
SCRIPT FOR THE PRECEDE TOOLKIT FOR RESEARCH

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

„Hello. I’ve heard that you can teach me how to do action research which could be used in kindergartens or by groups to look at solving different kinds of problems.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Yes, you are right. In the frame of the PRECEDE project, some useful tools for doing **action research** have been developed and I am glad to teach you how to use them. Action research can help you recognise a lot of unseen barriers in the learning process of some children and then actively and properly address them, by collecting evidence-based knowledge about the key issues that should improve the equity of all children in your group or kindergarten.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“I am really interested in that, because I would like to improve relationships among children in my group. One girl does not play with the other children, they often laugh at her and it seems that my colleagues are often angry at her. It really disappoints me.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Could you explain what it looks like in daily practice and what could be the reasons for such situations? It is important to recognize the factors which contribute to such situations, because it is the first step of action research, named **choosing to change**.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“That little girl lives in a really poor family and she does not speak our language well. When she arrived to the kindergarten, some children said that they do not like that she is with them, while others speak about her clothes, looks and language in an inappropriate way. If I try to highlight her good characteristics and motivate children to play with her, they protest and refuse to follow my suggestions.

In my opinion, we did not support the girl properly. In our kindergarten, she does not have enough possibilities to connect with other children, to build friendships, to learn the language, to have enough attention of teachers and other adults. Moreover, adults and peers often react in an inappropriate manner when she shows her dissatisfaction or is in a bad mood. Sometimes I have a feeling that we expect her to behave in a different way, to be a different person.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“What makes you feel that way?”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“I think that the children in my group do not have enough experience in communication with someone who speaks a different language, who has different habits and reacts to things differently. From my point of view, they do not have enough chances to learn about other cultures, different people and they do not know how to build relationships with that girl.

I have a feeling that children need more opportunities to learn about diversity and chances to develop their social skills. Maybe those themes are not visible enough in our curriculum and presented in a proper way. I also think that girl does not receive enough support in the process of her development and learning, because it is not easy for her to follow the curriculum and activities which are organised for the majority of children.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“It seems like a lack of respect for diversity. Do you have some idea how to improve that situation?”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“No. Moreover, I do not know how to start.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Firstly, you need to recognise that each child is an individual and that your class needs to recognise differences and diversity in the class, family, community and society and be a welcoming environment for every person. So, the question is: “How can you **change the kindergarten’s environment and practices?**” We begin by thinking about all the people this issues affects:

- young children in the community and in the kindergarten
- parents and families living in the community
- the kindergarten director and preschool teachers
- the children unable to attend the kindergarten or excluded through discriminatory practices or policies

Action research needs to include these actors in the planning, research, review and analysis and then coming to decisions about how to change the causes/roots of the problems.

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“It is difficult to get people together, but we can try. What should we discuss?”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“You could organise a meeting to get people together and look at the challenges you face in trying to include all types of diversity in our kindergarten and to meet the individual needs of young children. So, you should find answers to the following questions:

- What happens in your group of children?
- What are the reasons for your, the parents’, preschool teachers’ and children’s concerns?
- Which kind of barriers and bottlenecks are you or your children faced with?”

It is best if you write down all the comments and suggestions so that you can review them one by one and see what the most common issues are for everyone.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“For the beginning, I can invite my colleagues, parents and other kindergarten staff to a meeting. I can also invite some representatives of NGOs which work in our community, which care about young children and their inclusion into society. Like that, we will choose the change which will be the subject of our action research.

I will contact you after the meeting.”

A FEW DAYS LATER

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“Hello. I am glad to inform you that we had a very successful meeting. We decided that we would like to conduct action research directed to the improvement of skills of children in my group for respecting diversity. We also concluded that we will work on the improvement of preschool teachers’ skills to educate different children and to be more focused on the peace building in our kindergarten. Is it not exciting?

What should we do now?”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Now is time for **planning for change**. You and your partners should think about the following questions:

- What do you want to improve?
- How can you improve it? How can you start the action?
- Who can help you and how?
- Do you already have some experience about the topic? What do you already know? What should you investigate in more detail?
- What are the possible challenges or obstacles in that process?

It is important to find one small thing that is problematic and can be the focus of your action, in your kindergarten, rather than to try to make too big and unrealistic changes.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“I would like to start with the respect for diversity, that **every child in my group feels that he or she is welcome and belongs to our society**. I believe that I can implement some specific toolkit and to observe its impact on the children’s behaviour. My colleagues will help me.

I know that some specific programmes and activities exist which can help us get to know each other better, as well as to build our capacity to increase children’s commitment about social justice and equity. I really want to try it.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Does it mean that you would like to improve the capacity of your group to be more inclusive **by using some specific educational toolkit?**”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“Yes. Do you know if something like that exists?”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Yes. One of such programmes is the PRECEDE toolkit for respecting diversity and peace building in the kindergartens setting. Do you have some experience with using similar toolkits?”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“I know that my colleagues do something like that, but I never tried to use this toolkit in my practice.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“If you want, the implementation of the PRECEDE toolkit could be the action which you will take to reach your goal.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“I agree, even though I do not believe that I can do it myself. Tell me, what should I do exactly?”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Firstly, you should decide what you want to investigate in more detail and who can help you and how.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“In my opinion, it is necessary that I investigate which kind of attitudes about respect for diversity the children in my group have. After that, I will implement an action and check if this action contributed to some changes in that direction.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Yes. Is that all you need?”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“I would also want to know in which situations the children refuse to play with the girl.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Do you think that you can do it alone?”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“No. I have never done something like that. Maybe you can help me by finding a way that I can measure all these fields.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“I can help you to collect data and implement your action. It means that we are going to prepare the next stage of your action research, called **creating the change**.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“Tell me, which kind of data should I collect?”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

The evidence to be gathered is determined by the focus of the research. Normally, the gathering involves a range of approaches and include both quantitative and qualitative data. **Quantitative data** such as trends in attendance rates or in enrolments can help to paint the bigger picture; attitudinal questionnaires can also help and the analysis of the results can provide a useful basis for further enquiry. **Qualitative data**, however, will provide a richer base of inquiry – such data is well grounded, in close proximity to the specific situation and embedded in its context. It also tends to provide a more holistic picture as well as a more complex one. The data is collected over a sustained time and moves beyond a snapshot of how things are. That helps to answer why and how things are as they are. Because of all these reasons, qualitative data can help you be more confident in our understanding of what is or has been going on.

You may choose to include a variety of data, such as observations, analyses, diagrams, sketches, quotes, children’s comments, scores, thoughts, and feelings. You can also choose to use some research journals to collect field notes.

After each activity, you should make a quick note to yourself in your research journal and you can develop more detailed observations later. You also can record your insights and observations at the end of the day - this does not have to take a large amount of time. Another possibilities is that you reflect on the back of your activity plans.

What do you think, how can you collect the data you need for the purpose of your research?"

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

"Observation sounds interesting to me. What is it, exactly?"

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"It is a research method that can help researchers study people in their native environment in order to understand their perspective. The most important thing is that you know what the purpose of your research is and what you need to observe. In the objectivity of your observation, an action checklist can be useful. You can also use videotaping and analyse the behaviour of your children in peace, after having directly worked in the group."

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

"I will do that. I will prepare some checklists and I will record some specific situations in my group of children so I can analyse them."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Perfect. I suppose that you are ready for your action. What will you do?"

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

"I will observe the behaviour of my children in the next two weeks. I will pay special attention to the behaviour of children when they interact with the girl. I will also investigate the behaviour of that girl in different social situations."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Ok. When will you start with the action?"

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

"I will begin with the implementation of the PRECEDE toolkit when I will be sure that my observation has given me an insight in the attitudes and behaviours of children which should be improved by the action. I expect that I will be ready for the action in one month."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Tell me more about the results that you expect from your observation."

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

"I will try to explain how this girl and her peers communicate, in which situations this girl is most excommunicated and which kind of behaviour she uses in those moments. I think that I need around two weeks to observe and analyse that. After that, I will work intensely with my children on the implementation of the toolkit for respecting diversity and peace building. After three months, I will observe the behaviour and communication of my children again and I will be able to conclude if that toolkit works or not."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"I really like your plan. I see that **your research has a social value, a scientific validity, well developed procedure, and well-chosen participants and methodology.** I wish you good luck."

A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN NGO IS COMING FROM THE SHADOW. HE/SHE IS LISTENING TO THE CONVERSATION.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"I heard your conversation. I find it very interesting. Do you think I could participate in that process?"

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Who are you?"

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"I work in an NGO which tries to make some changes in our society, according to all the challenges of institutional forms of discrimination."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Ok. Why do you want to join us?"

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"I like the plan of your action research. However, I think that the entire society should make some efforts to build an inclusive and non-discriminant culture. I would also would like to be more active in improving the equity of different policies, especially those concerning the education and development of young children."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Nice. How do you plan to do it?"

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"I think that my NGO can correct or change policy issues about the respect for diversity and peace building. I just do not know how to collect evidence that prove that some kinds of policies are more inclusive than others."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Then you are on the right place. You really can do it together."

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"How we are going to do that?"

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"You can try to find an answer on the following question: **How to improve social justice in the specific kindergarten?**. How does it sound to both of you?"

PRESCHOOL TEACHER AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"We like it."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Your common work and efforts can increase a chance to prevent further discrimination of some children. You should know that the personal qualities and practices of the respect for diversity and peacebuilding are essential for a program's success or failure."

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"I agree. Programs do not change people, relationships do. That is why we should find the weaknesses in the vision, values and practice of the staff in the kindergarten that are responsible for the discriminative practice."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"What do you plan to do exactly?"

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"I would like to create some focus groups with the kindergarten staff about the ways in which they support vulnerable groups of children. After that, my NGO can organise some trainings about the culture of respect for diversity and teach them how to improve their practice. Then we can repeat the same focus group and check if something happens in the meantime."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"Which kind of changes do you expect?"

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

“I believe that the new knowledge will have some positive impact on the practice of the kindergarten staff and that it will help this girl and other children who are different in any sense feel and behave better.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“I think so, but how you will know that something important happened? Focus groups can be one, but not only source of evidence.”

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

“We will also observe their practice. We also can implement some attitude and rating scales or questionnaires?”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Yes, it is a good idea. You should also involve your colleagues and kindergarten staff in the process of planning your action research. Like that, you will ensure that the participants have some benefit of the research process and their results. Without that condition, it does not make sense.”

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

“It seems very exciting and powerful. At the same time, this experience will help my NGO to try out the impact of its programs in a real life setting.”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“Moreover, you and the preschool teacher should analyse, interpreting and understanding collected data before and after the actions which you will take. It is a precondition for the last stage of the action research, called **sharing the lessons**.”

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

“How we can do it?”

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

“You will make a connection between your actions and changes in behaviour of your target group. By this way, you will find some principles or regularities that can confirm your expectation that the PRECEDE toolkit, as well as training of the kindergarten staff, result with the improvement of the social justice in some kindergarten. It should be visible in the fact that every child in this kindergarten feels that he or she is welcome and belongs to our society. All of that will be based on the improvement of skills of kindergarten staffs and children for the respect for diversity.”

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NGO:

"I believe that we are able to do it. We will organise one round table and invite all stakeholders in the local community to discuss about the results of our action researchers. I think that it can lead to better and stronger collaboration of all of us in the future."

NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR RESEARCH:

"It is essential for the peace building. You know, no person, activity, or level of society is capable of designing and delivering peace on its own. All things are linked and mutually affect one another. Peacebuilding builds and supports the interdependent relationships necessary for pursuing and sustaining desired changes. More specifically, building peace is a long-term prospect. Rather than thinking only about the immediate effects of some particular actions, respect for diversity and peace building requires us to think about what creates an on-going capacity within the setting for responding to needs of all vulnerable children in our society."

PRESCHOOL TEACHER:

"I understand that. But, our plan is the first step in the direction of peace. It is not?"

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

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