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INSPIRE

Alliance for a Net Positive Performing Arts Sector

WP3 – Design and Development of the INSPIRE Online Training Programme and Practical Handbook

Chapter 1: Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector

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Chapter 1: Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector

Purpose, Learning Outcomes and Lessons of Chapter 1

Chapter No: 1	**Title: Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector**
Learning Level: EQF Level 5	**Duration:** 10 Hours 5 hours of Face-to-Face Learning & 5 hours of Self-directed Learning

Purpose of the Chapter:

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the fundamental concepts and methodologies that underpin competence-based learning within the performing arts and creative sectors. It aims to help trainers and educators in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training understand how lifelong learning, adaptability, and learner-centred approaches support the development of sustainable, digital, and entrepreneurial competences. This chapter also emphasises the institutional dimension of continuous learning, highlighting how organisations can cultivate learning cultures that encourage curiosity, collaboration, and professional growth.

Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge:

At the end of the module, the participant will know how to:

- Describe the characteristics of different target groups and learning contexts within the performing arts and cultural education sectors.
- Recognise the various educational levels and systems (formal, non-formal, informal) relevant to competence-based training.
- Explain different methodologies and tools for designing and delivering effective learning experiences.
- Outline the process of developing training paths, learning materials, and exercises aligned with competence-based learning principles.
- Identify effective methods for providing feedback and conducting assessment in competence-based education.
- Distinguish between different types of learning (e.g. experiential, project-based, work-based, blended, and lifelong learning).

Skills:

At the end of the module, the participant will be able to:

- Design learning activities and exercises that integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a competence-based framework.

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- Apply learner-centred and experiential methodologies (such as project-based, work-based, and collaborative learning) to engage diverse learners.
- Adapt teaching and training approaches to different target groups, learning environments, and competence levels.
- Facilitate reflective learning processes that encourage autonomy, critical thinking, and self-assessment.
- Use digital and blended learning tools — including the INSPIRE online platform — to support interaction, collaboration, and accessibility in training delivery.
- Provide constructive, evidence-based feedback to learners and use assessment results to improve learning outcomes.
- Navigate through the INSPIRE online learning platform applying and combining advanced educational practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts and Cultural Industries

Competencies:

At the end of the module the participant will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy and will be able to:

- Apply the INSPIRE framework to design and deliver competence-based, learner-centred, and inclusive training in the performing arts and cultural sectors.
- Adapt and evaluate teaching, mentoring, and assessment strategies in response to diverse learner needs and changing educational contexts.
- Demonstrate professional and reflective practice by collaborating with peers, upholding ethical and sustainable standards, and continuously improving their own teaching performance.

Chapter's Lessons:

Lesson 1: Competence-Based Learning (CBL)

- Introduction to Competence-Based Learning
- Key Concepts
- From Concept to Application: Observing and Structuring Competence

Lesson 2: Teaching vs Training

- Teaching and Training: Purpose, Distinctions, and Complementarity
- Roles in the Education and Training Process
- Key Actors: Learners, Teachers, Trainers, Mentors, and Assessors
- A Compact Competence Set for Starters

Lesson 3: A Learner-Centred Approach

- The Learner at the Centre: Understanding Learners' Backgrounds, Motivations, and Contexts
- The Teacher-Trainer as Facilitator: From Knowledge Provider to Learning Enabler

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- Activating and Engaging Learners in Face-to-Face and Online Environments
- Designing Inclusive and Individual Learning Pathways

Lesson 4: Teaching and Training Approaches

- Designing Learning Paths and Structures
- Embedding Pedagogical Principles in Learning Design
- Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal Learning Contexts
- Online and Face-to-Face Learning Environments
- Portfolio-Based Learning and Digital Recognition Tools
- Hybrid and Blended Learning Models

Lesson 5: Teaching and Training Methodologies

- Foundations of Teaching and Training Methodology
- Core Delivery Methods
- Active and Learner-Centred Strategies
- Collaborative and Experiential Learning
- Simulation-Based and Digital Learning Methods

Lesson 6: Developing a Training Program

- Training Needs Analysis
- Developing a Teaching and Training Strategy
- Developing Learner-centred Training and Training Paths
- Smart Development and Delivery of Training and Teaching Materials

Lesson 7: Developing Competence-Based Assessment and Certification

- Assessment Types and Purposes
- Designing and Implementing an Assessment Strategy
- Ensuring Fairness, Authenticity and Quality in Assessment
- Recognition, Certification and Emerging Frameworks

Self-directed Learning

- Self-Directed Learning Digital Library: in the form of links to articles, videos etc.
- One project-based activity
- One case study with reflective questions

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Knowledge Base

Chapter No: 1	Title: Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector
Knowledge Base Title	Orientation to the Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning to be applied to the INSPIRE program and addressing the Performing Arts Sector

1.1. Lesson 1: Competence-Based Learning (CBL)

Competence-Based Learning (CBL)

Chapter 1 of the INSPIRE Practical Handbook introduces a range of learner-centred methodologies, including project-based, micro-learning, blended, work-based, and other non-formal education approaches. To apply sustainability principles in training delivery, integrate digital tools for blended and distance learning, and strengthen engagement with themes such as sustainability, digitalisation, and entrepreneurship, it is essential to begin with the fundamental concepts of Competence-Based Learning (CBL).

The reflection builds on the newly established curriculum and training content of the **INSPIRE Online Training Programme**, which places strong emphasis on project-based, micro, blended, and work-based learning approaches. It supports the target audience in designing and implementing effective training activities, both face-to-face and online, while making full use of modern digital learning environments.

This lesson introduces the key concepts of competence-based learning within Vocational Education and Training (VET). These concepts form the foundation for the lessons that follow. By the end of this section, learners will be able to understand the concept and purpose of VET, recognise how competences are described through skills, underpinning knowledge, and attitudes and see how these components fit into different types of competence profiles.

1.1.1. Key Concepts

To ensure conceptual clarity, it is important to establish a shared terminology and avoid multiple interpretations caused by national differences or training traditions. Everyday language often blurs specialised meanings, so a clear conceptual framework is essential for common understanding. Among the key concepts that form the basis of competence-based learning, the first and most fundamental is Vocational Education and Training (VET).

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a learning pathway designed to equip individuals with the specific skills,

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knowledge, and practical experience needed to enter and progress within a chosen occupation or profession. It is grounded in the principle of learning by doing, combining theoretical understanding with hands-on application to prepare learners for the real demands of working life.

The term **vocational** refers to a pathway that leads directly to a profession or trade. It focuses on developing competences that are specific to an industry, such as healthcare, construction, hospitality, information technology, or the performing arts.

Education represents the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. For instance, a nursing student learns about anatomy, medical ethics, and pharmacology as part of their academic foundation.

Training is the practical application of that theory through internships, simulations, laboratory exercises, or workplace experience that allows learners to apply knowledge in authentic professional contexts.

By combining these three dimensions, VET offers a comprehensive and adaptable approach to professional development, ensuring that learners acquire both the knowledge and the practical abilities required by the labour market.

A key strength of VET lies in its **direct connection with employment**. Programmes are often developed in collaboration with employers and industry bodies to ensure that training reflects current workplace realities and emerging skill needs. This close relationship makes VET graduates particularly well placed to enter the labour market upon completion of their studies. In many cases, VET systems also include apprenticeships, mandatory work placements, or dual education models, which help learners build networks and gain practical insights even before graduation.

Another defining feature of VET is its **balance between theory and practice**. Learners explore the *why* through conceptual and ethical understanding while developing the *how* through direct application. This combination produces professionals who are not only technically competent but also reflective and aware of the wider social and organisational contexts in which they work.

VET and academic education are often perceived as two separate learning routes, yet in practice they form part of a continuum. Many higher education programmes, particularly in applied fields such as the arts or engineering, integrate strong vocational components, while modern VET pathways increasingly include elements of critical analysis and theoretical inquiry. The following table summarises the main distinctions between the two approaches.

Table 1.1

VET vs. Academic Pathways

Aspect	VET	Academic Education
Focus	Practical skills and direct job preparation	Theoretical knowledge and critical inquiry
Structure	Often shorter, includes apprenticeships	Longer duration, includes research projects
Outcome	Immediate employability in a specific field	Broad education, often leading to further study
Learning Mode	Practice-oriented	Lecture- and research-based

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Typical Path	Technician, skilled trades, service roles	Professional, managerial, academic roles

Both paths are valuable and can complement each other. In fact, some learners choose to combine them by pursuing academic degrees after completing VET, or vice versa, depending on their career goals and evolving interests. n the context of the INSPIRE project, VET is understood broadly to include the performing arts sector, where creative and technical professions require the same integration of theoretical understanding and practical mastery.

Competence

Competence refers to the ability of an individual to perform tasks and responsibilities effectively in a specific context. It encompasses not only the technical ability to do something but also the deeper understanding, mindset, and context needed to do it well, consistently, and responsibly.

To be competent is more than just knowing how to do something. It involves integrating various elements that together ensure quality performance. These elements include **skills, underpinning knowledge**, **underlying attitudes,** and, in many cases, **awareness of relevant legislation or regulations**.

To better understand how competence functions in practice, it is useful to look at how performance is demonstrated in real work contexts, where actions reveal understanding and responsibility. At its core, being competent means being able to perform a task to a required standard. This performance is not judged in isolation but within a particular role, situation, or set of expectations. For example, a competent electrician must not only know how to install wiring but also ensure safety standards, communicate with clients, and adapt to different site conditions. Competence is context-specific. A person might be competent in one area or job role but not necessarily in another unless they develop the corresponding abilities and understanding.

This understanding of competence as contextual and integrated aligns closely with the definitions adopted by European frameworks such as the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop).

ESCO applies the same definition of competence as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). According to this, *"competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal development."* Competences are expressed in terms of responsibility and autonomy. While sometimes used as synonyms, the terms *skill* and *competence* differ in scope. A *skill* typically refers to the use of methods or instruments in a particular setting and in relation to defined tasks, while *competence* is broader and refers to the ability of a person—facing new situations and unforeseen challenges—to use and apply knowledge and skills in an independent and self-directed way (ESCO, 2027).

Cedefop defines competence as *"the demonstrated ability to use knowledge, know-how, experience and job-related, personal, social or methodological skills in work or learning situations and in professional and personal development."* This definition clarifies that competence is not limited to cognitive elements (theory, concepts, or tacit knowledge); it also encompasses functional aspects (technical skills), interpersonal attributes (social or organisational skills), and ethical values. Competence may be individual or collective, applying not only to people but also to teams, organisations, or regions (Cedefop, n.d.).

In order to translate these definitions into practical learning and assessment terms, the following sections describe the main components of competence-skills, underpinning knowledge, attitude, and, where relevant, awareness of

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legislation-that together ensure effective performance in real professional contexts.

Skills	Skills refer to the *observable and measurable capabilities* that enable an individual to perform tasks effectively. They represent the practical, action-oriented dimension of competence, what a person can *do* in real work situations. Skills can take different forms, such as technical abilities (for instance, operating machinery or using digital tools), cognitive abilities (such as analysing information or solving problems), and interpersonal abilities (for example, communicating clearly or collaborating within a team). In vocational training, skills form the foundation of professional performance. They make competence visible and measurable, describing how an individual applies knowledge in practice. A clear and consistent description of skills ensures that trainers, learners, and employers share the same understanding of what successful performance looks like. When learners demonstrate mastery of the expected skills in context, we can be confident that they have achieved the related competence. **Example – Stage Technician** *Consider a stage technician whose competence involves building sets. To demonstrate this competence, the learner must show that they can read and interpret plans accurately, move and assemble structures safely, lift objects using correct ergonomic techniques, request assistance when needed, and choose appropriate lighting during setup.* By observing these concrete actions, trainers can reliably assess whether the learner's performance meets the standard of competence required.
Underpinning knowledge	Knowledge refers to the *body of facts, principles, theories, and practices* that is related to a field of work or study, and more specifically to the competence in which it appears. It provides the conceptual and factual foundation that supports skilled performance. Without knowledge, skills risk becoming mechanical or inflexible, lacking the understanding that allows professionals to adapt, reason, and make informed decisions. According to ESCO and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), "Knowledge means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. It is the body of facts, principles, theories, and practices that is related to a field of work or study." (ESCO, 2027) Both skills and competences rely on factual and theoretical knowledge, yet they differ in how that knowledge is applied and put into use. In this sense, knowledge underpins competence by providing the *why* behind the *how*. It explains the reasoning behind professional actions, the conventions, rules, traditions, and good practices that give meaning and consistency to performance. In vocational education, this is often referred to as *underpinning knowledge,* the essential understanding that supports effective practice. It can include general theoretical

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principles (such as electrical safety or ergonomics) as well as context-specific insights (such as local customs, production routines, or workplace standards). Knowledge can therefore be both independent, like "Basics of electricity" or "Lighting equipment," and situational, such as "Know local safety rules" or "Know where to switch the lights on."

To illustrate, consider the example of a chef, who must understand food safety laws, cooking techniques, and nutrition, not simply follow a recipe. Similarly, a nurse must know the principles of human biology, pharmacology, and medical protocols, not just perform routine procedures. This underlying knowledge ensures that performance is not only efficient but also informed, responsible, and adaptable to different circumstances.

Example – Stage Technician

Returning to the example of a stage technician whose competence involves building sets, the underpinning knowledge includes understanding the symbols used in technical plans, knowing appropriate set-mounting techniques, and applying ergonomic principles to ensure safe and effective work.

Teaching this knowledge gives learners the conceptual grounding they need to master their practical skills and to transfer those skills confidently to new or unfamiliar contexts.

In summary, underpinning knowledge transforms skill into competence. It connects what a person does with why it should be done that way, ensuring performance that is not only accurate but also intelligent, adaptable, and professionally sound.

Attitude

In every profession, the required attitude depends on the nature of the job and the working environment. It is not only about what a person does but how they approach doing it. In vocational education and training, attitude represents the human and behavioural side of competence, influencing how individuals think, act, and collaborate in professional contexts.

Consider someone working behind the scenes in a theatre, such as a performance production manager. This person needs more than technical expertise. They require an attitude that reflects the values and demands of the performing arts world, such as teamwork, adaptability, responsibility, and artistic awareness. Although every job involves action and movement, each profession calls for a distinct attitude that gives meaning to performance.

Attitude shapes three key aspects of professional behaviour:

- **The Intention-Why You Do It Matters:** Two people can perform the same action yet do so with entirely different intentions. A crane operator may focus on precision, timing, and adherence to a technical plan, while a performance production manager coordinates movement and timing to serve an artistic purpose. In the latter case, intention includes sensitivity to emotion, artistic understanding, and responsiveness to live performance. The same action acquires a completely different meaning when guided by a different purpose.

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Intention therefore provides direction, ensuring that every professional action is not only effective but also meaningful.

- ➔ **The Engagement-Being Present in the Task:** Engagement refers to how involved and committed a person is in their work. A disengaged worker performs mechanically, following instructions without reflection or initiative. In contrast, an engaged professional participates actively, stays alert, anticipates needs, and takes responsibility for outcomes. They show ownership and pride in their contribution, maintaining focus even under pressure. In creative and technical fields, engagement is essential, since effective teamwork and timing determine the quality of the final result.
- ➔ **The Emotional Investment-Connection to Work:** Attitude also involves emotion, the feeling a person brings to their work and the way that feeling is expressed through behaviour. A positive emotional attitude may include passion for the craft, curiosity and openness to learning, a sense of joy in contributing to a shared goal, and calmness in demanding situations. In artistic and performance-related professions, this emotional investment becomes an invisible yet vital part of the final outcome. It connects the individual to the purpose of the work, enhancing both quality and authenticity.

In this sense, attitude is central to vocational competence. It may not always be visible, but it drives consistency, quality, and meaning in professional behaviour. In vocational practice, the above-mentioned three dimensions of attitude together determine **how knowledge and skills are applied**. Competence therefore requires a mindset that values professionalism, responsibility, and continuous improvement. Positive underlying attitudes such as respect for others, willingness to learn, ethical awareness, attention to detail, and commitment to quality reinforce this mindset and turn technical ability into consistent, meaningful performance. Someone might have the skills and knowledge to do a job but still fail to meet standards if they lack the right attitude, such as reliability, empathy, or integrity. To illustrate how attitudes influence professional performance in practice, the following example demonstrates how specific behaviours reflect competence in a real vocational context.

Example – Demonstrating Professional Attitudes

Let us return to the example of a stage technician whose competence involves building sets. To master this competence, the individual must demonstrate specific attitudes that shape how their skills and knowledge are applied in practice. These include being collaborative, efficient, and aware of health and safety principles.

- *A **collaborative** attitude reflects teamwork and mutual support. In many sectors, and particularly in live performance, being collaborative is essential. It involves willingness to support colleagues, listening and communicating effectively, adapting to others' needs, and sharing responsibility for group outcomes. A technician who coordinates scenery changes during a performance must work in*

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synchrony with lighting operators, stage managers, and performers. This requires trust, communication, and a shared commitment to collective success.

- *An **efficient** attitude expresses focus, organisation, and discipline. Efficiency is not about speed, but about purpose and precision. A professional who plans ahead, prioritises tasks, avoids unnecessary errors, and strives for high-quality outcomes with minimal waste contributes to reliability and smooth performance. In fast-paced environments such as theatre or technical production, inefficiency can lead to stress, safety risks, or disrupted schedules. The right attitude ensures calm, methodical, and high-standard work.*
- *A **health and safety (H&S) aware** attitude demonstrates responsibility and care for oneself and others. This includes following established procedures, assessing potential risks, remaining alert and attentive, and respecting both equipment and working conditions. Health and safety awareness is not limited to compliance with rules. It is an internalised sense of responsibility and caution that reflects genuine concern for the wellbeing of the entire team.*

Through these examples, it becomes evident that competence is not only defined by what a person can do but also by how they approach their work. Collaboration, efficiency, and responsibility for safety transform technical ability into professional excellence, ensuring that performance remains both effective and ethical. This understanding of attitude as a key dimension of competence is also reflected in European skills frameworks and in the pedagogical approach adopted by the INSPIRE project.

The European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) framework does not define attitude as an independent concept but refers to it through the broader term “transversal skills and competences”. These are understood as personal, social, and methodological abilities that apply across occupations and sectors, influencing how professionals use their knowledge and skills in different contexts. Within the INSPIRE project, both perspectives are recognised. Attitudes are treated as independent elements, explored further in the soft skills module, while also being used to underpin technical and occupational competences.

Attitudes cannot be taught directly, as one cannot simply read a textbook and become respectful, curious, or responsible. However, they can be developed through experience and reflection, mentorship and role modelling, feedback and self-awareness, and supportive environments that promote professional values. Trainers play a vital role in this process. By modelling positive behaviour, providing constructive feedback, and creating learning experiences that encourage participation, accountability, and collaboration, they help learners internalise professional values and attitudes. Vocational education and training programmes therefore create the conditions in which positive attitudes can emerge, grow, and be sustained, not through direct instruction, but through immersion, interaction, and continuous practice.

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Underpinning legislation (Where relevant)	In many professions, competence extends beyond technical performance and personal conduct to include **awareness of the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern professional practice**. This understanding ensures that work is not only effective but also compliant, ethical, and socially responsible. Underpinning legislation refers to the body of laws, regulations, and standards that define what is acceptable and required within a specific sector. These may include health and safety rules, environmental standards, equality and inclusion policies, or professional codes of conduct. Legal awareness therefore supports competence by guiding decision-making, shaping behaviour, and protecting both the professional and those affected by their work. For example, a performance production manager must ensure compliance with health and safety regulations related to rigging, lighting, and stage movement. A set designer must understand intellectual property rights when using or adapting visual materials. Similarly, production teams must adhere to labour laws and working time regulations that protect artists and technicians. In addition, sustainable production increasingly requires compliance with environmental policies, such as waste reduction and resource efficiency measures. For trainers, integrating legal awareness into competence-based learning means connecting vocational tasks with the relevant legal and ethical frameworks. By doing so, learners not only perform their roles effectively but also understand the broader responsibilities that accompany professional practice in the performing arts.

1.1.2. From Concept to Application: Observing and Structuring Competence

Performance criteria

For assessment purposes, competences are often translated into **performance criteria:** objective and observable actions that demonstrate competence in a specific context. These criteria describe what successful performance looks like in practice, allowing trainers and assessors to evaluate learners consistently and fairly.

They are formulated in a way that makes the underlying knowledge and attitudes visible through the execution of skills. In other words, when learners perform a task, their understanding, decision-making, and professional behaviour become evident.

By standardising both the context and the assessment criteria, trainers ensure a high level of objectivity and reliability, making competence assessment transparent, comparable, and aligned with professional standards.

Occupation, function, role and individual profile

In competence-based education and training, the terms *occupation*, *function*, *role*, and *individual profile* are often used interchangeably, yet they describe different levels of professional activity. Understanding these distinctions helps trainers design learning experiences that are both relevant and personalised.

- **Occupation:** Set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity. We

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describe them as a generic set of competences reflecting the average professional in the occupation.

- **Function:** an occupation in a concrete context. In other words, the generic occupation adapted to for example a company or department.
- **Role:** refers to a person's position on a team, and all team members have a role and purpose that help get the job done.
- **Individual profile:** The unique set of competences of an individual, whether or not they are directly job-related.

These distinctions are essential when developing education and training programmes. In formal education, trainers often begin with a generic occupational profile, while also considering the individual profile of each learner. By building on individual strengths and prior experience, learners can meet the requirements of the occupational profile while enriching their personal competence set.

In company-based or professional training, the focus shifts towards functions and roles, identifying learning needs based on the gap between what a job requires and the competences an individual currently possesses. This approach ensures that training remains purposeful, targeted, and directly linked to real professional performance.

Developing competence-based learning in the performing arts means building a common understanding of how knowledge, skills, and attitudes come together in practice. It calls for a shared language that connects creativity with structure and supports trainers in designing, delivering, and evaluating learning that is both rigorous and adaptable. Ultimately, competence-based education flourishes when it bridges artistic growth with real-world application, fostering confidence, coherence, and lifelong learning.

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1.2. Lesson 2: Teaching Vs Training

Teaching Vs Training

This lesson explores the distinction between teaching and training and the evolving roles that shape learning in vocational and artistic contexts. It builds on Lesson 1 by examining how competences are developed through both conceptual understanding and practical application. Understanding the relationship between teaching and training helps trainers design learning experiences that balance theory and practice, enabling learners to move from knowledge acquisition to professional mastery.

1.2.1. Teaching vs Training

Historically, education in the performing arts focused heavily on craft and apprenticeship. While these remain vital, they are increasingly complemented by **hybrid educational models** combining in-person mentorship with online learning platforms, mobile learning applications, and immersive digital tools such as virtual and augmented reality. For instance, a lighting designer might now train through simulation-based software that replicates stage conditions, while dramaturgs can access digitised archives and collaborative annotation tools to engage with scripts and historical materials across continents.

Experiential learning also plays a critical role. Workshops, residencies, collaborative labs, and peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges provide fertile ground for skill refinement and innovation. These settings allow professionals to test new ideas, reflect on practices, and receive constructive feedback in a dynamic, non-hierarchical learning environment.

In today's professional world, the relationship between teaching and training is shifting. While hands-on training remains essential, the growing complexity of tools, systems, and contexts demands a stronger foundation in theoretical knowledge. This is especially true in fields where technology, regulation, and interdisciplinary collaboration are involved. Abstract principles like systems thinking, digital safety, sustainability, and inclusive design are not immediately visible in practice, yet they underpin almost every professional action. Without a theoretical framework, trainees may know *how* to do something, but not *why* it matters, or *how* to adapt when the context changes. **Teaching,** as structured reflection and conceptual grounding, equips learners to navigate uncertainty, connect dots, and innovate responsibly. In this sense, today's VET must integrate more theory not to replace practice, but to empower it, enabling professionals to act with insight, not just instruction.

While teaching is mainly about knowledge transfer, **training** is about building routine. After the knowledge transfer, a learner will know how to do something, but training is needed to master the competence. (Notting Hill college, 2022)

1.2.2. Different Roles in the Education Process

Understanding the distinction between teaching and training naturally leads to the question of **who** delivers and

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supports learning. In vocational and performing arts education, learning is not shaped by a single actor but by an interconnected set of roles that guide, facilitate, and assess the learner's progress.

A complete learning process covers every stage of a learner's journey, from their initial choice to participate to their final qualification or certification. It includes course design and development, the organisation of learning environments, the delivery of education and training, and the coaching, mentoring, and assessment that support ongoing growth.

Within this process, several **generic roles** can be identified. These roles often overlap, as professionals in VET and the performing arts frequently combine responsibilities depending on context and institutional setting. The specific role assumed depends on three key factors:

- what is being taught or trained (theory or practice)
- where learning takes place (classroom, laboratory, studio, or workplace)
- which part of the learning process is involved (transfer of knowledge, development of routine, evaluation, assessment, administration, or quality assurance)

By clarifying these roles, trainers and educators can design more coherent, learner-centred experiences that balance theoretical understanding with applied practice. The following sections describe the main roles that contribute to the learning process and how each supports competence development within vocational and artistic contexts.

Learner	The learner stands at the centre of the education and training process. In the context of competence-based learning, the term **learner** refers to anyone engaged in a learning experience, whether formal, non-formal, or informal. This inclusive definition reflects the diverse pathways through which individuals acquire competences across different settings and stages of their professional life. Depending on the educational context, specific terms are often used to describe different types of learners. In higher education, the term **student** is common; in secondary education, we refer to **pupils**; in dual or work-based learning environments, the terms **apprentice** or **trainee** are used; and in assessment procedures, participants are referred to as **candidates.** Lesson 3 explores these learner types in greater depth, focusing on how trainers can engage and support them effectively. In competence-based learning, the learner is not a passive recipient of information but an active participant. Learning is understood as a process of exploration, reflection, and application, in which learners construct understanding through experience and feedback. Trainers play a crucial role in designing environments where this active engagement can occur and where learners feel ownership of their learning journey.
Teacher	A **teacher** is a professional educator whose role is to impart knowledge, concepts, and critical understanding. In academic contexts, teachers typically operate at the secondary or higher education level, where they design structured learning experiences and guide learners through the acquisition of theoretical and conceptual knowledge. Effective teachers combine subject expertise with pedagogical skill, enabling learners to grasp

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	complex ideas and apply them to practice. In vocational education and training, the teacher's role expands beyond the transmission of theory. A **VET teacher** supports learners in connecting knowledge with practice, preparing them for specific occupations or professional contexts. This dual responsibility requires both educational competence and industry expertise. As defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), VET teachers must possess theoretical and practical knowledge and have the ability to transfer both effectively to diverse groups of learners (OECD, n.d.). The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) describes a **teacher** as a person whose function is to impart knowledge, know-how, or skills to learners within an educational or training institution. According to Cedefop, teachers may also design and deliver training programmes, transmit both theoretical and practical knowledge, and, in vocational contexts, perform tasks similar to those of trainers. The European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) framework complements this definition by emphasising that vocational teachers combine theoretical instruction with the facilitation of practical skills and the development of professional attitudes and values (ESCO, n.d.). In practice, teachers in competence-based learning environments act as **facilitators** of understanding, supporting learners to connect conceptual frameworks with practical application. Their teaching helps learners see the "why" behind the "how" and prepares them to act with autonomy, critical thinking, and responsibility.
Trainer	A **trainer** focuses primarily on facilitating the practical application of knowledge and the development of hands-on competences. Trainers help learners transform understanding into action, guiding them through real or simulated professional tasks. They play a central role in bridging the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that learning outcomes translate into performance that meets workplace standards. Cedefop defines the trainer as: "Anyone who fulfils an activity linked to the (theoretical or practical) training function, either in an institution for education or training, or at the workplace.". It further distinguishes two main categories of trainers: • **Professional trainer:** a training specialist whose primary role may coincide with that of a teacher in a vocational education or training institution. • **Part-time or occasional trainer:** a professional from any field who undertakes training activities alongside their regular duties, either within their company (for example, acting as a mentor or tutor for new recruits and apprentices) or externally (by providing occasional training in an educational establishment) The responsibilities of a trainer include designing and organising learning activities, delivering instruction, transferring know-how, and providing continuous feedback and guidance to help learners develop competence. A trainer's effectiveness depends on their

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	professional expertise and contextual awareness. They must understand workplace systems, priorities, and relationships, and be able to model best practices through demonstration and reflection. In competence-based education, trainers create the conditions in which learners can practise, refine, and internalise skills through direct experience.
Mentor and Coach	The roles of **mentor** and **coach** are often used interchangeably. Depending on the country, context, or educational tradition, they may have slightly different meanings and competence requirements. In essence, both roles focus on supporting the learner throughout the learning process, helping them make informed decisions about their personal development and training. Mentors and coaches guide learners in identifying the right learning paths, setting development goals, and finding appropriate solutions. In some contexts, mentors may also take on additional responsibilities. They may design individual training plans and evaluations, act as contact persons between learners and educational institutions, or serve as staff members responsible for monitoring external practical work experience. They may also support the recognition of prior learning or combine mentoring with the role of trainer, depending on institutional or workplace needs. Cedefop defines mentoring as "any support provided to a young person or novice (someone joining a new learning community or organisation) by an experienced person who acts as a role model, guide, tutor, coach or confidant." In **lifelong guidance**, mentoring covers a range of activities, including: • education and training, helping individuals make educational and vocational decisions and carry them out before and after entering the labour market • lifelong guidance, assisting individuals to explore, pursue, and achieve their career goals • personal development, helping individuals manage their life paths • tutoring, a related but not identical form of support According to the TeBeVat project, a mentor also plays an important role in the recognition of prior learning. Mentors provide guidance and advice to prepare learners for validation processes, help them set clear objectives for their personal development, and offer recommendations on further training, learning, or job market opportunities (TeBeVat, n.d.).
Assessor	An **assessor**, in the educational context, is responsible for measuring the competences of a candidate against agreed standards and procedures. This role requires a high level of objectivity, impartiality, and independence to ensure that every assessment is fair, transparent, and reliable. According to TeBeVat (n.d.), an assessor evaluates whether a candidate's competences

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meet the performance criteria of a given qualification profile, based on predefined standards and established procedures. The assessment involves professional judgement and evidence-based evaluation of the candidate's performance.

Beyond specific assessment skills, assessors must also possess a deep understanding of the field and its occupations, the qualifications and standards relevant to the targeted occupations, and the different standards, assessment methods, and procedures used in those professional contexts. This broad knowledge base allows them to interpret evidence accurately and to ensure that assessments remain consistent and credible.

Assessors are expected to have substantial, demonstrable experience in the professional areas they evaluate. This ensures credibility, accuracy, and alignment between real-world practice and competence-based assessment.

Other personnel involved in the education process

There are, of course, other people involved in the educational process, such as administrators, planners, and IT support staff. They are mentioned here for clarity. While they do not require pedagogical competences, they need a good understanding of educational systems and must be trained in ethical standards, as they are often in direct contact with learners

A compact competence set for starters

Within the framework of the **INSPIRE project**, the core competences required to begin **teaching and training in real work environments** have been brought together into **one combined competence**. This competence reflects the essential abilities needed to guide and support learning directly on the work floor. It includes the skills necessary for:

- Identifying the organisation's training needs
- Introducing and training new employees
- Setting up and delivering focussed training for the employees
- Mentoring apprenticeships and practical work experience

This approach is particularly suited to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or organisations with limited resources, where training and upskilling are not full-time functions but integrated roles within existing jobs.

Train coworkers on the floor

Description: Train, mentor and coach coworkers, starters, or apprentices on methods, procedures, or equipment in the work environment to support their personal development. Identify training needs and advise on training courses. Give feedback and assess progress.

Competence base URL: http://competencebase.eu/entity/Q1645

Skills

- Identity training needs

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- Develop training
- Deliver training
- Adapt training to target groups
- Mentor learners
- Develop and perform assessments
- Monitor educational developments
- Monitor developments in field of expertise

Knowledge

- Understand principles of competence based learning
- Know different roles in the training and assessment process
- Understand the principles of learner centered approach
- Know different teaching and training approaches
- Understand teaching and training methodologies
- Understand principles of assessment

Attitudes

- Emotional intelligent
- Empathic
- Self-aware
- Awareness of other's behavior
- Stress resistant
- Flexible
- Objective
- Committed to self-development

(These skills and areas of knowledge have been used to develop this chapter. The related attitudes are further elaborated in the following chapter).

Essential Underlaying ESCO skills competences:

(these are the ESCO competences that are combined in this competence)

- Introduce new employees (http://data.europa.eu/esco/skill/9d9ba780-4aa2-43d2-888c-95a41a713fb9)
- Identify training needs (https://competencebase.eu/wiki/Item:Q593)
- Train employees (http://data.europa.eu/esco/skill/e54ff029-1ce9-447d-a5b2-eb7283a23e6e)

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- Coach employees (http://data.europa.eu/esco/skill/0cc9c234-f817-4f4c-908a-4d28fe3b0f4a)
- Mentor individual employees (http://data.europa.eu/esco/skill/fb9c12af-ec45-498a-8e52-891371191557)
- Train volunteers (http://data.europa.eu/esco/skill/2c438b4b-4212-45f5-9625-ee21ac5061a9)
- Assist clients with personal development (http://data.europa.eu/esco/skill/98b32477-cccd-47ea-8c85-d4a16b18af08)
- Advise on training courses (https://competencebase.eu/wiki/Item:Q594)
- Monitor developments in field of expertise (https://competencebase.eu/wiki/Item:Q551)
- Monitor educational developments (https://competencebase.eu/wiki/Item:Q552)
- Establish educational network (https://competencebase.eu/wiki/Item:Q554)

Teaching and training are complementary processes that work together to develop competences. Teachers provide the conceptual structure; trainers, mentors, and assessors translate that structure into applied, measurable performance. Together, they support learner-centred and competence-oriented education aligned with professional realities.

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1.3. Lesson 3: A Learner-Centred Approach

A Learner-Centred Approach

This lesson explores what it means to develop a learner-centred approach within competence-based vocational and artistic training. It examines how understanding learners' backgrounds, experiences, and motivations enhances engagement and learning outcomes. Building on the previous lesson, it highlights how shifting the focus from teaching to learning redefines the trainer's role, classroom dynamics, and assessment practices. The lesson also presents strategies for activating learners, personalising pathways, and fostering inclusive and sustainable learning environments that support every individual in reaching their full potential.

1.3.1. Learner vs Teacher-Centred Approach

Student-centred learning is an educational approach that prioritises the needs, interests, and learning styles of individual learners. It shifts the focus from teacher directed instruction to an environment where learners actively participate in their own learning process, taking greater responsibility and control. Instead of passively receiving information, they engage in activities that promote deeper understanding, critical thinking, and the development of essential life skills such as self direction, curiosity, and collaboration.

Student-centred learning is not merely a methodology; it is a mindset. It views learners as primary and unique agents of learning, engagement, and connection, whereas teacher centred mindsets tend to see them as passive and uniform recipients of knowledge (Stanford University, 2025). Learners take their learning into their own hands. They act as active participants with autonomy yet must work collaboratively to achieve common goals. In this model, the teacher trainer becomes a facilitator of learning, guiding and supporting rather than directing.

Student-centred learning places strong emphasis on skill development, focusing on critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and other essential competences that are valuable both within and beyond the classroom. The outcomes include deeper understanding, increased motivation, and a lifelong commitment to learning, skills that prepare learners for future challenges and long-term success.

Building on these principles, the following sections explore how a learner centred approach can be effectively implemented in practice. They examine how learning objectives are defined through a competence-based framework, how the learner's context and strengths shape the learning process, and how the role of the teacher trainer evolves into that of a facilitator. The section also highlights strategies for activating learners through meaningful engagement and for applying these principles in online and blended learning environments.

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A competence-based approach

A competence-based approach means that learning objectives or goals are defined at the level of competences. This provides a framework to organise learning while allowing freedom in how to reach those goals. Mastery of a competence can be achieved in different ways, based on varying topics, interests, and learning methods. This flexibility supports the diversification of the learning process for each individual learner.

Of course, reality limits the possibility of absolute diversification. Nevertheless, when developing a learning path, one can anticipate where choices can be made, for example in discussions, group work, practical activities, external work experience or research assignments.

An important element in competence-based learning is the concept of the **double bar.** Competences are often written as the expected minimum for an average professional. This represents the lower bar, the minimum level required of a learner for each competence. However, we also encourage learners to excel in competences that match their interests, needs or fascinations, the higher bar. This approach ensures that every learner meets the basic competences required by the profile or standard while developing their own unique set of expert skills

The learner in the centre

When the learner is at the centre of the learning process, their personal context becomes the starting point. Their own world of experience serves to embed the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes. The learner's individual approach to a subject lies at the core of learning.

Focusing on the learner's **strengths** rather than weaknesses empowers them to excel in those areas. Supporting them in exploring their strengths and making informed choices enables the creation of a personal learning pathway based on awareness of their own abilities.

Recognising each learner's motivation, strengths and context improves outcomes, enhances engagement and builds a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

The teacher trainer as facilitator

In a student-centred education model, the teacher trainer is no longer the sole source of knowledge but acts as a facilitator of learning, asking questions that lead to discovery and providing reference frameworks and direction.

For traditionally trained or experienced teachers and trainers, this shift can be challenging. They are used to stating the truth, correcting learners' performance of skills or evaluating their behaviour. In other words, they have long served as the reference framework for what must be achieved.

Guiding learners through their own process, supporting exploration of individual

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strengths, giving positive feedback and opening space for unconventional solutions require almost the opposite skills of traditional teaching. This may feel uncomfortable, but it becomes deeply rewarding when embraced.

Common challenges include:

- Using learners' expertise even when they may know something the trainer does not.
- Allowing learners to fail or take risks, which can feel uncertain.
- Asking questions without providing answers or without knowing them.
- Giving open feedback and engaging in discussion without a fixed reference for what is right or wrong.

By adopting this mindset, trainers learn from their learners, develop new insights and witness unexpected growth. A prerequisite for this role is knowing one's students and oneself.

Activating the learner

The core idea of activating the learner is to make learning an active process rather than passive consumption of knowledge. This can be achieved in many ways depending on the target group, the learning environment and the methodologies chosen.

The goal is to design differentiated and meaningful activities that lead to deep, critical learning and the development of skills. Activities may include research assignments, discussions, group work, simulations or practical exercises. All should align with the final goals of the course, though learners may take different routes to reach them.

Activating the learner also requires a specific teaching approach. It involves asking open questions, finding out what learners already know before teaching, giving assignments to promote learning rather than grading and encouraging active participation (Stanford University, 2025)

Online learner centred learning

Online learner centred learning follows the same principles as face to face education but requires deliberate planning, intention and instructional design, as spontaneous interaction is limited (Riggs, 2022).

The main components are:

- Student content interaction, where instructors provide active learning experiences that include meaningful activity and reflection.
- Student student interaction, where instructors structure a learning community and clarify how participants should engage.
- Student instructor interaction, where instructors establish a clear framework

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for communication and feedback.

Ideally, **content interaction** is active. Learners should do something rather than consume information passively. They should reflect critically, rework material, summarise and compare concepts.

Active digital elements support this process, such as video clips, interactive presentations, self-assessment tests with feedback and different modes of content delivery.

1.3.2. Knowing your Target Group

Effective learner-centred training begins with understanding who your learners are, their backgrounds, motivations, prior experiences, and learning contexts. Learners are not blank canvases. They bring existing competences, perspectives, and experiences shaped by their educational pathways, professions, and personal histories. Knowing and understanding your target group and the individuals within it is essential to designing inclusive, engaging, and relevant learning experiences.

To design meaningful learning activities, trainers first need to understand the educational backgrounds learners come from. These backgrounds influence expectations, learning styles, and existing competences.

Different types of education and training

Education and training systems differ according to their goals, structures, and the competences they aim to develop.

- **Initial training,** the foundation of all education, often referred to as "general education". It is independent of a specific field or work area and delivers a long-lasting set of competences needed for life and further development. It includes competences such as writing, mathematics, physics, reasoning, and logic.
- **Professional education and training** prepare learners for a professional career and build further on the competences gained in initial training. They focus on broad, specialised competences that are long lasting and adaptable to different work environments and technological changes.
- **Academic education** focuses on theoretical knowledge and intellectual development. It emphasises critical thinking, analysis, and a broad understanding of various subjects rather than practical or vocational skills.
- **Continued education and training** take place in a professional or personal environment and develop new competences or update existing ones. This is part of lifelong learning expected of every professional, but also contributes to the individual development of each citizen. Continued education and training are often provided in short, competence-focused modules.
- **In house training** refers to training programmes conducted within an organisation using its own resources and personnel. It is a type of corporate training where employees are educated on specific skills, processes, or knowledge directly relevant to their roles and the organisation's needs.
- **Product training** focuses on the use of specific equipment, technologies, or methodologies. This type of training presumes a good professional foundation and understanding of the field and its context. The competences gained are directly applicable but often have a short life span.

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Beyond their educational background, learners also develop and perform within group environments that influence how they engage and collaborate.

Learners as a group

Learners are often trained in groups and influence or interact with each other during the learning process. The group size affects the way they respond and how communication within the group takes place. Group dynamics influence how individuals act as part of the group.

Group size has a direct impact on participation. In smaller groups, students are more likely to actively interact, engage in discussions and activities, and exchange ideas. Small groups facilitate more focused discussions and peer teaching, leading to a better understanding of the material and providing more opportunities for individual attention and personalised feedback from instructors. In practical training, where groups share the same equipment or workspace, smaller groups reduce waiting time and allow for more active participation.

Larger groups can bring together a wider range of ideas and experiences, but some students might contribute less when they believe their individual effort is not crucial. It can also be harder to track individual contributions and ensure all students are actively involved, which reduces personal accountability (Wang, Jiang, & Luo, 2023).

Group dynamics are the interacting forces within a small human group (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). They significantly influence teaching and training by shaping the classroom atmosphere, student engagement, and learning outcomes. Positive dynamics foster collaboration and a supportive environment, while negative dynamics can hinder learning. Understanding and managing these dynamics is crucial for effective teaching.

A **positive dynamic** can be seen in a cohesive group with open communication, mutual respect, and a sense of belonging that creates a welcoming and comfortable learning environment. Students are more likely to participate, ask questions, and feel confident sharing ideas. Learners who feel connected to their group and valued for their contributions are more likely to be actively engaged in learning activities.

A **negative dynamic** may appear as a lack of trust, conflict, or dominance by certain individuals, which can create a tense and uncomfortable atmosphere. This can lead to decreased participation, reluctance to share ideas, and even emotional distress for some learners. Poor group dynamics can hinder learning by creating distractions, fostering inequality in participation, and ultimately leading to lower academic performance (TRIPATHY & al., 2024).

It is clear that developing student-centred learning and training requires an understanding of group dynamics. The following questions can help determine a group's characteristics:

- *Is it a coherent group of people of the same age and background?*
- *Is it a diverse group, with people of different ages and backgrounds, and at different stages of learning maturity?*
- *Is learning their choice or an obligation?*
- *Is there preparedness to cooperate and share information?*
- *Is there a sense of responsibility towards the group?*
- *Who is leading and steering the others?*

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- *Who is waiting in the background?*
- *Whose ideas are neglected or applauded?*

The learner as an individual

When we look at the individual learner, certain characteristics can support a learner-centred learning process:

- √ A genuine fascination for the subject and an intrinsic interest
- √ A desire to learn
- √ A willingness to explore new ideas
- √ Critical thinking and problem solving
- √ (Self-)reflective thinking
- √ Proactiveness
- √ Self-reliance and low dependence

Learners who do not yet display these characteristics can still thrive in learner-centred environments if given additional support, encouragement, and time to adjust.

To effectively support individual learners, trainers must also understand their learning level, both formal and informal, to ensure that expectations and activities are appropriately aligned.

Starting level

The level of a learner provides an indication of the level of knowledge, thinking, skills, responsibility, and autonomy that can be expected. It is important to distinguish between **formal** and **informal levels**. Formal levels relate to the qualification a learner has earned and to the complexity of the occupational profile associated with that qualification. These levels are independent of whether a qualification is in general education, technical education, professional education, or arts education.

Formal Level

In Europe, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is the main reference system for levels. Each EQF level is translated into National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs). The eight levels of the EQF are defined by a set of descriptors that indicate the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any qualifications system.

For **Level 5**, they are described as follows:

Table 1.2

Knowledge, Skills, Responsibility and autonomy

Knowledge
Comprehensive, specialized, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge

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Skills
A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems
Responsibility and autonomy
Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others

Other EQF levels can be consulted at: https://europass.europa.eu/en/description-eight-eqf-levels

The standard EQF descriptors can sometimes be difficult to relate to artistic education, where creativity, artistry, and personality are core elements of the qualification. To address this, the **Tuning Project** developed a translation of the EQF into the **Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for the Arts**. More information: https://www.eq-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/sectorial-qualifications-framework.pdf

The **International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED),** developed by UNESCO, is another worldwide reference system closely related to the EQF, though it focuses more on educational systems and statistical comparisons than on qualifications. More details can be found at https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/classification-education/

In **daily practice**, we often use the type of education to indicate a level, usually combined with the field (general, technical, professional, or arts). This provides a reasonable indication for most individuals, although it can also reinforce certain preconceptions associated with specific labels.

Informal Level

Our learners are never blank canvases. Through experience or informal learning, they may have developed a set of competences that reflect a higher level than their formal qualifications suggest. This is particularly true in the artistic sector, where many practitioners have no formal education at all. As a teacher or trainer, you should take this informal level into account to avoid creating frustration among learners.

1.3.3. Your Identity As a Teacher-Trainer

Alongside understanding your learners, it is equally important to understand how you relate to them. Reflecting on your own identity as a teacher or trainer is fundamental to shaping an authentic and adaptive teaching approach.

Your **background** is key to who you are as a teacher or trainer. Often unconsciously, you use your own experiences as a reference point for your learners. You have succeeded through hard work and study, but it is important to recognise that not everyone learns in the same way, has the same motivation, or enjoys the same opportunities, networks, or luck. Moreover, times change, and the opportunities you once had may no longer exist or be relevant today.

Your **experience** in the professional field has been built up over the years, yet it can sometimes feel as if you have always had it. Over time, you have developed routines and accumulated experience, worked in different situations, solved hundreds of unexpected problems, and learned from the stories and experience of your senior colleagues.

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Remember that your learners will do the same, but it will take time.

Every teacher has a particular area of expertise, something they are exceptionally good at and enjoy sharing. This is valuable, as it gives you passion, drive, and a personal touch. However, you should keep your overall learning goals in mind and avoid allowing this focus to dominate your teaching.

We all come from a time when the teacher was seen as the one who knew everything. Today, the reality is different: the combined knowledge of a group of learners often exceeds that of any individual teacher. Sometimes a learner may know more about a specific topic than their teacher, through experience, previous study, or other means. Although this may initially seem unsettling, it is in fact an advantage. It redefines the teacher-trainer's role: no longer as the sole source of knowledge, but as the one who asks the right questions, guides exploration, and structures knowledge within context.

Recognising this shift requires self-awareness and reflection on one's own attitudes, assumptions, and comfort levels as an educator. The following guiding questions can support this reflection:

- *What is your expertise or professional experience?*
- *What is your special focus or passion?*
- *Do you see the learner as a younger colleague who lacks experience or as an empty vessel to be filled?*
- *Do you sometimes think, "Why don't they see the solution? It is so simple"?*
- *Are you uneasy when a learner mentions a subject that you do not fully master?*
- *Do you feel comfortable being vulnerable as someone who does not have all the answers?*
- *Do you feel comfortable asking questions when you do not know the answer?*
- *Do you dare to say, "I don't know"?*
- *Do you dare to ask a student to teach you something?*

These questions are intended not as an activity but as a theoretical reflection that encourages educators to acknowledge their own teaching identity and evolve towards a more open, facilitative, and collaborative role in the learning process.

1.3.4. VET Learners

After reflecting on who we are as educators, the next step is to understand the learners we work with. Vocational Education and Training (VET) learners, in particular, have distinct motivations, needs, and learning preferences that should shape how we design and deliver our training.

VET learners are practical people who have made a clear choice of trade, occupation or sector. They learn best in context and on a 'need-to-know' basis. They want to know why they need to know something, whether it solves a problem, improves their situation or makes them more efficient.

When developing a training programme, this has two consequences:

- The content must be focused on their professional field and show examples of real-life problems within that context.

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- The content must provide concrete, practical solutions and answers.

VET learners prefer a **hands-on approach**: learning by doing; practising before learning theory; and discovering how and why something works. A focus on their individual interests and career goals motivates them. They want to be competent and successful, and to feel a sense of ownership and personal value in their learning.

VET learners like to be **challenged** with real-life problems and discover real-life solutions. This motivates them to understand the background and theory behind the problem. However, they become frustrated by repetitive, one-size-fits-all learning processes. They therefore need an approach tailored to them as individuals.

In addition to typical VET learners, training programmes may also include participants with distinct backgrounds, motivations, and learning needs. Two examples frequently encountered in the performing arts and cultural sectors are **volunteers** and **freelance professionals**.

Volunteers	They are a specific group that occur more and more in arts organisations. They often come from very different backgrounds and can have a wide range of levels in different fields. Training volunteers is not only done to improve their skills within the organisation, but also **to** enrich their lives, strengthen their bond with the organisation, and serve as a motivational tool. The training is often felt as an appreciation of their engagement and the quality of their work. They can bring important skills and knowledge from other domains that can strengthen the courses. The social aspect of learning is even more important for this target group. On the other hand, volunteers have another life that can sometimes take priority.
Freelance workers	They are another specific group. They have to pay for their own training and, on top of that, lose paid work time when following training. So training is very expensive for them. They need highly efficient and flexible training models. On the other hand, training and certification raise their “market value” and provide them with networking opportunities. More and more companies invite freelancers who work for them on a regular basis to the courses they organise for their permanent staff, as a reward for their loyalty and as a moment to bond with the group.

1.3.5. Individual Pathways for Individual Learners

Understanding the general characteristics of VET learners helps us design relevant learning experiences. However, each learner within that group still has unique strengths, motivations, and expectations. Therefore, effective teaching must also allow room for individual learning pathways.

In an ideal world, every learner would have a unique pathway, tailored to the learner’s needs and expectations. In reality, this is often not entirely possible, but there are many opportunities within the limitations of education programmes, regulations, and time allocation.

We often focus on individual pathways that highlight negative elements, such as subjects in which students perform poorly or require more time. This often leads to frustration and unsatisfactory results. If we instead focused on learners' strengths to develop their learning, they would excel in those areas and improve their general learning skills, which would also benefit their weaker subjects.

Within a standardised program, we can **differentiate** subjects based on individuals' interests in practical work

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experience, collaborative practice, and research. Often, the same competence can be delivered in different areas of interest.

We can provide **additional material or exercises** to delve deeper into a subject based on a learner's interests, or create elective courses that students can opt to take.

For lifelong learning and experienced professionals, we can develop flexible, **modular learning paths** (microcredentials) that include options for recognition of prior learning. The essence of a **learning pathway** is that learners obtain the described competencies, rather than following exactly the same path as their colleagues. An ideal pathway ensures that learners are competent and can also excel in their strengths.

1.3.6. Dealing With Learning Disabilities and Special Needs

Recognising that each learner follows an individual pathway also means acknowledging that not all learners begin from the same starting point. Some may face additional challenges related to cognitive, physical, or social conditions that influence how they learn and interact within educational settings. Learners therefore come with diverse characteristics, including learning disabilities and special needs. Ensuring equitable access and participation for all must be at the forefront of every educational process, both online and offline, a core responsibility of every teacher-trainer and a fundamental principle of inclusive, learner-centred education.

Learning disabilities

Learning disabilities are often regarded as negative and based on a lower intellectual capacity, while in reality people with learning disabilities may not fit in a traditional educational system, but have a lot of unique qualities and characteristics that become strengths in a career path.

Often persons with **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** exhibit traits like divergent thinking, hyperfocus, and a tendency to think outside the box. They can can also experience periods of intense, sustained focus (hyperfocus) on tasks they find engaging and this can lead to exceptional productivity and high-quality work. They often show strong conversational skills, approach problems from unconventional angles, and find innovative solutions. Their heightened emotional sensitivity and intuitive nature can make them highly empathetic and understanding of others.

People with **autism spectrum disorders (ASD)** often show expertise in their favourite topics, can be highly focused and creative, possess exceptional attention to detail, and are excellent problem-solvers. They may also come up with creative solutions through strong pattern recognition and have an excellent memory (Atistica Network, 2025).

People with **dyslexia** often are creative thinkers and problem solvers, they see the big picture, visualising complex scenarios, and are logical thinkers. (University of London, 2024)

Individuals with **dyscalculia** often show creativity and artistic talent, strategic thinking and holistic approaches, intuitive thinking, spatial reasoning and visual thinking, problem-solving abilities, and strong verbal and interpersonal skills (Equality and Diversity Unit, Oxford University, n.d.) (Problem shared, n.d.)

If we were to place these strengths alongside those expected of an artist, designer, or technician, we would be surprised by the similarities. To be clear, possessing these strengths does not automatically make someone a technician, designer, or artist, but it certainly supports the development of such competences.

Focusing on these strengths, engaging in open and honest discussions, and finding (often simple) solutions to

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overcome difficulties and inconveniences, rather than concentrating on limitations, can enable individuals with learning disabilities to reach high levels of competence and confidence.

Special needs

Not all professionals have equal opportunities to engage in lifelong learning, whether due to **geographic, financial, linguistic** or **physical barriers**. Advanced practices seek to address these inequities through **inclusive design**, **open educational resources** (OER) and **culturally relevant curricula**. For example, community arts organisations may partner with academic institutions to co-develop training programmes, or digital platforms may offer multilingual support and accessibility features.

An important obligation and minimum requirement in online learning is the **European Accessibility Act (EAA),** a European Union law that mandates digital accessibility for people with disabilities. This requires, for example, web development that includes automatic reading, annotation and support for visual and audiovisual material (European Commission, n.d.).

In short, an online training course must be developed to be (Shaptala, 2025):

- √ **Clear.** All content should be written in plain, straightforward language. Avoid complex terms or confusing phrasing, as this is crucial for users with cognitive impairments.
- √ **Keyboard friendly.** The website must be fully navigable without a mouse, relying solely on keyboard controls. This is essential for users with motor impairments, older adults and anyone who uses alternative navigation methods.
- √ **Compatible with assistive technologies.** The website should work smoothly with tools such as screen readers, Braille display software and voice-controlled interfaces. These technologies are vital for users with visual or mobility impairments.
- √ **Inclusive of text alternatives.** Images must include alternative text, and videos should have captions or transcripts to ensure that users with visual or hearing impairments can fully access the information.
- √ **Visually adapted.** Colour contrast, scalable fonts and clear navigation are essential features every platform must include to support users with visual impairments

In a **physical learning and training environment**, accessibility can be improved by modifying spaces, providing assistive technologies and implementing inclusive practices. This includes building ramps, widening doorways, ensuring accessible restrooms, providing accessible parking and using clear signage. Additionally, assistive technologies such as screen readers and voice recognition software can assist people with various disabilities.

In some cases, **course content** and **assessment** can be adapted when irreversible physical limitations exist. These adaptations should be discussed with the individual and decided on a case-by-case basis. An adaptation may involve, for example, assessing a specific skill that is not core to the training through a professional discussion or a role play, where the individual leads someone else to perform the task.

1.3.7. Sustainability in Training Delivery

Finally, inclusive, ethical, and learner-centred education is inseparable from sustainability. Sustainable training delivery reflects not only environmental responsibility but also social and pedagogical sustainability, ensuring that education systems themselves model the values they promote.

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Sustainability is a **mindset**, it is not just a task on top of your job or a subject in a course, it is not just an obligation, it should be part of our daily behaviour and part of our professional actions. In that way, it is similar to health and safety.

Practice what you preach

The most convincing method to transfer the sustainability mindset to others is to put it into practice ourselves while training and teaching. Implementing it in our behaviour, our course materials and our methods of delivering training and teaching is the most organic way to transmit it in a long-lasting and meaningful way.

Sustainability, in the sense of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),** is a much wider concept than ecology. The Sustainable Development Goals call for action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere (UNESCO, n.d.) This may sound abstract and somewhat distant, but if we look closer, we can see that many of these goals are directly applicable to teaching and training. Some can be addressed more directly than others; others can be discussed, reflected upon, or promoted through the content. Some may also help make difficult issues open for discussion. We could roughly divide them into three groups, based on their effect:

- **Goals that make the course more sustainable**. They will have a direct, short-term effect. They will improve the quality of teaching and training and support the learners in their learning process.
- **Goals that we train and teach to make the actions in the sector more sustainable**. These have a long-term effect. Learners will apply and practice them in their daily activities.
- **Goals that we promote intrinsically**, they make learners aware and strengthen them to promote the idea of sustainability. These have a multiplier effect. They will "spread the news" throughout the sector and the world.

We discuss them, in order of impact.

Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into Teaching and Training Practice

The following overview links selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with practical actions that educators and trainers can integrate into their course design and delivery.

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

The INSPIRE course is open source, multilingual, and focused on lifelong learning. In this way, it supports lifelong opportunities for all.

In the delivery and development of courses we need to focus on:

- Inclusion, checking the content for non-inclusive language, cultural bias, and accessibility for individuals with limitations.
- Checking and adapting physical environments for accessibility.
- Following quality and ethical standards.
- Ensuring fair and unbiased assessment.

We promote engagement in training in the own organization.

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We promote engagement in training within our own organisations. Note that inclusion concerns all types of categorisation, including individuals based on level, background, or occupation.

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

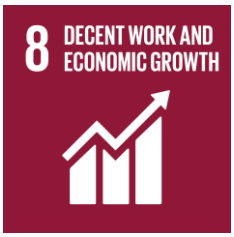
In the delivery and development of courses, we need to focus on:

- Checking content, exercises, and assessment for neutrality, bias, and evenly distributed examples.
- Presenting role models who have pursued opportunities in "typical" male or female occupations or broken the "glass ceiling", showing the advantages of mixed teams.
- Providing concrete examples of how to address gender issues.

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

In the delivery and development of courses, we need to focus on:

- Taking into account health, including mental health, safety and well-being issues when developing and delivering course content
- Ensure fair treatment
- Mentioning possible health risks associated with activities and possible mental-health risks linked to work organisation.
- Proposing concrete solutions.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

In the delivery and development of courses, we need to focus on:

- Fair treatment of all workers, regardless of their status or employment type.
- Maintaining a critical view of work organisation and its implications for decent working conditions.
- Maintaining a critical view of the principles of fair pay.
- Maintaining a critical view of workers' rights, particularly in relation to copyrights and neighbouring rights.

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

In the delivery and development of courses, we need to focus on:

- The direct use of energy, following sustainable practices
- Indirect use of energy and water, for example through servers for web-based or AI applications.

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Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

In the delivery and development of courses, we need to focus on:

- Using course materials that can be reused or recycled.
- Applying open-source commons principles.
- Allowing others to build upon ideas, develop further content, and avoid starting from zero.
- Promoting sustainable production techniques.

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

In the delivery and development of courses, we need to focus on:

- Planning live courses to minimise transport and maximise interaction,
- Using the "online where possible, live when needed" principle.
- Focusing live training on interaction and practice, where face-to-face contact is essential.
- Focusing online teaching on knowledge transfer. What can be read without interaction does not need face-to-face contact.
- Encouraging creative and energy-efficient building solutions.

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss

In the delivery and development of courses, we need to focus on:

- Managing material consumption responsibly, promoting recycling and fair trade.
- Providing concrete solutions that fit the target group, their activities**, and their working environment.

Learner-centred education integrates understanding of learners with self-awareness of the educator. Trainers and teachers who recognise individual and group diversity, apply inclusive and sustainable practices, and design flexible learning experiences create environments where learners take ownership of their growth. Together, they foster a culture of participation, reflection, and lifelong competence development aligned with professional realities.

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1.4. Lesson 4: Teaching and Training Approaches

Teaching and Training Approaches

This lesson focuses on teaching and training approaches, meaning the different ways learning can be organised and structured to support learners according to their characteristics, contexts, and needs. A teaching and training approach provides the broader framework within which a learner develops towards professional competence. It is shaped by the educational vision, the specific learning environment, and the learners' individual needs and goals.

Learning can take place in formal, non-formal, or informal contexts, and it may be theoretical or practice oriented, delivered in person or online. The learning path represents the structured sequence of steps a learner follows to reach a defined level of competence, a pathway that often combines different learning formats and contexts. Within each step of this pathway, trainers apply a range of teaching and training methodologies, which are explored in the next lesson.

1.4.1. Designing Learning Paths and Structures

In the previous lesson, we examined learning pathways from the learner's point of view — how individual needs, motivations, and experiences shape the way people learn. In this section, the focus shifts to the trainer's perspective: how to design and structure those pathways so that they effectively support competence development.

Designing and structuring learning paths

Individuals learn in different ways, based on their needs, preferences, level of autonomy, experience, and the amount of time they can or want to spend. To develop an efficient learning path, we need to determine which approaches best support their learning efforts.

One of the core questions when designing a learning path is to **identify which subjects learners can study independently and where interaction is essential**. When a lecturer is purely transmitting knowledge in one direction, the learner would probably benefit more from reading at their own pace. However, when dialogue, discussion, reflection, interaction or demonstration are needed for in-depth understanding and contextualisation, face-to-face contact becomes more effective.

Another important aspect is the **environment required for training**. If the subject needs a real-life context to practise and build routine, it also requires the live presence of a trainer to provide immediate feedback. If the competence is mainly theoretical or document-based, a digital environment with distance support may be more appropriate. The development of attitudes, soft skills and behaviour often requires an environment that encourages group interaction. This is more difficult to achieve in an online setting, where interaction can be limited by technical

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constraints, where people are harder to read, body language is difficult to interpret, and it is easy to hide behind the screen.

Of course, the **level of independence** of learners will influence their need for support. The more experienced and mature they are, the more they can work independently and manage larger portions of learning material. Less experienced learners benefit from smaller learning steps and greater guidance.

Learning paths are ideally a **combination of different approaches**. Learners benefit from variation in getting a deeper understanding of a subject by looking at it from different angles. For example, if taught theory is complemented with online learning content and practical exercises, the learner will see the concepts from the teachers point of view, can review them in own reading and practice them in exercises. This provides deeper understanding.

Embedding pedagogical principles within learning paths

Learning paths are not only defined by their structure and format but also by the **pedagogical principles** that shape how learning experiences unfold within them. Once the overall path is designed, trainers must embed methods and conditions that enable learners to grow effectively, safely, and sustainably. The following examples illustrate key pedagogical principles that can be applied across different learning paths and contexts.

- **Safe environment:** Leaners have the right to fail, in fact they should be encouraged to fail. Learning from failure is a crucial aspect of personal and professional growth. When faced with setbacks, it's important to acknowledge them, analyse what went wrong, and use that information to improve and move forward. Failure, while often uncomfortable, provides valuable lessons and can lead to greater resilience and success in the long run. But of course, in a real life environment, failure could have unwanted consequences for the organisation, the production or for the self-confidence of the learner. Therefore, it can be important to start in a safe environment and gradually increase risk to avoid negative effects of failure.
- **Building up complexity:** Some subjects overwhelm learners by their complexity. On the other hand, the lack of context makes the sub-subjects abstract. For larger subjects it is good practice to give context at the start, then teach and train the sub-subjects first. In a next step they are brought together and trained again. When routine has been developed, complexity can be added by bringing in external factors or more exceptional cases.
- **Practice before theory approach:** In traditional learning approaches theory is learned before it is practiced. This doesn't motivate or engages learners, because they don't see the need and lack context. Often practicing an unknown competence first and discovering what one needs to know and master is a more beneficial order. The practice, probably including a lot of failure, brings immediate context and clarity of missing knowledge and skills. The context helps to frame the needed theory and get a deeper understanding.
- **Learning sprints:** A learning sprint is a short, intensive learning experience designed to help individuals or teams quickly acquire new knowledge or skills. It's characterized by a focused, time-boxed approach, often lasting a few weeks, and emphasizes collaborative learning, practical application, and iterative feedback. It is a form of need-based learning that is triggered by a clear

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objective, a learning goal packed in a concrete problem to solve. The learners will discover what skills or knowledge they lack to solve the problem. They need to engage, to collaborate, to interact to get to a result. Often learning sprints are split in iterative cycles with feedback and reflection moments at the end.

1.4.2. Formal, Non-formal and Informal Learning

Once the structure and pedagogical principles of a learning path are defined, the next step is to situate it within the appropriate learning context. Learning can take place in formal, non-formal or informal settings, each defined by its level of organisation, purpose, and expected outcomes. Recognising these distinctions helps trainers and educators design relevant and flexible learning experiences that reflect real-life educational and professional environments. The following definitions are based on the Cedefop Glossary (Cedefop, n.d.):

Formal learning

Formal learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills and competences in an organised and structured environment in terms of learning objectives, time or resources, for example within an education or training institution or a company. It is intentional from the learner's point of view and typically leads to certification.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills and competences within the framework of planned activities, defined in terms of learning objectives, time or resources, where some form of learning support is present, such as in student–teacher or trainer relationships. It is intentional from the learner's point of view and may include programmes designed to impart work skills, adult literacy, or basic education for early school leavers.

Common examples of non-formal learning include in-company training through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers, for example in ICT; structured online learning using open educational resources; and courses organised by civil-society organisations for their members, target groups or the general public.

Outcomes of non-formal learning may be validated and may lead to certification. It is sometimes described as semi-structured learning and is close to, but not synonymous with, informal learning.

Informal learning

Informal learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills and competences within the framework of daily activities, such as work, family or leisure, that are not explicitly designated as learning activities in terms of objectives, time or learning support. It may be unintentional from the learner's perspective, yet its outcomes can also be validated and certified. Informal learning is often referred to as experiential, incidental or random learning and is close to, but not synonymous with, non-formal learning.

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1.4.3. Online Learning

Digitalisation has transformed the way formal, non-formal and informal learning take place. Each of these contexts can now be supported or even entirely delivered through online formats, expanding accessibility and flexibility for learners of all profiles. Online learning, in its many forms, enables trainers and educators to reach diverse audiences, facilitate continuous learning, and integrate digital tools into competence-based training. The following section outlines the main types and applications of online learning environments.

Online learning is a broad concept that can take different shapes and forms. One important element that defines its various types is the amount and timing of support a learner receives during the learning process. We can distinguish:

- **Online synchronous learning,** where the teacher or trainer is present during the learning process. This type provides high interaction both with the trainer and with other learners.
- **Online asynchronous learning**, where the teacher or trainer supports the learning process and can be reached through digital means. Interaction is lower and often limited to written communication, which can make it less suitable for competence-based learning.
- **Online independent learning,** where there is no teacher or trainer, and therefore no direct interaction.

In the following parts, we explore different approaches to online learning. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the pedagogical concept and the digital technology that supports it, as they are closely interconnected.

Learning management Systems, tools to integrate life and online	**Learning Management systems (LMS)** are software applications or web-based technology used to plan, implement, and assess learning and training processes. Essentially, an LMS streamlines the entire learning experience, from course creation to reporting, making it easier for organizations to manage and deliver training programs. They have dependant on the system following components: ➔ Planning and organizing teaching and training, acting as a one-stop location where the learner can find all information about the course. ➔ Course content container, keeping all documents and course elements for online and face-to-face learning and training, including learners' documents like assignments. ➔ Learner management, facilitating enrolment, tracking progress, reporting on student intermediate results. ➔ Engagement, facilitating communication and collaboration among learners and instructors through features like discussion forums and virtual meetings ➔ Assessment tools, supporting assessors in objective assessment of online as well as live tasks and assignments. Most LMS are very flexible and can be adapted to the needs of the users. Extra tools can be implemented on course or even on program level. Some examples:

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	• A portfolio that tracks progress towards competence over multiple courses and supports students in gathering evidence of progress. • Recognition of prior learning tools that guide candidates through the process. • Course generating tools, for example to develop video classes or complex exercises. • A repository of lessons that can be used or adapted. • Integration in other planning tools, like building management or institution agenda. • Tools for practical work experience and apprenticeship with external partners, including contract and time management, external evaluation, planning etc. LMS can be used in educational institutes, but also in private businesses or organisations to organize the learning of the coworkers. They exist as supported stand-alone cloud or local applications such as Canvas, Google Classroom or Adobe Learning Manager, as paid plugins for website management systems like WordPress, and as open-source applications that can be used for limited groups such as Moodle or Chamilo. Most systems have the option to share courses as final or editable content with colleagues around the world. This facilitates the development and reuse of courses and ensures a sustainable education ecosystem.
Massive Open Online Courses	Massive open online courses (MOOCs) are online courses in which anyone, anywhere can participate, usually for free. They are offered by universities and training institutes. The core characteristics are massiveness and openness. "**Massiveness**" refers to the scale and reach of the courses. **Openness** refers to barrier-free participation. The learning process is not limited by time, schedules, geographic location, learning speed, accessibility needs, or financial means. These characteristics define the differences between the various course types (Pilli & Admiraal, 2016). For example, • Limited to a specific audience and smaller scale • Small-scale but more open, typically open-source courses from smaller organizations A Vocational Open Online Course (VOOC) is a specific type of MOOC focused on vocational pedagogies. They can include practical tasks and procedures shown in real-world examples, along with experts providing advice as "talking heads." VOOCs are short, bite-sized vocational courses that typically take around an hour to complete (UNEVOC, n.d.).
Shared resources	There is a wide variety of online resources that could be considered as or part of MOOCs or VOOCs. Some examples: • **LinkedIn learning**, connected to the LinkedIn professional social platform, provides high quality learning material for an all-in price.

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	• **TED Talks**, short, powerful, and engaging presentations on a wide range of topics, designed to spread ideas. These can be used for more philosophical subjects or reflection. • YouTube **tutorials**, published by professionals, experts but also influencers and self-declared experts. The quality goes from verry high to disinformation. • A specific type of these tutorials are **training and demonstration videos** by teachers, experts or companies, that are product specific, but due the nature of the makers trustworthy and high quality. • Short, maximum 2-3 min. recordings referred to as **learning clips** are also shared online. These can be • used as building blocks in larger online courses Here, we can only try to motivate teachers to share the resources they develop. Sharing resources has a multiplier effect and is sustainable in the broadest sense. On the other hand, it is appropriate to offer some critical notes here. Most people and organizations publish these online resources for a reason. For educational institutes, this may be to sell mentoring and certification; for companies, it may be to sell their product; and for individuals, it may be to promote their ideas or generate clicks. There is nothing wrong with these practices as long as one is aware of them and carefully checks the quality and reliability of the information.
Online face-to-face group teaching	Online face-to-face training leverages digital platforms to deliver **synchronous learning**, combining the flexibility of remote access with real-time interaction. This method supports visual, auditory, and verbal communication through video calls, chat, and shared resources. It enables diverse learners to participate regardless of location while maintaining engagement through live discussions, breakout groups, and interactive tools. Particularly relevant today, it balances accessibility with personal connection. Teaching a group online is challenging, especially when using basic equipment. Teachers appear as "talking heads," alternating with screen views of PowerPoint presentations or documents. This can lead to image fatigue and a loss of focus. Additionally, the technical aspects of a session require the teacher's attention, which cannot be given to the learners. An effective online, face-to-face session requires much more preparation and planning than a live session. While one can spontaneously adapt to a group's dynamic, add demonstrations or exercises, or change focus in a live situation, everything in an online session must be prepared in advance. Videos must be uploaded for synchronization, quizzes and exercises must be created in digital formats, and variations in presentation formats must be established. Focus and rest points must be defined in advance.
Recording of	Live, face-to-face classes can be recorded for students who are unable to attend a class

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classes	or who need to review it for a better understanding. Often, the recordings are based on a general view from one camera, which is difficult to follow on a screen. While this is a good substitute, it can never replace a live lesson.
Online one-on-one / mentoring	Online, face-to-face mentoring is a flexible and efficient way of mentoring that doesn't take much time. Since only two people are online, and documents can be shared or work can be shown on screen, it ensures a high level of focus. For students with learning difficulties, sessions can be recorded. Neither the student nor the teacher needs to travel.

1.4.4. Live Face-to-Face Learning and Training

While online learning offers flexibility and accessibility, live face-to-face learning and training remain essential for developing practical, interpersonal, and experiential competences that require physical presence and real-time interaction. The two modes complement each other, as effective learning pathways often combine digital and in-person formats to balance flexibility with engagement, feedback, and collaboration.

Live face-to-face learning and training includes all kind of learning activities where a learner, individual or in group is present at the same physical place as the teacher-trainer. It includes traditional classroom teaching, but also lab, simulated environment or in situ training.

For learners, it provides a stronger sense of community and social interaction, they can get immediate feedback and clarification and work in a structured learning environment with reduced distractions.

Teachers and trainers have it easier to gauge student understanding, have more opportunities for spontaneous interaction and discussion and develop a stronger connection with students.

In live, face-to-face settings, dynamics are often shaped by physical presence, proximity, and non-verbal cues. In online environments, dynamics are influenced by factors like technological access, digital literacy, and the design of the online learning platform.

To address the diversity of live learning situations, the following sections present four common formats, each offering distinct opportunities for developing competences and applying knowledge in practice.

Face-to-face learning	**Face-to-face learning** varies from the most typical classroom or aula setting where the teacher "deliver" knowledge to a group of students, towards more interactive ways of transferring knowledge and skills. In these more interactive forms discussing, group interaction, exercises, presentations by learners, have a place. But the process is often teacher steered.
Lab training	**Labs** are safe spaces where learners, often on an individual basis, but in a community of peers, can discover, experiment, test, and discuss different methodologies, techniques, or settings. This creates a supported environment where new ideas or competences can be developed. Labs exist for different roles and activities, some examples: • **Business labs**, where learners engage in activities like ideation, prototyping,

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	market research, business modeling, and pitching, simulating real-world business challenges. • **IT labs**, or Information Technology labs, specialized environments designed for experimenting with, learning, and developing IT-related projects and solutions without fear of damaging a production network. • **Fab Lab**, or Fabrication Laboratory, designed to make individuals discover how to use digital fabrication tools and technologies. These labs are equipped with tools like 3D printers, laser cutters, and CNC machines, and the training aims to foster skills in design, prototyping, and problem-solving.
Simulated environment training	A **simulated environment** is an environment for training purposes that has all parameters of a real life under control. In this way, one can simulate different scenarios in safe conditions. In contrast with labs, simulated environments also implement external factors influencing the activity. The most known simulated environments are probably flight simulators, but the exist for different occupations or technologies. Some examples • A simulated shop where learners can develop their sales skills. • A (virtual) network simulator where connecting and patching of networks can be explored and real-life settings can be tested. • Lighting or set simulators, where 3D visualisation or a real performance can be made and tested.
In situ training	The essence of **in situ training** is the fact that the learners' trains is a real environment with all the complexity of this environment. This can be in a company or organisation, but in art schools it could also be a school context while working towards a public performance and where technical, design, productional, organisational and management roles work together "for real". Some typical variations of in situ training are: • **Apprenticeship:** It is in fact a very old system, dating back to the guilds. An apprentice would "join" a master and learn their trade there until they themselves became masters and started mentoring apprentices. However, the complexity of the professions in our sector makes it increasingly difficult to learn the trade solely on the floor. The necessary underlying theory and the greater abstraction of the tools we work with make it necessary to also learn part of the training in a more "school-based" context. • **Dual learning:** Dual learning is a fully-fledged learning pathway within education. The learner acquires knowledge and skills both in the classroom and on the shop floor. It is an integrated educational pathway of general training, vocational training and work experience. Dual learning is therefore a learning pathway in

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which the pupil, course participant or student combines learning at school with learning in a company. The learning processes at school and in the workplace complement and reinforce each other.

- **Internship or practical work experience:** An internship is a structured, temporary work experience, that provides practical training and exposure to a specific field. It's a chance to apply classroom knowledge in a real-world setting. Internships help develop both hard skills (technical abilities) and soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem-solving). The main focus is on developing routine in what is learned in a school context.

1.4.5. Portfolio-Based Learning & Digital Badges

Having explored different environments and methods for learning, both online and face-to-face, it is equally important to consider how the knowledge, skills and competences developed through these experiences are recognised and validated. Portfolio-based learning and digital badges provide tools for making individual learning visible, verifiable and transferable across educational, professional and creative contexts.

Portfolio-based learning and digital badges represent innovative approaches to recognising, evidencing and communicating learning. In **portfolio-based learning**, learners collect and reflect on evidence of their progress, achievements and competences over time, from formal education and training to informal or work-based experiences. Portfolios can include written reflections, project work, feedback, and artefacts that demonstrate growth and capability.

As the world of work and learning evolves, especially in fast-paced and non-linear sectors such as the performing arts and cultural industries, traditional methods of certifying skills and experiences often fall short. In this context, **digital badges** complement portfolios by providing a flexible and verifiable way to recognise specific learning achievements.

Digital Badges as Tools for Recognition

Digital badges are visual, web-enabled credentials that validate specific skills, achievements, or learning milestones. They contain metadata that verify what was learned, who issued the badge, the criteria for earning it, and the evidence supporting the accomplishment. These badges can be shared online (e.g., LinkedIn, personal websites, digital CVs), stored in digital backpacks or portfolios, used as building blocks in personalized, lifelong learning paths.

Unlike diplomas, which reflect a long-term program of study, digital badges can acknowledge shorter, more specific competencies. This makes them ideal for recognizing informal learning, workshop participation, practical achievements, or sector-specific training.

In creative professions, many essential skills, such as collaboration, cultural entrepreneurship, audience engagement, or digital creativity, are not always formally certified. Professionals often learn on the job, through residencies, mentorships, or peer-led initiatives. Digital badges make such learning visible and verifiable. They provide evidence-based validation of skills valued by employers, funders or collaborators, enhance visibility for freelance and project-based workers, and allow cross-sector and international portability of credentials.

For organisations, digital badges support inclusive talent development, diversify entry routes into the profession

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and enable more data-driven and transparent upskilling strategies.

As digital ecosystems expand, **integrating badges into broader lifelong learning and professional development strategies becomes essential**. For artists, technicians, managers, educators and administrators alike, badges offer a way to make learning more visible, shareable and impactful, on both personal and sector-wide levels.

To better understand how portfolio-based learning and digital credentials are applied in practice, several European initiatives demonstrate how these tools function within real-world education and training systems. The following case focuses illustrate different models of implementation, from sector-specific frameworks to Europe-wide credentialing tools.

Case Focus: The ETTEC Project (European Theatre Technicians Education Curriculum)

A leading example of digital badge implementation in the performing arts is the **ETTEC Project**, a European initiative that aims to build a common framework for technical training and certification in live performance across multiple countries (ETTEC, n.d.)

CASE Focus: Europass

Europass is a set of online tools and information that helps individuals manage every step of their learning and career. The tools and information support users in communicating their skills, qualifications and experiences clearly and consistently across Europe (European Commission, 2025). Europass functions as a digital portfolio with features such as automatic translation of competences based on the ESCO taxonomy. However, it is limited to gathering and presenting portfolio information and does not include interactivity with mentors or coaches.

Case focus: EDC's European Digital Credentials

European Digital Credentials (EDC) provide a multilingual format for electronically sealed, digital representations of learning credentials. They can be awarded in the context of formal education, training, online courses, volunteering experiences or non-formal learning, and can take the form of diplomas, micro-credentials, certificates of participation or any other type of learning record (European Commission, 2025).

1.4.6. Hybrid Learning

As education and training increasingly integrate both digital and physical environments, hybrid learning emerges as a dynamic combination of the two.

Hybrid teaching involves delivering lessons simultaneously to a live, in-person group and to an online audience. This is one of the most demanding forms of teaching because it combines two different approaches at the same time. It is very intensive for the teacher, who must maintain the attention of both groups, monitor the online systems and questions, and respond to the interactions of the live students.

For quality delivery, a multi-camera setup is preferable, so the teacher is not bound to a fixed position and live student reactions can be captured. Monitors should be placed within the teacher's sightline to give the impression that online students are being addressed alongside the live group. Likewise, online participants should be visible and audible to those on site, improving engagement and mutual interaction.

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Ideally, a second person manages the digital systems, ensures that all connections run smoothly, supports students with technical issues and selects or moderates the written online questions.

A setup of this kind becomes even more valuable when several teachers collaborate synchronously from different locations or countries, each engaging with their local group. This approach preserves the immediacy of live learning while promoting international cooperation and shared teaching experiences.

1.4.7. Blended Digital – Analogue Formats

Following the discussion on hybrid learning, **blended digital–analog formats** offer a complementary approach that combines online and face-to-face learning components across time rather than simultaneously. This approach allows flexibility in the design of learning pathways and adaptation to diverse learner profiles, contexts, and goals.

Depending on the target group, the education environment they follow, and the needs and goals they have, the same digital means can used in different ways. These needs can range from being “informed” to being “certified”, in other words, rom someone who seeks a better understanding of a topic, to someone who needs to apply specific skills in a job, to someone requiring formal certification.

We can roughly assume that a certified training course consists of three main elements:

- Knowledge transfer, which can often be achieved through digital tools and brings the learner to the level of an informed participant
- Skills development through practical training, which brings the learner to the level of a trained professional
- Assessment, which certifies the learner’s competence

These three elements form the foundation of most structured training programmes. They can be seen as sequential steps, from acquiring knowledge, to applying it in practice, to demonstrating competence through assessment. The figure below illustrates this progression, showing how digital learning, practical training, and assessment interact to support the development from informed to trained and finally certified learners.

This is a simplified model. In reality, more variations are possible by integrating online teaching or mentoring, offline coaching, feedback, diversification, and reflection on results or artefacts.

Figure 1.1

Elements of a certified training course

The three elements presented above-digital learning, practical training and assessment-can be combined and adapted to meet different learning needs and professional contexts. Depending on the learner’s experience, motivation and goals, as well as the requirements of the organisation or educational setting, these elements can be structured in multiple ways. The following models illustrate how the same building blocks can form flexible learning

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pathways that respond to diverse audiences, from experienced professionals seeking certification to newcomers engaging in structured education or informal upskilling.

Based on these building blocks, we can develop a flexible system that can be used in different ways.

Lifelong learning pathway

The **lifelong learning pathway** is designed for professionals already active in their field. They use the digital content for knowledge updates, receive targeted training from a local trainer within their workplace, and are assessed at the end by an independent assessor. This approach supports continuous professional development while remaining integrated into the learner's professional environment.

Figure 1.2

Lifelong learning pathway

Educational pathway

In the **educational pathway**, digital content is alternated with in-person training to enhance interaction and contextual application of knowledge. Learners progress through both online and classroom components before being assessed. This structure can also be used for maintenance or refresher training, enabling experienced staff within organisations to update their competences over a longer period of time.

Figure 1.3

Mainteinance training

Informed person pathway

Not all professionals require certification; some simply need to gain awareness or understanding of a topic to perform their roles more effectively. For instance, a manager overseeing a digitalisation process may not need full technical training but must understand the key concepts to follow the project's progress. Such learners can complete only the digital component and, in the case of more extensive courses, receive a certificate of attendance.

Figure 1.4

Attendance

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Recognition of prior learning

Professionals who already possess significant experience in a subject area may not require structured learning. In this pathway, learners can voluntarily access the digital content for self-assessment or review before proceeding directly to the formal assessment stage to validate their competence and obtain certification.

Figure 1.5

Recognition of prior learning

Advantages

By offering the same content and activities in multiple formats, these pathways accommodate diverse learner needs while minimising additional development effort. Because resources are shared across pathways, more investment can be directed towards the face-to-face components that enhance quality and learner engagement.

Together, these learning pathways illustrate how blended and flexible approaches can support competence-based education across formal, non-formal and informal contexts. By aligning digital, practical and assessment components, trainers and institutions can ensure inclusivity, adaptability and quality in professional learning, core principles that underpin the INSPIRE approach to teaching and training.

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1.5. Lesson 5: Teaching and Training Methodologies

Teaching and Training Methodologies

Building on Lesson 4, which examined how learning environments and structures can be designed to support diverse learners, this lesson focuses on the specific teaching and training methodologies that bring these approaches to life. It explores concrete methods used to deliver learning content effectively, enhance engagement, and adapt teaching to different goals, contexts, and learner needs.

1.5.1. Foundations of Teaching and Training Methodology

Goals of teaching and training

The goals of teaching and training are broad and diverse. To choose an appropriate methodology, it is necessary to match the needs and characteristics of a subject or competence with the objectives of the chosen method. Every method serves specific purposes, which can be distinguished as follows:

- √ Knowing and recapitulation
- √ Understanding
- √ Training
- √ Building routine
- √ Applying in a specific context
- √ Discovering

Some thoughts about storytelling

Teaching and training are like theatre: you aim to take an audience with you through a story, and they should leave with something meaningful at the end. Storytelling is built around a clear goal, a logical and understandable structure, and the use of different tools, styles, and techniques to engage the audience.

Most stories begin with **"Once upon a time…"**, setting the context, introducing the characters, and describing the environment in which the story takes place. In teaching and training, this corresponds to introducing the topic, defining the parameters, and clarifying the learning objectives.

The story then unfolds through **a series of actions** that gradually reveal the key elements needed to understand the outcome. This sequence is logical, though not necessarily chronological-it is arranged to maintain engagement and stimulate curiosity. Each part builds upon the previous one, providing the foundation for what follows. Similarly, in teaching and training, each lesson contributes knowledge and understanding needed for the next.

The various elements of the story accumulate and lead to the **final resolution**. Teaching and training follow the same principle: a well-structured course progresses step by step toward a comprehensive understanding of the

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subject, achieved through the integration of its parts.

Finally, the story concludes with **a takeaway**, something the audience remembers. In teaching and training, this corresponds to the **wrap-up**, where the key concepts are summarised and consolidated for future application. Applying storytelling principles in teaching helps create logical progression, sustain engagement, and reinforce the core concepts that learners should retain and practise.

1.5.2. Core Delivery Methods

Having established the main goals and underlying logic of teaching and training, the next step is to explore how these can be effectively implemented through concrete delivery methods. Each methodology offers different ways of achieving learning outcomes, depending on the level of participation, type of competence, and teaching context. The following core methods represent the most commonly used approaches in vocational and artistic education, combining theoretical delivery with practical engagement.

Lecturing	**Lecturing** is a traditional teaching method where the instructor delivers content directly to learners, usually in a structured format. It is effective for presenting large amounts of information efficiently and for introducing new concepts, theories, or frameworks. Lectures tend to be more teacher-centred, focusing on content transmission rather than active learner participation. While efficient, lecturing can lead to disengagement if overused or delivered passively. To maximise impact, lectures are often enhanced with visual aids, storytelling, examples, and occasional questions to maintain attention. In vocational education, lecturing serves well to establish theoretical foundations before practical application. However, combining lectures with interactive and experiential methods helps learners retain and apply knowledge more effectively.
Interactive teaching	**Interactive teaching** actively involves learners in the learning process, encouraging participation through questions, discussions, polls, or problem-solving tasks. Unlike passive lectures, this method promotes critical thinking and deeper understanding by engaging learners to articulate ideas and challenge assumptions. It helps build communication skills and accommodates diverse learning styles. In vocational settings, interactive teaching connects theory to real situations, making abstract concepts more concrete. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding learners rather than simply delivering information. This method fosters motivation and retention by making learners co-creators of their knowledge.
Demonstration	**Demonstration** is a teaching method in which the instructor shows how to perform a task or skill step by step, making learning visible and concrete. It bridges theory and practice by allowing learners to observe correct procedures, safety measures, and techniques before attempting them independently. Demonstrations are particularly valuable in vocational training for technical or manual skills. When combined with explanation and questioning, demonstrations help learners understand the reasons and principles behind actions. They reduce errors and build confidence, especially in complex or high-risk tasks.

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Exercises	**Exercises** provide hands-on opportunities for learners to apply knowledge and develop skills. They can be group-based, encouraging collaboration; lab-based, offering controlled environments for experimentation; or context-based, using real workplace scenarios or equipment. Exercises make learning active, helping learners consolidate theory through practice. In vocational training, exercises simulate actual job conditions, allowing learners to make mistakes safely and to strengthen procedural understanding and confidence. Exercises also foster teamwork and problem-solving skills when carried out collaboratively.

1.5.3. Active and Learner-Centred Strategies

Having explored the core delivery methods that structure and convey knowledge, the next step is to focus on methodologies that shift the centre of learning from the teacher to the learner. Active and learner-centred strategies place responsibility for learning on participants themselves, fostering autonomy, reflection, and engagement. These approaches complement traditional delivery methods by encouraging learners to apply, discuss, and co-create knowledge through experience and interaction.

Flip the classroom	**Flipping the classroom** reverses the traditional learning process. Learners first study theory independently through videos, readings, or tutorials, and then use class time for active application, discussion, and problem-solving. This approach encourages deeper engagement with the material and promotes learner autonomy. In vocational training, it allows learners to familiarise themselves with complex concepts at their own pace, freeing face-to-face sessions for practical exercises and personalised support. It fosters critical thinking and better preparation for real-world challenges by emphasising application over passive listening.[1]
Practice-to-theory approach	The **practice-to-theory approach** begins with hands-on experience or real-world tasks, followed by reflection and the introduction of underlying theoretical principles. This method grounds learning in context, helping learners connect abstract ideas to concrete actions. It is particularly effective in vocational education, where practical skills are essential but must be supported by theoretical understanding to ensure adaptability and problem-solving ability. By experiencing the work first, learners develop curiosity and motivation to understand why things work as they do, creating a meaningful and lasting learning cycle. This approach is essentially a variation of the flipped classroom model. The learner first explores what skills are already mastered at a basic level and then learns the reasons and deeper understanding behind the competence. Trainers provide context, encourage engagement, and guide learners towards a deeper comprehension of the subject, starting

[1] Instructional model in which the classical order of education or training is inverted. Instead of following a course with the teacher or trainer and then applying it individually (homework, online training, etc.), learners first study the topic outside the classroom (for instance viewing online resources) and then explore the topic in greater depth in the classroom with the teacher or trainer guiding learners as they apply related concepts. (Cedefop)

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	from the learner's current level.
Role play	**Role play** involves learners acting out real-life scenarios to practise communication, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. It is a dynamic method to explore behavioural attitudes and professional relationships in a safe environment. In vocational training, role play develops empathy, conflict resolution, and teamwork abilities. It allows participants to experiment with responses, receive feedback, and enhance soft skills that are crucial for workplace success. Role play also encourages reflection on attitudes and emotional intelligence, which are often difficult to teach through theory alone.
Case Study	A **case study** presents learners with a real or simulated problem based on actual events, requiring analysis, discussion, and problem-solving. This method strengthens critical thinking and application skills by connecting theory to practical challenges. Case studies can be individual or group-based and often involve research, debate, and decision-making. They promote understanding of complex, multifaceted issues learners may encounter in their profession and encourage them to consider different perspectives and potential consequences before taking action.

1.5.4. Collaborative and Experiential Learning

Building on the learner-centred approaches discussed previously, collaborative and experiential learning emphasise the social dimension of knowledge creation. Learning does not occur in isolation but through interaction, cooperation, and shared problem-solving. These methodologies engage learners as members of a community, mirroring real professional environments where teamwork, communication, and joint decision-making are essential.

Group work

Group work involves learners collaborating to complete a task or project without assigned roles. It promotes communication, teamwork, and problem-solving by encouraging learners to share ideas, negotiate, and reach consensus. This method reflects real workplace dynamics where cooperation is essential. Group work helps develop social skills, responsibility, and collective creativity, although it requires clear goals and effective facilitation to ensure balanced participation and to prevent dominance by a few members.

Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is a pedagogical model based on the socialisation of learners who work together to achieve common goals or complete group tasks that they may not be able to accomplish individually (Cedefop, nd.).

- **Collaborative group work and Role based group work:** While collaborative group work does not include any hierarchy among participants, role-based group work assigns specific functions or responsibilities to each group member, simulating real professional roles within a team. This method enhances understanding of individual contributions and interdependencies, fostering accountability and leadership skills. It prepares learners for collaborative work environments by emphasising coordination, delegation, and respect for diverse expertise, which are crucial in complex vocational settings.
- **Charettes:** Charettes are intensive, time-constrained group design or problem-solving sessions where

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participants rapidly generate ideas and develop solutions collaboratively. Originating from architecture and planning, this method stimulates creativity under pressure and encourages interdisciplinary input. In vocational education, charettes promote innovation, teamwork, and quick decision-making, helping learners experience real-world project dynamics in compressed timeframes**.** This methodology is particularly effective in professional training contexts. A diverse, mixed team is given a concrete challenge to solve within a limited time. The group ideally includes members with different roles, for example technician, building manager, designer, or financial manager. They work to solve the case within a three-hour cycle, which typically includes:

- Discussion
- Developing a solution
- Presentation to the larger group

The case must be concrete, with a clearly defined brief and explicit expectations. This type of activity helps participants understand problem-solving dynamics and appreciate different perspectives. Ideally, multiple teams work on similar cases and then learn from each other's results.

1.5.5. Simulation-Based and Digital Learning Methods

Building on collaborative and experiential learning, simulation-based and digital methods extend these principles into technologically enhanced environments. They allow learners to engage in realistic, hands-on activities that mirror professional practice while maintaining safety and control. Through simulation, gamification, and immersive technologies, learners can experience teamwork, decision-making, and problem-solving in a setting that blends practice with innovation.

Simulated environment training uses realistic but controlled settings such as virtual reality, mock-ups, or training labs to safely replicate workplace conditions. This approach allows learners to practise technical and decision-making skills without real-world risks. It builds confidence, reinforces procedures, and enables repeated practice of complex or hazardous tasks. Simulations can be adapted to varied scenarios, providing immediate feedback and assessment opportunities.

The simulated environment can take many forms, such as an office space (classroom), laboratory, studio, or an online space using virtual reality and simulation tools. The key advantages of such environments include:

- ✓ Greater control over the learning process
- ✓ The ability to gradually increase stress factors and complexity, for example through:
  - surroundings
  - colleagues
  - audience
  - physical environment
  - safety conditions
- ✓ The opportunity to tackle real problems in a safe and structured context

Gamification

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Building on simulation-based methods, **gamification** applies elements of game design and play to learning and training contexts. It uses mechanisms such as point scoring, progress levels, rewards, and competition to increase learner engagement, motivation, and participation. The purpose of gamification is not to turn learning into a game, but to use the motivational principles of games to stimulate achievement, persistence, and enjoyment in the learning process (Cedefop, n.d.).

Gamification can take many forms and is suitable for both digital and face-to-face contexts. It can be applied to individual learning activities or group-based challenges. Depending on the design, learners may earn points, unlock levels, collect digital badges, or receive tangible rewards that recognise their progress.

Key characteristics of gamified learning include:

- Motivational design that encourages sustained engagement
- Clearly defined challenges and feedback mechanisms
- Applicability in both virtual and real-life learning environments
- Adaptability for solo or team-based participation
- Structured progression through levels or stages
- Potential for symbolic or real rewards

Example – Sustainability learning context

A sustainability-focused training programme might award CO_2 badges for learners who complete green challenges, such as designing a low-emission solution. Once a learner collects a defined number of badges, they could unlock a symbolic "holiday flight" reward, illustrating the link between behavioural choices and measurable outcomes.

Gamification often draws inspiration from familiar board or card games that are adapted for educational use. For example:

- The **Quartet game**, used to match and compare related concepts or materials
- The **Timeline game**, where learners arrange events or innovations chronologically (see https://canonbase.eu/wiki/Item:Q31015)
- **Monopoly-type games**, adapted to explore sustainable city design or resource management

These adaptations show how game structures can be creatively integrated into learning to develop problem-solving, strategy, and collaboration skills in an engaging way.

Knowledge clips

Knowledge clips are short, focused videos, typically under ten minutes, designed to explain a specific concept, skill, or idea. They serve as supplementary learning resources, often used to introduce topics, clarify complex ideas, or provide concrete examples. Knowledge clips can be created by instructors, found online, or commissioned externally. The visual and audio quality of the clips is important to maintain learners' attention and improve retention. Using pre-existing clips can lead to a loss of coherence in style, level, or approach, so selection and adaptation should be done carefully.

Simulations and scale models

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Scale models and simulations are valuable tools in teaching and training because they provide safe, controlled environments for learning practical skills and concepts. They allow learners to interact with representations of real-world systems, practise decision-making, and develop problem-solving abilities without the risks and complexities of the actual environment. We can distinguish several types, each with different uses and advantages:

Scale models	Represent real-life systems at a reduced scale, allowing learners to observe and understand complex structures and processes in a more tangible way. They provide a strong three-dimensional perception and make it possible to visualise large realities that cannot be easily observed as a whole in real life. Through scale models, learners gain a clearer overview of how components interact, making them a valuable tool for design, planning, and spatial understanding.
Digital simulation	Recreates real-life environments in a three-dimensional, computer-generated form. It allows users to explore and interact with realistic scenarios, including the ability to visualise internal or hidden components that are not visible in physical models. However, digital simulations can be difficult to interpret for learners without prior real-world experience and may be challenging to navigate. When properly designed, they provide opportunities for repeated practice and reflection in safe, adaptable settings.
VR simulation	Enables learners to navigate and interact within a fully immersive digital environment. This approach depends heavily on learners' computer and gaming skills and often relies on gaming technologies. VR training allows for engaging, experiential learning but offers limited realistic interaction with other users, which can reduce the sense of shared practice or teamwork.
XR training	Combines real-world views with additional digital layers of information. It allows learners to see and interact with both real and virtual elements simultaneously, enriching their understanding of spatial relationships and technical operations. XR training is technically complex and requires precise object tracking and recognition to function effectively.
Chatbots and avatars	Represent another form of digital simulation, capable of replicating conversational and behavioural interactions. They can simulate role-play scenarios, present unexpected or adaptive cases, and provide immediate responses that support self-paced learning. However, they carry a risk of generating inaccurate or biased content if not carefully managed. Effective use of chatbots and avatars requires strong, sector-specific language models, thorough testing with the target group, and regular verification and updates to ensure reliability and educational value.

Effective teaching and training require more than the application of a single methodology. Each approach, whether traditional, learner-centred, collaborative, or digitally enhanced, serves different learning purposes and contexts. The key is to combine and adapt these methods to the learners' profiles, the competences to be developed, and the environment in which learning takes place. By doing so, trainers create flexible, inclusive, and engaging learning experiences that support both individual growth and professional excellence.

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1.6. Lesson 6: Developing a Training Program

Developing a Training Programme

Building on Lesson 5, which explored the key methodologies for delivering effective and engaging training, Lesson 6 focuses on how these elements come together in the design of a complete training programme. It guides educators and trainers through the practical steps of transforming identified learning needs into structured, learner-centred training pathways. The lesson examines how to analyse training needs, define teaching and training strategies, develop contextualised and progressive learning paths, and create high-quality learning materials and resources that support competence development in diverse settings.

1.6.1. Training Needs Analysis

A training needs analysis establishes the foundation of a training programme by comparing the current situation with the desired or expected situation. The process depends on the target group and the professional or organisational context in which the training will take place. Training needs are typically expressed in terms of **competences** or more concrete **learning outcomes**.

In educational contexts where the needs are not linked to a single organisation or defined group, the analysis focuses on the average learner profile and sectoral needs within a specific geographic or professional area. For example: “secondary school graduates to be trained as safety and sustainability managers in cultural centres” or “artists retraining for managerial positions in theatres.” The outcome of such research is a **generic occupational profile** that can guide the design of the training.

For company-specific training, needs are identified by analysing the organisation’s work processes in relation to the available competences within the workforce. This analysis should look not only at the present situation but also anticipate future developments, how processes might evolve and what new skills will be required. The result is an **organisational competence profile**, which can then be matched with the **individual competence profiles** of employees.

Within an organisation or a team, we do not need to train every coworker with the same competences for the same function. Often the **diversity of competence profiles** amongst the coworkers is enriching for the team and provides opportunities to excel in a specific part of a process. For example, in an office team it is an advantage to have someone specialising in dealing with the financial aspect of external sponsors and someone else in procurement of equipment, while they both have a general understanding of all the aspects of the financial office work.

Actively involving employees in this analysis is essential. It helps uncover hidden needs, identify untapped potential, and capture personal learning aspirations. The analysis should also consider career trajectories—for instance, a colleague approaching retirement might wish to transition to less physically demanding work or mentor younger staff.

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In the case of **interns or apprentices**, a predefined training profile usually exists. Here, the task is to align this profile with the opportunities available in the organisation.

Analysing methods

To analyse the needs of an organisation, a **process–competence matrix** can be developed. This matrix links each step of a workflow or process to the competences required to perform it effectively. It highlights which competences are critical, how they relate to one another, and which roles depend on them. This method helps translate abstract competences into the concrete reality of the workplace.

To identify the needs of **individual coworkers** or **learners,** a **competence survey** can be used. Each participant receives a list of relevant competences and indicates, for each one, how it relates to their current role:

- ➔ I am able to do this – the competence is already mastered.
- ➔ I use this for my role – the competence is actively applied in my work.
- ➔ I need this for my role – the competence is required but not yet fully mastered.
- ➔ I want to learn this – the competence is of personal interest for future growth.

This first survey provides an overview of existing competences, job-related requirements, and learning aspirations. It can be followed by individual or group discussions to explore answers in more depth. It is also important to leave space for participants to list additional competences that may not appear in the predefined list.

A second layer of analysis can be added through a **self-assessment of mastery**, where learners indicate their level of proficiency for each competence, choosing one of four statements:

- ➔ I can't do this
- ➔ I am uncertain doing this
- ➔ I am able to do this
- ➔ I am an expert in this

Combining both tools allows trainers to visualise the overall potential of a team, identify competence gaps, and design **differentiated training plans** that target real needs rather than repeating what learners already know. Engaging all participants in this process strengthens **learner-centred learning** from the outset, fostering motivation and ownership.

Finally, the process must take place in a **safe and confidential environment**. Participants should be assured that their responses will not be used for evaluation, performance review, or promotion decisions, but solely for improving the quality and relevance of the training.

1.6.2. Developing a Teaching and Training Strategy

Once the exact needs have been identified, the next step is to develop a **teaching and training strategy** to implement the planned activities.

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The strategy should take into account the **environment** in which the training will be delivered and define the **overall goals**, **timeline**, **logical steps**, and **methodology** to be used. It should also consider the **resources** and **commitment** of the organisation, including the time learners can dedicate, the facilities available, and the logistical support that can be provided.

In addition, the strategy must outline **quality assurance** and **follow-up measures** to ensure that the training remains effective, relevant, and aligned with its objectives.

In short, it provides a structured description of the framework and conditions within which the teaching and training activities will be developed.

1.6.3. Developing Learner-centred Training

Once the overall teaching and training strategy has been defined, the next step is to translate it into concrete, learner-centred practice. While the strategy outlines the broader framework, learner-centred training focuses on how these elements are applied to meet the specific needs, motivations, and contexts of individual learners. This ensures that the strategy is not only coherent and well-structured but also responsive, inclusive, and adaptable in practice.

The core principle of learner-centred training is to keep the learner at the heart of the learning process, granting them ownership of their development and guiding them through a structured yet flexible learning journey. This approach must be grounded in a thorough analysis of the **context**, **learning needs**, and **characteristics of the target group**.

Contextualizing the content

Understanding the learners' context is essential for designing relevant and engaging training. Trainers must identify the learners' backgrounds, prior knowledge, learning autonomy, working environment, available time, and learning preferences. Equally important is to determine what motivates them, what conditions they need in order to learn effectively, and which teaching or training approaches best support their engagement.

The learning content and activities should be contextualised so that examples, exercises, and case studies reflect the learners' professional or creative reality. When learners recognise their own context in the training material, their motivation and engagement increase, and learning outcomes become more meaningful and applicable to real-life situations. Contextualisation therefore transforms general content into concrete learning materials and activities that resonate with the learners' everyday experience.

Activating the learning process

The next step involves developing a **learning path** that actively engages learners in the process. Learning and teaching activities must be structured in a logical sequence, where each activity builds upon and reinforces the previous one. When selecting the types of activities and methodologies, trainers should consistently apply learner-centred principles.

The following questions can guide these decisions:

- *How do we trigger the learner?*
- *What support does the learner needs to learn this?*

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- *What prerequisite knowledge or skills does the learner need to learn?*
- *What can be learned autonomous, what needs a teacher-trainer intervention?*
- *What choices can the learner make within the framework of content to master?*
- *Where does the learner needs feedback, reflection, discussion?*

These guiding questions ensure that the design of the training process remains flexible, adaptive, and oriented towards learner empowerment.

Training in the Arts Context

In the cultural and creative sectors, the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of work requires educational practices that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries. Artists today need to understand fields such as software development, data ethics, or urban planning, while cultural managers must be competent in areas such as digital marketing, accessibility standards, and sustainable production practices.

Collaborative learning environments, where diverse sectors and skill sets intersect, are essential. Institutions are increasingly developing **cross-disciplinary laboratories** where, for example, choreographers work alongside AI developers or composers collaborate with game designers. These environments foster not only the acquisition of new skills but also the development of open-mindedness, innovation, and critical reflection.

1.6.4. Developing a Training Path

Once the learner-centred approach has been defined, the next step is to structure it into a coherent **training path**. While the previous section focused on contextualising and activating learning, this stage translates those principles into a structured sequence of **learning experiences** that progressively build competence. A well-designed training path ensures that each step logically follows the previous one, guiding learners from initial exposure to mastery.

A training path is the logical progression through which knowledge, skills and attitudes are gradually developed to achieve full competence. The components are introduced step by step, allowing learners to build experience and routine while progressively increasing the level of complexity. Throughout the process, regular evaluation, feedback and remediation ensure that learning remains continuous and cumulative.

Each stage of the pathway should move the learner towards greater understanding, increased autonomy and improved attitudes, while gradually reducing dependence on external guidance. The order of learning activities may vary according to the target group, the context or available opportunities. For example, a programme may begin with theoretical foundations and then move to practice, or it may take the opposite route by starting with real-life experiences such as company visits to create context before introducing theory.

In designing the pathway, **practical constraints** such as time, budget, facilities and access to equipment must also be considered. Equally important is maintaining a clear overview of the coherence between different learning lines so that all components contribute to the overall competence. In other words, each element should build on the previous one and prepare for the next.

Finally, **milestones for evaluation**, **feedback** and **summative assessment** complete the structure of the training path, ensuring that progress is visible and that learning outcomes are achieved in a systematic and meaningful way.

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1.6.5. Smart Development of Training and Teaching Materials

Once the overall training path has been defined, the next step is to create the teaching and training materials that support it. Developing such materials is a time-consuming and intensive process that requires both subject expertise and pedagogical experience. It involves researching the content, designing appropriate activities, writing, testing, and continuously refining the material until it becomes coherent, accurate and usable.

To make this process as efficient and sustainable as possible, it is advisable to **design materials according to a building-block structure**. This structure allows individual elements to be reused in different settings and adapted to various learner profiles. The starting point for this approach is the competence definition refined in a sectoral layer.

The sectoral layer, a concept developed in the TALQ project (Goethem, 2017), breaks down each competence into skills (what needs to be trained), knowledge (what needs to be understood) and attitudes (what needs to be developed). While skills are usually straightforward and require mainly detailed guidance for assessment, the knowledge and attitudes components can be elaborated separately to form the basis of teaching materials. The skills components, in turn, are detailed in training materials.

The advantage of this structure is that learning materials developed for specific knowledge or attitude blocks can be reused across multiple competences or contexts. For example, the lessons “Competence-Based Learning”, “Teaching vs Training”, and “Developing Competence-Based Summative Assessment” can also be applied in assessment-related training. Likewise, “A Learner-Centred Approach”, “Teaching and Training Approaches”, and “Teaching and Training Methodologies” can be used for workplace trainers, while the first two lessons are also suitable for managerial training contexts. The attitudes described in the next chapter can similarly be reused for several competences across different occupations.

A further advantage of this modular approach is that the learning blocks are designed in a way that allows them to be shared with other teachers and integrated into different courses. When written clearly and systematically, these materials can also function as reliable reference resources, extending their value beyond the original training programme.

1.6.6. Developing and Delivering Learning Materials

Having established how teaching and training materials can be designed strategically through a modular and competence-based approach, the next step is to focus on their concrete development. This section provides practical guidance for creating effective, accessible and engaging learning materials across different media and delivery formats.

Designing and Writing Learning Materials

Learning materials, such as books, online platforms, or presentation slides, are resources learners use to deepen their understanding of a subject. They do not necessarily need to contain the same content as that presented during active learning sessions. Information that can be read and assimilated individually can be included in textbooks or digital texts, while topics that require dialogue, reflection, or contextualisation are better suited to live teaching and group interaction. Effective learning materials combine clarity, structure, and relevance. The following principles outline how written and digital materials can be designed to support learning efficiently and sustainably.

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- **Reference work vs. textbook:** It is an old saying that "Technicians don't read, they look up stuff when they need it." The reason is they use information on a need-to-know basis, at the moment they need it. We see that other groups are getting more out this approach. In a fast-changing world whit a mass of information available we can inform ourselves on the spot. The competence of "knowing everything that exists" is changed into "being able to select the trustworthy information" in a mass of information. This has an influence on how we need to write and how we need to structure the information.
- **Clear language:** Clear language helps learners to develop a deep understanding of the subject. This doesn't mean the writing has to be simplistic or not use "difficult" words. A coherent text, build up in short single sentences, with consistent us of tense and unambiguous use of wording helps in depth understanding of the content.
- **Lay-out and structure:** Layout plays a significant role in how effectively information is conveyed. It influences how easily and quickly a user can understand and process information, impacting comprehension, engagement, and overall user experience. A well-structured layout with elements like headings, subheadings, and white space makes information easier to scan and digest. Layout helps organize information, creating a visual hierarchy that guides the user's eye and helps them understand the message being conveyed. In digital documents clear layout and intuitive navigation guide users through content, making it easier to find what they need and reducing the likelihood of them getting lost or frustrated. For printed documents the "grey page test" can be used. If the page hangs on the wall and you take a distance, you should still see the structure of the text.
- **Long lasting content:** Writing good learning material takes time. Therefore, it is useful to consider how to avoid the content is outdated after a short period of time. This demands a different approach than for live teaching, where one can easily reflect on the actuality of the day. Examples and references should be carefully chosen to avoid premature ageing.

Visual and Multimedia Presentation Tools

Once written materials are developed, the next step is to consider how content can be visually and audibly enhanced. Visual and multimedia tools support learning by combining information with design and storytelling, making abstract ideas easier to understand and remember. This section focuses on two key media forms, video and presentation tools, and offers practical guidance for using them effectively in teaching and training.

- **Video presentations:** Video materials can be powerful tools for explaining processes, techniques, or examples that benefit from visual demonstration. Ideally, video content should approach broadcast quality in editing and composition to sustain attention and reduce screen fatigue. Using multiple camera angles, clear lighting, and varied framing enhances engagement and comprehension. Trainers may also benefit from analysing

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professional video interviews to observe how camera positioning, pacing, and visual focus can strengthen communication.

➔ **Presentation tools:** Presentation tools allow educators to combine text, visuals, and multimedia into **structured** visual narratives. They should complement, not duplicate, what is being said. Slides serve as storytelling aids, providing structure, focus, and visual reinforcement.

Slides should **not be read aloud** but used as visual anchors that complement the spoken message. They should: Guide the teacher through the teaching sequence; Support storytelling by maintaining coherence and continuity; Reinforce learner understanding through visual cues; and, provide an overview of the main ideas

Effective presentations combine clarity, simplicity, and visual coherence. Each slide should communicate a single idea and support the spoken narrative, rather than replace it. It is good practice to begin with an overview slide outlining the session's objectives and to conclude with a take-away slide summarising the main points. Text should be kept concise, ideally no more than a few keywords per line, while visuals should illustrate and reinforce meaning. A clean and consistent layout, using the same fonts, titles, and colour schemes throughout, enhances both readability and professionalism. Inclusive colour combinations help ensure accessibility for visually impaired learners. Slides should maintain a professional yet discreet aesthetic, avoiding unnecessary decoration or excessive animation. Visuals and motion should always serve a clear instructional purpose, supporting understanding rather than distracting from it.

Technical reliability is crucial for maintaining flow and professionalism. Trainers should use **presenter view** on a secondary screen with a clean background or the organisation's logo, ensuring that no personal or unrelated content appears. All media, videos, links, and interactive components, should be integrated into the presentation to avoid switching between applications. It is advisable to keep an **offline backup** in case of connectivity problems and to **test audio and video compatibility** on the equipment that will be used. A video that works well on a personal computer may not function properly on a projector or external screen, so testing in advance prevents delays and interruption.

Developing Digital and Online Content

Building on the visual and multimedia principles discussed earlier, online learning content extends these ideas into fully digital environments. It can range from simple web-based resources or downloadable materials to highly interactive learning platforms.

While the same principles of clarity, coherence, and accessibility apply as for printed or presentation materials, digital content requires additional attention to structure, navigation, and interactivity. These aspects together define the **user experience (UX)**,

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the overall quality of a learner's interaction with an online platform. UX includes usability, efficiency, emotional engagement, and perceived value. A well-designed platform should feel intuitive, allowing learners to navigate easily, scroll minimally, and return to previous sections without confusion.

Learning platforms should also avoid unnecessary restrictions. For example, learners should be free to skip sections they have already mastered or revisit earlier topics without losing saved progress or assessment data.

To make navigation smooth and meaningful, each **building block** or **section** of the platform should be self-contained and coherent, with a short introduction that situates the learner and indicates what will be achieved.

Digital environments also allow for **multi-modal presentation of content.** For example, offering the same material as text, audio, or video. Allowing learners to choose how they consume content increases engagement and improves retention. However, interactive elements such as quizzes or simulations should be used purposefully to enhance learning, not simply as decorative or entertaining extras.

Finally, layout is just as crucial online as it is in print. Titles, colours, and frames should be applied consistently to convey hierarchy and meaning, supporting both accessibility and visual coherence across the platform.

Interactive and Experiential Delivery Formats

Building on the principles of user experience and interactive design discussed above, online learning can also include dynamic formats that combine explanation, demonstration, and learner participation. These formats make learning more experiential and can simulate real-life tasks or professional environments. Among the most effective are online demonstrations, live demonstrations, and software-based training, which integrate visual, auditory, and interactive elements to reinforce understanding and practical competence.

➔ **Online demonstrations:** An online demonstration is a presentation or tutorial delivered over the internet, often using video conferencing or screen-sharing tools, to showcase a product, service, or concept. These demonstrations aim to educate or inform an audience by visually illustrating features, functionalities, and benefits. Demonstrations can incorporate interactive elements such as live Q&A sessions, polls, or opportunities for participants to try out the product. Demonstrations can, for example, teach a concept, process, or skill, such as equipment or software usage, or train a system or procedure by providing learners with hands-on experience and examples of both correct and incorrect actions. For personalised engagement, online demonstrations should always be tailored to the specific needs of the audience. They can also be recorded, edited, and shared for later viewing.

Further reading: https://topr.online.ucf.edu/enhancing-experience-through-the-integration-of-demonstrations-and-simulations/

➔ **Live demonstrations:** A live demonstration, or live demo, is a presentation where a

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product, service, or concept is shown and explained in real time, often involving audience interaction. It is a dynamic way to showcase functionality, features, and benefits, allowing for immediate feedback and engagement. A successful live demo usually includes a clear narrative, highlights key features, and engages the audience through interaction. Preparation and testing of the equipment and the demonstrated features are essential for a good presentation. Technical issues, such as poor connections, software or hardware errors, missing access credentials, incorrect settings, or expired licences, can ruin the demonstration. Lack of experience or routine can also cause delays or even cancellation, so it is advisable to have a backup plan, such as a pre-recorded video or traditional presentation. For demonstrations of smaller equipment or precise actions, visibility must be ensured, especially for larger groups. A camera setup can enhance visibility by showing the presentation from the user's perspective and making internal or hard-to-see components clearly visible.

➔ **Software training:** In live software training, the trainer's screen is often projected onto a large display. Trainers typically demonstrate various functionalities and methods; however, because they are experienced, the pace may be too fast for participants to follow every step, leading to frustration. One way to prevent this is to let the slowest learner demonstrate under the trainer's guidance. This ensures that everyone can keep up and remain actively engaged. Ideally, a **step-by-step approach** should be used, where learners can practise each function immediately after the demonstration through simple assignments that apply what they have just learned. At regular intervals, tasks combining several functionalities can be assigned to verify whether the learners have mastered the skills.

Developing a training programme involves more than designing a sequence of activities. It requires a systematic process that begins with analysing needs and defining clear learning objectives, continues with selecting learner-centred strategies and structured pathways, and culminates in the creation of coherent, high-quality materials. By aligning each stage, from needs analysis to content development, with the principles of competence-based and inclusive education, trainers ensure that learning is relevant, engaging, and sustainable. A well-designed programme not only builds skills and knowledge but also empowers learners to apply them confidently in real professional contexts.

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1.7. Lesson 7: Developing Competence-Based Assessment and Certification

Developing Competence-Based Assessment and Certification

Building on Lesson 6, which examined how to design and develop effective training paths and learning materials, Lesson 7 focuses on how learning outcomes are measured, validated, and recognised. It guides educators and trainers through the process of designing fair, reliable, and transparent assessment strategies that reflect real competence and professional performance. The lesson explores how to align assessment methods with learning outcomes, ensure objectivity and quality, and connect results to formal certification, qualification, and recognition frameworks. It concludes by addressing emerging approaches such as micro-credentials and modular certification, which support flexible, lifelong, and competence-based learning pathways.

1.7.1. Summative vs Formative Assessment

To design a coherent and transparent competence-based assessment and certification process, it is essential first to understand the distinction between formative and summative assessment. Although both use similar tools and methodologies, they serve different purposes within the learning cycle.

According to Cedefop, **formative assessment** is defined as “an appraisal of an action intended to improve its performance, and in most cases conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programmes” (Cedefop, n.d., based on OECD, 2002a). In contrast, **summative assessment** is “a study conducted at the end of an action (or a phase of that action) to determine the extent to which expected outcomes were produced,” with the comment that “a summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the action” (Cedefop, n.d., based on OECD, 2002a).

While formative assessment is an essential tool during the learning process, helping to monitor and enhance learner progress, it does not measure the final achievement. Summative assessment, on the other hand, evaluates the results at the end of the process, providing an objective measure of competence acquisition.

In simple terms, formative assessment focuses on the process, whereas summative assessment focuses on the result. The following table summarises the main distinctions between the two approaches.

Table 1.3

Process vs. result measurement

Aspect	Process - formative	Result - summative
Measurement	Relative	Absolute
Measured against	Starting or intermediate position	Standard

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Goal	Motivational or guiding	Judging
Stakeholder	Learner	Industry or society

Modern educational practices increasingly recognise the value of formative assessment and reflective learning. Rather than relying solely on final evaluations, continuous feedback loops are built into the learning process, enabling learners to monitor their progress and adapt their learning strategies. Reflection, documentation, and dialogue play a vital role in this process, especially in the arts, where tacit knowledge and embodied practice often fall outside traditional assessment metrics.

Nevertheless, for the final evaluation of a learner's competence, a summative assessment is necessary, providing an independent measurement of achievement against defined standards, regardless of the learner's starting point.

1.7.2. Assessment for Certification and Qualification

Having distinguished between formative and summative assessment, it is now essential to explore how summative assessment leads to the formal **certification** or **qualification** of learners. The ultimate goal of a summative assessment is to verify that a learner has achieved a defined level of competence and to make this achievement visible and recognised through an official document.

According to Cedefop, a **certificate** is an "official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the learning outcomes (knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills, competences) of an individual following assessment against a predefined standard." Certification of learning outcomes is defined as the "process of issuing a certificate, diploma or title formally attesting that a set of learning outcomes (knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills and competences) acquired by an individual have been assessed by a competent body against a predefined standard." Cedefop further notes that "certification may validate the outcomes of learning acquired in formal, non-formal or informal settings" (Cedefop, n.d.).

A **formal qualification**, in turn, is "the formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work." A qualification "confers official recognition of the value of learning outcomes in the labour market and in education and training" and "can be a legal entitlement to practice a trade" (Cedefop, n.d., based on OECD, 2002a).

Both definitions highlight a set of **core terms** essential for understanding the certification process:

- **Assessment** is the process of appraising knowledge, know-how, information, values, skills, and competences, acquired in formal, non-formal, or informal settings, against relevant standards such as defined learning outcomes or validation procedures (Cedefop, n.d.).
- **Learning outcomes** refer to the knowledge, skills, and competences that an individual has acquired and is able to demonstrate upon completing a learning process, whether formal, non-formal, or informal (Cedefop, n.d.). In the context of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and responsibility/autonomy (Council of the European Union, 2017; Cedefop, n.d.).
- A **standard** in education and training is a statement approved and formalised by a recognised body, defining

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the rules to follow or the results to be achieved. Standards may be expressed in quantitative terms (such as figures or indicators) or qualitative terms (through precise descriptions). According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004), standards can be categorised as follows:

- **Input standards:** define the resources—such as staff, students, or materials—required to achieve a goal.
- **Process standards:** describe the activities that must be implemented to generate output.
- **Output standards:** define the expected level of performance to be attained.

Different standards may also apply within programmes and curricula:

- **Occupational standards:** define the activities and tasks related to a specific job.
- **Competence standards:** describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform a job.
- **Educational standards:** specify learning objectives, curriculum content, entry requirements, and required resources.
- **Assessment standards:** describe the learning outcomes to be assessed and the methods used.
- **Validation standards:** define the level of achievement and methodology for verifying competence.
- **Certification standards:** outline the rules for obtaining a certificate or diploma and the rights it confers.

➔ **Awarding body and competent body:** An **awarding body** is an organisation authorised to issue qualifications, such as certificates, diplomas, or titles, that formally recognise an individual's learning outcomes following assessment. A **competent body** refers to an organisation, entity, or individual with the necessary skills, authority, and qualifications to perform specific assessment or certification functions. It may also be legally designated to carry out such duties within a national or sectoral framework.

Through the interaction of these elements-assessment, standards, learning outcomes, and competent awarding bodies-education and training systems ensure that certification and qualification processes are **credible, transparent,** and **portable** across institutions, sectors, and countries.

1.7.3. Developing an Assessment Strategy

Building on the previous section, which defined assessment, standards, and certification, this section focuses on how to develop an assessment strategy that ensures fair, transparent, and competence-based evaluation. A well-designed strategy defines what is being measured, how it will be measured, and how objectivity and reliability will be guaranteed throughout the process.

The goal of an assessment strategy is to define how we measure the results of a learning process as objectively as possible against a standard. The strategy must:

- ✓ Define what we need to measure.
- ✓ Define how we will measure it.
- ✓ Ensure the procedure guarantees an objective result.

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Developing an effective assessment strategy follows a series of interconnected steps, each ensuring that the evaluation is valid, fair, and aligned with the defined competences. The process begins with selecting what should be measured and continues through the choice of appropriate methods, the design and assembly of the assessment, the establishment of scoring and decision procedures, and the final validation of the overall process. Each of these steps contributes to the creation of a coherent and transparent system that supports competence-based learning and certification.

1. Select what to measure	We assume that there is a standard to measure against and a competent body responsible for doing so. The standard is written in competences or learning outcomes that define what we need to measure. But for the strategy, we need to select elements that are representative of the larger whole because it would be impossible to measure every detail of a competence or learning outcome. To make a first selection, we can look at the **underlying knowledge and attitudes** and see if they can be measured by measuring the competence as a whole. In other words, if a candidate shows that they master the competence, does this also prove that they understand the underlying knowledge and have the required attitudes? If this is true, we don't need to measure the underlying elements anymore. Secondly, we can look for (elements of) **competences** that are representative of others. For example, someone who masters complex functionalities in Excel will probably also master the basic functions. These basic functionalities do not need to be measured for an accurate result. The focus of the assessment needs to be **on competence**. Within a learning process, parts of the learning outcomes are knowledge elements that are needed for understanding the context and the scope of the competence but can be looked up in a real-life work situation. These elements don't need to be measured to guarantee competence.
2. Select appropriate assessment methods	The next step is to define what assessment methods are most appropriate to measure the selected elements. (We describe the standard assessment methods further in the text.) Each assessment method has its strengths and weaknesses. One of the core issues is the fact that one needs other skills to prove the mastering of a competence than those being measured, and this influences the results. Some examples: • Motivating on paper how a complex planning issue is solved also implies that one needs writing skills, which are not part of a planning competence. • Answering multiple choice questions on a digital platform also implies digital literacy and the ability to see nuances in answers. These competences influence the result. • Oral tests can be stressful and rely on the ability to express oneself clearly, while stress resilience and clarity of expression are not part of the related competences. • Practical tests can be stressful and rely on language skills to understand the assignment while stress resilience and language skills are not part of the related competences.

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	So, in the choice of the assessment methods, we need to minimize these unwanted side effects that influence the result. If that is not possible, we need to minimize the influence of these side effects in the concrete execution of the assessment. For example: • One can offer an oral alternative (with preparation) for motivating the planning. • One can set up a training version of the multiple-choice environment. • One can provide training for oral or practical tests and ensure a low-stress delivery of the tests. Another way to minimize unwanted side effects is through triangulation. This methodology involves measuring a competence with different assessment methods to balance out the side effects (see the next section). Finally, we need to take into account the special needs of candidates. A detailed vision of this can be found at: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.64
3. Assemble the assessment	Next, we need to combine the chosen methods into one **coherent assessment**. First, we define the logical order and the relationship between the different elements to be assessed. Then, we put the concrete assessment elements in context. For a practical test, we can combine different assessment elements into one larger test that provides coherence and logic for the candidate. Oral tests can be organized according to sectoral logic, asking questions in the "order of appearance" in a sectoral process. This part is also a preliminary **reality check**. Given limited resources, we must ensure maximum output with minimum input. Second, the tests must be feasible for the candidate within a limited but realistic timeframe. The time span and complexity must be adapted to the average candidate, taking into account the inevitable effect of "exam stress." Often, this requires critically examining what is measured and adapting methods.
4. Develop the assessment	In this phase, we develop the concrete content of the assessment. We develop questions, assignments, and activities that need to be responded to by the candidate. While doing so, we need to keep several points in mind. The assessment must be: • **balanced**, all elements to be measured should be equally represented. • **realistic** and **adapted** to the expected level: it should be developed for an average starting professional, and not the exceptional case. The level should reflect the competence description. • **universal,** the measured competences must be applicable in different contexts and when someone shows competence in a different way than taught in a school, this should give the same result. It should be independent from sub-sector, country or training method.

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	• **independent from the learning process**, someone that has learned in a different place should have no disadvantages. This means for example avoiding reusing examples in learning program of a specific institute. • as **objective** as possible, avoiding bias and interpretation. • **measurable**, the results must be observable, we cannot measure intention or thoughts. • **Competence based**, the results should reflect mastering of competence. The development is a complex exercise that probably needs some iterations with feedback from colleagues. But if developed well, it can be used in different contexts.
5. Define scoring and decision methods	The final decision that we must make is whether the candidate is competent or not. This is a decision on the whole of the competence based on measured elements. So, we need to measure the elements before we make a decision. The descriptions in the competence or learning outcomes are often too vague to be useful in a concretely developed assessment situation. For an objective assessment, we need to translate them in observable measuring criteria. This should guarantee that every assessor comes to the same result. To ensure we cover the whole of the competencies we can use a reference matrix linking the different assessment elements with the competencies based on the concrete measuring criteria. We also need to define the methods to document the outcomes. To avoid bias we will only observe, document, describe what the candidate achieves without making decisions. Only when we have a complete overview of the achievements, we decide. We need to make a choice between a numeric or a consensus approach to decision making. A **numeric approach** is often easier, but it is hard to balance the importance of the different parts of an assessment Moreover there is a risk of "greying out" results, where too many measuring points always result in a grey, average figure. A specific case of numeric approach is **multiple choice questions**. Obviously one can only take the results that are given. But one does not know if a candidate has guessed. To correct this, **guess correction** is used, but while aiming to discourage random guessing, it can be controversial. It involves deducting points for incorrect answers, which can discourage students from attempting questions they're unsure of and potentially penalize those who are risk averse. While it might reduce the impact of random guessing, it can also create uncertainty and anxiety for students. More and more guess correction is replaced by higher pass marks. (University of Antwerp, 2021) Complex, mixed competences are hard to measure numerically, because the competence often incorporates different types of skills. For example, if someone scores really well on for example artistic skills, but rather low on the technical skills the numeric result would probably be positive, but not reflect the whole competence.

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	The **consensus approach** solves some of these problems. The idea is that all information of a candidate achievement is gathered first without judging or decision making. Based on this information a decision is made about the mastering of the competence. Ideally this is done with two or more assessors based on consensus. This method ensures a more coherent decision that takes into account all elements that are available. Because the consensus is only made at the end of the process, it minimizes bias.
6. Describe the assessment procedure	If we want to ensure a universal use of developed assessments, the whole procedure for conducting them, including the intake, how the assignments are given, timing, and measures to limit stress, has to be described in detail. This ensures that every assessor acts identically and that wherever the assessment is taken, it should give the same result. This is often done in an assessment roadmap or manual. An example of an assessment procedure can be found at: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.71
7. Check for impartiality and bias	The idea that teachers, trainers, or assessors can be impartial, objective, and unbiased is not realistic. Every person is biased, subjective, and not impartial. There is a good evolutionary reason for this. Without assumptions and prejudice, it would be hard to make quick and efficient decisions in life. In most cases, this is not an issue, but in assessment we want to avoid these influences. Experience shows that we need to make assessors and assessment developers aware of their bias to improve the quality of assessment. Related to that, we also need to check our assessments for bias or subjectivity. Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.59
8. Test and validate the procedure	Even if we devote the necessary attention to developing an assessment, it is still possible that errors will creep in or unexpected issues will arise. After all, we cannot always predict how a candidate will interpret the assignments or how they think they should be carried out. That is why each assessment must be thoroughly tested with a diverse group of participants. This allows us to maximise the objectivity of the results and give candidates a fair chance. The assessment must be carried out several times, each time after an adjustment and preferably by different assessors. This makes them independent of the specific context and therefore more universal.

Reflect on reality and continuous improvement

The procedure above seems simple and **logical** in order of actions. The reality of developing a coherent and realistic assessment procedure **requires** regular loopbacks to ensure it covers all necessary **guarantees** for a good result. In educational contexts, this methodology is often only partly followed, which limits the universal use **of** the developed assessment and reduces quality, but this is partly compensated by the wider quality systems of educational institutions.

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1.7.4. Standard Assessment Methods

Building on the previous section, which outlined the process of designing a coherent and objective assessment strategy, the following part presents the most commonly used assessment methods. Each method serves different purposes, addresses specific types of competences, and comes with its own strengths and limitations.

The educational world has developed a diverse set of **standardised assessment methods**. Each of these assessment methods is developed for a specific type of competences and has advantages and disadvantages. The **PACE-VET** project has created a detailed description and videos of methods. We will only introduce them here briefly and refer to the detailed descriptions and the videos for further information. (Pace-Vet, 2001).

The following overview summarises the main assessment methods most frequently applied in competence-based education and training. Each method represents a distinct approach to gathering evidence of learning outcomes, ranging from written and oral examinations to practical and workplace-based evaluations. Together, they provide a toolkit that assessors can adapt to different contexts and competence areas.

Written test – open answers

An **open-answer** test gives the candidate the freedom to formulate the answer and demonstrate their competence by doing so. Therefore, it is important not only to be clear in what you want to know, but also about the amount of detail you expect. Some tips:

- √ Write instructions that are clear, explicit, and unambiguous.
- √ Word questions clearly and simply.
- √ Write the questions in a realistic context

The questions should be competence focused.

Example – Sustainable Project Management:

- *A simple example of questions about sustainable project management in the performing arts illustrates the different levels of competence focus:*
- *What does the term sustainable project management mean? (recalling of facts)*
- *What are the three main pillars of sustainability applied in project planning? (recalling of knowledge)*
- *ow would you integrate sustainability principles into the budgeting phase of a theatre production? (theoretical application of knowledge)*
- *Imagine you are coordinating a touring performance across several European cities. How would you design the production logistics to minimise environmental impact while maintaining artistic and financial viability? (applying the competence in a real, contextualised situation)*

Applying the gained knowledge in a concrete context ensures that the candidate is able to apply the knowledge and therefore is competent. A specific type of written test is a paper or a dissertation. We will deal with assessing this type in the part about the post-box exercise.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

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- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training - Written Test – Open Answers
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.53

Written text - multiple choice

A multiple-choice test is a fast and **inexpensive** way to test knowledge and the application of it. But it is difficult to measure complex competences. It works well for formative evaluations. Good multiple-choice tests are hard to make. It is easy to unconsciously guide the candidates or to mislead them by the way the questions are constructed. Therefore, it is important to test the questions in advance. The sites below (and others) can help you improve your question quality:

- https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/catalogs/tip-sheets/designing-multiple-choice-questions
- https://theelearningcoach.com/elearning_design/rules-for-multiple-choice-questions/

Just as in the open answers' method, we need to focus the questions on mastery of competences and avoid pure knowledge-reproduction questions.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Written Test – Multiple Choice
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.49

Post box exercise

In a post-box exercise, the candidate gets a specific assignment that includes all essential information and has the time necessary to prepare the result. The result is scored through comparison with a prepared checklist of sample solutions. This method is strong for evaluating complex planning operations, strategic planning and management issues, or research.

A variation of this method is the traditional paper or dissertation that can be measured in a similar way.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Post Box Exercise
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.36

Oral test

An oral examination is a method of assessing the candidate through spoken communication. Assessors and the candidate interact through conversation. An oral exam can take place as a presentation, questioning, or application (oral account of a practical conclusion or lesson). Oral exams generally do not assess linguistic competence as such, but rather knowledge, understanding, and problem-solving abilities.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

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- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Oral Examination
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.56

Criterion based interview

The **Criterion-based Interview** (also called **the STARR method**) is comparable in many ways to the competency-based interview or the focused job interview. It gives the candidate the opportunity, guided by directional questions, to demonstrate skills based on a concrete situation that happened in their own professional life, or to demonstrate skills not observed in an assessment situation.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Criterion-Based Interview
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.45

Role play

In a role play, the candidate is placed in a situation with an actor (interlocutor) as a counterpart. The interlocutor steers the situation, based on a predefined scenario, into specific realistic situations. Observation and assessment are done based on a checklist of criteria.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Role Play
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.40

Observation on site

In an observation on-site, the candidate is observed in an authentic professional context of a real-life situation. This assessment method is used for skills that can be best shown in the workplace. It can verify the ability to carry out certain tasks. The difficulty is that real-life situations are hard to predict and can be influenced by others present on-site.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Observation on Site
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.32

Observation in a simulated environment

Observation in a simulated environment reflects a real-life situation but is standardized. This makes it possible to build in incentives for certain behaviour or choices. While the assessment situation is a formalized "reproduction" of a real-life situation, it also incorporates role play to observe behavioural skills. The candidate is observed in this simulated environment under structured authentic conditions.

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To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Observation in a Simulated Environment
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.27

Structured Portfolio

A structured portfolio is a gathering of different artefacts and evidence of competence and experience that are linked to a set of competences or a standard. There are specific requirements for the quality, the reliability, and the validity of the evidence. The assessors will verify the given information and assess if there is sufficient evidence of competence.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the links:

- Video: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training : Structured Portfolio
- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p.22

1.7.5. Ensuring Fairness, Authenticity and Quality in Assessment

After examining the main assessment methods, it is essential to address emerging issues that influence their reliability, authenticity, and fairness. As the learning landscape evolves, new factors reshape how competence is demonstrated and verified. The growing presence of artificial intelligence (AI) challenges traditional notions of authorship and originality, requiring assessors to rethink how evidence of learning is validated. At the same time, the need for triangulation becomes increasingly important to ensure balanced and unbiased results across different types of assessments. Finally, in creative and artistic disciplines where subjectivity is inherent, educators must seek intersubjective approaches that combine multiple perspectives to reach fair and meaningful evaluation outcomes.

Assessment in an AI era

With the introduction of more flexible, less task-related AI models, it is obvious that these models will be used by learners to make their life easier. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but we need to **adapt our assessment methods** to this reality. In fact, we can expect more from the students, because they have better and more efficient tools now. In general, the focus is on how to use them in an ethical and sustainable way, ensuring the learning goals are met.

(Online) exam situations

In an exam or assessment situation, we aim to measure the learner's own competence. However, when questions are clear and predictable, it is easy to use an AI model to generate answers, so we must ensure that it is indeed the learner who has responded. Such fraud occurs mainly online, but the first cases of live exam misuse are already emerging.

We have developed a strong bias toward text-based answers. A well-written, fluent text is often perceived as correct; a well-structured text as evidence of insight; and a long, well-written text as proof of a deep working process. In reality, these are precisely the things AI models excel at producing. Yet the text could contain errors, hallucinated content, or contextually irrelevant information. A well-written text only demonstrates that the model

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was used effectively, not necessarily that the learner has achieved the intended competence.

It is therefore increasingly difficult to ensure competence based on text alone. There is a need for triangulation with other methods that provide a higher guarantee of authenticity. A simple solution, for example, is to combine the written assignment with short oral questions about its content. Someone capable of producing a well-written text should also be able to explain and discuss it confidently.

Triangulation for reliability

In the social sciences, the term **"triangulation of methods"** is used to refer to instances where two or more methods are employed to study the same phenomenon. Research methods all have inherent strengths and weaknesses, and assessment methods are no different. The triangulation approach helps to overcome the inherent weaknesses and biases that any one method may have. When multiple methods point to the same conclusion, we can have greater confidence in the accuracy of that conclusion.

In the development of assessment, triangulation is an important element for improving the quality of the final measurement, avoiding inherent biases, and neutralising student characteristics that are not relevant. Combining, for example, a written assignment with a practical demonstration and an oral professional discussion can limit the effect of dyslexia, limited manual skills, or anxiety about speaking.

To deepen understanding and see how this method works in practice, visit the link:

- Further reading: https://pace-vet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PACE-VET_WP_5_1_Annex_2_Assessor_Handbook.pdf p. 25

Objectivity and subjectivity in the arts

One of the critical issues in arts education is how to measure the outcomes of an artistic or creative process **objectively**. However, objectivity is often impossible, and even undesirable, when discussing art. In these specific cases, we can use **intersubjectivity** as an alternative "measuring" method. Intersubjectivity is the process through which people create a common ground for communication and meaning-making by means of interaction and shared experiences. A group of independent experts with different backgrounds and perspectives are brought together to discuss and finally reach a consensus (Fiveable, n.d.).

1.7.6. From Assessment to Recognition and Certification

Building on the previous sections, which outlined the development and implementation of assessment strategies and methods, this part focuses on how the results of these assessments are recognised, validated, and certified. It examines how competences acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal learning can be officially recognised, how quality standards ensure fairness and reliability in assessment, and how certification and qualification provide formal validation of competence in both educational and professional contexts.

Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning is a procedure used to recognise competences learned in the working field. The recognition can be at the level of single sets of competences or up to a full degree. This gives professionals that learned their trade by self-learning the possibility to valorise these competences. The system is used outside education, for professional certification, but also inside education, creating shortcuts in education programmes or even allowing learners to obtain a full degree. European countries are expected to have these systems in place.

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The above-described competence-based assessment methodologies are at the centre of the recognition of prior learning.

Quality standards for assessment

For recognition of competences to be meaningful and trusted, the assessment process itself must adhere to clear and transparent quality standards. These standards ensure that assessments are fair, reliable, and consistent across institutions, sectors, and countries.

The quality standards for assessment can be divided in two main parts. The first part is the organizational level, describing the requirements for the body that delivers the assessment. The second part is the quality of the assessment itself.

At the **organisational level**, the requirements are defined in the ISO/IEC 17024:2012 standard (Technical Committee ISO/CASCO, 2018), which contains principles and requirements for a body certifying persons against specific requirements and includes the development and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons. The standard describes how the organisation needs to guarantee the rights of the candidate regarding ownership, privacy, and fair treatment. It creates the framework within which an assessment can take place.

At the **national level**, educational institutes follow the national legislation, which is often similar. Most European countries recognise the value of the ISO/IEC 17024:2012 in the recognition of certificates from other countries.

At the **assessment level**, the rules are less strict and based more on consensus. Partly they are an application of ISO/IEC 17024:2012, and partly they are based on good and fair practices. An important element is the candidate-centred approach to assessment, including ownership of the individual procedure and results.

In this context, several broadly accepted principles define what constitutes a high-quality, fair, and transparent assessment process. Assessment procedures are therefore expected to:

- √ be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other program objectives
- √ be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative
- √ be objective, fair, valid and reliable
- √ have clear and published criteria for marking
- √ be undertaken by competent people who understand the role of assessment
- √ be undertaken by people that have profound understanding and expertise of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification
- √ where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners
- √ take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations
- √ have clear regulations covering absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances
- √ ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures
- √ be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures

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Certification and qualification

Once assessment procedures have been carried out in line with recognised quality standards, the final stage is to formalise and document the results. This is achieved through certification and qualification, which provide official recognition of a learner's demonstrated competences.

The final step in the assessment process is certification or qualification. In other words, it is the official delivery of a document that states that the individual has been assessed against a standard by a competent body, confirming the individual's competence.

Signing the document is a serious responsibility not only toward the candidate but also toward the sector and society, the primary stakeholders of the document. They must be able to rely on the document's content and value.

In reality, certification can have a wide range of meanings and values attached to it. Sometimes "certification" is used to prove that someone has taken part in a learning activity without assessment, while "qualification" is used in a more formal, quality-controlled educational system and often includes a wider, coherent range of competences. On the other hand, certification for specific tasks, for example safety-related tasks, can have a high level of quality, including independent assessment and external quality procedures.

Therefore, the document needs all the information required to verify its quality.

1.7.7. Emerging Forms and Frameworks of Learning Recognition

As micro-credentials and other modular learning formats gain wider recognition, the question of how to measure and compare their value becomes increasingly important. The following section introduces the main European systems used to quantify the volume or weight of learning — ensuring transparency, compatibility, and mobility across institutions and countries.

Microcredentials

One of the key innovations in advanced educational practices is the move toward modular and personalized learning pathways. Micro-credentials, digital badges, and short, intensive courses enable professionals to focus on specific areas of need or interest, be it digital scenography, audience engagement analytics, or inclusive curatorial strategies, without the time and financial burden of full degree programs. Personalized learning also empowers individuals to learn at their own pace, drawing on real-time feedback and adaptive content delivery.

This **flexibility** is particularly valuable in the performing arts, where schedules are often non-linear, collaborative, and project-driven. Access to mobile learning content, asynchronous participation in webinars or online forums, and opportunities to integrate learning into daily practice all contribute to a more effective and sustainable educational model.

Micro-credentials are short, focused, and verified learning certifications that recognize the acquisition of specific skills, competencies, or knowledge areas. Unlike traditional degrees or diplomas, micro-credentials are modular and stackable, allowing learners to build their educational pathways flexibly over time. They are usually earned through brief learning experiences—ranging from a few hours to a few weeks—and are often issued by universities, professional training institutions, or accredited industry bodies.

These credentials can be digitally certified, allowing for easy sharing on portfolios, social media, or job platforms,

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and they are becoming increasingly recognized in creative and technical job markets.

The cultural and performing arts sectors are characterized by fluid careers, multidisciplinary collaborations, and a growing demand for digital literacy, adaptability, and project-based skills. Traditional education may not always keep pace with emerging needs such as:

- ➔ Learning new software (e.g., QLab, AutoCAD, Unreal Engine)
- ➔ Understanding digital marketing or audience analytics
- ➔ Acquiring business and funding literacy
- ➔ Integrating technologies like VR/AR or AI into creative practice

Microcredentials offer a **targeted**, **time-sensitive solution** to these evolving demands. They enable freelancers, artists, curators, technicians, and managers to remain competitive, up-to-date, and versatile.

Key features and benefits of the micro-credentials approach include:

- √ **Flexibility:** Microcredentials can be completed online, asynchronously, and without interfering with performance schedules or touring.
- √ **Customizability:** Professionals can choose courses that match their current or future needs, rather than committing to a rigid curriculum.
- √ **Recognition:** Many micro-credentials are now accepted in job applications and funding processes, serving as proof of continued professional development.
- √ **Stackability:** Some programs allow learners to combine multiple micro-credentials toward a larger certification, diploma, or degree.
- √ **Affordability:** Compared to full academic programs, micro-credentials are generally more affordable and accessible.

Therefore, based on these assumptions, a stage manager can complete a micro-credential in project management or scheduling software, a costume designer could earn a certificate in 3D rendering or digital textile printing, a cultural producer could get upskilled through a micro-course on inclusive audience strategies, a theatre technician could learn network protocols or sound system design and an artistic director could explore AI-based creative tools via short, applied workshops. These are only examples showing how micro-credentials can fill immediate skill gaps or strategically align with longer-term career goals.

However, while promising, micro-credentials come with certain challenges. In terms of quality assurance, not all micro-credentials are equally rigorous; professionals must evaluate the credibility of the issuing institution. Furthermore, recognition is not yet based on a unified reference system, and the acceptance of micro-credentials varies by employer, country, and sector, though this is steadily improving. In addition, without clear guidance, learners may accumulate unconnected credentials without building a coherent learning trajectory. While convenient, not all artistic practices lend themselves easily to remote, theory-based learning. To address these issues, many cultural institutions and training providers are beginning to curate pathways or recommend credential clusters relevant to specific roles or sectors.

The adoption of micro-credentials is expected to grow significantly within the creative industries, especially as:

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- Funders increasingly require proof of digital competencies.
- International collaborations demand interoperable qualifications.
- Professional associations begin endorsing or co-developing credential frameworks.

As part of lifelong learning strategies, micro-credentials can help democratize access to upskilling, support career transitions, and enable just-in-time learning that aligns with real-world challenges in arts and culture.

For professionals in the performing arts and cultural sectors, micro-credentials offer a practical, strategic, and empowering educational tool. By enabling **focused learning** without disrupting creative practice, they support both career sustainability and sector-wide innovation. As the industry continues to evolve, those who embrace micro-credentials as part of a continuous learning journey will be better equipped to lead, adapt, and thrive.

Volume of a qualification

The volume or weight of a qualification, a certification, a micro-credential or a learning outcome is important to improve the comparability and compatibility of study programmes, make them more transparent, allow for more flexibility and diversity of pathways, and facilitate student mobility. To put it simply, if we want to compare or exchange the result of study effort, we need a way to measure it mathematically.

At the European level, the **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)** remains the primary framework for expressing the volume of learning in higher education and, increasingly, in lifelong and vocational learning contexts. While in the past there were two main systems, ECTS and European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET), the **Council Recommendation of 2020 repealed the ECVET framework** and integrated its main principles, such as the use of learning outcomes, flexibility, and transferability—into a broader European approach to qualifications and micro-credentials.

ECTS, originally developed for higher education within the Erasmus mobility scheme and the Bologna Process, ECTS has evolved into a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer, based on the principle of transparency in the learning, teaching, and assessment processes. Its objective is to facilitate the planning, delivery, and evaluation of study programmes and learner mobility by recognising learning achievements, qualifications, and periods of learning (European Education Area, 2022).

The concept of **learning effort** includes all aspects of the learning process, lectures practical work, self-learning, preparing, and exams. **One ECTS credit** is equivalent of an average learning effort between **25 and 30 hours** (of 60 min).

Following the 2020 Recommendation, ECTS is also applied progressively in VET and lifelong learning. It provides a unified way to express the notional workload required to achieve defined learning outcomes, facilitating the recognition of prior learning, flexible learning pathways, and the integration of formal, non-formal, and informal education. Through this approach, the principles that once underpinned ECVET remain embedded in the European quality and credit framework for education and training.

Some countries continue to use their own systems for measuring the volume of a certification, qualification or learning outcome. For example, in the UK, a vocational credit is equivalent to half of an ECTS credit. In a European context, local credits are recalculated in relation to ECTS to ensure consistency and comparability across qualifications.

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Competence-based assessment is more than a process of grading or certification. It is an integrated approach that links learning outcomes, standards, and professional reality in a transparent and fair manner. By applying clear criteria, triangulating methods, and ensuring objectivity, educators and assessors can provide credible evidence of learners' achievements. When assessment is designed as part of a continuous learning cycle, leading to certification, qualification, and lifelong learning opportunities such as micro-credentials, it supports not only individual recognition but also the overall quality and innovation of education and training systems.

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Instructional Plan

Chapter Title	**Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector**
Target Group	• Trainers and educators of Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training • Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training organisations • Academia, Vocational Education and Training and enterprises' training/teaching staff
Purpose of this chapter	To introduce the fundamental concepts and methodologies that underpin competence-based learning within the performing arts and creative sectors. It aims to help trainers and educators in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training understand how lifelong learning, adaptability, and learner-centred approaches support the development of sustainable, digital, and entrepreneurial competences. This chapter also emphasises the institutional dimension of continuous learning, highlighting how organisations can cultivate learning cultures that encourage curiosity, collaboration, and professional growth.
Learning Outcomes of the Chapter	**Knowledge:** At the end of the module, the participant will know how to: • Describe the characteristics of different target groups and learning contexts within the performing arts and cultural education sectors. • Recognise the various educational levels and systems (formal, non-formal, informal) relevant to competence-based training. • Explain different methodologies and tools for designing and delivering effective learning experiences. • Outline the process of developing training paths, learning materials, and exercises aligned with competence-based learning principles. • Identify effective methods for providing feedback and conducting assessment in competence-based education. • Distinguish between different types of learning (e.g. experiential, project-based, work-based, blended, and lifelong learning). **Skills:**

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	At the end of the module, the participant will be able to: • Design learning activities and exercises that integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a competence-based framework. • Apply learner-centred and experiential methodologies (such as project-based, work-based, and collaborative learning) to engage diverse learners. • Adapt teaching and training approaches to different target groups, learning environments, and competence levels. • Facilitate reflective learning processes that encourage autonomy, critical thinking, and self-assessment. • Use digital and blended learning tools — including the INSPIRE online platform — to support interaction • collaboration, and accessibility in training delivery. • Provide constructive, evidence-based feedback to learners and use assessment results to improve learning outcomes. • Navigate through the INSPIRE online learning platform applying and combining advanced educational practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts and Cultural Industries **Competencies:** At the end of the module the participant will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy and will be able to: • Apply the INSPIRE framework to design and deliver competence-based, learner-centred, and inclusive training in the performing arts and cultural sectors. • Adapt and evaluate teaching, mentoring, and assessment strategies in response to diverse learner needs and changing educational contexts. • Demonstrate professional and reflective practice by collaborating with peers, upholding ethical and sustainable standards, and continuously improving their own teaching performance.
Chapter duration	Face-to-face: 5 hours of theory and practice and 5 hours of Self-Directed Learning

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Topics	**Lesson 1: Competence-Based Learning (CBL)** • Introduction to Competence-Based Learning • Key Concepts • From Concept to Application: Observing and Structuring Competence **Lesson 2: Teaching vs Training** • Teaching and Training: Purpose, Distinctions, and Complementarity • Roles in the Education and Training Process • Key Actors: Learners, Teachers, Trainers, Mentors, and Assessors • A Compact Competence Set for Starters **Lesson 3: A Learner-Centred Approach** • The Learner at the Centre: Understanding Learners' Backgrounds, Motivations, and Contexts • The Teacher-Trainer as Facilitator: From Knowledge Provider to Learning Enabler • Activating and Engaging Learners in Face-to-Face and Online Environments • Designing Inclusive and Individual Learning Pathways **Lesson 4: Teaching and Training Approaches** • Designing Learning Paths and Structures • Embedding Pedagogical Principles in Learning Design • Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal Learning Contexts

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- Online and Face-to-Face Learning Environments
- Portfolio-Based Learning and Digital Recognition Tools
- Hybrid and Blended Learning Models

Lesson 5: Teaching and Training Methodologies

- Foundations of Teaching and Training Methodology
- Core Delivery Methods
- Active and Learner-Centred Strategies
- Collaborative and Experiential Learning
- Simulation-Based and Digital Learning Methods

Lesson 6: Developing a Training Program

- Training Needs Analysis
- Developing a Teaching and Training Strategy
- Developing Learner-centred Training and Training Paths
- Smart Development and Delivery of Training and Teaching Materials

Lesson 7: Developing Competence-Based Assessment and Certification

- Assessment Types and Purposes
- Designing and Implementing an Assessment Strategy
- Ensuring Fairness, Authenticity and Quality in Assessment
- Recognition, Certification and Emerging Frameworks

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	Self-directed Learning • Self-Directed Learning Digital Library: in the form of links to articles, videos etc. • One project-based activity • One case study with reflective questions
Preparation	• Find a room with chairs and tables, computer, projector. Book at least 2 months before the workshop's implementation. • Find instructors for the workshop's activities you are not familiar with. • Inform the participants about the purpose of the workshop, its goals and the programme that is going to be followed. Additionally, make clear to them that they don't need to have any particular experience or knowledge in the fields that are going to be trained.

Nr.	Topics and Sub-topics/Learning Activities	Duration (minutes)	Training Methods	Materials/ Equipment Required for F2F and Online Delivery	Online Adaptation to Proposed Face-to-Face Activity
Lesson 1: Competence-Based Learning (CBL)					
1	**Workshop Opening:** The facilitator opens the workshop by welcoming all and then explains the main goals and topics of the chapter.	10 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation Training venue with IT equipment Sign-in handout for the workshop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you

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				Projector and screen Laptop Flipchart	are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.
2	**Theory Presentation:** **VET** The facilitator starts by providing information regarding the purpose of the INSPIRE project, how it is incorporated in different EUROPEAN frameworks and VET policies.	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.
3	**Theory Presentation:** **Key Concepts** The facilitator enters into the very definition of the different key concepts which are part of the training ecosystem proposed by INSPIRE; he/she follows the knowledge base section transferring information and facilitating Q&A on the concepts of:	30 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers Group activity Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	Competence Skills Underpinning knowledge Underpinning legislation Performance criteria Occupation, function, role and individual profile The last two aspects are managed through a participative approach, investigating participants' perception on these specific topics, collecting expectations and point of view and then delivering contents.				
Lesson 2: Teaching Vs Training					
1	**Theory presentation:** **Different roles in education process** The facilitator begins: "*Welcome back, everyone, to Lesson 2 of our train-the-*	11 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you

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	trainers programme: Then get into the first content part of the Lesson 2 introducing the difference between teaching and training and then getting into the different roles in education process Facilitator: *"We will now explore the key roles that contribute to the learning process.* *Let's begin with the learner, which is at the centre of the education and training process. They are the heart of the creative process…."* The suggested order to be followed is: Learner Teacher Trainer Mentor/coach			Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	Assessor				
Lesson 3: A learner-centred approach					
1	The third lesson start with a deep reflection (theoretical) on the differences of centring learning on Learner vs teacher. The goal is to make the participants understand the big difference between these two approaches. Facilitating a discussion helps in focusing on specificities which would lead to the change of perspective. It is suggested to follow the following order of topics: - A competence based approach - The learner in the centre - The teacher-trainer as facilitator - Activating the learner	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	- Online learner centred learning				
2	**Theory Presentation:** Through a participative approach the facilitator invites participants to reflect on the target groups: Facilitator: *"Your learners / trainees are not virgin fresh empty canvasses, they have a background, already earned expertise, they come from or are part of a specific type of education, at a specific level. Knowing and understanding your target group and the individuals that are part of it forms the basis for student centred learning…"*	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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3	**Theory Presentation:** Through a participative approach the facilitator invites participants to reflect on the identity as teacher-trainer Facilitator: *"Next to understanding your learners, it is also important to understand how you relate to your students. We can add here some concrete elements to reflect on that make you better understand your identity as a teacher…"*	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.
4	**Theory Presentation:** Then, the facilitator moves to a reflection on VET learners Facilitator: *"VET learners are practical people who have made a clear choice of trade, occupation or sector. They learn best in context and on a 'need-to-know' basis. They want to know why they need to*	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	know something, whether it solves a problem, improves their situation or makes them more efficient…"				
5	**Theory Presentation:** **Individual pathways for individual learners** Facilitator: *"In an ideal world, every learner would have a unique pathway, tailored on the learners needs and expectations. But in reality this is often not possible. But there are a lot of possibilities within the limitations of education programs, regulations, time spending etc…."*	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.
6	**Theory Presentation:** **Dealing with "learning disabilities" and special needs** This section is managed in a more theoretical and	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you

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	informative approach, raising awareness on the importance of inclusion at all levels.			Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.
7	**Theory Presentation:** **Sustainability in training delivery** This section is managed in a more theoretical and informative approach, raising awareness on the importance of inclusion at all levels.	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.
Lesson 4: Teaching and training approaches					
1	**Theory Presentation:** **Learning paths / structure** and **deepening on Formal, non-formal and informal learning** Facilitator: *"This lesson will focus on teaching and training approaches, in other words, different ways to organise and structure learning to support*	10 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	learners based on their characteristics and needs. *The teaching and training approach is the larger framework in which a learner will develop towards a competent person. It is based on the educational vision, concrete situation and learners needs. The approach can be formal, informal or non formal, it can be theoretical or practical oriented and can be real life or online.* *The learning path, the structured steps a learner needs to follow to get to the level of a competent person, is the concrete combination of learning formats that lead to this level. Within the different steps, we will use teaching and training methodologies that are described in the next lesson."*				

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2	**Theory Presentation:** The facilitator transfers the main training methodologies facilitating discussions and Q&A about the different ways to develop efficient learning paths. Facilitator: *"Individuals learn in different ways, based on their needs, their preferences, their autonomy level, their experience, and the amount of time they can (or want to) spend. To develop an efficient learning path, we need to figure out what approach(es) will support best their learning efforts."* It is recommended to follow the order and details listed in the knowledge base. - Online learning - Live face-to-face learning and training	25 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	- Portfolio based learning and digital badges - Hybrid learning - Blended digital – analogue formats				
3	**Activity:** **Bridging Theory and Practice in Performing Arts Training** The facilitator follows the steps: He/she distributes the Activity Handout and introduces the activity by stating that it is designed to support trainers in reinforcing reflection on the specific lesson topic. Participants are asked to reflect individually and write a brief response to the main topic. After 2-,3 minutes of writing, the facilitator invites a few participants to share their thoughts with the group,	15 minutes	Group activity Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Activity Handout C1.A1 Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	Use the "Breakout Rooms" feature of the platform and split the participants into groups. Online whiteboard, chat board, other collaboration tools • Miro https://miro.com/online-whiteboard/ • Sketch board: https://sketchboard.io/ • Group map: https://www.groupmap.com/ • Conceptboard: https://conceptboard.com/ • Milanote: https://milanote.com/ • Whiteboard: https://whiteboard.fi/ • Mindmap: https://mind-map-online.de/ • Notely: https://note.ly/# • Google Sticky notes: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/sticky-notes/nbjdhgkkhefpifbifjiflpaajchdkhpg?hl=de

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	encouraging a brief exchange of ideas and approaches. The facilitator concludes by reinforcing the key message.				
Lesson 5: Teaching and training methodologies					
1	**Theory Presentation:** **Foundations of Teaching and Training Methodology** Introduction: *"This lesson will focus on concrete teaching methodologies, in other words, different ways to deliver learning content in an attractive, adapted way."* The facilitator then gets into the goals of teaching and training. Facilitator: *"To be able to choose a methodology, one needs to match the needs and characteristics of a subject or competence with the goals of a methodology. Every method*	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	has specific goals, we can distinguish between: • *Knowing and recapitulation* • *Understanding* • *Training* • *Building routine* • *Applying in a specific context* • *Discovering"*				
2	**Theory Presentation:** **Core delivery methods, Active and Learner-centred strategies, Collaborative and experiential learning** The facilitator gets into the teaching and training methodologies (traditional frontal teaching and contemporary approaches) following this order of topics: - Goals of teaching and training - Some thoughts about	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers Reflection	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	storytelling - Lecturing - Interactive teaching - Demonstration - Exercises - Flip the classroom - Practice to theory approach - Role play - Case Study - Group work - Cooperative learning				
3	**Theory Presentation:** **Simulation-based and digital learning methods** Facilitator: *"Scale models and simulations are valuable tools in teaching and training, providing a safe and controlled environment for learning practical skills and concepts. They allow learners to interact*	5 minutes	Reflection	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	with representations of real-world systems, practice decision-making, and develop problem-solving abilities without the risks and complexities of the actual environment. We can distinct different types, with different uses and advantages---"				
4	**Activity:** **Reflecting on Your Trainer Identity** The facilitator follows the steps: He/she distributes Activity Handout and introduces the activity by stating that it is designed to support trainers in reinforcing reflection on the specific lesson topic. Participants are asked to reflect individually and write a brief response to the main topic. After 2-,3 minutes of writing,	10 minutes	Group Activity Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Activity Handout C1A2 Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	Use the "Breakout Rooms" feature of the platform and split the participants into groups. Online whiteboard, chat board, other collaboration tools Miro https://miro.com/online-whiteboard/ Sketch board: https://sketchboard.io/ Group map: https://www.groupmap.com/ Conceptboard: https://conceptboard.com/ Milanote: https://milanote.com/ Whiteboard: https://whiteboard.fi/ Mindmap: https://mind-map-online.de/ Notely: https://note.ly/#

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	the facilitator invites a few participants to share their thoughts with the group, encouraging a brief exchange of ideas and approaches. The facilitator concludes by reinforcing the key message.				Google Sticky notes: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/sticky-notes/nbjdhgkkhefpifbifjiflpaajchdkhpg?hl=de
5	**Activity:** **Adapting to Diverse Learners and Contexts** The facilitator follows the steps: He/she distributes Activity Handout and introduces the activity by stating that it is designed to support trainers in reinforcing reflection on the specific lesson topic. Participants are asked to reflect individually and write a brief response to the main topic. After 2-,3 minutes of writing, the facilitator invites a few	5 minutes	Group activity Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Activity Handout C1A3 Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	Use the "Breakout Rooms" feature of the platform and split the participants into groups. Online whiteboard, chat board, other collaboration tools Miro https://miro.com/online-whiteboard/ Sketch board: https://sketchboard.io/ Group map: https://www.groupmap.com/ Conceptboard: https://conceptboard.com/ Milanote: https://milanote.com/ Whiteboard: https://whiteboard.fi/ Mindmap: https://mind-map-online.de/ Notely: https://note.ly/# Google Sticky notes: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/st

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	participants to share their thoughts with the group, encouraging a brief exchange of ideas and approaches. The facilitator concludes by reinforcing the key message.				icky-notes/nbjdhgkkhefpifbifjiflpaajchdkhpg?hl=de
Lesson 6: Developing a training program					
1	**Theory Presentation:** **Training Needs Analysis & Developing a Teaching and Training Strategy** In lesson 6 there is a strong shift from theoretical to participative approach. Participants are asked to put in practice their knowledge and figure out in practice what it means to develop a training program. The facilitator follows the knowledge base order and simulate a collective analysis with participants	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	Facilitator: *"In a training needs analysis we lay the basis of a training program based on an analysis of the actual situation in relation to the expected situation. Therefore the training needs analysis is depending on the target group and/or the needs of a professional organisation. Training needs are defined in competences or in more concrete learning outcomes…"*				
2	**Theory Presentation:** **Developing learner centred training and Developing a training path** The facilitator follows the knowledge base corresponding sections and simulate a collective analysis with participants Facilitator: *"The core is to keep the learner in the center*	5 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers Group activity	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	of the learning process, giving them ownership and guide them through their learning process. This approach needs to be based on the analysis of the context, the learning needs and the target group. We need to know about the target group what their background is, their level, preliminary knowledge, their learning autonomy level, the environment they work in, the time they can / want to spend, their availability, … We have to figure out what motivates them, what they need to be able to learn, what triggers them engage in learning, what teaching and training approach works for them, what ways of delivering learning content optimizes their learning process. And we need to understand their context to be able to create learning content, activities,				

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	examples or exercises that reflect their reality and the environment they work in. This not only motivates the learners, it also ensures learning and training opportunities in their own life and the feeling of direct practical use. *This information will support us in contextualizing the learning content that has been defined into concrete learning materials and activities."*				
3	**Theory Presentation:** **Smart development of training and teaching materials and Developing and delivering learning materials** The facilitator follows the knowledge base corresponding sections and simulate a collective analysis	5 minutes	Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	with participants Facilitator: *"Developing training and teaching materials is a time consuming and intensive activity. It takes profound research on the subject, experience in the field and in teaching-training methodologies, and writing, testing and reworking the content until coherent material is ready to use. To do this as efficient as possible and to develop a building block structure that makes the content reusable in different settings, we can start from the competence definition refined in a sectoral layer."*				
4	**Activity:** **Assessing Your Readiness for Active Learning Facilitation** The facilitator follows the	15 minutes	Group activity Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Activity Handout C1A4	Use the "Breakout Rooms" feature of the platform and split the participants into groups. Online whiteboard, chat board, other collaboration tools

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	steps: He/she distributes Activity Handout and introduces the activity by stating that it is designed to support trainers in reinforcing reflection on the specific lesson topic. Participants are asked to reflect individually and write a brief response to the main topic. After 2-,3 minutes of writing, the facilitator invites a few participants to share their thoughts with the group, encouraging a brief exchange of ideas and approaches. The facilitator concludes by reinforcing the key message.			Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	• Miro https://miro.com/online-whiteboard/ • Sketch board: https://sketchboard.io/ • Group map: https://www.groupmap.com/ • Conceptboard: https://conceptboard.com/ • Milanote: https://milanote.com/ • Whiteboard: https://whiteboard.fi/ • Mindmap: https://mind-map-online.de/ • Notely: https://note.ly/# • Google Sticky notes: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/sticky-notes/nbjdhgkkhefpifbifjiflpaajchdkhpg?hl=de
Lesson 7: developing competence based summative assessment					
1	**Theory Presentation:** **Summative vs Formative Assessment, Assessment for**	3 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions &	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT)	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and

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	Certification and Qualification, Developing an assessment strategy Facilitator: *"There is often confusion between different forms of assessment, evaluation, etc. especially because often the same tools or methodologies are used. Cedefop defines formative assessment as "In education and training, appraisal of an action intended to improve its performance, and in most cases conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programmes." and summative assessment as "In education and training, study conducted at the end of an action (or a phase of that action) to determine the extent to which expected outcomes were produced…"*		Answers	Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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2	**Theory Presenation:** **Standard assessment methods** Facilitator: *"The educational world has developed a diverse set of standardized assessment methods. Each of these assessment methods is developed for a specific type of competences and has advantages and disadvantages. The Pace-Vet project has created a detailed description and videos of methods. We will only introduce them here briefly and refer to the detailed descriptions and the videos for further information."* The facilitator then gets into the assessment methodologies following this order of topics - Written test – open answers - Written text - multiple choice - Post box exercise	3 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	- Oral test - Criterion based interview - Role play - Observation on site - Observation in a simulated environment - Structured Portfolio				
3	**Theory Presentation:** **Ensuring Fairness, Authenticity and Quality in Assessment** Issues with assessment in an AI era: discussion session facilitated by the following introduction: Facilitator: *"With the introduction of more flexible, less task related AI models, it is obvious that these models will be used by learners to make their life easier. This is not necessary a bad thing, but we need to adapt our assessment methods to this reality. In fact*	3 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	we can expect more of the students, because they have better and more efficient tools now. In general the focus is on how to use them in an ethical sustainable way ensuring the learning goals are met…"				
4	**Theory Presentation:** **From Assessment to Recognition and Certification, Emerging Forms and Frameworks of Learning Recognition** Facilitator: *"One of the key innovations in advanced educational practices is the move toward modular and personalized learning pathways. Micro-credentials, digital badges, and short intensive courses enable professionals to focus on specific areas of need or interest—be it digital scenography, audience*	3 minutes	Presentation Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Team or any other online meeting software.

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	engagement analytics, or inclusive curatorial strategies—without the time and financial burden of full degree programs. Personalized learning also empowers individuals to learn at their own pace, drawing on real-time feedback and adaptive content delivery…"				
5	**Activity:** **Teaching for Holistic Competence** The facilitator follows the steps: He/she distributes Activity Handout and introduces the activity by stating that it is designed to support trainers in reinforcing reflection on the specific lesson topic. Participants are asked to reflect individually and write a brief	8 minutes	Group activity Discussion, Questions & Answers	PowerPoint Presentation (C1_INSPIRE Practical Handbook_PPT) Activity Handout C1A5 Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Projector and screen Laptop	Use the "Breakout Rooms" feature of the platform and split the participants into groups. Online whiteboard, chat board, other collaboration tools • Miro https://miro.com/online-whiteboard/ • Sketch board: https://sketchboard.io/ • Group map: https://www.groupmap.com/ • Conceptboard: https://conceptboard.com/ • Milanote: https://milanote.com/ • Whiteboard: https://whiteboard.fi/ • Mindmap: https://mind-map-online.de/

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	response to the main topic. After 2-,3 minutes of writing, the facilitator invites a few participants to share their thoughts with the group, encouraging a brief exchange of ideas and approaches. The facilitator concludes by reinforcing the key message.				• Notely: https://note.ly/# • Google Sticky notes: https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/sticky-notes/nbjdhgkkhefpifbifjiflpaajchdkhpg?hl=de
	Closure of Chapter 1 The facilitator wraps up the topics covered within Chapter 1 and asks participants to summarise what they have learned in 2-3 key words and then ask them to share their key words with the other participants, explaining why they found these key lessons learned important. A group discussion follows.	8 minutes	Discussion, Questions & Answers	Training venue with IT equipment Flipchart and markers Sign-in handout for the workshop Pens and note-taking materials Projector and screen Laptop	If hosting this workshop online, make sure that you and the participants have a good internet connection and that you test the audio and video functions. In addition, share the PowerPoint presentation by using the "screen sharing" function of the online platform you are deploying- Zoom, Teams or any other online meeting software.
Duration of the Chapter	5 training hours (5 * 45 = 225 minutes)				

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Training Material for F2F and Synchronous Online Learning	Handouts for Learners
References	Same as in the Knowledge Base

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Activity Handouts for F2F Learning

Activity Handout No 1

Chapter Title	Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector		
Activity Title	Bridging Theory and Practice in Performing Arts Training	**Activity Number**	C1A1
Description of the activity	Based on different roles involved in teaching and training, reflect on how to integrate theoretical frameworks into hands-on learning, especially in fields shaped by rapid technological and cultural change. Collective discussion.		

Activity Handout No 2

Chapter Title	Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector		
Activity Title	Reflecting on Your Trainer Identity	**Activity Number**	C1A2
Description of the activity	Answer the question: What is your personal approach or 'trainer identity,' and how will you ensure that your preferences do not overshadow the learning objectives and needs of your trainees? Reflect on your biases, strengths, and the importance of learner-centred training Collective discussion		

Activity Handout No 3

Chapter Title	Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector		
Activity Title	Adapting to Diverse Learners and Contexts	**Activity Number**	C1A3

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Description of the activity	Answer the question: In your role as a trainer, how will you identify and adapt to the diverse learning needs, motivations, and professional contexts of your learners to ensure a learner-centred approach? Consider differences in background, experience, and learning maturity in VET and cultural sectors. Collective discussion.

Activity Handout No 4

Chapter Title	Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector		
Activity Title	Assessing Your Readiness for Active Learning Facilitation	**Activity Number**	C1A4
Description of the activity	Answer the question: Which teaching and training methodologies from the course (e.g., role play, simulation, flipped classroom) do you feel most confident applying, and which do you find most challenging? Why? Reflect on your comfort zones and areas for development when facilitating active learning Collective discussion.		

Activity Handout No 5

Chapter Title	Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector		
Activity Title	Teaching for Holistic Competence	**Activity Number**	C1A5
Description of the activity	How do you define 'competence' in your professional field, and how will you ensure your training helps learners develop not only skills, but the right knowledge and attitude to perform effectively? *Think about how to teach for holistic competence, not just task execution E.g.: You are going to train…* *Collective discussion.*		

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Self-Directed Learning (SDL) Resources

Self-directed Digital Library

Chapter Title	**Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector**
Topic	Training design
Title of Resource:	Preparing Vocational Teachers and Trainers, Case Studies on Entry Requirements and Initial Training, OECD
What will you get from using this resource?	The OECD report *Preparing Vocational Teachers and Trainers* underscores the pivotal role of vocational teachers and in-company trainers in supporting learners' transition from education to work. It focuses on two key components: Entry Requirements: The report reviews the qualifications, experience, and professional standards expected of those entering the VET teaching and training professions. Through case studies from Canada, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway, it illustrates how countries set transparent quality requirements while maintaining flexibility to attract candidates from industry. Initial Education and Training (ITET): It examines how initial teacher education and training systems prepare VET teachers and trainers for their roles. Examples include tertiary-level teacher-training programmes combining pedagogical study with practical placements and, in some cases, targeted financial support for trainees. For in-company trainers, initial preparation is usually optional and non-formal but can be encouraged through incentives. The report highlights the importance of balancing quality with accessibility and flexibility in recruitment and preparation, ensuring that entry routes and training pathways remain open to diverse candidates while maintaining high pedagogical standards. It concludes that coordination between VET institutions and teacher-training providers, along with flexible pedagogical upskilling opportunities for trainers, strengthens both the quality and relevance of vocational education.
Link to resource:	Preparing Vocational Teachers and Trainers, Case Studies on Entry Requirements and Initial Training, OECD

Project-based Activity Sheet

Chapter Title	**Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector**		
Project-based	Designing a Training Course for Performing	**Duration of**	300

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Activity Title	Arts Learners	Activity (in minutes)	
Learning Outcomes	By the end of this activity, you will be able to: • Apply pedagogical frameworks (TEACH, ADDIE, TPACK) to the design of a performing arts training course. • Develop learning outcomes, assessments, and activities aligned with learner needs and artistic practice. • Reflect on the balance between teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches.		
Aim of Project-based activity	To guide participants through the process of designing a structured, learner-centred training course using established pedagogical models, adapting them to the specific needs of the performing arts and creative VET sectors. If you are **new to teaching or course design**, this guide will help you build or refresh your foundational pedagogical knowledge. It introduces essential concepts and frameworks for course design, defines key terms, and presents core pedagogical strategies and principles. By working through the guide, you will become familiar with the early stages of course planning and gain insights that are broadly applicable across different teaching contexts. The resource does not include example activities, specific tools, or discipline-based strategies; instead, this activity focuses on the **methodological aspects** of course design and invites you to adapt these principles to your own field of practice.		
Materials Required for the Project-based Activity	• Internet access • Stanford "Foundations of Course Design" guide • Template for course design (learning outcomes, structure, assessment, resources) • Online collaborative space or shared document for group work		
Step-by-step instructions	**Follow the steps below to apply key theoretical frameworks and reflect on how each stage contributes to designing an effective training programme. As you progress, compare these academic approaches with your own teaching or training practice. Identify similarities and differences, and discuss with your peers or trainer how theoretical models can inform and improve your personal training design.** 1. **From Theory to Practice:** Explore foundational frameworks for course design, including Stanford's TEACH Framework, which integrates *timeliness, engagement, accessibility, connection,* and *humanity* into course planning. Examine the ADDIE		

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	(Analyse–Design–Develop–Implement–Evaluate) and TPACK (Technological–Pedagogical–Content Knowledge) models, identifying how each can support coherent course design. Consider different course modalities (traditional, blended, hybrid, online, HyFlex) and decide which best fits your target learners and training context. 2. **Course Planning:** Draft clear learning outcomes and outline the course structure. Define the scope of content, delivery methods, and team roles (e.g., teaching assistants, guest trainers). Integrate appropriate digital tools and resources to enhance engagement and accessibility. 3. **Feedback and Assessment:** Plan how you will assess learning through formative (ongoing) and summative (end-of-course) strategies. Ensure that each assessment aligns with learning objectives and promotes reflective learning and academic integrity. 4. **Learning Activities:** Design a range of interactive and inclusive activities that stimulate creativity and collaboration. Apply a growth mindset approach to encourage continuous improvement and learner confidence. 5. **Improving Teaching Effectiveness:** Identify mechanisms to collect learner feedback and evaluate your own teaching effectiveness. Suggest one area for personal professional development to enhance future course design and delivery. 6. **Output:** A brief course design outline (2–3 pages) including learning outcomes, key activities, and assessment approach, accompanied by a short reflection on how theoretical models informed the design choices.
References	Foundations of Course Design

Case Study

Chapter Title	Advanced Educational Practices for Lifelong Learning in the Performing Arts Sector
Case Study Title	Your training identity
The Story	Elena had just completed her certification as a professional trainer when she was invited to lead a series of workshops for young professionals in the creative industries. Excited but slightly nervous, she began preparing her sessions with great enthusiasm. Elena knew she had a strong preference for interactive learning. In her own experience, discussions, brainstorming, and group work had always been the most engaging ways to learn. Naturally, she started designing her sessions around these methods.

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	But one evening, while reviewing her draft agenda, Elena paused. *"Am I creating this plan for myself, or for my trainees?"* she wondered. **Recognising Biases** Elena realised that her bias toward group activities might unintentionally exclude or overwhelm quieter participants who needed time to reflect before contributing. Others might prefer more structured, step-by-step guidance. If she relied only on her own preferences, she risked overlooking the learning objectives—and the needs of some participants. **Leveraging Strengths** At the same time, Elena recognised her strengths: she made people feel at ease, listened attentively, and adapted quickly when learners struggled. These qualities could help her balance different learning styles if she used them consciously. **Importance of Learner-Centred Training** Elena decided that the workshops should not reflect her favourite style but the goals and needs of her participants. She revised her plan accordingly: • kept group activities but balanced them with short presentations and individual reflection tasks; • prepared guiding questions for quieter learners; • built in feedback points so participants could express what worked best for them. Through this process, Elena embraced a learner-centred approach. She understood that her role as a trainer was not to showcase her knowledge but to facilitate learning and growth for others.
Follow-up Questions	Reflect on the case and write short notes for each question: • What personal preferences or habits might shape your own training style? • How can you use your strengths to enhance learner engagement without overshadowing their needs? • What strategies can you apply to ensure that your training remains learner-centred? Conclusion Elena's story shows that reflecting on one's trainer identity is essential. By acknowledging her biases, leveraging her strengths, and keeping learners at the center of her work, she positioned herself to deliver training that was inclusive, responsive, and effective.
References	-

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Assessment Quiz

1. **Why is a shared glossary important in training?**
   - A) To simplify course registration
   - **B) To prevent misinterpretation from national differences**
   - C) To reduce the number of lessons
   - D) To encourage informal learning only
2. **What distinguishes 'qualification' from 'certification'?**
   - A) Certification is more rigorous
   - B) Qualification is temporary
   - C) Certification always includes exams
   - **D) Qualification generally implies a broader, quality-controlled process**
3. **What is "product training" mainly focused on?**
   - A) Basic literacy and numeracy
   - B) Lifelong learning strategies
   - **C) Use of specific tools or equipment**
   - D) Theories of adult learning
4. **Why should trainers reflect on their own identity?**
   - A) To create better exercises
   - B) To follow institutional rules
   - C) To mimic their own trainers
   - **D) To avoid imposing their preferences on learners**
5. **Which of these supports individual learning pathways?**
   - A) Group exams
   - B) Teacher-centred delivery
   - **C) Adaptive content and modular learning**
   - D) Synchronous-only courses

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