Intercultural communication and cross-cultural learning: Session Plan (1 hour 15 mins)
Speaker: Fiona Prendergast

Time	Stage	Aim	Procedure	Resources
5 mins	Introduction	To define the session's aims	Intercultural communication is…	Flip chart
15 mins	Ice-breaker	To introduce the idea of cultural exchange and encourage positive attitudes to European collaboration	Quiz/Matching task/True, false?	Handouts, cards
15 mins	Relation to European projects/evaluation criteria	To relate issues to project success	My idea of a European project is… Point out Evaluation Performance Indicators (OHP) List of sideline outcomes	Flipchart OHP Powerpoint?
15 mins	Specific communication issues	To generate discussion of intercultural communication issues: miscommunication	Case study – Mike and Jane/Dominican Republic. Sharing of personal experiences/approaches – list of strategies	Case study on OHP
15 mins	Relation to teacher training practice in basic skills	To allow participants to relate issues to teaching/training practice; including an intercultural/European dimension in education	Intercultural education materials from Limerick – discussion as to how they may be used/adapted in classes	Handouts
10 mins	Question time/evaluation	To allow participants the opportunity for questions		

Intercultural learning 1

Chris Rose, British Council, Italy

This is the first of two articles that deal with the topic of intercultural awareness and learning. This article sets out the methodological background to this topic, and the second article - **Intercultural learning 2** - offers practical suggestions for the classroom.

- Introduction
- What is intercultural learning?
- What do we understand by the word 'culture'?
- Intercultural awareness
- Intercultural communicative competence
- Intercultural awareness skills
- How does this affect the role of the teacher?
- When should we introduce this?

Introduction

There will have been points in most teachers' careers when we have stopped to wonder "What am I actually doing?". Sometimes, filling our students up with all the requisite grammar and vocabulary, and polishing their pronunciation and honing their communicative skills doesn't actually seem to be helping them to achieve the wider goal of being able to genuinely communicate with and understand the real world outside the classroom at all.

For too long, we have been concentrating on structures and forms and producing materials that may help our students to have perfect diphthongs or a flawless command of the third conditional while leaving out anything approaching real, valid, meaningful content. Major ELT publishers have produced materials so carefully calculated not to offend anyone that they far too often end up being vacuous if not completely meaningless. If our students are to have any hope of using their language skills to genuinely comprehend and communicate in the global village, intercultural awareness is crucial.

What is intercultural learning?

The process of becoming more aware of and better understanding one's own culture and other cultures around the world. The aim of intercultural learning is to increase international and cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. This can take lots of forms - intercultural learning is by no means only a part of EFL, but has exponents in all fields of education.

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What do we understand by the word 'culture'?

A way of life. A set of social practices. A system of beliefs. A shared history or set of experiences. A culture may be synonymous with a country, or a region, or a nationality or it may cross several countries or regions. A culture may be synonymous with a religion, though followers of Christianity or Judaism or

Islam may also come from different cultures. It is highly possible to belong to or identify oneself with more than one culture.

Intercultural awareness

Intercultural awareness in language learning is often talked about as though it were a 'fifth skill' - the ability to be aware of cultural relativity following reading, writing, listening and speaking. There is something to be said for this as an initial attempt to understand or define something that may seem a difficult concept but, as Claire Kramsch points out ...

> "If...language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed as enabling language proficiency ... Culture in language teaching is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing" (in Context and Culture in Language Teaching OUP,1993).

Language itself is defined by a culture. We cannot be competent in the language if we do not also understand the culture that has shaped and informed it. We cannot learn a second language if we do not have an awareness of that culture, and how that culture relates to our own first language/first culture. It is not only therefore essential to have cultural awareness, but also intercultural awareness.

Intercultural communicative competence

Following on from what Kramsch says above, intercultural awareness is not really therefore a skill, but a collection of skills and attitudes better thought of as a competence.

Intercultural communicative competence is an attempt to raise students' awareness of their own culture, and in so doing, help them to interpret and understand other cultures. It is not just a body of knowledge, but a set of practices requiring knowledge, skills and attitudes.

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Intercultural awareness skills

What are these attitudes and skills that make up the competence? Among them are:

- observing, identifying and recognising
- comparing and contrasting
- negotiating meaning
- dealing with or tolerating ambiguity
- effectively interpreting messages
- limiting the possibility of misinterpretation
- defending one's own point of view while acknowledging the legitimacy of others
- accepting difference

These are very similar to many of the skills we teach normally. So what makes intercultural learning different?

Raised awareness of what we do and of the vital importance of these skills already makes intercultural communicative competence a more attainable

goal. Moreover - and despite the fact that the competence is more than just a body of knowledge - intercultural awareness skills can be developed by designing materials which have cultural and intercultural themes as their content, a kind of loop input, if you like.

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How does this affect the role of the teacher?
What are teachers? Activities managers? Language facilitation units? Babysitters? Intercultural learning gives the teacher a role not only as one or more of these, but also as an educator. This makes many teachers feel uncomfortable, above all with the idea that we may be influencing our students in some way. Are we responsible for transmitting some kind of ideology to our students?
No, we are helping them to become more aware of the world around them, and to better interact with that world. These are the crucial roles of the teacher.
Moreover, EFL teachers tend to have a wide variety of different backgrounds in different disciplines. They have different experiences, and in many cases may have travelled extensively and got to know several different cultures. They may have undergone the experience of living in, adjusting to and understanding a different culture. There is a lot that they can bring to the job. They are unique mediators of cultural relativity.

When should we introduce this?
Previously, "cultural awareness" has often only been seen as something for advanced learners, an extension exercise that can be "tacked on" to an ordinary lesson. This is partly due to the all-too frequent error of assuming that students with a low level of English also have a low intellect generally, or that it is impossible to explain intellectual concepts in level one English. Intercultural awareness, as a fundamental feature of language and an integral part of language learning, is important at all levels.

Related

ARTICLE -Think - Methodology - **Intercultural learning 2**
QUESTION AND ANSWERS - Talk - Questions and answers - **Second culture?**

http://online.lewisham.ac.uk/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=courses&url=/bin/common/course.pl?course_id=_84_1

‘Intercultural communication should grow from an understanding of people, culture and society generally.’
(Holliday, Hyde, Kullman, 2004, p. 2)

"We are training mentors to work with newly arrived migrants. These mentors will work through their mother tongue. We have a Pakistani man who is here in a hostel with his wife and family. He is very keen to integrate and acquire the social and cultural skills necessary to succeed in Irish society. At the same time he told me that his wife had to obey his strict instruction and could only operate in society with his express permission. Thus we have a two tier value set - Pakistani original for within the family and Pakistani adaptive for the males to get on in Irish society. This man sees no contradiction in this. His wife is not allowed to attend the training course though she would be a valuable addition for working with Pakistani women, no doubt."

(Denis Bates [bates@utvinternet.ie], email 1/4/05)

When I was at school in the Republic of Ireland, I had to learn Gaelic. I was forced to spend 30 per cent of my time not learning something useful like maths or science, that would serve me in life. I was a victim of a nostalgic, misguided and retrograde Irish nationalism that the politicians of the day decided to inflict upon us school kids to make themselves feel better.

Find someone who…

Who usually starts meetings at 8am?

Who expects a meeting to be chaired by one person?

Who likes to delegate?

Who prefers to spend time talking generally before getting to the point?

Who travels on double-decker trains?

Who goes skiing most weekends in the winter?

Who usually thanks others in a group by clapping three times and then directing their hands to the person in question?

Who rarely uses ‘to do’ lists?

Who usually keeps to deadlines?

Have you found out anything else of interest?

Find someone who…

Who has the same word for ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye’?

Who prefers communication by phone than by email?

Who knows how to say ‘thank you’ in Czech, German, Italian and English?

Who has attended a video conference at their institution?

Who thinks it’s better to find the answer yourself than to ask questions?

Who wants an exact plan of where they’re going before they head out?

Who uses games in lessons?

Who knows the difference between EFL and ESOL?

Who can define basic skills?

Who likes drinking ice-cream (vanilla or chocolate) drowning in coffee?

Have you found out anything else of interest?

Meeting and Greeting

1. Describe what you see in the photo.
2. How do people exchange greetings in your culture?
3. How do Irish people exchange greetings?
4. Role play the dialogue between the two people in the picture above.

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Meeting and Greeting

1. Describe what you see in the photo.
2. Are there issues , in your culture, when a man speaks to a woman, or to a child or vice versa?
3. How do Irish people greet each other?
4. Who should do the introductions in this picture?
5. Role play the discussion that might take place between the people in the picture above.

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Queuing

1. Describe what you see in the photo.
2. Talk about queuing in your own culture?
3. What are the rules for queuing in Ireland?
4. What should you say to find out about where and when to queue?
5. Role play the discussion that could take place between the people in the picture above.
6. Role play the dialogue between the person at the head of the queue and clerk who will serve him at the hatch.

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GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING YOUR EUROPEAN PROJECT

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06 January 2005

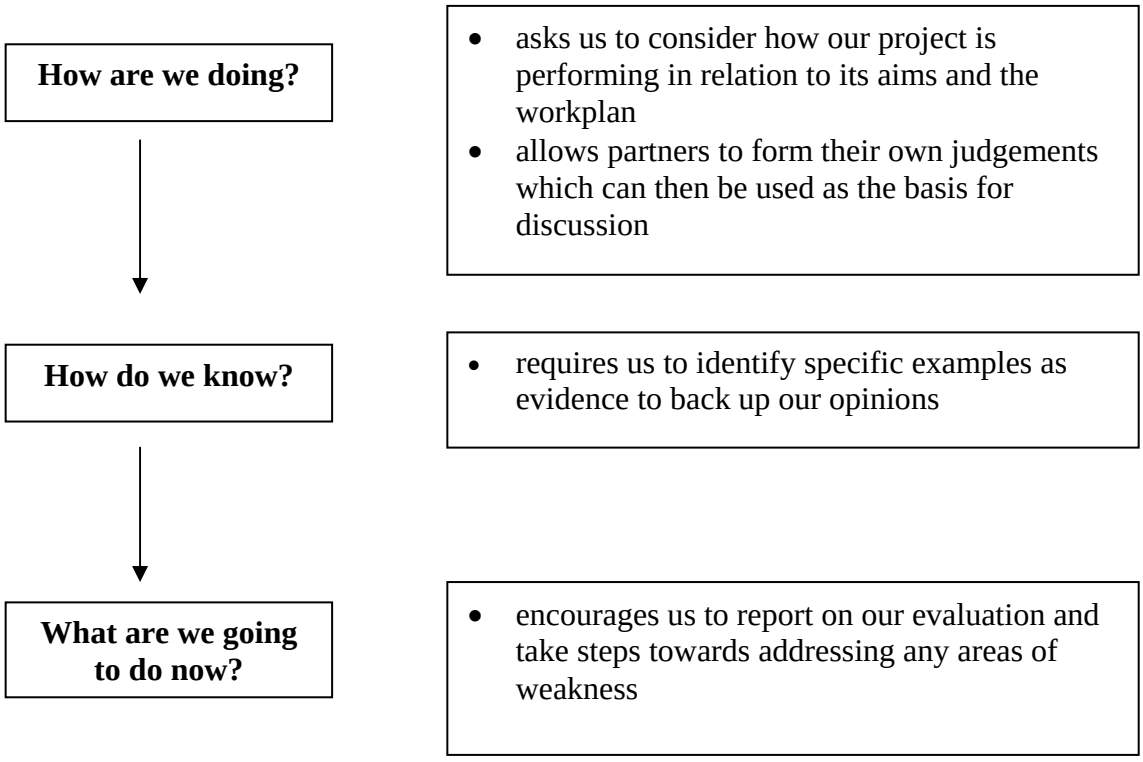
INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are based on the process of school self-evaluation used in Scotland and described in the document, "How Good is Our School?"

The aim of these guidelines is to help you to evaluate the quality of your European project and its activities. They introduce Key Areas and Indicators to help you to:

- recognise key strengths
- identify those areas where some improvement or further action is needed
- draw up an action plan for improvement

Three basic questions are at the centre of the self-evaluation process:



USING THE TOOLS

The tools, *"How Good is Our Project?"* and *"How Good is the Event?"* allow you to:

Take a broad view of all aspects of the project or event

- invite all partners to scan across all the areas and indicators, assigning one of the 4 levels to each indicator. This will give immediate feedback on areas of major strengths or concern.
  4 = *very good* - major strengths
  3 = *good* - strengths outweigh weaknesses
  2 = *fair* - some important weaknesses
  1 = *unsatisfactory* - major weaknesses

Take a closer look at specific areas

- in addition to taking a broad view, partners should agree on one or two key areas to focus on in more detail
- over the lifespan of the project, all the areas should be scrutinised
- the identified areas for taking a closer look can form the basis for discussion at, for example, a meeting of partners

Reporting and improving

- an evaluation report can be written around the key areas and indicators
- the report should mention the evidence identified
- the report should summarise the main strengths
- the report should identify the next steps to be taken towards improvement

The tools are offered as a *flexible* resource which can be tailored to meet the needs of individual projects and events. They can be downloaded from: http://www.aberdeen-education.org.uk/european

HOW GOOD IS OUR PROJECT?

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

No.	Performance Indicator	Themes	4	3	2	1
	Quality of the trans-national partnership					
1.1	Strong commitment to the project by each partner	*extent to which each partner is prepared to commit time and resources as required in line with the jointly agreed work plan *willingness to resolve problems				
1.2	Agreement amongst partners	*****mutual understanding about project rationale, overall aims and short-term/long-term objectives *clear evidence in the workplan of sharing of roles and responsibilities amongst partners				
1.3	Effective and on-going communication amongst partners and with other agencies	*effectiveness of communication with account being taken of any language difficulties *clarity of communication, particularly by the project co-ordinator *range. purpose, fulness and effectiveness of contacts and communications amongst partners and with other agencies eg. National Agency, European Commission				
1.4	Trust amongst partners	*development of mutual trust throughout the life of the project *development amongst partners of a sense of ownership of the project				
1.5	Development of positive attitudes	*development of positive attitudes towards Europe and transnational activities				
	Project management, leadership and quality assurance					
2.1	Quality of project management arrangements	*commitment and equitable involvement of all partners *detailed arrangements for implementation of workplans and administration of budgets *clarity of project co-ordination				
2.2	Effective management and leadership qualities demonstrated by project co-ordinator	*professional competence and commitment displayed by project co-ordinator *leadership qualities *quality of relationship with partners and development of teamwork				
2.3	Effectiveness of the process of monitoring and evaluation	*quality of the proposals for on-going monitoring and evaluation of the project and of its impact at local/regional/nationalEuropean level				

2.4	Quality of the dissemination process	*quality of the arrangements for disseminating project information/results *multiplier effect				
2.5	Implementation of the workplan	*adherence to the workplan by all partners *deviation from the workplan based on well-considered reasons and mutual agreement				
2.6	Integration of project activities into the department's/ institution's development plan	*evidence of the project's integration into the development plan and normal activities of the participating institutions				
	Project and its content/activities					
3.1	Structure of the project	*clear rationale and clarity of objectives *realistic timescales *pertinence of topics and activities *clarity and consistency of the general design of the project				
3.2	Quality of the project	*quality of the project in terms of its short, medium amd long term impact at local/regional/national/ European level				
3.3	Quality of project materials/ products	*quality of materials/guides/reports/products throughout the life-cycle of the project				
3.4	Integration of the project activities into and across the curriculum or work area	*integration and permeation *extent and quality of the intercultural/language-awareness dimensions *extent and quality of the multidisciplinarity of the project				
3.5	Quality of the promotion of the European Dimension	*appropriate emphasis placed on the European dimension in education *effective promotion of knowledge and understanding about Europe				
3.6	Innovation and variety of approach	*evidence of a varied range of approaches by all partners within the project *use, where appropriate, of innovative methodology and effective use of new technologies *extent of the opportunity for partners to input their own expertise and learn from each other				
	Support for project partners and participants					
4.1	Support within each partner organisation	*effective and ongoing support from line management within each partner organisation *access to specialised support as appropriate on an in-house basis *quality of support for individual participants				
4.2	Peer support	*effective peer support within each partner organisation *support, where appropriate, from project partners or those involved in similar transnational projects				
4.3	Support from external agencies	*awareness of specialised support available from external agencies at local/regional/national/ European level				

	Resources					
5.1	Provision of project resources	*sufficiency, range and suitability of project resources, including, where appropriate, technology resources *sharing of resources/expertise amongst transnational partners				
5.2	Effective use of resources	*extent to which technology and other resources are used effectively and innovatively *clear link between project workplan and cost-effective use of resources				

Exemplar

Performance Indicator 1.1

Strong commitment to the project by each partner

This performance indicator is concerned with the following themes:

* extent to which each partner is prepared to commit time and resources as required in line with the jointly agreed work plan
* evidence of willingness to resolve problems

It refers to the quality of the transnational partnership in terms of each partner's commitment to ensuring that the transnational project develops according to the agreed work plan for each year, and that any problems are resolved quickly and effectively.

Level 4 Illustration
* Each partner has a clear understanding of the amount of time and resources which require to be allocated to the project and demonstrates a strong willingness to contribute as required * Each partner is fully aware of the need to compromise and demonstrates a clear commitment to resolve any problesms which arise in a way which is acceptable to all project partners

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 award.

Level 2 ` Illustration
* There is lack of a clear understanding of the amount of time and resources which require to be allocated to the project in order to meet the targets agreed in the work plan, and consequently there may be evidence of a failure to contribute as required * Where problems have arisen, there is evidence of a lack of commitment to finding a mutually acceptable compromise

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 2 award.

Notes:
1. Reference should be made to the agreed workplan for the appropriate year of the project and, where appropriate, to the final report for each year of the project.

HOW GOOD IS THE EVENT?

(A tool for the evaluation/self-evaluation of transnational courses/conferences/seminars)

This tool has been produced in line with the Scottish model of evaluation, which uses key areas and performance indicators for evaluation and self-evaluation.

The tool is intended for use by external evaluators, event organisers and participants. It may be used in two main ways:

- to provide a broad overview of the event as a whole (eg. each indicator can be evaluated on a 4 point scale, where 4 is very good)
- to focus on one, or more, key area of particular relevance (in this case, it may be necessary to tease out the indicators in more detail)

The tool is offered as a *flexible* resource which can be tailored to meet the needs of individual events. It may prove useful as a starting point for initiating discussion, especially where, for example, there is an opportunity for event organisers and participants to use it for their own self-evaluation of an event, and follow this up with a shared discussion based on the results.

06 January 2005

HOW GOOD IS THE EVENT?

A tool for the evaluation/self-evaluation of transnational courses/conferences and seminars

(This tool is linked to "How Good Is Our Project? Performance Indicators for the evaluation/self-evaluation of European Projects")

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

No.	Performance Indicator	Themes	4	3	2	1
1	**Quality of the trans-national element**					
1.1	Input into the event by the project partners	❖ extent to which each partner contributes to the event ❖ evidence of partners sharing roles and responsibilities during the event or as part of the overall project				
1.2	Link between the aims of the event and the overarching aims of the transnational project/funding programme	❖ mutual understanding amongst partners about project and event rationale and the short-term/long-term objectives of the event and the project ❖ clear evidence in the event programme of synergy with the overarching transnational project and the relevant funding programme				
1.3	Development of positive attitudes towards Europe	❖ opportunities for the development of positive attitudes towards Europe and transnational activities ❖ extent and quality of the intercultural dimension ❖ extent of the opportunity for participants to share relevant information about their own countries				
1.4	Promotion of other languages	❖ extent and quality of opportunities for the use of various languages, both by trainers and by participants ❖ evidence of strategies for overcoming language difficulties				
1.5	Representation of a variety of countries	❖ extent to which a reasonable representation of participants from various countries has been achieved				
2	**Structure, content and delivery of the event**					
2.1	Organisation of the transnational event	❖ evidence of clear planning ❖ realistic timescales ❖ appropriate selection of delegates				

2.2	Effectiveness of content and appropriate range and balance of activities	❖ appropriate content, clearly related to the aims/objectives of the event ❖ relevant mixture of activities: eg.ice-breaking activities, information-giving sessions, active participation in workshops by participants etc. ❖ appropriateness of social programme				
2.3	Effectiveness of the delivery by trainers/workshop leaders etc.	❖ trainers/leaders have the appropriate subject competence and knowledge ❖ trainers/leaders are good communicators, with the necessary language skills ❖ trainers/leaders have the appropriate didactic experience for delivering professional development				
2.4	Effectiveness of shared ownership of the event	❖ evidence that the needs and expectations of participants have been taken into account ❖ evidence that participants have the opportuntity to contribute their own expertise				
2.5	Effectiveness of the process of monitoring and evaluation	❖ quality of the mechanism for evaluation, both short-term and long-term if appropriate, including post-event follow-up ❖ evidence of on-going assistance to participants, if appropriate				
3	**Materials, resources, equipment**					
3.1	Provision and suitability of materials, resources and equipment	❖ evidence of appropriate prior information being issued to participants ❖ relevance and quality of materials issued during the event ❖ sufficiency, range and suitability of other resources, including, where appropriate, ICT ❖ provision of support and assistance for technology users ❖ extent to which technology and other resources are used effectively and innovatively				
4	**Quality of the domestic arrangements**					
4.1	Quality and appropriateness of the domestic arrangements and the comfort factor	❖ attention to practical details and catering arrangements ❖ suitability of working venue ❖ quality of overnight accommodation where appropriate ❖ evidence of any special requirements of participants being taken account of				

Exemplar

Key area: Quality of the transnational partnership
Performance Indicator 1.1

This performance indicator is concerned with the following themes:

extent to which each partner contributes to the transnational event
evidence of partners sharing roles and responsibilities during the event, or within the overall project

It refers to the quality of the transnational partnership in terms of the contribution of each partner to the event element of the transnational project, with clear evidence of an appropriate division of tasks and responsibilities

Level 4 Illustration

Each partner plays a role in the preparation and delivery of the event according to an agreed prior division of roles and responsibilities
There is clear evidence of a collaborative approach, with strong teamworking

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 4 award.

Level 2 ` Illustration

* There is lack of a clarity in the partners' division of roles and responsibilities, and consequently there may be evidence of a failure to contribute as required
* Where problems have arisen, there is evidence of a lack of commitment to finding a mutually acceptable compromise

A performance broadly equivalent to that illustrated above would merit a Level 2 award.

Notes:

1. Reference should be made to materials issued in advance, and to the event programme.

TAKING A SNAPSHOT

On occasion, it may be helpful to undertake a "snapshot" activity to assess quality. This can be done in a short period of time, for example at the end of a meeting of partners. Partners can be invited to complete the form below using the three key questions:

How are we doing?
In the column +, list all the positive features
In the column -, list any areas of concern

How do we know?
In the column ?, try, where possible, to provide answers to How Do We Know? by listing concrete evidence for + or – comments

What are we going to do now?
In the column →, list some action points

Partners may wish to make use of the key areas and indicators in *How Good is Our Project?* or *How Good is the Event?*

EXAMPLE

+	−	?	→
The meeting was successful and I felt we achieved a great deal		*We went through the workplan in detail and each partner now has a clear area of responsibility*	*I will run an awareness session next term to tell the schools in my area about the project*
	The practical information issued in advance was not clear enough so we weren't sure where we had to change trains	*The information that was emailed to partners along with the agenda*	*The co-ordinator agreed to amend the details to help future participants*
Good mix of countries		*Five countries were represented and covered northern, southern and eastern Europe*	*When we run the course, we will aim to attract more participants from the newly eligible countries*

SNAPSHOT EVALUATION

+	−	?	→

EVALUATING SCHOOL PROJECTS

Materials which help schools to evaluate their European projects have been produced during the Comenius 2 MICE-T project (Model Instruments for Common Evaluation - Training). These materials are especially useful for gathering evidence (*How do we know?*) and can be downloaded from:

http://www.alden-biesen.be/Europe/evaluation/mice.html

06 January 2005

Quality Indicators for Measuring the Impact of ICT in Transnational Projects

(these indicators may be used in conjunction with the tool, *How Good is Our Project?*)

	4	3	2	1
1. Impact of ICT on Learner Reflection • Pupils can relate the use of ICT to the project's context and aims/objectives • Pupils can suggest when ICT might be used effectively • There is evidence that the project provides a context for the effective use of ICT				
2. Impact on Skills Development • Pupils demonstrate ICT skills as a direct result of the transnational collaboration in activities such as use of internet/email/video-conferencing, online discussions etc. • There is evidence of skills progression				
3. Managing and Manipulating Digital Information • There is evidence of drafting/redrafting, when appropriate on a transnational basis • Pupils use ICT to engage in problem-solving strategies on a transnational scale				
4. Shared Planning/Organisation • Pupils make use of ICT to undertake project planning and organisation activities on a transnational level				
5. Investigatory Learning • There is evidence of using the internet to search/research for information on the project topic • Pupils use ICT to collect/analyse project data • Pupils use ICT to assist with language difficulties or raise language awareness				
6. Shared Learning • Pupils take account of the needs of partner schools regarding the use of ICT • Pupils take account of the audience for their project work eg. ICT produced materials				

7. Motivation • There is evidence of enthusiasm/pride in work/active participation in learning with ICT				

Exemplar:

Level 4 Illustration

- The school makes effective and appropriate use of ICT to further pupils' global understanding and enhance enquiry-based learning. Pupils make regular use of email to communicate with partners in their Comenius project, and demonstrate proficiency in the sending of attachments (text, graphics, audio) related to the theme of the project. With support from the education authority, pupils participated in a short video-conference with one of the partner schools, thus using technology to "meet" their peers in the foreign country in preparation for collaboration on the creation of a project website. Pupils are encouraged to make regular use of the World Wide Web to access local and global information for use in their own projects and activities.

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How Good is Our Network?

This tool is offered to help Thematic Networks measure their progress and performance against the two broad criteria for these networks specified by the European Commission in the SOCRATES Guidelines for Applicants 2000-2006:

- **A platform to assist the persons and institutions involved in Comenius to strengthen their contribution**
- **A forum for joint reflection and co-operation in identifying and promoting innovation and best practice in the thematic area**

The areas and quality indicators from "How Good is Our Project?" can also, of course, be used by thematic networks to take an overview of their progress. This tool, however, takes a closer look at areas of specific relevance to the networks.

**Levels of performance can be assessed according to an agreed scale eg. from 4 (High) to 1 (Low).*

1. Platform to assist the persons and institutions involved in Comenius to strengthen their contribution

QI 1.1 To what extent	**Level***	**How do we know?**
• *Is there evidence of maintaining and consolidating European co-operation beyond the period of community support for specific projects?*		
Features to consider		
• Exchange of information between network partners and other projects, current or whose Community funding has finished, in the same thematic area • Strategies for involving active participation in the network by those from other projects, current or completed, within Comenius or from other parts of Socrates and other		

networks • Training of personnel who could then “cascade” to others without funding implications • Promotion of new projects in the same broad thematic area • Assisting other projects with the dissemination of information in the relevant thematic area • A developmental strategy to extend, sustain and monitor the network over time		

QI 1.2 To what extent	**Level**	**How do we know?**
• *Does the network have a strong and recognisable identity and image which raises the awareness of others?*		
Features to consider		
• Is the network well publicised to others through its website and other marketing materials and strategies? • Do the partners in the network promote and market the network at national and local level? • Do others working in the same thematic area indicate a desire to be linked to, or to become a participant in, the network?		

QI 1.3 To what extent	**Level**	**How do we know?**
• *Do partners in the thematic network have opportunities to build on prior work in the thematic area?*		
Features to consider		
• The network offers new possibilities for collaborative practice aimed at strengthening or extending existing materials, practical or theoretical, in the thematic area		

2 A forum for joint reflection and co-operation in identifying and promoting innovation and best practice in the thematic area

QI 2.1 To what extent	Level	How do we know?
• *do partners reflect and exchange experience and opinions about the thematic area?*		
Features to consider		
• Dedicated time set aside for reflection and discussion on the thematic area • A common understanding that complementary unity and diversity can lead to a stimulating and vibrant network environment • Willingness to express opinions and cross-fertilisation of ideas • Development of an environment conducive to looking inside each other's professional worlds • Opportunities for mapping the existing state of play in the thematic area		

QI 2.2 To what extent	Level	How do we know?
• *Is there evidence of effective joint working practices within the network to reflect a strong and united team of partners?*		
Features to consider		
• Mutual understanding about the rationale, aims and objectives of the network • Trust among partners and respect for each other's expertise in the thematic area • Sharing of expertise with each other in a mutually beneficial way • Equivalent commitment and input by all partners • Strategies for overcoming obstacles • Joint approach to collection, assessment and dissemination of		

information and interesting practice		
• Partners have a sense of ownership of the network and its activities, and value the contributions of others • Smaller working groups developing within networks to take forward particular activities or areas of interest, with appropriate co-operation with and feedback to the network as a whole • Agreed leadership structure when smaller groups are involved		

QI 2.3 To what extent	**Level**	**How do we know?**
• *Does the network identify and promote innovation and interesting practice in the thematic area?*		
Features to consider		
• The network has a clear understanding of the meaning of innovation in the thematic area in transnational, national, and local contexts • Partners have a strategy for identifying examples of interesting practice through their own contacts and other means eg. National Agencies • The impact of innovative practice is monitored and disseminated		

QI 2.4 To what extent	Level	How do we know?
• *Do partners and their institutions benefit from involvement in the network?*		
Features to consider		
• The increased knowledge and expertise, both theoretical and practical, gained from membership in the network contributes to the personal and professional development of partners and impacts on their institutions • Partners have a sense of pride, enjoyment and satisfaction in being a part of the network • Opportunities for intercultural exchange		

Next Steps

The grid below is for the recording of action points arising from the evaluation exercise:

Quality Indicator Number	**Aspect**	**Possible Action**	*Who?*	**When?**

Rosetta McLeod
Aberdeen City Council
(from comments and suggestions provided by partners in the I-Probe thematic network)

This tool, developed for the RIAC Thematic Network, may be adapted for use in other contexts.

Evaluating the projects within RIAC

The RIAC thematic network is promoting and co-ordinating activities relating to the development of regional identity and active citizenship. As a means of encouraging projects to monitor and evaluate their activities, it is proposed that several tools are produced to tease out the criteria which might be assessed in each thematic area. Below is an example of a planning and evaluation tool for the area of Youth Democracy.

Youth Democracy

Youth participation in the political process in important for developing the skills of active citizenship and allowing young people to contribute at local, national or international level as appropriate. Encouraging and supporting youth participation involves recognising the strengths, interests and abilities of young people to enable them to balance their social rights and responsibilities while working towards community development in a democratic society.

Overleaf is a tool which can be used in two ways:

- as a checklist for planning a project
  Simply tick each indicator which should feature in a proposed project

- as an evaluation tool
  Assess the strengths and weaknesses of performance against each of the chosen indicators by collecting appropriate evidence, and then define the next steps to be taken

The checklist/evaluation tool covers 4 broad areas:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills and competencies
- Values and attitudes
- Creativity and enterprise

Knowledge and understanding	√	**Skills and Competencies**	√
• rules of their school		• clarity of thought	
• community involvement through established groups eg. Community Councils		• speaking articulately and persuasively	
• the local government process, roles of elected members		• ability to assess different points of view	
• the national government process, roles of elected officials such as members of Parliament		• active involvement at the appropriate level (school/local/national/trans-national)	
• local and national issues		• consultation skills	
• democracy in other countries, roles of members of the European Parliament etc		• ability to take positive action	
• methods of disseminating the decision-making process and the influence of the media		• resolving conflict fairly	
• the legal and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society		• effective interpersonal skills	
		• recognising bias (eg. in media reports), ability to distinguish between fact and opinion, bias and objectivity	
		• reflecting on the process of participating	

Values and Attitudes	√	**Creativity and Enterprise**	√
• recognising and valuing the contribution of others, including those from different countries		• suggesting imaginative solutions to identified difficulties	
• developing positive attitudes towards the concept of citizenship and democracy at local, national, transnational levels as appropriate		• using imagination to consider other people's experiences and being able to consider, express and explain the views of others	
• developing mutual respect and understanding			
• recognising the importance of electoral systems and the voting process			
• being able to identify and use criteria to make informed judgements			

SELECTED INDICATORS	STRENGTHS	AREAS FOR ACTION	NEXT STEPS
Knowledge and understanding			
Skills and Competencies			

Values and Attitudes			
Creativity and Enterprise			

QUESTIONNAIRE ON IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

This questionnaire was produced for the RIAC Thematic Network to assist the partners to focus on the important issues of Impact and Sustainability. It may be adapted for other networks and projects.

IMPACT	High ↔ Low				Please provide examples/evidence
Personal level					
• To what extent has your involvement in RIAC developed your knowledge and understanding of the thematic area?					
• To what extent have you been able to build on prior work as a result of being involved in RIAC?					
• How much has your involvement contributed to your knowledge and understanding of work in the thematic area being undertaken in other countries?					

• Do you feel that your involvement in RIAC has involved you in greater reflection about the thematic area?					
Institutional/local/national level					
• To what extent, and in what ways, has RIAC had an impact on your institution, or on any work being undertaken at local or national level?					
• Do you feel that RIAC has a strong and recognisable identity and image which others in your country are aware of?					
Which RIAC activities have had most impact?					
• Events which have been run (please describe those which have had most impact)					
• Newsletter					
• Website					
• Forum					
• Meetings					
• Other (please describe)					
Overall score for IMPACT					
• Taking into account your answers, please give an overall assessment of RIAC's impact. Please highlight any difficulties which have hindered progress in the area of Impact.					

SUSTAINABILITY	**High ↔ Low**				**Please provide examples/evidence**
• To what degree do you expect there to be an ongoing exchange of information amongst partners after the RIAC funding period has ended?					
• To what extent do you intend to continue your active participation after the end of the funding period? Please describe the ways eg - through e-learning opportunities - through e-twinning - through other agencies eg. ECTIS					
• Will you continue to contribute to training events? Please describe the kind of events.					
• To what extent do you think you will be able to promote and support other projects in the same thematic area?					
• Do you agree that you might continue to work with only some, not all, of the RIAC partners?					
Overall score for SUSTAINABILITY					
• Taking into account your answers, please give an overall assessment of the sustainability of RIAC when the funding period has ended. Please highlight any difficulties which have hindered progress in the area of Sustainability.					

Please give any other view or comments about the Impact and Sustainability of the RIAC network.