



# 3

## FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES

We have identified three competence areas necessary for trainers to develop in order to deliver trainings following MCE's approach. In this chapter we'll give a brief introduction to these three domains, and we'll indicate under which sections you will find more detailed information.

COMPETENCE AREAS		SHORT DESCRIPTION
1	Application of theoretical knowledge	Being able to mobilise and connect vocabulary, models and theories to real life intercultural phenomena
2	Self-reflection - decentering, putting one's life and experiences to the service of learning	Detecting and managing own vulnerabilities, sensibilities. Using own experience as an illustration of intercultural dynamics
3	Managing the intercultural training process, interactions with participants	Detecting needs, skills and vulnerabilities of participants to adjust the training to them. Identifying and deblocking rigidities, resistances. facilitating the integration of the newly acquired knowledge and skills in the professional practice.

**Table 1. Competence areas**

### 3.1. Application of theoretical knowledge

Being able to mobilise and connect vocabulary, models and theories to real life intercultural phenomena.

Even if the main ambition of MCE's method is to serve as a practical tool for professionals working in culturally diverse contexts, the method relies heavily on theories from the disciplines of social psychology, intercultural psychology and cultural anthropology. Trainers who wish to use this approach must be well informed about these theories, follow new developments in these fields. What's more, this competence area does not merely consist in the theoretical knowledge (i.e. being aware of the concepts, models, theoretical explanations), rather it refers to the capacity of mobilizing this knowledge, to connect it to concrete real life phenomena. Below we detail the theories we consider necessary, and we also indicate where you can find further details about them.

THEORETICAL DOMAIN	CONCRETE ASPECTS
<p>CULTURE</p> <p>(presented in Chapter 3, section 2 and also in section 7)</p>	<p>What is culture, how do different sources define it? (Unesco, Camilleri, Geertz, etc.)</p> <p>How do people acquire their culture(s) and what are the consequences of such "acquisition"? What is the relationship between culture and the individuals?</p> <p>What are the characteristics and mechanisms of culture?</p> <p>What dimensions of culture have been described, identified, compared? Insights from cultural anthropology on a diversity of cultural dimensions such as social organization, gender, belief system, relation to hierarchy etc.</p>

	<p>On what dimensions can cultures differ? Familiarity with current findings of comparative cultural psychology on dimensions such as individualism-collectivism etc.</p> <p>What dimensions are relevant to training participants? (e.g. family structures, social organization, gender, belief system, relation to hierarchy etc.)</p> <p>What are key metaphors that illustrate main features of culture? Understanding of the metaphor of "iceberg" proposed by E.T.Hall. and being able to apply it to a variety of phenomena.</p>
<p>SOCIAL PERCEPTION (presented in Chapter 3, section 4, also in section 7)</p>	<p>Familiarity with Cohen-Emerique's conceptualization of filters and biases: cognitive automatisms, social identity and professional models.</p> <p>How to define and explain prejudice, discrimination, racism, stereotype? Getting familiar with these concepts of social psychology and being able to make a difference between them.</p> <p>What are the consequences of social identity on the perception of other groups? Getting familiar with the typology of the different forms of ethnocentrism according to Margalit Cohen-Emerique.</p> <p>How can professional models, norms, representations constitute a filter in the perception and understanding of the other?</p> <p>What is the impact of stereotypes, prejudice and racism on the person who is the target of these biases? Familiarity with concepts: "self-fulfilling prophecy", "stigmatized identities", "internalization of stereotypes", "stigma consciousness".</p>
<p>IDENTITY (presented in Chapter 4, section 3, also in section 7)</p>	<p>How to define identity? What models to use to make it easy to grasp? Operationalisation of the concept of identity, through the vocabulary of social psychology: personal / relational / group identities. Manifestations at cognitive, behavioural, emotional levels.</p> <p>What are the processes in which identities are constructed? What is the relationship of internal and external definitions of identity? Understanding the difference of attributed and revendedicated identities</p> <p>What are the motives / functions of identity? (Vignoles, Camilleri)</p> <p>How do identities change in intercultural mobility?, (Berry, Camilleri)</p>

	<p>In what way does international mobility / migration challenge the identity system? Understanding Breakwell's conceptualisation of identity threat.</p> <p>Can professional identities be threatened? What are the sources and forms of these threats and how to overcome them?</p>
COMMUNICATION (presented in Chapter 4, section 8)	<p>Getting familiar with concepts to open up "means" of communication: verbal / para-verbal / non-verbal communication. In non-verbal communication: chronemics, proxemics, haptics, gestures, posture.</p> <p>Understanding transversal aspects (on verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal): manifestation of emotions, direct / indirect communication, rich and poor in context. Reference: E.T.Hall</p> <p>Connecting cultural differences in communication with other dimensions of differences (e.g. gender, power relations etc.).</p> <p>Familiarity with drama exercises e.g. Boal: Games for actors and non-actors. David Diamond: theatre for living Concepts such as "demechanisation" proposed by Augusto Boal (Games for actors and non-actors)</p> <p>Understanding E. Goffman' concept of facework, Brown, Levinson (politeness theory, the difference between threat to positive and negative face as well as strategies to mitigate "face-threatening acts")</p>
NEGOTIATION (presented in Chapter 4, section 9)	<p>Knowledge of conflict patterns / typologies</p> <p>Knowledge of the rules of facework from an intercultural perspective</p> <p>References about conflict resolutions strategies</p> <p>Knowledge about negotiation models e.g. distinguishing positions and interests</p> <p>Familiarity with the Minoria / majoria simulation activity proposed by MCE.</p> <p>Familiarity with Forum theatre proposed by Augusto Boal (Games for Actors and Non Actors)</p>

	<p>Awareness of different limits (e.g. institutional, legal frameworks) as well as cultural frames of references of the person(s) triggering the shocks to generate solutions are acceptable for the other party.</p> <p>Reflection on blocking factors / facilitators as well as steps and conditions for negotiation</p> <p>Understanding of the concept of need for closure (Kruglanski)</p> <p>Awareness of the institutional limits of participants, and the limits drawn by the legal framework.</p> <p>Knowledge of specific negotiation strategies and techniques</p> <p>Knowledge of institutions and practices of intercultural mediation.</p>
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Table 2. Theoretical domains**

### 3.2. Decentering and putting one's life and experiences to the service of learning

Detecting and managing own vulnerabilities, sensibilities. Using own experience as an illustration of intercultural dynamics

To work with this approach invites training participants to become aware of their own cultural frame of references, occasionally questioning their most cherished values, to reflect on their built-in biases and so on. What's more, as a means of learning they are invited to remember and share potentially unpleasant episodes of "culture shock" where they have to disclose conflicts they may not have solved. All this amounts to an invitation to self-disclosure and vulnerability, which the trainer could best facilitate if she herself is willing to execute similar self-disclosure, or even more, to compensate her authority position. The practice of self-reflection on behalf of the facilitator can not only give her authenticity (as a demonstration that she herself plays by the rules she proposes) but also establish some sense of horizontality, which may facilitate the process. In MCE's approach, the act of gaining awareness on one's values, norms, practices is actually the first step, called "decentering".

Such a self-reflection is a first step in our competence area here too: becoming aware of own sensitive zones, emotions, needs. Additionally, the identification and mobilisation of relevant personal experiences (of migration, manifestation of prejudice etc.) through self-disclosure will help to root seemingly abstract concepts in reality and facilitate the learning experience of participants.

COMPETENCE LEVEL	CONCRETE ASPECTS
Decentering	Becoming aware of one's values, norms, representations and expectations in the training situation. These could include values and representations concerning teaching, concerning interculturality etc. Awareness of one's sensitive zones. Understanding of one's emotions and needs and how these motivate certain behaviours and positions.
Identification of relevant personal experience	Identifying aspects of one's life experiences as resources in the learning process to illustrate different concepts, mechanisms etc. Willingness to use these in the learning process.
Self-disclosure, opening up, accepting a certain vulnerability	Accepting to share part of one's self-reflections and personal experiences with the participants in the learning process. This entails a certain level of "vulnerability" with respect to participants.

**Table 3. Decentering and putting one's life experiences to the service of learning**

For further information about this competence area, please check the section on decentering in chapter 4 and the section dedicated to the vulnerability of facilitators in chapter 5.

### 3.3. Managing the interactions and dynamics with participants

Detecting needs, skills and vulnerabilities of participants to adjust the training to them.

Identifying and deblocking rigidities, resistances.

Facilitating the integration of the newly acquired knowledge and skills in the professional practice.

This competence area refers to the trainer's capacity to understand, interpret and appropriately respond to the participants, their needs, their sensibilities. This implies the capacity of adjusting training methods and contents to the needs and possibilities of the participants, often considered a key feature of the experienced trainers as opposed to novices, tempted to follow a "program" from A to Z, in a more rigid way. So this competence area requires a certain openness to the others, a willingness to adjust to the other (attitude) observation skills, sensitivity to detect resistances, discomforts (skills). While these aspects may be considered necessary in all kinds of training settings, in intercultural trainings they seem to be of particular importance. Indeed, the subject matter at hand in intercultural trainings can have sensitive and challenging aspects: they tend to "force" awareness of cultural norms, values, practices. Inadvertently, or by purpose we may come to relativise cherished professional conceptions or habits never questioned before, triggering professional identity threats within the training itself. We may thus activate the need for symbolic defence of these beliefs, norms, values. The trainer needs to be prepared to handle such reactions. We can open up this competence area into the often-used triple classification of knowledge, attitudes and skills.

COMPETENCE LEVEL	CONCRETE ASPECTS
KNOWLEDGE	Understanding of defensive positions, resistance, vulnerabilities
ATTITUDE	Openness, curiosity to the others, a willingness to adjust to the other. Empathy – in the sense of being able to understand and measure the emotions of others, their intensity.



SKILLS	Active listening, perspective taking, capacity to accommodate to others, flexibility of letting go the planned programme to adjust to participants
--------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Table 4. Managing the interactions and dynamics with participants**

In chapter 5 you will find further details about this competence area, that we tackle in sections dedicated to resistance (5.3), responding to rigid racist positions (5.4), working with the vulnerabilities of the participants (5.1), and the integration of the method into work life (5.5).

## Disclaimer

The information, documentation and figures in this document are written by the ZELDA project consortium (Grant Agreement No. 2019-1-IT02-KA2014-063370) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission. The European Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

## Acknowledgment

### Authors

Chapters 1-4 : Ariella Rothberg and Vera Varhegyi ( élan interculturel)

Chapters 2 and 5 : Diana Szántó, Panni Végh (Artemisszio Foundation), Joudith Hassoun, Daniela Salamandra (CBAI), Marco Muzzana, Pienicola di Pirro, Giancarlo Domenghini (Cooperativa RUAH), Georgia Chondrou (CESIE)

Translation of chapters 2.7, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6; 4.9, 5.1, 5.2 from French to English: Maurine Amelin, Emeline Alexandre, Vera Varhegyi (élan interculturel)

# Partners

---



ZELDA project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union  
Grant Agreement 2019-1-IT02-KA2014-063370