



Chapter 3

Cross-Curricular Competencies

3.1 Introduction

The subject-specific competencies do not include all the skills students need to attain the objectives of the Québec Education Program. Cross-curricular competencies are also necessary, and they can be developed only if they are a focus in all subjects and all activities at school. They represent aspects of education that are the responsibility of all school staff.

These cross-curricular competencies, which represent goals common to the whole curriculum, constitute the different types of tools that schools believe students need in order to adapt to a variety of situations and continue to learn throughout their lives. They are mutually complementary, since all complex situations necessarily call for more than one cross-curricular competency at a time.

The cross-curricular competencies apply to all the broad areas of learning and are also closely linked to the subject-specific competencies, which draw on them to varying degrees, thus contributing to their development. Cross-curricular competencies are developed both at school and elsewhere through a gradual process that begins at the elementary level and continues well beyond the secondary level. They epitomize the principle of integrated learning, insofar as they apply to all areas of learning (horizontal integration) and all the years of schooling (vertical integration).

The Québec Education Program contains nine cross-curricular competencies grouped in four categories:

- **intellectual:** Uses information, Solves problems; Exercises critical judgment; Uses creativity
- **methodological:** Adopts effective work methods; Uses information and communications technologies
- **personal and social:** Achieves his/her potential; Cooperates with others
- **communication-related:** Communicates appropriately

Each cross-curricular competency is presented under four headings:

- the *Focus of the Competency* indicates the competency's function and nature
- the *Key Features of the Competency* describe the components
- the *Evaluation Criteria* suggest ways to judge the extent to which a student has developed the competency
- the *Developmental Profile* gives an idea of how the competency develops over time, particularly from the elementary to the secondary level,¹ although experience will provide a clearer understanding of this process

Different Ways to Address the Cross-Curricular Competencies

Although the idea of *cross-curricular competency* may seem new, it corresponds to the practices already used by many teachers and other educators to encourage their students to draw on their cognitive, social and emotional resources in order to integrate knowledge better. In this sense, the cross-curricular competencies are not really a new feature of the curriculum, but rather a set of guidelines that make it easier to identify important dimensions of learning that should be used and worked on in all the subject areas and in the broad areas of learning and, as such, should not constitute the focus of students' work, in isolation from any program content. They are thus a joint responsibility; their development requires the concerted effort of all members of the educational community. They must also be a focus of learning, because they cannot be developed unless they are intentionally called upon, and students realize that they have learned something and can reflect on their learning process.

1. In this program, information on the cross-curricular competencies applies to both cycles of secondary school.

The intellectual competencies play an essential role in learning and consequently concern all the subjects. Although some subject areas are more spontaneously associated with certain cross-curricular competencies, they do not have a monopoly on them. All of the subject areas can offer students many opportunities to call upon them, to use them and to develop them.

For example, problem solving, which is usually associated with Mathematics, Science and Technology, may be used in any subject as long as students do not simply reproduce an existing procedure. Thus writing a text can easily constitute a problem-solving situation, as can considering and discussing a moral issue. Similarly, although the development of creativity is most commonly associated with Arts Education, creativity can play a role in the other subjects if the teachers make use of learning situations that encourage students to explore different avenues. It is also important for students to use their critical judgment in many learning situations, particularly those calling for the validation of information, the questioning of prejudices or prudence when they are urged to do various things.

The intellectual competencies, which are essential tools in the integration of subject-specific knowledge, are also useful for dealing with problems or carrying out projects related to the broad areas of learning.

The methodological competencies are closely linked to the techniques, strategies and tools required in various subject areas. Every subject constitutes an appropriate context for helping students to adopt effective work methods and to use information and communications technologies properly. To develop these competencies, however, students must not only integrate the methodological approaches normally associated with the subject, but also recognize and evaluate their personal learning styles. This

process has a metacognitive dimension, related to the knowledge students acquire about their own ways of understanding and learning and the way in which they manage them.

The personal and social competencies are related to several of the focuses of development of the broad areas of learning, particularly those that deal with the adoption of behaviours and attitudes—for example, *Citizenship and Community Life* clearly draws on the competency “Cooperates with others” and constitutes fertile ground for the achievement of each student’s potential. Although subject-specific or interdisciplinary learning situations that give students a chance to cooperate can also contribute to the development of these competencies, school and classroom life, everyday teaching practices and positive role models play a greater part in helping students develop the personal and social competencies.

The communication-related competency involves the assimilation of various modes of communication and their appropriate use in a variety of contexts. The competency *Communicates appropriately* can be developed only if all school staff share a concern for language quality and an effort is made in every subject to use the many resources for communication.

It should be emphasized that the cross-curricular competencies do not develop in isolation. While it may be useful for pedagogical purposes to target one or two competencies in particular, according to their relative importance in a given learning situation, they are generally used in interaction with each other. By way of example, creative thinking and problem solving are often linked, as are critical judgment and using information. Focusing deliberately on any one competency necessarily involves working on several others at the same time.

The Evaluation of Cross-Curricular Competencies

The evaluation of competencies—whether cross-curricular or subject-specific—serves essentially to facilitate the regulation of teaching and learning activities and to assess students’ learning. The nature of cross-curricular competencies and the fact that they concern different aspects of cognitive, social and affective development make it necessary to use a variety of approaches in evaluating them. The observation of students’ behaviours, procedures or attitudes during learning situations that call for the competencies is one possible approach, as is student self-evaluation. From this perspective, it is important to avoid establishing an exclusive one-to-one relationship between a specific subject and the development—and hence the evaluation—of a specific cross-curricular competency.

3.2 Nine Cross-Curricular Competencies

COMPETENCY 1 Uses information

Focus of the Competency

Societies today are characterized by the rapid growth of knowledge concerning all manner of subjects and the growing accessibility of numerous and varied information sources. Users must, however, perform increasingly complex operations in order to take full advantage of these information sources that are not all of equal value. In addition to finding information, comparing it and assessing its value or appropriateness, they have to be able to organize, process and synthesize it so that they can make use of it. Schools must therefore ensure that students learn how to locate what they are looking for and that they develop the cognitive flexibility required to process and use a broad variety of information effectively.

In secondary school, young people have access to a growing amount of information through the media. Some information sources are less accessible to them than others, however, and it is important that they be able to consult these sources as well. Schools have a responsibility to help students explore the wealth of information that is available, both by organizing the teaching process in an appropriate manner and by placing the necessary material resources at students' disposal.

Every subject area provides a context in which students can develop and exercise this competency, but they have to be given opportunities to do so. The subject-specific learning situations should encourage them to use and process different types of data in order to acquire new knowledge. The broad areas of learning, because they concern interdisciplinary issues, also provide a useful context in which students can exploit many information sources.

Key Features of Competency 1

Systematizes the information-gathering process

Establishes research strategies • Determines the pertinence of information • Identifies the value of each piece of information

Gathers information

Selects appropriate information sources • Compares information from different sources • Evaluates the validity of information according to criteria • Makes connections between what he/she already knows and new information • Distinguishes between essential and secondary information • Seeks further information



Puts information to use

Answers his/her questions, using the information gathered
• Compares his/her new learning with previous learning
• Uses information in new contexts • Respects copyright

Developmental Profile

In elementary school, children learn to recognize information that is of interest to them in the sources placed at their disposal. Gradually broadening their range of sources, particularly by reading, they learn to obtain and compare information from various sources and to distinguish important data from data of secondary importance.

In secondary school, students more spontaneously diversify their search for information, consulting databases, written, visual or audio-visual documents, multimedia, experts, etc. They gradually improve their capacity to manage these different information sources, using more economical and effective research strategies. They develop their sense of judgment with regard to the profusion of information available, particularly information obtained from the media. Comparing various sources of information helps them to put things in perspective, identify similarities and differences and evaluate the reliability of sources. They also develop strategies for organizing information that make it easier to use later for tasks or problem solving.

Evaluation Criteria

- Consultation of various sources
- Effective research strategies
- Critical analysis of information
- Logical organization of information
- Use of information in new contexts

COMPETENCY 2 Solves problems

Focus of the Competency

The problem-solving process, which is an aspect of all human activity, plays a pivotal role at school—especially secondary school. In daily life, there are many situations that require various problem-solving strategies. Whether we have to weigh the issues raised by certain situations, to choose from among a range of possibilities that are not all equally viable or to make informed decisions, the ability to handle these situations rationally is always an asset.

Problem solving is not a linear process that can be reduced to the simple application of an algorithm. One must begin by defining the problem or recognizing the elements that define it in a given situation. Typically it is by trial and error, exploring various possible solutions, testing hypotheses, starting over and reformulating the problem that one constructs a satisfactory solution—which does not mean that it is the only possible solution. Such a process can take many forms, if only because of the many different contexts in which it is carried out. Solving a mathematical problem is not the same as solving a problem concerning everyday life. And yet, beyond the specific strategies involved, they do have something in common: both entail exploring many possibilities, being open to new alternatives, making use of various resources and reflecting on the approach used.

By dealing with a wide variety of situational problems, students will discover that there may be more than one way to solve a problem, that some solutions are more effective than others and that context and resources often determine which solutions are most appropriate. It is therefore important for teachers of all subjects to set their students relatively complex problems and to take advantage of opportunities for problem solving that may arise during activities not originally intended as problem-solving activities. The school should provide students with situational problems that correspond to their level, and either help them become aware of their own resources or give them access to the resources they need. It should also encourage them to persevere in their efforts to solve problems and to regulate their own procedures, while allowing them to make errors.

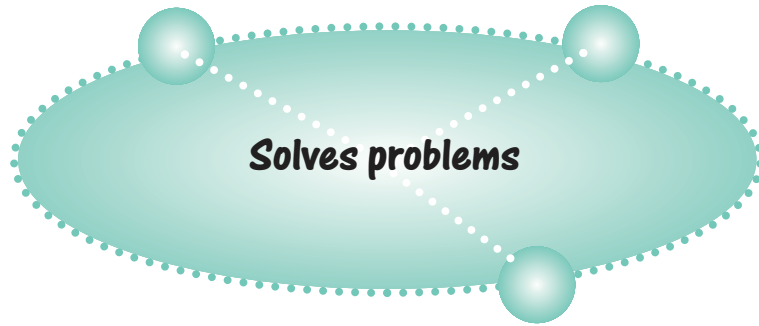
Key Features of Competency 2

Analyzes the components of a situational problem

Identifies the context and the main elements of the situational problem and makes connections among them • Recognizes similarities to situational problems solved previously

Tests possible solutions

Lists and classifies possible solutions • Considers the appropriateness of each solution and its requirements and consequences • Chooses a possible solution, applies it and evaluates its effectiveness • Chooses and tests another possible solution if necessary



Adopts a flexible approach

Reviews the steps taken • Redoes some of them if necessary • Identifies successful strategies and analyzes the difficulties encountered

Developmental Profile

In elementary school, students learn to identify the key elements of a relatively simple situational problem. They can explain how certain elements define a problem. They can list possible solutions and evaluate them, taking into account the resources at their disposal, and they can justify their choices. They can make connections between the situation under consideration and similar situations. Their implementation strategies are becoming more effective, their testing procedures are increasingly systematic and has improved their ability to analyze their procedures.

In secondary school, students deal with somewhat more complex problems and learn to define problems more rigorously. They explore a broader range of possible solutions, whose potential relevance they are able to judge in advance. Aware that there is more than one possible strategy, they learn to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each before choosing the one that seems most appropriate, given the resources at their disposal. They establish new connections among different contexts that involve problem solving, especially subject-specific contexts. In their search for an effective solution, they carry out a more extensive analysis, comparing viewpoints, asking questions and making connections with problems they have solved in the past. As they become aware of their own resources, they develop the ability to personalize their problem-solving methods and manage them autonomously.

Evaluation Criteria

- Accurate definition of the problem
- Variety and relevance of solutions proposed
- Evaluation of possible strategies
- Scope of the analysis
- Application of strategies developed to other situations

COMPETENCY 3 Exercises critical judgment

Focus of the Competency

People use their judgment to orient their actions or to influence those of others or simply for the pleasure of exploring an issue. There is no area of human activity in which people do not make judgments, be it politics, religion, morality, science, art, recreation or sports, intellectual life, work, business, consumption, the legal system, the media or hobbies—judgment is required in all of them.

Exercising critical judgment is demanding, even for adults, but its importance cannot be stressed enough in a pluralistic society such as ours, in which highly divergent opinions and values coexist. Critical judgment involves being able to go beyond stereotypes, prejudices, preconceptions and intuitive assumptions to do a rigorous analysis. Otherwise, what passes for judgment is simply an expression of opinion. So many of our beliefs about people or things are formed without any reflection on our part; to deliberately form an opinion is far more demanding. One must examine the issues involved, consider the facts, evaluate their accuracy and put them in perspective. This requires exploring and comparing various viewpoints, finding arguments and using well-defined criteria to develop a position that takes all factors into account.

By secondary school, students have reached a phase in their development in which they are particularly keen to assert themselves and discuss and validate the legitimacy of their convictions. Admittedly, for adolescents, the exercise of critical judgment sometimes consists in saying they like or dislike something and they may oversimplify an argument, a fact or a situation. They are nonetheless increasingly able to grasp the complexity of certain issues, see other viewpoints and distinguish judgments based on emotion from those based on reason. But they can only

learn to exercise critical judgment if their teachers themselves set an example and if they have many opportunities to express their opinions, discuss them with others, compare them with different viewpoints and analyze their validity.

The ability to exercise critical judgment cannot be fully developed unless it is exercised frequently. Since this competency forms the very basis for a critical relationship to knowledge, its use cannot be confined to a single subject, and the ability to put it in perspective. It is especially important in areas that involve taking informed positions, such as morality, religion, science, and history, or the appreciation of literature or art, the analysis of mathematical problems or the examination of territorial issues.

Key Features of Competency 3

Forms an opinion

Defines the question under consideration. Weighs the logical, ethical or aesthetic issues involved

- Goes back to the facts, verifies their accuracy and puts them in context
- Looks at various options and considers existing or possible points of view
- Bases his/her opinion on logical, ethical or aesthetic criteria
- Adopts a position

Expresses his/her judgment

Articulates and communicates his/her viewpoint

- Justifies his/her position



Qualifies his/her judgment

Compares his/her opinion with those of others

- Reconsiders his/her position
- Evaluates the respective influence of reason and emotion on his/her approach
- Recognizes his/her biases
- Repeats the whole exercise if necessary

Developmental Profile

In elementary school, students learn to distinguish between their own opinion and those of other people and to express their opinions quite articulately. They can question their own judgments and are willing to discuss them with others. They are more attentive to facts and better able to make connections between them and to evaluate their consequences for themselves and others. As a result, they gradually learn to distinguish arguments based on emotion from those based on reason. They are therefore capable of grasping the logical, ethical or aesthetic implications of a situation or issue, and can roughly formulate the values, principles, rights and duties on which their judgments are grounded.

In secondary school, students learn to question their opinions and positions and analyze the values underlying them. They become aware of the influences to which they are exposed. Recognizing that prejudices and pat answers are unacceptable, they are more concerned with the correctness of their arguments and the need, at times, to reconsider them. They deal with more complex situations involving a variety of issues. They are able to establish criteria for evaluating various positions regarding a situation, taking into account the context and the viewpoints of those involved. They express their judgment more precisely and are better able to take all relevant factors into account.

Evaluation Criteria

- Proper formulation of a question and its implications
- Openness to questioning of the judgment
- Appropriateness of the criteria used
- Well-reasoned justification of the judgment

COMPETENCY 4 Uses creativity

Focus of the Competency

Creativity is by no means limited to the arts, with which it tends to be associated, but plays a role in all areas of human activity. Dealing with the unexpected or with ambiguity, adapting to new conditions and meeting challenges are all situations that may elicit some measure of creativity, as all of these situations entail envisioning possible solutions, imagining scenarios and finding new ways of considering a problem and doing things.

Being creative consists essentially in using the resources at one's disposal in an original way. These resources may include ideas, concepts and strategies as well as objects, tools and techniques. Creativity is less a matter of new resources or knowledge than of the way in which one uses resources, rather like the ability to make do with what one has, using objects, ideas, concepts or means of communication for purposes other than those for which they were designed or in a new context. It entails finding imaginative ways to deal with constraints that at first glance seem insurmountable, balancing intuition and logic and managing emotions that may sometimes be contradictory.

At school, all the students' activities should foster creativity. Consequently, the school should provide learning activities that encourage students to use their personal resources, devise problems with more than one solution and situations that stimulate the imagination, and promote the use of a variety of approaches rather than one standard approach. The school can channel adolescents' typical need to assert themselves, by valuing initiative, risk-taking and inventiveness and allowing students to opt for the road less travelled. Schools must provide a flexible, open context in which students feel free to express their differences.

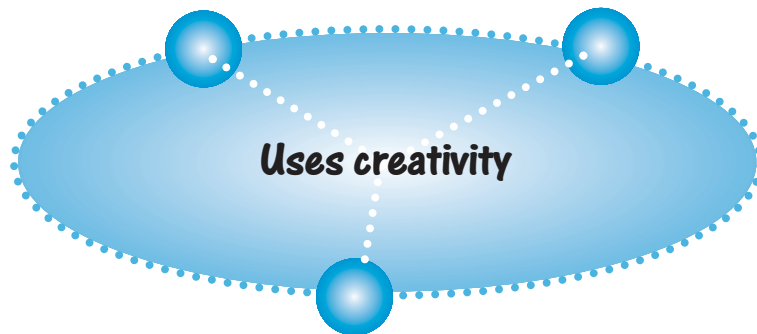
Key Features of Competency 4

Becomes familiar with all the elements of a situation

Defines the objectives and issues involved • Is open to different ways of perceiving the situation
• Listens to his/her intuitions • Envisages different scenarios and procedures

Explores

Accepts risks and unknowns • Plays with ideas • Proceeds by trial and error • Turns obstacles into resources • Recognizes possible or partial solutions • Is receptive to new ideas and ways of doing things



Adopts a flexible mode of operation

Tries out new approaches • Uses new ideas • Explores new strategies and techniques • Expresses his/her ideas in new ways

Developmental Profile

In elementary school, students are given opportunities to handle relatively complex and demanding tasks and to learn to organize the steps in their creative projects systematically. Over time, they grow less subject to the influence of other people and begin to show autonomy in their creative activities. They have learned to be receptive to various sources of inspiration and experiment with new combinations of ideas, strategies and techniques. When they explore new situations, they can recognize the original elements in their work.

In secondary school, they become more aware of their personal resources and discover the pleasure of drawing on them in carrying out tasks. They can imagine various ways of doing things or of thinking, adopt different perspectives and express their ideas in a personal way. They are able to deal with a broad range of ideas, concepts and approaches.

Evaluation Criteria

- Exploration of new ideas
- Exploration of different ways of doing things
- Use of his/her personal resources
- Originality of connections among the elements of a situation

COMPETENCY 5 Adopts effective work methods

Focus of the Competency

To carry out an activity or project or undertake any sizable task, one must adopt effective work methods. Such methods are based on knowledge about how to proceed—the methodological knowledge underlying virtually all human endeavours.

At school, students have to perform a variety of tasks, such as taking notes, planning their work, writing papers and answering questions. This knowledge is particularly important and can have a major impact on academic success. Effective task management greatly improves school learning situations. Planning work to be done, ensuring that it is done on time, taking into account various obstacles, locating the available resources, and gathering the required materials are all aspects of what it means to be effective in doing work or carrying out activities.

Adopting effective work methods involves more than this, however. This competency also involves selecting appropriate procedures according to the nature of the task and the resources available, particularly the cognitive resources. Students who solve a mathematical problem, write a narrative text, interpret a piece of music or do a history project have to imagine their task, define its requirements and consider ways of carrying it out. They also have to evaluate their progress while carrying out the task and make any necessary adjustments. Their role is not limited to following an established routine, for there is more than one way to perform a task, and the relative effectiveness of a given approach depends as much on the characteristics of each person and the internal and external resources at his or her disposal as on the requirements of the situation. The exercise of this competency involves being able to recognize which of several proce-

dures or methodological approaches is most appropriate for each person in a given situation or context.

Schools should therefore not require all students to follow the same procedures. Instead, they should help them to show self-reliance by encouraging them to select appropriate means for attaining objectives, to analyze their use of the available resources and to evaluate the effectiveness of their work methods. If students are encouraged to reflect on their approaches and to be open to other approaches, particularly those of their classmates, they may experiment with a number of possible methods and recognize which methods are most effective for them. All subjects lend themselves to this exercise, and transferring methods from one situation to another is likely to improve them, as it often entails adjustments that broaden their applicability.

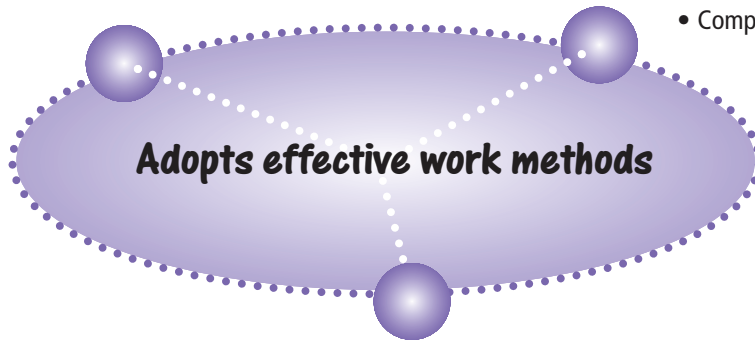
Key Features of Competency 5

Considers all aspects of a task

Adopts the objective and evaluates its complexity
• Identifies the available resources • Imagines various ways to carry out the task • Reflects on the best way to perform it • Plans how to carry it out

Adjusts his/her approach

Employs the necessary resources: people, materials, time, etc. • Adapts his/her work method to the task and the context and readjusts his/her actions as required
• Completes the task



Adopts effective work methods

Analyzes his/her procedure

Examines the procedure used • Recognizes what was effective and what worked less well • Assesses the requirements of the task
• Imagines contexts in which the approach could be reapplied

Developmental Profile

At the end of elementary school, students gradually assimilate various procedures and methods and apply them appropriately in various situations. They are willing to invest time and energy to attain an objective, and they are able to define their procedure quite autonomously and find original ways to achieve their goals. They are capable of perceiving the connection between their level of satisfaction and the work accomplished and can communicate their successes and difficulties verbally.

In secondary school, students are expected to expand their repertoire of methods, assess their relative effectiveness and adapt them to more complex and varied situations. They choose and adapt methods and processes to suit the context, the task and their personal characteristics as learners. They are capable of recognizing their strengths and weaknesses and taking advantage of the former and offsetting the latter by using the resources of their environment. In this way, they become more autonomous and better able to transfer methods and procedures from one situation to another.

Evaluation Criteria

- Perseverance in performing the task
- Appropriate choice of methods
- Broadening and adaptation of work methods
- Effectiveness of the outcome
- Accuracy of his/her assessment of the effectiveness of the methods chosen

COMPETENCY 6 Uses information and communications technologies

Focus of the Competency

The rapid development of knowledge and the increasing accessibility and variety of information sources makes the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) more and more essential. These technologies give people a new window on the world, with its conventions and contradictions. They have also changed the organization of work, made it easier to perform complex tasks and influenced intellectual life. The potential they represent for research, information processing, creation and communication in learning communities is further enhanced by the possibility of instantly exchanging ideas or sharing or processing data from a distance. Information and communication networks thus create new prospects for lifelong learning. It seems likely that, sooner or later, virtually every job will require at least a minimum of proficiency in this medium, which is both a language and a tool. It is thus essential that students acquire a certain mastery of these technologies by the end of secondary school.

Students beginning secondary school have varying degrees of competency in this area. They also vary considerably in their views on the educational relevance of these technologies and in their attraction to them. Some students use information and communications technologies regularly and expertly, while others make do with a superficial knowledge and still others have little or no access. A few enthusiasts take advantage of the opportunity to show off, using their competency to engage in unauthorized activities. Schools have a responsibility to recognize and further develop the expertise of these students while making sure that they make good use of their skills. More generally, schools have to enable all students to develop sufficient competence to use information and communi-

cations technologies in their learning. In addition, they must foster the students' respect for ethical standards in their use of ICT and ensure that the educational advantages of ICT are reflected in the intellectual, methodological, social and personal development of every student.

Mastering this competency involves using information and communications technologies effectively and appropriately, diversifying their use and developing critical judgment in this regard. This entails access to appropriate resources and ongoing support and supervision. It is thus important to provide students with a stimulating environment in which to learn to process information, create documents and communicate using ICT. If used appropriately in teaching subject matter, ICT accelerate the development and acquisition of many cross-curricular and subject-specific competencies. They are suitable for use in differentiated learning situations where students are expected to take responsibility for the construction of their learning. By providing access to a multitude of information sources and individuals, they give students the benefit of expertise from throughout the world and enable them to share their ideas and achievements with others.

Key Features of Competency 6

Uses appropriate technologies

Carries out various tasks using technological resources • Evaluates the potential of the available technologies and networks • Chooses the most suitable tools for the situation • Applies the interaction, communication and troubleshooting strategies required for a given task



Evaluates his/her use of this technology

Compares his/her ways of using ICT with those of others • Recognizes his/her successes and difficulties • Seeks ways to improve his/her use of these technologies and suggests ways to do this • Examines the relevance of using ICT by taking into account their contribution to specific tasks

Takes full advantage of these technologies

Diversifies his/her use of ICT • Takes advantage of ICT resources and functions in various types of learning • Recognizes and uses in a new context concepts and processes he/she has learned previously • Envisages new ways to use them • Respects the prevailing values and codes regarding intellectual property and privacy

Developmental Profile

In elementary school, students learn to identify, classify, compare and select information in various formats, do simple Web searches and use various software programs. They also learn to communicate with others using basic e-mail functions. They master the common functions of the applications used; they know how to search for, find, select, store and organize information using various formats. They are able to transfer data from one application to another, find their way on the Internet and use their address books. They recognize that ICT help them organize and communicate their ideas and understand the ethics of Internet use.

In secondary school, students expect ICT to help them to perform their increasingly complex tasks. They explore new functions of software programs, expand their repertoire of resources and diversify their use of ICT. They are able to use e-mail, and appreciate its convenience for sending or receiving documents, attaching files, compressing them if necessary, and opening attachments they receive. By developing strategies for constructing their knowledge, they increase their ability to organize their Internet browsing and their bookmarks and to use appropriate search techniques to consult specialized sites, data banks or written or multimedia documents. They learn to choose from among the peripherals at their disposal and use them appropriately. They can digitize data and present them in various formats, while respecting copyright. They use technologies to interact, collaborate and solve problems. They learn to identify ways in which ICT might allow them to be more effective in performing tasks. They use ICT to compare several points of view and critically examine the information they find. They seek expert advice when they require it and learn to compare information, see it in perspective and check the reliability of the sources. They evaluate their use of ICT for various tasks and identify possible improvements, bearing in mind their potential relevance to other cross-curricular learning.

Evaluation Criteria

- Effectiveness of his/her use of the technological resources in a given learning context
- Reuse of ICT processes and procedures in new situations
- Use of appropriate interaction, communication and troubleshooting strategies
- Analysis of his/her choices, successes and difficulties

COMPETENCY 7 Achieves his/her potential

Focus of the Competency

In order to fulfill their potential and make career choices that correspond to their interests and aptitudes, people have to know themselves well and be willing to explore their abilities. It is by recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, defining their needs and aspirations and identifying ways to fulfill them that people can develop self-confidence, take their place in society and assume responsibility for their own development. This self-knowledge is especially important in a context requiring regular assessment of one's personal or occupational development and ways of pursuing it.

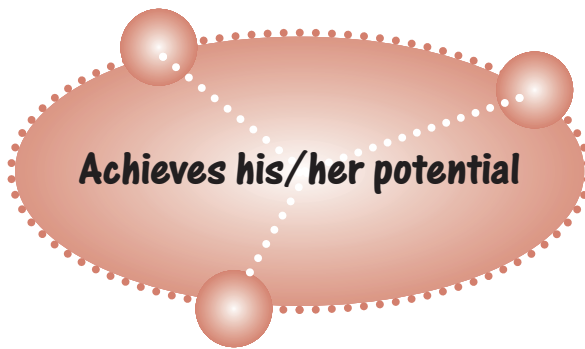
Secondary school corresponds to an important phase in adolescents' development, during which they seek autonomy, change their relationship to authority and feel a need for self-affirmation and belonging. Faced with choices concerning their social and occupational integration, they wonder about their future and about their capacities and aptitudes. Their knowledge of themselves and of their potential is strongly influenced by the social, cultural and spiritual groups to which they belong and the values supported by those groups. They are particularly sensitive to peer pressure and they need to recognize the influence of others on their values, behaviours, attitudes and choices as well as the influence they themselves can have on their peers. In order to take active responsibility for their development, they need to adopt a realistic and persevering attitude and develop the habit of self-evaluation, which will serve them well in the life-long learning that lies ahead.

Schools have a role to play in helping young people to define themselves as individuals, recognize their cultural identity and be receptive to other cultures. By having the opportunity to utilize their personal resources, make choices, justify and implement them and assess the consequences, adolescents will become aware of their identity and the values that influence them. The learning that students acquire at school, whether as part of the subject-specific programs or in the context of school and classroom life, contributes to their self-knowledge, to the achievement of their potential and to their awareness of the personal, social and cultural basis for their world-views. The various subject areas familiarize them with the major social issues on which they will have to take positions. Teachers of all subjects must also be aware of the values they convey and of the decisive influence that these values can have on the educational and career choices of their students. In addition, since it is often through their successes and failures that students develop an image of themselves and of what they can—or cannot—aspire to, schools must enable them to carry out projects that take into account their interests and abilities, while at the same time cultivating new interests and helping them to develop other abilities.

Key Features of Competency 7

Recognizes his/her personal characteristics

Identifies his/her feelings, thoughts, values, cultural frame of reference and options • Identifies his/her strengths and weaknesses • Assesses the quality and appropriateness of his/her choices of action • Recognizes the impact of his/her actions on his/her successes and difficulties • Evaluates his/her achievements and progress



Makes good use of his/her personal resources

Establishes short- and long-term goals • Establishes criteria for personal, academic and career success • Makes the efforts required to achieve his/her goals • Perseveres in the effort to achieve his/her goals • Displays increasing autonomy

Takes his/her place among others

Recognizes that he/she is part of a community • Compares his/her values and perceptions with those of others • Perceives the influence of others on his/her values and choices • Expresses his/her opinions and choices • Respects others

Developmental Profile

At the end of elementary school, students are capable of expressing their thoughts and feelings. They are learning to make choices and take action based on their strengths and in accordance with their values. Increasingly open-minded and curious about the world around them, they develop new fields of interest. They know that the attitudes and behaviour of others can influence them, and are aware of the impact of their own actions and attitudes on others. They feel a sense of responsibility for their actions and their consequences and can explain the reasons for what they do and say. They can recognize which tasks are most suitable for them and can reflect on factors that limit their capacity to take effective action. They have also learned to have confidence in themselves and to take risks to meet challenges.

In secondary school, students become more aware of their characteristics and affiliations and of how the latter influence their behaviours, attitudes and values. They learn to draw on these influences while putting them in perspective and to make their own choices. The group becomes a context for the validation of their personal characteristics, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. They recognize their cultural roots and can distinguish their culture from other cultures. They are learning to define their options in order to choose a future path that corresponds to both their aptitudes and their preferences. They find it easier to put their ideas into action and can make plans that correspond to their interests and aspirations. They are learning to persevere in carrying out their plans. They observe that the efforts they must make in order to achieve their goals give them a sense of satisfaction. They are also better able to gauge the quality of their work and learning. The development of this capacity for self-evaluation allows them to recognize how much progress they have made and the improvements they still need to make. Their increased awareness of the importance of achieving their potential and of the power they have to do so makes them autonomous learners.

Evaluation Criteria

- Expression of his/her feelings, values and opinions in interaction with others
- Realistic assessment of his/her potential
- Recognition of the impact of his/her actions on his/her successes and difficulties
- Demonstration of perseverance

COMPETENCY 8 Cooperates with others

Focus of the Competency

Even without the efforts of school staff, the school would still be a powerful agent of socialization simply because large numbers of students of various ages rub elbows there every day. But schools have a mandate to enhance this spontaneous socialization with more deliberate, systematic measures so as to ensure that students develop social competency based on values such as self-affirmation that is respectful of differences, consideration for other people's feelings, openness to pluralism, and nonviolence. School is an ideal setting for learning to live together in keeping with these values, and an appropriate place for students to learn teamwork, which is particularly useful for tasks whose scale or complexity requires collaboration by all concerned. Teamwork also contributes to the construction of knowledge by providing opportunities to compare various points of view and negotiate ways of doing things. The social activity in school makes it a place where interpersonal relations can contribute to the learning process. For this to happen, however, students must learn to cooperate.

Although this competency is generally applied in the context of teamwork, having students work together does not necessarily guarantee cooperation, which involves commitment to a common goal, establishing work rules, sharing responsibilities, recognizing complementary areas of expertise, respecting differences and using them constructively, sharing resources, managing conflicts, mutual support, collaborative action, and so on. It is the school's responsibility to develop these skills and attitudes, and to do so, it must set an example. Secondary school students are particularly sensitive to inconsistencies between

the behaviours that are expected of them and those they observe in some adults.

The teaching of certain subjects—particularly drama, dance and physical education—would be virtually impossible without teamwork, but in fact, all the programs lend themselves to the creation of learning situations that foster cooperation, be it around a table or while using ICT. In secondary school, students are often encouraged to do cooperative tasks or projects that are peripheral to the curriculum, for example, in extracurricular activities. Schools should show students that such experiences can be useful in subject-specific learning activities. They should also encourage their staff to adopt the same spirit of cooperation they seek to instill in students. Interdisciplinary learning activities provide ideal opportunities to promote cooperation among teachers and thus to set an example for students.

Key Features of Competency 8

Contributes to team efforts

Assesses what sort of collaboration or cooperation a task lends itself to • Participates actively in classroom and school activities with a cooperative attitude • Uses differences constructively to attain a common objective • Plans and carries out work with others • Carries out his/her task according to the procedure agreed on by the team • Manages conflict



Cooperates with others

Interacts with an open mind in various contexts

Accepts others as they are and recognizes their interests and needs • Exchanges points of view, listens to others and respects different views • Adapts his/her behaviour to the team members and the task

Uses teamwork effectively

Recognizes which tasks can be done more effectively by means of teamwork • Assesses the challenges or issues involved • Recognizes the benefits of teamwork for himself/herself and others • Assesses his/her participation and that of peers • Identifies desirable improvements

Developmental Profile

In elementary school, students experience teamwork a number of times and learn to work within structures of some complexity. They recognize which tasks can more easily be carried out by means of teamwork. They participate actively in group projects, proposing simple plans, activities and modes of operation and playing roles that are complementary to those of others. They can express their feelings and points of view clearly and take into account those of others. They help others and know when to ask for help. They make suggestions and welcome those of others. They know which behaviours and strategies contribute to teamwork and harmonious interpersonal relations.

In secondary school, students carry out subject-specific and interdisciplinary tasks whose scope or complexity requires the sharing of resources. They learn to solve problems collectively, which involves comparing points of view and coordinating actions in order to test possible solutions. They state and justify their viewpoints and respect those of others. Their assessments of situations that lend themselves to teamwork and of the type of collaboration required are increasingly accurate.

Evaluation Criteria

- Recognition of the needs of others
- Appropriate attitudes and behaviours
- Active participation in the work of the team
- Contribution to improving the way the team works together

COMPETENCY 9 Communicates appropriately

Focus of the Competency

Communication plays a major role in shaping our relations with others in a world in which social, ethnic and cultural diversity contributes to the complexity of social relations. Some forms of communication can bring individuals and societies closer together, while others can increase the distance between them or set them against each other.

Competency in communicating is closely related to the organization of thought. It is essential for disseminating knowledge, negotiating points of view, discussing ideas, and justifying choices or opinions. It enables us to share our thoughts, feelings, values, intuitions and perceptions, express our world-views and affirm our personal, social and cultural identities.

The development of jargon and unique patterns of interaction indicating their affiliation with a group is a way for young people in secondary school to affirm their identities, distinguish themselves from others and express their culture. Their competency in communicating can be considerably enriched by awareness of the diverse modes of communication and registers within each mode. It takes various forms: attitude, posture, voice, gestures, mimicry, clothing, images and symbols.

To fully understand their surroundings and interact effectively with others, students must recognize the importance of different modes of communication, each with its own structure and system of signs, and strive to use them properly. Mastering this competency entails knowing and observing the rules and conventions of each mode of

communication and taking into account the many variables involved in their use. As an interactive process, communication is rarely unequivocal: it is characterized by the need for constant adjustment to a variety of possible meanings and reciprocal expectations. It requires choosing modes and registers of communication that correspond to the intentions of those wishing to communicate and that are adapted to the context of communication and to the target audience.

Since each subject is associated primarily with one means of expression, school is an ideal place for students to experiment with the different forms of communication: artistic, musical, mathematical, computerized, physical, symbolic, etc. School gives students opportunities to explore the resources of each of these forms of communication, to discover their conventions and codes and to develop the ability to listen. Among these modes of communication, the language of instruction represents the principal tool and means of access to culture.

In this regard, it is a major asset to know how to use the organized system of signs and articulated codes that constitutes language. Language is a factor of cohesion that facilitates the cultural expression of a way of being, of representing reality, of thinking and of feeling that are specific to a community. It is also the cornerstone of individual identity: it enables individuals to form ideas, express them and compare them with those of other people. The capacity to express oneself properly is a key factor in the ability to take one's place in society as an individual and a citizen.

Students' acquisition of proficiency in this language must not be the exclusive responsibility of those who teach the language of instruction. In all subjects, to communicate their learning appropriately in accordance with their level of education, students require skill in expressing their ideas, emotions, intuitions, questions, reasoning and arguments using the vocabulary, codes and conventions specific to the given subject. In short, while language skills help students master what they learn in the different subjects, each subject in turn helps them hone their language skills.

Key Features of Competency 9

Becomes familiar with various modes of communication

Knows and observes usage, rules, codes and conventions associated with different modes of communication

- Uses their resources



Manages the communication process

Takes into account factors that may facilitate or hinder communication

- Adjusts the communication on the basis of the reactions of the target audience
- Recognizes the strategies used throughout the process and evaluates their effectiveness

Uses various modes of communication

Analyzes the communication situation

- Chooses one or more modes of communication suited to the context and purpose of communication
- Identifies ways of communicating suited to the target audience and their characteristics
- Uses modes of communication suited to the situation

Developmental Profile

In elementary school, students learn to take into account the different aspects of a communication situation and to be more and more attentive to reactions to their way of communicating. They express themselves with a certain ease, and observe the rules and codes associated with the mode of communication used. They are capable of planning their communication activities and evaluating their own communication efforts more rigorously. They have greater sensitivity to the effects of the use of different modes of communication and take into account the point of view of the other person in order to improve their ability to communicate.

In secondary school, students improve their mastery of oral and written communication and their ability to make full use of the resources of the spoken and written language by paying attention to the vocabulary and specific characteristics of the specialized languages of each subject: the language of mathematics, of science, of computers and so on. They also continue exploring various modes of communication: artistic, musical, computer-related, gestural and symbolic. They are increasingly aware of the diversity of forms of communication and gradually recognize the modes of communication, and of their many uses, that are best-suited to their thoughts and feelings. They are capable of putting their own points of view into perspective, and learn to use reactions to adjust their communication. They express themselves properly, taking into account the resources of the various modes of communication used, observe the conventions, and pay special attention to the quality of their written and spoken language in all school and extracurricular activities. With respect to their mother tongue, they develop greater sensitivity to the richness and precision of vocabulary, the appropriateness of content, the coherence of reasoning and the elegance of composition. They learn to recognize their language as an essential tool for structuring and expressing thought and as a vehicle of their culture. They are also able to communicate effectively in their second language.

Evaluation Criteria

- Coherence of the message
- Use of appropriate vocabulary or symbols
- Observance of practices, codes and conventions
- Appropriateness of the message for the context and audience
- Self-analysis and evaluation