

Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters



Module 5

Activity 3: Evidence of competences

Alice's AIE Section 9: Thinking back and looking forward – commentary

Section 9 of the AIE has been designed to support the development of

- Critical cultural awareness and
- Action orientation

Critical cultural awareness is the ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, personal experiences as well as the perspectives and practices of others. In section 9 Alice looks back at her overall experience of building a relationship with Peter and his family and she is clear about the encounter having been a rewarding one. She judges it by her appreciation of closeness between people and getting to know them better. In her view, it has been an important step in her development as a more socially mature and competent person because it has made other such experiences easier, helping her to understand culturally complex situations better, how to behave and how to react appropriately.

And yet, Alice admits there are some aspects of Peter and his family's thinking that she could "absolutely not accept", e.g. their homophobic attitude. Equality of human rights is something which she puts above everything else.

Action orientation, i.e. the willingness to undertake activity as a consequence of reflection, is evident in several ways in Alice's AIE. First and foremost she points to the impact that working with the AIE has had on her. Without using the term intercultural competence, Alice actually talks of a huge change in her behavior – making her opinions and values clear, speaking coherently, giving clear reasons for her actions, grasping the opinions of others and putting herself in their situation. Half way through the Autobiography she has already decided – showing trust and courage – to resume contact with Peter and the members of his family.

Alice also takes another a step, this time in the direction of a different kind of responsibility: she wants to "write essays about race and culture", thus demonstrating her desire to share and spread what she has learned.