

Guide for Vocational Education and Training (VET) practitioners to developing intercultural competencies



Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1. ILCC Project	3
1.2. Why 'Intercultural learning'?	4
1.3. Who is this Guide aimed at?	6
2. Background to the Handbook	7
2.1. Gap and Need analysis	7
2.2. The intercultural competencies framework	10
3 Intercultural competencies	10
3.1 What is an intercultural competence?	10
3.2. How competencies are developed	11
3.3. How is the development of intercultural competencies addressed in this guide?	12
4. Learning and developing intercultural competencies	14
4.1. Self-awareness	14
4.2 Challenging stereotypes	18
4.3 Communication	22
4.4 Flexibility	27
4.5 Networking	31
4. 6. Intercultural Team Management	35
4.7 Change Management	40
4.8 Service Orientation	45
Useful resources, organisations and links	49
Appendix 1: Template for Action Plan	53

1. Introduction

This guide is aimed at practitioners working in Vocational Education and Training (VET) settings across Europe. It is designed to support practitioners to develop their 'intercultural competencies'. Intercultural competencies are collections of attitudes, skills and concepts that are causally linked with behaviours that enable people to work and interact effectively with people from different countries and diverse cultures (see 4.1). We use the phrase 'people from different countries and diverse cultures' to describe a wide range of people including migrants, people from minority ethnic groups, and people from minority linguistic, cultural and religious groups. At some points the guide refers specifically to migrants, as their needs may be distinct from people from other groups.

This guide begins with an introduction to the project from which this guide was developed. It goes on to describe intercultural competencies and to discuss the process of developing them. It then goes on to set out eight broad intercultural competencies, to describe these in detail, and to guide the reader through the process of developing their skills, knowledge and behaviour in relation to the competencies.

1.1. ILCC Project

The draft guide is the product of a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation funded project entitled 'Intercultural Learning - Cultural Competencies' (ILCC) involving seven organisations from five EU countries:

1. AEDIPE (National Association of HR and Development Managers), Spain (leading partner) (www.aedipe.es).
2. beramí (an NGO specialising in the integration of migrant workers with an special focus on women), Germany (www.berami.de)
3. DVV (International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association), Germany (www.dvv-international.org)
4. The Institute of Business Education of the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, Slovenia (www.cpu.si)
5. IMH (Machine Tools Institute; Vet Centre), Basque Country, Spain (www.imh.es)
6. Europartners 2000 (specialising in training and education), Bulgaria (www.europartners2000.org)
7. NIACE (National Institute of Adults Continuing Education), England and Wales (www.niace.org.uk)

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- organisations and practitioners involved in facilitating access to and participation in VET through the provision of information, advice and guidance/counselling or teaching/training
- organisations and practitioners involved in recruitment into employment.

¹ For further information, please follow the link: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc82_en.htm

The intended direct beneficiaries of this project are VET practitioners including teachers, tutors, trainers, career information, advice and guidance practitioners, recruiters and managers. The indirect beneficiaries of this project are adult learners and workers, in particular those from different countries and diverse cultures.

The ILCC project is divided into four main phases:

1) The undertaking of a gaps and needs analysis (see 2.1). Partners were required to focus on their own country and on a specific industrial sector and to:

- explore the experiences of groups from different countries and diverse cultures within the broader migration context;
- illustrate the typical migrant journey to the labour market;
- identify and analyse the key VET practitioners roles and their skills requirements;
- identify the current situation regarding intercultural learning and existing best practice;
- identify existing models for intercultural learning that can be adapted for the VET sector. The partners made much use of CILT's National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working (UK) .

2) The development of a draft guide for VET practitioners to support them to develop intercultural competencies, using a range of existing resources as well as drawing on partners' experience and knowledge.

3) The testing of the draft guide with different VET practitioners working in different contexts, and with experts on intercultural competencies, in all partner countries before finalising the guide.

4) The dissemination of the final guide.

1.2. Why 'Intercultural learning'?

Living and working in a globalised world is complex. People, societies, companies and organisations face an increasing number of challenges that come from a wide range of causes and are resulting in, or creating a need for, 'change': changes in working models, changes in values, changes in technology, and changes in society. The increasingly diverse population of Europe has in itself been a result of changes in global communication and increased mobility. As part of a pattern of global migration, people have migrated to Europe (as well as away from Europe and within European countries) for a wide range of often complex and overlapping reasons, and frequently under difficult circumstances. The resulting increased diversity has necessitated a change in the way that things are done, to engage with and respond appropriately to the needs and aspirations of people from different countries and diverse cultures and to accommodate broader demographic change.

Intercultural competencies are vital for effective lifelong learning. In addition, without intercultural competencies Europe's ability to innovate is likely to be hampered. The report "Creating an Innovative Europe" (the Aho report) recommends urgent action to better exploit and improve the EU's innovation potential in order to respond to the challenges of globalisation:

'Underpinning social and cultural challenges, including creating jobs, absorbing immigrants, improving education (particularly to create interest and excitement in science and technology), exploiting cultural diversity and addressing inequalities within the EU exacerbated by enlargement.' (p. 13, 2006)

² This group was prioritised in the General Call 2008-2010 of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme.

³ CILT The National Centre for Languages (2008) National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working London: CILT

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Responses to increasing diversity have ranged from positive to negative. By some, diversity has been embraced as an opportunity for creativity and innovation; but it has also been considered a threat. As a result of fear of that which is different, or unknown, some responses have focused on differences between people rather than similarities, and association of difference with 'bad' or 'risk', and similarities with 'good' or 'safe'.

Diversity management has become a topic for work in schools, colleges, companies and organisations. Effective diversity management includes the need for 'intercultural competencies'. Practitioners - including VET practitioners - need well developed intercultural competencies in order to work and interact effectively with people from different countries or diverse cultures.

Being interculturally competent is not only a question of political correctness, good manners or ethical requirements. Intercultural competencies are required to meet the need for social, economic and cultural

ral integration and to satisfy legal and professional requirements that have a direct impact on professional practice, the success of organisations and the overall effectiveness of the VET practitioner's work. In many cases the development of intercultural competencies has not been part of the core training for VET practitioners.

Furthermore, intercultural effectiveness is required by several EU countries' regulations, especially those regulations regarding equal opportunities, social exclusion, anti-discriminatory practice and the integration of migrant workers or people from different countries or diverse cultures, including ethnic minorities. If you are a VET practitioner, you should have an in depth understanding of the implications of these European or national regulations for your daily job.

⁴ Aho Group Report "Creating an Innovative Europe" (2006) http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/action/2006_ahogroup_en.htm

⁵ For example see Davis, N. and Cho, M. O. (2005) Intercultural competence for future leaders of educational technology and its evaluation. *Interactive Educational Multimedia*, Number 10 (April 2005), pp.1-22 <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/iem/article/viewFile/204569/273103>

Improved Intercultural effectiveness benefits the VET sector, as it can result in:

- Provision of customised VET training and advice / guidance services to meet individual needs and organisational needs
- A better understanding of intercultural requirements for professional practice
- Enhanced relationships between VET practitioners and clients
- Improvements to staff morale and productivity
- Improved staff management systems
- The identification of and action against discriminatory practices or outcomes for any groups of employees or clients
- Avoidance of claims of unlawful discrimination
- Increased success of integration processes through a better understanding of clients' needs and expectations
- The identification and recruitment of talent in an effective and open way
- More efficient induction processes for new workers from different countries or diverse cultures into the company or organisation
- The development of a creative and innovative working environment.

This guide is intended to be used as a learning resource to support VET practitioners' professional development. It will help you:

- to explore the concept of culture
- to become familiar with some of the models for developing intercultural competencies
- to develop an understanding of intercultural competencies and their relevance for your role
- to develop your intercultural competencies by identifying your own current strengths and weaknesses in those competencies and areas for improvement
- to access information about other resources that can support intercultural working.

As a result you will become more effective in your interactions with people from different countries or diverse cultures, or people that have a different social or cultural background to you. This guide can be used in a variety of ways:

1. It can be used by an individual to support their own learning
2. It can be used by a coach, to conduct individual or group coaching sessions.
3. It can be used by a trainer to conduct training sessions.

⁶ You can find European Legislation at the European Union Website: <http://europa.eu>. For national or regional regulations, please consult national, regional and local authorities and public bodies for education, training and employment.

⁷ CILT The National Centre for Languages (2008) National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working London: CILT

1.3. Who is this Guide aimed at?

This guide may be used by a variety of practitioners, but it was primarily designed to inform and support VET practitioners. VET practitioners are a group of professionals that play a key role in vocational education, training and integration processes.

In the first phase of the project, the project partners explored the typical 'journeys' that people from different countries or diverse cultures may undertake in the process of accessing labour market opportunities and achieving vocational integration. This phase enabled partners to identify the key practitioners that support this process, and these are the roles on which this guide focuses:

1. Teacher (including teachers, trainers and tutors in VET centres and general education and training centres)
2. Advisor (including career counsellors and information, advice and guidance practitioners in VET centres)
3. Recruiter (including people supporting job seeking and recruitment into work, based in VET centres, employment agencies or companies, including managers; that is, the people who make decisions regarding who is hired for what job).

The role descriptions for people in these roles vary according to country, the organisational context, the individual and organisational level of responsibility and other factors. However, the partners in the project could develop typical role descriptions – including the most common features throughout the different countries. These can be found in appendix 2.

2. Background to the Handbook

2.1. Gap and Need analysis

The partners analysed the experiences of people from different countries or diverse cultures entering in the VET systems in the different countries involved in the project. The following conclusions were drawn:

1. The background situations of people from different countries and diverse cultures within the 5 partner countries vary considerably. For example, migrants' situations are very different from the situations of people from settled ethnic minority communities. People from different countries and diverse cultures are subject to different legal restrictions in accessing learning and employment.
2. The qualification levels of migrant people in the countries analysed varies from very low qualification levels to high qualification levels, but there are some common findings:
 - a. Despite qualification level, migrant workers usually accept jobs below their qualification levels.
 - b. Migrant workers usually get low paid jobs with poorer working conditions in comparison with other workers.
 - c. The unemployment rate is often higher in the migrant population than in the local population.
3. The barriers that people from different countries and diverse cultures may face when entering the labour market are very complex and diverse, but there are two main types:
 - a. Structural barriers, regarding the labour and training market organisation, and restrictive European and national legislation. One of the main problems is the formal and practical recognition of qualifications, skills and experience. This is not a new challenge, but one that still needs addressing.
 - b. Subjective barriers, regarding the prejudices and stereotypes of people that interact with people from different countries and diverse cultures during their training and integration into the labour markets.
4. When companies or organisations put specific and positive policies into place to combat stereotyping or prejudices, immediate results are obtained in terms of equal opportunities and genuine integration.
5. If one of the key barriers to integration is associated with the attitudes of people who interact with people from different countries and diverse cultures, and their resulting skills, knowledge and behaviour, then it is important to identify these key practitioners, in order to address this. The gap and needs analysis resulted in the identification of three main practitioner roles (see 1.4).
6. The VET practitioners identified usually do not receive any specific training that allows them to fight more effectively against discrimination, for example, training in developing intercultural competencies. As a result of this analysis, ILCC project partners designed a framework of intercultural competencies for these practitioners, and applied it to the three main roles identified.

One of the most informative tasks carried out by the partners was to outline the typical 'journey' that a migrant person may follow when attempting to enter the labour market in the different countries involved in the project. There are, of course, differences across countries according to national regulations and the structure of the VET systems. However, analysing the journeys allowed us to reach a better understanding of the situation of workers from different countries or diverse cultures during a typical integration process. As an example, on the next page you will find the case of Helen, a fictitious name for a refugee, developed by NIACE.

Helen is from Sierra Leone. She arrived in the UK in 1999 with her 3 year old daughter, the youngest of her six children. Like many refugees, Helen arrived in London where she knew few people from her country. After making her asylum claim Helen was dispersed to Derby. Helen spoke English as an additional language and as a trained nurse wanted to continue with her nursing career as soon as possible.

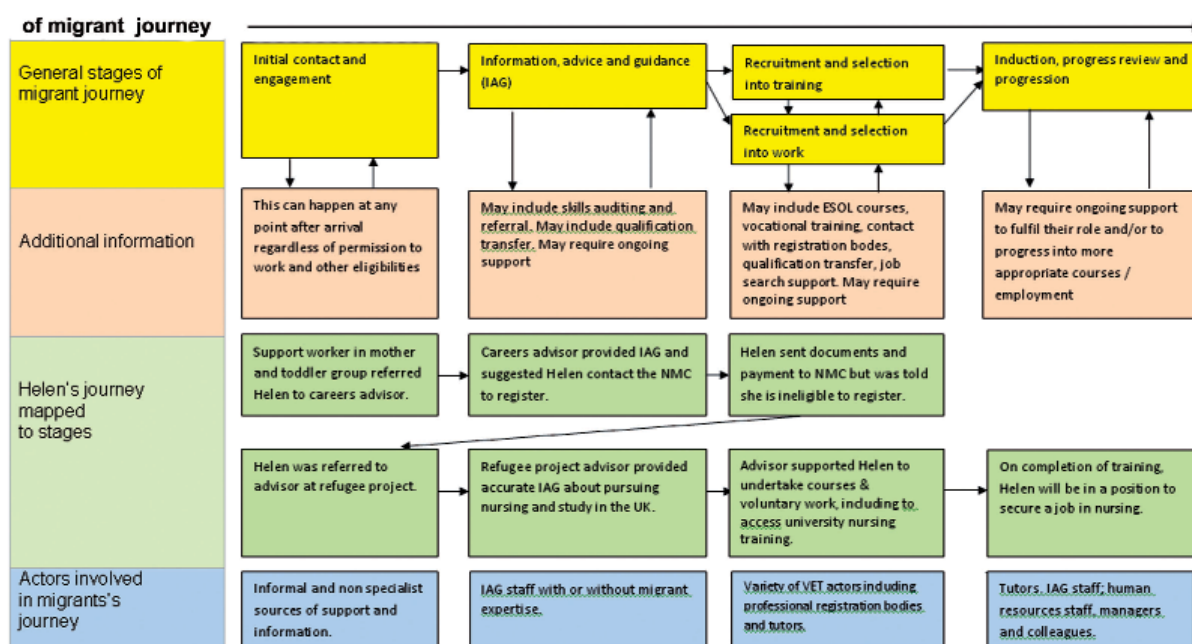
She required information about getting into nursing in the UK. She asked the support worker in the mother and toddler group she attended if she can help her. The worker told her that she has a friend who is a nurse and that Helen will have no problem getting into nursing as the NHS were struggling to recruit and were actively recruiting nurses from other countries. Few weeks later Helen asked another support worker if she can get her some advice about getting into nursing. She was referred to a career advisor.

The career advisor gave Helen information about nursing registration requirements and addresses of websites where nursing jobs were advertised. She advised Helen to develop a CV and gave her information about CV writing. Following her advice Helen sent her documents to the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) and paid the necessary fee. They wrote back to say that she is not eligible for registration as a nurse because her nursing training lasted two years. Minimum three years of training were a requirement. Helen called the NMC to explain that she has had a lot of post-qualification experience and training but was told that this is not taken into account.

Few months later Helen was referred to a project that worked specifically with refugees. It is through working with the advisor at refugee project that Helen received full information about pursuing nursing registration in the UK. Her advisor found out that she did not have to pay for the NMC fee because of her low income but was unable to get Helen reimbursed. Helen was quite upset about the lack of recognition of her qualification and skills and was determined to return to nursing even if this included training from scratch.

With the help of an advisor Helen found out that that she can not study at the university until she has been granted refugee status. She was advised and supported to access a range of courses that would help her once she is able to study nursing and advised to do voluntary work in health and social care settings. Although dealing with the uncertainty and restrictions of her status, Helen has persevered and completed computer skills training and an Access to Higher Education Course that gave her qualifications that were recognised in the UK to meet the university nursing training entry requirements. Through her voluntary work she has been able to access a range short courses and gain references.

Helen received positive decision on her asylum claim after 7 years of waiting. She has joined a nursing course and is working part time as a nursing assistant.



2.2. The intercultural competencies framework

The partners researched existing intercultural competencies models used in different countries and institutions, with the aim of identifying which best practice could be transferred. These included CILT's National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working (UK). The standards are intended to support people to develop their skills and knowledge to work effectively with people from different countries or diverse cultures and are also provided in a format approved for embedding into UK vocational qualifications based on the credit framework. ILCC project partners used this resource as a basis, and the standards were modified, adapted and aggregated in order to develop an intercultural competencies framework, designed with VET practitioners in mind. This framework consists of eight broad intercultural competencies, each with a set of performance indicators, associated with VET practitioner roles



- The 8 Intercultural Competencies Framework



It is difficult to focus on these eight competencies separately; they merge and overlap with one another. For example, you cannot improve your communication skills if you are not sufficiently self aware and do not have some understanding of how stereotypes and prejudices may have influenced your communication in the past.

3 Intercultural competencies

3.1 What is an intercultural competence?

A competence is a psychological concept that was developed in the 1970s. The most common definition of competence is the collection of attitudes, skills and concepts that are causally linked with a successful behaviour in an organisational or social context. The best way of understanding the value of competencies is by using categories of 'effective' or 'ineffective' to assess behaviours in a given context (e.g. the workplace, social settings or participation in group work). If the given context includes working with people from different countries and diverse cultures, the competence may be considered an 'intercultural competence'.

The word 'intercultural' it's not easy to define: it relates to the interaction of at least two people with different backgrounds, and focuses on mutual understanding and effective interaction. The NILE project defined the term 'intercultural' within the context of a learning process : 'intercultural learning denotes a concept of how people with different backgrounds and from different cultures, can be challenged, develop more flexible attitudes, build bridges in spite of differences and live together peacefully. This dynamic social process refers to an individual active process of non-stop exchange and acquiring knowledge, attitudes, or behaviour, evolving from the interaction of different cultures' (p. 11-12).

The NILE project also defined 'intercultural competence' as 'the ability of successful communication with people from a range of cultures' (p. 13). If we take this further than communication skills, intercultural competence is the ability of a person that allows him or her to effectively perform in a professional role when working in an intercultural environment.

Taken outside of an intercultural context, the eight competencies set out in 2.3 are general competencies. For example, 'communication' is a competence that most organisations expect of their staff. It is within an intercultural context that these competencies become intercultural competencies. Considered in relation to intercultural contexts, the competencies have specific performance indicators. These are set out in sections 4.1-4.8 of this guide.

The approach to developing a 'competence', which is the central aim of this guide, is based on the following principles:

1. The development of a competence is an ongoing learning process.
2. The learning process consists of personal or group work enabling one to learn about and reflect on one's attitudes, skills and behaviours related to the competencies.
3. It is difficult to separate one competence from another because they merge and overlap with one another. For this reason, this guide should be used considering the eight competencies in the framework as a whole.

Being interculturally competent also involves learning to distinguish between the values and beliefs you hold which you may see as negotiable – for example, religious beliefs, personal dress – and those you find non-negotiable – for example, human rights. Within the process of developing intercultural competencies, you will need to accept that your clients' values may differ from yours and to learn to respect these differing values. However, you may encounter values that stand in opposition to your non-negotiable values, and if, for example, human rights are being violated, such as restricting access to education to a woman, your organisation will have to develop the correct policies to support you to challenge issues which arise..

Similarly, it should not be assumed that all differing or conflicting values, beliefs and conventions, or misunderstanding, are the result of (real or assumed) differences between ethnicities, nationalities or cultures. While this should always be considered, differences and misunderstandings also occur simply because of individual differences.

3.2. How competencies are developed

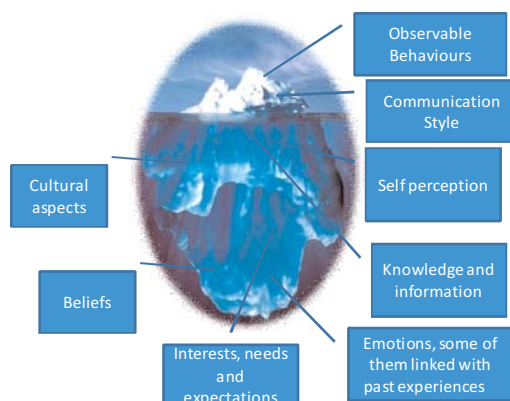
For the development of intercultural competencies it is important to explore and develop an understanding of the complexity of the concept of culture (NILE, 2008). Cultural sensitivity, which is essential to avoiding cultural stereotyping, implies:

- recognition that culture is dynamic;
- awareness of cultural heterogeneity, and
- understanding that the development of new cultural forms over time.

The following UNESCO (2002, in NILE 2008, p. 6) definition of culture was considered by the NILE project as relevant for the understanding of culture in the context of lifelong learning: "... culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". The ILCC partnership also acknowledged the need to differentiate between the individual and collective cultures.

The iceberg model

The Iceberg model of culture is frequently used to illustrate the different manifestations of individual and collective cultures (music, food or meaning of facial expressions) and how easily these can be observed.



The iceberg model illustrates how the observable element of culture and resulting human behaviour is very small, like the visible part of the iceberg, compared to the non observable elements of human behaviour. The understanding of behaviour requires that both the observable and 'hidden' cultural features are considered. These include cultural norms and values; beliefs; interests, needs and expectations; emotions; knowledge and information; and one's self perception. Assessing whether a person is competent usually relies on observing behaviour that indicates competence, or lack thereof. However, as this section has discussed, when acquiring or developing a competence, focusing only on observable behaviour is not enough.

The adult learning cycle model

The process of developing intercultural competencies, as illustrated in the model below, is cyclical, highlighting the need for ongoing development to reflect that culture is diverse and dynamic. The model also illustrates that as individuals we have different starting points in the learning process but that our ability to reflect on our skills, knowledge and overall level of competence is the key to progression.

Adult learning cycle models (based on the theory of experiential learning) can be successfully employed to facilitate the addressing of unobservable elements including knowledge, self-perceptions, emotions, and beliefs. The basic learning cycle illustrates that learning is based on experience and reflection. When facing a given situation, one will act in a certain way. These actions will have an impact on the results of the situation; that is how successful or unsuccessful the action was. This can be used as a learning experience only if one then reflects on the actions: what worked well and what did not? How can the result be improved in the future? This reflection enables one to plan how to do something differently in future situations: the only way to achieve different results is to employ different actions, this is, different behaviours.



Knowledge and information also form a key part of the learning process and have a big impact on our understanding and behaviour. Often behaviours result from ignorance. Therefore, access to information, and learning about good practice from others, enhance the reflection and planning stage.

3.3. How is the development of intercultural competencies addressed in this guide?

The iceberg model and the learning cycle models were used by the ILCC project partners to create a new model, ERPA, that is specific to the eight intercultural competencies framework, and the target group (VET practitioners).

The ERPA model

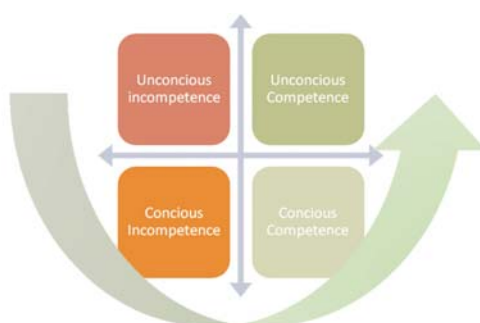


In this model, four different elements interact with one another to influence the development of intercultural competencies.

- **Emotions:** emotions (stereotypes, beliefs, self-perceptions, motivations, and also fears and insecurities) influence the learning process of a competence. That is why in this guide you will find sections that ask questions about your beliefs and your emotions.
- **Reasons:** emotions are an important element of a learning process, but reasons, concepts, knowledge and information are also important. In this guide you will also find information to aid the development of intercultural competencies.
- **Processes:** In practice, the competencies are applied in specific working processes – for example, during an interview, during a training session or during an advice session. That is why you will be asked to assess your current practice as a VET practitioner.
- **Actions:** Learning happens when new behaviours are put in place. In this guide we will ask you to design your own action plan, using some hints and tips that may help you.

This guide also sets out a series of case studies. Case studies are intended to help learners to identify the relevance of the intercultural competence in specific situations, reflect on a specific situation and identify possible similarities with their own practice.

The ‘four stages of learning’ matrix - is employed in sections 4.1 - 4.8 to help you get the most out of these case studies.



The ‘four stages of learning’ model sets out the learning process for competencies from the initial stage of ‘unconscious incompetence’ to desired end stage of ‘unconscious competence’.

1. Unconscious incompetence: people in this stage are unaware of their lack of competence in a specific skill. This can be caused by a lack of knowledge, a lack of opportunities to practice the competence, or beliefs that the competence is not important. People may inaccurately believe they are competent. Lack of motivation and emotions such as fear can prevent people moving on from this stage.

2. Conscious incompetence: people in this stage are aware that they need to improve their skills. This is a basic step towards effective learning, as effective learning is voluntary and undertaken on a conscious basis. In this stage learners need support and guidance (ideas, knowledge, techniques and opportunities to practice new skills) to develop their competence.

3. Conscious competence: people in this stage are developing their skills in a conscious way. The learner will pay attention to the fine details of situations, tasks and their behaviour and will actively reflect on their practice.

4. Unconscious Competence: people at this stage do not need to concentrate or make efforts to perform a particular skill and they are proficient in this. This may be because the skill is a ‘natural’ ability that has not been consciously developed, or because it becomes ‘natural’ after the learning process (though stages 1, 2 and 3).

4. Learning and developing intercultural competencies

4.1. Self-awareness

What can you learn from this chapter?

This chapter will help you:

- to become aware of the values, beliefs and cultural conventions which are most important to you and which influence your behaviours and your interaction with others in VET professional situations
- to understand that your values are not universal ones and to become aware of how your values may be culturally determined
- to manage the effect of your personal values on your perceptions, decision making and actions in VET professional context.

Introduction

Self-awareness is the ability to recognise and reflect upon one's own values, beliefs and cultural conventions - including prejudices or stereotypes you may hold- and that they are not universal or superior. It is the basis of any intercultural competence and plays an important role in the development of all of these e.g. it is essential for communication and challenging stereotypes. Self-awareness enables you to reflect upon how your values etc. affect your perceptions and expectations of others, and how they influence your conduct in a workplace and your interaction with other people. For example, you demonstrate self-awareness as a VET practitioner if you take into account that your attitudes or behaviour may be the reason for misunderstandings with your clients, and do not automatically assume clients' attitudes or behaviour are the cause, or judge clients' behaviour as inappropriate.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - self awareness

You are interculturally competent if you...

- recognise your own values, beliefs and cultural conventions and how they affect your perceptions and expectations in work situations
- actively seek to understand how your values, beliefs, cultural conventions and ways of communication appear to other people.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider where self-awareness plays – or should play – a role for you in your work with people from different countries and diverse cultures. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- In my actions towards clients from different backgrounds, do I consider the impression I may give to them through my way of speaking, my clothing, my expression of values, etc. which may differ from theirs and therefore may be unfamiliar to them?
- Do clients give me explicit feedback – or do I perceive it from their reactions towards me – about whether my use of language or the values I hold have an impact on my work with them?
- Am I able to acknowledge misunderstandings between others and me as possible effects of a lack of self-awareness on my part?
- Can I recall a situation where my personal qualities and beliefs seemed to be an obstacle in achieving a goal in my work with someone from a different background?
- If clients express values I do not share at all, or if clients make use of language in a way I find disturbing,

how do I react to them?

- Am I capable of addressing differences in values, language use, etc. with my clients in a reflective way, and to work together to explore how possible difficulties may be overcome?

The learning journey of developing self-awareness may be thought of as a sequence of steps - each building on the last:

- **Step 1** - I am normal. Why is the other person acting rudely and why doesn't s/he seem to understand my point of view?
- **Step 2** - I understand my own conventions are not universal. The other person may not share them. I won't take offence even if some attitudes she expresses or demonstrates through her actions are impolite in my culture. I am curious about other cultures.
- **Step 3** - I can discern some of the major differences regarding values, beliefs and behaviour between the other person and me. I see how they affect our interaction and mutual understanding. For instance, I am becoming aware of how I impart information and give advice as an explicit order to the client to fulfil a task until the next meeting, whereas the client may be more comfortable with a more informal suggestion.
- **Step 4** - I realise I need to check that I have understood exactly which values are crucial to the other person and how they influence her/his behaviour. I also need to check again that my own, differing values, do not have a negative impact on my way of perceiving the other person and of interacting with her/him.
- **Step 5** - I am aware of how my values, beliefs and cultural conventions influence my interaction with people from other backgrounds. I am able to show respect for differing values and behaviour, and to successfully adapt my way of interaction. I am able to draw the others' attention to existing differences and to refer to difficulties which may result from them. I am able to point out the other possible ways of overcoming such difficulties. I am able to challenge values that are non-negotiable, e.g. discrimination and violations to human rights, and, if necessary, report these to the appropriate authorities.

This process of developing intercultural competence in self-awareness can also be understood using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – Everyone holds the same values, beliefs and cultural conventions as I do. Why does this person not behave correspondently?
- Conscious incompetence – I have the impression that there are other values, beliefs and cultural conventions which determine people's behaviour. But I don't know which they are or why they differ from mine.
- Conscious competence – I am trying to understand the others' values, beliefs and cultural conventions and to interact in a way that facilitates understanding.
- Unconscious competence – I am used to reflecting on my values, beliefs and cultural conventions and considering their influence when interacting with people from another culture. I now do so automatically.

Case study

For a year Sarah has worked at an organisation in Germany which advises migrant women on issues relating to their professional and private lives. Her clients come from a broad range of countries. Many of them are highly qualified and seeking employment. Reflecting on the questions above, Sarah feels that she has been largely successful in her work with clients. She has supported most clients to enter the labour market. She feels competent in imparting the necessary information to her clients and in giving emotional support. She feels that she demonstrates sufficient understanding regarding difficulties that her clients encounter, and that there is a mutual understanding between clients and herself.

However, lately Sarah has been working with a new client, Mrs C. from Brazil, who arrives at least 20 minutes late for all her appointments with Sarah. In some cases, she does not show up at all. Sarah feels

deeply offended by the client's behaviour. Punctuality is necessary for Sarah in order to keep up the appointments with all her other clients.

Sarah has addressed the issue with Mrs C. several times and explained to her that she needed to be punctual for their future meetings. Mrs C. appeared to show some insight, even though she did not apologise explicitly to Sarah. The client explained that she had missed the bus on various occasions, that her daughter had been ill, and that taking her child to kindergarten sometimes simply took longer than expected. Sarah can accept some of the reasons but still feels offended by simple excuses. Sarah has been asking herself: Why doesn't her client take an earlier bus? Why doesn't she call if she knows she is going to be late or cannot keep the appointment? Does she not respect the job Sarah is doing for her?...

Using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence consider the following questions:

- At which stage do you think Sarah is?
- How do you think the situation will develop?
- If you were Sarah, how would you react to your client and what would you do?

Step 2: further information on self-awareness

Although self-awareness has a lot to do with self-reflection, i.e. thinking about and analysing one's own attitudes and actions, this does not mean that developing it should be a task to embark on alone. You should engage in this learning process with others, such as colleagues and experts, and make use of activities designed to support your development, such as professional supervision or coaching, informal exchange with colleagues in your team, and further vocational education (e.g. workshops on how to translate self-awareness into action with your clients).

Certain traits open up possibilities for greater self awareness, such as being open-minded, and having a tendency to focus on positive aspects of others' behaviour and actions rather than negative ones (deficits). Some traits inhibit self awareness, such as intolerance, and focusing on negative aspects of others.

Also, perceptions of others may be deeply rooted in prejudices and stereotypes which may be part of unconscious or automatic thinking (see 4.2). It is not always easy to identify deeply rooted, unconscious and automatic beliefs, and is a continuous process.

Being aware of your own values, beliefs and conventions allows you to better understand others' values, beliefs and conventions. Self aware people are therefore better able to avoid taking offence in interactions, reacting emotionally and taking things personally. They are better able to analyse actions according to the client's own values, beliefs and conventions.

Case study continuing

...After talking to a colleague about Mrs. C, Sarah realises that there are different ways of looking at it. Whereas she took it as a personal offence that Mrs C knocked on her door 20 minutes after the agreed time, these 20 minutes may not have been seen by Mrs C as 'late'. Sarah's colleague told her about her own experiences with some clients from South American and African countries and the talks she had with them on punctuality: as it turned out, almost all of them believe being punctual was very important. But the time span that determined whether you were on time or not in their cultures differed noticeably from what one would call punctuality in Germany. Taking this into account, Sarah can understand better why Mrs C did not apologise for 'being late'. And taking into account that her client was not late at all from her own perspective, Sarah does not take such deep personal offence from 'weak excuses' anymore. She has reached a much better basis for the continuation of her work with Mrs C.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues which norms and values are most important to you.

- Consider when you have felt offence that something important to you is being violated, possibly by someone's behaviour or attitudes.
- Now try to leave aside the emotional effect the situation had on you for a moment: assume that the offence was not intended. Try to analyse what exactly was it that made you feel offended in this situation. What was the value that was important to you that you felt had been violated?

Example: One of your clients did not follow up actions s/he agreed to. You felt offended, because the client violated your attitude that agreements should be kept.

Example from the case study: Sarah's client repeatedly misses the agreed appointments times. She does not inform Sarah that she will be late or unable to attend. Sarah feels offended, because you should not be late for a meeting – and if you are, you should inform the other party and apologise.

Now take your reflection a step further.

- Can you see why the value in question is so important to you? Is it a value acknowledged by many others e.g. by family members, colleagues, large groups of society? Or is it something more personal?
- Where does the value 'come from'? When and how did you come to feel it is important?

Example: From childhood on, you have been taught that keeping agreements is crucial for relationships. This has been confirmed to you in many contexts (e.g. personal, educational, professional contexts). Agreements are commonly made by two or more parties, and often confirmed in writing. If none of the parties involved objects explicitly, the agreement is considered valid – and each party should carry out the agreed actions.

Example from the case study: Sarah has learned in private and professional socialisation that not informing someone about the fact that you will be late for a meeting is impolite. She feels that her client shows no respect for her work. Furthermore, keeping her schedule is important for Sarah in order to manage her work load.

Now try to take on the perspective of the other person involved.

- Which reasons may the other person have had to act in the way s/he did? If the other person were to describe what happened, what would s/he possibly describe?

Example: As a possible reason for your client's behaviour, you may want to take into account that it is not common in all cultures or for all people to express disagreement explicitly. Therefore, not rejecting your advice verbally in a meeting does not mean automatically that a client accepts the advice and agrees with you. Instead, the client may prefer to express rejection by not taking action – at a point in time when you assume that the agreement has already been made and actions should be taken.

Example from the case study: For people from different backgrounds, the concept of punctuality may embrace different time spans. This may also differ from individual to individual. It is therefore possible that Mrs C does not perceive her arrival for meetings after the agreed-on time as too late. Furthermore, from her point of view, calling to inform Sarah may not have been necessary.

To round up your reflection, consider the following questions:

- How do you react to people who don't follow the same conventions as you? How do they respond to your reaction?
- Does your reaction cause difficulties in the interaction?
- How could you react differently?
- How could you make sure that an aspect of a client's behaviour – which you personally do not approve of – does not lead to unprofessional actions on your part?



Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your self-awareness. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1, to help you develop your self-awareness. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

Hints and tips

The following hints and tips may help you to develop your self-awareness action plan:

- Ask your friends and colleagues – including those from different cultural backgrounds – what they perceive as the values, beliefs or conventions most important to you. Let them explain from which actions or behaviour on your part they deduce this. Have you learned anything about yourself and are there any surprises? How do the values, beliefs or conventions that you most value differ from those of your friends and colleagues?
- Carefully check if a client and you share the same values, using their feedback rather than your assumptions.
- Practice discussing differences with regard to values etc. with others in a respectful way.
- Practice suggesting how to deal with difficulties arising from differences in a constructive way in a VET professional situation (e.g. advice session, class room situation, job interview).

4.2 Challenging stereotypes

What can you learn from this chapter?

This chapter will help you to:

- understand what stereotypes are and how they can result in prejudices and discriminatory actions
- identify the stereotypes you may hold, or that may be embedded in your organisation, and consider how they may affect practice
- become more skilled in recognising and consciously challenging your own stereotypical thinking.

Introduction

Stereotypes reflect ideas that groups of people hold about others who are different from them. A stereotype is an oversimplified statement based on a single characteristic. A stereotype can be embedded in single word or phrase (such as, "jock" or "nerd"), an image, a belief or a combination of words, images and beliefs. The stereotype evoked is easily recognised by others, as stereotypes have usually developed over time and become embedded in culture.

Stereotypes can appear to be 'positive' (such as "black men are good at basketball") or negative (such as "women are bad drivers"). But most stereotypes tend to make us feel superior in some way to the person or group being stereotyped. Stereotypes ignore the uniqueness of individuals by grouping individuals together and assuming they are all the same. Stereotypes are not the same as broad knowledge about customs and practices of people from different countries and diverse cultures, which can be used to enhance your practice while still regarding people as individuals.

Social identity theory identifies two concepts in stereotyping: 'ingroups' and 'outgroups'. In this theory, 'ingroups' are positioned as normal and superior, and are generally the group that one associates with or aspires to join. 'Outgroups' comprise all the other groups. They are seen as lesser than or inferior to the 'ingroup'.

Theorists have also developed concepts of ‘automatic’ stereotyping or ‘explicit’ stereotyping; these can also be understood as ‘subconscious’ stereotyping and ‘conscious’ stereotyping. Automatic/subconscious stereotyping is stereotyping that occurs without one noticing. Depending on levels of self awareness, this is often followed by a thought process whereby one challenges their automatic/subconscious stereotyping and alters the words, images or beliefs they associate with the group. Over time, automatic stereotyping is broken down, as this thought process challenges and replaces stereotypical thinking. Explicit or conscious stereotyping occurs when a person deliberately embraces stereotypes about another group, and does so consciously.

A third set of concepts used to categorise stereotypes is ‘general types’ and ‘sub-types’. Stereotypes consist of hierarchical systems, which include of broad and specific groups (these being the general types and sub-types respectively). A general type is a large group (e.g. teenagers) to which broad stereotypes are applied; these stereotypes are recognisable to many people and may be widely accepted. A sub-type is one of the several smaller groups that comprise the general group. Stereotypes associated with sub-types are more specific, and not necessarily recognised by the majority of people.

Although we all use stereotypes at times, we should find ways to challenge them.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - challenging stereotypes

You are interculturally competent if you:

- base your opinions of people on your own interaction with them rather than on common perception, stereotypes, their accent or their appearance
- challenge and adapt your own assumptions about the behaviour of people from different countries or diverse cultures
- challenge any stereotypes, prejudice or racism expressed by other people about yourself or others
- base your decisions to recruit, advise, teach, employ or promote people on their potential to undertake the learning programme or do the job rather than on accent or appearance, stereotypes or prejudice, out-of-date information or commonly held but incorrect perceptions of their skills and work ethics.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider how stereotyping impacts on your work practices with people from different countries and different cultures. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Can I identify a stereotype about people from my own country or culture that I don’t think applies to me?
- Can I identify a stereotype about my clients from different countries or diverse cultures that I do not think applies to them?
- Do I feel comfortable recognising the stereotypes I hold and challenging them?
- Can I identify a stereotype about my clients from different countries or diverse cultures that I find offensive?
- Are any stereotypes about clients from different countries or diverse cultures rooted in my organisational culture and practices?

This process of developing intercultural competence in challenging stereotypes can be understood using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – Certain groups of people all have the same beliefs, values and practices. They are different from mine and mine are accepted and normal in my culture.
- Conscious incompetence – I realise that I can automatically stereotype some groups of people and that

it isn't necessarily fair or useful. I am trying to challenge this stereotyping using conscious thought.

- Conscious competence – I am aware of how I may stereotype people and I am working to challenge my stereotypical thoughts, and others' stereotypical thoughts, by basing my opinions of people on my interactions with them.
- Unconscious competence – I challenge stereotypical thinking and do not allow stereotypical thoughts to influence my work practices. I get to know my clients as individuals. I challenge others' stereotypical thinking.

Case study

Nadia is a teacher in a vocational training centre in Ljubljana. In the last 4 years the number of students belonging to the Roma community has increased, and Nadia now has five Roma students in her classroom.

Based on her experiences, Nadia believes Roma students only attend the classes because their families get grants from the state if they register their sons and daughters in a public centre. Usually, after a couple of weeks, their attendance becomes irregular and eventually they leave the class before it finishes. In Nadia's opinion, Roma students don't pay enough attention, and their behavior in the classroom is poor. Nadia also knows from living with her family, and living in her community, that Roma people are generally antisocial. Nadia often tells her colleagues that "they are all the same".

Every year a group of students from Nadia's class is selected for a work placement. This is a great development opportunity for the students. The principal of the college has asked Nadia to make sure she includes Roma students in her selection. Nadia was unhappy about this as she believes a Roma student will perform badly and leave before the placement ends. She feels a Roma student would take the place of a different student who would make the most of the opportunity. Any bad behavior could also cause problems for Nadia in the future with the companies that host the work placements.

After Nadia told her students about the possibilities of the work placement, one of her Roma students, Lola, asked to be considered. Nadia told her that the group was now full. Lola felt very upset and marginalised. She visited the principal and complained about Nadia's behavior.

Using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence consider the following questions:

- At which stage do you think Nadia is?
- How do you think the situation will develop?
- If you were Lola, how would you react and what would you do?

Step 2: Further information on challenging stereotypes

Prejudice is to pre-judge or to form an opinion (usually negative) about someone or something by using a stereotype, before all the facts are known. "John can't cook - he's a man!" is an example of prejudice. Prejudices are unjust and unreasonable opinion or feelings, formed without reflection or understanding. They restrict our view of reality.

Stereotypes can result in discriminative practices: stereotypes are not only ideas, concepts or opinions; they have an influence in the way we interact with others, and in the way we treat people.

This reflects a well known psychological effect called the 'Pygmalion Effect'. The Pygmalion Effect occurs when reality is influenced by the beliefs and expectations of others. Our expectations about others influen-

ce the way we interact with them, and as a result, influence the expectations others have about themselves. For example, if teachers are led to have high expectations about certain students, this influences their interaction with those students and the students achieve higher levels of performance. This effect has been studied by Rosenthal and Jacobson in the field of education, but may also be applied to other fields, like employment or performance at work.

We challenge stereotypes by:

- being alert to our own, and others, views and practices and considering if and how stereotypes have influenced them
- avoiding generalising when judging others' acts - so judging others as individuals, rather than as part of a group
- trying to get a better understanding of others' personalities, behaviours and skills on individual bases
- being aware that stereotypes usually transcend beliefs and have influence in the way we treat others, and seeking to identify discriminatory practice.

Case study continuing

Lola was upset because she thought that Nadia was behaving in a discriminatory way. Lola has good qualifications, and is really interested in the subject Nadia is teaching, and the opportunity for a work placement.

The principal spoke to Nadia about Lola's case. Nadia explained her reasons for excluding Lola from the work placement. The principle discussed the increasing proportions of Roma students in the centre and demonstrated the success Roma students have had on other course. He recommended Nadia have an in depth conversation with Lola, to try to get to know her and to find out about her interest in the class and the placement.

Nadia spoke to Lola and apologised that she had not put her forward for a work placement. She arranged to meet Yola after class. When Lola and Nadia spent some time together, Nadia changed her opinion about Lola. She realised she was a hard working and enthusiastic student. She found out that Lola was very active socially, and was member of a Roma students association involved in different activities to support an increase in the proportions of Roma students who completed their studies. Lola's ambition was to become the first Roma woman manager in a big company in her country.

Nadia realised it would be very unfair to exclude Lola from the work placement. She put in a late application and secured a place for Lola at a local company. A few weeks later Nadia received an email from the human resources manager for the company wanting to feedback to Nadia about the commitment, skills and good attitude that Lola had exhibited. They were very happy with Lola's performance, and wanted Nadia to know that they would be delighted to work with her again in the future.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues how stereotypes influence your work and your organisational culture.

- Can you identify current culture or practices in your working environment in which stereotypes have some influence?
- Regarding your clients, can you identify your own stereotypes? How do stereotypes affect your expectations?
- What can be done in your environment to challenge stereotypes?

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you may hold stereotypes and accepting that they may impact on your work with people from different countries and diverse cultures is the first step to challenging stereotypes and becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your skills in challenging stereotypes. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1.

Hints and tips

The following hints and tips may help you to develop your action plan:

- Make an honest list of stereotypical views that you sometimes hold, and think of examples from your experience that challenge these stereotypes.
- Talk to friends and colleague about whether they have noticed any stereotypes you appear to hold.
- Challenge any deep rooted stereotypes by doing research into that particular group of people.
- Build time into your interactions with clients early on to get to know them as individuals.
- Make positive use of the Pygmalion Effect: have high expectations of your clients, and you can get great results in return.

Complementary resources

- Ouch! That stereotype hurts: Communicating respectfully in a diverse world. Leslie C. Aguilar. (2006)
- Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination . Todd D. Nelson (2009)
- Dosta! Dovolj! Osvobodimo se predsodkov, spoznajmo Rome, Priroènik. Informacijski urad Sveta Evrope v RS in Urad Vlade RS za narodnosti, Ljubljana, februar 2009.
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- Šeèerov, N., Mihaliè, Z. (2001). Uèiteljeva priprava na pouk. ZRSŠ. Ljubljana.
- Brataniæ, M. (1990). Mikropedagogija. Interakcijsko-komunikacijski aspekt odgoja. Školska knjiga. Zagreb.

4.3 Communication

What can you learn from this chapter?

This chapter will help you:

- to learn about communication competence and how it is demonstrated in practice
- to become aware of the impact of culture (values, beliefs and conventions) on communication
- to understand how you can communicate effectively with people from different countries or diverse cultures.

Introduction

Communication is the ability to share and exchange information with people clearly and effectively. It applies to the use of different modes of communication including:

- speaking and listening
- writing
- personal presentation (e.g. dress, hairstyle or jewellery).

We can convey and receive messages from other people in different ways and our ability to adapt our communication style and choose the best method reflects the level of competence that we have. We demonstrate communication competence by being sensitive and taking into account others' views and needs. For example if our job is to advertise a course to people from a particular group, before deciding on a written flier we would need to find out about literacy levels of the people in that group.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - communication

You are interculturally competent if you:

- communicate in ways that can be understood by the people from the countries or cultures you are working with
- recognise how your use of language, body language, gestures and tone of voice may appear to people from different countries or diverse cultures and of how theirs may affect your perceptions of them
- reflect on the impact of your behaviour and use of language when working with people from different countries or diverse cultures and adapt them to improve results in the future
- implement communication strategies that are right for the situation and that take account of the diversity of language and culture of the people involved
- identify any language skills needed and where support can be sourced most effectively.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in communicating with people from different countries and diverse cultures. As a VET practitioner ask yourself: How effective are my communication skills within my work setting in terms of:

- Do clients understand me most of the time?
- Do I understand clients most of the time?
- What communication and understanding difficulties do I experience?
- What can I do to overcome the difficulties?

Case study

Alma is an Education and Employment Advisor in the UK. Until recently, most of her clients were originally from the UK, and spoke English. She had never considered her own skills in communicating effectively with people from different countries and diverse cultures. However, recently Alma has been seeing increasing numbers of people who are new to the UK. Many of her new clients are from Somalia and Poland. On reflection using the above questions, Alma did not identify any major problems with understanding between herself and her clients. She did identify communication and understanding difficulties in use of language, as many of her new clients have English as an additional language, but did not perceive this to be a big problem....

This process of developing intercultural competence in communication can be understood using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – I have no problems communicating with clients from different countries and diverse cultures. The only thing I need to consider is their language skills. They all have some skills in communicating in my language, so there are no problems.
- Conscious incompetence – I recognise that spoken and written language is not the only form of communication, and that I need to consider my body language, gestures, eye contact, personal dress, etc. I recognise that sometimes clients don't fully understand me, and vice versa, but I don't know how to address the situation.

- Conscious competence - I am becoming aware of the different ways in which I can communicate to ensure there is mutual understanding. I am gaining knowledge of my clients' preferred languages and communication customs.
- Unconscious competence - I can communicate in a range of ways. I automatically adapt my communication style to meet clients' needs, check client understanding and reflect critically on interactions.

Using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence consider the following questions:

- At which stage do you think Alma is?
- What are your reasons for thinking she is at this stage?
- Considering your own communication with clients, at which stage do you think you are?
- What are your reasons for thinking you are at this stage?

Step 2: further information on communication

As in 4.1, the learning journey of developing communication competence may be thought of as a sequence of steps each building on the last:

- **Step 1** - I am normal. Why is the other person acting rudely and why doesn't s/he seem to understand me?
- **Step 2** - I understand my own conventions are not universal. The other person may not share them. I won't take offence even if some things s/he does or says are impolite in my culture. I am curious about other cultures.
- **Step 3** - I understand some of the different aspects of communication that may affect how we understand each other. I am becoming aware of how I communicate with gestures and tone.
- **Step 4** - I realise I need to check that I have understood exactly what the other person is trying to express and that s/he has really understood me.
- **Step 5** - I am able to adapt some of my body language and ways of speaking to make it easier for the other person to understand. I can engage with and work effectively with interpreters.

Speaking and listening

People who are not native speakers within a country often comment that they find it easier to speak and understand the foreign language when spoken by a foreigner than by a native speaker. The Europe at Work guide explains that 'this is because the native speaker doesn't make the allowances for speed of speech, dialect, accent and use of idiom that a foreign speaker does.' Being aware of this can support the improvement of our own communication skills. Furthermore, it is important to understand that migrants' feelings of inadequacy in the host country's language can be a source of anxiety and have negative impact on their confidence. It is also essential to be aware of unequal power relations that can arise within practitioner/client relationships, and how this can impact on communication.

Body language

Whilst spoken word is often perceived as the main means of conveying a message, body language is as important in ensuring that the words are understood. By body language we mean posture, distance, eye contact, nods, smiling, the volume at which we speak, as well as other conventions that are used to show politeness. Whilst in some cultures smiling may be perceived as being friendly, it can also convey the lack of seriousness of the message given. Similarly maintaining eye contact can be perceived as a sign of respect or disrespect and in many cultures this will be determined by the person's position in society. Being new to a country or culture may present a challenge for individuals in determining their position in relation to a practitioner. As a sign of respect of their seniority and position, clients may avoid eye contact.

Having understanding of such differences and discussing different cultural attitudes to body language is the key to effective communication.

Setting

It is necessary to be aware of how our work settings can be used to convey messages to people. For example the location of the building in which our service is based, the type of space in which we work or the working times we operate are indicators of our organisational culture and can be used to encourage or to prevent access by certain people.

Working with others

Interculturally competent practitioners have an awareness of, and ability to engage and work effectively with, other people who can support them in communicating with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This can include working with interpreters or engaging bilingual staff. Using information in other languages can also be helpful. Working with others to improve your own intercultural communication competence will support you in working independently with your clients.

Hints and tips

The following hints and tips can help people enhance their communication skills:

- Learn conventions for introductions and greetings from other cultures.
- Learn some phrases in other languages.
- Use gesture and images.
- Avoid idioms.
- Explain acronyms.
- Vary speed of talk.
- Check the client's understanding carefully using their feedback rather than your assumptions.
- Try to pronounce clients' names correctly.

Case study continuing

...Alma received information from the local college about a course in employability skills which is offered with language support. She has identified this course as appropriate for her clients who are new to the UK and has given the information about the course to five clients.

Some weeks later, Alma's manager asked her to provide information about the destination of her clients. On contacting the college she found out that none of her clients are on the course. Alma called some of her clients to ask if they have tried to access the course. The first client said 'I waited for you to call me to tell me that it is OK for me to go but you never called me'. Another client said that she thought Alma would send her the information about the course as she doesn't know where the college is. Other clients made similar comments...

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues what your norms and values are in communication - including speech, personal presentation or body language. You may wish to consider your practices in relation to:

- making eye contact
- communication styles and conventions

- personal space
- nods
- your reaction to apparent rudeness or insincerity
- smiling
- using own fluency as way of overpowering others
- how you dress
- gestures used while speaking.

Can you think of examples from amongst your clients who have different behaviours? How do you react to people who don't follow the same conventions as you?

Case study continuing

...Alma realised that her message to clients about the course was misunderstood and as a consequence they have not accessed the course. They also felt let down by Alma as they had expected her to secure the place on the course and to contact them. On reflection Alma realised that clients responded with 'yes' to everything she said and she did not check whether they understood.

She realised that she should have given clients written information about the course so that they can check the information with their friends/family and discuss it with them. She has also thought that translating the course information into Polish and Somali would have been helpful for the majority of the clients.



Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in intercultural communication. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1, to help you develop your communication skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

You may want to use some of these hints and tips in your action plan:

- Check that clients understand you by asking them to repeat back to you what they are going to do next.
- Provide information in writing. If information is not in the client's language make it simple and clear.
- Learn some key words and phrases in the client's language, e.g. appointment, course, address, and 'do you understand?' Using internet translating tools to learn new words/phrases can be useful and you can check the meaning with clients.
- Find out if your organisation has a budget and/or contracts for interpreting and translating and identify local translating and interpreting services
- Identify the most important information that can be translated to be used in more than one situation.
- When using interpreters consider the following:
 - Practitioners are often nervous when using interpreters for the first time. Remember that many interpreters are trained and/or experienced. Ask them what the best practice is and how to conduct an interview or discussion via an interpreter.
 - Using untrained, informal interpreters (often friends and family members of clients') is not considered best practice but happens frequently for a number of reasons such as lack of resources, clients' preferences or convenience. Use common sense in deciding if you can use an informal interpreter in some situations.
 - An integral part of the interpreter's role is cultural mediation; they can explain to you any cultural norms that can help you in independent communication with clients.

4.4 Flexibility

What can you learn from this chapter?

This chapter will help you to:

- learn how to adapt strategies for working with clients to clients' objectives and new contexts
- be able to align diverse abilities, knowledge and skills in order to reach a goal
- appreciate the importance of understanding the context and the importance of adapting your own behaviour to the context.

Introduction

Flexibility can be defined as the ability to be open to and adapt to new and changing circumstances and contexts. There are at least three dimensions of flexibility:

- to accept new opinions or points of view
- to adapt your own behaviour to the context
- to create a new strategy depending on the new circumstances.

The first dimension, to accept new opinions or points of view, is perhaps the most complex dimension of this competence. People usually act or react according to their own set of principles, certainties and 'truths' based on past experiences. Flexibility requires that we adapt to new situations and are open-minded when encountering new values.

The second dimension, to adapt your own behaviour, means that you are able to adapt or change your behaviour depending on different situations, different people, social rules and cultural norms, and therefore be more effective in your role. People who never change their way of working, and are unaware that it can be inappropriate or even offensive in different contexts, are likely to be ineffective.

Finally, flexibility is the ability to change the strategy if needed. Having a fixed strategy and not adapting it to new contexts and clients' objectives means it will not be fit for purpose. For example, planning is a very important activity, but to insist obstinately on a plan/strategy, especially when it has failed in the past, usually leads to a new failure.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - flexibility

You demonstrate intercultural competence if you:

- make enough time and effort and respond flexibly and positively so that your working practice engages and includes people from different countries or diverse cultures
- work in ways that balance other people's expectations of you with the need to achieve organisational objectives
- when recruiting people, use selection procedures that do not require more skills than are needed to participate in the learning programme and/or to carry out the job
- when recruiting people, use selection procedures that recognise education, training, skills, experience and qualifications gained in other countries
- when delivering training, manage the learning/training group in a way that meets group objectives while showing flexibility towards individual members' cultural needs
- when providing advice (career guidance/counselling), work with your clients in ways that recognise education, training, skills, experience and qualifications gained in other countries.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in this competence. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Am I ready to accept that I can be wrong or make mistakes?
- Do I accept new ideas and opinions on how to be effective in my role? Particularly, do I accept the ideas, opinions and views of my clients who are from different countries or diverse cultures?
- Do I adapt my practice or planning to my clients' needs or to new circumstances?
- Do I adapt my behaviour to the context and people I work with?

Case study

Luis works for an employment agency in Madrid that recruits people who do temporary work for various companies. His agency specialises in recruiting people for office work including many administrators. They regularly advertise vacancies in the local press inviting candidates to apply with their CV.

Emmanuel, a 32 year old Nigerian, brought in his CV to the agency's office and told the receptionist that he is interested in admin work. The receptionist explained that one of the advisors would get in touch with Emmanuel. The receptionist passed his CV to Luis, who looked at it and on establishing that Emmanuel had no Spanish qualifications or admin experience in Spain and discarded the CV. A few days later Emmanuel called at the office to enquire about vacancies. The receptionist recognised him and asked Luis to see him.

Luis told Emmanuel that he is not suitable for the vacancies because he had no Spanish admin qualifications or experience. Emmanuel explained that he has qualifications and experience from Nigeria and that he is qualified to do admin work. Luis told him that it was not relevant...

This process of developing intercultural competence in flexibility can be supported by using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – I know the best way to do things. Other people need to accept my way of working. This is what I offer; I cannot offer anything else.
- Conscious incompetence - I am not trying to be flexible in my work but I recognise my way of working is not the only possible way.
- Conscious competence - I am open to new ways of working. I am trying to listen to clients' objectives and be aware of how different contexts might require different ways of working.
- Unconscious competence - I am able to act in different ways depending on changing contexts and clients' objectives and solve different problems.

In which stage do you think Luis is? What would you do if you were in Luis's position?

Step 2: further information on flexibility

Flexibility is the basic ability to deal with ambiguity. In many occasions professionals work in uncertain situations when planning the objectives and activities in a training programme, or the methodology to follow in advising. But it is important to understand that success usually depends on the efforts that a practitioner makes to understand his or her clients' needs and to adapt his planning to the objectives of his or her customers.

Get to know your clients

Flexibility is related to adaptation. To be able to adapt your behaviour to a specific context, you need to understand that context. This means it is important to know:

- your clients' cultural backgrounds and their current needs,
- how cultural differences may affect your work with your clients: e.g. in some cultures, posing a direct question to a teacher is not considered appropriate,
- clients' expectations about your work with them.

Focus on clients' goals and objectives

For a VET practitioner to be flexible, you need to plan the work taking into account the goals of your clients, this is often referred to as client/person centred approach. Although the practitioner is in the position of expert, it is also true that her or his client's objectives are as important as the practitioner's ones. A good way of doing this is directly asking clients about their objectives (e.g. at the beginning of a training programme, or an advice process), and trying to adapt the initial plan to their requirements and circumstances.

Being flexible and able to focus on the client needs requires you to have good communication skills (see section 4.3) which include active listening skills. As a VET practitioner you should pay attention to a wide variety of factors that surround your activity with clients, such as personal situations, different cultural backgrounds and client's perception of your role. Active listening will enable you to understand what others are saying to you and to explore what they 'mean'. To be an active listener it is important to:

- stay calm and relaxed when interacting with others using open body language; concentrate on the words and behaviours of the other party,
- avoid the natural trend of giving a quick answer, before listening to the whole message and before having all the information
- encourage the client to continue talking. This can be done using expressions like 'I see...', 'I understand...'
- avoid negative body language, including shaking your head in disagreement, hinders effective communication
- repeat what the other has said with your own words, to make sure that you have really understood the message.

Saying 'probably yes' instead of directly 'no'

Flexible people try to avoid saying 'no' too many times. One way of finding out how flexible you are is to count how many times you say 'no' during a normal day. Phrases that usually 'kill' flexibility are:

- No, it is impossible
- No, we cannot change this, we have always done this this way
- That idea won't work
- It is too risky

People who are not flexible are also the ones who resist change.

Starting an answer to others' opinions with a positive expression usually shows flexibility:

- Your opinion is very interesting...have you considered also these aspects of the issue?
- I do agree with you in most of what you're saying, but I need to contrast this with our past experience...
- I really thank you for sharing your ideas...I have planned or done this in the way I did because I had a different opinion. I appreciate your input...

You can always express your own opinion in a positive way, even when you disagree with the others' opinions.

Case study continuing

...Emmanuel was upset about Luis's response and felt that it was not fair. He called at the agency the next day and asked to see Luis again. When he met with Luis he told him how he felt about his qualifications not being recognised and said that he is prepared to work for free for someone to assess his skills as an administrator. He began to describe the work that he had done before referring to setting up meetings, taking notes, dealing with the post and mentioning different computer applications that he had used in his work. Luis listened carefully, and started to better understand Emmanuel's past experiences and skills. Luis realised that Emmanuel's skills match those that local companies require. Although he was persuaded that he had misjudged Emmanuel's skills, he felt that the companies who use the employment agency may have the same reservations about Luis's qualifications and experience. He tried to think creatively about how he could address this in a positive way. He spoke to his manager and he suggested to Emmanuel that he works for his agency for one week and depending on the performance he would be able to recommend him for positions and offer references.

Luis supervised Emmanuel's placement and was therefore able to vouch for the quality of his work with companies looking for temporary staff. He also did some informal research into the Nigerian community locally. He found out that many Nigerian migrants are highly skilled but engaged in menial work because employers are reluctant to consider their qualifications. Luis did an internet search about verifications of qualifications from other countries and found out about NARIC. He established contact with NARIC and is working on developing the employment agency's strategies and ways of working to ensure that local migrants can fill labour market gaps, and that their skills and experience are not wasted.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues what your norms and values are with regard to flexibility. You may wish to consider your practices in relation to:

- the knowledge you have of your clients
- how you adapt your methods and goals to your clients' needs and expectations
- active listening
- showing more flexibility using positive and open language.

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in flexibility. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1, to help you develop your flexibility skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

Hints and tips

The following hints and tips may help you develop your action plan:

- Set up the objectives in partnership with clients.
- Adapt your own objectives to the clients' expectations.
- Practice active listening.
- When discussing with another colleague or client, try to start your answer with 'probably yes' instead of 'no'.

4.5 Networking

What can you learn from this chapter?

This chapter will help you to:

- learn about networking as a competence
- be aware of requirements for effective networking when working with people from different countries or diverse cultures
- have some understanding of how to develop new networks to support you when working in an intercultural context.

Introduction

Networking is the ability to build relationships and work in partnership with other organisations and agencies. Who you network with will depend on the nature of your service, your organisation's existing networks and partners, and your clients' needs. While all practitioners network, networking in an intercultural context should include creating relationships with organisations and agencies that work with specific minority ethnic groups, or have a particular focus on cultural, religious or linguistic requirements. Networking is especially important when working with people from different countries and diverse cultures as it enables the VET practitioner to:

- develop their intercultural understanding and skills, to enhance their work with clients
- ensure their clients have a more holistic support system, taking account of a variety of cultural requirements. Steps towards employment can be addressed more effectively through partnership working than by working alone. Clients' needs may be complex and no one organisation can meet all of these needs
- set up and maintain personal and professional boundaries.

Networking also refers to taking a wider view of the individual client. It is common in many Western countries for practitioners to work with and perceive the client as an isolated individual. However, in many cultures and countries, family members, friends and the wider community will be heavily involved in the client's journey. If practitioners can understand how clients' family and other social networks impact on their journey, they can build this into their working practices and use them as a resource when working with clients.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - networking

You are intercultural competent if you...

- build relationships with, and signpost to, organisations that can support people from the countries or cultures you are working with and understand the importance of recognising the role of other agencies for provision of integrated support and maintaining professional/organisational boundaries
- build relationships with people who can provide you with resources, information and support in carrying out your role in an intercultural competent way
- get the support you need to resolve issues caused by intercultural tension or misunderstanding.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in networking. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Do I place importance on networking with other organisations including those specifically aimed at supporting culturally diverse members of the community?

- What, if any, organisations and agencies do I currently work that can support me in providing services to culturally diverse clients?
- How do I benefit from working with them - what resources, information and support do I receive?
- How do they benefit from working with me?

Case study

Samuel recently started work as a career advisor at a mainstream learning and employment support centre. The reception staff made an appointment for him to see a client from Zimbabwe. So he could better understand and help his client, Samuel did some research into the political situation in Zimbabwe, the education and training system, the language and the culture. He used the Internet to do his research. Samuel felt confident that he had taken the initiative to find out more about his client's country of origin.

When the client, Prosperine, attended the appointment, she told Samuel that she was looking for care training. Samuel discussed with her the requirements for taking up care training and explained that it was possible to get funding from the government for this training. He gave her the information about a relevant course at the local vocational college and advised her to contact them urgently as the enrolment on the course had already started...

This process of developing intercultural competence in networking can also be understood using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – I have always worked with the same partners, and this works well. I do not have time to network much, and there is little need for me to do so.
- Conscious incompetence – I am realising that other organisations might be able to help me meet clients' holistic needs. I know that locally there are culturally specific organisations, and organisations working with people from different countries and diverse cultures, but I don't know who they are, or how we can help each other.
- Conscious competence - I have started to work alongside a range of organisations that meet the needs of clients from different countries and diverse cultures. I can see the benefits of working in this way - for my organisation, for other organisation, and for clients.
- Unconscious competence - I have developed working partnerships with a range of other organisations, in order to better meet clients' needs. These partnerships are embedded into my practice and I can develop new partnerships as necessary.

At which stage do you think Samuel is? What are your reasons for thinking he is at this stage? Considering your own networking practice in relation to clients from different countries or diverse cultures, at which stage do you think you are? What are your reasons for thinking you are at this stage?

Step 2: further information on networking

A range of people and organisations can be part of your professional network including clients' families and friends, religious organisations, migrant, asylum seeker and refugee support organisations, minority ethnic group organisations, health, housing, social care or welfare organisations - and of course learning providers, advice organisations, recruitment organisations and employers.

Networking and building partnerships can help practitioners better understand varying cultures, working practices, attitudes to work, means of communication, etc. that exist for different groups. It can help them understand clients' needs and deal with misunderstandings with clients, and appreciate why similarities and differences exist.

People's immigration experiences, including the reasons for migration, migration routes and current immigration status, have implications for their situation. This can determine the agencies that they are involved with and their position in relation to the labour market and learning.

Without cooperation with other services' providers and practitioners you will only be able to have a limited impact upon the lives of people you support.

Different levels of networking

Networking and building partnerships with other organisations may need to happen at different levels - specifically with front line staff, to enhance direct support to clients, and also at a strategic level, to embed partnership working within organisational culture, practice and policy. Local or national organisations may be involved. Partnership working can be informal (where contact and support, information and advice are taken up as and when needed) or formal (with agreed arrangements for regular contact and ways of working together).

Developing relationships

Developing productive working relationships takes time, energy and commitment. Building on existing relationships can be a good place to start.

Identifying potential organisations to work with can be challenging. You may not come across the variety of potential organisations in your day to day work. Consideration needs to be given to developing your knowledge of local and national organisations as well as organisations that have transnational reach. Using the existing contacts to ask about organisations that can support you in working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds can be a useful starting point for enquiries and this can have snowballing effect. Internet searches can complement this or be an alternative starting point.

Factors to consider in networking

Networking can pose challenges because of unfamiliarity with other organisations' cultures, working practices, communication practices and organisational and service specific language. To create effective partnerships it is important to understand the different roles and responsibilities of different organisations and their limitations, and to look for opportunities to share ideas, knowledge and resources that complement each other's work in order to maximise the benefit for clients without increasing workloads.

It is also important to remember not to share clients' personal details amongst organisations unless the client understands and has agreed to this.

Case study continuing

...The following week Prosperine came back to see Samuel. He tried to explain to her that she should make an appointment at the local vocational college at which point she burst into tears and said that she has been told that she cannot attend the course. The college receptionist has told her that because she is an asylum seeker she is not eligible to join the course. She asked Samuel to help her and explained that it is very important for her to join the course and find care work because this is her only chance to be reunited with her children who are still in Zimbabwe. Samuel felt under pressure to help Prosperine to bring her children over and said that he will help her with this but was very worried as he did not know what to do...

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues the extent to which you do, and should, network with other organisations.

- How can you identify which potential organisations exist?
- Which other organisations and agencies could or should you be working with?
- Has networking and partnership working enhanced your work with clients in the past?
- Do you engage people from the client's wider life in the process - such as family members or members of their community?
- Do you work in partnership formally or informally? Would it be beneficial to pursue more formal arrangements?

It is important to learn what has worked and what has not worked in previous situations so that such mistakes can be avoided in the future. For example, can you learn from your or other organisations' experiences of developing provision that is more inclusive of women or people of a particular age group? Reflect on the key aspects in developing networks that promote inclusivity. How can this support you in developing intercultural networks?

Case study continuing

...Samuel spoke to his manager who said that he should explain to Prosperine that they cannot offer any other help as family reunion matters and asylum seeker eligibility is not part of their role. Samuel explained that he felt that this will further upset Prosperine and agreed with his manager to first contact local Red Cross to find out if they can help Prosperine.

The Red Cross explained that there is a local service that supports asylum seekers and gave Samuel details. They also explained that the Red Cross can offer information and advice on family reunion matters. Samuel contacted the local asylum support service who provided him with information about asylum seekers' eligibility to access training. He was able to view this information online and found out that Prosperine should be eligible for the course. He printed this information and gave it to Prosperine. He wrote a letter to the college explaining what had happened to Prosperine and included information about her eligibility to study on the course and the contact details for the local asylum support service. He highlighted the need for college frontline staff to be more sensitive to people approaching them for support and to check their entitlements to avoid their exclusion.

He explained to Prosperine that he was unable to offer help with getting her children to join her and advised her to contact the Red Cross. Samuel recognised that making contact with the Red Cross and subsequently with the local asylum support service has enabled him to advocate for his client Prosperine to access her entitlement and to receive support with family reunion.

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in intercultural networking. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1, to help you develop your networking skills and practice. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

Use these hints and tips to help you develop your action plan:

- Work with your manager to decide what actions are needed and to develop and agree an action plan. Gaining support from your manager is important.
- Research local services that may work with or be able to work with your clients.
- Find out what training is available to improve your knowledge about clients' entitlements to training and funding.
- Tell your colleagues about your experiences and what you have found out, to ensure a team wide approach to networking. Other colleagues may also have ideas to help you deal with the situation and can learn from you. You can gain this support more easily if you are able to make a 'business case'. Think about how you can demonstrate that networking:
 - helps you/your team and organisation to meet your own business aims and objectives, and
 - supports you/your colleagues to meet your professional requirements, for example for anti-discriminatory practice.
- Ask your clients about other organisations and people that they are in contact with and what they do.
- Identify which groups of people from different countries and diverse cultures have large populations in your local area. Source training from other organisations to better enable you to work with these groups.

Like other intercultural competencies, networking requires ongoing development. You can achieve this by setting up your own formal and informal networks, attending local forums or joining online forums and communication networks. You can learn which networks and organisations are most important to support you in your work and limit involvement with networks that are not as relevant.

Networks and partnerships evolve and change due to many factors. Your resources and focus, and your organisation's resources and focus, may change over time. Other organisations may cease to provide particular services. Clients, and their needs and requirements, may change over time. Continue to review your networking arrangements to ensure they are appropriate to you, your organisation, and your clients.

4. 6. Intercultural Team Management**What can you learn from this chapter?**

This chapter will help you:

- to take into account the importance of diversity in order to achieve maximum performance
- learn how to get people from different countries and diverse cultures involved and committed with common goals
- learn how to empathise with each group member and their context, in order to adapt the way you interact with them.

It will be useful to those working in a team management role, but also to all VET practitioners working with groups of clients.

Introduction

VET practitioners may also have team management responsibilities. Team management models have changed significantly over the last thirty years. Leadership is embedded in the management role. The modern view of leadership presents the leader as somebody who has responsibilities that can be reached only by co-operating with others, and as somebody who is able to work effectively with all members of their team and across teams. This requires the leader to be flexible in adapting her or his personal style to meet the different needs of team members and to have excellent communication skills.

Expectations and understandings of leadership roles vary across organisations. Expectations and understanding also vary across cultures: the image of a 'leader' that someone from one culture holds may be very different from the image that someone from a different culture holds. The personal leadership style of the leader may clash with members of her or his team depending on cultural paradigms. In this case, tailoring the leadership or management style to individual team members becomes more important.

Team management usually is defined as the ability to conduct a group of persons in a certain direction to reach specific goals, with high levels of commitment and motivation. From this point of view, the team management definition contains at least three dimensions:

1. the ability to set goals and plan
2. the ability to conduct a group of persons in certain direction
3. the ability to motivate.

If you are not a manager in your organisation, most of these abilities are important for people who work in teams.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - intercultural team management

You demonstrate intercultural competence if you...

- apply equality of opportunity to all workers and communicate this in ways they can all engage with
- expect team members to respect each other's values, beliefs and cultural conventions and to value the contributions of all team members
- motivate the team to work as a team, explore common ground and achieve an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and purpose
- develop a working culture that balances the cultural needs and expectations of all team members
- make sure all team members are inducted into the working culture and have the skills and encouragement to continually assess their interaction with their colleagues from different countries or diverse cultures
- use the skills, experiences and contributions of all team members to the benefit of the team when planning and carrying out work.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in this competence. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Do I adapt the goals or procedures of my function according to my knowledge of the team members or clients?
- Do I pay attention to the individual needs of my employees, colleagues or clients in terms of direction and motivation?
- How often do I give feedback to my team, colleagues or clients on how to interact more effectively with people from different countries and diverse cultures?
- When I think of my team, colleagues or clients, do we have a common set of rules that we must follow to assure that each team member respects each other's values, beliefs or cultural conventions? Have there been times when individuals have shown disrespect? What have I done in those cases?
- Do I apply equality of opportunities in my daily job?
- Do I show in my behaviour with my team members any sort of favouritism?
- Do cultural stereotypes influence my decisions?

Case Study

Antonio had worked as a tutor for four years in a VET training centre in Madrid. During this time he gained a lot of experience, and worked with many learners from different countries or diverse cultures.

Wanting to take on a new challenge, Antonio secured a position as a tutor and team manager at a new training institution. The institution was located in the city centre neighbourhood that has experienced a lot of change in recent years due to the arrival of people from different countries. During his induction Antonio learned about the training offer, and training methodologies and resources.

After few weeks, Antonio was informed that some of the tutors were having difficulties when interacting with students from different countries or diverse cultures. Some students complained about the examples that the tutors used during the sessions – in many cases the students didn't understand the examples because they were very specific to the Spanish culture. Some tutors also used linguistic expressions that students didn't understand. Two Muslim students complained that a tutor had made a joke about pork, and they felt offended by this.

Antonio prepared a meeting with the tutors. He described the complaints he had received, and invited comments from the tutors. The tutors informed Antonio that they had a lot of experience of working but mainly with Spanish students and that they are not doing anything different.

Antonio also reviewed the training resources. He realised that many were designed over 15 years ago. Frequently the content did not reflect any cultural diversity. The examples were oriented to the Spanish culture, and there were no examples of people from other countries or cultures...

The process of developing intercultural competence in team management can also be understood using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – It is not necessary to adapt to new team members or clients from different countries or diverse cultures. It is their responsibility to adapt to the usual way of working.
- Conscious incompetence – I was not able to create a united and cooperative group with team members or clients from different countries or diverse cultures, but I don't know why.
- Conscious competence - I will include different people, cultures and goals in the same project and find ways of working that suit everyone, as far as possible.
- Unconscious competence - I have united a very diverse group and it is working perfectly.

At which stage do you think Antonio is? What would you do in this case?

Step 2: further information on intercultural team management

Setting goals and planning

Setting goals is a basic management duty. Common goals are the glue that keeps the members of the team united.

A group may be characterised by the diversities among them, or by the similarities. A good team member emphasises the similarities and tries to minimise the negative impacts of differences. To set common goals is not an easy thing, but it emphasises similarities as it brings people together in working towards a shared goal. Team members must understand that common goals distinguish a team from a group because they unite the members in a shared purpose.

Some activities may help in order to set up common goals:

- Invite team members to team meetings in which goals and strategies are discussed and defined in partnership.
- Clarify fair play rules in the team: respect others' opinions, beliefs and cultural assumptions.
- Assign tasks and projects to team members that don't usually work together, so that they can have the opportunity to get to know each other more in depth.

Planning follows the goal setting, and again collaborative work is better than individual planning.

Activities should be assigned to the different team members on an equality of opportunity basis: according to the qualifications or experience needed. Decisions made on gender, ethnic or cultural reasons are discriminatory practice. Sometimes these discriminatory practice is hidden under cultural assumptions disguised as other 'technical' reasons: a woman wouldn't be able to lead a certain kind of team, or someone who has always lived in the local area would better understand the expectations or needs of the local customers than a migrant would. It is important to ensure equality of opportunities in the big tasks and roles, but also in the small ones.

Conduct a team towards its goals

The second ability related to team management is the ability to drive people to reach their goals, in this case, their common goals. This is usually achieved via four main management activities :

- giving advice
- giving support-coaching
- supervising
- delegating.

The main question that many VET practitioners ask themselves is: how do I match the right activity with the right people? Intercultural factors may impact on this decision: giving advice and giving support are person oriented activities. People coming from person oriented cultures are likely to accept their manager's efforts in these activities. But people from task oriented cultures, may interpret these activities as an invasion of their privacy. There are no magic recipes: each person has to find her or his own way of managing a team according to the needs of team members. The only way to answer do this is to focus on the individual needs of the team members.

'Feedback please!'

Feedback is one of the simplest and most powerful instruments that team managers have. Feedback consists of giving information on someone's performance. The objective of feedback is to allow a team member to understand how s/he is performing, and to improve that performance by reflecting on actual behaviour. Positive feedback is also a motivational instrument.

Here are some helpful tips for giving and receiving feedback:

- Ask others for feedback
- Feedback is not an opportunity for revenge.
- Start by giving positive feedback.
- 'Play with the ball, not with the player.' This means that if you are giving negative feedback, you should focus your feedback on the other person's behaviour, not their personal characteristics.
- Close the discussion with an action plan: what can be done to address any problems or to improve performance. Explore resources that may be needed to aid improvement (e.g. more training, coaching, time).

Feedback needs to be delivered with due sensitivity in any situation. This does not mean that problems are ignored but rather that they are dealt with due regard for people's feelings. Culture affects feedback process as 'feedback' is not a universal concept. It is important that people understand what feedback is about. In some cultures achievements are attributed to the team, not the individual; people coming from those cultures may not understand individual rewards or individual positive feedback. In other cultures, errors in work are very serious issues (and can even result in social punishment) and people may not accept that they have made a mistake easily. In such case a defensive reaction is predictable and therefore any negative feedback needs to be well handled.

Case study continuing

...Antonio quickly realised that he should organise a training seminar for his tutors. Antonio recruited a trainer to run the seminar, with the central aim of making his team aware of the fact that multicultural environments demanded specific skills and behaviours. He also invited the principal to attend the seminar to demonstrate high level support.

During the seminar, Antonio realised that many of the tutors felt unsettled by people from different countries setting in Madrid. They felt that students coming from different countries or diverse cultures should adapt themselves to Spanish culture. But the majority of the tutors understood that these attitudes resulted in barriers to training, and needed to be addressed. After the seminar, Antonio worked with tutors on one-to-one bases, to help them address their fears of change, the unknown and new ideas. After a few months they began to see the benefits of working in an interculturally inclusive way they were able to empathise more easily with their students, and the learning objectives were more easily achieved. Their students also felt more comfortable during the classes, and there were no further complaints.

Antonio also realised that the training resources needed to be rewritten. He worked with the tutors to rewrite these in partnership. The team worked to avoid using examples that were only relevant to Spanish students, and the new case studies and photographs reflected the intercultural richness and diversity of the training institute's students.

A couple of months later, Antonio received a phone call from the principal: he wanted to congratulate Antonio and all his team of tutors because the training institute had been nominated to the Department of Education of Madrid for the Diversity Management Award.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues your norms and values are about intercultural team management. You may wish to consider your practices in relation to:

- The knowledge you have of your team members. What are their expectations? Which kind of leadership style do they need?
- Keeping your communication channels open.
- Giving feedback and providing support, advice, supervision or delegation when needed.
- What your natural leadership style is. Does it match with individual team members' needs? What should I change?

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in intercultural

ral team management. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1, to help you develop your team management skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

Hints and tips

The following hints and tips can help people enhance their intercultural team management skills:

- Involve the team in setting objectives and goals.
- Clarify a set of internal rules that guarantee respect for each other's cultures, values, beliefs and social rules.
- A good manager is a different manager with each member of the team. Therefore it is important to adapt the personal management style to team members' needs.
- Feedback can be two way. Accept feedback on your management style from team members.
- Feedback should be offered on a continuous basis.

4.7 Change Management

What can you learn from this chapter?

This chapter will help you:

- to be able to identify what change is needed and when is the right time for a change
- to calculate in advance the possible consequences of a change
- to prevent possible barriers that may arise from a change.

Implementing and managing change is important for people in a team management role, but also for VET practitioners managing change arising from diversity within groups of clients. VET practitioners also need to be able to respond to change.

Introduction

We can define change management as the ability to create change when needed, and to monitor the change process from the initial stages of the change through to the end of the process, when the changes have been implemented and accepted by those who need to deal with them. This requires the ability to identify, accept and adapt to change, together with the capacity to convert all new ways of working into familiar routines.

Today, diversity is the norm. Staff teams and groups of clients are diverse in many ways: gender, ethnic origins and cultural and academic backgrounds. But we cannot assume that increased diversity in the composition of staff or clients in companies or organisations has had a direct impact on the organisation, leadership and internal rules: often people do not know how to behave when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds, and moreover, some internal rules (not written rules, but informal rules that have to do with the culture of the organisation) have not been changed, and therefore may become discriminative norms.

Change management is not only a question of planning. Change may be planned, but good planning is not enough to implement change effectively. When we think of intercultural competencies, to design or implement a diversity policy is not enough: people continue acting according to well known rules and routines. It is not enough to know that things must change; it is crucial to change them effectively. Change at an individual level requires support at an organisational level.

Change management has four main dimensions:

1. to design and plan changes
2. to deal with the reactions to change (both positive and negative)
3. to support and guide people during the change process
4. to consolidate change and use the changes to promote more change.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - change management

You will demonstrate intercultural competence if you...

- identify and remove barriers that may stop people from different countries or diverse cultures working or learning effectively
- induct, train and support people from different countries or diverse cultures to help them adapt and maximise their learning, productivity, effectiveness and understanding
- manage the expectations and perceptions of existing staff and arrange for any necessary training or ongoing support to achieve the effective recruitment and inclusion of employees and clients from diverse cultural backgrounds
- deal with things that go wrong that are caused by different cultural expectations, miscommunication, misunderstanding or racial tension and minimise their impact on ongoing service delivery, getting support when you need it.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in this competence. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Do I review my professional practices (as a trainer, as an advisor or as a recruiter or manager) to find out what should be changed in order to meet the requirements of intercultural environments?
- In my organisation, do I identify and try to change habits, working routines or rules that are not interculturally effective, or furthermore, discriminatory practices?
- In my environment, do I identify if some people (colleagues or clients) need specific support to implement?
- How do I support people in change process?

Case study

Salim is an engineer in a manufacturing company, based in Brussels. 30% of the workers of the company have a migrant background, and the majority are from Pakistan or Turkey. The company has designed a new internal diversity policy and has run a campaign on valuing diversity.

In the last six months Salim has applied for three different management positions, but was not selected. The positions have been given to three European engineers.

Salim was upset about not being promoted to the new positions and arranged a meeting with his manager, Alain. He told Alain that he thought that the main reason he was not successful was that the top managers prefer to have European workers in management positions. Alain replied that it was not the case and said 'Furthermore, a new diversity internal policy has been implemented three months ago, and it is working'. Salim replied, 'I know, but how many new managers have a different cultural background? How many women are in top management positions?' Alain did not know the exact answer, and he promised Salim to think on this issue, to find out why he was not given the promotions, and to give him an answer as soon as possible.

Alain visited Rupert, the recruiter for his department, and explained the situation. Rupert denied any possibilities of discriminatory procedures in the recruitment and promotion. He had not been involved in Salim's applications and interviews, but assumed that Salim had not been successful because he was not the best candidate for the position...

This process of developing intercultural competence in change management can also be understood using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – I don't like changes and I prefer to preserve the given status quo.
- Conscious incompetence – Perhaps I don't like change because I like doing things the way I always have. But I understand the need to consider new ways of working.
- Conscious competence - I understand that change is needed, and I am trying to adapt my own behaviour and encourage others to do so.
- Unconscious competence – I adapt to change arising from diversity easily and can encourage others to change as well.

In which stage do you think Alain is? In which stage is Rupert? What would you do in this case if you were Alain or Rupert?

Step 2: further information on change management

Resistance to change

Resistance is a common response from colleagues and clients to change. It is natural to be concerned about new situations, and this may result in different reactions:

Cognitive: denial, doubt, radicalisation, etc.

Emotional: fear, insecurity, frustration, hostility, anger, etc.

Behavioural: fight, passive or aggressive behaviour, boycotts, etc.

Resistance to change is therefore:

- an attitude, an understandable behaviour and an individual right and
- the result of the wishes of the people.

People who are dealing with change have to know the basic elements that explain resistance to change, in order to help people come to terms with change.

Fear

New situations, situations of change and uncertainties may generate an emotional response of fear. This is a primary reaction to a situation perceived as a risk or threat, be it real or imaginary.

Fears and concerns are recurring thoughts that usually assail everyone. In some cases, fear becomes so strong that it is not surprising that stress arises.

Not all people are afraid of change, but we can all feel fear of change. Usually this is not because of change itself, but because the possible consequences of that change.

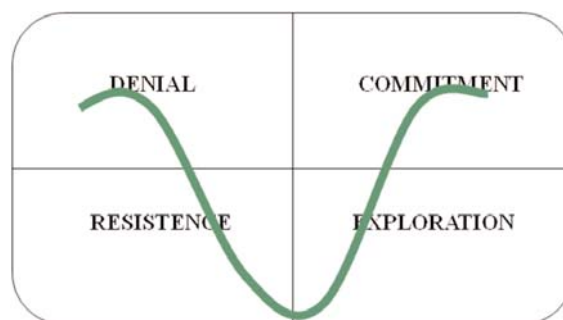
As primary reaction, fear is an automatic response, and difficult to manage. Saying 'do not be afraid' is not helpful because fear is not voluntary. People are afraid; you cannot decide not to be afraid. But you can decide to do something despite the fear it causes.

Change management

To implement a change process is much more difficult than planning it. This is particularly the case in large or complex organisations. To manage change it is necessary to define the direction of change, but also to design a suitable strategy for implementing change, which is called 'change management'. There are two key areas that need addressing to manage change effectively:

- the organisational dimension, i.e. implementing systems and processes that induce and reinforce change in the organisation, and
- the personal dimension, i.e. accompanying people during the change process.

Scott and Jaffe (1995) proposed a model to explain the process of change in people, based on four main elements:



The first reaction may be the denial of a need for change, denying even the existence of reasons for change. Withdrawal, apathy, focus on the past, reinforcing past rituals, etc. are possible behaviours in this phase. To help people move forward, it is important to confront people with facts, be clear and unequivocal: change will happen. It is also important to explain what will happen and why, and the benefits of change.

At this stage, the resistance may follow: anger, guilt, anxiety, depression, and a sense of failure, are common reactions in this phase. A VET practitioner must pay close attention to people in this phase: listening, giving positive feedback, and giving all possible assistance to her or his team or clients.

The third stage is the exploration phase. There will be many new ideas, but also potentially a lack of energy or coherence, and feelings of confusion. To cope with this phase, you must focus on key priorities, set small goals, and encourage the team or clients to get results.

Finally, it is possible to reach the stage of commitment: to do this you should work to develop long-term goals, focusing on teamwork, and reward those already committed.

Of course, some people respond well to change. Their needs should also be taken into account and their enthusiasm harnessed to support change.

Tolerate the error

Tolerating error means being accepting of mistakes. To tolerate the error does not mean accepting it peacefully. It really means to use it as a lever to make things better. Only those who risk error in doing things differently can achieve outstanding results.

An organisation culture that tolerates error will tend to reveal itself through some of the following:

- the systematic use of positive and negative feedback in all directions.
- an emphasis on learning
- encouragement of critical thinking and critical reflection
- encouragement of new ideas and innovation
- investment in training
- presenting problems and system failures as an opportunity for improvement, and therefore as a challenge.

Case study continuing

...After his conversation with Rupert, Alain met with the human resources manager, Lisa. Lisa had been responsible for implementing the diversity policy.

Alain and Lisa identified that the selection and recruitment department was the department with overall responsibility for promotions. The professionals in that department were highly qualified and were committed to implementing the new diversity policy. But some staff in that department were also suspicious of the validity of qualifications of workers from non-European countries. As the technical side of the work was very important, if there were candidates from non-European countries and candidates from Europe, they selected the 'less risky' European candidates.

Rupert was commissioned by Lisa to carry out a review of recruitment practices in order to avoid this discriminatory practice. Rupert held meetings with both the selection and recruitment department, and also senior managers. Senior managers were more confident about the skills and qualifications of their staff, regardless of where they had achieved the qualifications. They knew their engineers, and could guarantee that their skills and qualifications were valid from a technical point of view.

Rupert suggested that promotions should be approved by a committee with both recruiters and senior managers on it. Recruiters could focus on soft skills, and the managers could assess the technical skills. The company approved changes in the selection procedures.

Three months later, a new management position became available. Salim applied and, because the new procedures ensured his skills were assessed fairly, he got the job. Alain was also very glad: he realised that theoretical changes in procedures are not enough to bring about real changes.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues what your norms and values are about change management. You may wish to ask yourself:

- How do I set up the goals for change?
- How do I provide information and feedback to my team and clients about the change I want to sponsor?
- How do I deal with resistance to change?
- How do I react to new ideas and new ways of working?
- How do I promote a culture that tolerates error and uses it to learn from?

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in identifying the need for and implementing change. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1, to help you develop your change management skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

Hints and tips

The following hints and tips can help people enhance their change management skills:

- Set up the objectives of change and to plan it carefully.
- Get as much support as possible.
- Take into account the possible barriers and resistance to change.
- Accompany your team and clients throughout the change process and all its phases, using support, advice and feedback.
- Make the change public and use the changes to produce more changes.
- Promote an organisational culture in which mistakes and errors are tolerated, as a basis for learning.

4.8 Service Orientation

What can you learn from this chapter?

This chapter will help you to:

- learn about the service orientation competence and how it is demonstrated in practice
- become aware of the impact of culture (values, beliefs and conventions) on service delivery
- understand how you can deliver a service taking into account the needs of people from different countries or diverse cultures.

While the rest of this guide has used the term 'client' to describe learners, trainees, service users, etc. in this chapter we sometimes use the term 'customer' as it denotes a particular relationship relevant to this chapter.

Introduction

According to the ISO, a service is a type of product . Service is the result of an activity or interaction between a service provider and a customer.

A service is a type of economic activity that is intangible, is not stored and does not result in ownership. A service is consumed at the point of sale. Services are one of the two key components of economics, the other being goods. Examples of services include the transfer of goods, such as the postal service delivering mail, and the use of expertise or experience, a doctor carrying out an appointment, a teacher teaching a class, etc.

In situations where the customer is from a different country or culture, the service provider must take this into account when providing the service. The service provider should perform the activity while trying to comply with the customer needs and trying to enhance customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction means how much the customer perceives that the provider meets their needs.

Meeting customer needs requires that service provider monitor information relating to customer perception as to whether the organisation has met their needs. This monitoring could be done with different tools such as personal interviews or customer satisfaction surveys.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - service orientation

You demonstrate intercultural competence if you...

- respect and understand clients' values, beliefs and cultural conventions and value them as customers.
- identify any language skills needed and where language support provision can be sourced most effectively
- continually assess your interaction with clients from different countries or diverse cultures and make sure you have the skills to do so
- respond flexibly and positively and solve problems so that the service meets the needs of clients from different countries and diverse cultures
- maintain the same high standard of service for each client
- check that clients are satisfied with the service and resolve differences between their needs and the service offered so that it attracts and does not discriminate against the people you are providing services for
- deal with things that go wrong that are caused by different cultural expectations, miscommunication, misunderstanding or racial tension and minimise their impact on ongoing service delivery, getting support when you need it.

? Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in providing services to people from different countries and diverse cultures. As a VET practitioner ask yourself, how effective is my delivery of service in terms of:

- How do I assess my interaction with clients?
- How do I maintain a high standard of service?
- How do I meet diverse customer needs?

Case study

Aitor works as a training coordinator at a vocational training school in the Basque County, Spain. The school works with clients to develop their skills in working with machinery, to meet local industry needs. Until recently, the majority of clients were from the Basque Country and the school did not receive any specific training regarding working with migrant people.

The school received messages from the local industry that more workers were needed. Aitor realised that migrants were a potential available labour pool. He contacted the Red Cross in order to recruit migrant clients who were seeking training for work. At first, Aitor and the teachers did not change the way of delivering the training to new migrant clients. However, after starting the training programme, gradually migrant clients started to drop out from the training programme. The programme ended with 50% of the original migrant clients completing the training....

This process of developing intercultural competence in self-awareness can also be understood using the four stage model from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, as described in section 3.2:

- Unconscious incompetence – The service we offer is suitable for all people regardless of their values, beliefs and cultural conventions. If they choose not to take up the service, or leave part way through, that is not my problem.
- Conscious incompetence – I have the impression that there are other values, beliefs and cultural conventions which determine people's behaviour. But I don't know why people think my service is not suitable for them.

- Conscious competence – I am trying to understand others' values, beliefs and cultural conventions and to adjust my service to better meet diverse needs.
- Unconscious competence – I am used to reflecting on my values, beliefs and cultural conventions and considering their influence when designing and delivering services. I take these issues into account automatically when developing and delivering my service.

At which stage do you think Aitor is? How do you think the situation will develop? If you were Aitor, what would you do?

Step 2: Further information on service orientation

Improving your own intercultural service orientation competence will support you in working independently with your clients and will increase the quality of the service provided; this means that your organisation will get better results.

Every organisation should aim to be consistent in meeting customer needs, and should strive to exceed their expectations. Customer needs are the starting point for effective service orientation. Therefore, organisations should take the necessary steps to identify and understand customers' needs. There are many tools to assist in this information gathering, but arguably the best tool is face to face interaction. It is advisable to use both face to face interaction as well as other communication methods.

Measuring customer satisfaction

The measurement of customer satisfaction involves 5 steps:

1. Determination of customer satisfaction criteria. These will be different for each company and type of service
2. Selection of the method for gathering of customer satisfaction data - there are different direct and indirect measures of getting customer satisfaction data. Indirect measures can include frequencies or trends in complaints, lost clients, etc. Direct measures include surveys, personnel interviews, etc.
3. Measurement of customer satisfaction - the organisation collects data about customer satisfaction, using methods decided in step 2. Consider using surveys or evaluation forms after finishing each module of the training programme, or each phase of advice or recruitment, and including personal interviews periodically throughout the service delivery.
4. Customer satisfaction analysis and report - this involves the analysis and interpretation of data collected.
5. Monitor customer satisfaction - the customer satisfaction information gained should be compared with other relevant business results. For example, if the organisation's customer satisfaction measures show a positive trend, it should typically also be reflected in increased demand, increased repeat customers, etc.

Case study continuing

...The vocational training school telephoned all the migrants who had left the training programme and asked why they had left. The tool used was the personal telephone interview. Many clients gave the same answer: 'when I started the training programme I was told that I was going to get a job with a specific salary but once I saw the kind of job the training would lead to, I decided it was not the right job for me'.

As a result Aitor and his colleagues reviewed the process of recruiting clients and starting the training programme. When the school organised the second training programme for migrants, the school hired a bus and took the potential migrant clients to a factory. In the factory, the migrants were able to see what kind of job they were going to get after finishing the training and they had the chance to ask questions of factory employees. After the factory visit, Aitor met with the migrant group and explained that, now they had some knowledge of the job that the training programme would lead to, those who were interested in this work should enrol on the training programme, and those that were not should leave their place to someone who is interested.

Since then, the number of clients leaving the training programmes early has reduced drastically. The school, with this approach, focussed on delivering a service that addressed clients' needs and interests - by providing information about the job, salary, working conditions, etc. - which it previously had not...

This case study is based on real life activities at IMH. Click here to see the movie of the awareness activity done by IMH.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this chapter, think again and discuss with your colleagues what else could be done to improve your service orientation competence. Consider the following:

- In the past, how have I taken account of culture (values, beliefs and conventions) in service design and delivery?
- How do I identify customer needs?
- How do I measure customer satisfaction?

Case study continuing

...The school now has plans to include these 'fact finding trips' before the start of any training programmes. In addition, they plan to organise for migrants to visit the school before enrolling on training programmes, so potential clients can review the facilities, equipment and training on offer.

In addition, Aitor had the idea of developing a website to address issues of multiculturalism and diversity. This was set up to improve service orientation. It has specific information for migrants, for other schools and for the companies that will hire clients from the school in the future.

This case study is based on real life activities at IMH. Visit the following address to view the multicultural website: <http://www.inmigramek.com/>



Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in intercultural service orientation. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 1, to help you develop your service design and delivery. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

You may want to use some of these hints and tips in your action plan:

- When working with clients from different countries, find out about the organisational cultures in these countries.
- Provide information about your service and local industry needs. Consider different ways of doing this such as written information in different languages, visual information and/or visits to workplaces.
- Create a 'suggestion box' for clients to suggest how to improve services.

Useful resources, organisations and links

(Please note, this section needs to be developed so the resources are referenced in a consistent way, so brief descriptions are given and to describe which language(s) the resources are available in.)

Michael Stuber: Diversity - Das Potenzial-Prinzip. Personalwirtschaft Buch. 2. Auflage 2009

Michael Stuber: <http://www.european-diversity.com/> or <http://www.ungleich-besser.de/>

Erika Lüthi, Hans Oberpriller: Teamentwicklung mit Diversity Management: Methoden-Übungen und Tools. Haupt Verlag, 2009

Stefan Gaitanides: Interkulturelle Öffnung der sozialen Dienste, in: Hinz-Rommel, Wolfgang/ Barwig, Klaus (Hg.), Interkulturelle Öffnung sozialer Dienste, Lambertus Freiburg 1995, S. 65-83

Stefan Gaitanides: Interkulturelle Öffnung der sozialen Dienste. In: Otto, Hans-Uwe/ Schödter, Mark (Hg.): Soziale Arbeit in der Migrationsgesellschaft. Sonderheft 8 der "neuen praxis" 2006, S. 222-233

Stefan Gaitanides: Verstehen, Verständigung, Vertrautheit. Chancen und Schwierigkeiten der Kommunikation im Berufsalltag mit MigrantInnen unter dem Aspekt von sprachlicher/ kultureller Vertrautheit, sozialmagazin, 1/1997, S. 52-56

Stefan Gaitanides: Interkulturelle Teamentwicklung - Beobachtungen in der Praxis. In: Auernheimer(Hg.) (2008): Interkulturelle Kompetenz und pädagogische Professionalität (2. aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage). Wiesbaden, S. 153-172

INT.COMP – Intercultural Competences for Trainers and Advisers in the Field of Professional Orientation (A/06/B/F/PP-158.305). Leonardo da Vinci Programme 2006. www.intcomp.eu

ICOPROMO – Intercultural competence for professional mobility.
<http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Icopromo/results/>

Bertelsmann Stiftung and Fondazione Cariplo: Intercultural competence – The key competence in the 21st century? (Interkulturelle Kompetenz – Schlüsselkompetenz des 21. Jahrhunderts? Thesenpapier der Bertelsmann Stiftung auf Basis der Interkulturellen-Kompetenz-Modelle von Dr. Darla K. Deardorff. 2008)

Petra Köppel, Dominik Sandner: Synergy by Diversity. Real Life Examples of Cultural Diversity in Corporations. Bertelsmann Stiftung. 1. Auflage 2008.

Kulturforum Bertelsmann Stiftung: <http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xchg/SID-CFA72E8C-1846CE84/bst/hs.xsl/11657.htm>

Sabine Handschuck, Willy Klawe: Interkulturelle Verständigung in der sozialen Arbeit. Ein Erfahrungs-, Lern- und Übungsprogramm zum Erwerb interkultureller Kompetenz. Juventa Verlag 2004.

Barbara Weißbach, Angelika Kipp: Managing Diversity. Konzepte – Fälle – Tools. Ein Trainings-Handbuch. IUK Institut GmbH und Gender Akademie NRW e.V.. Dortmund 2004.

PROINNO Gruppe: Management internationaler Projekte – Arbeitsbuch. Hrsg. Kooperationsstelle Hamburg und Krewer Consult GmbH, Saarbrücken. (German, English, French.)

CILT, the (UK) National Centre for Languages: www.cilt.org.uk/standards (English Language). This website includes National Occupational Standards for interpreting, translation, and other roles, and the European Language Portfolio (a portable record of language skills, devised by CILT and validated by the Council of Europe).

European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities: For Diversity. Against Discrimination http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fdad/cms/stopdiscrimination/about.html?langid=en (English language). This website offers information about the campaign, activities and resources.

Health for Asylum seekers and Refugees Portal (HARP): <http://www.harpweb.org.uk/> (English Language). This provides a directory of information resources for the health needs of asylum seekers and refugees. Some of the information on the website can be relevant for VET practitioners, in particular the 'cultural info' section which provides some basic information about different cultures such as multicultural calendars, religion, population information, etc.

Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) project: <http://www.incaproject.org/> (German, English and Czech languages). This website hosts the INCA framework of intercultural competencies, and a range of assessment tools.

Journal of Intercultural Communication: <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/> (English Language).
Kwintessential: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk> (range of languages). Kwintessential is a private company offering training and services related to intercultural working. The website includes some interesting information and links.

Papadopoulos, I., Tilki, M. and Taylor, G. (1998) Trans-cultural Care, A Guide for Health Professionals. Quay Books. Wilts. (To familiarise yourselves with the Papadopoulos, Tilki and Taylor model of cultural competence see information available on this link: http://www.ieneproject.eu/learning_intro.php)

Phelan, M. and Parkman, S. (1995): How To Do It: Work with an interpreter. Psychiatric British Medical Journal 311:555-557.

Sussex Interpreting Service: <http://www.sussexinterpreting.org.uk/guidelines.asp> (English Language). This website provides guidelines for service providers when working with Sussex Interpreting Services and Community Interpreters. The preparation checklist for working with interpreters may be useful for all regardless of setting

UNEC project: www.unec.eu.com (English Language). This website sets out a catalogue of skills needed by facilitators of multicultural groups. It was developed in the framework of the Socrates project and published in 2005 under the title Developing Skills for Efficient Communication with People from Different Cultural Backgrounds.

Young Yun Kim. *Becoming Intercultural: An integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-cultural Adaptation*. Sage Publications. 2000.

Minhong Wang, Zhaohao Sun. *Techniques for Adaptability in Turbulent Environments*. IGI Global, 2009.

Joan Gurvis, Allan Calarco. *Adaptability: Responding Effectively to Change*. Center for Creative Leadership. 2007.

Jennifer J. Deal, Don W. Prince. *Developing Cultural Adaptability: How to Work Across Differences*. Center for Creative Leadership. 2007

Center for Creative Leadership. www.ccl.org

Davis, N. and Cho, M. O. (2005) Intercultural competence for future leaders of educational technology and its evaluation. *Interactive Educational Multimedia*, Number 10 (April 2005), pp.1-22

<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/iem/article/viewFile/204569/273103>

Comnet (Competencies for Networking) <http://www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php> (English Language). This website offers information, resources and training.

Partnership Development Project: http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:XP_0Evla-SawJ:www.partnershipdevelopmentproject.org.uk/html/our_networks.html+partnership+working+with+refugeeshow+to+network&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk&source=www.google.co.uk (English Language). This provides examples of regional networks in the East of England region and their aims.

Temple, B. and Edwards, R. (2006) *Limited Exchanges: approaches to involving people who do not speak English in research and service development* in B. Temple, and R. Moran (eds) (2006) *Doing Research with Refugees: Issues and Guidelines* chapter 3, pages 37-54, Bristol: The Policy Press. (English Language)

International Association of Cross Cultural Competence . <http://www.wu.ac.at/iaccm>

Association for Multicultural Counselling and Development. <http://www.amcdaca.org/amcd/whatisamcd.cfm>

Claire B. Halverson, S. Aqeel Tirmizi . *Effective Multicultural Teams: Theory and Practice*. Springer, 2008

Farid Elashmawi. *Competing Globally: Mastering Multicultural Management and Negotiations*. 2001.

Victor J. Friedman and Ariane Berthoin Antal (2005), *Negotiating Reality. A Theory of Action Approach to Intercultural Competence*, in *Management Learning*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 69-86.

Beate Schmidt-Behlau (Ed.) (2009), *SOS. Culture Communication Tool Kit*. Guidance materials for European Project Leaders and Teams.

weReurope project: www.wereurope.eu. A website produced in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme and including some tools and suggestions to reflect on diversity and intercultural dialogue in Europe.

INTERtool project, Virtual Intercultural Team Tool: www.intertool.eu . The website provides access to a publication and a virtual community of educators interested in exchanging information about the management of diversity in European projects, as well as access to the Virtual Intercultural Team Tool, a virtual platform aiming at assisting European project teams to improve intercultural communication and build on their cultural diversity for an effective implementation of their projects.

European Federation for Intercultural Learning. <http://www.efil.afs.org/>

Farid Elashmawi. *Competing Globally: Mastering Multicultural Management and Negotiations*. 2001.

John P. Kotter. *Leading Change*. 1996

Richard Luecke and Harvard Business School Press. *Managing Change and Transition*. 2003

<http://www.change-management.com> .This website includes articles, books, training resources, different resources to apply, benchmarking and tutorials. A complete website about change management

ISO 9001:2008. *Quality Management Systems. Requirements*.

Service Orientation: Winning strategies and best practices written by Paul Hallen.

Service Oriented Enterprise written by Setrag Khoshafian.

Appendix 1: Template for Action Plan

Name and role: Date:
Competence: Self assessment for this competence
What stage am I currently in the four stages of learning matrix (unconscious incompetence-unconscious competence, see page x)?
These are indicators of the competence that I perform reasonably well (and I will continue doing in the same way):
My plans for the future These behaviours need to be changed in my own practice:
For each behaviour, write how you plan to change it, what steps you will need to go through to change it, and what support or resources you might need. Consider ideas, techniques or 'hint and tips' you haven't practiced before.

