



Module 4: Understanding the competences and values

Guidance material	4.1.13 What is Initiative/Self-direction?
What is the purpose of this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a brief introduction to the competence of initiative/self-direction
When to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When introducing the competences to teachers to support them in implementing this competence in their class programme.
With whom to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers
Have you considered these materials first?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce teachers to the SCF through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2 Structure of the SCF activity 1.4 Prior knowledge brainstorm activity 1.3 Definitions matching activity For further information on each of the competences, including student progressions, see 1.6 Close reading of ADEC SCF – Framework Requirements & Exemplifications.
How to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This resource can be used in a range of ways, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share with teachers and discuss it in staff meetings or departmental meetings. Encourage teachers to plan using the ideas in this resource. Discuss the ideas and then ask teachers to share their own ideas for teaching this competence. For more information on each competence read the <i>Framework Requirements & Exemplifications</i> section of the <i>Abu Dhabi Education Council Student Competence Framework (SCF) for Private Schools - Competences for Abu Dhabi's 21st Century Learners (2014)</i>.
What resources or equipment are needed?	<p>Copies of the <i>Framework Requirements & Exemplifications</i> section of the <i>ADEC SCF for Private Schools (2014)</i>.</p>



4.1.13 What is Initiative/Self-direction?

Definition

Having or using initiative involves the ability to assess and initiate things independently, a willingness and ability to take on responsibility, make decisions and solve problems without formal direction or instruction. Having initiative invariably means an individual being self-motivated; having the desire and determination to work towards goals and targets without the need to be pushed or driven by others (for example by teachers).

(ADEC SCF for Private Schools Framework Requirements and Exemplification (2014) p.iii.16)

Background

This summary of research is provided as a background to this competence and further information can be found in the references below.

The OECD Definition and Selection of Competences project (DeSeCo, 2005), in looking at what capabilities are needed to function effectively in modern life, identified three broad categories of interrelated competences: use tools interactively, interact in homogenous groups, and act autonomously. They identified the need for people to be self-directed and self-motivated - to act autonomously - in order to participate effectively in the development of society and to function well in the workplace, family life, and social life. The ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects was identified as a key capability within the 'act autonomously' competence.

Therefore, people who are able to show initiative and self-direction need to be able to:

- Define a project and set a goal;
- Identify and evaluate resources (both resources they have and those they need)
- Prioritise and refine goals
- Balance the resources needed to meet multiple goals; learn from past actions, project future outcomes
- Work with minimal direction from others; and
- Monitor progress, making necessary adjustments as a project unfolds.



A learner who shows initiative and is self-directed knows how to plan a project and set goals. They can identify, find and use resources they need to complete project and attain goals. They can monitor and track their progress and make necessary adjustments as a project unfolds. They can prioritize and refine goals. They can reflect on and evaluate their learning and progress, and learn from past actions to project future outcomes. Students need authentic learning contexts in order to maximize their learning; they need careful scaffolding to ensure they are motivated by their successes and supportive feedback to learn from their mistakes.



Learning Progressions

“The term ‘learning progression’ refers to the purposeful sequencing of teaching and learning expectations across multiple developmental stages, ages, or grade levels. The term is most commonly used in reference to learning standards—concise, clearly articulated descriptions of what students should know and be able to do at a specific stage in their education. In terms of the student competence framework, a learning progression is a road or pathway that students travel as they progress toward mastery of the skills needed for career and post compulsory education.”

(ADEC SCF for Private Schools Framework Requirements and Exemplification (2014) p.iii.7)

The ADEC SCF for Private Schools (2014) provides learning progressions from kindergarten / Grade 1¹ through to the end of Grade 12. These progressions provide clear descriptors of what should be expected within that competence at each grade level, for example:

At the end of Grade 11, learners who show initiative and self-motivation are developing the ability to:

- initiate a range of simple and complex activities and tasks which advance their knowledge, understanding and skills
- plan, define and work towards goals and targets without the need to be pushed or managed by others
- recognise opportunities for self-advancement and opportunities to benefit others
- assume responsibility, make decisions and take action to resolve issues without being prompted to do so
- inspire and enthuse others with their self-confidence and fearlessness
- excel in all they do and persevere regardless of hurdles, to achieve their objectives

At the end of Grade 10, learners who show initiative and self-motivation are developing the ability to:

- initiate a range of simple activities and tasks which advance their knowledge, understanding and skills
- plan and work towards goals and targets without the need to be pushed or managed by others
- recognise opportunities for self-advancement
- assume responsibility, make decisions and take action to resolve issues
- inspire and enthuse others with their self-confidence
- are motivated to excel in all they do and persevere regardless of hurdles, to achieve their objectives

(Grade 10 and 11 Learning progressions for Initiative/Self-direction in the ADEC SCF for Private Schools Framework Requirements and Exemplifications (2014). p.iii.36-37)

While the performance indicators within these progressions do not change in essence, they do expand in breadth and depth. This expansion makes the progressions a useful tool for both teachers and students. Below are some tasks teachers can undertake to help them make best use of these learning progressions:

¹ The ADEC SCF for Private Schools (2014) recognizes that not all schools are able to deliver all competences across all grades. Table 5: A Road Map for the Delivery of the Competences across the Stages (p.iii.9) provides schools with a ‘road-map’ to support them in making decisions on the delivery and development of the competences across the four stages of schooling.

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- Read the progressions carefully as this will help you further understand this competence and what skills and attitudes make up that competence.
- Before reading the descriptors for the grade you teach, read the descriptors for the grades below. These descriptors are the building blocks of what students have experienced in this competence before they reached this grade level.
- Ask students to share their experiences of these descriptors (e.g. “Tell me about a time when you had to complete something on your own?”) and use their answers to help you plan your starting point.
- While reading the descriptors for each grade level and identify the ‘step up’ students need to make to move through the progressions. For example, at the end of Grade 10 in Initiative/Self-direction students are developing the ability to “recognise opportunities for self-advancement” while by the end of Grade 11 they “recognise opportunities for self-advancement and opportunities to benefit others” (ADEC SCF for Private Schools (2014) p.iii.36). Therefore their step up is learning how to recognise opportunities to benefit others, not just themselves. Ask yourself what this might look like, for example teachers might ensure that student long term projects encourage and expect students to recognise the opportunities to benefit others.
- Use the progressions when planning lessons to ensure your focus on a competence is based on the appropriate stage of the competence framework. The progressions are useful to refer to when giving specific feedback to students on their next steps in developing that competence.
- Support student to use the progressions to set goals and self/peer assess their own and others learning.

References

Abu Dhabi Education Council (2014) *Abu Dhabi Education Council Student Competence Framework (SCF) for Private Schools - Competences for Abu Dhabi's 21st Century Learners*. Pearson Education Limited.

DeSeCo (2005). *The definition and selection of key competences: Executive Summary*. Switzerland: OECD. Retrieved from <http://www.deseco.admin.ch/bfs/deseco/en/index/02.html>