

A PORTFOLIO OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE



Standard version



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Cover and layout:
Documents and Publications
Production Department
(SPDP), Council of Europe

Photo: Shutterstock

Council of Europe Publishing
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
<http://book.coe.int>

ISBN 978-92-871- 8756-7
© Council of Europe, March 2021
Printed at the Council of Europe

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Introduction

The Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) is a set of materials that can be used by education systems to help people to acquire the competences that are needed to take action to:

- ▶ defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- ▶ participate effectively in a culture of democracy;
- ▶ engage in intercultural dialogue; and
- ▶ live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies.

The RFCDC is intended for use by education policy makers and by teachers and other education practitioners in all sectors of education systems, from pre-school through primary and secondary schooling to higher education, including adult education and vocational education.

The Framework provides a systematic approach to designing the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, and introducing them into education systems in ways that are coherent, comprehensive and transparent.

The portfolio

The portfolio that is presented here is a means of using the RFCDC. It provides learners with the opportunity to reflect on their competences, to collect data and documents which support and stimulate their reflections, and to think about how they will further develop their competences in the future. As such, it provides an invaluable tool that can be used to foster and support the development of democratic and intercultural competences in learners.

The portfolio also provides evidence about how a learner's proficiency in the use of their competences is developing. Users of the portfolio can thus assess their own progress and identify where and how they can improve. The evidence can also be used by teachers and others to assess the progress of learners in achieving proficiency and to advise and help them in the use of their democratic and intercultural competences. Assessments using the portfolio may therefore be made for either formative or summative purposes.

Versions of the portfolio

There are two versions of the portfolio, one for younger learners (children up to approximately the age of 10/11 years) and a second standard version (for learners from approximately 10/11 years upwards). Each version is accompanied by a guide for teachers. Both versions of the portfolio have been piloted successfully by teachers in a number of countries.

While the portfolio documents and the feedback questionnaire are available in English, all of these materials may be translated and used by teachers and learners in their own language(s). Teachers are also free to adapt and alter the suggested contents of the portfolio to make them more suitable for their own education system and needs as they wish, based on their own professional judgments. However, two features need to be retained when changes are made to the portfolio. It is important to ensure that learners always provide:

- ▶ adequate documentation on their uses of competences;
- ▶ critical reflections on their uses of competences.

These two features are crucial in enabling the portfolio to support and facilitate the development of learners' competences.

Portfolio contents in brief

The materials presented in the current document are twofold:

- ▶ a blank template, which is intended to display the overall structure of the portfolio in a relatively straightforward format;
- ▶ a guide for teachers, which explains how teachers can help learners compile an RFCDC portfolio using the template.

The portfolio may be compiled in traditional hard copy (for example, using binders, folders or box files), or it may be implemented digitally as an e-portfolio. Digital implementation has several advantages. These include:

- ▶ allowing learners to be highly creative in how they compile, organise and cross-reference the contents of their portfolios; and
- ▶ facilitating the collection and storage of videos, audio-recordings and digital images as part of the documentation.

The choice between hard copy and digital implementation is one for teachers and learners to make according to their particular circumstances.

Teachers who use the portfolio are invited to provide feedback on their experience to the authoring team. An online form through which this feedback may be provided is available on the Council of Europe's RFCDC Portfolio webpage: www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/portfolios.

Template

1. Title page

My name(s) and family name(s):

.....

Date on which I started this portfolio:

.....

People who helped me to compile this portfolio (teachers/peers/parents/siblings, etc.):

.....

Name of my school:

.....

My year/grade:

.....

The school subject(s) in which I have compiled this portfolio:

.....

.....

Other school activities which I have included (for example, being a class representative):

.....

.....

Other situations outside school which I have included (for example, events in recreation time, clubs, after-school activities):

.....

.....

The portfolio is a resource for teachers and learners to ensure and monitor the learning and application of competences for democratic culture in relation to particular activities or programmes or a whole-school integrated approach.

The main functions of the RFCDC Portfolio are to provide an opportunity for learners to document the development of their competences for democratic culture, and to help learners to reflect on their progress/achievements/accomplishments.

2. List of contents

[To be completed by you]

3. Statement of purpose

In this section, you are invited to provide an introductory statement about the purpose of your portfolio. You may mention what kind of documents and materials you include in order to show your values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding as a citizen. Remember that you can fill in this section at any time, and you can also come back to it and modify it at any time.

You can make this statement in any form you feel comfortable with, for example you could record a video.

Example: in my portfolio I will include descriptions of events which show my competences for democratic culture. To do this, I will be recording some events in writing, or by video or audio recording, or by introducing images such as photos or cartoon strips. These documents will allow me to reflect upon different competences I have developed and/or am still working on in order to be a proficient participant in today's society.

Feel free to revise and enrich your purpose statement whenever you wish.

4. Personal statement

A. How I see myself

In this section of the portfolio, you are asked to describe yourself as a citizen.

Please summarise in a few words what citizenship means to you. How do you see yourself as a citizen?

Remember that you can fill in this section at any time and you can come back to it and modify it (for example when you have had a new experience at national level).

Here you may want to provide some examples of your memberships, affiliations, active participation in various communities including social networks. You can also provide drawings, photos or recordings in this section.

Describe the things you do

- ▶ at the **local** level (for example, in your village, your street, your part of town)

.....

.....

- ▶ at the **regional** level (for example, in your part of the country, your department, etc.)

.....

.....

- ▶ at the **national** level (that is, in relationship to your country)

.....

.....

- ▶ at the **international** level

.....

.....

- ▶ in the **digital world** (virtual profile, online communities, online gaming, social networking, etc.).

.....

.....

B. What other people say about me as a member of a local, regional, national, international, virtual community

In this part, you may include what people say about you from different contexts of life (reference letters, teacher and family testimonials, social media comments, etc.).

You may also want to group these testimonials according to the four types of competence:

- ▶ What do others think about your **values as a citizen**?
- ▶ What do others think about your **attitudes as a citizen**?
- ▶ What do others think about your **skills as a citizen**?
- ▶ What do others think about your **knowledge and critical understanding as a citizen**?

5. My activities and reflections

In this section of the portfolio, you should include descriptions and documentation of specific activities which show that you have used your competences, as well as your reflections on those activities. Radar charts can also be used to summarise your overall pattern of competences in those activities; your teacher can show you examples of these from the guide for teachers.

It is advisable to give each activity a number to make it easy to refer to it in other parts of your portfolio.

6. My logbook

This section should contain descriptions of experiences in and outside of school in which you have used your competences, together with your reflections on those experiences.

This section may also be used to record your reflections on relevant aspects of the context in which you are living – the extent to which features of your environment (including other people) support you in or prevent you from exercising your competences, and how your behaviour is influenced or affected by things or people in your environment.

You should provide an indication of who is allowed to read each description and reflection in this section.

Again, it is advisable to give each experience and reflection a number to make it easy to refer to it in other parts of your portfolio.

7. My general reflections

My reflections after considering my activities and logbook sections for the last ... weeks/months:

In this section you are invited to look back over your portfolio and in particular your activities, reflections and logbook, and think about what you have included. Here are some key questions to help you:

- ▶ What do I remember most? What is most striking in “My activities and reflections” and in “My logbook”?

.....
.....

- ▶ What could I have done differently?

.....
.....

- ▶ What got in the way of me doing something differently?

.....
.....

- ▶ What made me change over time?

.....
.....

- ▶ What have I learnt about myself?

.....
.....

- ▶ Which descriptors best describe where I am now?

.....
.....

8. List of competences

In this section you are invited to add references to earlier sections of your portfolio using the numbers you have given to each activity, experience or reflection, so that you and your teachers can quickly see which competences have been demonstrated in which activity, experience or reflection.

Values	
▶ Valuing human dignity and human rights	
▶ Valuing cultural diversity	
▶ Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law	
Attitudes	
▶ Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices	
▶ Respect	
▶ Civic-mindedness	
▶ Responsibility	
▶ Self-efficacy	
▶ Tolerance of ambiguity	
Skills	
▶ Autonomous learning skills	
▶ Analytical and critical thinking skills	
▶ Skills of listening and observing	
▶ Empathy	
▶ Flexibility and adaptability	
▶ Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills	
▶ Co-operation skills	
▶ Conflict-resolution skills	
Knowledge and critical understanding	
▶ Knowledge and critical understanding of the self	
▶ Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication	
▶ Knowledge and critical understanding of the world	

A guide for teachers

Overview

This guide is for teachers,¹ that is, all who educate whether in pre-school, school or any other educational institution. It is intended for use with the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC).

The guide explains how teachers can help learners compile an RFCDC Portfolio. Compiling a portfolio requires learners to collect documents (images, recordings, texts, etc., from multiple sources in school and beyond) which show their competences for democratic culture, and to reflect critically on their competences. Documentation and reflection help in further developing learners' competences.

There are two versions of the RFCDC Portfolio and two guides:

- ▶ the portfolio and guide for "younger learners", aged up to 10/11 years; and
- ▶ the "standard" portfolio and guide for learners from 10/11 years upwards.

Although there are two guides, both cover the same issues.

Each guide begins by explaining what the portfolio is and its purposes. The guide then provides the teacher with detailed guidance about the different sections of the portfolio and how the teacher can help learners to construct their portfolios.

Pedagogy: by encouraging learners to document and reflect critically on their competences, the portfolio is, first, a powerful pedagogical tool for developing learners' competences.

Assessment: the portfolio can be used for assessment and the guide discusses how the portfolio can be used for both self-assessment and assessment by teachers.

Legal and ethical questions: when learners compile portfolios, there are legal and ethical issues that need to be considered by teachers. The guide includes a discussion of these issues.

Appendices: there are two appendices. The first appendix is a list of the principles that underlie the design of the portfolio. The second appendix contains an example of an information sheet for parents that can be used to obtain consent from parents, guardians or carers for a learner to participate in the portfolio process.

1. The term "teacher" is used here in a generic sense to refer to all who educate whether in pre-school, school, university, vocational education or any other educational institution. In the text the word "school" is also used generically to refer to all kinds of educational institution.

Before its publication, the RFCDC Portfolio was piloted successfully by 139 teachers in seven European countries. Here are some reactions from teachers who helped us pilot and prepare the portfolio:

Often when working with young people, we forget what is essential, and that is to prepare them for life. The portfolio is now here to help us conceptualise learning to develop their democratic competences.

(Standard version)

In my opinion, the portfolio consists of everything needed for children's development and improvement in democratic society.

(Younger learners version)

This portfolio can encourage students to take more ownership and responsibility over the learning process. It helped students to reflect on where they started a project, how they developed, and where they ended up at the conclusion of the project.

(Younger learners version)

I am not a devotee of portfolios ... but gradually, after studying the guide, when we started with the assessment of experience from such school subjects as History, Social Studies, Literature, English, and the teachers who teach these subjects joined us, we could get the full picture of whether we reach the education goals we set or just provide the students with knowledge.

(Standard version)

I think it's extremely useful because it prepares the students for real life and to think both creatively and critically and to problem solve. It gives them a more global perspective while working on their confidence and inclusion in their communities and in the world as a whole.

(Younger learners version)

The format is useful because it is very flexible and it challenges students to think about some ideas they are not given a chance to reflect in their education.

(Standard version)

The authors hope that teachers and learners will enjoy using the portfolio and find it helpful in becoming competent democratic and intercultural citizens.

1. What is the portfolio?

The portfolio is a means of using the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/). The RFCDC is a set of materials that can be used by education systems to equip young people with the competences required to take action to defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law; to participate effectively in a culture of democracy; and to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies. The Framework consists of three main components: a model of the competences that democratic citizens need in order to be active, effective and respectful members of society; a set of descriptors that help to define the competences in detail at three different levels of proficiency; and a collection of guidance documents for users of the RFCDC.

The portfolio provides learners with the opportunity to reflect on their democratic and intercultural competences. Learners do this by:

- ▶ collecting data and documents which stimulate their reflections; and
- ▶ thinking about how they will develop their competences in the future.

These processes help to promote the development of learners' democratic and intercultural competences. In addition, the portfolio provides evidence of how a learner's proficiency in the use of those competences is developing. This evidence may also be used for formative, diagnostic, monitoring or summative assessment purposes.

Purposes of the portfolio and the two versions

The portfolio is a practical means of bringing the RFCDC to people, young and old, in all social groups, to help and encourage them to become aware of the competences they have, and the competences they might yet acquire, as the basis for being an active and interculturally competent democratic citizen.

There are two versions of the RFCDC portfolio:

- ▶ a version for younger learners, aged up to 10/11 years; and
- ▶ a standard version, for learners from 10/11 years upwards.

Purposes of this guide for teachers

This guide has three main purposes:

- ▶ to explain the principles that underlie the design of the portfolio;
- ▶ to provide guidance on the roles of the teacher and learner in the use of the portfolio;
- ▶ to offer suggestions on how the contents of the portfolio may be compiled by learners.

Teachers understand the portfolio best when they themselves create a portfolio of the same kind as their learners, documenting and reflecting on their own competences, whether during a training course as an individual activity before or in parallel with their learners, or in co-operation with another teacher.

The standard version of the portfolio contains the following components:

1. a title page;
2. a list of contents;
3. a statement of purpose;
4. a personal statement;
5. a collection of descriptions of activities, documents, reflections and radar charts that describe the learner's performance, learning progressions, achievements and proficiency in the use of competences for democratic culture across a wide range of contexts within and beyond the classroom;
6. a logbook in which learners can record some of the specific experiences that they may wish to think more about;
7. a general reflections section, which reviews experiences and change over a longer period, for example a school term or a school year;
8. a summarising list of competences that have been demonstrated throughout the portfolio.

2. Principles of the portfolio²

Ownership and access

The portfolio belongs to the learner but is created in co-operation with one or more teachers in order to produce a rich description and analysis of the learner's experiences and the competences they demonstrate. Its purpose is to help in teaching, learning and assessment. The portfolio is flexible and equal emphasis can be given to teaching, learning and assessment, or to just one or two of these.

The learner has the right to withhold any materials that they do not wish to disclose, based on the principle of respect for private and family life. This means that there are different levels of disclosure. For example, some sections are open to anyone to whom the learner allows access; other sections are open only to the learner and their teacher (and perhaps the learner's family); and other sections are entirely private and not accessible to anyone but the learner. This principle applies above all to the "logbook" element of the portfolio, which is described below.

When, as is the most frequent case, the portfolio is used in a school or other educational institution, the learner will probably have more than one teacher to help them make decisions about what to include and what comments to make. The portfolio will therefore be open to more than one teacher, and a group of teachers can help the learner from their different points of view.

Pedagogical functions of the portfolio

Reviewing and reflecting on experiences and documents is the basis for learning. Learners can identify changes in their competences and in their proficiency levels with the help of the descriptors of competences, and in this way they can become aware of their own learning. They can do this independently or with the help of teachers, and teachers can help to gradually lead learners to autonomous use of the portfolio and autonomous analysis of their own experiences.

The teacher can also examine the portfolios of a group of learners and identify common weaknesses or gaps so that they can then plan their teaching to provide experiences in which the missing competences can be demonstrated.

Reflections on experiences and documents

Each document in the portfolio is usually a "product" of an experience. The portfolio can also contain multiple and linked documents which trace, over a period of time, the "process" and change in a series of experiences which demonstrate competences for democratic culture. In both cases, the portfolio encourages reflection on process as well as product.

Such reflection can be focused on the efforts made – perhaps not fully consciously at the time – to use different kinds and combinations of competences for democratic culture.

It can also include reflections on obstacles which were overcome when using competences, as well as reflections on obstacles which were too substantial to be overcome on a particular occasion.

The portfolio is thus a place in which both success and failure can be documented with equal importance and without loss of self-respect.

There are three types of reflection.

1. Activity reflections

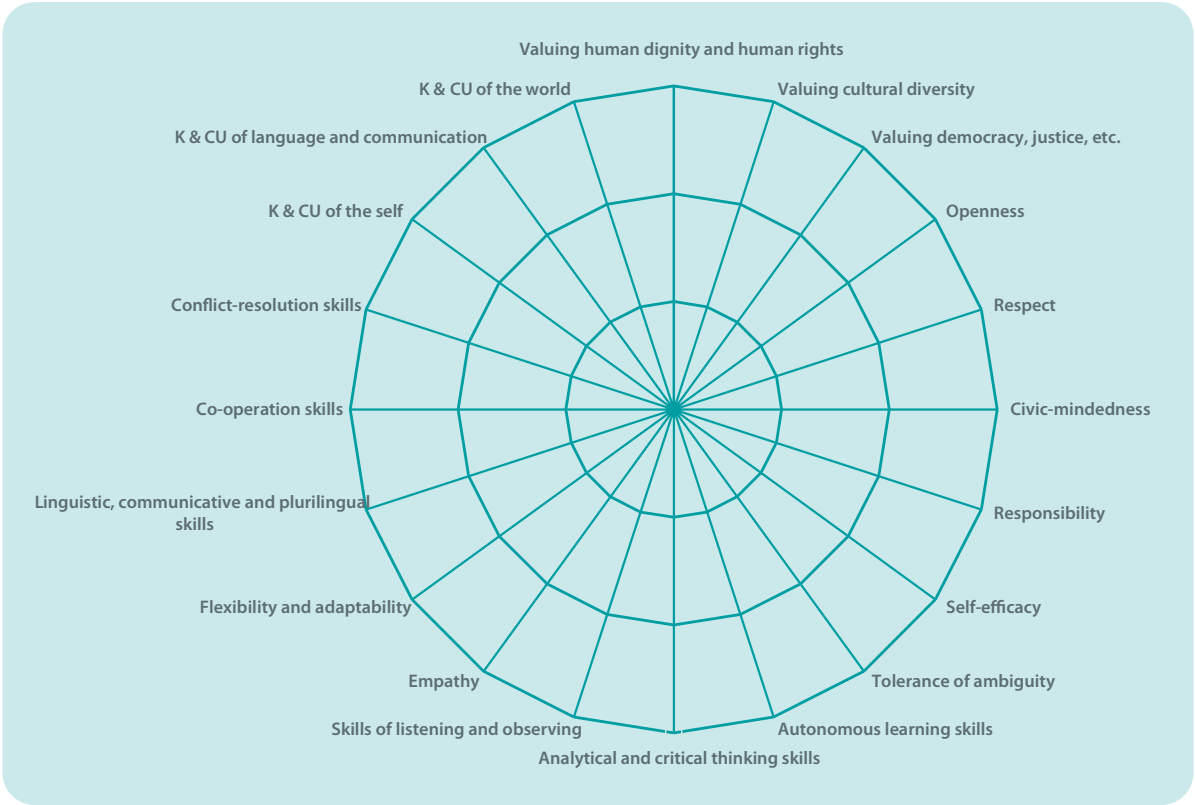
Learners should include descriptions of specific learning experiences or activities, usually organised for them by teachers in lessons or other aspects of school life such as student assemblies. These descriptions are then the focus of "activity reflections". They are immediate reflections on the link between an activity and the competences called upon in the course of an activity.

Learners may also wish to represent their conclusions about their level of proficiency in the competences they have used in a single individual activity in a radar chart (see Figure 1; radar charts such as these can be produced using Excel).

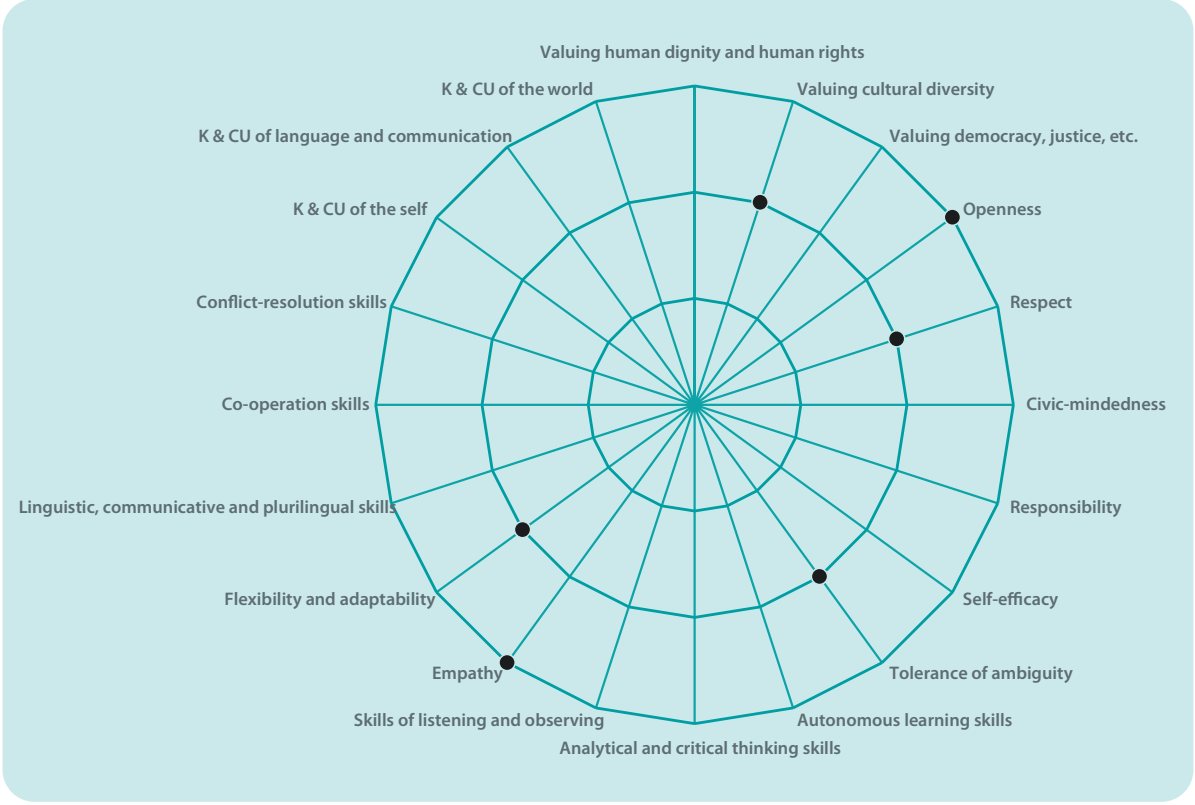
2. This section introduces principles which are important for teachers to understand in using the portfolio. A full account of the underlying principles is provided in Appendix 1 below.

Figure 1: Three radar charts (a, b, c) that can be used to represent levels of proficiency in the practice of some or all of the 20 competences

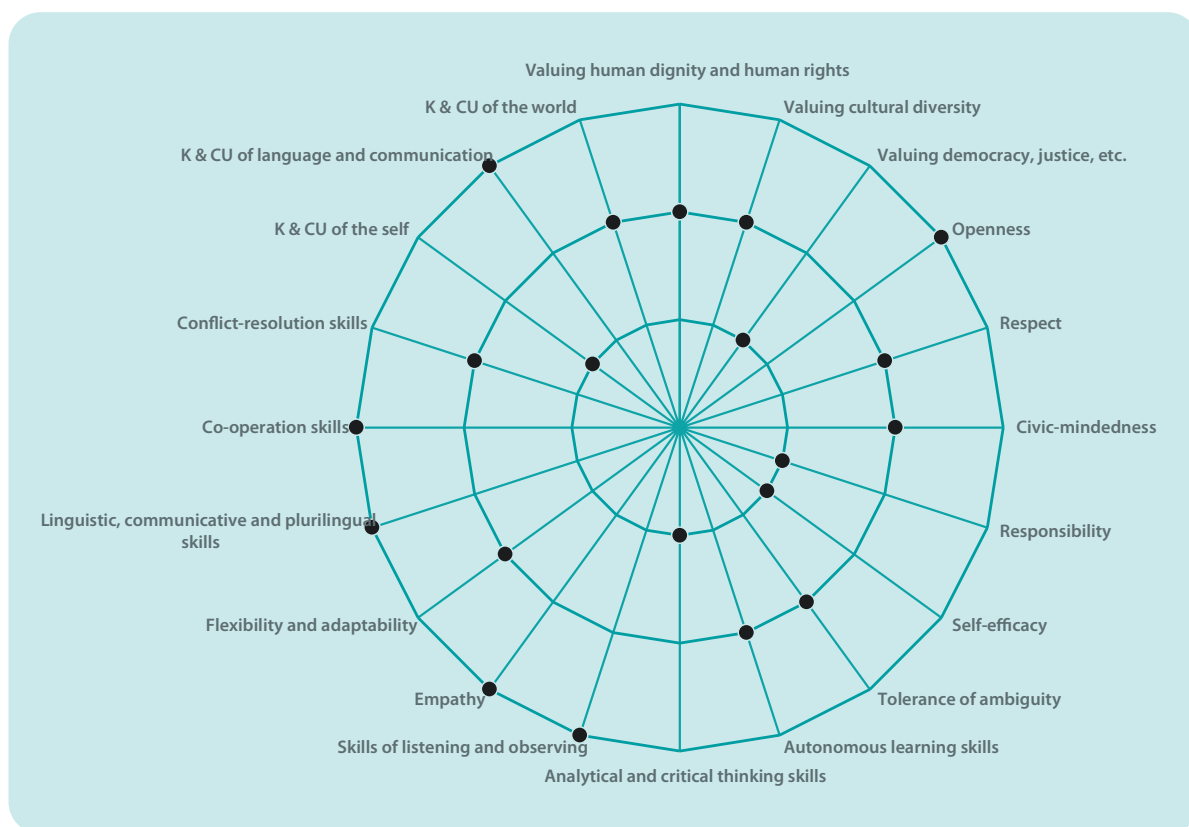
a) A blank radar chart that can be copied and used as a template by learners.



b) A radar chart representing the levels of proficiency displayed in an activity where only some rather than all of the 20 competences were used.



c) A radar chart representing the levels of proficiency displayed in one or more activities in which all 20 competences were used.



2. Logbook

Learners should also include in their portfolio a “logbook” in which they write descriptions of experiences which are not necessarily organised by teachers and not necessarily part of life in school. They describe and think about these experiences and refer to the 20 competences as they do so.

As stated above, some sections of this logbook can remain private, others open only to teachers and/or parents and others completely open. This logbook is ongoing. It is part of the evidence for competences, like activity reflections, but the purpose here is to provide an open, flexible space for learners which is not immediately linked to specific activities; it is additional to the more specific activity reflections. It provides the learner with an opportunity to think about and to analyse their progression over time, and their responses to the challenging and rewarding experiences they have across a number of activities.

The logbook may also be used to record the learner’s thoughts and observations on relevant aspects of the context in which they are living. They can think about the extent to which features of their environment support or inhibit them and others in the exercise of their democratic and intercultural competences. They can also think about how their own democratic or intercultural behaviour may be influenced by aspects of their environment.

3. General reflections

At the end of a period of use of the portfolio – for example at the end of a school term or school year – learners and teachers look back over the activity reflections and logbook and consider progression and trends within the experiences over this longer period. These are “general reflections”. The difference between general reflections and the logbook is that the logbook is personal and can be partly private, but general reflections are the result of guidance and/or discussion with teachers, peers and others such as family members. The general reflections should include a review of the competences which have developed over the period of time in question and the learner’s strengths and weaknesses.

3. Competences in the portfolio

The RFCDC specifies 20 competences. These, and the descriptors connected with them, are the basis for the portfolio, in particular for comments on experiences that learners include in the portfolio. An experience must exemplify one or more of the 20 competences if it is to be included in a document by the learner (for example, text, image, audio-recording, etc.).

It is normal that competences are mobilised in clusters and that each experience exemplifies more than one competence.³

Learners should focus not only on skills, knowledge and critical understanding when deciding what to include in the portfolio, but also on their values and attitudes.

Any documentation of experience can be analysed for more than one competence and more than one type of competence.

The portfolio is a repository for multiple kinds of documentation of experience and competence, including images, recordings and texts, collected from multiple sources both in school and beyond. The precise nature of the portfolio – whether a paper-based version or an electronic version – determines how different kinds of document are collected and stored.

The portfolio is intended to accompany its owner over a substantial period of time, from several months to several years. It is constructed in such a way that learners can store and retrieve documents from different points in time and compare and contrast them – and the accompanying reflections – so that the learner can see changes over time, for example by changes in the levels of the descriptors that have been attributed to a set of experiences and their documentation.

4. Portfolio uses

The portfolio has been created as part of the larger project of using the RFCDC to help and guide teachers in bringing democratic and intercultural competences directly into schools.

In its use in schools, there are no prescribed usages. The portfolio can be used by learners in one subject or in multiple subjects where teachers collaborate to help learners to document their learning experiences across the curriculum and to draw connections among different experiences. The portfolio can also be used to record experience within the school as a whole, not just in the classroom (see the chapter on the Whole-School Approach in Volume 3 of the RFCDC).

Teachers are also free to adapt and alter the suggested contents of the portfolio to make them more suitable for their own education system and needs as they wish, based on their own professional judgments.

However, whatever form the portfolio takes, it is important to retain two features, namely that:

- ▶ there is adequate documentation of learners' uses of their competences;
- ▶ learners' reflections should be (self)-critical and refer closely to the documents they include in their portfolio.

There are many different classroom activities in which the child's developing competences for democratic culture can be elicited and displayed. Teachers will find plenty of suggestions for suitable classroom activities in the following resources:

Compasito – Manual on human rights education for children (2nd edition), Council of Europe, Strasbourg. [Available in English, French, Hungarian and Russian from www.coe.int/en/web/youth/manuals-and-handbooks]

Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people (2nd edition), Council of Europe, Strasbourg. [Available in Arabic, Bulgarian, English, Estonian, French, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian from www.coe.int/en/web/youth/manuals-and-handbooks]

Bookmarks – A manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education (revised edition), Council of Europe, Strasbourg. [Available in Armenian, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German (Austria), German (Germany), Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, Ukrainian from www.coe.int/en/web/youth/manuals-and-handbooks]

3. For further information on clusters, see RFCDC, Volume 1, Chapter 5.

Gollob R. and Krapf P. (eds) (2008), *Living in democracy: EDC/HRE lesson plans for lower secondary level*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at www.living-democracy.com/textbooks/volume-3/

Gollob R., Krapf P. and Weidinger W. (eds) (2010), *Taking part in democracy: lesson plans for upper secondary level on democratic citizenship and human rights education*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at www.living-democracy.com/textbooks/volume-4/

The portfolio should also be used to document experiences and competences mobilised outside schools, for example in non-formal education and in interactions with family members, peers, neighbours, other people in the neighbourhood and elsewhere, and online.

The following are some common situations outside schools from which evidence can be collected. This is not a prescriptive list but simply an indication of the variety and breadth of experience which can be included in the portfolio. Learners and teachers should add other experiences of any kind they can imagine to be relevant.

In this list we indicate some of the most relevant competences that are likely to be involved in each situation, and for which the situation may therefore be generating evidence that can be included in the portfolio (the competences included here are intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive – in all cases, the situation could involve other competences as well, and not all of the competences indicated here may be involved).

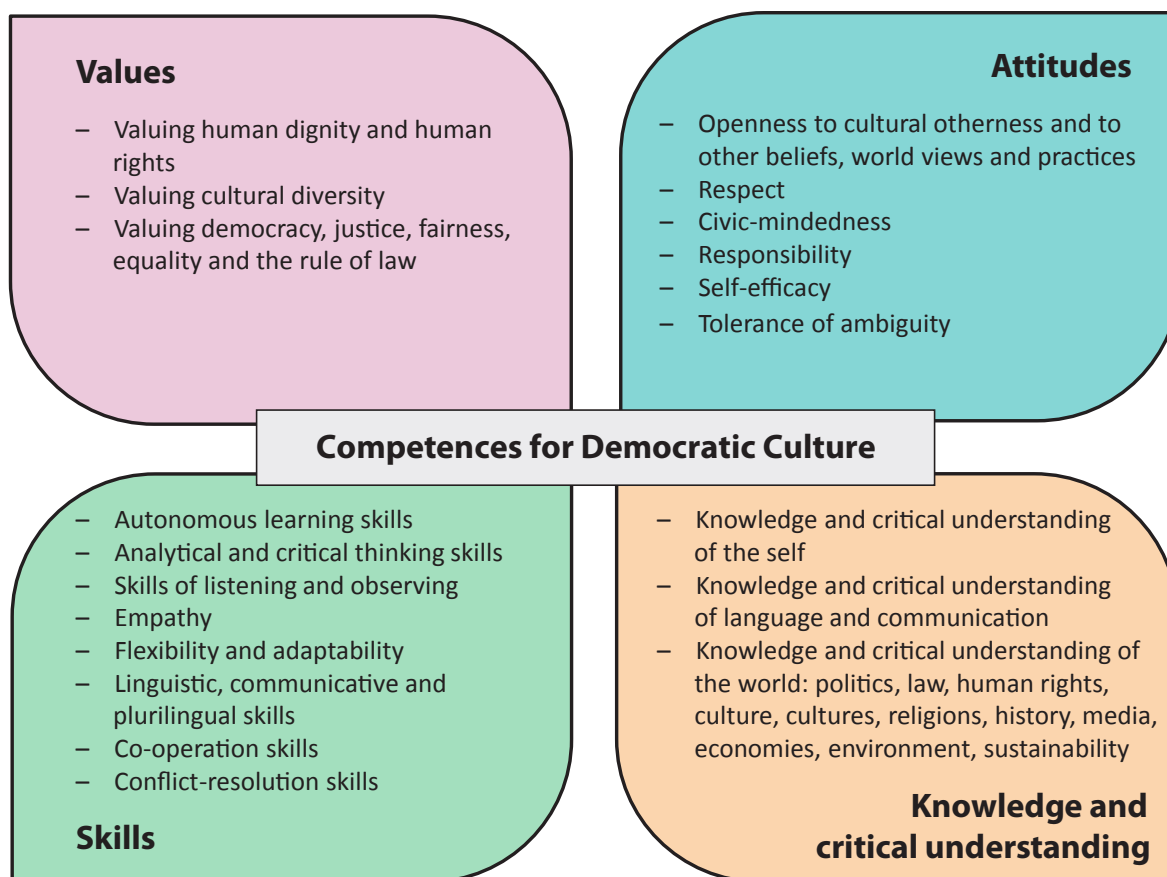
- ▶ Playing or working together with other people in a game, task or project. (Relevant competences: co-operation skills, skills of listening and observing, linguistic and communicative skills, empathy, conflict-resolution skills)
- ▶ Participating in a group discussion or group decision making. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, linguistic and communicative skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, conflict-resolution skills, empathy, respect, civic-mindedness)
- ▶ Talking about an issue with one or more people where there is a difference of opinion. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, linguistic and communicative skills, conflict-resolution skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, empathy, respect, tolerance of ambiguity)
- ▶ Experiencing a situation in which a conflict between people is either resolved or not resolved. (Relevant competences: conflict-resolution skills, empathy, tolerance of ambiguity, skills of listening and observing, linguistic and communicative skills)
- ▶ Taking on a leadership, organisational or representative role (for example in a youth group or hobby club). (Relevant competences: self-efficacy, civic-mindedness, responsibility, linguistic and communicative skills)
- ▶ Participating in an organised vote for or against something or someone (for example electing someone in a youth group or similar organisation to take on a particular role). (Relevant competences: valuing democracy, civic-mindedness, responsibility)
- ▶ Undertaking volunteer work or a service learning project in the local community to help other people (for example visiting or helping sick or elderly people) or to address a specific cause (for example littering, recycling, renovating a neighbourhood facility). (Relevant competences: civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy)
- ▶ Contacting an elected representative or an official about an issue of concern (for example litter, graffiti, young people's facilities in the neighbourhood). (Relevant competences: valuing democracy, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, linguistic and communicative skills)
- ▶ Supporting a victim in a bullying situation. (Relevant competences: valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing justice and fairness, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, empathy)
- ▶ Hearing a story or watching a programme or film about someone being bullied. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing justice and fairness, civic-mindedness, empathy)
- ▶ Hearing hurtful language being used about someone else. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing justice and fairness, civic-mindedness, empathy)
- ▶ Visiting a community organisation or place of religious worship in the neighbourhood. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity, civic-mindedness, respect, empathy)

- ▶ Observing other people's behaviour in the local community. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, valuing human dignity and human rights, respect, empathy)
- ▶ Talking to or interviewing people about things that they have seen or experienced in their lives. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, valuing human dignity and human rights, respect, empathy)
- ▶ Conducting research into the histories, cultural practices, beliefs and contributions that have been made by minority cultural groups within the country in which they are living. (Relevant competences: valuing cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness, respect, tolerance of ambiguity, autonomous learning skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures, religions and history)
- ▶ Visiting another country or another region of their own country. (Relevant competences: valuing cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness, respect, tolerance of ambiguity, analytical and critical thinking skills, knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures)
- ▶ Interacting with another person or people who have a different cultural background. (Relevant competences: valuing cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness, respect, tolerance of ambiguity, analytical and critical thinking skills, knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures, skills of listening and observing, linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills, flexibility and adaptability)
- ▶ Seeing a picture, hearing a story, or watching a programme or film about people who have different cultural backgrounds. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, valuing cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness, respect, tolerance of ambiguity, analytical and critical thinking skills, knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures)
- ▶ Hearing a story or watching a programme or film about people from a different cultural group, or being friendly with people who have different cultural backgrounds. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, analytical and critical thinking skills, valuing cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness, respect, tolerance of ambiguity, knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures)
- ▶ Communicating and exchanging information with people from other cultural backgrounds through video conferencing or social media. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills, valuing cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness, respect, tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility and adaptability, analytical and critical thinking skills, knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures)
- ▶ Conducting a collaborative project with young people in another country, or in another region of the same country, through video conferencing or social media. (Relevant competences: skills of listening and observing, linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills, valuing cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness, empathy, respect, tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility and adaptability, autonomous learning skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, co-operation skills, conflict-resolution skills, knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of culture and cultures)

5. How to introduce and construct a portfolio

Teachers will need to introduce learners to the RFCDC before the construction of the portfolio begins. Depending on the age of learners, teachers may decide to help them understand concepts such as "citizen", "citizenship" or "competence". They should also use the "CDC butterfly" (see Figure 2) as an iconic representation of the RFCDC so that learners understand what it represents and how they can describe an activity using competences and their descriptors. This is an essential first step. In addition to constructing verbal descriptions or definitions of these various concepts, learners could be asked to produce drawings or to find pictures that help to illustrate the concepts.

Figure 2: The 20 competences included in the RFCDC



The portfolio is above all dynamic. A template is provided and learners fill out the template over a period of weeks, months and years. They can at any time review and revise what they include within a section of the portfolio, and the introduction to the portfolio that teachers give to the learners must put particular emphasis on this flexible and dynamic character.

The template includes the following:

A title page

In addition to the title of the portfolio and the name of the learner, this page also carries a statement which describes the purpose of the portfolio from the point of view of the Council of Europe.

A list of contents

This list of contents changes over time as new experiences, documents and reflections are entered into the portfolio.

A statement of purpose

The learner is invited to provide an introductory statement about the purpose of their portfolio, and they are encouraged to review and revise this over the life of the portfolio.

A personal statement

This should provide a presentation of the learner both as they see themselves and as they think others see them. The presentation might be provided in a verbal format, but it could also include drawings, photos or recordings. This statement can also be changed over time.

My activities, activity reflections and logbook

These sections should be compiled by the learner as they carry out and participate in various tasks, activities, situations and contexts. In addition to curricular and other activities in the school, these sections should also

incorporate events and experiences learners have outside the formal school setting. Documents should be chosen which clearly demonstrate the learner's use of competences across a wide range of activities, situations and contexts, both within and beyond the classroom.

Each piece of description of an activity and the documents which accompany it as evidence should be complemented by activity reflections about the competences involved. This may be followed by a summary in the form of a radar chart.

The portfolio should also include a logbook, in which learners write about challenging and/or rewarding experiences which have occurred in addition to activities in school. The logbook also includes the learner's personal analysis of experiences over time.

A general reflections section

This section contains retrospective reflections about the documents the learner has compiled and their progression and development over time. It is different from the logbook because the logbook is the learner's independent thinking whereas general reflections are guided by the teacher.

General reflections can be done by the individual independently and in this case guiding questions provided by the teacher encourage learners to link their general reflections to the competences of the RFCDC.

A second and more usual approach is that general reflections are produced after discussion with others, for example with teachers or peers or parents. The guiding questions can also be used to structure such discussions.

A list of the 20 competences

This list acts as a summary. The learner gives cross-references for each competence to specific examples from the documentation sections which provide the evidence and reflections for each competence.

The list serves both learner and teacher as a general profile of the competences which have been present in the activities and experiences of the learner over a period of time. This too is dynamic; learners add to it as they add new activities and experiences to the portfolio.

6. Assessment and the portfolio

The portfolio can also be used as the basis for assessment. This happens by attributing levels of proficiency – as specified by the descriptors – to how the competences have been used within particular experiences. In order to do this, the documentation of the experiences needs to provide enough information to allow levels of proficiency in the use of the relevant competences to be identified. The process can be the sole responsibility of the learner, the responsibility of the learner in co-operation with one or more teachers, or the responsibility of the teacher alone if required. Options for introducing peer-assessment can also be envisaged.

Assessment can be “achievement assessment” or “proficiency assessment”.

Achievement assessment is closely linked to specific teaching and learning events and a learner can choose to include experience from a specific school subject, where one or more competences for democratic culture are objectives of teaching and learning. In this case it is the learner's degree of achievement which is assessed.

Proficiency assessment is focused on the competences a learner has at a specific moment, whatever the source of their competences, whether from a specific course in school or from any experience inside or outside school. This means that learners can include experiences and comments which are unrelated to subject learning – or even entirely unrelated to school life – and their proficiency is assessed through the use of descriptors to describe competences demonstrated through an experience and allocate them to particular levels.⁴

Both achievement and proficiency are important elements of assessment and learners should include examples of both.

Assessment can also be formative (used to identify learners' present progress and future learning goals), diagnostic (used to identify specific learning obstacles or difficulties that learners might be experiencing), monitoring (used to monitor whether learners are making expected or sufficient progress) or summative (used to obtain a description of the extent to which learners have achieved the intended learning goals at the end of a period of learning).

4. For further discussion see Chapter 3 on assessment in Volume 3 of the RFCDC.

For example, if a teacher reads a learner's portfolio and helps them to identify or diagnose their strengths and weaknesses – that is, the competences for which they have evidence and others for which they have little or no evidence – then formative and diagnostic assessments are being conducted. The teacher can then help the learner to plan or seek experiences which will give evidence of the competences not yet present in the learner's profile.

Self-assessment

The purpose and spirit of the portfolio is to stimulate learners to reflect on and evaluate their actions and their learning. Such self-evaluation can become self-assessment with use of descriptors to trace and document changes in competence in a systematic way which links evidence to descriptor levels.⁵

The radar charts described above can be used not only descriptively but also as a basis for learners to decide where their strengths and weaknesses lie and which kind of experience they might engage in to develop and gather evidence for (some of) their weaker competences.

Recording of this self-assessment can become an element in the activities reflections under a specific heading and/or in the logbook, where a specific section on self-assessment can be introduced.

Teachers will probably need to train learners in self-assessment and use of the descriptors and may need to comment on the quality of the self-assessment, but this needs to be discussed and agreed with learners, since they are the owners of the portfolio. Teachers can refer to the section below "Use of descriptors for assessment".

Teacher assessment

Assessment by the teacher can serve a variety of purposes. It can be used for formative purposes (to identify learners' present progress and future learning goals), diagnostic purposes (to identify specific learning obstacles or difficulties that learners might be experiencing), monitoring purposes (to monitor whether learners are making expected or sufficient progress) or summative purposes (to obtain a description of the extent to which learners have achieved the intended learning goals at the end of a period of learning).

Because education systems and schools differ from country to country and region to region, it is possible that summative assessment and allocation of a grade or mark by the teacher is not always necessary. However, if teacher assessment is needed, then the following principles and recommendations apply, whatever the purpose.

Assessment can be formative, diagnostic, monitoring or summative, as mentioned, and the results of the teacher's assessment can be used formatively to guide the next stages of the learner's experience, or they can be used to give a final assessment of the learner's competences at the end of a period of learning.

Assessment depends upon the degree of confidentiality of certain parts of the portfolio. For example, parts of the logbook can be confidential and not available to the teacher whereas the activity and general reflections are available.

When using the portfolio for assessment, steps should be taken to ensure that the assessment is valid, reliable, equitable, transparent and respectful (for an explanation of these concepts in relation to assessment, see the discussion in Chapter 3 on assessment in Volume 3 of the RFCDC). Equity and respectfulness are especially important, and they require that all assessments conducted by the teacher are respectful and fair towards learners and do not favour or disadvantage any particular group or individual.

Teacher assessment for summative purposes normally means that individuals are assessed as members of a group, usually a class group. Assessment need not involve comparison with other members of the group, but it does require that everyone be treated equally and that all members of a group be assessed in the same way, using transparent procedures which learners understand.

There are two points at which the learner can be assessed by the teacher either formally or by way of informal feedback.

1. Where they have written an activity reflection: this could involve an analysis by the teacher of the relationship between action and reflection. For example, a teacher may observe a discrepancy between action and reflection (a learner may consider that a particular competence is demonstrated by an activity and give reasons for this self-assessment, but the teacher may disagree).

5. The European Language Portfolio provides an example of how descriptors can be used both in self-assessment of proficiency and in setting targets for further learning. See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio>.

2. Where they have written a general reflection: based on this general reflection, the teacher is able to assess progression – in terms of descriptor levels if appropriate – and the degree to which the learner has given evidence of all or some of the competences for democratic culture and to which level. As with assessment of the activity reflection, the general reflection allows the teacher to compare the learner’s self-assessment with the teacher’s own understanding of the learner’s general progress in developing competences for democratic culture.

The documentation that the teacher produces from an assessment may also be included in the portfolio in the “My activities and reflections” or logbook sections as evidence for proficiency or achievement, and it can be used by the learner as a basis for further reflections in the logbook or general reflections sections.

Use of descriptors for assessment

It is possible for the teacher to use the descriptors provided in Volume 2 of the RFCDC to assess learners and their progression. If teachers choose to do this, then there are certain issues which need to be taken into consideration.

Descriptors are statements or descriptions of what a person is able to do if they have mastered a particular competence to a particular level in a particular context. They provide examples of the concrete observable behaviours that a person will display if they have achieved a certain level of proficiency in a given competence.

The RFCDC descriptors use the language of learning outcomes. Each descriptor contains an action verb and the object of that verb, and the behaviour that is described is concrete and observable within an educational setting.

The descriptors are scaled to three levels of proficiency: basic, intermediate and advanced, and descriptors are cumulative. This means that when a person displays the behaviour in a descriptor that is assigned to the advanced level of proficiency, there is a very high probability that the person will also be able to display the behaviours in the descriptors for the intermediate and basic levels. When a person displays the behaviour in a descriptor assigned to the intermediate level of proficiency, there is a very high probability that the person will also be able to display the behaviours corresponding to the basic level of proficiency.

Assessments should ideally be based on observations of behaviours that take place over a reasonable period of time and in several different contexts. It is possible that a learner displays a behaviour in a single context, for example, in the context of a particular learning activity, without displaying this behaviour in any other context.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the descriptors are all formulated in positive terms – the descriptors therefore allow recognition of what learners can do in a positive way.

7. Legal and ethical issues

The provisions of the (EU) General Data Protection Regulation

It should be noted that if digital data about a child are being stored by a school that is in the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA), this storage is subject to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The GDPR is an EU regulation on data protection and privacy that covers all citizens in the EU and EEA, and it protects individual citizens with regard to the storage and processing of their personal data. Personal data are any information relating to a person where that person can be identified directly or indirectly from those data, or any information held about an individual whose processing could intrude on that individual’s privacy. This information might include, for example, their name, date of birth, contact details, political opinions, and religious or philosophical beliefs.

The contents of a portfolio are highly likely to fall into this category. It is recommended that all schools that use the portfolio, irrespective of whether or not their countries are members of the EU or the EEA, comply with the principles of the GDPR. These principles are as follows.

Those who store personal data about children (for example the teacher and the school) must adhere to data protection principles, provide safeguards to protect the data and use the highest possible privacy settings by default. The data controller or processor must also receive consent from the individual whose data are being stored, and that individual has the right to withdraw this consent at any time. The individual also has the right

to request a copy of the data that have been collected and the right to have their data erased under certain circumstances. The consent of the individual to have data about them stored must be freely given, specific to the purposes for which the data are being collected and informed so that the purpose(s) of the data are made explicit to the individual.

In the case of children, there is a two-stage process. In the first stage, informed consent for storing data about them should first be obtained from parents, guardians or others with a legal duty of care for the child. This consent should not be interpreted as meaning that the child has consented to participate, but instead, allows consent to be sought from the child. In the second stage, active informed consent to participate in the portfolio process should then also be obtained from the child, before work on the portfolio commences.

An example of an information sheet that can be used or amended for obtaining consent from parents, guardians or carers for their child to participate in the portfolio process is provided in Appendix 2.

Freedom of expression of values and attitudes: implications for assessment and teaching

A crucial and frequently asked question in assessment is whether it is appropriate to assess learners' values and attitudes. The key word here is "respect". It is crucial that teachers respect the values and attitudes of learners, as explained below.

One view is that assessing values and attitudes is inappropriate, because it infringes learners' rights to freedom of thought and expression. This view is supported by the fact that the European Convention on Human Rights explicitly grants everyone the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, and freedom from discrimination. The Convention also states that the "Freedom to manifest one's ... beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others" (Article 9.2).

In order to acknowledge this position, teachers should censure learners if and only if the expression of their views spreads, incites or justifies hatred based on intolerance, which has the potential to undermine the rights and freedoms of others. Otherwise, there should be no penalisation of learners in an assessment if they express views deemed contrary to the values and attitudes contained in the RFCDC.

Another view is that assessment helps to stimulate further learning. For example, learners might develop more nuanced formulations of their values and attitudes as a consequence of feedback from assessment. Questions of values and attitudes and their assessment thus also have pedagogical implications. If learners' values and attitudes are assessed in order to assist in fostering their development, teachers must respect the values and attitudes of learners, provided those values and attitudes do not violate the rights of others or incite hatred.

Ethical issues may arise as a consequence of assessment or at other moments of teaching and learning, especially if the learner expresses negativity or hostility. Extreme negativity will need to be followed up at a later time in consultation with others such as school authorities. However, milder negative reactions may eventually assist the learner in their learning, and teachers need to discuss – preferably in the team who have access to the portfolio – how they wish to deal with such matters.

Ownership of the portfolio

As stated earlier, the portfolio belongs to the learner. It is the learner who therefore decides who can have access to the portfolio, but it is also important that the learner is fully aware of the consequences of a decision to give access. For example, giving access to a future employer when applying for a job may lead to misuse of the portfolio, just as use of the portfolio by a governmental authority to judge whether its owner is a "good citizen" would be contrary to the spirit of the portfolio and to the principles of the Council of Europe.

Teachers should therefore help learners to reflect on the question of access from the beginning, and on how they can include material which is entirely private, material which is open to some people but not others, and so on.

Some useful resources

A detailed treatment of the ethical issues which could arise is beyond the scope of this guide. However, it may be useful for teachers to be aware of the following resources for dealing with racism and intolerance towards others, which are available from the Council of Europe:

All different, all equal: education pack – Ideas, resources, methods and activities for non-formal intercultural education with young people and adults (2005), Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at <https://rm.coe.int/1680700aac>

Domino – A manual to use peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance (3rd edition) (2004), Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at <https://rm.coe.int/16807023ce>

Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people (2nd edition updated 2020), Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at www.coe.int/en/web/compass

Compasito – Manual on human rights education for children (2009), Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/pdf/Compasito%20EN.pdf

Living in democracy, EDC/HRE Volume III (2008), Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802f7304>

Appendix 1

The underlying principles of the portfolio

The portfolio may⁶ be used for teaching, learning and assessment purposes

The RFCDC portfolio is intended to assist learners in developing their own competences for democratic culture (CDCs), and to enable teachers to support and promote the development of learners' CDCs.

The portfolio is also intended to enable the teacher, or the teacher and learner working together, to assess the learner's emerging proficiency in the use of CDCs across a range of situations and contexts and over time.

Based on the right to respect for private and family life, the learner has the right to withhold any materials that they do not wish to disclose through the portfolio

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights states that everyone has the right to respect for their private and family life, their home and their correspondence, and that there should be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right (except in a range of specific areas such as the prevention of disorder or crime, the protection of health, and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others). This means that, under the Convention, the learner has the right to withhold information about their private and family life which they do not wish to disclose in their portfolio, and education authorities cannot compel the learner to disclose information which they wish to withhold. This right of the learner must be respected by the teacher.

The portfolio should be based explicitly on the competences specified by the RFCDC

For the portfolio to be used for teaching, learning or assessment purposes in relationship to the RFCDC, the contents of the portfolio need to provide evidence of the learner's proficiency in the use of CDCs specified by the RFCDC, and reflections on the learning processes that have led to that proficiency.

The portfolio should record evidence concerning the dynamic, fluid and adaptive mobilisation and deployment of clusters of CDCs within specific situations

The RFCDC proposes that, in real-life situations, CDCs are rarely mobilised and used individually. Instead, they are much more likely to be used in clusters. Depending on the situation and the specific demands, challenges and opportunities which that situation presents, as well as the specific needs of the individual within the situation, different subsets of competences are likely to be activated and deployed (see RFCDC, Volume 1, pp. 32-35). Furthermore, any given situation changes over time. Consequently, an effective and adaptive response requires constant monitoring of the situation and the appropriate ongoing adjustment of the competences being used. In other words, according to the RFCDC, a competent individual will mobilise and deploy competences in a fluid, dynamic and adaptive manner in order to meet the constantly shifting demands, challenges and opportunities that arise in democratic and intercultural situations. For these reasons, the portfolio should record evidence of the dynamic and adaptive mobilisation and deployment of entire clusters of CDCs within particular situations by the learner. Project work, extracurricular activities and service learning are all extremely rich and productive contexts in which learners can learn to apply clusters of CDCs in practice.

That said, there may be some circumstances in which an individual competence (for example analytical and critical thinking skills) may be demonstrated on its own (for example through the learner's analysis of a specific

6. In this appendix, the term "may" is used to denote an optional feature of the RFCDC Portfolio, whereas the term "should" is used to denote an obligatory feature.

problem), rather than alongside other CDCs as part of a cluster. Evidence concerning the learner's ability to deploy and utilise a single specific competence appropriately and effectively within a given context may also be included within the portfolio.

Crucially, however, the portfolio overall should be viewed as a tool that allows for a holistic understanding of learning as a contextually situated, practice-based and emerging process. As such, the portfolio has the potential to capture the fundamentally dynamic and contextualised nature of both learning and competence.

Finally, it should be noted that democratic and intercultural experiences are not limited to situations that occur only at the local, regional or national level. They can also have an international dimension in terms of the democratic institutions involved or the intercultural encounters that occur. Evidence that is recorded in the portfolio may cover situations, experiences and encounters at the local, regional, national or international level.

The RFCDC descriptors should be used as learning outcomes

The descriptors for the 20 competences provided as part of the RFCDC (see RFCDC, Volume 2) should be used to determine expected learning outcomes for learners. The descriptors have been formulated using the language of learning outcomes – thus, each descriptor contains an action verb and the object of that verb, and the behaviour that is described is observable and assessable with use of the descriptors. The descriptors for older learners have also been scaled to one of three levels of proficiency (basic, intermediate or advanced). Because the portfolio needs to provide evidence of and reflections on the learner's proficiency in mobilising and using the 20 CDCs specified by the RFCDC, the descriptors may be used to determine the specific learning outcomes for which the learner should be aiming through the use of the portfolio. The descriptors may also be used to identify specific areas for further learning, and to support the assessment of patterns of proficiency through the portfolio after a period of learning has taken place.

The materials compiled in the portfolio should focus not only on the development of learners' skills, knowledge and critical understanding, but also on the development of learner's values and attitudes

The RFCDC posits that democratic competence requires not only skills, knowledge and critical understanding, it also requires a range of values and attitudes. Furthermore, the empirical work that was used to validate and scale the descriptors for the values and attitudes in the RFCDC revealed that it is not only skills, knowledge and critical understanding that may be displayed at a basic, intermediate or advanced level of proficiency – values and attitudes may also be displayed at any one of these three levels of proficiency.

For this reason, the portfolio should be used to capture evidence of, and reflections on, the learner's levels of proficiency in values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding alike. In other words, the materials compiled in the portfolio should document the learner's levels of proficiency in all four categories of CDCs, including values and attitudes, and the learner should be encouraged to reflect on their proficiency in all four categories of competence.

The evidence that is compiled in the portfolio should be derived from multiple sources

The evidence collected in the portfolio should be drawn from formal, non-formal and informal educational settings.⁷ In other words, the evidence may be drawn from activities that take place in the classroom, in other school settings such as the playground, in youth clubs or organisations, while taking a course or training programme outside the school, on visits to community organisations, on encountering other people in the street, on visits to other countries, in the family home, in the peer group, while consuming mass media content or while interacting with others through social media. Because the RFCDC construes proficiency as the mobilisation and deployment of CDCs across a range of situations, both within and beyond the classroom, evidence concerning proficiency should be derived from a wide range of varied sources.

7. The RFCDC defines formal, non-formal and informal education in the following way (see RFCDC, Volume 1, footnote, p. 19): "Formal education" is the structured education and training system that runs from pre-primary and primary through secondary school and on to university; it takes place, as a rule, at general or vocational educational institutions and leads to certification. "Non-formal education" is any planned programme of education designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational setting. "Informal education" is the lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in their own environment and from daily experience (family, peer group, neighbours, encounters, library, mass media, work, play, etc.). These definitions are taken from the EDC/HRE Charter available at www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education.

The portfolio should document the development of the learner's proficiency and the changes in the learner's behaviour that have occurred over time across varieties of situations and contexts

The portfolio should document not only the learner's current proficiency, it should also document developments and advances (and regressions, where these occur) in the learner's proficiency and behaviour over time and across varieties of situations and contexts. In short, the portfolio should be a "progress portfolio" that displays evidence of development, change and achievement over time (rather than a "showcase portfolio" in which only the learner's best work or evidence of attainment is compiled).

The portfolio should contain evidence of both proficiency and achievement

Proficiency and achievement are two distinct but related concepts (see RFCDC, Volume 3, p. 60). As already noted, proficiency is construed by the RFCDC as the mobilisation and deployment of CDCs (including values and attitudes) across a range of different situations. By contrast, achievement is construed by the RFCDC as what the learner has acquired from a particular course of study and is more closely tied to a specific syllabus or programme of learning. Achievement concerns the improvement in the learner's CDCs that has occurred as a result of participating in the course of study, and how they have progressed since the start of the course.

The portfolio should include evidence of both proficiency and achievement. Evidence of achievement may be derived solely from the school context, whereas evidence of proficiency should be obtained across a wider range of situations, including situations beyond the classroom and the school.

The portfolio should document the efforts that the learner has made to develop proficiency

In addition to documenting the learner's progress, the portfolio should contain evidence of the efforts that the learner has made to enhance their CDCs. For example, it could include evidence of: self-generated efforts that have been made to exercise, extend or consolidate CDCs in novel contexts and situations; non-formal education courses that have been voluntarily undertaken; voluntary activities that have been undertaken in the community; and efforts to engage in intercultural activities and encounters.

The portfolio should document obstacles that the learner has faced in the use of CDCs

The portfolio should be viewed as a place for documenting not only proficiency, achievement and attainment, but also for documenting unsolved challenges or obstacles to learning and progress in developing the CDCs. The portfolio should provide an inclusive, open and "honest" space for the learner to reflect on their "failures" and on the role that these failures may have played in promoting their progress and development.

The materials compiled in the portfolio may be provided in multiple formats

Because the materials assembled in the portfolio should present compelling evidence of the learner's levels of proficiency across a range of diverse situations, they may be provided in multiple formats. For example, the evidence may consist of artefacts (documents that have been produced by the learner such as essays, reports, reviews, projects, etc.), recordings (photographs, videos, audio recordings, drawings, etc.) and various forms of assessment of the learner's competences (self-assessments, peer-assessments, teacher-assessments, parent-assessments, assessments by youth or community leaders, assessments by others in the local community, etc.).

The portfolio should facilitate and stimulate the learner's critical reflections on their competences

The portfolio should contain not only evidence of the learner's proficiency in the use of CDCs, but also reflections produced by the learner in which subsets of the evidence are summarised and critically evaluated and assessed with the help of the descriptors. It is of most benefit to learners' development if they produce these reflections throughout the period in which they are working on their portfolios (rather than only at the end), so that the reflection process helps them to identify their own learning needs, the areas that require further development, and the actions that they should undertake in the future to develop their proficiency further.

These reflections should contain the learner's critical reflections on:

- ▶ the learning outcomes that were expected;
- ▶ the progress that has been made towards reaching those outcomes, as indexed by the evidence presented;
- ▶ the learning process in which the learner engaged (for example whether and how it involved concrete experience, evidence gathering, observation, analysis, generalisation, active experimentation, feedback) in order to progress towards those outcomes;
- ▶ the patterns of proficiency that have been reached in the use of CDCs across diverse situations and contexts;
- ▶ learning goals for the future.

Reflections should therefore contain not only the learner's account of the history or trajectory of their learning experience as they see it, and an account of their current proficiency, but also an account of their future learning goals (using the competences and the descriptors as a guide to identifying these goals).

The portfolio may also contain reflections, feedback or commentaries that have been produced by other people (for example teachers, parents or peers) on the learner's development and progress. If the portfolio does include reflections from other people, then the learner should provide further reflections on how they have used these reflections and feedback from others in order to progress their own learning.

In addition, collaborative reflections on the contents of the portfolio should take place through dialogue between the learner and the teacher. Collaborative reflections may also take place between the learner and a parent, the learner and a peer, or the learner, parents and one or more teachers together. In a collaborative reflection, all parties to the dialogue jointly reflect on and evaluate the contents of the portfolio. Such collectively generated reflections can be extremely useful for eliciting additional perspectives on the progress made by the learner, and can help to stimulate further development and progress in the learner. Collaborative reflection is also a particularly useful opportunity for teachers to provide the learner with positive and affirmative feedback on their achievements to date.

The portfolio may be used within a single-subject, integrated or cross-curricular approach to citizenship education

Citizenship education is taught in three main ways in European countries: as a separate subject; integrated into broader subjects or learning areas such as the social sciences or language studies; or through a cross-curricular approach that is taught by all teachers within the school. The portfolio may be used in conjunction with all of these approaches. However, when citizenship education is taught through either an integrated or cross-curricular approach, this will require the teachers of all of the subjects involved to co-operate with each other to ensure that the learner receives consistent advice and support from all teachers. The precise manner in which learners are supported in compiling their portfolios within an integrated or cross-curricular system is a matter for the school and the teachers involved to decide, but in all cases it should involve active collaboration between teachers.

The portfolio may be used within a whole-school approach

A whole-school approach to the RFCDC ensures that all aspects of school life – curricula, teaching methods, teaching resources, leadership, decision-making structures and processes, policies, codes of behaviour, teacher–teacher, teacher–learner and learner–learner relationships, extracurricular activities, and links with the community – reflect democratic, intercultural and human rights principles (see RFCDC, Volume 3, Chapter 5). A whole-school approach requires the active involvement and commitment of all stakeholders in the school, and the joint effort and co-operation of school principals, teachers, learners, parents, administrative and support staff, and members of the local community with whom the school has links.

The portfolio lends itself readily to use within a whole-school approach because, in such an approach, the classroom, the wider school environment and links with the local community will all operate on the basis of democratic, intercultural and human rights principles. As a consequence, not only the classroom and the school but also the local community can provide suitable places within which learners can acquire relevant experience and exercise their CDCs. Thus, evidence for the portfolio may be readily generated by learners through their experience of, for example, election of class representatives, the functioning of school councils, learner involvement in school decision making and governance, voluntary service performed within the local community, and intercultural experiences obtained in the local community.

Appendix 2

Example of an information sheet for obtaining consent

Example of an information sheet for obtaining consent from parents, guardians or carers for their child to participate in the portfolio process

*** Note that this information sheet may be adapted according to local, educational and legal circumstances, needs and practices ***

You are being invited to enable your child to take part in the portfolio project. Before you decide whether to allow them to take part in the project, it is important for you to understand why the portfolio work is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish your child to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the portfolio?

The purpose of the portfolio is to help your child to develop the competences that will enable them to act as a responsible and respectful democratic citizen. It will also enable your child's teacher(s) to help your child to develop these competences. In addition, the portfolio will enable your child's teacher(s) to assess your child's proficiency in using their competences across a range of situations.

The portfolio work will take place from xxxx to xxxx [fill in the start and end dates of the portfolio work].

Why has my child been chosen?

We are approaching all parents of children in xxxx [fill in the names of all the classes in the school in which children are being recruited to work on the portfolio] of your child's school to volunteer for the portfolio project.

Does my child have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not your child should take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep, and you will be asked to sign the consent slip that is appended to the bottom of this form. You can still withdraw your child at any time without it affecting any benefits that you or your child are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

What will happen if my child takes part?

Your child will take part in the portfolio project in the school. Information about your child's citizenship competences will be collected through various means. Teachers will talk to your child about their activities, and may record their responses either on a voice recorder or on video. Teachers and children may also take photographs of various chosen activities.

All relevant ethical, health and safety regulations will be adhered to throughout the portfolio project. Your child can stop participating in the portfolio work at any point.

All adults working with children will be subject to relevant safeguarding checks, as appropriate to the institution in which the project takes place.

Your child's portfolio data will be stored securely at school on xxxx [fill in details of how the data will be stored].

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Your child will acquire new competences that will enable them to behave with confidence as a responsible and respectful citizen at school, at home and in the wider community. They may also enjoy taking part in the portfolio project activities.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

We cannot identify any disadvantages or risks associated with taking part in the portfolio project, only benefits.

Will my child’s taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about your child during the course of the portfolio project will be kept strictly confidential. Data on your child will only be shared between the teacher, child and parents/guardians.

Will my child be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Your child can be recorded using a digital voice recorder and a camcorder. Your child’s photographs may also be taken. The portfolio content will not be shared outside the classroom. It will be used only by the teacher, the child and their family. The same applies to digital portfolios that fulfil the conditions of EU data protection policy.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about the portfolio project, please contact the following person at your child’s school for further information:

xxxx [complete the name and contact details of the relevant contact person]

.....

Consent slip

I confirm that I have read and understood the above information about the portfolio project, and I freely consent to my child participating in this project.

.....

Name of child

.....

Name of parent or guardian signature

Date

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This portfolio is intended for use in conjunction with the Council of Europe's *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC). It requires learners to compile documents – such as recordings, texts and images – which demonstrate how they are using their competences for democratic culture in diverse situations within and beyond school. The portfolio supports learners in reflecting critically on their developing competences, and in thinking about how they will further develop their competences in the future. The contents of the portfolio also provide evidence about how a learner's proficiency in the use of these competences is developing, evidence which may be used for either formative or summative assessment purposes.

There are two versions of the portfolio: a version for younger learners, that is, children up to approximately the age of 10-11 years; and a standard version, for learners from approximately 10-11 years upwards. Each version is accompanied by a guide for teachers. The present volume contains the standard version.

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<http://book.coe.int>
ISBN 978-92-871-8756-7
€34/US\$68

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