

Fieldwork Toolkit

Ten Competencies for Inclusive Learning Design

Accessibility · Disability Justice · Emergent Learning

This document provides an accessible, linear version of the interactive Fieldwork Toolkit competency map. All ten competencies are described in full, organised into their three clusters, with notes on how each connects to others within the framework.

The central argument of the toolkit is this: knowledge only travels as far as the systems designed to carry it. Technical infrastructure, ethical grounding, and adaptive pedagogy must work together — none of them is sufficient alone.

How to navigate this document

The ten competencies are grouped into three clusters. Each competency entry includes its number and title, a short focus phrase, a full description, and a list of the competencies it connects most directly to. Use your screen reader's heading navigation (H1, H2, H3) to move between clusters and individual competencies.

Structural cluster

Infrastructure — building the carriage for knowledge

2. Technical Compliance

WCAG / ACA standards

Applying WCAG 2.1 Level AA and Accessible Canada Act standards proactively — not reactively — from the very start of design. Compliance is the foundation, not the finish line.

Connected to:

- 3 — Proactive & Universal Design
- 9 — Backward Curriculum Design
- 4 — Intersectional Analysis
- 10 — Collective Access & Interdependence

3. Proactive & Universal Design

UDL from the ground up

Building Universal Design for Learning pathways — visual, auditory, kinesthetic — so every learner can reach the same goal through the route that works for them. UDL is the architecture, not an add-on.

Connected to:

- 2 — Technical Compliance

- 9 — Backward Curriculum Design
- 5 — Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement
- 10 — Collective Access & Interdependence

9. Backward Curriculum Design

Start from the end goal

Beginning with the end goal — genuine participation and social transformation — and designing every learning pathway backwards from there. The destination shapes the journey.

Connected to:

- 2 — Technical Compliance
- 3 — Proactive & Universal Design
- 6 — Facilitating Emergent Adaptation
- 1 — Methodological Inquiry

Relational cluster

Ethics — centring those most impacted

4. Intersectional Analysis

Layered identity & barriers

Recognising that learners hold multiple, layered identities and that barriers compound. A student who is a person of colour in a low-income area with unreliable internet faces categorically different conditions than a student facing a single barrier. One-size solutions erase real people.

Connected to:

- 5 — Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement
- 10 — Collective Access & Interdependence
- 2 — Technical Compliance
- 7 — Neuroeducational Literacy

5. Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement

Design with, not for

Facilitating inclusive consultations that centre the leadership of learners themselves. Not designing for a community, but alongside and under the direction of those most impacted by the decisions being made.

Connected to:

- 4 — Intersectional Analysis
- 10 — Collective Access & Interdependence
- 3 — Proactive & Universal Design

10. Collective Access & Interdependence

Community over independence

Moving beyond individual 'fixes' toward community-supported learning where mutual aid and shared resources strengthen everyone. The goal is interdependence, not isolated self-sufficiency.

Connected to:

- 4 — Intersectional Analysis
- 5 — Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement
- 2 — Technical Compliance
- 3 — Proactive & Universal Design

Dynamic cluster

Pedagogy — keeping the learning alive

1. Methodological Inquiry

Evidence-gathering in action

Gathering real-time data through surveys, check-ins, and observation during live learning. The practitioner-researcher stance that treats every session as a site of ongoing inquiry.

Connected to:

- 6 — Facilitating Emergent Adaptation
- 7 — Neuroeducational Literacy
- 8 — Iterative Reflective Practice
- 9 — Backward Curriculum Design

6. Facilitating Emergent Adaptation

Curriculum as a living system

Treating curriculum as emergent rather than static. Pivoting when real-time conditions demand it — not as a sign of failure, but as skilled, responsive practice. Learning systems that can adapt are more resilient than those that cannot.

Connected to:

- 1 — Methodological Inquiry
- 7 — Neuroeducational Literacy
- 8 — Iterative Reflective Practice
- 9 — Backward Curriculum Design

7. Neuroeducational Literacy

How the brain learns

Using knowledge of neuroplasticity, spaced repetition, active learning, and cognitive load to design sessions that work with how brains actually function — not against them. This is a practical tool, not a buzzword.

Connected to:

- 1 — Methodological Inquiry
- 6 — Facilitating Emergent Adaptation
- 8 — Iterative Reflective Practice
- 4 — Intersectional Analysis

8. Iterative Reflective Practice

Reflection in and on action

Reflection-in-action during sessions and reflection-on-action between them. The ongoing self-critical and generative stance that keeps the whole system honest, adaptive, and improving over time.

Connected to:

- 1 — Methodological Inquiry
- 6 — Facilitating Emergent Adaptation
- 7 — Neuroeducational Literacy

Why interconnectivity matters

These competencies are not a checklist to work through sequentially. They form an integrated system where each element depends on and strengthens the others.

You cannot achieve Collective Access without the Technical Compliance to make it possible. You cannot sustain Emergent Learning without the Reflective Practice to guide it. You cannot do

any of it equitably without the Intersectional Analysis to understand who is actually in the room and what they are navigating.

This is what distinguishes the practitioner-researcher from the content creator: the capacity to hold the Structural, the Relational, and the Dynamic in active, simultaneous relationship — not as separate phases, but as one integrated practice.

Quick reference: competency clusters

Cluster	Competencies	Core focus
Structural	2, 3, 9	Technical Compliance · Proactive & Universal Design · Backward Curriculum Design
Relational	4, 5, 10	Intersectional Analysis · Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement · Collective Access & Interdependence
Dynamic	1, 6, 7, 8	Methodological Inquiry · Facilitating Emergent Adaptation · Neuroeducational Literacy · Iterative Reflective Practice