# Competence Matrix: Managing Diversity in International Educational Environments

## What is this matrix?

The Managing Diversity in International Educational Environments Competence Matrix is a theory and research-based tool for enabling quality assurance in international educational settings. The matrix was developed to support Finnish-educated educators when they take up positions in other countries.  It has been designed using empirical data provided by Finnish-educated professionals having experience of working abroad in a variety of countries.  Data comprising 'voices from the field' has been examined alongside key research on diversity management in education.

## How is this matrix used?

This matrix enables future and current educators who live and work abroad to have greater understanding  of how international settings impact on personal and professional lives. For organizations the matrix provides a tool to improve recruitment, preparation, and in-country support with special focus on:

- Identifying pre-existing educator competences  which are advantageous for adapting to working life in international environments.
- Supporting recruitment and pre-departure processes  for working life in international educational environments.
- Identifying continuous professional development needs of educators working in international environments.
- Designing in-country professional development processes.

## How is this matrix structured?

This matrix is structured according to thematic  competence areas. Each area comprises of description and indicators specifying a set of attitudes (mindset), knowledge, and skills needed for managing diversity  in international educational environments.

Kärkkäinen, K. & Marsh, D. (2019). Competence Matrix: Successful Diversity Management in International Environments. Jyväskylä: EduClusterFinland, University of Jyväskylä Group

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# Key concepts used in the matrix

## International Educational Environment

An educational setting which involves students, educational professionals and parents representing differing social-cultural backgrounds reflecting global experiences.

## Competence

Having sufficient knowledge, judgement, skill and strength to be able to work efficiently in international educational environments.

## Mindset

An individuals' set of assumptions and attitudes towards working efficiently in international educational environments.

## Diversity

The condition of having or being composed of differing attributes and characteristics which involves recognition of commonality or dissimilarity.

## Interculturality

Processes of interaction between people sharing differing socio-cultural backgrounds and orientations. In an ideal situation this interaction is based on equity and mutual respect and leads to the creation of new more responsive patterns and practices.

## Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

A dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language.

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## Global Open-Mindedness

*being receptive to new ideas when encountering different socio-cultural contexts and situations*

**INDICATORS**

- Is open to a wide range of ways to think, understand and do
- Is pro-active in learning about different perspectives
- Is interested in living abroad
- Has broad knowledge of the world

## Positive Mindset

*being able to approach 'difference' and challenging situations with a positive attitude*

**INDICATORS**

- Can look at challenges through a positive lens
- Sees working with differences as an opportunity, not only a problem
- Can live in the present moment
- Strives to cultivate the joy of learning even where the context is challenging

## Reflective Analytical Mindset

*being ready and able to analyse and critically reflect on own behaviour and teaching practices, and to use this to strengthen performance*

**INDICATORS**

- Can recognise complexities related to upbringing, learning, language, and culture
- Can challenge assumptions on how best to teach and learn
- Can approach students, teachers and parents from different backgrounds with intellectual curiosity which supports finding common ground
- Can critically reflect on own behaviour and teaching practices to identify and activate continuous improvement

## Collaborative & Teamwork Orientation

*being open to working closely with others by engaging in different types of collaboration and multi-professional practices*

**INDICATORS**

- Can recognise benefits of co-teaching and/or has an experience of successful co-design and co-teaching, peer observation and constructive use of feedback
- Can work effectively in teams of various composition
- Can cooperate with other professionals and parents involved in the learning process
- Can benefit from analysing learners' needs with fellow teachers, professionals and parents

## Subject Expertise and Transversal Skills

*being able to teach subjects and subject content across the curriculum on the basis of deep content expertise and thematic inter-connectedness*

**INDICATORS**

- Has deep subject knowledge, and is aware of breadth of own knowledge and limitations
- Can engage in thematic teaching across subjects in collaboration with other educators

## Constructive Interactional Skills

*being able to build, nurture and sustain good relations with students, parents, colleagues through constructive and meaningful interaction*

**INDICATORS**

- Can look for what matters to other people, express empathy, and adapt communication to suit purpose and context
- Can provide constructive feedback and feedforward (with a future-oriented focus)
- Can cultivate constructive interaction through dialogue, respect and focus on student needs and wellbeing

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## Responsiveness to Diversities and Interculturality

*being willing and able to approach diversity and interculturality in a multidimensional way*

**INDICATORS**

- Is open to a wide range of ways to think, understand and do
- Is pro-active in learning about different perspectives
- Is interested in living abroad
- Has broad knowledge of the world

## Self-confidence as a Professional

*being able to respond to professional demands with a high level of personal self-confidence*

**INDICATORS**

- Can stand for and articulate issues relating to professional decisions related to selection of learning content and classroom practices
- Believes in own abilities as an educator

## Bilingual Methodologies

*being actively plurilingual and creating rich CLIL learning environments*

**INDICATORS**

- Understands the theoretical and operational principles of CLIL
- Can construct and manage CLIL learning environments
- Is aware of the benefits and limitations of CLIL methodologies
- Can adjust teaching for the individual sociolinguistic profile of students in international contexts
- Can construct varied types of scaffolding to support learning of content and language

## Enabling Innovation through Creativity

*being receptive and pro-active in introducing and supporting innovation in education*

**INDICATORS**

- Can use creative methodologies including problem-based learning, phenomenon-based learning
- Can utilize school assistants' availability to support student learning in creative ways
- Is ready to identify, propose, share, and launch new innovations and forms of collaboration
- Can manage uncertainty resulting from the introduction of innovation

## Managing and Leading Classrooms

*being able to use a variety of high-impact methods, strategies, activities, and technologies to support learning alongside classroom management in diverse contexts*

**INDICATORS**

- Can identify high-impact methods appropriate for specific grade levels, subjects and learning objectives
- Understands how to use technologies to support learning in and outside the classroom
- Can use a variety of methods and activities to suit context, time, group and individual preferences
- Can deal with highly challenging situations including seriously disruptive behaviour in the classroom setting

## Lifelong Learning Orientation

*being open to personal and professional development*

**INDICATORS**

- Sees personal educational and career development as a lifelong long learning process
- Engages in different forms of lifelong learning for development as a professional and as a person
- Can reflect on prior and ongoing learning and experiences to develop further

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## Situational Adaptability

*being open and able to adapt effectively to different situations, conditions, expectations, uncertainties, and other work environment factors*

**INDICATORS**

- Can adapt to interacting successfully with people of different backgrounds
- Can be flexible in approaching different tasks and expectations
- Can adapt and perform effectively in uncertain and unpredictable conditions and contexts
- Can adapt and further develop knowledge and skills for the demands of the current context and situation
- Can adopt a pioneering role in managing change, everyday school requirements, and innovation
- Can engage in stress management and find ways to cope with psychological and emotional pressures (e.g. loneliness, physical tiredness, insecurity, and ethical dilemmas)
- Can manage means for maintaining well-being and work-life balance

## Managing Educational Contexts through English

*being able to communicate effectively and appropriately in the English language*

**INDICATORS**

- Can successfully combine management of basic interpersonal communication skills with use of cognitive academic language
- Can successfully manage classroom and other related situations in English
- Has an appropriate command of English (pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, grammatical structures, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency)
- Can manage different discourse, genre and politeness when interacting with different stakeholders

## Situating Curricula in International Environments

*being able to adopt, adapt, design and operationalize curricula in complex environments*

**INDICATORS**

- Understands how the school's local curriculum links to the Finnish national core curriculum
- Can incorporate multicultural features of the lives of students and other stakeholders into teaching and learning activities in a variety of ways
- Can contribute to curricular development according to the Finnish educational ethos
- Can articulate why incorporation of multiculturalism into the curriculum is important, and how it can support individual and social progress

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