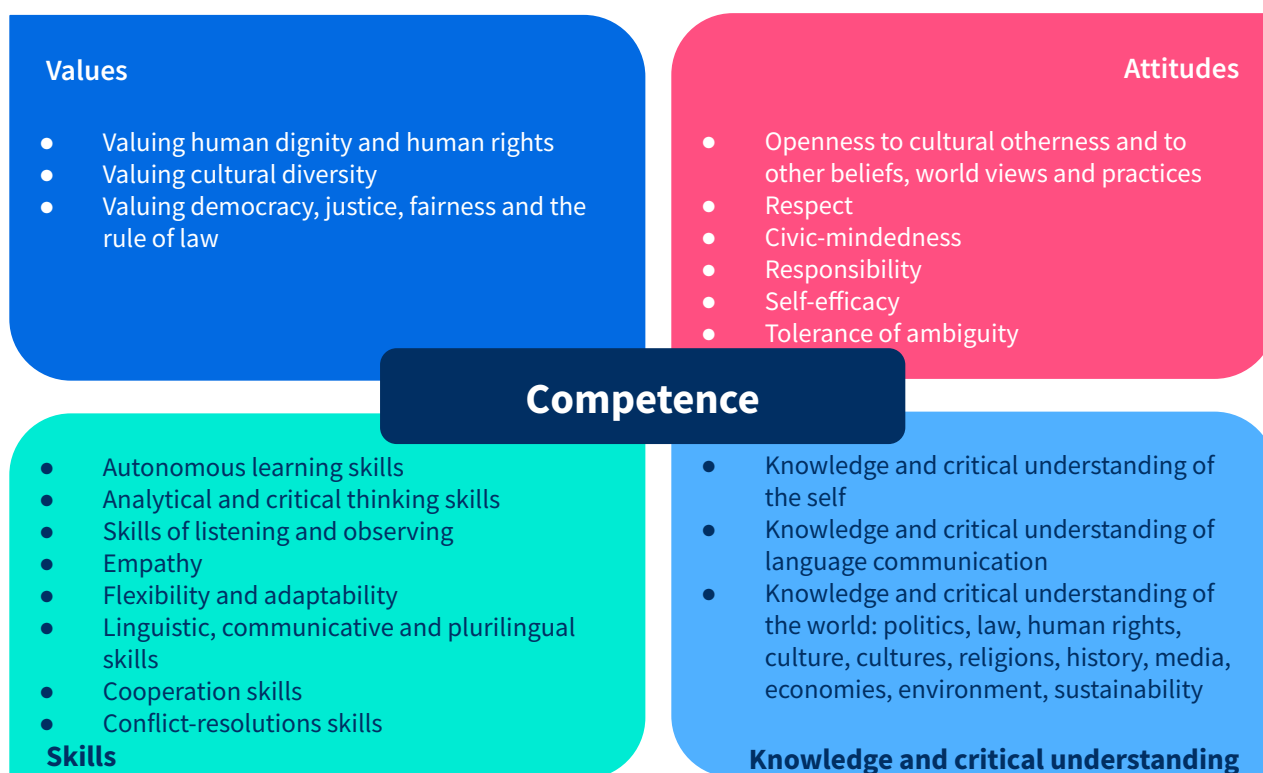


Council of Europe Competency Framework - Summary

The **Council of Europe Competency Reference Framework for Democratic Culture** published in 2018 offers a comprehensive conceptual model of the competencies that individuals require in order to function as democratically and interculturally competent citizens. The framework was put together following five years of work involving an extensive review of relevant research including over 100 models of competency. The approach was developed in discussion with the Council of Europe member states, education experts, academics and teachers.

'The starting point for the development of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture was the belief that education systems, schools and universities should make preparation for democratic citizenship one of its key missions. This involves ensuring that students should know and understand the challenges they are faced with and the consequences of their decisions, what they are able to do and what they should refrain from doing. In order to do all this they need not only to have knowledge, but also the relevant competences – and the aim of the Framework is to define what those competences are.' **Council of Europe, 2018**



There are 20 key competences in the 'butterfly' diagram which provides a useful starting point for thinking about the building blocks of democratic culture. These are drawn from 447 competency descriptors in the full model. These 20 key competences are presented as those that need to be developed by educators in order to empower learners to act as competent and effective democratic citizens.

'The heart of the Framework is a model of the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies.' (**Council of Europe, 2018**)

The competences are subdivided into values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. For each competency detailed descriptions are provided. Their purpose is two-fold:

1. to support the assessment of the current level of proficiency with regards to each of the competences, for an individual or for a group, with a view to identifying areas of further development and learning needs or identifying achieved proficiency after a period of learning;
2. to serve as a reference and a toolbox for educators in designing, implementing and evaluating educational interventions, in formal and non-formal settings.

Using the Council of Europe Competency Framework in schools

The competency framework is designed to be used as a ‘toolbox’ by teachers and schools. For example to help teachers reflect, plan and adjust:

- their curriculum to include the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for pupils to develop as effective and active democratic citizens
- their teaching approaches, pedagogy and classroom practices to support building a democratic culture
- their whole school culture and ethos to promote the values and principles of democratic citizenship and human rights.

The Competency framework has also been used and applied in teacher training and teacher development, non-formal education, higher education and vocational education.

Teachers will

‘decide how to adapt and implement the Framework in their own contexts for their own purposes.’
(Council of Europe, 2018)

The full details of the Competency Framework, the Descriptions of Competencies and Guidance for Implementation are available as three volumes online.

[Volume 1](#) contains the Model of Competences, as determined by a multidisciplinary team of international experts following extensive research and consultation. The 20 competences are divided into four areas – Values, Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge and critical understanding – and accompanied by information about the background to the model, how it was developed and how it is intended to be used.

[Volume 2](#) contains a series of statements setting out learning targets and outcomes for each competence. These descriptors are intended to help educators design learning situations that enable them to observe learners’ behaviour in relation to a given competence. The descriptors were tested by volunteer schools and teachers in 16 member states.

[Volume 3](#) offers guidance on how the Model of Competences might be used in six education contexts.

See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/home>