

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Infosheet

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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

A 21st Century Skill

In our highly interconnected and interdependent world intercultural competence is indispensable. It is listed among the most important skills for the 21st century and future work skills. (Partnership for 21st Century Learning)

A Definition

Intercultural Competence is the ability to interact in an effective and appropriate manner in intercultural situations; it is supported by a specific set of attitudes, skills and (inter)cultural knowledge.

FRAMEWORK FOR INTER- CULTURAL COMPETENCE



SELF-COMPETENCE

- openness
- curiosity
- flexibility
- (cultural) self-awareness

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

- knowledge of other languages
- culture-specific knowledge
- empathy and ability to change perspective
- intercultural communication

METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

- critical reflection
- self-directed, intercultural learning
- problem-solving skills
- specific profession-related knowledge and skills

CONTEXT COMPETENCE

- knowledge about and experience in/with work-specific context, organisational cultures, regional and sub-cultures, working sectors in society

Intercultural Competence

PERSONAL / SELF-COMPETENCE

openness - suspending judgment and criticism of other people and cultures; exploring and investigating cultural similarities and differences; being ready to be proven wrong

curiosity - seeking interactions with people from other cultures, viewing difference as an opportunity for learning, knowing that you know nothing (yet)

flexibility - readiness to learn new things, correcting own thinking and behaviour, ability to adapt quickly to new unfamiliar situations, improvise and to acquire new skills

(cultural) self-awareness - being aware of and articulating how one's own culture has shaped one's own identity and world view

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

knowledge of other languages - acquiring basic local language skills, articulating differences in verbal and non-verbal communication in order to understand other people's way of thinking and expression

culture-specific knowledge - knowledge about one's own and other cultures (history, values, politics, economics, communication styles, values, beliefs and practices)

empathy and ability to change perspective - ability to put oneself into the position of other people, both emotionally and mentally

intercultural communication skills - the ability to approach others in a communicative way, build relationships and establish communication networks

PROFESSIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

critical reflection - questioning one's own point of view, ability to see and interpret the world from other individuals' and cultures' point of view

self-directed, intercultural learning - willingness to learn from intercultural interactions, ability to take the learning process in one's own hands: being aware of one's needs, setting goals, planning process, assessing progress and evaluating results of intercultural learning

problem-solving skills - ability to address misunderstanding, tensions and conflicts in a solution-oriented way, being able to try out new and creative ways of solving problems and create solutions based on synergies

specific profession-related knowledge and skills - abilities that are connected to a certain job/profession and its aims and tasks

CONTEXT COMPETENCE

knowledge about and **experience** in/with work-specific context, organisational cultures, regional and sub-cultures, working sectors in society

DEVELOPING INTER-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Intercultural competence cannot be acquired in a short space of time or in a single training module. Developing ICC is a life-long learning process which needs to be addressed explicitly with intercultural training and coaching.

Michael Kimmig, August 2018

“Tolerance, inter-cultural dialogue and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where peoples are becoming more and more closely interconnected.”

— Kofi Annan