



Q-mobil – Toolbox zur Qualitätssicherung europäischer Mobilität

# Intercultural Competence

*A learning module for those who wish to develop their skills to work with people from another country or a different culture.*



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### ***What is intercultural competence?***

Sophisticated methods of communication and highly developed transportation systems have, for most people, hugely increased their exposure to other cultures. Television and the Internet enable to see and communicate with people in the most distant areas of the Earth. City dwellers the world over have become accustomed to seeing and individuals from ethnic groups whose appearance, dress, language and customs at first seemed exotic. In small towns it is now commonplace to encounter other cultures when frequenting the variety of ethnic restaurants that have everywhere sprung up. More relevantly to this learning module it is also increasingly normal, especially within the European Union, for human beings to either work in another country or to work with people from other cultures.

Sadly it is well known that many negative reactions are also provoked by this increased exposure to otherness. Prejudice, suspicion, defensiveness, intolerance and aggression are by no means uncommon attitudes towards cultural difference. It goes without saying that such negativity does not result in productive relationships, particularly in the workplace where co-operation and collaboration are indispensable.

Within the European Union there is positive encouragement for member states to embrace and celebrate one another's cultures and, indeed, their common Europeanness. Co-operation and collaboration are fostered by the European Commission and young people especially are encouraged to experience other European cultures by embarking on working placements abroad. Anyone who has undertaken this kind of activity will understand that many adjustments have to be made in order to feel comfortable with, for example, the host culture's different ways of doing things, of thinking about things, and of behaving towards others. They will also understand how important it is to strive to make these adjustments in order to be able to work productively and harmoniously with ones hosts.

One has to firstly **know about and understand** the reason for the differences one encounters. Secondly one has to exercise **patience, tolerance and openness** when faced with ways that may at first seem strange, or even ridiculous. Finally, one has to be **adaptable** in order to blend in productively with the host culture.

These are the keys features of intercultural competence (ICC). Some individuals seem to naturally endowed with such qualities; others may need to work to develop them

### ***Introduction to the module***

The module is based upon one part of a set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Intercultural working compiled by a team of specialists under the



direction of the Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CILT) in the United Kingdom. These NOS have been approved as the U.K. standards for this occupational area by the U.K. Commission for Education and Skills, the body that, among other things, oversees NOS.

National Occupational Standards have been, and continue to be, developed for a wide range of occupations. They form the basis for the conferment of occupational qualifications at a range of National Qualification Framework (NQF) and, therefore, European Qualification Framework (EQF) levels. Such standards, each set of which applies specifically to one occupational (job) area, are expressed as statements of competence (more specifically as performance outcomes or performance criteria) that describe what a person who is deemed to be competent at a certain level within that occupation must be capable of doing. NOS are always accompanied by outlines of the knowledge and understanding that are needed to effectively underpin the occupational competence, since being able to do something necessarily entails a degree of knowledge and understanding.

Thus qualifications of this competence-based type are specified in terms of OUTCOME and not in terms of (teacher) INPUT. Indeed, there is no specification concerning the manner in which the stated competence and knowledge are acquired. On the other hand it is essential that the methods of assessment employed to judge the competence and knowledge are highly valid and reliable (see below). NOS units or modules are therefore essentially units of assessment. This and the fact that the manner in which these qualifications are managed allows individuals to build up their competence AT THEIR OWN PACE make NOS completely compatible with both the EQF and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

### ***Who is the module for?***

The module is suitable for anybody from any country or culture who is building working relationships with a person or persons from another country or culture.

### ***What are the key elements of the module?***

The learning and development targets of the module are expressed as **performance outcomes** and statements of **knowledge and understanding**. These are supplemented with a list of **underpinning personal qualities** and some **indicative content** (intercultural contexts, situations, problems) that the above two categories of learning outcome are likely to relate to. Finally, the operation of the module entails a number of **roles**. Some explanation of these elements follows.



## ***Roles***

The individual who is working towards the qualification is referred to as the **candidate**. (S)he may be supported and guided by **(a) mentor(s)** and **(a) tutor(s)** who are instrumental in helping to identify opportunities for learning and development and in co-operating with the **candidate** in learning and reflective activities. Any number of other individuals, such as colleagues or clients, who are active in the **candidate's** workplace may also be informally involved in such activities, since the acquisition of ICC is actively carried out in real life and in real time **in the workplace**. An **assessor** is responsible for planning, carrying out and recording, in accordance with specified guidelines, periodic assessments of the **candidate**. **Internal and external verifiers** ensure that assessment procedures are carried out in accordance with awarding body guidelines.

## ***What are performance outcomes?***

The broad concept of intercultural competence is broken down into a set of ten descriptions of behaviours that can be gradually developed through practice by the candidate. It is difficult to pin down the precise nature of ICC in such statements and there may well be room for discussion about their exact meaning. For this reason it will be necessary for the candidate, mentor/tutor and assessor to work together at fully comprehending them from the outset. They will need to be referred to continuously so that they become internalised and so that the candidate's progress can be gauged. Assessment judgements are made against the performance outcomes.

## ***What is meant by knowledge and understanding?***

All purposeful behaviour is carried out on the basis of knowledge and understanding. The statements in the module capture some of the areas that are critical to ICC. In most cases these refer either to ways in which certain actions may provoke certain responses in others, i.e. aspects of human psychology, or to ways in which language is used in human relationships. There is also reference to knowledge of differences between cultures.

This aspect of the module is of equal importance to the performance outcomes and must be as rigorously assessed. For example, candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding explicitly by, say, answering questions or by producing a report.



### ***What are underpinning personal qualities?***

This is an indicative (non-exhaustive) list of the kinds of personal qualities that can be associated with ICC. Those who already possess some or all of these are likely to develop their level of ICC more readily than those who are lacking in them. They serve as self-diagnostic instruments, so that useful self-reflective work can be carried out on the basis of them at all stages of the Q-Mobil cycle. For those who are so inclined they can also serve as useful targets or milestones. Finally they provide an additional view of ICC that should make the performance outcomes and knowledge statements simpler to comprehend.

The personal qualities are not a directly assessed element of ICC within the module.

### ***What is indicative content?***

The aspects of culture listed represent the type of subject matter that any candidate working towards intercultural competence is likely to be called upon to engage with. They overlap with some of the example material listed together with the knowledge statements. The list is not exhaustive, however it does capture key areas. It does not in itself form a mandatory part of the award.

### ***Performance outcomes***

1. Recognise your own values, beliefs and cultural conventions and how they affect your perceptions and expectations in work situations.
2. Actively seek to understand how your values, beliefs, cultural conventions and language use appear to other people.
3. Base your opinions of people on your own interaction with them rather than on common perception, stereotypes, their accent or their dress.
4. Challenge and adapt your own assumptions about the behaviour of people from different countries or diverse cultures.
5. Challenge any stereotypes, prejudice or racism expressed by other people about yourself or others.
6. Communicate in ways that can be understood by the people from the other countries or cultures you are working with.



7. 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.
8. Work in ways that balance other people's expectations of you with the need to achieve organisational objectives.
9. Deal constructively with situations that you find unclear or confusing when working with people from different countries or diverse cultures and maintain respect for individuals when you are unable to understand or empathise with their views or behaviour.
10. 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.

*From: NOS for Intercultural Working © CILT 2008*

### ***Knowledge and understanding***

*To perform effectively you need to know and understand the following*

#### *1. Cultural influences*

- How differences and similarities between your own and other people's cultural behaviour may change or affect attitudes, expectations, communication and working practices. (For example timekeeping, timescales, decision-making processes, perceptions of status and role, attitudes to men and women, communication styles and conventions, attitudes to emotion and levels of hierarchy and formality.)
- How your and other people's values and beliefs may change as culture evolves or you and they are exposed to a different culture. (For example by growing up in a country that is not your or their parents' or grandparents' native country, by living or working abroad, by living or working with people from different countries or cultures.)
- How to base your opinions and actions towards people from a different country or diverse culture on them as an individual and not on common



perception, stereotypes, prejudice or old information. (For example by asking the person, by judging them on their own work, by getting to know them.)

- How cultural stereotypes can be reinforced by the way you and others behave and present information about your country or culture.

## 2. *Communication and language*

- How your use of language, body language, gestures and tone of voice may appear to people from different countries or diverse cultures and how theirs may affect your perceptions of them.
- The possible results of a lack of understanding or ineffective communication tools. (For example disagreements, misunderstanding about expectations, potential conflict.)
- The politeness conventions used by yourself and the people from the countries or cultures you are working with and how these may affect people's perceptions of each other. (For example apparent rudeness caused by non-use, apparent insincerity caused by over-use of 'please' and 'thank you'.)
- Ways to minimise misunderstanding and improve communication with people with a different first language to you. (For example by taking the time to listen closely to what they are really saying, learning the conventions for introductions and greeting, not using your own fluency as a way to overpower others, learning some simple phrases in their language, gesturing, avoiding idioms, explaining acronyms, using pictures and diagrams, learning their language.)
- The challenges in communicating with people from another culture who share the same first language with you. (For example differences in vocabulary, spelling, accent, expressions and directness.)

## 3. *Working relationships*

- How finding shared ground can contribute to good working relationships between people from different countries or diverse cultures.



#### 4. *Training and support*

- What training and support to develop your skills for working with other people from different countries or diverse cultures might be relevant to you and who to approach to access it. (For example language awareness training, language training, intercultural skills training, training courses about specific cultures.)

#### 5. *Equality laws and regulations*

- The laws, regulations and company guidelines that dictate how you are expected to behave with people from different countries or diverse cultures, how to apply them in relation to your work and where to get further information and advice about them. (For example equality legislation, company policies and values, codes of practice.)
- What to do or who to approach if you or a colleague feel unfairly treated at work. (For example relevant manager, trade union representative.)

*From: NOS for Intercultural Working © CILT 2008*

#### ***Underpinning personal qualities***

*These are a non-mandatory part of the standard but are desirable attributes and attitudes, which people with different cultural experiences working together might need. They represent what people who are well disposed to intercultural working may aspire to and grow towards*

- You enjoy working alongside people with different cultural experiences and perspectives to your own and actively try to appreciate why differences and similarities may exist.
- You are able to reflect on how your own working practices might be perceived by others and are ready to negotiate new ways of working.
- You are open to the positive potential of cultural diversity in the generation of ideas and in developing workplace productivity.



- You are sensitive to the different levels of *English* language skills people have and are willing to adapt your language in the interests of mutual comprehension.
- You are sensitive to how your use of language, tone of voice and behaviour may be interpreted by others.
- You are able to look critically at work practices and projects and make contributions designed to enhance intercultural cooperation and understanding.
- You are working towards greater critical understanding of difference while appreciating that this is a lifelong process.
- You are aware that others subscribe to equality and human rights in different ways, but do your best to adopt an ethical outlook which reflects how you would like to be treated yourself.

*From: NOS for Intercultural Working © CILT 2008*

### ***Indicative content***

*The following list provides an indicative summary of the kinds of aspects of culture with which candidates are likely to need to engage. A number of these have already been mentioned above.*

- Cultural conventions and values: treatment of people depending on age, gender, status, job role and experience; attitudes to punctuality, waiting, queuing; expectations of service and work- or service-related undressing and contact, expectations of bargaining, use of machinery, etc.
- Communication styles and language use: clarity, speed, use of jargon; formality and politeness; body language and eye contact; directness; display of emotion and facial expressions, focus on task or relationship.



- Self-awareness: knowledge of own conventions, language use, communication style, attitudes and how they affect expectations.
- Cultural and religious requirements: washing, dress, dietary customs and requirements, prayer times.
- Key cultural aspects of the target culture: languages spoken; main communities/ minorities; geography, history and traditions; famous people/places; sport, culture and leisure; family, home, community and working life; lucky/unlucky numbers and colours.
- Available resources: books; media; direct contact; film and television broadcasts; cultural and language courses or training.

*Based on: NOS for Intercultural Working © CILT 2008*

### ***Learning (and teaching) strategies***

It should by now be patent that this module does not depend upon a “course of study”. The emphasis is on **learning** and not on teaching. Occupational standards are designed to clarify what competence is required in a specific occupational area and hence to enable an individual to embark, in a work environment, on a developmental journey in partnership with supporting mentors and/or tutors. Learning and development are therefore principally achieved by DOING, as this is generally acknowledged as the best way to learn\*.

However, in the interests of efficiency activities at work need to be structured, discussed and deeply reflected upon jointly by the candidate, the mentors/tutors and the assessor so that the module outcomes can be purposefully and systematically approached. Thus learning activities additional to the normal occupational duties can include reflective writing, reading and research, report production, case studies, role play, discussion, professional conversations between the candidate and others, observation of others, following instructions and so on.

Indeed, no learning methods are proscribed, but those that most effectively facilitate the desired learning and development are favoured by candidates. A course of study is naturally also a possibility for certain learning targets, but it is

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\* It should be noted that occupational standards also enable an individual to simply claim credit for competence that they already possess, in which case no **new** learning is necessarily required, although assessment has to be carried out in order to confirm the claim to competence.



not the obvious method for someone who is learning on the job. Specific taught inputs may nonetheless in some circumstances serve a useful purpose: for example in the preparatory coverage of cultural differences to be anticipated in the host country.

### ***Assessment***

Assessment of occupational standards takes the form of candidates providing acceptable **evidence** of their current occupational competence. It is a fairly formal process. In the first place assessors are required to be qualified in both the occupational area in question and also in the occupational area of “assessment”. In the second place the methods of assessment used must be as valid and reliable as possible. To be valid a method of assessment must truly assess what it purports to assess. Thus, if an individual’s ability to carry out the duties of their role is being assessed, then an obvious way to assess this is to **observe** the individual carrying out the duties in question. It would not be valid to ask the candidate to write an essay about doing their duties. To be reliable an assessment method must produce a true record of the candidate’s ability. For example, it would not be reliable to assess a person under abnormal conditions. **Oral question and answer** would typically follow the observation of a candidate’s performance in order to assess knowledge and understanding. Typical assessment methods for occupational standards include, in addition to **observation and Q&A, reports produced by the candidate and other “witnesses”, written question and answer, assignment tasks and evidence from prior achievement.**

Just as the learning journey is determined by the individual candidate’s characteristics and preferences, so also is the assessment process. Candidate and assessor jointly plan a series of valid and reliable assessments that enable the candidate to provide evidence, in stages, of competence across the areas specified in the module. The link between the assessment instrument and the relevant learning outcomes should be evident. Since candidates should be permitted to develop at their own pace assessment should only be carried out when the candidate is ready, so that negative judgements are minimised and unnecessary expense spared. Responsible assessment planning should ensure this. This does not imply that candidates should not be encouraged to move forward quickly. Indeed there may be very good reasons for encouraging a faster pace of development.

### ***Openness, knowledge and adaptability\****

Although not formally incorporated in the module outcomes these three overarching aspects of ICC, mentioned earlier, provide a simple framework that can aid the candidate on her/his developmental path:



The interculturally competent person is:

- open to and tolerant of difference
- willing to acquire new knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- prepared and able to make efforts to adapt their behaviour and beliefs in the interests of cultural harmony and productive co-operation

**Openness** can in turn be further broken down into **respect for otherness** and **tolerance of ambiguity**.

**Knowledge** includes **knowledge discovery** (e.g. of facts about another culture) and **empathy** (knowledge of how others feel).

**Adaptability** consists of **behavioural flexibility** and **communicative awareness**.

*\* Source: The INCA (Intercultural Competence Assessment) Project, © INCA LdVII 2004*



<b>Suggested Sources of Evidence (Assessment Methods) for Intercultural Competence Performance Outcomes</b>							
<i>Evidence P.O</i>	<i>Candidate's reflective report</i>	<i>Observation and report</i>	<i>Oral Q&amp;A/ Professional exchange</i>	<i>Written question and answer</i>	<i>Report from others</i>	<i>Case study</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
a	1		3		2		
b	1	3	4		2		
c	1	3	4		2	5	
d	1	2	3				
e	2	1	3	4		4	
f	2	1	3		4		
g	2	1	3		4		
h	2	1	3		4		
i	2	1	3		4		
j	1	2	3				

Numbers indicate order of preference. At least two sources of evidence, and preferably three, should be used for each outcome. 4 and 5 indicate a secondary level of evidence.



## ***Explanation of sources of evidence***

### *Candidate's report*

This is a reflective written report produced by the candidate to address specific aspects of the performance outcomes and knowledge and understanding. Such reports may well focus on particular cases or incidents. These can be effectively generated if the candidate is required to keep a reflective journal (RJ), a diary in which feelings, responses, thoughts judgements and resolutions can be regularly recorded. The RJ can be an extremely powerful instrument in that it can:

- provide a very valuable outlet to the candidate to express him/herself and to work at resolving inner conflicts
- enable the candidate to specifically address many aspects of both the performance outcomes and the knowledge base including analysis of the intercultural behaviour of **others** in the workplace setting
- provide a basis for the production of reflective reports
- provide extremely valuable evidence for the assessor the make valid and reliable judgements about the candidates intercultural performance, knowledge and understanding

Clearly the RJ may be viewed by the assessor and any other persons agreed by the candidate.

### *Observation and report*

This can either be an observation of a specific process, e.g. an interview with a person from another culture, or a longer term observation of intercultural behaviour at work. It is best carried out with a checklist, derived from the performance outcomes and knowledge statements, which specifies what constitutes a competent performance. The candidate should be told when (s)he is being observed and should be familiarised with the checklist. Oral questions can be used to clarify any points after the observation. A brief report is produced as a record of the outcome of the observation. This can consist primarily of the assessor's notes written on the checklist.

### *Oral question and answer/professional exchange*

These are both ways of gathering evidence of knowledge and understanding. Oral Q&A is structured and more business-like, whereas a professional exchange is likely to be longer and less structured exploratory process that covers a wider range of issues. The RJ, or extracts therefrom, would form an excellent basis for a professional exchange.

### *Written question and answer*

These can be used to cover more formal and more complex aspects of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may be less nervous than with oral questions and have more time to reflect and formulate sophisticated responses. They can be used for simple Q&A with candidates who are very nervous. Conversely, oral



questions can be used with candidates who have difficulties with writing (e.g. dyslexia). Care must be taken to ensure that candidates produce their own answers, so written Q&A should ideally be done under supervision.

#### *Report from others*

Just as individuals in a work environment can contribute to a reference statement for a colleague, so reports on the performance of a candidate can be used to contribute towards assessment judgements. They could, for example, form part of a 360° evaluation. Questions could be raised about the reliability of such evidence, but provided that guidance is given and certain checks carried out such reports can be extremely valuable. They are sometimes referred to as witness testimony.

#### *Case studies*

Case studies based on real relevant situations are invaluable sources of evidence. However, in the absence of such circumstances that provide relevant opportunities for assessment it may be necessary to resort to fictional case studies in order to gather a “surrogate” response from a candidate, i.e. oral or written evidence of what the candidate **would** do in certain circumstances. Indirect evidence of this kind should be only be used if no other possibilities are available.

#### *Assignments*

Assignments are simply tasks that are set up to enable a candidate to provide performance and knowledge evidence. They should make use of real, not simulated, work situations.

30<sup>th</sup> June 2012



## Sample Materials for the Intercultural Competence Module

### **Introduction**

In order to produce relevant and effective learning, teaching and assessment materials to support the development of intercultural competence, it is vital to have a clear understanding of the defining characteristics of this type of qualification. These are set out in the module document, but it is worth itemising them here:

- The developmental targets of the award are new competences, expressed as performance outcomes and knowledge/understanding statements. These two different types of outcome should be read together as they are closely interlinked. It can be seen that the knowledge/understanding statements in particular contain many examples that make the performance outcomes more comprehensible
- The targeted competences, which are work-related, are to be achieved primarily through carrying out the normal duties of a relevant job in a workplace. This does not imply that other methods of learning may not be used: it simply rests on the belief that the most natural and effective way of developing competence is by DOING. No particular learning methods are otherwise prescribed or proscribed.
- The individual participant first practices the various aspects of the targeted competences in the very process of working and, step by step, in a planned manner individually tailored to her/his learning speed, needs and preferences, undergoes a series of assessments in which (s)he demonstrates competence (performance and knowledge/understanding). This process is referred to as the gathering and presenting of EVIDENCE of competence.
- Step by step the planned assessments\* cover the entire requirements of the module.

***\*Assessments must, of course, result in the decision that the participant is indeed competent. If a particular assessment indicates that (s)he is not yet competent, then a repeat assessment must be planned and executed. In theory no assessment should be carried out unless it is clear from informal observation that the participant is competent and therefore ready for assessment.***

Thus, during phase 1 of the Q-Mobil cycle, a participant is likely to attend preparatory activities in which (s)he is encouraged to anticipate and reflect upon the aspects of ICC specified in the module and how they are likely to manifest themselves in the forthcoming placement. Much invaluable groundwork in ICC relating to basic concepts, values and principles can be covered during the planning phase, not forgetting a thorough examination of the performance and knowledge/understanding outcomes

During phase 2, in placement, new learning (and teaching) is likely to take place on a one-to-one basis. The mentor will be responsible for managing the developmental process and ensuring that the participant is always clear about learning and assessment targets and feels sufficiently supported and at ease in other respects. Learning tasks can be given to the participant to develop his/her ICC and to gather



valuable evidence of it. In a really effective placement setting several colleagues could be mobilised to support the development of the participant.

Finally, during the placement some formal assessment will be jointly (i.e. between participant and assessor) planned and carried out. Properly planned and executed assessments that result in a positive outcome are highly motivating and provide extremely valuable feedback to the candidate.

The sample materials that follow are therefore designed for use in one or other of phases 1 and 2.

### ***Analysis of the Performance Outcomes into Specific Learning Objectives***

As they stand the performance outcomes in the module are fairly broad statements. Their analysis into more specific statements (learning objectives) can greatly facilitate the production of learning, teaching and assessment materials. A suggestion for such an analysis can be found in appendix 1. Just like the module performance outcomes these more specific outcomes should be used in conjunction with the knowledge/understanding statements, as the latter provide many ideas for content.

### ***Levels of competence***

The INCA Project\* has furnished us with a useful staging of intercultural competence into 3 levels. This enables participant and assessor to register positive development on the way to full competence and therefore serves as a motivator. The levels broadly represent increasing degrees of internalisation of the concepts and principles of ICC and growing autonomy in their application in appropriate situations. Both assessor and assessee versions are reproduced in full in appendices 2 and 3; a general outline of the levels follows:

Level 1: Shows willingness to interact positively with those of other cultures. Responds enthusiastically to ICC aims and ideas, but has not yet had enough experience to be able to anticipate and deal with intercultural situations without guidance and support. Is tolerant of other cultural practices but can still find them challenging.

Level 2: Has developed, as a result of training and experience, a more systematic understanding of the kinds of intercultural situation that may arise along with the skills to be able to deal with them. Is far less dependent upon guidance and support, though still needs it in certain circumstances. Is far more able to respond neutrally to cultural differences.

Level 3: Has largely internalised the competences needed to deal with intercultural situations. Has access to a range of strategies to deal with intercultural encounters and the differences that arise in intercultural settings. Can readily empathise with others and behaves consistently in ways which avoid friction and offence. Is able to intercede when difficulties arise in order to



mediate. Handles own responses to difference in a respectful yet assertive manner that makes own position clear whilst acknowledging that of others.

### ***The sample materials***

The sample materials are suggestions for approaching some aspects of ICC learning, teaching and assessing with young adults. The tasks, for use primarily in phase 1, require learners to work in a range of different ways that involve interaction and reflection, but they end up with a requirement to record experiences and reflections in a form that can be used as evidence of competence. Competence, as has already been emphasised, embraces both performance (doing) and knowledge (knowing and understanding). It is assumed that the tasks will be mediated by a teacher who is familiar with the concepts, values and principles of intercultural competence. The teacher can therefore break down the tasks into their smaller constituent elements, each of which can be expanded if it seems profitable to do so. The points can, of course, be tackled in a different order and other prefatory material can be added to prepare learners for the tasks if a teacher considers that this is required. Finally, the teacher is free to manage the tasks as (s)he thinks fit. For example, reflective tasks can be carried out either in small peer groups or they can be “led” via teacher elicitation (question and answer with the plenary group).

The other items are designed mainly, but not only, for assessment during phase 2.

“**Mirror, Mirror...**” is intended for use with a group but it can also be used with an individual. The purpose of it is to encourage learners to reflect on their own cultural identity and to begin to explore the meaning of key ICC concepts. It is designed for use in the early stages of ICC work with participants who need to be familiarised with the basic concepts.

“**First Impressions**” addresses the issues of stereotyping and prejudice. It can be used either with groups or with individuals if no peers are available and it can be treated at different levels of complexity. Adaptation and shift of emphasis is possible as with the previous task. The link with specific learning outcomes derived from the module performance outcomes is clear. It should be noted, however, that other learning outcomes can be formulated and used as long as they target learning that will, eventually, lead to the development of competence. Indeed, some inexperienced learners may need much preparatory work before they can even embark on work that is directly related to the module requirements.

“**The Reflective Journal**” captures the key features of a tool that can be an extremely powerful learning aid and an invaluable source of assessment evidence. Reflective writing can be structured and presented in various ways but the idea of a regularly maintained “diary” has the advantage of allowing sufficient freedom to the participant to stamp his/her individuality upon it. The RJ can enable a tutor (or mentor if the participant agrees her/his access to the RJ) to monitor development and



to intervene if necessary to redirect a learner. It also provides an excellent starting point for “professional conversations” about ICC and the participant’s development.

**“Sample Checklist”.** It has been emphasised that the observation of performance in the workplace is of major importance in assessing competence. A checklist enables the assessor to structure the observation into specific behaviours that form an identifiable part of the competence in question. The sample exemplifies this. Aspects of the module performance outcomes and knowledge statements have been reformulated as “performance criteria” that, in combination, constitute a part of the targeted competence. It is these behaviours that the assessor desires to witness when observing the participant in intercultural exchanges. When the assessor is satisfied that (s)he has witnessed the participant exhibiting the behaviour a sufficient number of times (s)he can confirm this with a relevant comment in the appropriate column and a tick in the “met” column. It may require a number of observations to cover all the criteria; it may, alternatively, require reports (completed checklists) from other designated observers (witnesses) to cover everything efficiently. This is not a new idea: managers have always reported on the performance of their subordinates. This version of reporting is simply more structured and specific. Questions can be put to the participant after an observation to clarify any issues or to check their understanding of the reasons underlying the behaviours they have demonstrated. Finally, checklists serve as records of an assessment so that the achievements and growing credit of the participant are formally noted. Signed and dated copies are kept by both assessor and participant.



## Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall..

**Task:** To reflect on and characterise your own cultural identity and its origins. To describe how you try to present yourself and what impression you hope to make on others. To consider aspects of your own culture that may contrast significantly with those of other cultures.

### Objectives:

- define the meaning of the terms “culture, values, beliefs and cultural conventions”
- describe own cultural identity, its complexity and its origins
- explain how own culture contains potential for conflict with other cultures

### Guidance:

1. Choose a particular setting such as college, work, or general social life (including choosing close friends) and consider first what are the important things that you look for in others with whom you will be interacting.

**Teacher can give a few prompts, such as: particular personal qualities, physical appearance, intelligence, beliefs, emotion, skills and abilities, interests, values, humour/seriousness, being different, being conventional, etc. This can be interwoven with an exchange on the meaning of concepts like values, beliefs and cultural conventions and on the usefulness of using headings or categories to organize and structure thoughts and writing.**

2. List these things in order of importance as best you can. If you can group any of them under the headings of values, beliefs and cultural conventions, do so. If not, use other headings if you wish to and are able to. Otherwise list them individually.
3. Using your own list and headings of what you look for in others, construct a portrait of yourself as you feel you are and as you wish others to see you. Add comments that indicate where you would like any aspects that you have identified in yourself to be more or less pronounced.

**Teacher can introduce a discussion on the meaning of “culture” and “cultural identity”. This could start with a list of the key groups that most people feel they belong to, e.g. gender, nationality, ethnic, language, age, class, profession, religion, etc. The discussion could explore the way that these and the many other social groups and sub-groups that exist each has its own culture that may overlap with many other cultures. A Venn diagram works well to illustrate this. The main point is to try to pin down what the term “culture” means, making reference to “values, beliefs and cultural conventions” and to encourage learners to recognize the origins and nature of their own multi-faceted cultural identity. It is important that learners should be able to grasp the complex and fluid nature of cultural identity.**

4. Can you identify what gives you the cultural identity that you feel you have and/or prefer to have?
5. Can you think of occasions when aspects of your personal cultural identity have come into potential conflict with those of another culture (for example, when you have been together with people from other cultures either at home or abroad)? Can you also think of any examples of cultures where aspects of you, as you have described yourself, might cause others to be offended?
6. What did/would you do to minimise the potential friction?
7. Produce a 250 word reflective report about your own cultural identity, its origins and its potential incompatibilities with other cultures. Include this in your reflective journal. You may be asked to return to it later to see how you might revise it.



## First Impressions

**Task:** To examine how our opinions of others can be influenced by their accent, appearance and dress. To consider how feelings towards others can be shaped by common perception and stereotyping.

### **Objectives:**

- Give examples of how accent, appearance and dress can influence our opinions of others.
- Explain, using examples, how both common perception and stereotyping can influence our opinions of others.
- Describe how own feelings towards others have been negatively influenced by accent, appearance, dress, common perception and/or stereotyping.

### **Guidance:**

1. Either in groups, pairs or individually\* select 3 or 4 persons who are currently in the public eye and whom you consider to belong, wholly or partly, to a culture that is not your own. The individuals do not have to belong to a different country or language group, but they can if you so wish.

**Teacher can explain how cultures vary from group to group and provide examples of public figures to prompt the learners. A suitable current selection for the UK could include George Osborne, Paris Hilton, Dizzie Rascal, Kate Middleton, Wayne Rooney, Yohan Blake, Prince Charles, Dominic Cumberbatch, Russell Brand, Jo Brand.**

2. Try to describe how they look, speak and dress. Jot down key words that portray these aspects. With which culture(s) do you associate each individual? Are the words you chose to characterise them positive or negative?
3. Discuss your own/peers' impressions of these individuals. What do you think they are like as people? Try to capture the feelings that you can't help having about these individuals based on what you have seen and heard of them. Are these positive or negative impressions?
4. Report back to the whole group on your (joint) findings.
5. To what extent do you and your peer group think your impression is fair/unfair? Give reasons for your opinions.

**A brief discussion of the meaning of "common perception and stereotyping" can follow this.**

6. Try to explain to what extent common perception and stereotyping have influenced your feelings about the individuals above.
7. Individually, recall one or more cases from your own experience where your first impressions have been influenced by accent, dress, appearance, common perception and stereotyping.
8. Describe what happened to change or confirm your first impressions.
9. Write some guidance and advice points for a younger person to help them avoid making premature and unreliable judgements about others.
10. Record your reflections and conclusions for this task in your reflective journal.

- **Group work can help those who lack confidence to express their own feelings. Individuals can report on others' or collective experience and views rather than just their own.**



## The Reflective Journal

The reflective journal (RJ) is a document in which you regularly record the experiences you encounter that are of relevance to the development of your intercultural competence.

### ***Purpose of the RJ***

Maintaining the RJ enables you to provide evidence of your understanding of the concepts, values and principles underlying intercultural competence and your ability to act, in an ICC context, in a manner that demonstrates your openness, your tolerance, your ability to empathise, your adaptability and your communicative skill.

### ***Content of the RJ***

The journal will contain a record of significant experiences you have had during your placement, the preparation period leading up to it and also in your previous life. It will also include your reflections upon them. A clearer idea of what counts as relevant material can be obtained by studying the performance outcomes, the knowledge and understanding statements and the personal qualities sections of the module. Ultimately, however, you will decide what is relevant. You will also be sharing your personal reactions and thoughts, although you are not obliged to share anything that you do not wish to. The content of the RJ will provide extremely valuable evidence of your understanding of ICC and your insights into its challenges. It is therefore in your interests to reveal your reflections.

### ***Who will read it?***

Only your tutor, and your assessor will have access to your material. It may well form the basis of discussions between you and them. It may also be passed to an external assessor if your own assessor is requested to do so. You may share it with whomever else you wish.

### ***How do you construct entries?***

Once you have decided on something that you wish to report, you should:

- Describe what happened as clearly as you can, including all relevant details but not writing at greater length than is necessary.
- Reflect on and describe what you thought/think about what happened and how you felt/feel about it.
- Explain what was significant about what happened, e.g. what was good/bad about it.
- Try to analyse what happened. What were the reasons for it? What were or could be/have been the consequences? (This may, of course, entail explaining your own actions). Why did it prompt your reaction?
- Explain what you think should have happened. What else could you/others have done? How could outcomes have been improved?
- What have you learnt from the experience? How will it help you to act or respond in the future? What did it tell you about yourself and about others?\*

***N.B. You should keep your entries anonymous and avoid revealing any unnecessary personal detail about yourself or others. Maintain a scrupulously professional tone, at all times avoiding pointless direct criticism or maliciously negative portrayal of others.***

The above is only a framework to guide you; you do not need to laboriously answer the questions systematically every time. Remember that you are trying to provide evidence of your competence (both performance and knowledge).

\* **Suggestions based on:** Gibbs, G *Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods.* Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford



### Example of a checklist to be used by an assessor when observing performance

Name of candidate:	Name of assessor:
Award: Certificate in Intercultural Competence	Unit:
Date of observation:	Location:
Start time of observation:	End time of observation:

Performance criteria	Assessor's comment	Met
Attempts to identify communication barriers of others.		
Uses language which is both comprehensible and inclusive.		
Checks regularly to ensure that others have understood.		
Attempts to assist others to express ideas clearly.		
Uses techniques to indicate that (s)he is listening actively.		
Applies techniques to ensure that (s)he has understood what others are attempting to say.		
Uses a range of methods to convey meaning when others have difficulty in understanding.		
Uses body language, gestures and tone of voice sensitively to support communication.		
Acts constructively to avoid negative effects of disagreements or misunderstandings.		

Signature of candidate:

Date:

Signature of assessor:

Date:

## Appendix 1

### Suggested Breakdown of ICC Performance Outcomes into Learning Objectives

1.

- Give examples\* of values, beliefs and cultural conventions.
- Give examples\* of your own values, beliefs and cultural conventions.
- Give examples\* of expectations and perceptions in a work situation.
- Explain influences of own values, beliefs and cultural conventions on expectations and perceptions in work situations.

2.

- Suggest ways\* of gaining feedback on how others perceive your values, beliefs, cultural conventions and language use.
- Implement methods to gather evidence on how others perceive your values, beliefs, cultural conventions and language use.
- Analyse evidence on how others perceive your values, beliefs, cultural conventions and language use and draw conclusions.

3.

- Give examples\* of how accent, appearance and dress can influence our opinions of others.
- Explain, using examples\*, how both common perception and stereotyping can influence our opinions of others.
- Describe how own feelings towards others\* have been negatively influenced by accent, appearance, dress, common perception and/or stereotyping.
- Demonstrate how own opinions of others\* are based solely on own experience of them.

4.

- Describe own assumptions about people from a range\* of different countries or cultures.
- Explain the origins of such assumptions.
- Describe the influence of such assumptions on own feelings and behaviour in respect of these countries or cultures.
- Explain how original assumptions have been challenged and modified as a result of direct experience of people from these countries or cultures.

5.

- Give examples\* of prejudice, racism and stereotyping encountered either directly or indirectly.
- Explain possible origins of examples of prejudice, racism and stereotyping.
- Give examples\* of how you have challenged cases of prejudice, racism and stereotyping.

6.

- Suggest ways of facilitating communication between speakers of different languages.

- Give examples of cultural differences that may influence the way in which messages are passed and/or interpreted.
- Describe how own communication needs to be adapted in order to minimise barriers to good communication.
- Implement good practice over time in order to facilitate effective communication.

7.

- Take sufficient time to ascertain the level of comprehension of others in work situations.
- Behave and communicate in ways that accommodate critical cultural conventions of others in work situations.
- Take a range of appropriate measures\* to ensure that own communication in work situations is clear and inclusive.
- Take appropriate measures\* to minimise barriers to communication arising from cultural discrepancies.

8.

- Take appropriate measures\* to ensure that organisational objectives are clear and understood by others.
- Take appropriate measures\* to clarify own and others' roles and responsibilities in relation to organisational objectives.
- Take positive and constructive measures\* to resolve any conflict arising from discrepancies between cultural preferences and organisational objectives.

9.

- Take appropriate measures\* to clarify and comprehend individual points of view in situations where confusion arises from cultural discrepancies.
- Deal objectively and respectfully with individuals whose view and/or behaviour you are unable to understand or empathise with.
- Take appropriate measures\* to resolve confusing and/or conflictual situations at work in a way that is acceptable to all parties.

10.

- Describe the impact of own behaviour and language on others\* from different countries or cultures.
- Identify and offer reasons for areas of negative impact.
- Plan actions\* to minimise negative reactions of others to own behaviour and language.
- Implement actions\* to minimise negative reactions of others to own behaviour and language.

***\*It will be necessary to specify more precisely the number of examples or cases required to demonstrate competent performance. Similarly it will be necessary to clarify what kinds of and how many measures should be taken to demonstrate competence. Some candidates will be significantly more proactive than others in contributing to these decisions.***

## Appendix 2

<b>INCA Framework (assessor version)</b>			
<b>Level Competence</b>	<b>1: Basic</b>	<b>2: Intermediate</b>	<b>3: Full</b>
General profile	The candidate at this level is on the ladder of progression. They will be disposed to deal positively with the situation. Their responses to it will be piecemeal and improvised rather than principled, even though mostly successful in avoiding short term difficulties. These will be based on fragmentary information.	The candidate at this level has begun to induce simple principles to apply to the situation, rather than improvise reactively in response to isolated features of it. There will be evidence of a basic strategy and some coherent knowledge for dealing with situations.	The candidate at this level will combine a strategic and principled approach to a situation to take the role of a mediator seeking to bring about the most favourable outcome. Knowledge of their own culture and that of others, including work parameters, will be both coherent and sophisticated.
i) Tolerance of ambiguity	1T Deals with ambiguity on a one-off basis, responding to items as they arise. May be overwhelmed by ambiguous situations which imply high involvement.	2T Has begun to acquire a repertoire of approaches to cope with ambiguities in low-involvement situations. Begins to accept ambiguity as a challenge.	3T Is constantly aware of the possibility of ambiguity. When it occurs, he/she tolerates and manages it.
ii) Behavioural flexibility	1B Adopts a reactive/defensive approach to situations. Learns from isolated experiences in a rather unsystematic way.	2B Previous experience of required behaviour begins to influence behaviour in everyday parallel situations. Sometimes takes the initiative in adopting/conforming to other cultures' behaviour patterns.	3B Is ready and able to adopt appropriate behaviour in job-specific situations from a broad and well-understood repertoire
iii) Communicative awareness	1C Attempts to relate problems of intercultural interaction to different communicative conventions, but lacks the necessary knowledge for identifying differences; tends to hold on to his own conventions and expects adaptation from others; is aware of difficulties in interaction with non-native-speakers, but has not yet evolved principles to guide the choice of (meta-communication, clarification or simplification) strategies.	2C Begins to relate problems of intercultural interaction to conflicting communicative conventions and attempts to clarify his own or to adapt to the conventions of others. Uses a limited repertoire of strategies (meta-communication, clarification, simplification) to solve and prevent problems when interacting with a non- native-speaker.	3C Is able to relate problems of intercultural interaction to conflicting communicative conventions and is aware of their effects on the communication process; is able to identify and ready to adapt to different communicative conventions, or to negotiate new discourse rules in order to prevent or clarify misunderstandings; uses a variety of strategies (meta-communication, clarification, simplification) to prevent, to solve, and to mediate problems when interacting with a non-native-speaker.

iv) Knowledge discovery	<p>1K Draws on random general knowledge and minimal factual research about other cultures. Learns by discovery and is willing to modify perceptions but not yet systematic.</p>	<p>2K Has recourse to some information sources in anticipation of everyday encounters with the other cultures, and modifies and builds on information so acquired, in the light of actual experience. Is motivated by curiosity to develop his knowledge of his own culture as perceived by others.</p>	<p>3K Has a deep knowledge of other cultures. Develops his knowledge through systematic research-like activities and direct questioning and can, where this is sought, offer advice and support to others in work situations.</p>
v) Respect for otherness	<p>1R Is not always aware of difference and, when it is recognised, may not be able to defer evaluative judgement as good or bad. Where it is fully appreciated, adopts a tolerant stance and tries to adapt to low-involving demands of the foreign culture.</p>	<p>2R Accepts the other's values, norms and behaviours in everyday situations as neither good nor bad, provided that basic assumptions of his own culture have not been violated. Is motivated to put others at ease and avoid giving offence.</p>	<p>3R Out of respect for diversity in value systems, applies critical knowledge of such systems to ensure equal treatment of people in the workplace. Is able to cope tactfully with the ethical problems raised by personally unacceptable features of otherness.</p>
vi) Empathy	<p>1E Tends to see the cultural foreigner's differences as curious, and remains confused about the seemingly strange behaviours and their antecedents. Nonetheless tries to 'make allowances'.</p>	<p>2E Has the beginnings of a mental checklist of how others may perceive, feel and respond differently to, a range of routine circumstances. Tends increasingly to see things intuitively from the other's point of view.</p>	<p>3E Accepts the other as a coherent individual. Enlists role-taking and de-centring skills and awareness of different perspectives in optimising job-related communication and interaction with the cultural foreigner.</p>

### Appendix 3

<b>INCA Framework (assessee version)</b>			
<b>Level Dimension</b>	<b>1: Basic</b>	<b>2: Intermediate</b>	<b>3: Full</b>
<b>Overview of competence</b>	I am already willing to interact successfully with people of other cultures. I tend to pick things up and learn from them as I go along, but I haven't yet the experience to work out any system of dealing with intercultural situations in general. I respond to events, rather than planning for them. At this stage I am reasonably tolerant of other values, customs and practices although I may find them odd or surprising and approve or disapprove.	As a result of experience and/or training, I am beginning to view more coherently some of the aspects of intercultural encounters I used to deal with in a 'one-off' way. I have a mental 'map' or 'checklists' of the sort of situations I am likely to need to deal with and am developing my skills to cope with them. This means that I am more prepared for the need to respond and adapt to the demands of unfamiliar situations. I am quicker to see patterns in the various experiences I have and I am beginning to draw conclusions without having to seek advice. I find it easier to respond in a neutral way to difference, rather than approving or disapproving.	Many of the competences I developed consciously at level 2 have become intuitive. I am constantly ready for situations and encounters in which I will exercise my knowledge, judgement and skills and have a large repertoire of strategies for dealing with differences in values, customs and practices among members of the intercultural group. I not only accept that people can see things from widely varying perspectives and are entitled to do so, but am able to put myself in their place and avoid behaviour I sense would be hurtful or offensive. At this level of operation I am able to intercede when difficulties arise and tactfully support other members of the group in understanding each other. I am confident enough of my position to take a polite stand over issues despite my respect for the viewpoint of others.
<b>Openness</b>	<b>O1.1</b> When uncertainty arises from cultural difference, I adopt a tolerant attitude as long as the issue is not a sensitive one for me TA <b>O1.2</b> Sometimes I may jump to conclusions about different behaviour that I later realise were not entirely correct RO	<b>O2.1</b> now see the uncertainties that can arise from intercultural encounters as an interesting challenge, provided that the issues involved are not sensitive for me TA <b>O2.2</b> I react neutrally to cultural differences, rather than hastily categorising them as good or bad RO	<b>O3.1</b> I am aware of ways of coping with ambiguous situations even when these give rise to inner moral conflicts that are serious for me TA <b>O3.2</b> I fully respect the right of those from other cultures to have different values from my own and can see how these values make sense as part of a way of thinking RO
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>K1.1</b> I have some general knowledge about the cultures of those I work with. This knowledge consists of facts that are not always connected and I don't yet have an overall picture of the relevant cultures KD <b>K 1.2</b> I learn from intercultural experiences and add to my previous knowledge KD	<b>K2.1</b> I take the trouble to find out about the cultures I am likely to be working with, paying attention not only to isolated facts, but to values, customs and practices common in those cultures KD <b>K2.2</b> When I experience new values, customs and practices I use the knowledge	<b>K3.1</b> I have a deep understanding of cultures I encounter frequently. When involved in new intercultural situations I strive to acquire the best possible available knowledge and understanding both through prior research and by seeking regular clarification within the group KD

	<p><b>K1.3</b> Although I often find culturally different behaviour curious, I try to make allowances for it E</p>	<p>to develop into an overall system of principles KD  <b>K2.3</b> I have developed a mental checklist of how others may perceive, feel and respond differently to, a range of routine circumstances. This supports my concern to put others at ease and avoid upsetting them E</p>	<p><b>K3.2</b> I have acquired a system of principles that can be applied reliably to almost any intercultural encounter KD  <b>K3.3</b> I often imagine myself in the place of those from different cultures when trying to understand all aspects of a work problem. This supports my spontaneous concern that others in the group should receive fair treatment and consideration E</p>
<b>Adaptability</b>	<p><b>A1.1</b> I learn bit by bit the best ways of behaving, but have not yet arrived at underlying principles and do not have a plan for reacting to events. When a situation becomes confusing, I tend to take a passive role BF  <b>A1.2</b> I take events as they come, doing what seems right at the time BF  <b>A1.3</b> When people communicate in ways I do not understand I try in an unsystematic way to take part but hope that they will eventually adapt to the way I communicate BF  <b>A1.4</b> I know that others may communicate in ways I am not familiar with CA.</p>	<p><b>A2.1</b> My behaviour is now influenced by principles that guide me and I often plan for eventualities, including ambiguous situations BF/C  <b>A2.2</b> I adapt my behaviour in new situations, taking account of lessons learnt in previous intercultural situations. I sometimes adopt the behaviour patterns of others, rather than waiting for them to adopt mine BF  <b>A2.3</b> I seek to achieve good communication both by making my own conventions clearer and by adopting those of others. When there is, or might be, a problem with communication, I quite often find ways around it, e.g. using gesture, re-explaining, simplifying etc. BF/CA  <b>A2.4</b> I am aware of a number of useful strategies for dealing with common communication problems. CA.</p>	<p><b>A 3.1</b> When ambiguous situations arise, I can usually clarify or otherwise deal with them to the benefit of the group BF/CA  <b>A3.2</b> I make use of my knowledge and understanding to inform tactfully, support and encourage others in an intercultural group. I consistently adopt behaviour that minimises the risk of offending or hurting others' feelings BF  <b>A3.3</b> I use my communication strategies to prevent, solve and mediate problems arising from differences in language or other communication conventions BF/CA  <b>A3.4</b> I have a good overall understanding of the kinds of communicative difficulties that can arise in an intercultural context and of a wide range of strategies for resolving them CA</p>