

# Engaging Students in Intercultural Dialogue Through Credit-Based Learning and Microcredentials

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# What is Sustainability?



- ▶ Sustainability is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- ▶ It's a holistic approach that considers interconnectedness and long-term well-being.
- ▶ ESD enables every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.

# The Global Action Programme (GAP)

- ▶ The GAP is a UNESCO-led initiative to scale up ESD. It focuses on five priority action areas:
  - ▶ Advancing policy: Mainstreaming ESD into national policies.
  - ▶ Transforming learning environments: Implementing the Whole Institution Approach.
  - ▶ Building capacities of educators: Training educators in ESD methodologies.
  - ▶ Empowering and mobilizing youth: Engaging young people as change agents.
  - ▶ Accelerating sustainable solutions: Promoting ESD at all levels and in all areas.
- ▶ Students bring diverse perspectives and language skills.
  - ▶ Contributions promote critical thinking, research literacy, and peace-building awareness.
  - ▶ Participation turns students into active agents of intercultural dialogue.

# The Delors Report: Foundational Pillars for Competency Development

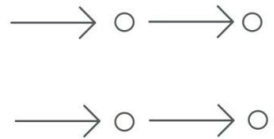


- ▶ Competencies are more than just knowledge; they are the skills, abilities, and attitudes needed to address complex sustainability challenges
- ▶ The 1996 Delors Report, "Learning: The Treasure Within," provides a framework for education built on four key pillars, which are essential for developing sustainability competencies:

# Key Competencies

## Traditional (linear) thinking vs. Systems thinking

Traditional thinking



Systems thinking



Source: Bansal, Lee, & Mascena, 2022.

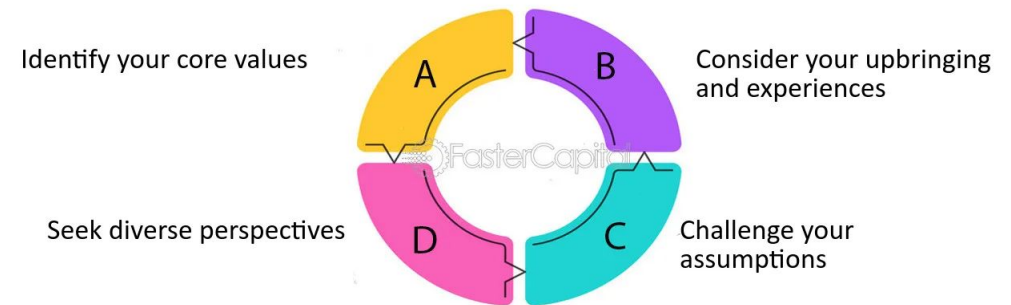
Graphic adapted by Abby Litchfield

- ▶ 1. Systems Thinking: Understanding complex systems and interconnections.
- ▶ 2. Anticipatory Competency: Envisioning future scenarios and possibilities

# Key Sustainability Competencies

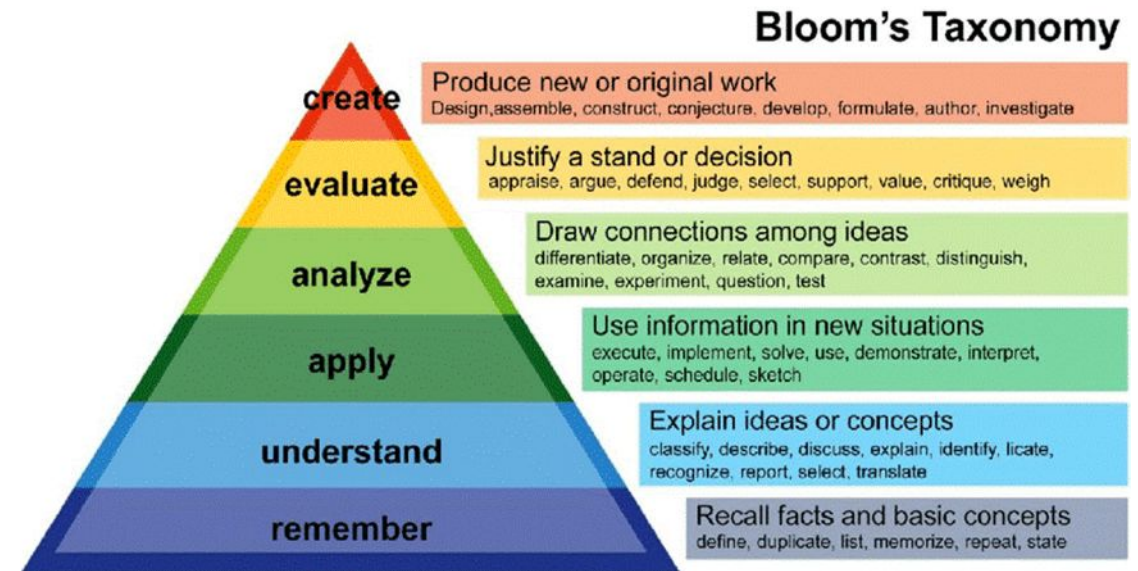
- ▶ 3. Normative Competency: Reflecting on values and ethical considerations.
- ▶ 4. Strategic Competency: Developing and implementing sustainable strategies.

## Reflecting on Personal Values and Beliefs



# Key Sustainability Competencies

- ▶ 5. Collaboration Competency: Working effectively in diverse groups.
- ▶ 6. Critical Thinking: Analyzing information and challenging assumptions







## Key Sustainability Competencies

- ▶ 7. Self-Awareness Competency: Reflecting on one's own role and impact.
- ▶ 8. Integrated Problem-Solving Competency: Applying different problem-solving frameworks to complex sustainability issues.



# Integrated Problem-Solving Competence



- The meta-competence of meaningfully using and integrating the five key competencies for solving sustainability problems and fostering sustainable development:

# Developing Competencies in Your Organization

## Training

Training & Workshops: Provide opportunities for skill-building.

## Facilitate

Peer-to-Peer Learning: Facilitate knowledge sharing among members.

## Connect

Mentorship: Connect experienced members with those newer to sustainability.

## Action

Action Projects: Support members in implementing sustainability initiatives

# How to Incentivize Participation

- ▶ Course-integrated assignments: embed contributions in coursework.
- ▶ Internships: enable work placements contributing to the database.
- ▶ Community engagement projects: link database contributions with fieldwork.
- ▶ Research theses: encourage use and expansion of the database.

# What Are Microcredentials?

**Microcredentials are short, targeted learning experiences that certify a specific skill or competency.**

- ▶ Recognized by employers and institutions.
- ▶ Stackable toward larger qualifications.
- ▶ Often digitally certified (e.g., digital badges).
- ▶ - Can focus on intercultural dialogue, conflict analysis, or research methodology.
- ▶ Students can earn microcredentials for:
  - ▶ Creating or curating database entries.
  - ▶ Conducting interviews or translations.
  - ▶ Writing annotated reports on intercultural conflicts.
  - ▶ Universities can award ECTS for microcredential-based learning.

# Institutional Opportunities

- ▶ Curriculum alignment:
- ▶ Add “Dialogue Across Borders” tasks to syllabi.
- ▶ International partnerships:
- ▶ Facilitate exchange of content and interns across Anna Lindh Network universities.
- ▶ Funding models?
- ▶ Sustainability: Institutionalizing database contributions supports longevity.
- ▶ Reputation: Academic recognition of Dialogue Across Borders increases its global credibility.
- ▶ Peace-building: Students trained through this system become future intercultural leaders.