

GUIDELINES FOR SKILLS AND COMPETENCES OF VET EDUCATORS



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INTRODUCTION

VET is one of the key areas for cooperation under the European Education Area initiative for the period 2021-2030. Ensuring the sustainability and excellence of vocational education and training is imperative given its vital role in European societies and economies. To uphold Europe's status as the leading exporter of industrial products globally, it is essential to have top-notch VET. In the era of knowledge-based societies, vocational skills and competencies are as crucial as academic ones. The diversity inherent in European VET systems provides an opportunity for shared learning. However, fostering mutual trust, mobility, and recognition of skills across these systems requires transparency and a unified approach to quality assurance. In the upcoming decade, prioritizing quality assurance is paramount in the collaborative efforts for the European VET.

The main objectives for the quality of Vocational education and training are set in the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in Vocational education and Training. The Bruges Communiqué acknowledges competent teachers and trainers in the VET as key agents for high-quality initial and continuous education across the EU. One of the main objectives in the Bruges Communiqué is to make VET systems more attractive, relevant, career-oriented, innovative, accessible and flexible, contributing to the excellence and equity in lifelong learning by providing: highly qualified teachers and trainers, innovative learning methods, high-quality infrastructure and facilities, a high labour market relevance, and pathways to further education and training.



The involved countries in the Bruges Communiqué should enhance the training for teachers, trainers, mentors and counselors, both at initial stage and programs. This improvement should involve flexible training options and increased investment. Giving the aging population of European teachers and trainers, evolving labor markets, and changing work environments, the imperative to attract individuals best suited for teaching becomes even more crucial. Moreover, encouraging teacher and trainer internships in enterprises is also recommended. Furthermore, the Bruges Communiqué recommends that European countries should collaborate in identifying best practices and guiding principles related to evolving competencies and profiles of VET teachers and trainers. Besides, they must have access to continuing professional development that trains them to provide high-quality apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning, strengthen the links between education and the labor market, and contribute to shaping flexible educational responses to emerging needs.

The Osnabrück Declaration 2020 focuses on VET as an enabler of recovery and transition to a digital and green economy. Vocational education and training play a central role in preparing young people for work, developing the skills of adults, and responding to the labor-market needs of the economy. VET educators can have an immediate and positive influence on learners' skills, employability, and career development. This makes the necessity of highly competent and skilled VET educators more important than ever.





Taking into account the aforementioned, the EnVET project aims to provide flexible opportunities for continuing professional development of VET educators equipping them with the skills and competencies for high-quality vocational education and training in line with the needs of the labor market.

EnVET project aims to improve the skills and competences for VET educators through addressing a specific gap in the VET sector- the lack of training opportunities. As there are less organized opportunities and sources for professional development of the VET educators, EnVET project is also in line with the targeted initiatives under the European Year of Skills- 2023.



The European Year of Skills aims to address skills gaps in the European Union and boost the EU skills strategy, which will help reskill people with a focus on digital and green technology skills. Thus, European citizens will be able to get the right skills for quality jobs, in particular small and medium enterprises by highlighting national efforts as well as existing and new EU initiatives and EU funding possibilities. European Year of Skills supports skills-related activities and events across Europe.

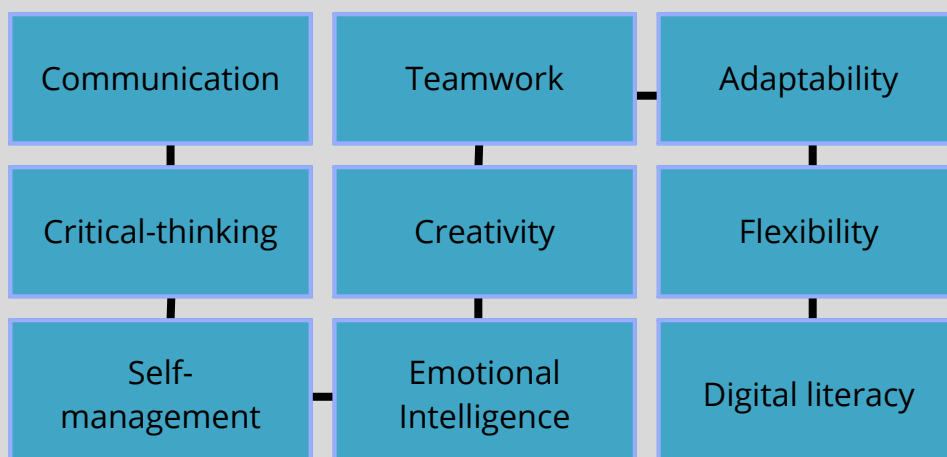


BIRD'S EYE VIEW ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF VET EDUCATORS ACROSS EUROPE

- **Necessity of qualified VET educators**

The broadening of vocational education and training goals observed twenty years ago has led to a corresponding expansion of curricula and programs. This departure from narrow, task-specific structures reflects the demand for a more extensive skills set in the labor market. Concurrently, there has been an increase in work-based learning, a distinctive feature of VET that sets it apart from other forms of education. This shift allows for better alignment of programs with workplace needs.

Some European countries have a growing relevance of transversal skills in VET programmes, however, there is no clear trend in how such skills are being imparted across different VET systems. Moreover, gained transversal skills also played crucial role in the VET assessment around Europe in recent years. However, teaching transversal skills requires competent trainers who also possess transversal skills. These skills include:



Moreover, the European Union has outlined key competency areas for teachers across the EU, emphasizing the need for capabilities in information, technology, and knowledge management, collaboration with various stakeholders, and action at local, regional, national, European, and global levels. The European Commission has also published Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications, highlighting the importance of a well-qualified profession, lifelong learning, mobility, and partnerships.

From the perspective of VET educators, being a well-qualified professional involves having a higher education degree, specialized vocational qualifications, and appropriate pedagogical training. Lifelong learning is encouraged to keep up with evolving knowledge, and mobility is promoted through participation in European projects and experiences in other countries.

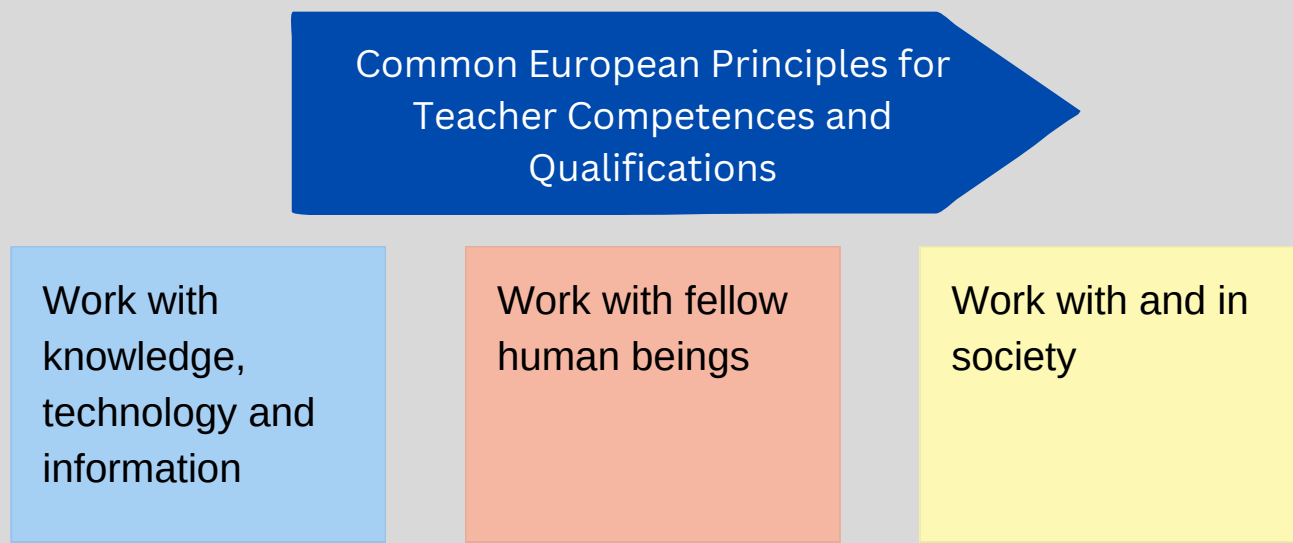


FIG. 2 COMMON EUROPEAN PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHER COMPETENCES AND WUALIFICATIONS

- **Types of VET across Europe**

The distinction between IVET (Initial Vocational Education and Training) and CVET (Continuing Vocational Education and Training) varies across countries, and the terminology may differ. The employment models for IVET teachers also vary, including civil servants, direct employees of IVET providers, or freelancers.

The role of VET teachers has become more complex, involving guidance, counseling, teamwork, cooperation with enterprises, and communication with stakeholders. The autonomy of VET teachers varies across countries, with some having more influence at the institutional level, while others adhere to fixed national curricula.

VET-teacher education traditions in Europe fall into the “normal school tradition” and the “academic tradition,” with three main traditions dominating VET teacher training: the “general subject teacher,” “craftsman-turned-teacher,” and “professional VET teacher” traditions. The pre-service training models include concurrent, consecutive, co-existing, and sequential models, with varying degrees of emphasis on theoretical and practical components.

The VET systems in various countries categorize education differently, where the term IVET (Initial Vocational Education and Training) typically pertains to education primarily aimed at young individuals (16 and above), and CVET (Continuing Vocational Education and Training) encompasses education or training occurring after initial education and training or upon entering the workforce. However, CEDEFOP’s comparative analysis of VET teachers and trainers in Europe highlights a distinction in UK, where IVET relates to meeting pre-entry requirements, and CVET involves providing a recognized vocational qualification for practical application within a specific trade or profession. This implies that what is classified as CVET in the UK aligns with what other countries define as IVET. In France, there is no concept of CVET teachers; all individuals facilitating learning are referred to as trainers. Meanwhile, in Portugal, the term “teacher” is used for those in the general education system, whereas “trainer” is reserved for individuals working in vocational training.



Taking into account the comparative reports of CEDEFOP, regarding IVET, two types of teachers can be differentiated:

1. General subject teachers typically hold a university degree or a tertiary level qualification along with a teaching credential.
2. Vocational subject teachers possess a vocational qualification, work experience, and a teaching credential. The teaching qualification is often acquired at the beginning of the teaching career through in-service training in many countries, while in others, it is a pre-service qualification.

The employment and status of IVET teachers vary across countries, generally falling into three models, sometimes overlapping:

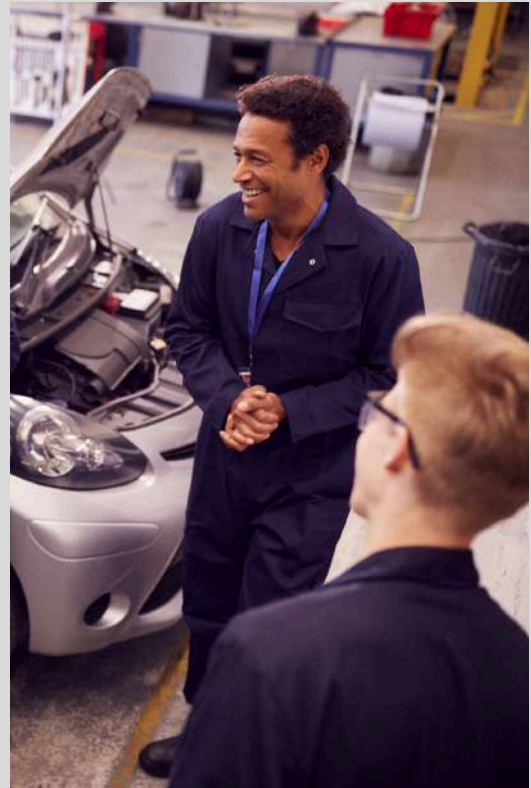
- IVET teachers as civil servants employed by the State, requiring them to pass a State exam or concours (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxemburg)
- IVET teachers as direct employees of the IVET provider (Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Bulgaria, the UK, North Macedonia)
- Many IVET teachers work as freelancers or part-timers for example in Italy, Austria, Portugal



In the EU, two types of IVET trainers exist: in-company trainers, primarily in dual systems, and school-based trainers providing practical training at labor market training centers of VET schools. In Eastern Europe, particularly in newer EU Member States that joined after 2004, there is a trend toward less distinction between IVET and CVET. Both are provided by the same VET institutions, and teachers are responsible for teaching both tracks. This integration is observed in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

VET educators' qualifications

Regarding VET educators' qualifications, the situation varies among EU member states. There is a noticeable inclination towards implementing formal qualification requirements for all categories of VET educators. Regarding prerequisites for teachers and trainers, as well as national standards for their qualifications, there is a considerable degree of consistency. Throughout the EU, the regulation of the IVET (Initial Vocational Education and Training) teacher profession is typically guided by national legislation on IVET or by a national standard or qualifications framework.



Unlike IVET, there are usually no national requirements for trainers in IVET or teachers and trainers in CVET (Continuing Vocational Education and Training). Some exceptions exist, such as Austria, Germany, Iceland and Luxemburg, where there are formal training prerequisites for IVET trainers. However, not all countries employing the dual training principle for IVET have formal requirements for their trainers, as seen in Denmark and Norway. In some countries, there are formal requirements for CVET teachers, particularly in those nations where a portion of CVET is delivered through the public sector, including Denmark, Italy, Austria, and Finland.

There is a strong emphasis across the EU on highlighting the essential skills of VET educators, including their proficiency in teaching their subject, ensuring learning progression, actively participating in assessments and evaluations, and providing support to their learners. Additionally, there is a notable focus on the significance of integrating vocational and teaching skills. The identity of vocational subject teachers often stems from their profession, trade, or craft, underscoring the importance of establishing a teacher identity alongside their vocational identity. This integration is observed in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.



The role and level of autonomy of VET educators vary significantly among countries. In more decentralized systems like those in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Finland, and some newer Member States such as Latvia, Hungary, and Poland, VET teachers wield considerable influence at the institutional level. On the contrary, in more centralized systems like those in Greece, Spain, France, Luxembourg, and Malta, teachers are obliged to adhere to a fixed national curriculum, resulting in comparatively limited autonomy.

Typically, VET educators across Europe are consulted through their unions and professional associations, which have representation in national councils and committees. Nevertheless, in certain instances, teachers actively shape the national curriculum through councils or working groups, as observed in Austria and Finland.

In contrast, Continuing Vocational Education and Training generally lacks regulation by national standards. Consequently, the impact of CVET teachers and trainers on content and methods of training relies heavily on the policies of the organization or enterprise where they are employed. The capacity of CVET trainers to influence national policymaking hinges on their association or membership in professional organizations or units.

CEDEFOP's comparative analysis reveals two prevailing traditions in teacher education across Europe: the 'normal school tradition,' which involves teacher training in dedicated teacher training institutions, and the 'academic tradition,' where teacher training occurs at universities. In parallel, three main traditions dominate the training of teachers for Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET). Although these traditions lack universally recognized names, CEDEFOP's analysis categorizes them as the 'general subject teacher' tradition, the 'craftsman-turned-teacher' tradition, and the 'professional VET teacher' tradition.

In the “general subject teacher” tradition, the approach is akin to general teacher education, where individuals are educated as subject teachers. Being a teacher in VET is not a prominent aspect of their identity; they perceive themselves as subject teachers who happen to teach in VET.

As the European Commission organizes every year European skills week and thematic events together with Cedefop, some of the participants believe that some of the key challenges related to VET teacher training are:

- The diverse systems in which VET educators work
- The different training needs
- The need for close cooperation between businesses and VET schools
- The recognition of VET teachers', trainers' and mentors' potential
- The need for planning and monitoring their development
- The importance of school leadership that promotes a more professional environment for learning
- The need to use EU funding with sustainable plans for long-term teacher training

According to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of OECD from 2018¹ the shortages of VET teachers is a significant policy concern in several OECD countries. This result is due to the low interest of the educators in VET teaching and training. Furthermore, in many countries the VET teaching workforce is ageing which also contributes to the shortages. VET teacher shortages can damage the stable provision of specific occupational courses and the sustainable supply of qualified workers for associated occupations.

Based on the challenges before the VET educators, OECD publishes key policy recommendations for strengthening teaching and leadership in VET.



key policy recommendations for strengthening teaching and leadership in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

<p>Vet Teacher supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the attractiveness of teaching careers in VET. • Providing flexible pathways into VET teaching. • Attracting more industry professionals to teach in VET. • Improving the monitoring of VET workforce dynamics. 	<p>Innovative pedagogy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering VET teacher`s capacity to use innovative pedagogy. • Providing VET teachers with strategic guidance and institutional for the integration of new technology into VET. • Establishing partnerships between the VET sector, industry and research institutions. • Raising awareness of the importance of innovation, ICT and soft skills in VET.
<p>VET Teacher training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing effective and flexible initial teacher education and training programmes for VET teachers. • Increasing participation in relevant professional development opportunities. 	<p>Strengthened leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying the roles of VET leaders. • Ensuring that VET leaders have access to initial training and professional development opportunities. • Improving the attractiveness of the VET leadership role.

FIG. 3 KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PUBLICATION: TEACHERS AND LEADERS IN VET

VET EDUCATORS' SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES NECESSARY IN THE POST-COVID-19 SOCIETY

Everyone in Europe should be able to have access to education, training, and life-long learning and this fundamental right is recognized in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. VET educators also have the right to access training that contributes to their professional development. The acquiring of new skills and competencies and the improvement of those already gained is a prerequisite for providing highly qualified educators. Skills are at the heart of the EU's efforts to build resilient and forward-looking education and training systems that are fit for the digital age.



The new European Skills Agenda focuses on the development of skills that contribute to the green and digital transition. As VET educators work in an educational environment that is very closed to the working environment, they need to possess skills and competencies that are easily taught to the VET learners and are applicable in real working environment. Transversal skills are more often included in the curriculum of VET programmes.

Transversal skills are skills that are applicable not only in real work environment but in many life situations. Due to that, these skills have become more important than ever after the spread of COVID-19. Transversal skills are typically considered as not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge but as skills that can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings (IBE 2013).

TRANSVERSAL AND SOFT SKILLS FOR VET EDUCATOR

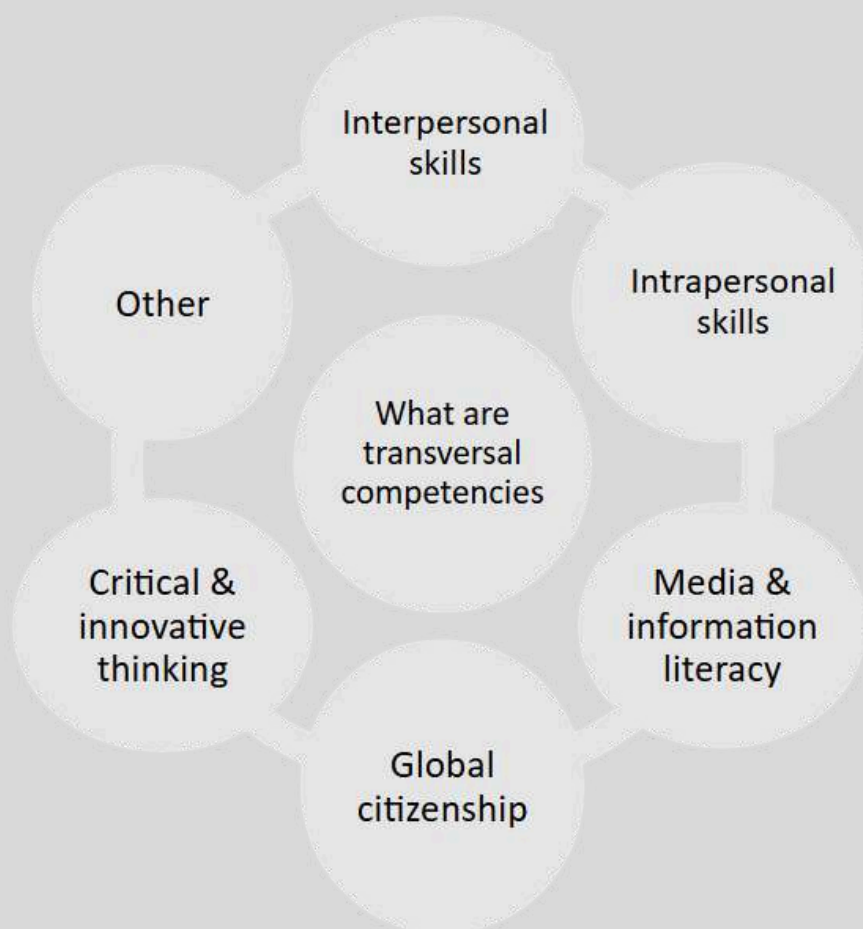


FIG. 4 TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES

1. DIGITAL LITERACY

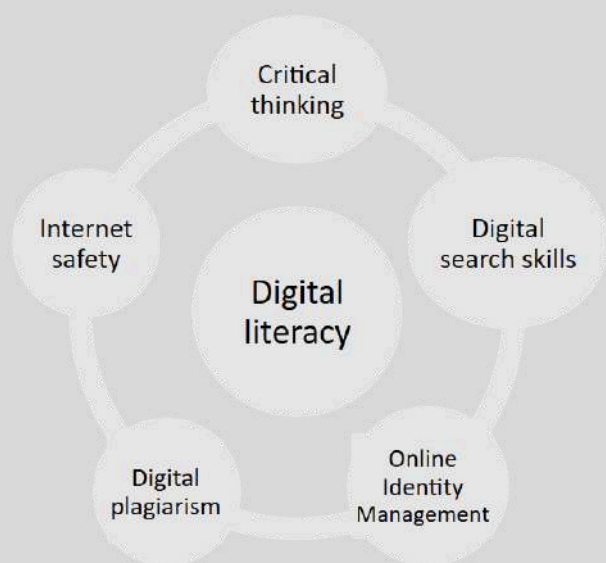


FIG. 5 DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy is the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies. Digital literacy is connected with several digital skills. The EU has developed a range of policies and initiatives to increase digital skills in all European citizens. In Europe, more than 90% of professional roles require a basic level of digital knowledge, just as they require basic literacy and numeracy skills. VET educators together with other teachers need to possess at least basic digital literacy. The improvement of their digital literacy will lead to their professional development.

Digital literacy includes:

- Safety and security- the ability to stay safe and legal online through protecting data, identity, and well-being, including online transactions and digital footprint.
- Information and Data literacy- the ability to handle information- find, interpret, and evaluate information and data from multiple sources using a range of devices
- Digital Content Creation- the ability to identify and use appropriate software to design and display content for different purposes and audiences including e-portfolios.
- Connecting and Collaborating effectively online- the ability to interact with others using digital tools for projects and social interaction.
- Learning and working online- the ability to learn and work in a blended environment- using digital tools to learn, manage tasks and complete assignment

2. COMMUNICATION

The ability to communicate effectively with the audience is an especially important transversal skill in the teaching profession. Communication includes public speaking and presentation skills. These skills are connected with the ability to express ideas clearly and concisely and make what is said interesting and easy to understand. The way teachers communicate with their students can have an immense impact on their learning, motivation, and overall development. Improving communication skills is important for educators to create a positive and productive learning environment for the learners.



FIG. 6 CATHERINE SONG / THE BALANCE

3. TEAM WORK

The ability to work effectively within a group has significant value in the learning process where often educators want to achieve certain learning objectives through collaborative efforts. However, team work is maybe one of the most difficult transversal skills to be acquired. In a research review conducted by Abelson and Woodman (1983) on team effectiveness, newly formed teams typically exhibit the following characteristics:



- There is significant confusion regarding the roles team members should assume.
- Ambiguity exists regarding the social and professional relationships among team members.
- Individuals possess skills or competences relevant to the team's purpose, but some may be unaware of how their abilities contribute to team goals. Additionally, some individuals may not recognize or value the strengths of others or their connection to team objectives.
- While there may be some comprehension of short-term goals, understanding long-term goals tends to be more challenging.
- In the absence of established norms, rules, or policies, there is confusion about team operations and decision-making processes.
- Team members, especially leaders, initially focus more on the task at hand than on social and professional relationships.

These characteristics hold significance when considering educator teams.

For a team to be effective, all members must have a clear understanding of an agreement on the team goals. The components of a goal include what is to be achieved, a measure of accomplishment, and a time frame for completion. Team goals should be developed collaboratively with input from all members, and roles and responsibilities of all educators in achieving these goals. Factors such as experience, training, comfort level, time constraints, and knowledge levels of individual team members need consideration when determining roles and responsibilities.

4. ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability in teaching is really important transversal and soft skill. Being an adaptable educator also means to be flexible with the learners. Adaptability is usually addressing the learners needs. In the fast-changing world, learners have various learning styles and abilities. Moreover, there are also technical and curricular changes that require the educator to become adaptable to the new situations. An educator could not be adaptable if he is not flexible. The flexible pedagogical strategies are those that put the learners and their needs at the center of the learning process. When an educator applies flexible pedagogical strategies, he tailors his teaching to the needs of all students, regardless of their learning style or ability level. Flexible teaching strategies help create an inclusive learning environment in which all students feel supported and respected.

5. CRITICAL THINKING



FIG. 6 CRITICAL THINKING [HTTPS://TSCFM.ORG/BLOGS/THE-BENEFITS-OF-CRITICAL-THINKING-FOR-STUDENTS/](https://tscfm.org/blogs/the-benefits-of-critical-thinking-for-students/) N V

Critical thinking is a process in which a person evaluated an issue from multiple perspectives to be critical and logical in their evaluation. Critical thinking leads to critical questions to developing a critical understanding of a problem.

Critical thinking allows educators to:

- Methodically resolve issues
- Filter our unnecessary and irrelevant ideas
- Comprehend the logical reasoning behind concepts
- Identify logical gaps in reasonings
- Establish watertight arguments
- Analyse others' arguments

It is important for an educator to think critically because this way he teaches critical thinking to his students. To teach students how to question everything they see and to filter it through logic is very important for achieving the teaching objectives.

6. CREATIVITY

In 21st century creativity is a must-have skill in almost all professional fields. Digitalization and Industry 5.0 require creativity in all fields of education. The IGI Global research defines creativity as: a complex of traits, skills, and capacities, including the ability to work autonomously, curiosity, unconventional thinking, openness to experience, and tolerance of ambiguity. Highly creative adults exhibit deep knowledge of and a strong bond with their subject matter, as well as intrinsic motivation. ³ Moreover, Camarda Cassoti defines creativity as: a complex skill that allows the generation of original and innovative ideas in resolving various situations in the daily lives of human beings, and is, thus, an essential skill in the process of adaptation of the individual in a rapidly- changing society. ⁴ After the spread of COVID-19 all over the world educators faced the necessity to become more creative than ever in order to provide the students with adequate support through online communication. VET educators were especially challenged because their teaching differs from the formal education where the most of the lessons are based on theories. VET educators had to discover how to provide practical experience in online environment for their students. If an educator has not developed his creativity, in unexpected situations such as the spread of COVID, he might be challenged, and his students might struggle from that. In education when the educator is creative, he will teach his students how to use their imagination and critical thinking in order to create new forms of ideas.

Creativity is considered a crucial component in education for several reasons:



- Preparation for the future: In a world where automation and technology handle routine tasks, the ability to think creatively becomes more valuable. Creative individuals are better equipped to tackle novel challenges and come up with innovative solutions.
- Adaptability and Problem-Solving: Creative thinking fosters adaptability and problem-solving skills. In a rapidly changing world, the capacity to adapt to new situations and solve problems creatively is essential. Education that encourages creativity helps individuals become more resourceful and better equipped to face the uncertainties of the future.

- **Innovation and Leadership:** Creative individuals often drive innovation. In educational settings that foster creativity, leaders are more likely to develop the skills necessary for innovation and leadership. These skills are crucial in various fields, from business and science to arts and social development.
- **Employability:** Creativity is a highly sought-after trait in the job market. Employers value individuals who can think outside the box, generate new ideas, and contribute to the growth and development of an organization. Developing creativity in Vocational education and training enhances students' employability by preparing them for the demands of the modern workforce.
- **Motivation for learning:** Creative and interactive lessons make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. When students are encouraged to think creatively, they are more likely to be motivated to explore and learn new things. This motivation can have a positive impact on their overall academic performance and lifelong learning habits.
- **Emotional and Social Development:** Creative ideas and expression play a crucial role in emotional development. It provides an outlet for self-expression and can enhance emotional intelligence in both learners and education. Additionally, collaborative and creative activities in the classroom contribute to the development of social skills and effective communication.

7. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence (EI) encompasses a range of abilities and self-perceptions related to the awareness, expression, understanding, and management of emotions. These emotional characteristics, though often considered stable and innate, can be developed and enhanced through training, transforming into what we term emotional competences (EC). When discussing the results of interventions, we use the term emotional competences (EC), while when focusing on the inherent emotional traits of individuals, we refer to it as EI.



In psychology, three main approaches have been employed to study Emotional Intelligence: ability EI, trait EI, and mixed models. The first approach defines EI as a cognitive ability, consisting of four subcomponents: perceiving emotions in oneself and others, using emotions to support thinking, understanding emotions in oneself and others, and managing emotions in oneself and others (Mayer and Salovey 1997). Objective tests, like the Situational Test of Emotion Understanding (STEU; MacCann and Roberts 2008), can measure EI in this context. The second approach views EI as a personality trait and includes models such as Petrides' and Furnham's (2003) four-component model (well-being, sociability, self-control, and emotionality). In this case, self-report scales like the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue; Petrides 2009) are used for measurement. The third approach sees EI as a blend of personality traits, dispositions, and competences, exemplified by Goleman's (1998) model with components like self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Measurement in this approach is often done using self-report questionnaires such as the Emotional and Social Competence Inventory (ESCI; Boyatzis and Goleman (2007).

The cultivation of emotional competences holds significant importance, especially for a demographic frequently grappling with emotional fluctuations—adolescents, particularly those engaged in vocational education and training (VET). This group of students and apprentices undergoes a critical phase in their lives, transitioning swiftly from adolescence to adulthood, a process expedited by the early demands of financial and psychological independence compared to their counterparts pursuing tertiary education (Masdonati et al., 2007). Consequently, they confront heightened emotional challenges, including fears of social exclusion and stressful social environments such as peer pressure and work contexts. Enhancing emotional competences becomes a crucial factor in fostering resilience among this population. This is achieved by aiding stress regulation (Davis, 2018) and promoting improved self-management and more effective interpersonal relationships. The advantages of interventions in emotional competences for these students are diverse, encompassing enhanced conflict resolution, better emotional regulation, potentially leading to a reduction in youth violence and bullying (Brown et al., 2011; Schoeps et al., 2019). Additionally, such interventions contribute to lower dropout rates and provide stronger support in developing students who are more adept not only academically but also in terms of social adaptation (Dowling et al., 2019; Nathanson et al., 2016). The positive outcomes of interventions in emotional competences appear especially well-suited for VET students and apprentices, potentially magnified due to the distinctive emotional characteristics characterizing this particular group of adolescents, as previously highlighted.

To teach emotional intelligence to learners, VET educators should be emotionally intelligent themselves. Only then, they can provide valuable experience for the VET learners. Emotional competences must be trained and improved continuously. In the learning process, both educators and learners can improve their emotional intelligence through their collaboration and communication.

TRANSVERSAL AND SOFT SKILLS FOR VET EDUCATOR

1. WORK PROFESSIONALISM



Working ethics and standards are those that define the VET educator as committed enough to his work. His professionalism also is important to the level at which his students will respect him and will be interested in the teaching process. Educators are those who inspire and motivate the learners. The work professionalism of the educator depends also on soft skills that must be possessed. However, work professionalism shall not be limited only to the educator's students. The teacher's professionalism should also be applied in his work with colleagues and senior staff as he may encounter all kinds of situations. The improvement of the quality of work professionalism often could be acquired by taking into account role models for example other educators. Having a mentor in your educator's career could be really useful. An educator with enough experience and a high working ethic can be a highly encouraging factor for the improvement of each educator's working standards.

To teach emotional intelligence to learners, VET educators should be emotionally intelligent themselves. Only then, they can provide valuable experience for the VET learners. Emotional competences must be trained and improved continuously. In the learning process, both educators and learners can improve their emotional intelligence through their collaboration and communication.

TRANSVERSAL AND SOFT SKILLS FOR VET EDUCATOR

2. SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management is highly important for delivering efficient teaching and training.

The self-management typically include self-initiative, risk management and time management. The self-initiative is the ability to identify and take opportunities, to use self-initiative for personal and professional development. The risk management ability is the ability to undertake tasks beyond one's comfort zone, to calculate risks, and to make informed decisions. Time management is the ability to identify tasks and plan, prioritize, and adapt them when faced with changing circumstances. For improving one's self-management, it could be a good idea to be developed a self-management plan. A self-management plan is a set of tools that build and foster independence, self-reliance, and self-motivation. The self- management plan could include: goals setting; behavior monitoring; self-reinforcement and self- evaluation.



3. PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS



Pedagogical skills refer to the abilities and strategies that educators use to facilitate effective teaching and learning experiences. These skills are essential for creating a positive and engaging learning environment, promoting learners' understanding and retention, and adapting teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of learners. Pedagogical skills are dynamic and require continuous development to meet the evolving needs of students and the educational landscape. Effective educators often combine the following aspects of pedagogical skills to create a rich and engaging learning experience:



Content Knowledge

A strong understanding of the content being taught is fundamental. This includes not only knowing the material but also understanding its relevance and application in real-world contexts.



Instructional design

Curriculum development: Designing a curriculum that aligns with learning objectives is age- appropriate and incorporates various teaching methods is a key skill.

Lesson planning: Breaking down content into manageable segments, incorporating a variety of instructional strategies, and including formative and summative assessments are crucial aspects of effective lesson planning.



Classroom management

Behavioral Management: Maintaining a positive and inclusive classroom environment involves establishing clear expectations, enforcing rules consistently, and addressing behavioural issues promptly and constructively.

Time Management: Organizing and managing class time efficiently is essential for covering content effectively and ensuring that students stay engaged.



Collaboration and Teamwork

Professional collaboration: Engaging in collaborative efforts with colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders to support learning and development.

Team building: Fostering a sense of community within the classroom and promoting collaborative learning among students.



Cultural competence

Awareness of diversity: Understanding and respecting cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom.

Inclusive practices: Creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment where all students feel valued and represented.

Work-based learning is a way for people to develop their potential. The work-based component contributes substantially to developing a professional identity and can boost the self-esteem of those who might otherwise see themselves as failures. Learning on the job enables those in employment to develop their potential while maintaining their earnings. A well performing VET, which enables learning on and off-the-job on a part-time or full-time basis, can thereby also strongly contribute to social cohesion in our societies.



International skills

As players on the global education market, VET educators need to be connected to the wider world in order to remain up-to-date and competitive. They have to be more capable of attracting learners from other European and third countries, providing them with education and training as well as making it easier to recognise their skills. Demographic change and international migration make these issues even more relevant. Better and targeted information provision and guidance are needed to attract more foreign learners to our VET systems. Substantially increasing transnational mobility of VET learners and teachers, and recognising the knowledge, skills and competences they have acquired abroad, will be an important challenge for the future. In line with the international skills of the VET educators are their linguistic skills. The more fluent in a language an educator is, the more opportunities for communicating with international learners he has.



PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF VET EDUCATOR'S SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES



- How to improve Communication skills?

There are several tips for improving the communication skills of VET educators:

- **Engage in Active listening:** Active listening to learners stands out as a paramount communication skill for educators. This involves not just hearing their words but comprehending their perspectives, addressing concerns, and understanding their needs.
- **Employ Clarity in Expression:** Teachers should articulate their thoughts using straightforward and concise language. It is important to steer clear of jargon or intricate language that might be beyond the students' comprehension.
- **Convey Messages Through Body Language:** Recognizing the significance of body language is integral to effective communication. Educators need to be mindful in their non-verbal cues, utilizing them adeptly to convey messages to learners.
- **Demonstrate Empathy:** Educators who exhibit empathy toward their students foster robust relationships. Grasping students' emotions and viewpoints enables teachers to communicate more adeptly, cultivating a secure and positive learning atmosphere.

- Offer Constructive Feedback: Dispensing constructive feedback is indispensable for student improvement. Teachers should ensure that their feedback is lucid, specific, and supportive, thereby facilitating the learning process
- Integrate technology: Embracing technology as a communication tool can be highly effective. Educators can leverage diverse digital platforms to interact with learners, deliver feedback, and share educational resources.
- Cultivate Communication skills through practice: Like any skill, communication proficiency can be honed through regular practice. Educators can enhance their communication abilities by engaging in communication exercises with colleagues, students, and parents.



- How to improve Adaptability and Flexibility in teaching?

There are several principles of Flexibility in teaching:

1. Be open to different approaches to teaching
2. Be willing to modify the learning procedures based on the needs of the students
3. Be creative in the applied approaches

Ideas for flexible teaching strategies:

- Differentiated teaching
- In this flexible teaching strategy, the educator must adapt the teaching to the individual needs of each student. An example is assigning different activities to different students based on their individual learning styles or abilities. Appreciate the individual and cultural differences of each individual learner. Thus, all students will be able to access the material and progress in learning with their own pace.
- Use variety of teaching methods. Move various methods for teaching based on individual needs: task-oriented, based learning, project-based, inquiry-based learning etc.
- Use technology to provide learning with additional support and resources. You can use online tutorials or interactive activities.

- Adjust the pace of instruction in order to suit the needs of the learners
- Adjust the content of the lesson to maintain the attention and motivation of the different components of the same lesson.
- Use scaffolding techniques to support learners to expand their knowledge. The techniques may include: breaking down complex concepts and feedback.
- Encourage flexible peer learning. You can create an educational environment that encourages creativity and critical thinking by allowing students to collaborate and learn from each other. The collaboration may be encouraged by open discussions.



How to improve Creativity?

Cultivating creativity necessitates a secure environment where learners can freely explore, exercise autonomy, and take risks. It falls upon learners to establish such a supportive classroom. The following recommendations can foster educators' and learner's creativity:

- Create a compassionate environment
 - Foster an accepting atmosphere where learners feel safe to take creative risks without fear of judgement
- Engage with learners' ideas
 - Initiate conversations with learners to discover their passion areas and incorporate these into your teaching approach
- Encourage Autonomy
 - Avoid imposing a rigid definition of "good" work; instead, provide feedback that promotes self-assessment and independence
- Revise Assignments for Creative thinking
 - Modify assignments by incorporating words like "create", "design", "invent", "imagine", or "suppose". Use instructions like "Generate multiple solutions" or "Be creative!" to boost creative performance.
- Provide Direct Feedback on creativity
 - Offer constructive feedback on learners' creative efforts to help them recognize and integrate creativity into their self-concept
- Guide appropriateness of creativity
 - Help learners discern situations where creativity is more or less beneficial, such as in group projects versus standardized assessments
- Integrate creative thinking activities:
 - Experiment with incorporating creative thinking exercises into classroom activities, such as warm-ups or brief breaks



- **How to improve digital literacy?**

- Participate in trainings for improvement of digital skills
- Participate in actions related to digital skills certification
- Practice your digital skills in and outside the classrooms
- Promote audience engagement
- Promote digital literacy among the learners and promote various digital tools that could make the learning process easier.



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