



Module 4: Understanding the competences and values

Guidance material	4.1.6 What is Cultural awareness/Citizenship?
What is the purpose of this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a brief introduction to the competence of Cultural awareness/Citizenship.
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?	Copies of the <i>Framework Requirements & Exemplifications</i> section of the <i>ADEC SCF for Private Schools (2014)</i> .

4.1.6 What is Cultural awareness/Citizenship?

Definition

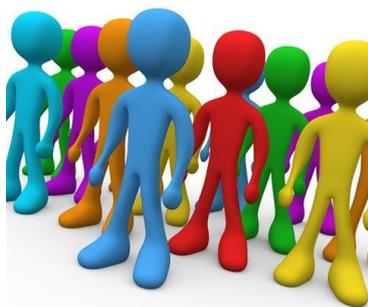
“Cultural awareness is about having knowledge and understanding of the history, traditions and beliefs of one’s own and others’ countries and being sensitive to these in dealing with others. Cultural awareness also exists within countries, e.g. generational awareness, urban versus rural customs, etc. Citizenship involves being aware of one’s duties and responsibilities as citizens, and being active participants in communities.”

(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.

Cultural awareness education is informed by several fields of learning including; sociology, linguistics, anthropology, cultural studies and multicultural education. Schools can be regarded as a place where young people have their first experiences of participation as citizens and develop a sense of being members of a wider community (Ainley *et al*, 2009). The ways students develop civic-related dispositions and competences and acquire understandings with regard to their role as citizens are strongly influenced by their respective education systems and the contexts in which those systems operate. Each country’s historical background, political system, educational structure, and curriculum need to be taken into account. Due to the schools’ importance in promoting cultural awareness and citizenship the role of teachers can hardly be overstated (Reimers, 2006).



The need to realise one’s identity and set goals in a complex world is paramount (OECD). As is the need to exercise rights and take responsibility, and to understand one’s environment and their role in its functioning. Individuals must understand and consider the wider context of their actions and decisions. It is important to recognise how one’s own actions and decisions fit into this wider picture. To accomplish this students must have an idea of the system in which they exist i.e. understand its structures, culture, practices, and formal and informal rules and expectations and the roles they play within it.



As a national citizen, students have a collective responsibility to better understand the world inside their own borders, protect and preserve the human rights of people everywhere, and challenge injustice wherever it occurs. Students have to consider how they can fulfil the responsibilities of national citizenship and what they can do as an individual in their day-to-day life to make a difference.



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 4, learners who demonstrate effective cultural awareness and citizenship skills are developing the ability to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the history, culture and traditions of the UAE
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the multicultural nature of the UAE/Abu Dhabi
- make a positive contribution to their school and local community, including acting upon suggestions for improving the school environment
- have a positive influence on their peers and others

At the end of Grade 3, learners who demonstrate effective cultural awareness and citizenship skills are developing the ability to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the history, culture and traditions of the UAE
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the multicultural nature of the UAE/Abu Dhabi
- make a positive contribution to their school, including suggestions for improving the school environment
- have a positive influence on their peers and others

(Grade 3 and 4 Learning progressions for Cultural awareness and citizenship in the *ADEC SCF for Private Schools (2014) Framework Requirements and Exemplifications*. p.iii.40-42)

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.



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:

- 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 one time that you had a positive influence on the people in your class?”*) 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 3 in cultural awareness and citizenship students are developing the ability to *“make a positive contribution to their school, including suggestions for improving the school environment”*, while in Grade 4 they *“make a positive contribution to their school and local community, including acting upon suggestions for improving the school environment”* (ADEC SCF for Private Schools (2014) Framework Requirements and Exemplifications p.iii.41). Therefore their step up is learning how to turn a suggestion into an action. Ask yourself what this might look like. In this example a student will actually do something around the school to improve the environment, this could be painting a mural to make the buildings more attractive.
- 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

Ainley, J., Schulz, W., & Friedman, T. eds(2009). ICCS 2009 Encyclopedia Approaches to civic and citizenship education around the world. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. The Netherlands.

Reimers, F. (2006). Citizenship, identity and education: Examining the public purposes of schools in an age of globalization. *Prospects*, 36(3), 275-294.

OECD(2005). The definition and selection of key competences – executive summary.
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