

ANNEX C - British Council Core Skills and Competencies

Context

The British Council's work with school systems aims to improve learning outcomes for students. Research by education experts and academics explains that in order to participate in a global economy, young people need to be equipped with deep learning skills. These are also referred to in the literature as core/key skills/competencies.

This focus on equipping young people with deep learning skills strongly supports, and is in line with, the DFID Education position paper "Improving learning, expanding opportunities" published in 2013¹. In particular, it supports the cited premise "Improving learning requires good teachers and great classroom practice" recognising the "centrality of teachers to learning" and the need to "use teaching techniques based on the best available evidence of what works to improve learning". It directly supports the post-Millennium Development Goal agenda and the increasing focus on the delivery of high quality education.

We conducted in-depth desk research to identify the most pertinent key skills from the literature and research that are

- critical to meeting the needs of students in the 21st century and a globalised economy
- relevant to the British Council's Charter²
- relevant to the educational context of the countries and regions where the British Council operates.

Desk research highlighted numerous frameworks in the literature. Two of the most prominent, and already being used by some of the British Council's partners and clients, are the '6Cs' framework developed by Fullan and Langworthy³, and UNESCO's transversal skills⁴. Fullan and Langworthy are education experts who have widely consulted and put together a framework based on best practice and research. The UNESCO framework is also relevant to our work and is being used by some overseas Ministries.

To make sure that the core skills and competencies that we base our schools strategy on are in line with the British Council's international cultural relations purpose, we have drawn from both frameworks, and developed our own list of six key skills.

Definitions

¹ DfID Education position paper *Improving learning, expanding opportunities*

² The British Council's Royal Charter

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/royalcharter.pdf>

³ Fullan, Michael and Langworthy, Maria; *Towards a new end: New Pedagogies for Deep Learning*

⁴ UNESCO; *Integrating Transversal Competencies in Education Policy and Practice*; 2013

Each skill is defined first by the Fullan and Langworthy/UNESCO frameworks, where applicable, followed by how the British Council defines the skill. The British Council definitions were written in consultation with internal and external stakeholders across the UK and overseas.

1) Critical thinking & problem solving

Thinking critically to design and manage projects, solve problems, make effective decisions using a variety of digital tools and resources. (Fullan and Langworthy, 2013)

Creativity, entrepreneurship, resourcefulness, application skills, reflective thinking, reasoned decision-making. (UNESCO, 2013)

British Council definition:

Self-directed thinking that produces new and innovative ideas and solves problems. Reflecting critically on learning experiences and processes and making effective decisions.

2) Collaboration and communication

Communicate effectively orally, in writing and with a variety of digital tools. (Fullan and Langworthy, 2013)

Work in teams, learn from and contribute to the learning of others, social networking skills, empathy in working with diverse others. (Fullan and Langworthy, 2013)

British Council definition:

Communicate effectively orally, in writing, actively listen to others in diverse and multi-lingual environments and understand verbal and non-verbal communication. Work in diverse international teams, learning from and contributing to the learning of others, assuming shared responsibility, cooperating, leading, delegating and compromising to produce new and innovative ideas and solutions.

3) Creativity & imagination

Economic and social entrepreneurialism, considering and pursuing novel ideas, and leadership for action (Fullan and Langworthy, 2013)

British Council definition:

Economic and social entrepreneurialism, imagining and pursuing novel ideas, judging value, developing innovation and curiosity.

4) Citizenship

Global knowledge, sensitivity to and respect for other cultures, active involvement in addressing issues of human and environmental sustainability. (Fullan and Langworthy, 2013)

Awareness, tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding, ability to resolve conflicts, civic/political participation, conflict resolution, respect for the environment. (UNESCO, 2013)

British Council definition:

Active, globally-aware citizens who have the skills, knowledge and motivation to address issues of human and environmental sustainability and work towards a fairer world in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue. Developing students' understanding of what it means to be a citizen of their own country and their own country's values.

5) Digital literacy

British Council definition:

Using technology as a tool to reinforce, extend and deepen learning through international collaboration. Enabling the student to discover, master and communicate knowledge and information in a globalised economy.

6) Student leadership and personal development

Fullan and Langworthy's 'Character Education': Honesty, self-regulation and responsibility, perseverance, empathy for contributing to the safety and benefit of others, self-confidence, personal health and well-being, career and life skills. (Fullan and Langworthy, 2013)

UNESCO's inter- and intra-personal skills: Presentation and communication skills, leadership, organizational skills, teamwork, collaboration, initiative, sociability, collegiality; self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, compassion, integrity, commitment. (UNESCO, 2013)

British Council definition:

Honesty, leadership, self-regulation and responsibility, perseverance, empathy for contributing to the safety and benefit of others, self-confidence, pupil voice, resilience, personal health and well-being, career and life skills and learning to learn/life-long learning.

References and Further Reading

- Barber, Michael, Donnelly, Katelyn, and Rizvi, Saad; *Oceans of Innovation: The Atlantic, the Pacific, Global Leadership and the Future of Education*; Institute for Public Policy Research; Aug 2012; http://www.ippr.org/assets/media/images/media/files/publication/2012/09/oceans-of-innovation_Aug2012_9543.pdf
- Department for International Development; *Education position paper: Improving learning, expanding opportunities*; https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/225715/Education_Position_Paper_July_2013.pdf; June 2013
- Fullan, Michael and Langworthy, Maria "Towards a new end: New Pedagogies for Deep Learning"; Collaborative Impact, Washington USA; http://www.newpedagogies.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/New_Pedagogies_for_Deep%20Learning_Whitepaper.pdf; June 2013
- Fullan, Michael and Langworthy, Maria; *A Rich Seam" 2014: How New Pedagogies Find Deep Learning* http://www.michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/3897.Rich_Seam_web.pdf; January 2014

- McKinsey and Co.; 'How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top'; (Sept 2007) <http://mckinseysociety.com/how-the-worlds-best-performing-schools-come-out-on-top/>

Website resources

- The Center for 21st Century Skills: <http://www.skills21.org/>
- The Glossary of Education Reform; <http://edglossary.org/21st-century-skills/>
- The Partnership for 21st Century Skills: <http://www.p21.org/>
- UNESCO's Transversal Skills: http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/epr/ERI-Net_Seminar/2013/Transversal_16_Oct.pdf