REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Volume 1 | Context, concepts and model

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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Contents

Foreword

Democratic laws and institutions can only function effectively when they are based on a culture of democracy. For this, education is key. These were the conclusions of the Council of Europe's Third Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Warsaw in 2005. On this basis, our Organisation was tasked with "promoting a democratic culture among our citizens". Essential to this is ensuring that young people acquire the knowledge, values and capacity to be responsible citizens in modern, diverse, democratic societies.

Since that time, member states have undertaken a range of initiatives in this area. What has been lacking is a clear focus and understanding of common goals in citizenship education. Our Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture has been designed to bridge that gap.

The urgent need for it was brought into sharp focus by the many terrorist attacks across Europe in recent times. Education is a medium- to long-term investment in preventing violent extremism and radicalisation, but the work must start now. In light of this, the Model of Competences (contained in Volume 1 of the Framework) was unanimously welcomed by the 2016 Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education at its 25th session in Brussels.

This Reference Framework is the result of widespread consultation and testing within Council of Europe member states and beyond. It is built on principles that are common to our democratic societies. It specifies the tools and critical understanding that learners at all levels of education should acquire in order to feel a sense of belonging and make their own positive contributions to the democratic societies in which we live. In doing so it offers education systems a common focus for their action while respecting a diversity of pedagogical approaches.

The purpose of this Framework is to support member states in developing open, tolerant and diverse societies through their education. I hope that they will embrace this tool and benefit from it.

Thorbjørn Jagland

Secretary General
of the Council of Europe

Preface

What kind of society will our children live in tomorrow? An important part of the answer to that question lies in the education we give them today. Education plays an essential role in building the future and reflects the type of world we want to prepare for the generations to come.

Democracy is one of the three pillars of the Council of Europe and there should be no hesitation among its member states that it should remain a key foundation for our future societies. Although our institutions may be solid they will only function in a truly democratic manner if our citizens are fully aware not only of their voting rights, but also of the values our institutions embody. Our education systems and schools need to prepare young people to become active, participative and responsible individuals: the complex, multicultural and rapidly evolving societies we live in cannot do with less. And at the dawn of quantum computing and artificial intelligence it is all the more important that our children should be equipped with the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding that will enable them to make responsible decisions about their future.

The starting point for the development of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture was the belief that education systems, schools and universities should make preparation for democratic citizenship one of its key missions. This involves ensuring that students should know and understand the challenges they are faced with and the consequences of their decisions, what they are able to do and what they should refrain from doing. In order to do all this they need not only to have knowledge, but also the relevant competences – and the aim of the Framework is to define what those competences are.

The Framework itself comprises three volumes.

The first contains the Model of Competences, as determined by a multidisciplinary team of international experts following extensive research and consultation. The 20 competences are divided into four areas – Values, Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge and critical understanding – and accompanied by information about the background to the model, how it was developed and how it is intended to be used.

Volume 2 contains a series of statements setting out learning targets and outcomes for each competence. These descriptors are intended to help educators design learning situations that enable them to observe learners' behaviour in relation to a given competence. The descriptors were tested by volunteer schools and teachers in 16 member states.

Volume 3 offers guidance on how the Model of Competences might be used in six education contexts. Further chapters will be added in due course.

The Framework is offered as an instrument to help inspire individual approaches to teaching competences for democratic culture while adhering to a common goal. Although there is no obligation to use the volumes in a set way, they are intended as a coherent whole and we recommend that educators get acquainted with the whole framework before deciding on their own approach in accordance with their particular needs and context.

I am very proud to present this Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture to our member states. It has been a work of dedication and an example of consultation and open-mindedness. I hope that many of you will use it in the spirit in which it is offered: a contribution to the efforts to make our future society one which we are happy for our children to live in.

Snežana Samardžić-Marković

Council of Europe
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Contributions

Introduction

T he Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (henceforward, the Framework) is intended for use by educationists in all sectors of education systems from pre-school through primary and secondary schooling to higher education, including adult education and vocational education. The Framework offers a systematic approach to designing the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture (CDC), and introducing them into education systems in ways which are coherent, comprehensive and transparent for all concerned.

The heart of the Framework is a model of the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies. The Framework also contains descriptors for all of the competences in the model.

The publications on the Framework consist of three volumes.[1] This first volume begins with an account of the background to the Framework and of the previous work of the Council of Europe relevant to it, and offers some important cautions concerning the use of the Framework. The subsequent sections explain the concepts and theoretical assumptions underlying the Framework. These explanations are followed by a description of the model of competences, which is in turn followed by an introduction to the role of the descriptors in the Framework. This first volume concludes with a glossary of key terms and a list of suggestions for further reading.

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1. In addition, there is an earlier document which describes how the Framework model was developed. It is of relevance to readers who wish to understand the development process, its rationale and the technical details of the model. See: Council of Europe (2016), *Competences for democratic culture: living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, www.coe.int/en/web/education/competences-for-democratic-culture.

The second volume focuses on the descriptors in greater detail. It describes how they were developed and provides a complete listing of all descriptors.

The third volume offers guidance on how the Framework can be implemented in education systems. It begins with three chapters that discuss the use of the model and the descriptors in three stages of education planning, in the order they should take: developing curricula, planning pedagogy and designing assessment. These are followed by further chapters which deal with the ways in which the Framework can be used in teacher education, how it may be implemented using a "whole-school" approach, and how it is relevant to addressing a pressing social and political issue, namely building resilience to radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism.

The model in the Framework describes the competences in detail, while the descriptors provide a means of operationalising the competences for use by educationists. The model is not an imposition of an ideal but a conceptual organisation of the competences to which reference can be made by users of the Framework. Users will decide how to adapt and implement the Framework in their own contexts for their own purposes. The Framework, in the third volume of guidance chapters, describes possibilities and options in its use, and users of the Framework will need to make their own decisions about which options are appropriate in their own context.

Chapter 1

Background to the Framework

Values and education

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on education as a central element in the Council of Europe's work to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Even though these principles have been cornerstones of European societies and political systems for decades, they need to be continuously maintained and fostered. In times of economic and political crisis, it becomes even more evident that citizens should be able and willing to engage actively in defence of these values and principles. Acquiring and maintaining the capacity to take part actively in democratic processes begins in early childhood and continues throughout life. The process of acquiring competences is dynamic and never complete. Circumstances change and people need to develop existing competences and acquire new ones in response to changes in the environments in which they live.

Education institutions play an important role in this lifelong process. Most children have their first encounter with the public realm in schools, and schools should be places where democratic education begins. Other education institutions, including further and other higher education institutions, should also take on this role in ways appropriate to the age and maturity of students.

Democratic education should be part of a comprehensive and coherent vision of education, of an education of the whole person. The Council of Europe, in Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6, provides a vision of education that includes four major purposes:

► preparation for the labour market;

► preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies;

► personal development;

► the development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

All four purposes are necessary to enable individuals to live independent lives and to take part as active citizens in all spheres of modern, rapidly changing societies. They are of equal value and complementary. For example, many of the competences people need to be employable – such as analytical ability, communication skills and the aptitude to work as part of a group – also help to make them active citizens in democratic societies, and are fundamental to their personal development.

Because cultural, technological and demographic changes require the readiness to continuously learn, reflect and act upon new challenges and possibilities in work, in private and in public life, all four purposes must be pursued by individuals throughout their lives. Public authorities have a responsibility to help them to do so by providing an adequate system of lifelong learning.

In order to support education authorities in fulfilling this responsibility, the Council of Europe has already developed approaches and materials, and supported their implementation in member states. The Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) defines the central conceptual foundations, objectives and areas for the implementation of EDC/HRE. The Charter defines education for democratic citizenship as:

> education, training, awareness-raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law. (section 2.a)

The Charter also defines human rights education as:

> education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. (section 2.b)

In these definitions, the Charter points to competences (such as knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes) that learners need to develop in order to be empowered to act as active citizens. The EDC/HRE Charter provides a comprehensive account of the education objectives, principles and policies which are required to achieve the empowerment of learners.

Empowerment and the European tradition of education

The EDC/HRE Charter states that:

> Teaching and learning practices and activities should follow and promote democratic and human rights values and principles. (section 5.e)

The Council of Europe's work in education reflects this principle and the traditions of European education processes. The corresponding pedagogy is not only instrumental but also educational. It reflects a long education tradition, based on humanistic ideas and reflected in the concept of *Bildung*: the lifelong process enabling people to make independent choices for their own lives, to recognise others as equals and to interact with them in meaningful ways. This means learners are considered to be actively responsible for their own learning, not mere receivers of knowledge or the objects of the transmission of values. Education systems and institutions and the educators who work within them are expected to place learners at the centre of their own learning processes, and to support them in developing independent thinking and judgment.

This kind of education is explicitly linked to the ideals of democracy and reflects the principles of human rights. These principles are of special importance with regard to the development of competences for active participation in democracy. This means that the focus should not only be on the transmission of knowledge. The focus should also be on creating meaningful conditions in which learners can develop their full potential, in ways and at a pace suitable for and influenced by themselves.

Moreover, learning is not only a matter of cognitive processes. Learning requires processes which engage the learner's whole person: intellect, emotions and experiences. Experience-based and active learning is of particular importance for the competences that are needed for active democratic participation. Co-operation skills can best be developed in interactive or collaborative learning situations. Critical thinking is enhanced by opportunities and encouragement to engage with the different aspects of a subject matter and different interpretations. The importance of valuing other people's rights is best understood through immersion in an educational environment in which the rights and responsibilities of everyone, adults and young people alike, are respected as a foundation for making judgments and taking action.

The Framework will help to create education which ensures that humanity flourishes, that the individual's human rights are protected and that democratic values are expressed through public bodies and other institutions that affect citizens. The competences specified by the Framework define a capacity to create or restructure institutions or processes in a peaceful manner, in order to generate and reinforce democratic societies. This includes citizens complying with existing practices and also actively engaging in practices judged to be in need of change.

CDC and the context of educational institutions

The EDC/HRE Charter further states that:

> the governance of educational institutions, including schools, should reflect and promote human rights values and foster the empowerment and active participation of learners, educational staff and stakeholders, including parents. (section 5.e)

Education institutions can implement this principle and foster "learning democracy" by:

▶ the ways in which decision-making processes are organised and communicated;

▶ the opportunities for debate and active participation in the life of the institution;

▶ the degree to which relations between teachers, learners and parents are built on mutual respect and trust.

An appropriate combination of democratic contexts, pedagogies and methodologies in education institutions are a prerequisite for the development of democratic competences. In contexts provided by such practices, three kinds of learning are encouraged. First, self-efficacy can develop when learners are given opportunities to solve tasks, being encouraged to persevere and acknowledged for even the smallest success. This experience-based and affective dimension of the learning process is "learning through" democracy. Second, the acquisition of knowledge and critical understanding is "learning about" democracy. Third, the ability to use one's capabilities in a given context or situation is "learning for" democracy.[2] All three kinds of learning are needed to pursue the overall education goal to prepare and empower learners for life as active citizens in democratic societies.

The Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 on ensuring quality education underlines the principles of the EDC/HRE Charter by stating that:

"quality education" is understood as education which …

d. promotes democracy, respect for human rights and social justice in a learning environment which recognises everyone's learning and social needs;

e. enables pupils and students to develop appropriate competences, self-confidence and critical thinking to help them become responsible citizens.

The Framework, with its competence model and descriptors, provides a means of realising the principles of the EDC/HRE Charter and of the Council of Europe's call for quality education. It offers a comprehensive, coherent and transparent description of the competences required for active democratic participation.

Language and learning

Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 emphasises the importance of the language(s) of schooling. It states (paragraph 6b) that:

particular attention should be paid, right from the outset of schooling, to the acquisition of the language of schooling, which, as both a specific school subject and a medium of instruction in the other subjects, plays a crucial role in providing access to knowledge and cognitive development.

Learners who have language difficulties have problems in learning and in progressing through their education in a successful way.

In all disciplines, activities involving language competence include:

▶ reading and understanding expository texts, which are often different in structure depending on the disciplinary context;

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2. These distinctions are related to the distinctions between learning about, through and for human rights in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. See: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/UNDHREducationTraining.aspx.

- ▶ listening to explanations of complex issues by the teacher;
- ▶ answering questions orally and in a written mode;
- ▶ presenting results of investigation and study;
- ▶ participating in topic-oriented discussions.

Language learning is always part of subject learning, and the learning of subject-specific knowledge cannot happen without linguistic mediation. Language competence is an integral part of subject competence. Without adequate language competences, a learner can neither properly follow the content that is being taught, nor communicate with others about it. The Council of Europe has analysed and prepared materials to help education-ists with ensuring learners' language competences are adequate for successful learning on its Platform of Resources and References for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education.[3]

The acquisition of CDC is also dependent on language competences. It may take place as a specified part of a curriculum or through organising an education institution to encourage participation by learners. In either case, language competence is crucial and needs to be the focus of teachers' attention. Learners also become increasingly aware of language and the significance of their language competences in exercising their democratic and intercultural competences.

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3. See: www.coe.int/EN/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/.

Chapter 2
The Framework – What it is and what it is not

T he Framework is a document of reference founded on the values of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive resource to plan and implement teaching, learning and assessing of CDC and intercultural dialogue so that there is transparency and coherence for all concerned.

The Framework provides a shared language, including shared terminology, which enables all concerned to teach, learn or assess comprehensively, that is, in full awareness of the different kinds of competences – values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding – and the relations between them. Transparency is promoted through detailed statements and descriptions of competences and how such descriptions can be used in teaching, learning and assessment. Coherence is a matter of ensuring that there are no contradictions within or among the three elements: teaching, learning and assessment. Comprehensiveness, transparency and coherence facilitate mutual understanding both within and between formal, non-formal and informal education, and among the education systems of member states.[4]

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4. "Formal education" is the structured education and training system that runs from pre-primary and primary through secondary school and on to university; it takes place, as a rule, at general or vocational educational institutions and leads to certification. "Non-formal education" is any planned programme of education designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational setting. "Informal education" is the lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, peer group, neighbours, encounters, library, mass media, work, play, etc.). These definitions are taken from the EDC/HRE Charter.

The Framework is not a prescribed or even recommended European curriculum. It does not propose an exclusive pedagogy or teaching methodology or mode of assessment. It does, however, demonstrate how CDC can be introduced into a range of pedagogies, methodologies and assessments which are in harmony with Council of Europe values. It also identifies which kinds are more suitable for teaching, learning and/or assessing competences so that users of the Framework can evaluate their own approaches and whether other approaches are desirable and feasible in their own context.

The Framework is thus a tool for use in designing and developing curricula, pedagogies and assessments suitable for different contexts and education systems as determined by those responsible, for example, learners generally speaking, curriculum designers, teachers, examiners, teacher trainers and other stakeholders, all of whom are social actors. Empowerment is at the heart of the Framework.

To empower these social actors, the Framework provides the means of conceptualising and describing competences necessary to be an active member of a democratic culture within any social group, for example in an education institution, a workplace, a political system (local, national, international), a leisure organisation, or an NGO.

Furthermore, because the Framework is produced to empower and not to denigrate individuals, it should not serve as a means of excluding people from social groups of any kind, including membership of a state. To use the Framework to create a barrier to inclusion is to misuse it and to abuse its purpose. It is a crucial principle that the use of the Framework should do no harm, neither to individuals nor to groups.

Process, context and (present) scope

The acquisition of CDC is *not* a linear progression to ever-increasing competence in intercultural dialogue or democratic processes. Competence in one situation may transfer to others, but not necessarily, and the acquisition of CDC is a lifelong process. This means that teaching and learning must include acknowledgement of context, and assessment must include a means of recognition of all degrees of competence. No degree of competence is considered inadequate, and all competences are in potential growth.

The Framework does *not* determine which competences and/or levels of proficiency an individual might aspire to achieve throughout lifelong learning. It does not, for example, determine which competences and levels might be required for the award of citizenship of a state. Furthermore, the use of the Framework, and the strategy for its implementation in education, will always need to be adapted to the specific local, national and cultural contexts in which it is used, but it offers the means of ensuring comprehensiveness, transparency and coherence in any context.

Adaptation is necessarily the responsibility of policy makers and practitioners who have the detailed knowledge and understanding of specific contexts, and of how they vary in subtle and important ways that inevitably affect educational processes. Furthermore, contexts continuously respond to historic, economic, technological and cultural changes in ways that cannot be anticipated, and users of the Framework will need to review their teaching, learning and assessment practices as changes take

place. Decision making based on the Framework must always take place as near as possible to the level of implementation, such as the national, regional, municipal or education institution, teacher or learner (as described in the guidance chapter in Volume 3 on the curriculum).

The acquisition of CDC is a lifelong process, as individuals continually experience new and different contexts, and analyse and plan for them. The Framework, and the competence model as a part of it, has the potential to help in this process in all kinds and stages of education – formal, informal and non-formal.

Chapter 3
The need for a culture of democracy and intercultural dialogue

Democracy, as it is commonly interpreted, means a form of governance by or on behalf of the people. A principal feature of such governance is to be responsive to the views of the majority. For this reason, democracy cannot operate in the absence of institutions that ensure the inclusive enfranchisement of adult citizens, the organisation of regular, contested, free and fair elections, majority rule and government accountability.

However, while democracy cannot exist without democratic institutions and laws, these institutions themselves cannot function unless citizens practise a culture of democracy and hold democratic values and attitudes. Among other things, these include:

▶ commitment to public deliberation;
▶ willingness to express one's own opinions and to listen to the opinions of others;
▶ conviction that differences of opinion and conflicts must be resolved peacefully;
▶ commitment to decisions being made by majorities;
▶ commitment to the protection of minorities and their rights;
▶ recognition that majority rule cannot abolish minority rights;
▶ commitment to the rule of law.

Democracy also requires citizens' commitment to participate actively in the public realm. If citizens do not adhere to these values, attitudes and practices, then democratic institutions will not be able to function.

In culturally diverse societies, democratic processes and institutions require intercultural dialogue. A fundamental principle of democracy is that those affected by political decisions are able to express their views when decisions are being made, and that decision makers pay attention to their views. Intercultural dialogue is, first, the most important means through which citizens can express their views to other citizens with different cultural affiliations. It is, second, the means through which decision makers can understand the views of all citizens, taking account of their various self-ascribed cultural affiliations. In culturally diverse societies, intercultural dialogue is thus crucial for ensuring that all citizens are equally able to participate in public discussion and decision making. Democracy and intercultural dialogue are complementary in culturally diverse societies.

Intercultural dialogue requires respect for one's interlocutors. Without respect, communication with other people becomes either adversarial or coercive. In adversarial communication, the goal is to "defeat" the other person by trying to prove the "superiority" of one's own views over theirs. In coercive communication, the goal is to impose, force or pressurise the other person to abandon their position and to adopt one's own position instead. The other person is not respected in either case and there is no attempt to engage with the views of other people.

In other words, without respect, dialogue loses its key characteristic as an open exchange of views, through which individuals who have differing cultural affiliations from one another can acquire an understanding of the perspectives, interests and needs of each other.

Respect itself is based on the judgment that the other person has an inherent importance and value and is worthy of one's attention and interest. It involves recognising the dignity of other people and affirming other people's rights to choose and to advocate for their own views and way of life. In short, intercultural dialogue requires respect for the dignity, the equality and the human rights of other people. It also requires critical reflection on the relationship between the cultural groups to which those involved in the intercultural dialogue belong, and respect for the cultural affiliations of others. In order to participate in intercultural dialogue, citizens require intercultural competence, and respect is a vital component of that competence.

Finally, democracy requires institutions to uphold the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens. Those who hold minority views need to be shielded from actions by the majority which might jeopardise their human rights and freedoms. Minority views can enrich debate and should never be marginalised or excluded. This means that, in a democracy, institutions must establish limits on the actions that can be taken by the majority. Such limits are normally implemented either through a constitution or through legislation which specifies and safeguards the human rights and freedoms of all citizens, both majority and minority.

In summary, in culturally diverse societies, a flourishing democracy requires: a government and institutions that are responsive to the views of the majority while

recognising and protecting minority rights, a culture of democracy, intercultural dialogue, respect for the dignity and rights of others, and institutions to protect the human rights and freedoms of all citizens. The Framework has been developed to assist educators to contribute to the goal of achieving and consolidating three of these five conditions: a culture of democracy, intercultural dialogue, and respect for the dignity and rights of others.

The Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008)[5] points out that democratic and intercultural competences are not acquired automatically but instead need to be learned and practised. Education is in a unique position to guide and support learners in this, and by doing so, empowers them. They acquire the capacities which they need to become active and autonomous participants in democracy, in intercultural dialogue and in society more generally. It gives them the ability to choose and pursue their own goals while respecting human rights, the dignity of others and democratic processes.

The Framework assists educational planning towards this goal of empowering all learners to become autonomous and respectful democratic citizens by equipping them with the competences needed for democracy and intercultural dialogue.

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5. Council of Europe (2008), White Paper on intercultural dialogue "Living together as equals in dignity", Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf.

Chapter 4

The importance of institutional structures

While it is vital to equip learners with the competences they require to participate in a culture of democracy, this alone is not sufficient to ensure that a democracy functions well, for the following reasons.

First, in addition to democratically and interculturally competent citizens, a democracy needs democratic political and legal institutions. Such institutions must make available to citizens opportunities for active engagement. Institutions which deny such opportunities are not democratic. For example, citizens' opportunities for democratic activities and participation are denied if there are no institutional consultative bodies through which citizens can communicate their views to politicians. Where this occurs, citizens need to use alternative forms of democratic action if they wish to make their voices heard. Similarly, if there are no institutional structures to support intercultural dialogue, then citizens are less likely to engage in such dialogue. However, if governments provide appropriate places and spaces (for example cultural and social centres, youth clubs, education centres, other leisure facilities or virtual spaces) and promote the use of these facilities for intercultural activities, then citizens are more likely to engage in intercultural dialogue.

In other words, while democratic institutions are not self-sustaining without an accompanying culture of democracy, it is also the case that democratic culture and intercultural dialogue are not self-sustaining in the absence of appropriately configured institutions. Institutions and citizens' competences and actions are interdependent.

Furthermore, where there are systematic patterns of disadvantage and discrimination, and where there are differences in the allocation of resources within societies, people may be disempowered from participation on an equal basis. For example, if citizens do not have sufficient material or financial resources to access information about societal or political issues or to participate in civic actions, they will be disempowered in comparison with people who do have such resources. In this case, their competences for participation are irrelevant because there is no opportunity to use them.

These inequalities and disadvantages are often increased by institutional biases and differences of power which lead to democratic and intercultural settings and opportunities being dominated by those who occupy positions of privilege. Disadvantaged citizens can be excluded from participating as equals through the language and actions of those who have the privileges associated with, for example, a high level of education, high status through their occupation or networks of powerful connections. There is a danger that people who are marginalised or excluded from democratic processes and intercultural exchanges become disengaged from civic life and alienated from participation and deliberation.

For these reasons, special measures need to be adopted to ensure that members of disadvantaged groups enjoy genuine equality of opportunity to engage in democratic action. It is not sufficient only to equip citizens with the competences that are specified by the Framework. It is also necessary to change structural inequalities and disadvantages.

Consequently, the Framework presupposes that democratic and intercultural competences are necessary for participation in democratic processes and intercultural dialogue but are not sufficient to ensure such participation. The need for appropriate institutional structures, and for action where inequalities and disadvantages exist, should be borne in mind throughout.

Chapter 5

The conceptual foundations of the Framework

The concepts of "identity", "culture", "intercultural" and "intercultural dialogue"

The Framework is based on a number of concepts, including "identity", "culture", "intercultural" and "intercultural dialogue", and each of these is discussed and defined for use in the Framework.

The term "identity" denotes a person's sense of who they are and the self-descriptions to which they attribute significance and value. Most people use a range of different identities to describe themselves, including both personal and social identities. Personal identities are those identities that are based on personal attributes (e.g. caring, tolerant, extroverted), interpersonal relationships and roles (e.g. mother, friend, colleague) and autobiographical narratives (e.g. born to working-class parents, educated at a state school). Social identities are instead based on memberships of social groups (e.g. a nation, an ethnic group, a religious group, a gender group, an age or generational group, an occupational group, an educational institution, a hobby club, a sports team, a virtual social media group); cultural identities (the identities that people construct on the basis of their membership of cultural groups) are a particular type of social identity, and are central to the concerns of the Framework.

"Culture" is a difficult term to define, largely because cultural groups are always internally heterogeneous and embrace a range of diverse practices and norms that are often disputed, change over time and are enacted by individuals in personalised ways. That said, any given culture may be construed as having three main aspects: the material resources that are used by members of the group (e.g. tools, foods, clothing), the socially shared resources of the group (e.g. the language, religion, rules of social conduct), and the subjective resources that are used by individual group members (e.g. the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices which group members commonly use as a frame of reference for making sense of and relating to the world). The culture of the group is a composite formed from all three aspects – it consists of a network of material, social and subjective resources. The total set of resources is distributed across the entire group, but each individual member of the group appropriates and uses only a subset of the total set of cultural resources potentially available to them.

Defining "culture" in this way means that groups of any size can have their own distinctive cultures. This includes nations, ethnic groups, religious groups, cities, neighbourhoods, work organisations, occupational groups, sexual orientation groups, disability groups, generational groups, families and so on. For this reason, all people belong simultaneously to and identify with many different groups and their associated cultures.

There is usually considerable variability within cultural groups because the resources that are perceived to be associated with membership of the group are often resisted, challenged or rejected by different individuals and subgroups within it. In addition, even the boundaries of the group itself, and who is perceived to be within the group and who is perceived to be outside the group, may be disputed by different group members – cultural group boundaries are often very fuzzy.

This internal variability and contestation of cultures is, in part, a consequence of the fact that all people belong to multiple groups and their cultures but participate in different constellations of cultures, so that the ways in which they relate to any one culture depends, at least in part, on the points of view that are present in the other cultures in which they also participate. In other words, cultural affiliations intersect in such a way that each person occupies a unique cultural positioning. In addition, the meanings and feelings which people attach to particular cultures are personalised as a consequence of their own life histories, personal experiences and individual personalities.

Cultural affiliations are fluid and dynamic, with the subjective salience of social and cultural identities fluctuating as individuals move from one situation to another, with different affiliations – or different clusters of intersecting affiliations – being highlighted depending on the particular social context encountered. Fluctuations in the salience of cultural affiliations and identities are also linked to shifts in people's interests, needs, goals and expectations as they move across situations and through time. Furthermore, all groups and their cultures are dynamic and change over time as a result of political, economic and historical events and developments, and as a result of interactions with and influences from the cultures of other groups. They also change over time because of their members' internal contestation of the meanings, norms, values and practices of the group.

This underlying concept of culture described above was used to develop the Framework, and it has implications for the concept of "intercultural". If we all participate in multiple cultures, but we each participate in a unique constellation of cultures, then every interpersonal situation is potentially an intercultural situation. Often, when we encounter other people, we respond to them as individuals who have a range of physical, social and psychological attributes that serve to distinguish and identify them as being unique. However, sometimes we respond to other people instead in terms of their cultural affiliations, and when this occurs we group them together with others who share those affiliations. There are several factors that prompt us to shift our frame of reference from the individual and the interpersonal to the intercultural. These include, *inter alia*, the presence of noticeable cultural emblems or practices that elicit or invoke the cultural category in the mind of the perceiver, the frequent use of cultural categories to think about other people so that these categories are more readily elicited and accessed when interacting with others, and the usefulness of a cultural category in helping to understand why another person is behaving in the way that they are.

Thus, intercultural situations arise when an individual perceives another person (or group of people) as being culturally different from themselves. When other people are perceived as members of a social group and its culture rather than as individuals, then the self is also usually categorised – and may present itself – as a cultural group member rather than in purely individual terms. Intercultural situations, identified in this way, may involve people from different countries, people from different regional, linguistic, ethnic or faith groups, or people who differ from each other because of their lifestyle, gender, age or generation, social class, education, occupation, level of religious observance, sexual orientation, and so on. From this perspective, "intercultural dialogue" may be defined as an open exchange of views, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, between individuals or groups who perceive themselves as having different cultural affiliations from each other.

Intercultural dialogue fosters constructive engagement across perceived cultural divides, reduces intolerance, prejudice and stereotyping, enhances the cohesion of democratic societies and helps to resolve conflicts. That said, intercultural dialogue can be a difficult process. This is particularly the case when the participants perceive each other as representatives of cultures that have an adversarial relationship with one another (e.g. as a consequence of past or present armed conflict) or when a participant believes that their own cultural group has experienced significant harm (e.g. blatant discrimination, material exploitation or genocide) at the hands of another group to which they perceive their interlocutor as belonging. Under such circumstances, intercultural dialogue can be extremely difficult, requiring a high level of intercultural competence and very considerable emotional and social sensitivity, commitment, perseverance and courage.

To summarise, the Framework assumes that cultures are internally heterogeneous, contested, dynamic and constantly changing, and that individuals have complex affiliations to various cultures. The Framework also assumes that intercultural situations arise due to the perception that there are cultural differences between people. For this reason, the Framework competence model makes frequent reference to "people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself" (rather than,

for example, to "people from other cultures"). Intercultural dialogue is construed as an open exchange of views between individuals or groups who perceive themselves as having different cultural affiliations from each other.

The concepts of "competence" and "clusters of competences"

Another important concept underlying the Framework is that of competence. The term "competence" can be used in many ways, including, first, its casual everyday use as a synonym for "ability", second, its more technical use within vocational education and training, and third, its use to denote the ability to meet complex demands within a given context. For the purposes of the Framework, the term "competence" is defined as the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context.

Democratic situations are one such type of context. Thus, "democratic competence" is the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant psychological resources (namely values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding) in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by democratic situations. Likewise, "intercultural competence" is the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant psychological resources in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by intercultural situations. In the case of citizens who live within culturally diverse democratic societies, intercultural competence is construed by the Framework as being an integral component of democratic competence.

It is important to note that democratic and intercultural situations occur not only in the physical world but also in the digital online world. In other words, democratic discussions and debates and intercultural encounters and interactions take place not only through face-to-face exchanges, traditional print and broadcast media, letters, petitions and so on, but also through computer-mediated communications, for example, through online social networks, forums, blogs, e-petitions and e-mails. For this reason, the Framework has relevance not only to education for democratic citizenship, human rights education and intercultural education but also to digital citizenship education.

The Framework construes competence as a dynamic process. This is because competence involves the selection, activation, organisation and co-ordination of relevant psychological resources which are then applied through behaviour in such a way that the individual adapts appropriately and effectively to a given situation. Appropriate and effective adaptation involves the constant self-monitoring of the results of behaviour and of the situation. It may also involve the modification of behaviour (perhaps using further psychological resources) to meet the shifting demands of the situation. In other words, a competent individual mobilises and deploys psychological resources in a dynamic manner according to the situation.

In addition to this global and holistic use of the term "competence" (in the singular), the term "competences" (in the plural) is used in the Framework to refer to the specific psychological resources (the specific values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding) that are mobilised and deployed in the production of competent behaviour.

Hence, on the present account, "competence" as a holistic term consists of the selection, activation and organisation of "competences" and the application of these competences in a co-ordinated, adaptive and dynamic manner to concrete situations.

It should be noted that, according to the Framework, competences include not only skills, knowledge and understanding but also values and attitudes. Values and attitudes are regarded as essential for behaving appropriately and effectively in democratic and intercultural situations. Just like skills, knowledge and understanding, values and attitudes are psychological resources that can be activated, organised and applied through behaviour in order to respond appropriately and effectively in democratic and intercultural situations. As such, values and attitudes are also competences that can be drawn upon by individuals, in much the same way as skills, knowledge and understanding.

However, dispositions are excluded from the set of competences specified by the Framework. Dispositions are instead treated as being implicit in the definition of competence which underpins the entire Framework – that is, competence as the mobilisation and deployment of competences through behaviour. If competences are not mobilised and deployed (if there is no disposition to use them in behaviour), then an individual cannot be deemed to be competent. In other words, having the disposition to use one's competences in behaviour is intrinsic to the very notion of competence – there is no competence without this disposition.

In real-life situations, competences are rarely mobilised and deployed individually. Instead, competent behaviour invariably involves the activation and application of an entire cluster of competences. Depending on the situation, and the specific demands, challenges and opportunities which that situation presents, and also the specific needs and goals of the individual within that situation, different subsets of competences will need to be activated and deployed. Five examples of situations that require an entire cluster of competences to be mobilised and applied in a dynamic and adaptive manner are presented in Boxes 1 to 5.

Box 1: Interacting during an intercultural encounter

At a multicultural event, two people who have different ethnic backgrounds from each other find themselves standing together. They start to talk about their respective ethnic and religious practices. Their conversation initially requires them to adopt an attitude of openness towards each other. It may also require them to regulate their emotions in order to overcome any anxieties or insecurities that they might have about meeting and interacting with someone with a different cultural background. Once the dialogue commences, they also need to mobilise and deploy close listening skills and linguistic and communicative skills to ensure that miscommunications do not occur and that the contents of the conversation remain sensitive to the communicative needs and cultural norms of the other person. Empathy is also likely to be required, along with analytical thinking skills, to facilitate comprehension of the other person's point of view, especially if this is not immediately apparent from what they are saying. It may emerge during the course of the conversation that there are irreconcilable differences in points of view between them. If this is the case, then respect for difference and tolerance of ambiguity need to be deployed and the lack of a clear-cut resolution accepted.

Box 2: Taking a stand against hate speech

A citizen may choose to take a principled stand against hate speech that is being directed at refugees or migrants on the internet. Such a stand is likely to be initiated through the activation of human dignity as a fundamental value and to be sustained through the activation of an attitude of civic-mindedness and a sense of responsibility. To challenge the contents of the hate speech, analytical and critical thinking skills need to be applied. In addition, the formulation of an appropriate response requires knowledge of human rights as well as linguistic and communicative skills in order to ensure that the stand that is taken is expressed appropriately and is targeted effectively at its intended audience(s). In addition, knowledge and understanding of digital media need to be drawn upon to ensure that the response is posted in an appropriate manner and its impact maximised.

Box 3: Participating in political debate and supporting one's own political position

In order to function effectively in political debate and to argue in support of one's own political position, it is necessary to have good knowledge and understanding of the political issues that are being debated. In addition, one's communications need to be adapted to both the medium of expression (e.g. speech, writing) and the intended audience. In addition, one needs to have an understanding of freedom of expression and its limits, and, in cases where communications involve people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself, an understanding of cultural appropriateness. Political debate also requires the ability to critique the views of others and to evaluate the arguments which they deploy during the course of the debate. Political debate, and supporting one's own political position, therefore requires all of the following competences: knowledge and critical understanding of politics, linguistic and communicative skills, knowledge and understanding of communication, knowledge and understanding of cultural norms, analytical and critical thinking skills and the ability to adapt one's arguments appropriately as the debate proceeds.

Box 4: Encountering propaganda advocating a violent extremist cause on the internet

In the course of surfing the internet, an individual may encounter propaganda that is attempting to convert its viewers to a violent extremist cause. Analytical and critical thinking skills need to be mobilised on encountering such content. These skills enable the individual not only to recognise the literal meaning of the content but also to perceive its propagandist nature, as well as the underlying motives and intent of those who have produced the material. By additionally mobilising knowledge and critical understanding of media, the individual will be able to recognise the way in which the images and messages in the propaganda have been deliberately selected and edited in such a way to try to achieve their intended effects on the viewer. Because the content proposes that the human rights of other people should be violated in pursuit of the extremist cause, the valuing of human dignity and human rights needs to be activated, together with the valuing of peaceful democratic solutions to social and political conflicts. In addition, if an attitude of civic-mindedness is activated, the individual will report the online content to the appropriate public authorities. Resilience and action in response to violent extremist propaganda is

therefore achieved by mobilising and applying a large number of competences, including values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding.

Box 5: Post-conflict reconciliation

In the wake of a serious conflict between two groups, an individual who has suffered violence or injustice in the course of the conflict may nevertheless choose to seek reconciliation with individuals from the other group. The recognition that all human beings are of equal dignity and value irrespective of the particular groups to which they belong may act as a motivation for seeking reconciliation. Alternatively, the desire to seek reconciliation may be motivated by knowledge of the history of conflicts between groups, and through understanding that seeking and inflicting revenge or retaliation for past events only leads to yet more conflict and a cycle of violence, causing still further loss and grief. The ability to regulate one's own emotions, especially when there have been strong feelings about the adversary in the past, is vital. A person who has set himself/herself the goal of reconciliation needs to mobilise an attitude of openness towards the former adversary, and a willingness to learn about and possibly to meet with members of the other group. Empathic skills need to be mobilised, as do linguistic and communicative skills and listening skills if meetings do take place. These skills are likely to lead to an understanding of how the members of the adversary group perceive the conflict. Empathy might also lead to an understanding that members of the adversary group have the same basic psychological needs for freedom from threat and security as the members of one's own group, and that the conflict has caused harmful and damaging consequences for both groups, as a result of which a sense of common suffering may be generated. Analytical and critical thinking skills also need to be deployed to evaluate how the conflict has been represented on both sides, with the negative images, stereotypes and propaganda that have served to sustain and perpetuate the conflict being identified and deconstructed. From the dedicated and determined application of this large cluster of competences, forgiveness, reconciliation and a sense of hope regarding future relations with the other group may eventually emerge.

The examples given in these five boxes show that, in all five cases, adaptive behaviour requires the mobilisation, orchestration and sensitive application of a large set of competences in a manner that is appropriate to the given situation. Furthermore, these competences range across and include values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding. This notion of competences being deployed dynamically in entire clusters, rather than individually, in order to meet the needs and opportunities of specific democratic and intercultural situations as they arise, has important implications for curriculum design and for the teaching and learning of the competences, as well as for their assessment.

In summary, democratically and interculturally competent behaviour is viewed by the Framework as arising from a dynamic and adaptive process in which an individual responds appropriately and effectively to the constantly shifting demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations. This is achieved through the flexible mobilisation, orchestration and deployment of varying clusters of psychological resources drawn selectively from the individual's full repertoire of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding.

Chapter 6

A model of the competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue

Building on these background concepts, the Framework offers a comprehensive conceptual model of the competences that individuals require in order to function as democratically and interculturally competent citizens. These are therefore the competences that need to be targeted by educators in order to empower learners to act as competent and effective democratic citizens.

There are 20 competences in the model in total. These competences are subdivided into values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. The 20 competences are summarised diagrammatically in Figure 1.[6]

Figure 1: The 20 competences included in the competence model

Values	Attitudes
– Valuing human dignity and human rights – Valuing cultural diversity – Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law	– Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices – Respect – Civic-mindedness – Responsibility – Self-efficacy – Tolerance of ambiguity

Competence

Skills	Knowledge and critical understanding
– Autonomous learning skills – Analytical and critical thinking skills – Skills of listening and observing – Empathy – Flexibility and adaptability – Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills – Co-operation skills – Conflict-resolution skills	– Knowledge and critical understanding of the self – Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication – Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

The model proposes that, within the context of democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, an individual is deemed to be acting competently when he or she meets the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations appropriately and effectively by mobilising and deploying some or all of these 20 competences. In the following, each of the four groups of competences, as well as all of the individual competences in each group, are described in detail.

VALUES

Values are general beliefs that individuals hold about the desirable goals that should be striven for in life. They motivate action and they also serve as guiding principles for deciding how to act. Values transcend specific actions and contexts, and they have a normative prescriptive quality about what ought to be done or thought across many different situations. Values offer standards or criteria for: evaluating actions, both one's own and those of other people; justifying opinions, attitudes and behaviours; deciding between alternatives; planning behaviour; and attempting to influence others.

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6. The rationale underlying the competence model, and the process through which these particular competences were identified, are described in full in: Council of Europe (2016), *Competences for democratic culture: living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, www.coe.int/en/web/education/competences-for-democratic-culture.

Readers familiar with other existing competence schemes may be surprised by the appearance of values as a distinct type of competence in the current model. However, it is important to bear in mind that the term "competence" is not being used here in its casual everyday sense as a synonym of "ability", but in a more technical sense to refer to the psychological resources (such as attitudes, skills and knowledge) that need to be mobilised and deployed to meet the demands and challenges of democratic and intercultural situations. Values are one such type of resource. In fact, other competence schemes do often include values but fail to identify them as such and instead merge them with attitudes. By contrast, the current model draws a clear conceptual distinction between values and attitudes, with only the former being characterised by their normative prescriptive quality.

Values are essential in the context of conceptualising the competences that enable participation in a culture of democracy. This is because without a specification of the particular values that underpin these competences, they would not be democratic competences but would instead be more general political competences that could be used in the service of many other kinds of political order, including anti-democratic orders. For example, one could be a responsible, self-efficacious and politically well-informed citizen within a totalitarian dictatorship if a different set of values were to be employed as the foundation for one's judgments, decisions and actions. Thus, the values which the Framework model contains lie at the very heart of democratic competence, and are essential for the characterisation of that competence.

There are three sets of values that are crucial for participating in a culture of democracy, as follows.

Valuing human dignity and human rights

This first set of values is based on the general belief that every individual human being is of equal worth, has equal dignity, is entitled to equal respect, and is entitled to the same set of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and ought to be treated accordingly. This belief assumes that: human rights are universal, inalienable and indivisible and apply to everyone without distinction; human rights provide a minimum set of protections that are essential for human beings to live a life of dignity; and that human rights provide an essential foundation for freedom, equality, justice and peace in the world. This set of values therefore involves:

1. Recognition that all people share a common humanity and have equal dignity irrespective of their particular cultural affiliations, status, abilities or circumstances.

2. Recognition of the universal, inalienable and indivisible nature of human rights.

3. Recognition that human rights should always be promoted, respected and protected.

4. Recognition that fundamental freedoms should always be defended unless they undermine or violate the human rights of others.

5. Recognition that human rights provide the foundation for living together as equals in society and for freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Valuing cultural diversity

The second set of values is based on the general belief that other cultural affiliations, cultural variability and diversity, and pluralism of perspectives, views and practices ought to be positively regarded, appreciated and cherished. This belief assumes that: cultural diversity is an asset for society; people can learn and benefit from other people's diverse perspectives; cultural diversity should be promoted and protected; people should be encouraged to interact with one another irrespective of their perceived cultural differences; and intercultural dialogue should be used to develop a democratic culture of living together as equals in society.

Note that there is a potential tension between valuing human rights and valuing cultural diversity. In a society which has adopted human rights as its primary value foundation, valuing cultural diversity will have certain limits. These limits are set by the need to promote, respect and protect the human rights and freedoms of other people. Hence, it is assumed here that cultural diversity always ought to be valued unless it undermines the human rights and freedoms of others.

This second set of values therefore involves:

1. Recognition that cultural diversity and pluralism of opinions, world views and practices is an asset for society and provides an opportunity for the enrichment of all members of society.

2. Recognition that all people have the right to be different and the right to choose their own perspectives, views, beliefs and opinions.

3. Recognition that people should always respect the perspectives, views, beliefs and opinions of other people, unless these are directed at undermining the human rights and freedoms of others.

4. Recognition that people should always respect the lifestyles and practices of other people, unless they undermine or violate the human rights and freedoms of others.

5. Recognition that people should listen to and engage in dialogue with those who are perceived to be different from themselves.

Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

The third set of values is based on a cluster of beliefs about how societies ought to operate and be governed, including the beliefs that: all citizens ought to be able to participate equally (either directly or indirectly through elected representatives) in the procedures through which the laws that are used to regulate society are formulated and established; all citizens ought to engage actively with the democratic procedures which operate within their society (allowing that this might also mean not engaging on occasions for reasons of conscience or circumstance); while decisions ought to be made by majorities, the just and fair treatment of minorities of all kinds ought to be ensured; social justice, fairness and equality ought to operate at all levels of society; and the rule of law ought to prevail so that everyone in society is treated justly, fairly, impartially and equally in accordance with laws that are shared by all. This set of values therefore involves:

1.	Support for democratic processes and procedures (while recognising that exist-ing democratic procedures may not be optimal and that there may sometimes be a need to change or improve them through democratic means).

2.	Recognition of the importance of active citizenship (while recognising that non-participation may sometimes be justified for reasons of conscience or circumstance).

3.	Recognition of the importance of citizen engagement with political decision making.

4.	Recognition of the need for the protection of civil liberties, including the civil liberties of people who hold minority views.

5.	Support for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes.

6.	A sense of social justice and social responsibility for the just and fair treatment of all members of society, including equal opportunities for all irrespective of national origins, ethnicity, race, religion, language, age, sex, gender, political opinion, birth, social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation or other status.

7.	Support for the rule of law and the equal and impartial treatment of all citizens under the law as a means of ensuring justice.

ATTITUDES

An attitude is the overall mental orientation which an individual adopts towards someone or something (for example a person, a group, an institution, an issue, an event, a symbol). Attitudes usually consist of four components: a belief or opinion about the object of the attitude, an emotion or feeling towards the object, an evaluation (either positive or negative) of the object, and a tendency to behave in a particular way towards that object.

Six attitudes that are important for a culture of democracy are as follows.

Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices

Openness is an attitude towards either people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself or towards world views, beliefs, values and prac-tices that differ from one's own. The attitude of openness towards cultural other-ness needs to be distinguished from the attitude of having an interest in collecting experiences of the "exotic" merely for one's own personal enjoyment or benefit. Openness instead involves:

1.	Sensitivity towards cultural diversity and to world views, beliefs, values and practices which differ from one's own.

2.	Curiosity about, and interest in discovering and learning about, other cultural orientations and affiliations and other world views, beliefs, values and practices.

3.	Willingness to suspend judgment and disbelief of other people's world views, beliefs, values and practices, and willingness to question the "naturalness" of one's own world view, beliefs, values and practices.

4.   Emotional readiness to relate to others who are perceived to be different from oneself.

5.   Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage, co-operate and interact with those who are perceived to have cultural affiliations that differ from one's own, in a relationship of equality.

Respect

Respect is an attitude towards someone or something (for example a person, a belief, a symbol, a principle, a practice) where the object of that attitude is judged to have some kind of importance, worth or value which warrants positive regard and esteem.[7] Depending on the nature of the object that is respected, the respect may take on very different forms (cf. respect for a school/institution rule versus respect for an elder's wisdom versus respect for nature).

One type of respect that is especially important in the context of a culture of democracy is the respect that is accorded to other people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations or different beliefs, opinions or practices from one's own. Such respect assumes the intrinsic dignity and equality of all human beings and their inalienable human right to choose their own affiliations, beliefs, opinions or practices. Importantly, this type of respect does not require minimising or ignoring the actual differences that might exist between the self and the other, which can sometimes be significant and profound, nor does it require agreement with, adoption of or conversion to that which is respected. It is instead an attitude that involves the positive appreciation of the dignity and the right of the other person to hold those affiliations, beliefs, opinions or practices, while nevertheless recognising and acknowledging the differences which exist between the self and the other. An attitude of respect is required to facilitate both democratic interaction and intercultural dialogue with other people. However, it should be noted that limits do need to be placed on respect – for example, respect should not be accorded to the contents of beliefs and opinions, or to lifestyles and practices, which undermine or violate the dignity, human rights or freedoms of others.[8]

The concept of respect reflects better than the concept of tolerance the attitude that is required for a culture of democracy. Tolerance may, in some contexts, convey the connotation of simply enduring or putting up with difference and a patronising stance of tolerating something that one would prefer not to endure. Tolerance may also sometimes be construed as involving an act of power which allows the existence of difference by merely tolerating it, and through this act of tolerance enhancing the power and authority of the tolerating individual. Respect is a less ambiguous concept

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7.   Notice that respect is closely linked to values in two ways: a value may be an object of respect (i.e. a value may be respected) and it can also function as a foundation for respect (i.e. one can respect someone or something because they exemplify or put into practice a particular value).

8.   From a human rights perspective, another person's right to freedom of beliefs should always be respected, but respect cannot be accorded to the contents of beliefs that seek to undermine or violate the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. In the case of beliefs where the content cannot be respected, restrictions are placed not on the right to hold the beliefs but on the freedom to manifest those beliefs if such restrictions are necessary for public safety, the protection of public order or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others (see Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights: www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf.).

than tolerance, being based on recognition of the dignity, rights and freedoms of the other and a relationship of equality between the self and the other.

Respect therefore involves:

1. Positive regard and esteem for someone or something based on the judgment that they have intrinsic importance, worth or value.

2. Positive regard and esteem for other people as equal human beings who share a common dignity and have exactly the same set of human rights and freedoms irrespective of their particular cultural affiliations, beliefs, opinions, lifestyles or practices.

3. Positive regard and esteem for the beliefs, opinions, lifestyles and practices adopted by other people, as long as these do not undermine or violate the dignity, human rights or freedoms of others.

Civic-mindedness

Civic-mindedness is an attitude towards a community or social group. The term "community" is used here to denote a social or cultural group that is larger than one's immediate circle of family and friends and to which one feels a sense of belonging. There are numerous types of group that might be relevant here, for example, the people who live within a particular geographical area (such as a neighbourhood, a town or city, a country, a group of countries such as Europe or Africa, or indeed the world in the case of the "global community"), a more geographically diffused group (such as an ethnic group, faith group, leisure group, sexual orientation group), or any other kind of social or cultural group to which an individual feels a sense of belonging. Every individual belongs to multiple groups, and an attitude of civic-mindedness may be held towards any number of these. Civic-mindedness involves:

1. A feeling of belonging to and identification with the community.

2. Mindfulness of other people in the community, of the interconnectedness between those people, and of the effects of one's actions on those people.

3. A sense of solidarity with other people in the community, including a willingness to co-operate and work with them, feelings of concern and care for their rights and welfare, and a willingness to defend those who might be disempowered and disadvantaged within the community.

4. An interest in, and attentiveness towards, the affairs and concerns of the community.

5. A sense of civic duty, a willingness to contribute actively to community life, a willingness to participate in decisions concerning the affairs, concerns and common good of the community, and a willingness to engage in dialogue with other members of the community regardless of their cultural affiliations.

6. A commitment to fulfil, to the best of one's abilities, the responsibilities, duties or obligations that are attached to the roles or positions which one occupies within the community.

7. A sense of accountability to other people within the community and accepting that one is answerable to others for one's decisions and actions.

Responsibility

The term "responsibility" has many meanings. Two meanings that are especially pertinent to a culture of democracy are role responsibility and moral responsibility. The former is an aspect of civic-mindedness (see above, point 6); here we are concerned with the latter. Moral responsibility is an attitude towards one's own actions. It arises when a person has an obligation to act in a particular way and deserves praise or blame for either performing that act or failing to act in that way. Necessary conditions for individuals to be judged as being either praiseworthy or blameworthy are that they are able to reflect on their own actions, are able to form intentions about how they will act, and are able to execute their chosen actions (hence, when a lack of resources or structural conditions conspire to prevent a person from performing an action, it is inappropriate to ascribe either praise or blame to them). Responsibility can require courage insofar as taking a principled stance may entail acting on one's own, taking action against the norms of a community, or challenging a collective decision that is judged to be wrong. Thus, there can sometimes be a tension between civic-mindedness (construed as solidarity with and loyalty towards other people) and moral responsibility. An attitude of responsibility for one's own actions therefore involves:

1. The adoption of a reflective and thoughtful approach towards one's actions and the possible consequences of those actions.

2. The identification of one's duties and obligations and how one ought to act in relation to a particular situation, based on a value or set of values.[9]

3. Making decisions about the actions to take (which in some cases might entail not taking action), given the circumstances which apply.

4. The taking of action (or the avoidance of action) accordingly as an autonomous agent.

5. Willingness to hold oneself accountable for the nature or consequences of one's decisions and actions.

6. Willingness to appraise and judge the self.

7. Willingness to act courageously when this is judged to be necessary.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an attitude towards the self. It involves a positive belief in one's own ability to undertake the actions which are required to achieve particular goals. This belief commonly entails the further beliefs that one can understand what is required, can make appropriate judgments, can select appropriate methods for accomplishing tasks, can navigate obstacles successfully, can influence what happens, and can make a difference to the events that affect one's own and other people's lives. Thus,

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9. Hence, the deployment of the attitude of responsibility in democratic and intercultural situations requires the simultaneous deployment of one or more of the three sets of values specified by the current model (i.e. valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity, or valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law). In the absence of the simultaneous deployment of one or more of these sets of values, responsibility would not be a democratic competence but a more general political competence instead (cf. the introductory text on values above).

self-efficacy is associated with feelings of self-confidence in one's own abilities. Low self-efficacy can discourage democratic and intercultural behaviour even when there is a high level of ability, while unrealistically high self-efficacy can lead to frustration and disappointment. An optimal attitude is relatively high self-efficacy coupled to a realistically estimated high level of ability, which encourages individuals to tackle new challenges and enables them to take action on issues of concern. Thus, self-efficacy involves:

1. Belief in one's ability to understand issues, to make judgments and to select appropriate methods for accomplishing tasks.

2. Belief in one's ability to organise and execute the courses of action required to attain particular goals, and to navigate the obstacles that might arise.

3. A feeling of confidence about tackling new challenges.

4. A feeling of confidence about democratic engagement and undertaking the actions judged to be necessary to achieve democratic goals (including challenging and holding to account those in positions of power and authority when their decisions or actions are judged to be unfair or unjust).

5. A feeling of confidence about engaging in intercultural dialogue with those who are perceived to have cultural affiliations that differ from one's own.

Tolerance of ambiguity

Tolerance of ambiguity is an attitude towards objects, events and situations which are perceived to be uncertain and subject to multiple conflicting or incompatible interpretations. People who have high tolerance of ambiguity evaluate these kinds of objects, events and situations in a positive manner, willingly accept their inherent lack of clarity, are willing to admit that other people's perspectives may be just as adequate as their own perspectives, and deal with the ambiguity constructively. Hence, the term "tolerance" should be understood here in its positive sense of accepting and embracing ambiguity (rather than in its negative sense of enduring or putting up with ambiguity). People who have low tolerance of ambiguity instead adopt a single perspective on unclear situations and issues, hold a closed attitude towards unfamiliar situations and issues, and use fixed and inflexible categories for thinking about the world. Thus, in the present context, tolerance of ambiguity involves:

1. Recognition and acknowledgement that there can be multiple perspectives on and interpretations of any given situation or issue.

2. Recognition and acknowledgement that one's own perspective on a situation may be no better than other people's perspectives.

3. Acceptance of complexity, contradictions and lack of clarity.

4. Willingness to undertake tasks when only incomplete or partial information is available.

5. Willingness to tolerate uncertainty and to deal with it constructively.

A skill is the capacity for carrying out complex, well-organised patterns of either thinking or behaviour in an adaptive manner in order to achieve a particular end or goal.

There are eight sets of skills that are important for a culture of democracy, as follows.

Autonomous learning skills

Autonomous learning skills are those skills that individuals require to pursue, organise and evaluate their own learning, in accordance with their own needs, in a self-directed and self-regulated manner, without being prompted by others. Autonomous learning skills are important for a culture of democracy because they enable individuals to learn for themselves about, and how to deal with, political, civic and cultural issues using multiple and diverse sources both far and near, rather than relying on agents in their immediate environment for the provision of information about these issues. Autonomous learning skills include abilities or skills in:

1. Identifying one's own learning needs – these needs may stem from gaps in knowledge or understanding, from lack or poor mastery of skills, or from difficulties that have arisen as a consequence of current attitudes or values.

2. Identifying, locating and accessing possible sources of the information, advice or guidance which is required to address these needs – these sources could include personal experiences, interactions and discussions with others, encounters with people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from one's own or who hold different beliefs, opinions or world views from one's own, and visual, print, broadcast and digital media sources.

3. Judging the reliability of the various sources of information, advice or guidance, assessing them for possible bias or distortion, and selecting the most suitable sources from the range available.

4. Processing and learning the information, using the most appropriate learning strategies and techniques, or adopting and following the advice or guidance, from the most reliable sources, making adjustments to one's existing repertoire of knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes or values accordingly.

5. Thinking about what has been learned, the progress that has been made, evaluating the learning strategies that have been used, and drawing conclusions about further learning that may still need to be undertaken and new learning strategies that may need to be acquired.

Analytical and critical thinking skills

Analytical and critical thinking skills consist of a large and complex cluster of inter-related skills. Analytical thinking skills are those skills that are required to analyse materials of any kind (for example texts, arguments, interpretations, issues, events, experiences) in a systematic and logical manner. They include abilities or skills in:

1. Systematically breaking down the materials that are under analysis into constituent elements, and organising those elements in a logical manner.

2. Identifying and interpreting the meaning(s) of each element, possibly by comparing and relating those elements to what is already known and identifying similarities and differences.

3. Examining the elements in relation to each other and identifying the connections that exist between them (e.g. logical, causal, temporal).

4. Identifying any discrepancies, inconsistencies or divergences between elements.

5. Identifying alternative possible meanings and relationships for individual elements, generating new elements that may be missing from the whole, systematically changing elements to determine effects on the whole, and generating new syntheses of the elements that have been examined – in other words, imagining and exploring novel possibilities and alternatives.

6. Drawing the results of the analysis together in an organised and coherent manner to construct logical and defensible conclusions about the whole.

Critical thinking skills consist of those skills that are required to evaluate and make judgments about materials of any kind. They therefore include abilities or skills in:

1. Making evaluations on the basis of internal consistency, and on the basis of consistency with available evidence and experience.

2. Making judgments about whether or not materials under analysis are valid, accurate, acceptable, reliable, appropriate, useful and/or persuasive.

3. Understanding and evaluating the preconceptions, assumptions and textual or communicative conventions upon which materials are based.

4. Engaging not only with the literal meaning of materials, but also with their broader rhetorical purpose including the underlying motives, intentions and agendas of those who produced or created them (in the case of political communications, this includes the ability to identify propaganda and the ability to deconstruct the underlying motives, intentions and purposes of those who have produced the propaganda).

5. Situating the materials within the historical context in which they have been produced in order to assist in making evaluative judgments about the materials.

6. Generating and elaborating different alternative options, possibilities and solutions to those that are present within the materials under consideration.

7. Weighing up the pros and cons of the available options – this can include cost-benefit analysis (incorporating both short-term and long-term perspectives), resource analysis (assessing whether the resources required for each option are available in practice) and risk analysis (understanding and assessing the risks associated with each option and how they might be managed).

8. Drawing the results of the evaluative process together in an organised and coherent manner to construct a logical and defensible argument for or against a particular interpretation, conclusion or course of action, based on explicit and specifiable criteria, principles or values and/or compelling evidence.

9. Recognising one's own assumptions and preconceptions that might have biased the evaluative process, and acknowledging that one's beliefs and judgments are always contingent and dependent upon one's own cultural affiliations and perspective.

Effective analytical thinking incorporates critical thinking (the evaluation of the materials under analysis), while effective critical thinking incorporates analytical thinking (drawing distinctions and making connections). For this reason, analytical and critical thinking skills are inherently linked together.

Skills of listening and observing

Skills of listening and observing are the skills that are required to understand what other people are saying and to learn from other people's behaviour. Understanding what other people are saying requires active listening – paying close attention not only to what is being said but also to how it is being said through the use of tone, pitch, loudness, rate and fluency of voice, and paying close attention to the person's accompanying body language, especially their eye movements, facial expressions and gestures. Close observational scrutiny of other people's behaviour can also be an important source of information about the behaviours that are most appropriate and effective in different social settings and cultural contexts, and can assist a learner in mastering those behaviours through the retention of that information and replicating the other person's behaviour in later similar situations. Thus, skills of listening and observing include abilities or skills in:

1. Attending not only to what is being said but also to how it is being said and to the body language of the speaker.

2. Attending to possible inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages.

3. Attending to subtleties of meaning and to what might be only partially said or indeed left unsaid.

4. Attending to the relationship between what is being said and the social context in which it is said.

5. Paying close attention to the behaviour of other people and retaining information about that behaviour, particularly the behaviour of others who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from one's own.

6. Paying close attention to the similarities and the differences in how people react to the same situation, particularly people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from one another.

Empathy

Empathy is the set of skills required to understand and relate to other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, and to see the world from other people's perspectives. Empathy involves the ability to step outside one's own psychological frame of reference (to decentre from one's own perspective) and the ability to imaginatively apprehend and understand the psychological frame of reference and perspective of another person. This skill is fundamental to imagining the cultural affiliations, world views, beliefs, interests, emotions, wishes and needs of other people. There are several different forms of empathy that can be distinguished, including:

1. Cognitive perspective-taking – the ability to apprehend and understand the perceptions, thoughts and beliefs of other people.

2.   Affective perspective-taking – the ability to apprehend and understand the emotions, feelings and needs of other people.

3.   Sympathy, sometimes called "compassionate empathy" or "empathic concern" – the ability to experience feelings of compassion and concern for other people based on the apprehension of their cognitive or affective state or condition, or their material situation or circumstances.[10]

Flexibility and adaptability

Flexibility and adaptability are the skills that are required to adjust one's thoughts, feelings or behaviours in a principled manner to new contexts and situations so that one can respond effectively and appropriately to their challenges, demands and opportunities. Flexibility and adaptability enable individuals to adjust positively to novelty and change and to other people's social or cultural expectations, communication styles and behaviours. They also enable individuals to adjust their patterns of thinking, feeling or behaviour in response to new situational contingencies, experiences, encounters and information. Flexibility and adaptability, defined in this way, need to be distinguished from the unprincipled or opportunistic adjustment of behaviour for personal benefit or gain. They also need to be distinguished from externally coerced adaptation.[11] Thus, flexibility and adaptability include abilities or skills in:

1.   Adjusting one's habitual way of thinking due to changing circumstances, or temporarily shifting into a different cognitive perspective in response to cultural cues.

2.   Reconsidering one's own opinions in the light of new evidence and/or rational argument.

3.   Controlling and regulating one's own emotions and feelings in order to facilitate more effective and appropriate communication and co-operation with others.

4.   Overcoming anxieties, worries and insecurities about meeting and interacting with other people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from one's own.

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10. Note the positioning of empathy as a skill in the current model. The term "empathy" is of course also used in many other ways in everyday discourse. For example, it is sometimes used when a person experiences the same emotion that another person is feeling (i.e. the phenomenon of "emotional contagion", where a person "catches" and shares another person's joy, panic, fear, etc.), sometimes to refer to a sense of emotional connectedness or identification with another person (e.g. "I had a lot of empathy for the leading character in the book") and sometimes to refer to the compassion or concern for another person that results from sympathy (e.g. "I feel empathy for you in your current predicament"). The term "empathy" is also sometimes used to refer to a much larger cluster of responses that one may have to another person in which openness to the other, respect for the other, cognitive and emotional engagement with the other, and feelings of emotional connection to the other are co-mingled. The present model instead uses the term "empathy" in a more specific and focused manner to denote the set of skills that are required to understand and relate to other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, this being a crucial set of skills for participating in a culture of democracy. This definition is not intended to preclude the possible simultaneous mobilisation and deployment of empathy, openness, respect, etc., as an entire cluster of competences or capacities in some situations.

11. For example, the enforced assimilation of cultural minorities to a majority culture should never be condoned. All individuals have a fundamental right to choose their own cultural affiliations, beliefs and lifestyle (see footnote 8).

5. Regulating and reducing negative feelings towards members of another group with which one's own group has historically been in conflict.

6. Adjusting one's behaviour in a socially appropriate way according to the prevailing cultural environment.

7. Adapting to different communication styles and behaviours, and switching to appropriate communication styles and behaviours to avoid violating the cultural norms of others and to communicate with them through means which they are able to understand.

Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills[12]

Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills are those skills that are required to communicate effectively and appropriately with other people. They include the following abilities and skills, among others:[13]

1. The ability to communicate clearly in a range of situations – this includes expressing one's beliefs, opinions, interests and needs, explaining and clarifying ideas, advocating, promoting, arguing, reasoning, discussing, debating, persuading and negotiating.

2. The ability to meet the communicative demands of intercultural situations by using more than one language or language variety or by using a shared language or lingua franca to understand another language.

3. The ability to express oneself confidently and without aggression, even in situations where one is disadvantaged through a disparity of power, and to express a fundamental disagreement with another person in a manner that is nevertheless respectful of that person's dignity and rights.

4. The ability to recognise the different forms of expression and the different communicative conventions (both verbal and non-verbal) in the communications employed by other social groups and their cultures.

5. The ability to adjust and modify one's communicative behaviour so that one uses the communicative conventions (both verbal and non-verbal) that are appropriate to one's interlocutor(s) and to the prevailing cultural setting.

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12. The term "language" is used in the Framework to denote all linguistic systems, whether recognised as languages or considered to be varieties of recognised languages, irrespective of modality. It includes spoken and signed language and all other forms of non-spoken language. The terms "verbal" and "non-verbal" communication in this context therefore mean, respectively, "communication effected by means of language" and "communication effected by means other than language".

13. First and foremost, of course, effective and appropriate communication requires linguistic skills (to produce and comprehend spoken and written sentences and utterances), sociolinguistic skills (to process accent, dialect, register and the linguistic markers of social relations between speakers) and discourse skills (to construct longer coherent stretches of language through the use of appropriate communicative conventions, and to deploy spoken discourse and written texts for particular communicative purposes). However, because these are generic skills (as are numeracy and literacy), they have been omitted from the Framework model. Readers who are interested in a detailed account of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse skills should instead consult the Council of Europe's (2001) Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, where they are described at length.

6. The ability to ask questions of clarification in an appropriate and sensitive manner in cases where the meanings being expressed by another person are unclear or where inconsistencies between the verbal and non-verbal messages produced by another person are detected.

7. The ability to manage breakdowns in communication, for example by requesting repetitions or reformulations from others, or providing restatements, revisions or simplifications of one's own misunderstood communications.

8. The ability to act as a linguistic mediator in intercultural exchanges, including skills in translating, interpreting and explaining, and to act as an intercultural mediator by assisting others to understand and appreciate the characteristics of someone or something that is perceived to have a different cultural affiliation from their own.

Co-operation skills

Co-operation skills are those skills that are required to participate successfully with others on shared activities, tasks and ventures. They include abilities or skills in:

1. Expressing views and opinions in group settings, and encouraging other group members to express their views and opinions in such settings.

2. Building consensus and compromise within a group.

3. Taking action together with others in a reciprocal and co-ordinated manner.

4. Identifying and setting group goals.

5. Pursuing the goals of a group and adapting one's own behaviour for the purpose of achieving these goals.

6. Appreciating all group members' talents and strengths, and helping others to develop in areas where they need to and want to improve.

7. Encouraging and motivating other group members to co-operate and help each other in order to achieve group goals.

8. Helping others with their work where appropriate.

9. Sharing relevant and useful knowledge, experience or expertise with the group and persuading other group members to do so.

10. Recognising conflict in group settings, including identifying emotional signs of conflict in the self and in others, and responding appropriately using peaceful means and dialogue.

Conflict-resolution skills

Conflict-resolution skills are those skills that are required to address, manage and resolve conflicts in a peaceful way. They include abilities or skills in:

1. Reducing or preventing aggression and negativity, and creating a neutral environment in which people feel free to express their differing opinions and concerns without fear of reprisal.

2. Encouraging and enhancing receptivity, mutual understanding and trust between conflicting parties.

3. Recognising differences in the power and/or status of the conflicting parties, and taking steps to reduce the possible impact of such differentials on communications between them.

4. Effectively managing and regulating emotions – the ability to interpret one's own underlying emotional and motivational states as well as those of others, and to deal with emotional stress, anxiety and insecurity both in oneself and in others.

5. Listening to and understanding the different perspectives of the parties involved in conflicts.

6. Expressing and summarising the different points of view held by conflicting parties.

7. Countering or reducing misperceptions held by conflicting parties.

8. Recognising that sometimes there may be a need for a period of silence, a truce or a period of inaction, to allow the conflicting parties to reflect on the perspectives that are held by others.

9. Identifying, analysing, relating and contextualising the causes and other aspects of conflicts.

10. Identifying common ground on which agreement between conflicting parties can be built, identifying options for resolving conflicts, and refining possible compromises or solutions.

11. Assisting others to resolve conflicts by enhancing their understanding of the available options.

12. Assisting and guiding the parties involved to agree on an optimal and acceptable solution to the conflict.

KNOWLEDGE AND CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING

Knowledge is the body of information that is possessed by a person, while understanding is the comprehension and appreciation of meanings. The term "critical understanding" is used to emphasise the need for the comprehension and appreciation of meanings in the context of democratic processes and intercultural dialogue to involve active reflection on and critical evaluation of that which is being understood and interpreted (as opposed to automatic, habitual and unreflective interpretation).

The various forms of knowledge and critical understanding that are required for a culture of democracy fall into three main sets, as follows.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the self

Self-awareness and self-understanding are vital for participating effectively and appropriately in a culture of democracy. Knowledge and critical understanding of the self has many different aspects, including:

1. Knowledge and understanding of one's own cultural affiliations.

2. Knowledge and understanding of one's perspective on the world and of its cognitive, emotional and motivational aspects and biases.

3. Knowledge and understanding of the assumptions and preconceptions which underlie one's perspective on the world.

4. Understanding how one's perspective on the world, and one's assumptions and preconceptions, are contingent and dependent upon one's cultural affiliations and experiences, and in turn affect one's perceptions, judgments and reactions to other people.

5. Awareness of one's own emotions, feelings and motivations, especially in contexts involving communication and co-operation with other people.

6. Knowledge and understanding of the limits of one's own competence and expertise.

Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication

Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication have many different aspects, and include:

1. Knowledge of the socially appropriate verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which operate in the language(s) which one uses.

2. Understanding that people of other cultural affiliations may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions from oneself, which are meaningful from their perspective, even when they are using the same language as oneself.

3. Understanding that people who have different cultural affiliations can perceive the meanings of communications in different ways.

4. Understanding that there are multiple ways of speaking in any given language and a variety of ways of using the same language.

5. Understanding how the use of language is a cultural practice which operates as a carrier of information, meanings and identities which circulate in the culture in which that language is embedded.

6. Understanding of the fact that languages may express culturally shared ideas in a unique way or express unique ideas which may be difficult to access through another language.

7. Understanding the social impact and effects on others of different communication styles, including understanding how different communication styles may clash or result in a breakdown of communication.

8. Understanding how one's own assumptions, preconceptions, perceptions, beliefs and judgments are related to the specific language(s) which one speaks.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the world (including politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, the environment and sustainability)

Knowledge and critical understanding of the world subsumes a large and complex range of knowledge and understanding in a variety of domains, including all of the following.

(a) Knowledge and critical understanding of politics and law, which includes:

1. Knowledge and understanding of political and legal concepts, including democracy, freedom, justice, equality, citizenship, rights and responsibilities, the necessity of laws and regulations, and the rule of law.

2. Knowledge and understanding of democratic processes, of how democratic institutions work, including the roles of political parties, election processes and voting.

3. Knowledge and understanding of the diverse ways in which citizens can participate in public deliberations and decision making and can influence policy and society, including understanding of the role that civil society and NGOs can play in this regard.

4. Understanding power relations, political disagreement and conflict of opinion in democratic societies, and of how such disagreements and conflicts can be peacefully resolved.

5. Knowledge and understanding of current affairs, contemporary social and political problems, and the political views of others.

6. Knowledge and understanding of contemporary threats to democracy.

(b) Knowledge and critical understanding of human rights, which includes:

1. Knowledge and understanding that human rights are grounded in the dignity that is inherent in all human beings.

2. Knowledge and understanding that human rights are universal, inalienable and indivisible, and that everyone does not only have human rights but also has a responsibility to respect the rights of others, irrespective of their national origins, ethnicity, race, religion, language, age, sex, gender, political opinion, birth, social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation or other status.

3. Knowledge and understanding of the obligations of states and governments in relation to human rights.

4. Knowledge and understanding of the history of human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5. Knowledge and understanding of the relationship between human rights, democracy, freedom, justice, peace and security.

6. Knowledge and understanding that there may be different ways of interpreting and experiencing human rights in different societies and cultures but that the possible variations are framed by internationally agreed legal instruments which set out minimum standards for human rights irrespective of cultural context.

7. Knowledge and understanding of how human rights principles are applied in practice to specific situations, how violations of human rights can arise, how violations of human rights can be addressed, and how possible conflicts between human rights can be resolved.

8. Knowledge and understanding of critical human rights challenges in the world today.

(c) Knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures, which includes:

1. Knowledge and understanding of how people's cultural affiliations shape their world views, preconceptions, perceptions, beliefs, values, behaviours and interactions with others.

2. Knowledge and understanding that all cultural groups are internally variable and heterogeneous, do not have fixed inherent characteristics, contain individuals who contest and challenge traditional cultural meanings, and are constantly evolving and changing.

3. Knowledge and understanding of how power structures, discriminatory practices and institutional barriers within and between cultural groups operate to restrict opportunities for disempowered individuals.

4. Knowledge and understanding of the specific beliefs, values, norms, practices, discourses and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural affiliations, especially those used by people with whom one interacts and communicates and who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself.

(d) Knowledge and critical understanding of religions, which includes:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the key aspects of the history of particular religious traditions, of the key texts and key doctrines of particular religious traditions, and of the commonalities and differences which exist between different religious traditions.

2. Knowledge and understanding of religious symbols, religious rituals and the religious uses of language.

3. Knowledge and understanding of the key features of the beliefs, values, practices and experiences of individuals who practise particular religions.

4. Understanding of the fact that the subjective experience and personal expressions of religions are likely to differ in various ways from the standard textbook representations of those religions.

5. Knowledge and understanding of the internal diversity of beliefs and practices which exists within individual religions.

6. Knowledge and understanding of the fact that all religious groups contain individuals who contest and challenge traditional religious meanings, do not have fixed inherent characteristics, and are constantly evolving and changing.

(e) Knowledge and critical understanding of history, which includes:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the fluid nature of history and of how interpretations of the past vary over time and across cultures.

2. Knowledge and understanding of particular narratives from different perspectives about the historical forces and factors that have shaped the contemporary world.

3. Understanding of the processes of historical investigation, in particular of how facts are selected and constructed, and how they become evidence in the production of historical narratives, explanations and arguments.

4. Understanding of the need to access alternative sources of information about history because the contributions of marginalised groups (e.g. cultural minorities and women) are often excluded from standard historical narratives.

5. Knowledge and understanding of how histories are often presented and taught from an ethnocentric point of view.

6. Knowledge and understanding of how the concepts of democracy and citizenship have evolved in different ways in different cultures over time.

7. Knowledge and understanding of how stereotyping is a form of discrimination that has been used to deny individuality and diversity to human beings and to undermine human rights, and in some cases has led to crimes against humanity.

8. Understanding and interpreting the past in the light of the present with a view to the future, and understanding the relevance of the past to concerns and issues in the contemporary world.

(f) Knowledge and critical understanding of the media, which includes:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the processes through which the mass media select, interpret and edit information before transmitting it for public consumption.

2. Knowledge and understanding of the mass media as commodities that involve producers and consumers, and of the possible motives, intentions and purposes that the producers of content, images, messages and advertisements for the mass media may have.

3. Knowledge and understanding of digital media, of how digital media content, images, messages and advertisements are produced, and of the various possible motives, intentions and purposes of those who create or reproduce them.

4. Knowledge and understanding of the effects that mass media and digital media content can have on individuals' judgments and behaviours.

5. Knowledge and understanding of how political messages, propaganda and hate speech in the mass media and digital media are produced, how these forms of communication can be identified, and how individuals can guard and protect themselves against the effects of these communications.

(g) Knowledge and critical understanding of economies, the environment and sustainability, which includes:

1. Knowledge and understanding of economies and of the economic and financial processes that affect the functioning of society, including the relationship between employment, earnings, profit, taxation and government expenditure.

2. Knowledge and understanding of the relationship between income and expenditure, the nature and consequences of debt, the real cost of loans, and the risk of loans beyond repayment capacity.

3. Knowledge and understanding of the economic interdependence of the global community and of the impact that personal choices and patterns of consumption may have in other parts of the world.

4. Knowledge and understanding of the natural environment, the factors that can impact on it, the risks associated with environmental damage, current environmental challenges, and the need for responsible consumption and environmental protection and sustainability.

5. Knowledge and understanding of the connections between economic, social, political and environmental processes, especially when viewed from a global perspective.

6. Knowledge and understanding of the ethical issues associated with globalisation.

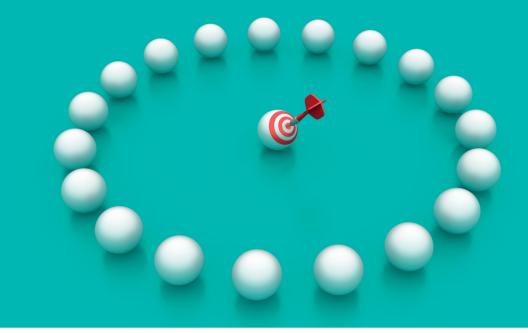## The concept of clusters of competences revisited

As noted earlier, according to the Framework, these 20 competences are rarely mobilised and deployed individually. Instead, competent behaviour is much more likely to involve the simultaneous or sequential activation and application of an entire cluster of competences in a dynamic and orchestrated manner, which enables the individual to adapt appropriately and effectively to the specific demands and challenges that are presented by a given situation. The competences in any given cluster are drawn variably from across the full range of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding. This means that users of the Framework need to pay careful attention to all four groups of competences when designing a new educational curriculum.

It may be the case that not all 20 competences can be included in the curriculum. This could be a consequence of limitations in the material resources that are available to educators or limitations of time. Alternatively, there could be policy considerations which dictate that some of the competences are a higher priority to target than others, or there may be broader political or cultural concerns which mean that it is not acceptable to target a particular competence through education.

If decisions are taken to omit particular competences from a curriculum, users of the Framework should bear in mind the following two considerations. First, insofar as competent behaviour requires an individual to draw on an entire cluster of competences, if that individual has not been equipped with the full range of competences, there will inevitably be some situations in which he or she will be unable to respond competently. Users of the Framework need to factor into their decision making the consequences of omitting particular competences from a curriculum.

Second, consideration should also be given to whether the omissions might undermine the overall rationale of the Framework, which is to promote and protect democracy, human rights and intercultural dialogue. For example, omitting all the values would mean that learners will be equipped not with democratic competence but with a more general political competence which, as has been noted already, could be used in the service of non-democratic political regimes (in other words, omitting values from the curriculum does not necessarily render knowledge and skills neutral). Alternatively, focusing solely on skills, knowledge and critical understanding, and omitting all the values and attitudes, would mean that, while learners may be equipped with the relevant skills, knowledge and critical understanding, they might have little disposition or inclination to use them in practice because it is precisely the values and attitudes which predispose people to use their skills, knowledge and critical understanding.

In short, great care should be taken over omitting particular competences from a curriculum. Such decisions should only be made in the light of a full examination of the likely consequences of the proposed omissions.

Chapter 7

Descriptors – Their uses and purposes

The need for competence descriptors

A democratic culture relies on citizens having the values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding that are described by the competence model. Two elements are essential to ensuring the development of CDC in learners:

1.   the possibility to assess the current level of proficiency of learners on each of the competences, with a view to identifying their learning needs and areas for further development; and

2.   references for educators which can help them to design, implement and evaluate educational interventions, in formal and non-formal settings.

In order to meet these needs, the Framework provides descriptors for each of the 20 competences that are contained in the competence model. These descriptors help to operationalise the competences and provide important and useful tools for curriculum planning, teaching and learning, and assessment. Competence descriptors are statements that describe observable behaviours which indicate that the person concerned has achieved a certain level of proficiency with regard to a competence. In order for descriptors to be relevant for curriculum planning, teaching and learning, and assessment, they need to be formulated using the language of learning outcomes.

How the descriptors were developed

The following criteria were used to formulate the descriptors for the Framework:

▶ *Wording*: descriptors had to be formulated using the language of learning outcomes, starting with one unambiguous action verb and describing an observable behaviour connected with a learning achievement.

▶ *Brevity*: descriptors had to be short rather than long, ideally no longer than about 25 words.

▶ *Positivity*: each descriptor had to express ability in terms of a positive statement (e.g. can, expresses, supports), not a negative statement (e.g. cannot, fails to, has limited). Ideally, the aim was to ensure that each descriptor would enable a teacher to say "Yes, this person can do this/has this (value, attitude, skill, knowledge, understanding)" or "No, this person cannot do this/does not have this (value, attitude, skill, knowledge, understanding)".

▶ *Clarity*: each descriptor had to be transparent and not jargon-laden, and written using relatively simple grammar.

▶ *Independence*: each descriptor had to be independent of all the other descriptors. In other words, each descriptor could not have meaning only relative to other descriptors in the set. For this reason, the descriptors avoided using the same statement multiple times to form a set by simply substituting a qualifying word or phrase across the statements (e.g. poor/moderate/good, a few/some/many/most, fairly broad/very broad) which would have meant that the items were not independent of each other.

▶ *Definiteness*: each descriptor also needed to describe concrete behaviours or achievements which would indicate whether or not the relevant value/attitude/skill/knowledge/understanding had been mastered by an individual.

Using these criteria, an initial set of 2 085 draft descriptors covering all 20 competences was produced. These descriptors were progressively reduced in number and refined in their wording using a series of feedback and rating tasks, validation tasks and scaling tasks, in which 3 094 educational practitioners drawn from across Europe participated. The data from these tasks were used to identify a set of 447 validated and highly rated descriptors and a smaller set of 135 key descriptors that were judged to be especially useful for indexing the achievement of the 20 competences contained in the Framework model.[14]

The data collected from the educational practitioners were also used to scale the descriptors to three different levels of proficiency: a basic, intermediate and advanced level of proficiency. It was found that many of the descriptors could be clearly associated with just one of these three levels of proficiency. However, some descriptors, although found to be valid, were revealed by the scaling procedure to fall either between the basic and intermediate levels or between the intermediate and advanced levels.

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14. A full description of the process through which the descriptors were developed is provided in Volume 2 of the current publication.

Through this extensive empirical work, scaled descriptors were established for each of the 20 competences. These descriptors indicate that a person displaying the respective behaviour in a consistent way will have a high probability of having achieved the corresponding level of proficiency (basic, intermediate or advanced) for the respective competence. The full lists of key descriptors and the larger bank of validated descriptors are presented in Volume 2 of the current publication and are also available online on the webpage of the Council of Europe dedicated to the Framework.

For illustrative purposes, examples of scaled key descriptors for two competences are presented here in Boxes 6 and 7.

Box 6: Key descriptors for skills of listening and observing
  – Basic level of proficiency
    - Listens attentively to other people
    - Listens carefully to differing opinions

  – Intermediate level of proficiency
    - Can listen effectively in order to decipher another person's meanings and intentions
    - Watches speakers' gestures and general body language to help himself/ herself to figure out the meaning of what they are saying

  – Advanced level of proficiency
    - Pays attention to what other people imply but do not say
    - Notices how people with other cultural affiliations react in different ways to the same situation

Box 7: Key descriptors for knowledge and critical understanding of politics, law and human rights
  – Basic level of proficiency
    - Can explain the meaning of basic political concepts, including democracy, freedom, citizenship, rights and responsibilities
    - Can explain why everybody has a responsibility to respect the human rights of others
  – Intermediate level of proficiency
    - Can explain the universal, inalienable and indivisible nature of human rights
    - Can reflect critically on the root causes of human rights violations, including the role of stereotypes and prejudice in processes that lead to human rights abuses
  – Advanced level of proficiency
    - Can describe the diverse ways in which citizens can influence policy
    - Can reflect critically on the evolving nature of the human rights framework and the ongoing development of human rights in different regions of the world

Using the descriptors

The process of developing the descriptors therefore produced two sets of validated and scaled descriptors: the overall bank of 447 descriptors (with some descriptors connected to the three levels of proficiency and some descriptors situated in between these levels), and a reduced subset of 135 key descriptors that are clearly connected to each of the three levels of proficiency. A basic assumption (which rests on the statistical procedure used to scale the descriptors) is that if a person displays the behaviour corresponding to a descriptor at the advanced level, then it is highly probable that this person will also be able to display the behaviours corresponding to the descriptors at the intermediate and basic levels for the same competence.

There are several uses that can be made of both lists of descriptors. However, there are also some potential misuses that should be avoided.

Descriptors can be used in different ways in the context of formal education and non-formal education. As they are formulated in the language of learning outcomes, they are directly relevant as references for curriculum development at different levels, from national curricula to school-based curricula, as well as for the design, implementation and evaluation of learning activities.

Because competences are usually mobilised in clusters, educators can design learning activities that create opportunities for learners to display and to practise the behaviours associated with combinations of descriptors from different competences. These activities will therefore contribute to the development of those competences. However, descriptors can also be a source of inspiration for educators in designing educational activities, and learning outcomes can also be defined by combining and adapting existing descriptors.

This simplifies the task for educators in covering, with relevant learning opportunities, as many as possible of the 20 competences. It would be incorrect to assume that educators should aim to cover with separate learning activities each of the 447 descriptors or even the 135 key descriptors. First, the bank of descriptors should be seen as a toolbox from which to pick and combine the most relevant elements considering the level of the learners and their specific context. The bank should not be seen as a "to-do list". Second, when choosing the most relevant descriptors to set as expected learning outcomes, educators should consider that learning activities need to provide meaningful opportunities for all learners to move to higher levels of proficiency or to stabilise and consolidate proficiency for various competences. Thus, the target should not be set too high, by focusing on advanced level descriptors when large numbers of learners are not prepared for this, nor should it be set too low, by picking only descriptors at the basic level when the possibilities of learners are higher.

This is also connected to another important use of descriptors, namely assessment. Because they are learning outcomes, it is appropriate for the descriptors to be used as a reference for assessment purposes. However, it should be underlined that the descriptors refer to proficiency and not to performance in a single specific situation.

Thus, it is possible that a learner displays by chance a certain behaviour in a specific context, for example in the context of a learning activity, but without reproducing this behaviour in other settings. Just observing a learner producing the behaviour reflected in a descriptor on a single occasion does not necessarily mean that the learner has achieved the level of proficiency indicated by that descriptor.

Reciprocally, the fact that a learner does not display in an educational situation the behaviour reflected in a descriptor is not enough to draw the conclusion that the learner has a lower level of proficiency. It may be the case that in the specific situation, at that particular moment, the behaviour was not visible, but in other circumstances the learner would be able to display the relevant behaviour.

Additionally, because of the cumulative character of the descriptors (and the validity of the scaling, based on a robust statistical procedure), when conducting an assessment, educators do not need to use the lists of descriptors as checklists to make sure that they have all been covered. For example, if a learner displays in a consistent manner the behaviour that is reflected in a descriptor at the intermediate level for a particular competence, it is not necessary to check with the other descriptors at the intermediate level for that same competence or for the descriptors at the basic level because it is highly probable that they will have been mastered. Instead, the educator should check if the learner displays behaviours corresponding to the descriptors for that competence at the advanced level, and if those behaviours are not observed, this can then form the focus of future learning activities.

The use of descriptors, because they are formulated in positive terms, allows for recognising what learners can do, and the absence of behaviours should guide future interventions and not be used to label the learner in a negative manner. As can be seen by inspecting the scaled descriptors shown in Boxes 6 and 7, even the descriptors at the basic level still require a significant degree of proficiency.

Another risk of misuse is when the behaviour that is reflected in a descriptor at the basic level is not observed. It would be wrong to conclude that the learner does not have any level of proficiency. Even in this case, the learner may well have a certain level of proficiency, and the basic level descriptors can then be the next target for learning.

In addition to their various uses by educators in formal and non-formal settings, descriptors can also be useful for learners, in several possible ways.

As the Framework includes both self-efficacy and autonomous learning skills, learners can reflect on the descriptors for all 20 competences in order to plan and implement their own development pathway. The list of descriptors can help to orient their learning goals in a scaffolded and achievable way, thus increasing the chances of success and their empowerment.

The descriptors are also relevant for self-assessment and as an aid for critical reflection on learning, whether this takes place in a formal, non-formal or informal educational setting. Learners can use the descriptors to consider how they have behaved in specific relevant situations in the past and what they could do in the future. With regard to the values, learners can also reflect on what would happen to society if citizens were to discount or reject the contents of the respective descriptors.

In conclusion, the descriptors represent a valuable tool for both educators and learners. The risks of potential misuse can be avoided if the principles and suggestions included in the guidance chapters in Volume 3 of the current publication – in particular, the chapters on curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and the whole-school approach – are taken into account. Users of the Framework are recommended to consult these chapters before using the descriptors.

Conclusion

As noted earlier, the competence model that has been described in this volume provides a detailed description of the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to become effective engaged citizens and live peacefully together with others as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies. In addition, the descriptors provide a means of operationalising the competences for use by educationists for the purposes of curriculum planning, teaching and learning, and assessment.

It is hoped that the competence model and the descriptors will prove useful for educational decision making and planning and will assist in the harnessing of educational systems for the purpose of preparing learners for life as democratically and interculturally competent citizens.

It is also hoped that the Framework will enable education systems to empower learners as autonomous social agents who are capable of choosing and pursuing their own goals in life within the framework that is provided by democratic institutions and respect for human rights. Several competences in the model are especially pertinent to this goal.

For example, if learners develop an attitude of openness towards other cultures, beliefs, world views and practices, they will be willing to explore and investigate other perspectives and modes of life that lie beyond the traditional ones with which they have grown up, expanding the range of their experiences and their horizons. If they acquire autonomous learning skills, they will be able to learn independently about these new perspectives and modes of life and not be dependent solely upon information provided by others in their immediate environment. And if they acquire

analytical and critical thinking skills, they will be able to subject alternative perspectives and modes of life, and new information and ideas, to detailed scrutiny and will be able to make their own evaluative judgments about whether or not they are acceptable or desirable. In addition, if young people learn to value human dignity and human rights, cultural diversity and democracy, then these values will be used as the foundation for all of their choices and actions, and they will willingly pursue their lives in a manner that respects the dignity and human rights of other people and the principles of democracy.

In short, equipping learners with the competences specified by the Framework is an essential step which needs to be taken to empower them to choose and pursue their own goals within a context of respect for human rights and democratic processes. Equipping them with these competences through the educational system, alongside taking action to tackle structural disadvantages and inequalities, is crucial to ensure the future health of our culturally diverse democratic societies and the empowerment and flourishing of all young people who live within them.

Glossary of key terms

List of terms in alphabetical order

Attitude

Citizen

Citizenship

Civic-mindedness

Competence

Critical understanding

Culture

Democracy

Democratic culture

Descriptor

Disposition

Education for democratic citizenship (EDC)

Empathy

Ethnocentrism

Formal education

Human rights education (HRE)

Informal education

Intercultural competence

Intercultural dialogue

Knowledge

Learning outcome

Multiperspectivity

Non-formal education

Plurilingualism

Respect

Responsibility

Self-efficacy

Skill

Tolerance

Tolerance of ambiguity

Value

List of terms by category

Content-related terms	Technical terms
Citizen Citizenship Civic-mindedness Culture Democracy Democratic culture Education for democratic citizenship (EDC) Empathy Ethnocentrism Human rights education (HRE) Intercultural competence Intercultural dialogue Multiperspectivity Plurilingualism Respect Responsibility Self-efficacy Tolerance Tolerance of ambiguity	Attitude Competence Critical understanding Descriptor Disposition Formal education Informal education Knowledge Learning outcome Non-formal education Skill Value

Glossary

Attitude

An attitude is the overall mental orientation which an individual adopts towards someone or something (e.g. a person, a group, an institution, an issue, an event, a symbol). Attitudes usually consist of four components: a belief or opinion about the object of the attitude, an emotion or feeling towards the object, an evaluation (either positive or negative) of the object, and a tendency to behave in a particular way towards that object.

Attitudes vary in their strength, that is, in their stability, durability and impact on behaviour. A distinction may be drawn between explicit and implicit attitudes. Explicit attitudes can be consciously accessed and controlled and can be expressed verbally. Implicit attitudes cannot be consciously accessed or controlled and are instead expressed through more subtle or covert behaviours such as facial displays, body language and reaction times. Changes to explicit attitudes may not be reflected in corresponding changes to implicit attitudes. It is possible to hold two or more different attitudes towards the same object on different occasions, to hold ambivalent attitudes, and for explicit and implicit attitudes towards the same object to display contradictory feelings and evaluations.

Citizen

The term "citizen" has two different meanings:

► someone who has the objective legal status of citizenship of a state as defined by the laws and regulations of that state; this status is usually indexed by whether or not that person holds the passport of that state;

► any individual who is affected by the political or civic decision making of a polity or community and who is able to engage with political and civic processes through one means or another. Not all of those who are citizens in this broad sense of the term are legal citizens. For example, first generation migrants may not have legal citizenship of the country in which they reside; however, even if they are unable to vote in national elections, they are able to participate in political and civic processes through a variety of other means, including community organisations, trade union membership and union politics, and membership of pressure groups (e.g. anti-racist, human rights or environmental organisations).

In the context of the Framework, the term "citizens" is used to denote all individuals who are affected by democratic decision making and who can engage with democratic processes and institutions (rather than to denote only those who hold legal citizenship of a particular state).

Citizenship

The term "citizenship" has two different meanings:

► the legal status of a person with regard to a state (which is proved by a passport);

► the exercise of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a (participatory) democratic society.

A person can be a citizen of a state without involvement in public matters, while a person who is not a citizen (in the legal sense) can demonstrate active citizenship by engaging in various civic activities.

In the context of the Framework, the term "citizenship" refers to the active engagement of citizens with democratic processes and institutions, exercising their rights and responsibilities.

Civic-mindedness

Civic-mindedness is an attitude towards other people, beyond family and friends. It involves a sense of belonging to a group or community, an awareness of other people in the group, an awareness of the effects of one's actions on those people, solidarity with the other members of the group, and a sense of civic duty towards the group. Groups or communities in relation to which civic-mindedness may be expressed include people who live within a particular geographical area (such as a neighbourhood, a town or city, a country, a group of countries such as Europe or Africa, or indeed the world in the case of the "global community"), ethnic groups, faith groups, leisure groups, or any other kind of social or cultural group to which an individual feels a sense of belonging. Every individual belongs to multiple groups, and an attitude of civic-mindedness may be held towards any number of these.

Democratic societies need community-oriented people who take an interest in the welfare of the community. Mutual interest and trust, together with shared goals and a variety of resources, result in commitment and involvement. When people have a sense that they have something at stake beyond their immediate individual interest, they become involved in social life. There is a difference between civic-mindedness in a modern democratic society and the "civic duties" imposed by totalitarian regimes (civic-minded people think and act based on their own genuine conviction and decision) or the concern for common good in collectivist societies (civic-minded people do not give up their own interests for the interest of the community but act together with other individuals to address common and general interests).

Competence

Competence is the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context. This implies selecting, activating, co-ordinating and organising the relevant set of values, attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills and applying these through behaviour which is appropriate to those situations. In addition to this global and holistic use of the term "competence", the term "competences" (in the plural) is used in the Framework to refer to the specific individual resources (namely, the specific values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding) that are mobilised and deployed in the production of competent behaviour.

Critical understanding

Critical understanding involves the comprehension and appreciation of meanings, and it entails a certain way of relating to knowledge. It requires reflection on knowledge, critical analysis of its content, of its source, comparing various perspectives on the same topic, connecting newly acquired knowledge with knowledge acquired previously from various sources, situating knowledge in a specific sociocultural context, relativising its meaning, and evaluating different ideas and positions based on a variety of arguments. Thus, critical understanding involves active reflection on and critical evaluation of that which is being understood and interpreted (as opposed to automatic, habitual and unreflective interpretation). Critical understanding is demonstrated by the ability not just to reproduce knowledge but to apply it in new contexts and in creative ways.

Culture

Culture is a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group that encompasses not only art and literature but also lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. A distinction may be drawn between material (physical artefacts such as food, clothing, housing, goods, tools, artistic products, etc.), social (language, religion, laws, rules, family structure, labour patterns, folklore, cultural icons, etc.) and subjective (shared knowledge, beliefs, memories, identities, attitudes, values and practices) aspects of culture. This set of cultural resources is distributed across the entire social group with each individual member appropriating and using only a subset of the cultural resources

potentially available to them. This explains the variability within each cultural group and may result in contested or blurred group boundaries.

Under this view, any social group can have a culture and all cultures are dynamic and constantly change over time as a result of internal and external factors. All people belong to multiple groups and their cultures, and participate in different constellations of cultures. Cultural affiliations are also fluid and dynamic, having a strong subjective dimension.

Democracy

Democracy is government by or on behalf of the people where a main feature of government is to be responsive to the views of the majority. In a democracy, the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them (direct democracy) or by their elected agents under a free electoral system (representative democracy).

The pillars of democracy are:

▶ sovereignty of the people;
▶ government based upon consent of the governed;
▶ majority rule;
▶ minority rights;
▶ guarantee of basic human rights;
▶ free and fair elections;
▶ equality before the law;
▶ due process of law;
▶ constitutional limits on government;
▶ social, economic and political pluralism, including recognition of independent civil society organisations;
▶ values of co-operation, fair competition and compromise.

Current democratic standards go beyond classical representative democracy, where the key role of citizens is to delegate by vote to their representatives the responsibility for elaborating and implementing public policies. Current standards instead take the form of participatory democracy, where public institutions comply with the principles of good governance and citizens have the legitimacy to engage in all phases of the public policy cycle.

Democratic culture

Democracy is more than the sum of its institutions. A healthy democracy depends in large part on the development of a democratic civic culture.

The term "democratic culture" emphasises the fact that, while democracy cannot exist without democratic institutions and laws, such institutions and laws cannot work in practice unless they are grounded in a culture of democracy, that is, in democratic values, attitudes and practices shared by citizens and institutions. Among other things, these include a commitment to the rule of law and human rights, a commitment to the public sphere, a conviction that conflicts must be resolved peacefully,

acknowledgement of and respect for diversity, a willingness to express one's own opinions, a willingness to listen to the opinions of others, a commitment to decisions being made by majorities, a commitment to the protection of minorities and their rights, and a willingness to engage in dialogue across cultural divides. It also includes concern for the sustainable well-being of fellow human beings, as well as for the environment in which we live.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a statement describing an observable and assessable behaviour of a learner which demonstrates the attainment or achievement of a certain level of proficiency in relation to a specific competence. Descriptors are positively formulated, and independent of one another.

Disposition

A disposition is an enduring organisation of internal psychological factors that is expressed as a stable and consistent tendency to exhibit particular patterns of thinking, feeling or behaving across a broad range of circumstances in the absence of external coercion or extrinsic rewards. Dispositions need to be distinguished from capabilities. For example, people may be able to generate arguments that are opposed to their own position on an issue when they are asked to do so (they have the capability) but they generally tend not to do so (they do not have the disposition). Likewise, people might have the skills, knowledge and understanding that are required to engage in a particular kind of behaviour, but lack the disposition to use them. A disposition is therefore a cluster of preferences and intentions plus a set of capabilities that allow this cluster to be realised in a particular way. Dispositions are excluded from the Framework, because they are implicit in the definition of competence which underpins the entire Framework – that is, competence as the mobilisation and deployment of competences through behaviour. If competences are not mobilised and deployed (if there is no disposition to use them in behaviour), then an individual cannot be deemed to be competent. In other words, having the disposition to use one's competences in behaviour is intrinsic to the very notion of competence – there is no competence without this disposition.

Education for democratic citizenship (EDC)

Education for democratic citizenship is education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

As democratic citizenship is not limited to the citizen's legal status and to the voting right this status confers, education for democratic citizenship includes all aspects of life in a democratic society and is therefore related to a vast range of topics such as sustainable development, participation of people with disabilities in society, gender mainstreaming, prevention of terrorism and many others.

Empathy

Empathy is the set of skills required to understand and relate to other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, and to see the world from other people's perspectives. Empathy involves the ability to step outside one's own psychological frame of reference (to decentre from one's own perspective) and the ability to imaginatively apprehend and understand the psychological frame of reference and perspective of another person. This skill is fundamental to imagining the cultural affiliations, world views, beliefs, interests, emotions, wishes and needs of other people.

In the CDC model, empathy is therefore seen as a skill, although in the everyday or in scientific discourse there are also other meanings (for example, regarding emotional contagion, where a person "catches" and shares another person's emotions). Three different forms of empathy are distinguished:

► cognitive perspective-taking – the ability to apprehend and understand the perceptions, thoughts and beliefs of other people;

► affective perspective-taking – the ability to apprehend and understand the emotions, feelings and needs of other people;

► sympathy, sometimes called "compassionate empathy" or "empathic concern" – the ability to experience feelings of compassion and concern for other people based on the apprehension of their cognitive or affective state or condition, or their material situation or circumstances.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the view of things in which one's own primary culture is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. Ethnocentrism is also understood as a prejudice expressed by thinking one's own group's ways are superior to others. Three forms of ethnocentrism may be distinguished:

► denial: the inability or refusal to cognitively understand cultural difference, which leads to ignorant or naive observations about other cultures.

► defence: recognition of cultural difference coupled to a negative evaluation of variations from one's own culture, with the greater the difference, the more negative the evaluation, and characterised by dualistic "us versus them" thinking.

► minimisation of difference: recognition and acceptance of superficial cultural differences while holding that all human beings are essentially the same, placing an emphasis on the similarity of people and commonality of basic values but defining the basis of that commonality in ethnocentric terms (everyone is essentially like "us").

Formal education

Formal education is the structured education and training system that runs from pre-primary and primary through secondary school and on to university. It takes place, as a rule, at general or vocational educational institutions and leads to certification.

Human rights education (HRE)

Human rights education is education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights education involves three dimensions:

► learning about human rights, knowledge about human rights, what they are, and how they are safeguarded or protected;

► learning through human rights, recognising that the context and the way human rights learning is organised and imparted has to be consistent with human rights values (e.g. participation, freedom of thought and expression) and that in human rights education the process of learning is as important as the content of the learning;

► learning for human rights, by developing skills, attitudes and values for the learners to apply human rights values in their lives and to take action, alone or with others, for promoting and defending human rights.

Informal education

Informal education is the lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, peer group, neighbours, encounters, library, mass media, online media, work, play, etc.).

Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant psychological resources in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by intercultural situations. More specifically, it involves a combination of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding applied through action which enables one to:

► understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself;

► respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people;

► establish positive and constructive relationships with such people.

"Respect" means that one has positive regard for, appreciates and values the other; "appropriate" means that all participants in the situation are equally satisfied that the interaction occurs within expected cultural norms; and "effective" means that all involved are able to achieve their objectives in the interaction at least in part.

Intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue is an open exchange of views, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, between individuals or groups who perceive themselves as

having different cultural affiliations from each other. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. Intercultural dialogue fosters constructive engagement across perceived cultural divides, reduces intolerance, prejudice and stereotyping, and contributes to political, social, cultural and economic integration and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies. It fosters equality, human dignity and a sense of common purpose. It aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse world views and practices, to increase co-operation and participation (or the freedom to make choices), to allow personal growth and transformation, and to promote respect for the other.

Intercultural dialogue can be a difficult process. This is particularly the case when the participants perceive each other as representatives of cultures that have an adversarial relationship with one another (e.g. as a consequence of past or present armed conflict) or when a participant believes that their own cultural group has experienced significant harm (e.g. blatant discrimination, material exploitation or genocide) at the hands of another group to which they perceive their interlocutor as belonging. Under such circumstances, intercultural dialogue can be extremely difficult, requiring a high level of intercultural competence and very considerable emotional and social sensitivity, commitment, perseverance and courage.

Knowledge

Knowledge is the body of structured and interconnected information which an individual possesses and is closely connected to the notion of understanding. In education, knowledge is seen as an essential element of curriculum, often referred to as curriculum content, and encompasses the essential elements which humanity accumulated in time and which school is supposed to pass on to new generations in order to advance in the understanding of the world and in the progress of human society.

Learning outcome

A learning outcome is a statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning.

Multiperspectivity

Multiperspectivity is the analysis and presentation of situations, events, practices, documents, media representations, societies and cultures, taking into account multiple points of view in addition to one's own. Multiperspectivity presupposes:

► recognising that everyone, including the self, holds partial and biased perspectives which are determined by cultural, educational and family background, personal history, personality, and cognitive and affective processes;

► acknowledging that other people's perspectives may be just as valid as our own when viewed from their cultural and personal positions;

► the willingness and the ability to adopt the psychological point of view of other people in an attempt to see the world as they see it (the skill of "perspective-taking", which is an aspect of empathy).

Non-formal education

Non-formal education is any planned programme of education designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational setting.

Plurilingualism

Plurilingualism is the capacity of an individual to use several languages receptively and/or productively, whatever level of competence that they have in each of them.

Respect

Respect is an attitude towards someone or something (e.g. a person, a belief, a symbol, a principle, a practice) where the object of that attitude is judged to have some kind of importance, worth or value which warrants positive regard and esteem. Depending on the nature of the object that is respected, the respect may take on very different forms (cf. respect for a school rule versus respect for an elder's wisdom versus respect for nature). One type of respect that is especially important in the context of democratic culture is the respect that is accorded to other people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations or different beliefs, opinions or practices from oneself. Such respect does not require agreement with, adoption of or conversion to that which is respected – it is instead an attitude that involves the positive appreciation of the other and of their differences from the self, while nevertheless recognising and acknowledging the differences which exist. An attitude of respect is required to facilitate both democratic interaction and intercultural dialogue with others. However, limits do need to be placed on respect – for example, respect should not be accorded to beliefs, opinions, lifestyles or practices which undermine or violate the dignity and human rights of others.

Respect therefore involves:

► positive regard and esteem for someone or something based on the judgment that they have intrinsic importance, worth or value;

► positive regard and esteem for other people as equal human beings irrespective of their cultural affiliations, beliefs, opinions, lifestyles or practices;

► positive regard and esteem for the beliefs, opinions, lifestyles and practices adopted by other people, as long as these do not undermine the dignity and human rights of others.

Responsibility

Responsibility is an attitude towards one's own actions. It involves being reflective about one's actions, forming intentions about how to act in a morally appropriate way, conscientiously performing those actions, and holding oneself accountable for the outcomes of those actions.

Responsibility arises when a person has a moral obligation to act in a particular way and deserves praise or blame for either performing that act or failing to act in that way. Responsibility can require courage insofar as taking a principled stance may entail acting on one's own, taking action against the norms of a community, or challenging a collective decision that is judged to be wrong. Thus, there can sometimes

be a tension between civic-mindedness (construed as solidarity with and loyalty towards other people) and moral responsibility. An attitude of responsibility for one's own actions therefore involves making decisions about the actions to take (which in some cases might entail not taking action), given the circumstances which apply.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an attitude towards the self. It involves a positive belief in one's own ability to undertake the actions which are required to achieve particular goals, and confidence that one can understand issues, select appropriate methods for accomplishing tasks, navigate obstacles and new challenges successfully, influence what happens, and make a difference in the world.

Thus, self-efficacy is associated with feelings of self-confidence in one's own abilities. Low self-efficacy can discourage democratic and intercultural behaviour even when there is a high level of ability, while unrealistically high self-efficacy can lead to frustration and disappointment. An optimal attitude is relatively high self-efficacy coupled to a realistically estimated high level of ability, which encourages individuals to tackle new challenges and enables them to take action on issues of concern. Self-efficacy involves also a feeling of confidence about democratic engagement and undertaking the actions judged to be necessary to achieve democratic goals (including challenging and holding to account those in positions of power and authority when their decisions or actions are judged to be unfair or unjust) and a feeling of confidence about engaging in intercultural dialogue with those who are perceived to have cultural affiliations that differ from one's own.

Skill

In the context of the Framework, a skill is the capacity for carrying out a complex, well-organised pattern of either thinking or behaviour in an adaptive manner in order to achieve a particular end or goal.

Tolerance

Tolerance may be construed either as a social phenomenon or as an attitude of individuals. If the focus is on tolerance as an attitude of an individual, there are three possible interpretations of tolerance:

► as the antonym of intolerance, implying acceptance and openness, without imposing your own views or practices on others;

► as a patronising attitude, connected to its Latin etymology: tolerance as "putting up with" something we dislike or even hate. This is often associated with the verb "to tolerate", which implies an unbalanced relationship, from someone who tolerates to another who is tolerated;

► as a useful insight in dealing with the key issue of reconciling at an individual level the belief in the equal worth and dignity of all human beings coupled to a situation of strong disagreement about values, beliefs or practices. From this perspective, tolerance is defined as a fair and objective attitude towards those whose opinions and practices differ from one's own based on the commitment to respect human dignity.

This third view implies that there are three jointly necessary conditions to have tolerance:

► precondition: a situation of difference or conflict with another person;
► procedure: a commitment to avoiding any kind of violence, searching for non-violent ways to settle the disagreement or to endure/bear the conflict;
► motivation: the decision to search for a non-violent solution or to put up with the disagreement, which relies on valuing the rights of the other people and human dignity.

One should not be tolerant in certain situations – there are limits. For example, we should not tolerate racism. The third approach above, grounded on respect for the dignity of all human beings and for their fundamental equality of human rights, is incorporated into the definition given to respect in the Framework.

Tolerance of ambiguity

Tolerance of ambiguity is an attitude towards situations which are uncertain and subject to multiple conflicting interpretations. People with high tolerance of ambiguity evaluate these kinds of objects, events and situations in a positive manner and deal with them constructively, while people with low tolerance for ambiguity adopt a rigid single perspective on unclear situations and are inflexible in their thinking about the world.

Value

A value is a belief about a desirable goal that motivates action and serves as a guiding principle in life across many situations. Values have a normative prescriptive quality about what should be done or thought. Values offer standards or criteria for: making evaluations; justifying opinions, attitudes and conduct; planning behaviour and deciding between alternatives; attempting to influence others; and presenting the self to others. Values are linked to emotions in that, when they are activated, they are infused with feeling. They also provide structures around which more specific attitudes are organised. They influence attitudes, and assessing people's values can help to predict their attitudes and their behaviour. People organise their values into hierarchies in terms of their relative importance, and the relative importance of values often changes across the lifespan. At the individual psychological level, values are internalised social representations or moral beliefs that people appeal to as the ultimate rationale for their actions. However, values are not simply individual traits but social agreements about what is right, good, or to be cherished. They are codes or general principles guiding action, not the actions themselves nor specific checklists of what to do and when to do it. Values underlie the sanctions for some behavioural choices and the rewards for others. A value system presents what is expected and hoped for, what is required and what is forbidden.

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Model of Competences for Democratic Culture

Values

– Valuing human dignity and human rights
– Valuing cultural diversity
– Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Attitudes

– Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices
– Respect
– Civic-mindedness
– Responsibility
– Self-efficacy
– Tolerance of ambiguity

Competence

Skills

– Autonomous learning skills
– Analytical and critical thinking skills
– Skills of listening and observing
– Empathy
– Flexibility and adaptability
– Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
– Co-operation skills
– Conflict-resolution skills

Knowledge and critical understanding

– Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
– Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
– Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

The Council of Europe promotes and protects human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These principles have been cornerstones of European societies and political systems for decades, yet they need to be maintained and fostered, not least in times of economic and political crisis.

Most people would agree that democracy means a form of governance by or on behalf of the people and that it cannot operate without institutions that ensure regular, free and fair elections, majority rule and government accountability. However, these institutions cannot function unless citizens themselves are active and committed to democratic values and attitudes. Education has a central role to play here and this Reference Framework supports education systems in the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture and provides a coherent focus to the wide range of approaches used.

This **first volume** contains the model of competences for democratic culture that was unanimously approved by European ministers of education at their standing conference in Brussels in April 2016. It also gives an account of the background to the Framework, offers some important guidance concerning its use, introduces the role of the descriptors that are contained in volume two, and concludes with a glossary of key terms. Further guidance on implementation of the Reference Framework is offered in volume three.

ENG

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