results from the subgroups are presented and discussed:

- What are the differences?
- Can those differences be explained by the background of the participants of the subgroups (type of education, subject, religion, rural/urban, etc.)?
- Is there a difference between being a good teacher and being a good colleague?

After this discussion, the groups try to identify common standards that are ‘universal’.

Step C: Personal reflection

- The participants are invited to reflect individually:



Identifying Teacher Quality

- What do you think are your best qualities as a teacher?
- What would you like to develop further?
 - What concrete activities can support this development?

These reflections are shared in pairs. This reflection can also be used to identify strategies and concrete activities to develop the identified qualities.

Variations

The method can be varied by making heterogeneous and homogenous groups based on, for example, the participant teacher's subject areas or the educational level they teach in (primary, secondary, higher education or likewise).

To start the reflection process in step A, other reflection tools can be used, e.g. My most remarkable teacher, Picture cards, etc.

In step A, a shared list can be developed in steps (especially when the group is large:

- Start with pairs, who develop a shared list of the 5 most important qualities of teachers, based on their individual reflection
- Two pairs sit together to compare their top 5. Their task is to develop a shared top 5
- Two groups of four combine in a group of 8, to compare their top 5's and to come to a shared top 5
- This continues until the full group is assembled. When the group in the last steps is large, negotiators from each subgroups can be used to negotiate.

Conditions

For step C, a safe environment is necessary where participants feel free to reflect openly with other participants on their personal qualities.

Materials

This tool does not require specific materials. A flipchart or white/blackboard can be useful to list the universal standards.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

The tool is easy to use.

When teachers from different backgrounds are involved, the tool can be used to bridge the differences in context, focussing on similarities rather than differences.

Within a team the tool can be used to develop a shared understanding of teacher quality that can be used as a frame of reference for team development, intervision, collegial support, etc.