Stiftung
Lernen durch Engagement
Service-Learning in Deutschland

LMU LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN

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Democratic Competence in Service-Learning

Model and Guide to Implementation

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“ The model of democratic competence in service-learning bridges the gap between academic theory and pedagogical practice. It opens up opportunities and perspectives on how democratic citizenship education can be successfully implemented in schools. ”

Professor Anne Sliwka,
Institut für Bildungswissenschaft,
Universität Heidelberg

“ Thanks to service-learning I have learned that I also have to look out for other people and I have become more socially engaged. I’ve also learned that everyone can be who they want to be. ”

Student

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“ In our experience, the concept of democracy as a way of life is often not present in practice. We therefore wanted to develop a model that shows that knowledge of a system of government is just one element of democratic competence: Self-efficacy, empathy, and participation are also fundamental. In over 15 years of collaboration with schools and partners throughout Germany we have seen time and time again how well service-learning strengthens all these competences. This model will help us to further enhance this potential and bring our approach to a broader audience. ”

Sandra Zentner,
Stiftung Lernen durch Engagement

“ Through service-learning I’ve seen new places and gotten to know other people. And I’ve been able to better understand their histories. ”

Student

Service-Learning strengthens democratic competence

Service-Learning is a form of learning that combines civic engagement with subject-specific learning. It encourages an innovative culture of learning in which young people actively experience democracy and consciously reflect on it by means of their own creative contribution. Service-Learning is based in part on the ideas of the American philosopher and educationalist John Dewey and is translated in German-language literature and practice as “learning through civic engagement” (“Lernen durch Engagement”) (Seifert, Zentner & Nagy, 2012).

Service-Learning fills democratic education and school culture with life. Teachers of all subjects and in all types of schools can imbue students of all ages with democratic competence, regardless of previous experience. More than an extracurricular activity for a few committed students, Service-Learning is a central part of education for every student.

> *“Service-Learning is more than community service. It implies providing a community service in the con- text of a structured set of steps, in which the teacher plays an important role as organizer and facilitator, while keeping a strong learner-centered approach and empowering learners to make decisions and act on their own will in co-operation with peers.”*
>
> ***Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 37***

> *“Service-Learning is also an effective way to develop the full range of CDC (competences of democratic culture) because it gives learners opportunities to connect the knowledge and critical understanding and skills acquired in a classroom setting with meaningful action targeting a real-world issue.*
> *Through this connection, not only knowledge, critical understanding and skills are consolidated and further developed, but processes are put in place which stimulate the development and critical awareness of attitudes and values.”*
>
> ***Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 36***

You can find information and materials for the implementation of Service-Learning in English at https://www.servicelearning.de/english

You can find materials in German from Stiftung Lernen durch Engagement at https://www.servicelearning.de/infopool

What is Service-Learning?

Service-Learning combines civic engagement with subject-specific learning in class and can be used in all types of schools, for students of any age, and with a range of contents (Seifert, Zentner & Nagy, 2012).

In the German Service-Learning Network ("Netzwerk Lernen durch Engagement"), schools from across Germany are demonstrating how this can work – from primary schools to vocational schools.

EXAMPLES

Primary school students learn about fairy tales from various cultures. In a workshop for neighborhood children they write new fairy tales, which are then published in a special series by the local media.

In biology, sixth graders address environmental pollution. They regard plastic waste in their city as the most important problem. Working with a local conservation initiative, they start campaigning for the use of reusable coffee cups. But what is the situation like in other countries? Assisted by their teacher, they contact a school in Catalonia and encourage the students there to start a conservation project of their own. These students clean up their local beach and discover where the plastic waste comes from. In class, the Spanish and German students investigate the major environmental problems in their countries and discuss their projects with each other. They plan to visit each other when their projects have been completed.

Eighth graders explore the theme of appearance and reality in their philosophy and art classes. They design an exhibition of photos depicting the fake "reality" of Instagram that is displayed in the local town hall. Online, the school invites students and teachers worldwide to participate.

In foreign language classes students deal with poetry and in politics they learn about the causes and effects of the war in Ukraine. Working with a local aid organization they create a "Peace Path" with refugees: an exhibition in the town park with poems on the subject of peace from Ukraine and other European countries.

An English teacher at a German comprehensive school is contacted by a teacher from Macedonia who wants to help his students learn about other European countries. He asks for a video in which students record a typical day in their lives. The curriculum in both countries includes learning about the importance of civic engagement and the institutions of civil society. The German students create short videos about their surroundings and in brief interviews they document the work of non-profit organizations in the neighborhood of their school: a youth club, a sheltered workshop for people with disabilities, and a retirement home. With support from their English teacher, they encourage their contemporaries in Macedonia to create their own videos of their daily life and surroundings. The students contact friends and relatives abroad and encourage them to shoot short videos too. The final result is a film depicting daily life at school and outside of it, and the importance of non-profit organizations in various European countries. The film is uploaded on the schools' communication channels.

These insights into how Service-Learning can be implemented in schools demonstrate a diversity of approaches. What all these examples have in common is that young people develop democratic competence both in class and in society. In school, students plan and shape their civic engagement themselves, reflect on their progress, discuss problems, and come up with solutions. At the same time they put their knowledge and their skills into practice directly by becoming active – alongside partners – in social, ecological, cultural, or political questions that interest them (service). Their civic engagement is part of the course and is deliberately integrated into the curriculum (learning).

The combination of civic engagement and subject-specific learning reflects the two main goals of Service-Learning:

- Changing school and the culture of learning: Students participate actively, and learning is action-oriented, meaningful, and socially relevant.
- Strengthening democracy and society: Students are introduced to civic engagement and acquire social and democratic competence.

To attain these two goals and develop young people's competences, the quality of the pedagogical implementation is crucial. Service-Learning does not strengthen democratic competence per se. This is evident not only in scientific research, but also in feedback from schools. The German Service-Learning Network has therefore developed six quality standards (see box).

All six quality standards contain pedagogical challenges that – to varying degrees depending on the school – question the familiar, require teachers and students to reflect on their attitudes and roles, and call for new approaches for everybody involved, in particular with regard to fostering democratic competence.

> "Any Service-Learning course or program must pay attention to these factors to be successful in achieving desired civic learning outcomes."
>
> **Battistoni, 2013, p. 122**

The six quality standards of Service-Learning

(Seifert, Zentner & Nagy, 2012)

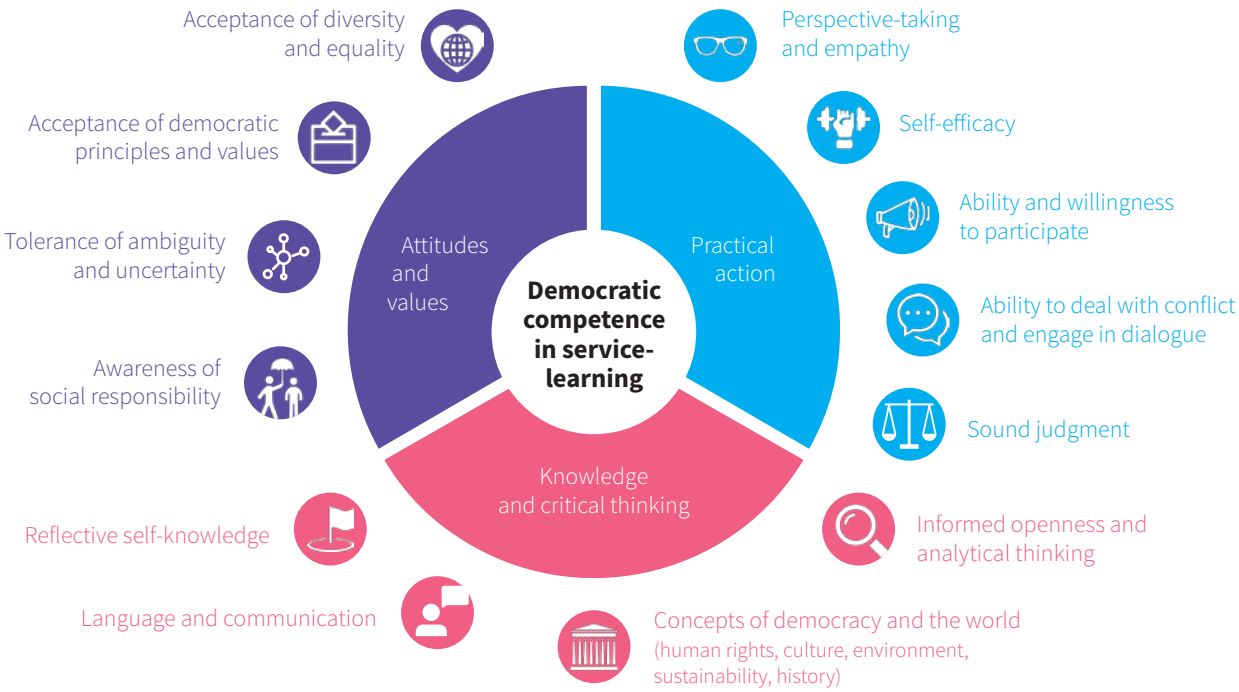
- **Real demand:** Students' civic engagement is a response to a real demand in the neighborhood, community, or society. Students take on tasks that all stakeholders perceive as meaningful and significant.
- **Connection to the curriculum:** Service-Learning is part of the lessons and civic engagement is linked to the curriculum.
- **Reflection:** Students regularly reflect on their experiences.
- **Student participation:** Students are actively involved in planning, preparing, and organizing Service-Learning.
- **Engagement outside the school:** The students' practical engagement takes place outside the school and in collaboration with partners.
- **Recognition and conclusion:** Students' engagement and achievements are honored in feedback throughout the process and at an end-of-project celebration.

To provide concrete support for this demanding process we have collaborated with academics and practitioners to develop a model that defines the acquisition of democratic competence through Service-Learning, breaks it down into individual competences, and offers support with practical materials. This model makes it possible to define each individual competence more accurately in the implementation of Service-Learning and to consciously treat them as goals aligned with the quality standards. For example, it is particularly important for the competence of self-efficacy that students embrace their engagement and the learning process it involves, take responsibility for making decisions, and repeatedly reflect on what they have achieved and how this can be attributed to themselves and their competences (quality standard: student participation).

Democratic competence in Service-Learning: The model

The model "Democratic competence in Service-Learning" was informed by both theory and practice. It was developed by the "Stiftung Lernen durch Engagement" (Foundation for Service-Learning in Germany) in close collaboration with Prof. Dr. Markus Gloe (Geschwister-Scholl-Institute for Political Science, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich). The model has been revised several times to incorporate feedback from experts, including academics, teachers, and democracy education specialists.

The model comprises individual competences in three areas: attitudes and values, practical action, and knowledge and critical thinking. It aims to provide assistance and guidance to anybody who wants to strengthen innovative learning for a democratic society at and with schools, and to stimulate dialogue and discourse in academia and in practice.



The model provides practical materials to help teachers and students implement democratic citizenship education through Service-Learning. It makes democratic competence, which is often regarded as abstract, concrete and applicable in a pedagogical context. At the same time, the model provides a framework for qualitative and quantitative studies that focus on fostering democratic competence through Service-Learning.

How to use the model

Individual competences and suggestions for implementation

The following pages offer an in-depth look at each individual competence, with guidance on how to recognize and foster the competence in students, as well as questions for reflection.

STEP 1: Analysis and overview

What individual competences make up democratic competence?
How can I recognize individual competences in my students?
The definitions and students' comments provided illustrate each individual competence and how to apply it in practice.

STEP 2: Defining goals

What individual competences do I want to focus on in my pedagogical work with Service-Learning?
We recommend concentrating on two or three individual competences to begin with. Further competences can be added gradually.

STEP 3: Implementation: Quality standards of Service-Learning and methods

How can I strengthen the individual competences in Service-Learning?
What is important for implementation?
What methodological tips, materials, and suggestions exist?
For each individual competence you will find tips to keep in mind when implementing Service-Learning (with reference to the quality standards of Service-Learning), as well as methodological tips for fostering the individual competence.

STEP 4: Reflection

How can I assess the development of the individual competences with my students?
Service-Learning does not automatically strengthen students' democratic competence – implementing Service-Learning according to the quality standards is crucial. In particular, opportunities for reflection are necessary to ensure that students' practical experiences translate into genuine learning experiences. Here you will find suggestions for reflecting with students about the individual competences and their development. The questions are a representative selection; they can and should be adapted to the students and the context.

> "We do not learn from experience, but from reflecting on experience."
>
> **John Dewey**

Awareness of social responsibility

Students experience themselves as being part of society and have an awareness of other people and the effects of their actions on their fellow human beings. They feel solidarity and display an appreciation of their responsibility for people outside their family and circle of friends. They reflect on their actions with regard to others and take responsibility for those actions.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I help my fellow human beings and support them, regardless of whether they are friends or not.
- I am happy to stick up for other people.
- I honor agreements with other people.
- I assume responsibility within my learning group or society (e. g., in the form of tasks or civic engagement).

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Direct and intensive contact with people involved in the civic engagement
- Cooperation with engagement partners outside the students' usual environment
- Role playing, images, and stories that involve taking on new perspectives and attitudes
- Project management tools and allocation of tasks

Questions for reflection

- What influence do my actions have on other people's environments?
- Why should I stick up for other people?
- How did other people experience my actions?
- What does the word reliability mean to me?
- Was I able to rely on my project partners?

> "I think it is important to stick up for people and to be there for them if they want my help. I am aware of the effect of my actions on other people and assume responsibility for it."

Space for your ideas

Tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty

Students can tolerate ambiguous or uncertain situations and contradictory courses of action. They can discern contradictions, culture-related differences, or ambiguous information that is hard to understand, without assessing them as purely negative or positive. They can deal with these situations and challenges constructively.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I feel comfortable in new situations.
- If I am afraid of uncertain situations, I accept this and trust in my own abilities.
- I know how to deal with circumstances where there is no clear solution to a question or challenge and information is contradictory.
- I can concentrate on my work even if I don't know what is going to happen.
- I find challenging and uncertain situations exciting.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Encouraging controversial discussions about issues concerning the social context of the civic engagement
- Reflecting on expectations and feelings before the civic engagement
- Reflecting on experiences during the course of the project
- Dilemma discussions to expose students to situations without a clear solution

Questions for reflection

- How do I deal with situations that make me feel uncertain?
- If I cannot assess a situation, what feelings does that trigger in me?
- How do I deal with situations, problems, and challenges for which there is no clear solution or answer?
- How do I deal with things that don't work out as I had imagined?

> "I can deal with situations that are uncertain or have no clear solutions."

Space for your ideas

Acceptance of democratic principles and values

Students firmly believe that democratic processes and structures such as the rule of law, the separation of powers, and human rights are important for cohesion in a society. They respect democratic values such as justice, fairness, and equality and apply them in their actions. They understand civic participation (e. g., voting, civic engagement) as an important contribution from every individual.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I value other people's contributions.
- I like to participate actively in decision-making.
- I stick to decisions and rules that have been agreed on (e. g., in group work).
- I can appreciate my fellow students' positions and understand them even if they are at odds with mine.

> "I accept democratic processes – for instance, in decision-making – and structures such as the rule of law, and I respect democratic values such as justice, fairness, and equality."

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Setting up rules for the group and initiating democratic discussions
- Voting in the learning group
- Involving students in planning and organizing the civic engagement
- Leveraging moral dilemmas as an occasion for reflecting on one's own values
- Reflecting on the social context of the civic engagement
- Covering democratic procedures, principles, and values in school subjects (e. g., social studies, politics)

Questions for reflection

- What rules, laws, and regulations do I know (at school, in the classroom, at my community organization, in society, etc)?
- Why do these rules, laws, and regulations exist?
- Where can I have an influence? What areas can I not influence? Why?
- What would happen if everybody could do what they wanted?

Space for your ideas

Acceptance of diversity and equality

Students value diversity and respect people with different lifestyles and cultural backgrounds. They believe that all people are equal and they believe in dignity, equal human rights, and basic liberties for all. They are tolerant of other people, perspectives, opinions, and customs and they are open to cultural differences.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I like situations where I can meet new people.
- I accept my fellow students irrespective of their background, religion, beliefs, or gender.
- I am curious to meet other people and get to know their view of the world.
- In group work and in the Service-Learning project I consider the diversity of points of view, languages, genders, cultures, and religions to be an enrichment.

> "I think it is good that all people are different and I believe that we can all learn from each other. I believe that everyone has the same rights and I treat them without prejudice."

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Cooperative learning methods
- Promoting a strengths-oriented perspective
- Cooperating with engagement partners outside the students' usual environment
- Direct and intensive contact with people involved in the civic engagement
- Seeking conversations with people outside the students' usual environment
- Reflecting about oneself and one's fears and prejudices
- Role-playing, images, and stories that involve taking on new perspectives and attitudes
- Human rights, children's rights, and diversity as topics in school subjects (e. g., ethics, social studies)

Questions for reflection

- What can I learn from my fellow students and/or the people in the civic engagement?
- What would the world be like if everyone was like me? What would be better? What would be worse?
- What is the difference between equality and equity?
- What would a world be like in which all people were equal? What advantages would it have? What disadvantages would it have?

Space for your ideas

Perspective-taking and empathy

Students can empathize with other people's thoughts, opinions, and feelings even if they are not part of their own environment. They can feel and express sympathy for people or groups, in particular for those who face obstacles to participating in society or accessing resources.

How to recognize the competence in students

- When working with other people or in difficult situations, I can identify and explain other people's points of view.
- In conflict situations I try to put myself in the other person's shoes.
- I can appreciate other people's behavior and understand their feelings, even in difficult situations.
- When there are questions or problems I can describe the points of view and feelings of everyone involved.
- I know that people have different opportunities for participating in society and face different barriers.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Role-playing, images, and stories that involve taking on new perspectives and attitudes
- Reflecting on oneself and one's fears, concerns, and prejudices
- Reflecting on experiences during the civic engagement
- Research: exploring what engagement is really needed, weighing up and clarifying the needs and expectations of everyone involved, seeking conversations with people outside the students' usual environment

> "I can put myself in other people's shoes, even if they are quite different from me. I try to understand other people's thoughts, convictions, and feelings, to get on with them, and to see the world from their point of view."

Questions for reflection

- What types of people have I encountered during Service-Learning/in the project/during the civic engagement?
- How did these people behave? How did they think and feel?
- What explanation can I provide for their doing so?
- What did people do or say that I did not understand?

Space for your ideas

Self-efficacy

Students have a favorable opinion of their ability to act: They believe in their ability to control their actions in such a way that makes it possible to achieve a desired goal. In addition, they have faith in their ability to overcome obstacles. They know that with their talents, interests, and competences they can contribute to society and bring about change.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I believe in my own abilities.
- I can put things I have planned into practice.
- I believe that I can master challenges using my own abilities.
- I believe that I can bring about change myself.
- I can overcome the challenges in my life.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Genuinely involve the students in planning, organizing, and assessing their civic engagement
- Organize learning situations in such a way that students feel competent and can demonstrate their abilities
- Give constructive feedback
- Reflection on oneself, one's development, and the project's progress
- Feedback from community organizations
- Appreciative wrap-up and thorough reflection on what has been achieved

Questions for reflection

- Do I believe that I can help shape society? Why do I believe that?
- What am I particularly proud of achieving by myself?
- When I think about my future, do I think that I can influence it myself?
- Where have I been able to demonstrate my abilities particularly well?

> "I believe in my abilities. Using these abilities, I can achieve goals and act effectively."

Space for your ideas

Ability and willingness to participate

Students take initiative and are motivated to participate in democratic processes of decision-making at school and in their environment. They experience themselves as an active and creative part of society and make use of social and political opportunities to participate.

> "I participate actively in decision-making and I am good at helping to shape important things at my school and in my environment. In this I am guided by my interests and the general good."

How to recognize the competence in students

- I feel responsible for the success of Service-Learning.
- I show interest in helping to organize the learning group.
- I play an active role in trying to change things at my school.
- I am motivated to contribute to the school environment.
- I play an active part in discussions and decision-making in society.
- I address shortcomings proactively and am willing to correct them myself.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Genuinely involving students in planning, organizing, and assessing their civic engagement
- Students research the real social need for their engagement and actively help organize the cooperation with engagement partners
- Cooperative learning methods
- Reflecting with students about expectations, their own competences, and the progress of the project
- Civic engagement and opportunities for participation as topics in school subjects (e. g., social studies, politics, ethics, religion)

Questions for reflection

- Where are my abilities needed in Service-Learning and/or in the civic engagement?
- If there is something in class, school, or society that bothers me, what can I do to change the situation?
- Have I been actively involved in something before now? How did I feel about it?
- If I had all the power and money in the world, what would I change in my environment and how? What steps can I take now?

Space for your ideas

Ability to deal with conflicts and engage in dialogue

Students can accept diversity and differences, as well as disparate positions, perspectives, and interests. They firmly believe that it is important to mediate between differing positions and opinions. They can recognize the complexities of conflicts and deal with conflict situations fairly and appreciatively. They cooperate with other people.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I accept different interests and perspectives.
- In conflict situations I am tolerant of and open to other positions, ideas, and points of view.
- I can distinguish between the personal and the factual.
- In conflict situations I search for a solution in which nobody loses face.
- I take other people's positions seriously and can put myself in other people's shoes.
- I listen and ask follow-up questions to ensure I have correctly understood a person's position.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Setting up and reflecting on rules for communication and feedback
- Creating and moderating opportunities for discussion (e. g., on students' ideas about the civic engagement)
- Setting up opportunities for talks with people outside the students' environment (e. g., with civic engagement partners)
- Cooperative learning methods
- Self-assessment and assessment by others
- Constructive feedback, reflection about the progress of the project (e. g., regular evaluation of challenging situations or conflicts in the civic engagement or learning group)

> "I accept other people's point of view and I can solve conflicts constructively. I can work with other people."

Questions for reflection

- How do I try to resolve a conflict?
- Is there always a solution for conflict situations?
- How do I react if people do not agree with my opinion?
- How do I express criticism? How do other people react to this?
- How can I be sure that I have understood other people's statements and opinions correctly?

Space for your ideas

Sound judgment

Students can analyze conflicts, problems, and political and social issues, and question other people's political opinions. They can formulate their own political opinions independently based on facts and values and stand up for them.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I can gather enough information to formulate my own political opinion.
- I can check whether the information I have gathered is correct.
- In political problems, controversies, and conflicts I can discern and understand other people's points of view and perspectives.
- I can assess other people's political opinions to see whether they are justified.
- I can assess other people's political opinions to see whether they are compatible with human rights.
- I can position myself politically and justify my position.
- I can amend my political opinions in the face of new information and arguments.

> "I can analyze political and social conflicts and problems and independently form my own opinion. I can stand up for this position in public."

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Highlighting topics from the civic engagement that require students to take a political stance (e. g., social justice, scarcity and distribution of resources, discrimination, poverty, care, inclusion)
- Using varied information sources and working out assessment criteria
- Role playing, images, and stories that involve taking on new positions and attitudes
- Comparing opinions from the start and the end of the Service-Learning project
- Reflecting on oneself and one's own fears, reservations, and prejudices
- Reflecting with the students about the social context of their civic engagement, democratic values and democratic everyday behavior, and the importance of engagement for a democratic society
- Leveraging moral dilemmas as a reason for reflecting on one's own values
- Discussions in various formats that encourage people to adopt, reflect on, and justify a position

Questions for reflection

- Have I gathered and checked all the available information in order to form an opinion?
- How do other people see this topic, conflict, or problem?
- Have I incorporated other people's points of view in my opinion (e. g., project partners)?
- What consequences does my opinion have (for other people as well)?
- In what way has my opinion changed in the course of the project? What new arguments have I introduced?
- Do I stand up for my opinion in public? Why or why not?

Informed openness and analytical thinking

Students can systematically and logically analyze materials of all kinds (e. g., texts, arguments, social contexts, circumstances, political and social problems) and can obtain information about them. They provide assessment criteria and debate differing statements in context.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I know how to find suitable and reliable sources of information.
- I examine topics from various perspectives.
- I distinguish between facts and opinions.
- I make reasoned decisions and can put them into words.
- I know how to include information in my reasoning.
- I avoid blanket judgements.

> "I know how and where I can find information, I look at topics from various points of view, and I can assess them critically."

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Comprehensive research around the civic engagement and social context: Where is my help needed? Where can I find information (newspapers, the Internet, surveys, etc.)?
- Discussing ways of interpreting a situation and reflecting about the civic engagement and related content from the curriculum
- Using various sources of information and working out assessment criteria

Questions for reflection

- Where could I find information on the topic of my civic engagement?
- How can I tell if a source or information is reliable?
- What am I learning about the environment of the people in my civic engagement?
- Why might someone disapprove of this issue or topic?
- How do other people view this topic?

Space for your ideas

Concepts of democracy and the world
(e. g., human rights, culture, environment, sustainability, history)

Students know that there are multiple legitimate concepts of democracy. In the context of specific problems and action situations they understand democracy as a form of government, of society, and of life (e.g., knowledge of the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations). They know democratic values and principles and understand their fundamental importance for democratic societies. In specific situations, students are aware of suitable forms and processes of participation and active co-determination and can put them into practice.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I know important procedures in a democratic society (e. g., elections).
- I know how important civic engagement is for society.
- I know that I can call for a vote in a decision-making process and accept the result of the democratic procedure.
- I know how to contribute positively to a group.
- I know that I can help shape processes in my class and/or learning group (e. g., debates, discussions, collaboration).
- I know how I can participate actively in the civic engagement.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

> “I know democratic values and opportunities for participation and on what basis democratic societies are organized.”

- Including democracy and democratic values and principles as classroom topics alongside Service-Learning (e. g., in social studies, politics, ethics)
- Reflecting with the students about the social context of their civic engagement, democratic values and democratic everyday behavior, and the importance of civic engagement for a democratic society
- Revisiting relevant topics from the civic engagement (e. g., social justice, scarcity and distribution of resources, poverty, care, social inclusion) in classes using Service-Learning (e. g., in collaboration with other departments)
- Genuinely involving students in all phases of Service-Learning: independent decisions, applying democratic procedures to decisions in the learning group, etc.

Questions for reflection

- Why does our society need civic engagement?
- What are the social topics of my civic engagement (e. g., justice, equality of opportunity, climate change)? What broader context are we operating in?
- How do we reach decisions in our civic engagement? How are decisions reached in a democratic society?
- What are the duties of the state and what are the duties of civil society? Who decides?
- How do we want to live and work together?

Language and communication

Students know and follow socially appropriate conventions of verbal and nonverbal communication, in both their own language and newly acquired languages. They understand the effect of various styles of communication on other people, reflect critically on their own manner of communication, and make conscious decisions about how they communicate. Students consider how their language expresses common cultural content in specific ways.

How to recognize the competence in students

- I know that my voice and body language are important in a conversation.
- I know that language often communicates important things that go beyond what is said (e. g., social relationship via forms of greeting).
- I know that people who speak a different language from me might understand what I say and my body language (facial expression, gestures, etc.) differently.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Working with external partners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Preparing interviews with people outside school and from other linguistic backgrounds and evaluating them afterwards
- Carrying out Service-Learning in foreign language classes by addressing subject-specific topics and analyzing their expression in the foreign language
- Carrying out Service-Learning across borders by cooperating with schools with a different language (digital and/or analogue cooperation)
- Reflection on communicative situations

Questions for reflection

- When I meet someone who speaks a different language from me, how can I greet this person politely? How can I make it clear that I value this person?
- In what situations in the project, in the civic engagement, or in class is it particularly important to know what another person meant in a conversation?
- Who or what can help me to understand what another person meant in a conversation?
- When do I find it difficult to express something in words? What do I do in those cases?
- In what situations (in class or in the civic engagement) do I make use of body language? What do these situations have in common?

> “I know spoken and unspoken rules of the languages I can speak. I know that language often communicates important things that go beyond what is said.”

Reflective self-knowledge

Students know their strengths, interests, positions, and goals in life as well as their affiliations and views of the world. They know how to express these to others and can reflect about their own thoughts and feelings critically and in a broader context.

> "I know what I can do and I know my interests and goals. I have my own opinions and can reflect on them critically, justify them, and express them."

How to recognize the competence in students

- I can accurately assess my own abilities.
- I know where my strengths lie.
- I know what I am not yet good at and where I want to develop further.
- I have my own opinion in controversial questions.
- I can adopt a reasoned position.
- I can examine my own position critically.

How to strengthen the competence in Service-Learning

- Methods of self-assessment and assessment by others
- Presenting the civic engagement and my own learning processes in the learning group and/or in front of other people
- Constructive feedback (e. g., competence grid or portfolio)
- Reflecting about the course of the project and my own learning progress and development
- Discussions that encourage adopting a position, reflecting on it, and justifying it

Questions for reflection

- What can I do particularly well?
- In what areas do I want to improve?
- What should my life look like in 1, 2, or 5 years' time? What must I do to achieve these goals?
- How do I form an opinion of my own? Who or what plays a part in this? Who or what does not?
- Why is my position and/or my opinion important to me?

Space for your ideas

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Strengthening democracy and civil society. Changing school and the learning culture.

In order to shape a vibrant democratic culture we need democratic competence. This encompasses democratic attitudes and values, practical action, and specific knowledge and critical thinking. The purpose of this model is to help translate the concept of democratic competence into practice and to support teachers and students in implementing learning through civic engagement.

Stiftung Lernen durch Engagement is a charitable foundation that develops, disseminates, and supports Service-Learning throughout Germany, so that young people from all backgrounds can receive a good education, develop their competences, become involved in civic society, and actively help shape our democratic society. The foundation collaborates with a large network of schools and partners to achieve these shared goals.

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