



Competences gained through long-term exchange

Assessment practices and considerations

Peer Learning Activity – Youth Work case study

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Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

EFIL / AFS experience

- Long-term immersive exchange (6-12 months)
 - Young people (15-18 years old)
 - Host family-based, attending school abroad
 - Careful preparation, support and follow-up through NFE seminars, individual counseling & ongoing guidance by local volunteers
- Combining elements of Formal Education and Informal Learning, under the Non-Formal Education framework



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Our Competence Framework



GOALS

Educational Objectives

Personal

- Self-awareness
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Motivation & self-confidence
- Defining self in terms of ideals & values

Interpersonal

- Empathy
- Flexibility & social skills
- Communication skills
- Commitment to others and contributing to the group

Educational Objectives

Cultural

- Building intercultural friendships
- Cultural knowledge & awareness
- Foreign language skills & non-verbal communication
- Intercultural effectiveness

Global

- Interest & concern in world affairs, awareness of the impact of one's choices on others
- Appreciation of global cultural interdependence
- Commitment to contributing to the world community

Research on educational outcomes

- Impact of AFS Experience: Hammer Consulting, 2005
 - intercultural competences & effectiveness (→ DMIS), intercultural anxiety, language acquisition, knowledge of the host culture, level of intercultural interaction
 - 3 surveys: before, right after & 6 months after exchange, with participants, their natural families & their host families
- Impact of Living Abroad: University of Essex, 2014
 - acculturation, (bi-, inter-, extra-) cultural learning, intergroup processes, cultural distance
 - 9 online surveys for each participant, spread over 18 months

Educational Impact Assessment Pilot

- Individual assessment over longer period
- Monthly online assignments before, during & after exchange (surveys, narratives, visuals...)
- Triangulation of sources:
learner + volunteer + surrounding community
- Focusing on 7 of the 16 Educational Objectives
- Goals:
 - learners' self-recognition, facilitation & documentation of the learning
 - organisational improvements
 - summative group outcomes for AFS positioning

What to consider when assessing intercultural/transversal competences?

- No “one best way”, rather several complementary ones
- Quantitative vs. qualitative
- Longitudinal (compared over time)
- Formative role as (if not more) important as summative
- Involvement of many actors in assessment (incl. learner)
- A number of competences can only be assessed when interacting with diverse groups & situations
- There are cultural differences in approaching self- & external assessment
- Using assessment scales for competences involving personal values is controversial

Methods and approaches

- Self-assessment questionnaires
- Individual mentoring / coaching
- Interviews
- Group debriefing / group reflection
- Simulations, case studies
- Implicit association tests
- Personal narratives (critical incidents journal, reflective journal, self-portraits, “visual speak”)
- (e-)Portfolios
- Official tools: IDI, IES, BEVI...

For consideration...

- Lack of focus (of Formal Education & policy makers) on SOFT transversal competences
- Soft skills are hard to quantify & require complex, multi-dimensional assessment
- Results of such assessment might have issues with credibility and coherence
 - Does quantifying & standardising contradict NFE values?
 - Could NFE providers obtain e.g. “quality labels”?
- There is a huge number of frameworks/scales, used by different sectors & countries