THREE STEPS FOR MY INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Source
This activity was developed by Oana Nestian Sandu.

Themes
- All themes

Competences addressed
All

Complexity: Level 4

Group size: any

Time: 100 minutes (10 minutes introduction, 40 minutes for the group work, 20 minutes for presentations and 30 minutes for the debriefing)

Objectives
- To support participants in making a self-assessment of their competences related to intercultural learning
- To raise awareness of the lifelong learning aspect of intercultural learning
- To encourage participants to obtain ideas on how to further develop their intercultural competences.

Materials
Papers and pens for all participants, copies of the handout.

Preparation
This activity can be preceded by “The stages of intercultural sensitivity”, an activity that helps participants reflect upon the continuum of intercultural sensitivity and how one can move from one stage to the other.
Photocopy the handout for all participants.

Instructions
1. Start by asking participants how they feel about their competences to deal with intercultural relations. Ask them to think of concrete examples, such as when they met someone from a different country or with a different cultural background, when they witnessed discrimination towards people or when they felt misunderstood in relation to their own cultural belonging. Inform them that this activity will allow them to reflect upon their intercultural competences and get some ideas of how to further develop them.

2. Give each participant a copy of the handout with the competence sheet and explanation. Divide participants into pairs, and ask them to go through the competence sheet together with their peer. For each of the 13 competences, ask participants to discuss with their peer a strength they have and something they want to improve. They may wish to skip some competences, if they do not have ideas on them or they find them too complex. These can be discussed later in the debriefing.

3. At the end of the peer-group discussion, ask each participant to identify up to three steps for what they would like to do to have improved their competences a year from now. Ask them to be realistic when identifying these steps.

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28. The descriptors are based on the section “Competences developed through intercultural learning” in Chapter 3 of this T-Kit, on the “Guidelines for intercultural dialogue” (Council of Europe/European Union 2014) and on the model of Competences for Democratic Culture (www.coe.int/competences).
4. Give participants 40 minutes for working together on their competences and for identifying their main three steps for the future.

5. Bring the pairs back to form the main group again, and have a round of sharing the individual three steps. If participants have similar ideas about what they could do – for example, learn more about human rights or organise an intercultural neighbourhood event – these could also become ideas for the whole group to act upon.

6. A debriefing discussion follows.

Debriefing and evaluation

Move to the debriefing and use the following questions.

» Was it helpful to analyse your competences? Did anything surprise you?

» What were the most challenging competence components?

» What do you think about what people wanted to learn more about?

» How could you make sure that you follow the three steps of your future plan? What would help?

Tips for facilitators

Each competence component is described in the section “Competences developed through intercultural learning” in Chapter 3.

Self-assessment might be difficult for some participants who have never done it before. It is important to be aware of the level of the group in order to make sure that this activity is not too complex for them. We recommend this activity for training sessions or events that focus specifically on intercultural learning.

For the action plan you can tell participants to think about something they can do every day, something they can do once a week/month and something they can do once a year.

Encourage participants to be honest with themselves. The aim of the activity is not to identify who is the most competent or the least competent, but rather to think more in-depth about the competences related to intercultural learning and to set up goals and specific steps for their further development.

Variations

You may choose to ask participants to do their self-assessment at two points, for example once at the beginning of a training session and again at the end, to see what has changed. If you do this, keep in mind that as people become more competent they tend to evaluate themselves lower (Dunning-Kruger effect). If participants do this, encourage them to discuss how their understanding of any specific competence component has changed.

You could also keep the self-assessments and agree to send them to participants as a “letter to themselves” a few weeks or months later, depending on the duration of the commitments made. This creates a reconnection effect and enables participants to stand back and take a look, and to reconnect to what they committed to.

Suggestions for follow-up

This activity can be followed by “My intercultural diary”. In this flow, participants first make an assessment of their competences and continue to reflect upon their development in the diary.
### Handout: competence sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My competences</th>
<th>What I am good at?</th>
<th>What I want to improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Respect for oneself and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A sense of social justice and social responsibility</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. Openness and curiosity towards diversity</td>
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<td>4. Tolerance of ambiguity</td>
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<td>5. Knowledge of culture, politics and history</td>
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<td>6. Knowledge of human rights</td>
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<td>7. Knowledge of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination</td>
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<td>8. Knowledge of cultural differences in communication</td>
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<td>9. Empathy</td>
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<td>10. Solidarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Critical thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Active listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Dealing constructively with conflicts</td>
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### Competence explanation

1. **Respect for oneself and others**
   - You believe in freedom and equality among human beings.
   - You try to understand yourself and others, people’s different identities and the complex realities in which people live.
   - You understand that there is more than one possible and acceptable set of values, attitudes and beliefs.
   - You behave respectfully towards people regardless of their cultural background, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, ability, social status or political opinions.

2. **A sense of social justice and social responsibility**
   - You are aware of how your behaviour affects others.
   - You want to learn and to contribute to make society better.
   - You react if someone’s human rights are violated.
   - You are willing to do something to defend freedom, equality and respect for diversity.

3. **Openness and curiosity towards diversity**
   - You have an open mind in complex situations and refrain from making assumptions and value judgments.
– You look for opportunities to meet people with different values, customs and behaviours and to learn about their cultures.
– You are motivated to discover other beliefs and world views and to question your own perceptions, ideas and lifestyles.
– You are interested in experiencing other cultures.

4. Tolerance of ambiguity
– You want to first understand a situation more than react with a judgment immediately.
– You appreciate it when people have different views on things, even when you may not agree with them.
– In an ambiguous situation, you remain positive and constructive.
– You communicate constructively with people who have different opinions from you.

5. Knowledge of culture, politics and history
– You are aware of beliefs, values and practices specific to various cultures and you understand there is also internal diversity within a culture.
– You are aware of power structures, discriminatory practices and institutional barriers between and within cultural groups.
– You look for information from diverse sources and reject nationalistic narratives.
– You have knowledge about migration, international relations, conflicts and history (especially the history of oppression and exclusion of certain groups).

6. Knowledge of human rights
– You understand the universal, inalienable and indivisible nature of human rights.
– You understand the root causes of human rights violations, including the role of stereotypes and prejudice in human rights abuses.
– You can explain why everybody has a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.
– You are aware of human rights violations in your context and in other parts of the world.

7. Knowledge of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination
– You understand how stereotypes and prejudices are formed, how they function and how they can be broken.
– You are aware of, and reflect on, your own prejudices and stereotypes.
– You are aware of how discrimination and exclusion function, also when it comes to resource allocation, barriers to participation and exclusion based on ethnocentric views.

8. Knowledge of cultural differences in communication
– You are aware that different people, with different cultural affiliations, may communicate in different ways.
– You understand the role of language in reflecting social relations in a society and in shaping how people see the world.
– You are ready to explain what seems to be evident to you.

9. Empathy
– You put yourself in someone else's shoes, to understand their perspective.
– You try to understand the thoughts and feelings of other people, their needs and expectations.
– You take other people's feelings into account when making decisions.

10. Solidarity
– You can take action to challenge a certain situation that goes against the principle of equality of rights.
– You care about other people's well-being and rights, especially for disadvantaged groups.
– You contribute to making society more democratic and intercultural.

11. Critical thinking
– You can formulate questions, analyse perspectives and practices using specific criteria.
– You use evidence to support your opinions and can distinguish opinions from facts.
– You check the sources of information you use for their credibility, their interests or their attempts to manipulate people or to promote fake news.
– You are able to recognise your own preconceptions.
12. Active listening
   – In a dialogue, you can concentrate fully not only on what is being said but also on non-verbal aspects such as body language, tone, facial expressions, etc., and on what people imply but do not say.
   – In a dialogue, you ask careful questions, do not interrupt and do not assume to already know what is being said.

13. Dealing constructively with conflicts
   – You understand how conflicts function, especially the relation between needs and claims.
   – You look for constructive solutions to conflicts, which benefit all parties.
   – You carefully avoid the “us and them” dichotomy.
   – You understand that individual citizens are not to blame for the actions of their government.