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**Theoretical and Pedagogical Framework that provides
methodological guidance for Teachers to integrate International
Understanding and Global Competencies into their own
Professional Context.**

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1. Introduction and background

The drive for competency-based education has developed globally since its initial establishment by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2005. In 2018 the OECD added the assessment of Global Competence based on its Global Competence Framework to its Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2018). The OECD (2018: 7) define Global Competence as:

the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development.

The notion of Global Competence takes the form of a set of identified key-competencies necessary for young people to become successful 21st century citizens and function effectively in society (Zhao, 2020). As such, China's Ministry of Education has been reforming its curriculum since 2014 to incorporate key competencies which, in the Chinese context, are known as Core Competencies (CC). International Understanding (IU) and Global Competency (GC) are regarded as important elements of China's Core Competencies. In primary schools, English Language Teaching (ELT) has been identified as the most suitable and convenient curriculum area to incorporate the teaching of IU and GC. While some schools have supported and responded innovatively to the curricula reform agenda, more widely the successful implementation of these reforms has been thwarted by inadequate resources and conceptual ambiguity (Deng and Peng, 2021). Classroom teachers are especially exposed to the shortage of teaching materials, guidelines, and training support. Herein lies the foremost reason for the inception of the Teacher Methodological Guidance and Instruction Manual that this paper accompanies.

Project Outline

The Teacher Methodological Guidance and Instruction Manual is one of the key outputs from a British Council supported project (Award Type (RIA/EMaDA)). The project entitled 'Theoretical and Methodological Support for the Integration of International Understanding into Primary English Language Teaching' is a collaboration between Staffordshire University, United Kingdom (UK) and Chengdu Education Center for International Exchanges, China. The project aims to promote Global Competencies which stem from the OECD's Sustainable Development Goal 4, which commends quality education for all. The purpose of the Teacher Methodological Guidance and Instruction Manual is to provide guidance and content to help teachers plan the instructional design of ELT for IU and GC. This is underpinned by a theoretical and methodological framework.

Academic experts from the Institute of Education at Staffordshire University, UK with proficiency in primary education, ELT and the training of teachers have created guidance and content to help teachers plan the instructional design of ELT for IU and GC. To ensure the Teacher Methodological Guidance and Instruction Manual was appropriately designed to meet the needs of teachers in Chengdu primary schools, researchers at Staffordshire University first undertook desk-based research, an analysis of a range of relevant primary ELT textbooks and conducted a needs analysis baseline study with almost 500 primary teachers and school leaders. This preliminary work facilitated the identification of Chengdu's primary teachers' professional development needs in the teaching of

English along with ascertaining teachers' understanding of IU and GC and teachers' confidence in their integration into ELT in the primary classroom. These perceived needs informed the design and development of the Teacher Methodological Guidance and Instruction Manual. The manual provides pedagogic principles which are supported theoretically and based on UK frameworks and expectations. The principles of the China's New National Curriculum for primary schools have also been incorporated, as appropriate. The manual also contains content and topics in the form of themed case studies, and a range of Grade and Level-related activities to illustrate how the underpinning pedagogical principles of the manual can be applied to English Language teaching. The experts have included planning and assessment support, lesson design, templates and checklists, suggested extension activities and posed key questions to promote teachers' self-reflection when giving a lesson.

The remainder of this paper provides an explanation of the theoretical and methodological principles that have informed the design of the manual.

2. International Understanding, Core Competencies and English Language Teaching: An inter-related framework.

As China's presence on the global stage continues to grow markedly, it is important that Chinese children develop into well-rounded individuals who can thrive in an interconnected world. In addition to being able to converse in the lingua-franca of English, they also need to have the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to be able to think with an international mindset to empower them to operate competently on a global stage. In this manual, these are defined as **learning characteristics**, and they align with a sociocultural view of learning. This is explained further in the Section 3.

Acquiring global competence is a life-long process, and whilst it is acknowledged that there are different models of global education across the world (for example UNESCO, 2014; Council of Europe 2016; MoE, 2022) they tend to share a common vision. The OECD (2018) usefully frames these as four dimensions of global competencies that individuals need to develop to be successful in everyday life (Fig, 1).

Learners need to be able to:

***Dimension 1:* Examine issues of local global and cultural significance.**

***Dimension 2:* Understand and appreciate the perspectives and world view of others.**

***Dimension 3:* Engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures.**

***Dimension 4:* Take action for collective wellbeing and sustainable development**

Fig 1. Four dimensions of global competencies (OECD, 2018).

To fully understand global and/or intercultural issues, learners also need to develop specific cognitive skills and processes. The OECD (2018:25) identifies four cognitive skills and processes (Fig. 2), which when aligned with the four dimensions of global competence, provide a framework for understanding the importance of developing both knowledge and skills (see Fig. 3).

1. The capacity to *evaluate* information, formulate arguments and explain complex situations and problems by using and connecting evidence, identifying biases and gaps in information, and managing conflicting arguments.
2. The capacity to *identify* and *analyse* multiple perspectives and world views, positioning and connecting their own and others' perspectives on the world.
3. The capacity to *understand* differences in communication, recognising the importance of socially appropriate communication conventions and adapting communication to the demands of diverse cultural contexts.
4. The capacity to *evaluate* actions and consequences by identifying and comparing different courses of action and weighing these actions against one another based on short-and long-term consequences.

Fig 2. Cognitive skills and processes required to develop global competence (OECD, 2018)

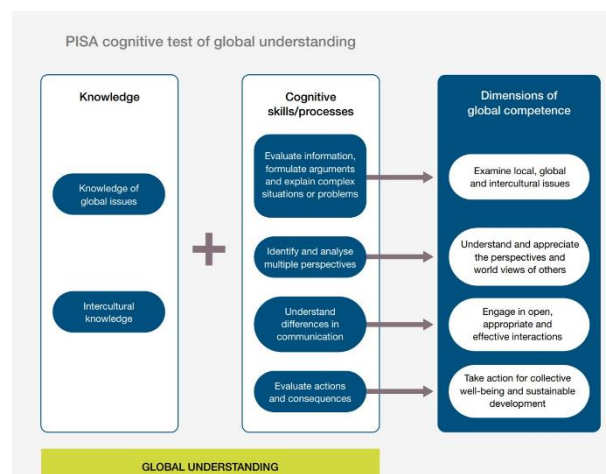


Fig 3. The relationship between the cognitive test of global understanding and the dimensions of global competence. (OECD 2018:26)

Cognitive skills and processes cannot be 'taught' as discrete units of learning. Teachers need to provide appropriate learning contexts that enable children to practice and apply these skills. Teaching through the medium of English Language lends itself to this because, as cognitive science research indicates, language profoundly influences how we see and understand the world (Madibekovna and Seitzhapparovna, 2016). Therefore, language learning involves not just the technical aspects of pronunciation, grammar and phonics, but also *how* language is used to reflect the ideas, customs, and beliefs of society (Huang, 2014). The four core competencies for the ELT curriculum reflect this idea, as it is designed in such a way to cultivate the necessary skills for lifelong learning and social development. Being proficient in these competencies is key to the development of global competencies. **Language Ability** is the foundation of the ELT curriculum, as it refers to the ability to understand and express language, thus enabling a learner to be able to communicate and interact across cultures. The cultivation of **Cultural Awareness** helps the learner to enhance their national

identity, alongside understanding other cultures to develop a sense of global community and their role in becoming educated and responsible citizens. Developing **Thinking Capacity** helps the learner to identify, analyse and solve problems, whilst **Learning Ability** is concerned with the development of self-regulatory skills which enable learners to be aware of their English learning ability.

When viewed alongside the global competencies, the interrelationship between all the learning dimensions can be seen (Fig. 4). These are the guiding principles which have informed the pedagogical framework for the manual, and as alluded to earlier, are underpinned by sociocultural theory.

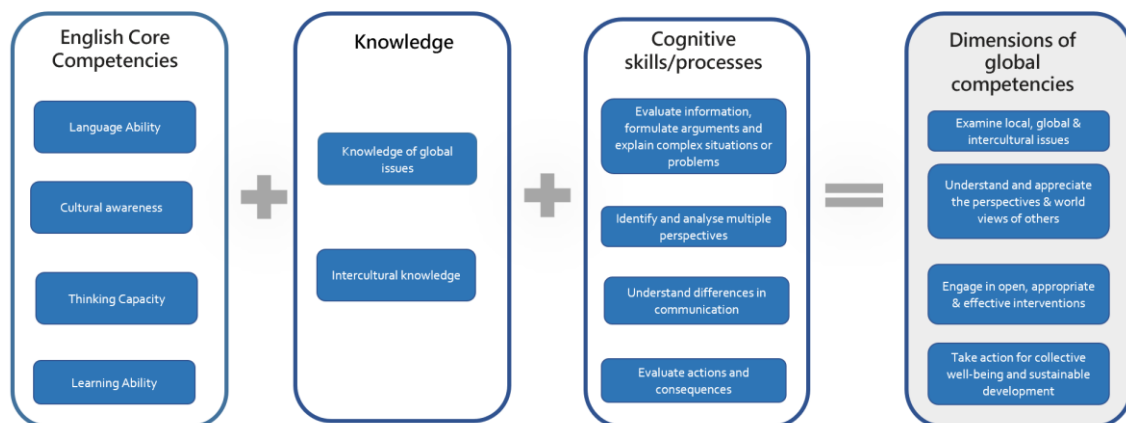


Fig 4: Pedagogical framework which illustrates the Inter-relationship between ELT and Global Competencies

3. Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural theory places particular attention on both the *context* and *process* of learning. It is understood as an interactive process that is informed by the social and cultural context in which the learning is situated. A key defining feature of this theory, is the recognition that knowledge acquisition and the development of intellectual capacity occurs as a collective rather than individual endeavour and is informed by the beliefs and knowledge practices of the learning community (Edwards, 2005). This theory of learning originates from the work of Vygotsky and has been further developed by other contemporary thinkers such as Engestrom (1999), Bodrova and Leong (2007) and Rogoff (2003). From a sociocultural perspective, learning involves being an observer and participant where cognitive processes are developed firstly through interaction and then internalisation (Smidt, 2013). Through watching, listening, talking and doing, there is an ongoing exchange of meaning which enables the learner to gain new knowledge and understanding which, once internalised can be used in new learning situations. Exemplification of this is illustrated through a vignette in Section 5.

The development of IU is not associated with a prescribed notion of knowledge; rather, it encompasses such aspects as skills, dispositions, learning behaviours and other processes that occur alongside the development of knowledge (Hedges and Cullen, 2012). Such behaviours are indicative of positive **learning characteristics** which enable learners to develop the cognitive skills and processes to be globally competent. To be able to participate in this learning process, it is necessary for the learner to be able to use the language and symbols (sometimes referred to as ‘cultural tools’) that are representative of the learning context. The cultivation of **Thinking Capacity** and **Learning Ability**, as

outlined in the ELT Curriculum support the development of these learning characteristics. It is important to understand that the development of learning characteristics requires the learner to be able to recognise their own learning abilities and dispositions towards learning. Learning dispositions are sometimes called 'habits of mind' (Claxton and Carr, 2004). These can be described as the ways in which learners engage in and relate to the learning process. Learning dispositions affect how the learner responds to learning experiences, and therefore the outcomes of their learning. For example, if a learner shows an interest in learning about the food that is eaten in different cultures and is willing to sample foods that they would not usually eat, they are developing their capacity to explore similarities and differences in food around the world. The ability to reflect on the learning process forms part of the development of learning dispositions and is explored further in Section 4.

The notion of **learning characteristics** has been informed by the English Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum which frames learning characteristics in the following way:

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. (Early Education 2012:4)

The creation of an appropriate learning environment that allows for the development of these learning characteristics is a central consideration for a primary teacher. The classroom environment should reflect the culture and ethos of the learners' community and should facilitate the development of intercultural understanding. The next section outlines the teaching and learning principles which when followed, enable this development.

4. Teaching and Learning Principles

In planning and guiding what children learn, teachers should be aware of the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Regardless of the stage of learning and development, there are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which are applicable to all learners. These are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – this involves children investigating and experiencing things.
- **Active Learning** – this involves children being actively engaged in their learning. They concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and they show enjoyment in their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – this involves children having and developing their own ideas, making links between ideas, and developing strategies for doing things. They are effectively learning how to learn. (Adapted from DfE, 2021:13)

A sociocultural view of learning advocates that learning is an active, social process. Deep learning occurs through interaction with others, and the environment. When children can explore artefacts and materials and talk about them with each other, they are making connections and developing their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. This is exemplified in the vignette in Section 5. The examples provided in Sections 4 and 5 of the manual also provide further exemplification of the theory-practice relationship and are underpinned by a number of teaching and learning principles

(Fig. 5). In the manual they are framed as evaluative questions for teachers to reflect upon in relation to their own practice.

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- **Create a community and classroom culture**
 - **Learning is a shared endeavour, which occurs within and beyond the classroom. Learning and development become embedded when there are opportunities to share experiences with family and community.**
 - **Active Learning**
 - **Learners need to be able to manipulate materials, solve problems and have their own ideas. This enables them to notice differences in different cultures, reflect on the nature of them and develop personal solutions to intercultural issues. (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Lohler, 2003)**
 - **Collaboration**
 - **Learning is a collaborative process which involves learning to notice, listen, understand, debate, and reflect on different ideas and perspectives.**
 - **Real World Scenarios**
 - **Learning contexts need to have local and global relevance. This enables the learner to explore difference and similarities and understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others.**
 - **Learning Ability**
 - **Learners need to have opportunities to reflect upon and develop the ability to self-regulate and understand how they learn.**
 - **Learners develop their dispositions to learning in different ways and at different rates. They need to be self-aware of their own developing capacity to becoming globally competent.**
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Fig 5. Underpinning teaching and learning principles of the manual

Assessment

In the manual, assessment is related to the learners' developing learning characteristics towards becoming globally competent. Assessment approaches should focus on *how* learners are developing their learning characteristics, rather than *what* they are learning. The approach to assessment is informed by the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL), an approach to formative assessment developed in England by Black and Wiliam (2009). Assessment from this perspective is seen as a process that promotes rather than measures learning. Both the learner and the teacher take an active role in this process. The teacher's role is to scaffold learning opportunities that enable the learner to recognise what they need to do to meet the desired learning goals. Providing appropriate feedback to the learner is an important step as it enables students to be able to recognise their learning gap and monitor their own learning towards the desired goals (Yan, Zhang and Dixon, 2022).

The learning goals in this manual are informed by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures of global competence (OECD,2018). This approach does not assess knowledge. Instead, it seeks to assess the development of the learners' attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions towards global issues and cultural differences. Specifically, assessment should enable both teachers and learners to make judgements about how a learner is

developing the capacity to:

- Critically examine contemporary issues of local, global and intercultural significance
- Understand and appreciate multiple cultural perspectives (including their own)
- Interact respectfully across cultural differences
- Care about the world and take action to make a positive difference in other people's lives and safeguard the environment
- Understand about different educational approaches and experiences around the world (OECD, 2018)

At the heart of the assessment process is the understanding that acting and thinking with others drives learning through the process of dialogue and interaction (Basford and Wood, 2018). For children to be able to assess their learning, opportunities need to be created for them to reflect on the progress they are making. This relates directly to the **Learning Ability** competence in the English curriculum. There is much evidence that a pupil's ability to self-regulate and understand how to learn is an important factor affecting learning performance (Muijs and Bokhove, 2020). Self-regulatory skills are defined as thoughts, feelings and actions that are generated by the learner (Zimmerman, 2000) about how they are going to achieve their learning goals. The ability to self-regulate can also have an impact on the children's enjoyment and motivation to learn (Chen, 2009; Torgerson et al., 2014). The vignette in Section 5, and the case studies in Section 4 of the manual, and Appendix 2 material provide examples of approaches to assessing learning which encourage dialogue and interaction to enable learners to reflect on their own learning and consider the progress they are making in becoming globally competent.

Reflective Practice

Reflection is a key part of the process of intercultural language learning. For teachers to enable their students to become globally competent they must first develop these attributes themselves and know how to foster them in their students. Liddicoat (2008) refers to this as 'cultural locatedness', where teachers recognise their own intercultural understanding and how this affects their approaches to teaching and learning. The development of 'cultural locatedness' can be framed as four interrelated processes of noticing, comparing, reflecting and interacting (ibid). The processes do not happen in a linear way, learners pass through them many times as their complexity of understanding develops. In the manual a range of reflective models drawing on the work of Brookfield (2017), Schön (2002), Rolfe, Freshwater and Jasper (2001) and Gibbs (1988) have been utilised to exemplify how they can be used to encourage the reflective process.

Reflection on teaching and learning needs to take place at appropriate moments. This may be at the end of a lesson or at the end of a unit or topic. Alternatively, drawing specifically on Schön's (2002) model, reflection may also occur during a lesson - 'in action', or immediately after the teaching moment - 'on action.' An example of reflecting 'in action' may be cutting short a learning activity that is not going as well as anticipated. Reflecting 'on action' may be related to post-lesson consideration of how to address the reasons why a lesson did not go as well as anticipated. Teachers need to use their professional judgement to determine at what point in the learning process reflection would be most beneficial.

Developing skills to critically reflect and then to evaluate actions effectively involves the capacity to ask, as Brookfield (2017) suggests, probing questions of the self and others that challenge pre-held

assumptions. This can be done by thinking about the knowledge and skills that are currently held in relation to GC and IU and what skills and knowledge might need to be further embedded into teaching and learning. To be a critically reflective practitioner, this means constantly developing and changing as a teacher. Critically reflective teachers do not just think about their teaching, they challenge their own beliefs, values and assumptions which might influence how they feel and react. To ensure that reflection is critical, questions need to be asked and pre-held assumptions are challenged (Brookfield, 2017). This means, rather than just asking ‘How well did the learning go?’, a teacher needs to be able to evaluate and understand how effective the learning context they have provided is in supporting the development of global competencies. The question is thus extended to asking; ‘How well did the learning go, how did I feel and what evidence am I using to make an informed judgement about this?’ This can then enable new thoughts and ideas to aid professional development. In summary, critically reflecting will allow for development as a teacher and development of the resources and activities to help to make them appropriate for their learners.

5. Principles into Practice

Following an explanation of the theoretical and pedagogical principles that have guided the design of the manual, this final section explains how the guiding principles are translated into practice through the Grade and Level related activities in Section 3 and the themed case studies in Section 4 of the manual. In the manual the Grade and Level related activities provide exemplification of the inter-relationship between the Dimensions of Global Competence and the English Language Core Competencies (as illustrated in Fig, 4). The Case Studies offer detailed lesson plans which illustrate how a series of learning activities can be planned around a theme that links to the global and English Language competencies. Suggestions for the assessment and reflection foci are also included, as well as ideas about how learning can be developed beyond the classroom. The vignette in Fig. 6 provides an example of how the theoretical and pedagogical principles have been applied to one of the Case Study lessons. This is followed by a critical explanation of the theory-practice relationship. Liddicoat (2004:21) draws attention to the point that cultural content should be treated as practices for learners to engage with rather than facts to be memorised. The vignette illustrates how engaging with the cultural content of the lesson in an active and collaborative way enables learners to develop the cognitive skills and process required to engage with the identified Global Dimension that is linked to the activity.

Case study 3: Use of Plastics.

Lesson 1. The children have been conducting investigations into different sorts of carrier bags. Their homework task had been to collect a range of carrier bags made from different materials and bring them into school. In the lesson they worked in groups to conduct an experiment to see which type of carrier bag would be the best for shopping. The children were introduced to new comparative vocabulary that they were encouraged to use to decide which bag would be the best for carrying heavy goods such as tins.

The lesson provided opportunities for the children to work collaboratively. The teacher encouraged the children to take on different roles dependent on their skills and understanding. Some children had a confident command of English Language and were encouraged to model the vocabulary to their peers. Other children had well developed written skills and took responsibility for recording the outcomes from the experiment. During the lesson, the teacher noticed that

some of the children were unsure of the correct English vocabulary for some of the materials that the bags were made from. Reflecting 'in the moment', the teacher brought the class together to do a quick revision of the key vocabulary aligned to the topic. At the end of the lesson the teacher asked the groups to self-assess how well they had worked together and to explain to the rest of the class the reason for score they had given themselves.

Lesson 2. In the following lesson, the teacher wanted to build on the learning about different materials. The focus was to start to develop the children's understanding of the environmental issues related to plastic bag wastage. The teacher wrote on the board the statement: 'people should have to pay for plastic bags in shops.' Working in the same groups from the previous lesson, the teacher asked the children to discuss their response to the question. To practice their negotiation skills, they were asked to firstly listen to each other's responses. Then they were asked to come to a group view and select a representative. Each group representative was then asked to position themselves on a line that represented their response to the statement (strongly agree versus strongly disagree). The teacher explained that everyone's view will fall somewhere along the line, and that there are not necessarily any right or wrong answers. Once the children had positioned themselves on the line, they were invited to say a few words about why they had taken that position. When everyone had been given the opportunity to express their opinion, they returned to their group and decided whether they wanted to change their position on the line light of the arguments they had heard.

At the end of the lesson the teacher asked the children if they had changed their opinion during the activity. Some children were able to reflect on how listening to the responses of those who had a different opinion enabled them to think about other points of view that they had not considered. The teacher noted the children's responses, and this informed her assessment of the developing learning characteristics. The teacher then presented a homework task for the children to keep a 'plastic diary' recording how much single-use plastic they use in a week.

The teacher hoped that the homework task would provide further opportunities for the children to engage in discussion with their families about plastic wastage and how they could begin to address this in their own homes. Following on from this, the teacher planned for the third lesson to focus on wider global issues related to plastic pollution in our oceans.

Fig 6. Vignette to exemplify the application of the theoretical and pedagogical principles to case study 3.

It is now widely accepted that 'people learn better and become more engaged when the content relates to them, and when they can see the parallels between many global issues and their immediate environment' (OECD, 2018:14). The vignette illustrates how a theme that has both local and global relevance provides the ideal context for children to develop their GC and IU. Considering specifically how the principles into practice are exemplified, the following observations are made. The setting of the homework tasks created opportunities to share learning experiences with family, thus creating a **community and classroom culture**. The planned activities enabled the children to engage in **active learning**. This enabled them to manipulate materials and test out their own ideas, through **collaboration**. Development is a process of active participation in sociocultural activities (Rogoff, 2003), therefore interacting, and actively participating with each other supported the development of

the children's cognitive skills and processes. For example, in lesson 2, ideas and understanding of the use of plastic bags may have been challenging for some learners if peers had a different opinion to their own. Using a **real-world scenario**, in the form of a provocation ('should people have to pay for plastic bags?') allowed the children to explore similarities and differences in opinions and appreciate the perspectives of others. The teaching and learning strategies that the teacher employed supported the development of the children's **learning ability**. This required the teacher to appropriately scaffold the learning in a way that was relevant to the children's learning needs. Reflection played a significant role, requiring the teacher to think 'in' and 'on' action (Schön, 2002) to ensure the children had the required knowledge and understanding to achieve their learning goals. For example, in lesson 1, the teacher noticed that some children needed further reinforcement of the required vocabulary to be able to participate in the experiment. The teacher adapted the structure of the lesson by bringing the children together as a class to revise the English comparative vocabulary linked to the task. Some children in the class will have been more proficient than others in their ability to use the topic vocabulary. Drawing the whole class together in the middle of a lesson created an opportunity for the children to be aware of each other's learning needs and thus support each other's different learning needs in a respectful manner.

6. Conclusion

The theoretical principles which underpin the manual provide the pedagogical framework for supporting English **language teachers'** continuing professional development. Recognising that teachers had different levels of confidence and competence in teaching IU and GC through the ELT curriculum was an important consideration for the design of the manual. It is the intention therefore that teachers perceive it not so much as an instruction manual, but a professional development tool which supports both teachers and learners in their development to become comfortable and capable in using language in an intercultural context (Liu, Zhang and Yin, 2014).

Reflection plays a key role in development for both the teacher and the learner. By reflecting on learning and understanding this enables the teacher to consider the needs of their learners and adapt and develop the suggested activities according to their learning context. Seeing the act of reflection through a sociocultural lens recognises that knowledge acquisition and the development of intellectual capacity is a collective rather than individual endeavour that is informed by the beliefs and knowledge practices of the learning community (Edwards, 2005). We hope therefore that this manual helps to support and celebrate teachers' collective journey to achieving global competence and international understanding.

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