

Needs Analysis Framework

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Active citizenship is a combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills and actions with the aims of establishing a democratic society and healthy communities. Active citizenship means people getting involved in their local communities and building democracy at all levels, from towns to cities and nationwide activity. Education towards gaining this knowledge and developing and practicing the skills take place in all levels of our shared social life, but schools play a very important role in it.

As researchers and teacher educators, we ask ourselves what demands we can place on decision-makers in school and society about accepting new venues for the development of the young. Positive change can occur when people become aware of and identify their actual roles and living conditions. A prerequisite for change is that politicians and decision-makers of all kind notice the opportunities for change and are prepared to contribute to the processes that are initiated (Kise & Sträng, 2015).

To determine the facts of the current situation in each country and identify areas for potential improvement we will implement a needs analysis. Simply spoken, a needs analysis is a way to identify the way things are and the way they should be.

Different activities

According to the project plan, the needs analysis consists of different research activities. The first task is to identify *central key perceptions* on the topic from important national documents, policies and publications in the area of citizenship education (desk research). The second piece of work is to implement field research activities against the target groups, such as predefined questions, based on previous results from the document analysis

The choice of public documents should be carefully considered depending on several aspects, due to the diversity of individuals and environments in the project. It is decisive that the researchers ensure the representativeness and relevance of active citizenship in all the chosen material (Richie and Spencer, 1994).

Keywords and key phrases (multi-word units) are widely used in public documents. They describe the content of the document and provide a kind of metadata that is useful for a certain purposes. The task of assigning keywords and key phrases to a document is *key phrase indexing*. In the analysis, we will collect samples of the keywords in order to organize and provide a thematic summary on the public view on citizenship education.

The amount of the *keywords sampling* is flexible during the analysis process in that it allows us to either collect all the keywords and key-phrases we can find, or restrict the samples to match our own pre-defined words and phrases to describe active citizenship.

NB! It is important that each national participant group should formulate their own keywords, in accordance with local and national contexts. Assuming a presumed common view would pose a major risk of weakening the validity of the analysis.

Framework for the document analysis

First step

The document analysis process includes a few different steps. The first step is *familiarization*, meaning that each researcher acquire one's own overview of the collected documents. Throughout this part of the process, we will likely become aware of the presence of key ideas and recurrent statements relevant to active citizenship and informally start the keywords/key phrases sampling.

In addition to the pure familiarization, Bowen (2009) speaks of *thematic analysis*, which is a form of pattern recognition with the document's data. This means in short that the keywords and key phrases, by focused reading and re-reading of data, as well as coding and category construction, are sorted by categories, useful for further analysis.

NB! It is not just a matter of lining up a collection of keywords and phrases that convey what the researchers are looking for. Instead, the work is to be embellished by ambitions of high level of objectivity and sensitivity to make the document analysis results credible and valid for the continuing work of the project (Bowen, 2009).

Second step

As mentioned above, the next step after familiarization is the coding of the chosen material. Inductive studies use *open coding*, by coding anything that seems to be relevant from as many different perspectives as possible. In deductive studies, the codes are pre-determined, based on the purpose of the study.

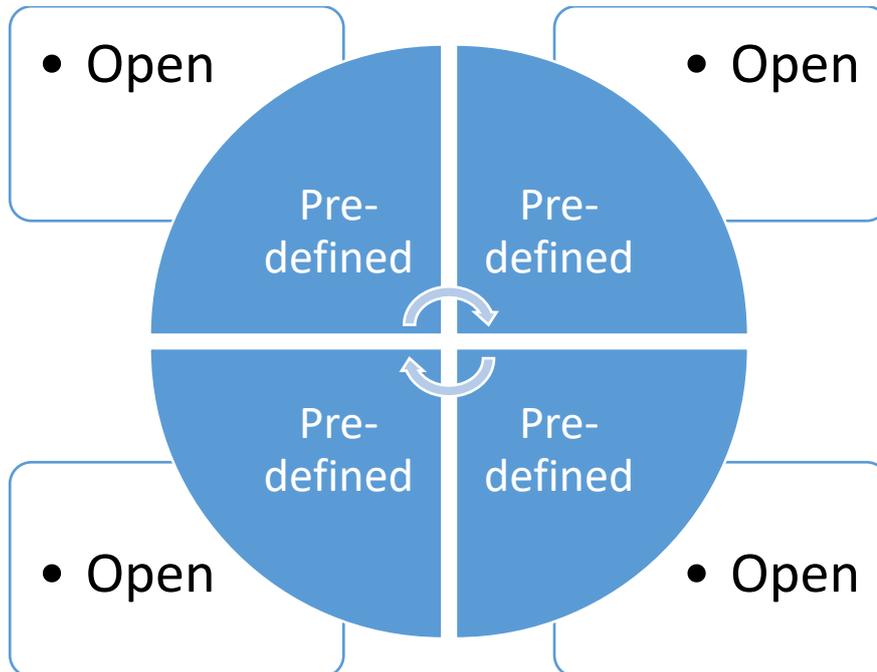
In the project, we start with *pre-defined codes*, based on the central key perceptions we initially have identified in the documents. We continue the search with open coding based on relevant statements found in the documents.

To refine the search and find a structure for the collection of data, the statements are sorted in certain main categories, e.g. objective, heuristic and "in between.

The aim of the document analysis is to provide with knowledge and information of patterns that emerge. The document analysis framework ensures that documents from different contexts, compared with each other, will provide us with a transnational overview of official discourses on active citizenship.

NB! It is important to pay attention to both latent and manifest statements and not to just code in a descriptive way. Some key perceptions may not be clearly expressed or express dissenting opinions. To reconcile and explain anomalies in the data will often make the analysis deeper and more nuanced. In the project, this is interesting in relation to the different contexts.

A graphical image of coding



Active Citizenship Rhetorical Checklist

1. Purpose

- What is this document about?
- What is the writer of the document trying to accomplish?
- Which elements are crucial (keywords and phrases)

2. Audience

- Who is the primary audience for this document
- What are their characteristics?
- Is the document well adapted to this audience?
- What kinds of arguments and evidence (logos) does the writer use to persuade the audience?
- Are the arguments convincing?
- Does the writer try to create an emotional response (pathos)
- What kind of action does the writer want from the reader?
- Do you think the reader will react in this way?

3. Form

- What form or genre is this document?
- Is it formal or informal? Is it simple or complex?

4. Stylistic choices

- How does the writer construct *active citizenship*? What words in the text define the topic (keywords)?
- Who are the main players in *active citizenship*? What words and phrases define their roles and the relationships between them?
- Do these words have negative or positive connotations?
- What social values are represented in the text?
- What words create this impression?
- Do you think that *active citizenship* is properly described, or is it consciously constructed to favour the writer's purpose?
- What makes you think so?
- If *active citizenship* were not properly described - would you characterize it as a little biased, somewhat deceptive, or outright fraud?

(Edlund, 2006)

Field research framework

The purpose of this part of the needs analysis is to find out the most important needs of the target groups - what topics, methods, forms are the most relevant for them. This information will be used in the following stage - development of the teaching/learning materials. Overall the needs analysis contextualize the possible for sustainable active citizenship and provide a deeper insight into the situation of citizenship education among the participants.

However, the needs for education to create an active citizenship should not be limited to the participants' own wishes. They also need to be related to the complexity and widespread confusion that characterize our world today. Schools and other educational institutions are the result of the interplay between formal steering and informal influences based on the impact of society on several. Researchers aiming for a holistic approach therefore need to bring together various elements into a coherent analytical model.

Based on an ecological approach the results of the document analysis give us an impression of active citizenship from meso, exo and macro levels of society. In other words, the document analysis will serve the outer frame for our fieldwork, investigating the needs of the target groups on the micro level.

What do we need to know?

Steinberg (2011) emphasizes that creating an active citizenship curriculum has certain obstacles, relating to environmental conditions and current human activities. "The more urban the area, the more disenfranchised, the harder the challenge becomes" (p. 270). A Swedish researcher, focusing on public administration (Karlsson, 2014), notes that actors in a society align what happens in dominating social systems as long as one experience some form of

sense. Shifting between different social systems is fully possible, depending on context, but the complexity of social reality requires a continuous update of personal roles and performances.

This gives us a strong reason for not using standardized questions for all participants without being aware of their different contexts. Instead, we should focus on creating a pedagogic space of active citizenship for the target groups, researching and observing each group on its own. Steinberg (2011) recommends a variety of extensive knowledge about the target groups and their individual members. Our focus should be on:

- The socio-cultural context of the school or community organization
- The backgrounds of each individual member
- The positions and senses of empowerment and disempowerment from which each member operates daily
- The knowledge each member will bring to the project of active citizenship
- What language skills and other means of communication that are available in the group (Steinberg, 2011, p 271)

*NB! To implement and develop a sustainable change there is a need of interaction and mutual understanding of **active citizenship** between all levels! That's why our initial work with the document analysis is crucial!*

Focus groups as research method

Using focus groups as method for the field research is a way to facilitate the collection of needs for *active citizenship* through dialogue between the target group members. As researchers, we compile a number of topics, extracted from the document analysis, for the target group to discuss and reflect upon. The topics shall cover different perspectives of creating an *active citizenship* and its consequences for society and for the individual.

The analysis of the focus group discussions is performed in the same way as the document analysis, divided into three stages (Karlsson, 2014).

- Recording and transcription
- Coding
- Choosing excerpts, relevant for the topic

With the results from both analyses, we look for particular structures of association and/or disconnections between the different contexts of *public documents* and *individual needs* on active citizenship. This *summative content analysis* includes counting and comparisons of keywords and content, together with interpretation and defining of the underlying contexts.

NB! It is important for us as researchers to delineate this specific approach to content analysis before beginning data analysis. A relevant analytic procedure and coding scheme will increase the validity of the study and promote a mutual understanding of active citizenship in the project. It is also important to reconcile nuances and anomalies in the data. This makes the analysis more nuanced and trustworthy. In the project, this is of interest in relation to the different contexts of nations and target groups.

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