

Integrating Soft Skills into VET for Improved Employability

Workshop 4



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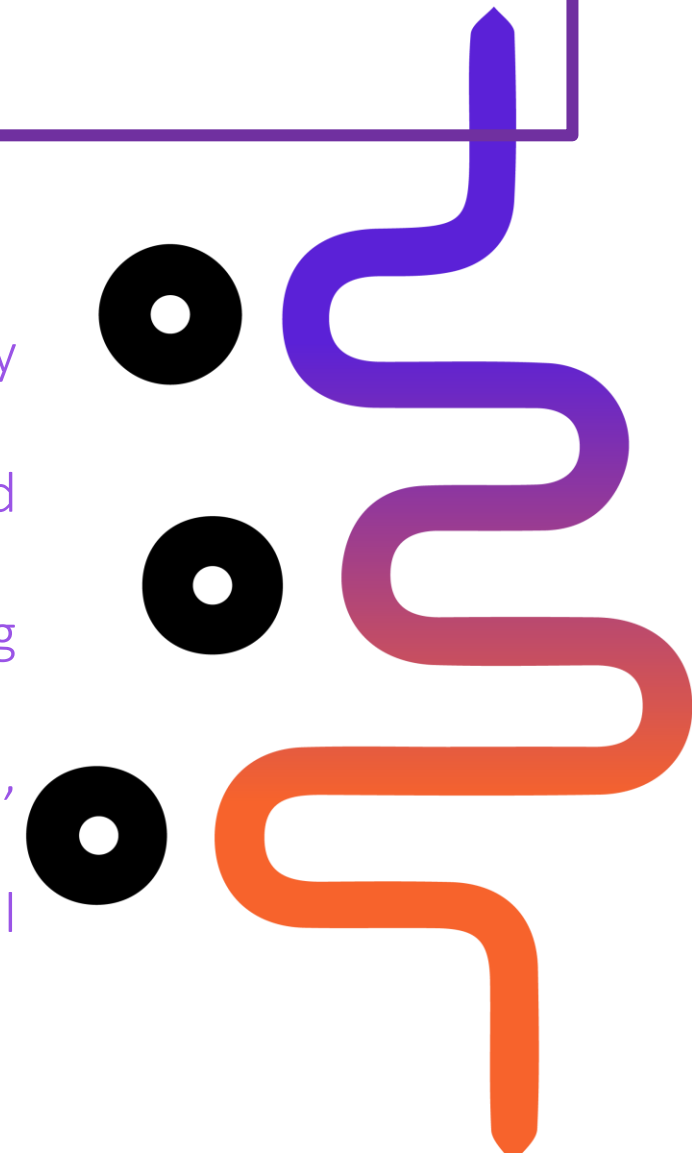
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MMC Mediterranean
Management Centre

Objectives of the workshop

In terms of knowledge

- To explain the importance of soft skills in the contemporary labour market.
- To identify key soft skills relevant to VET curricula and occupational profiles.
- To describe effective methodologies for teaching and assessing soft skills.
- To relate soft skills integration to relevant EU frameworks (e.g., LifeComp, EntreComp, DigComp)
- To recognize examples of good practices and successful approaches among partner institutions.



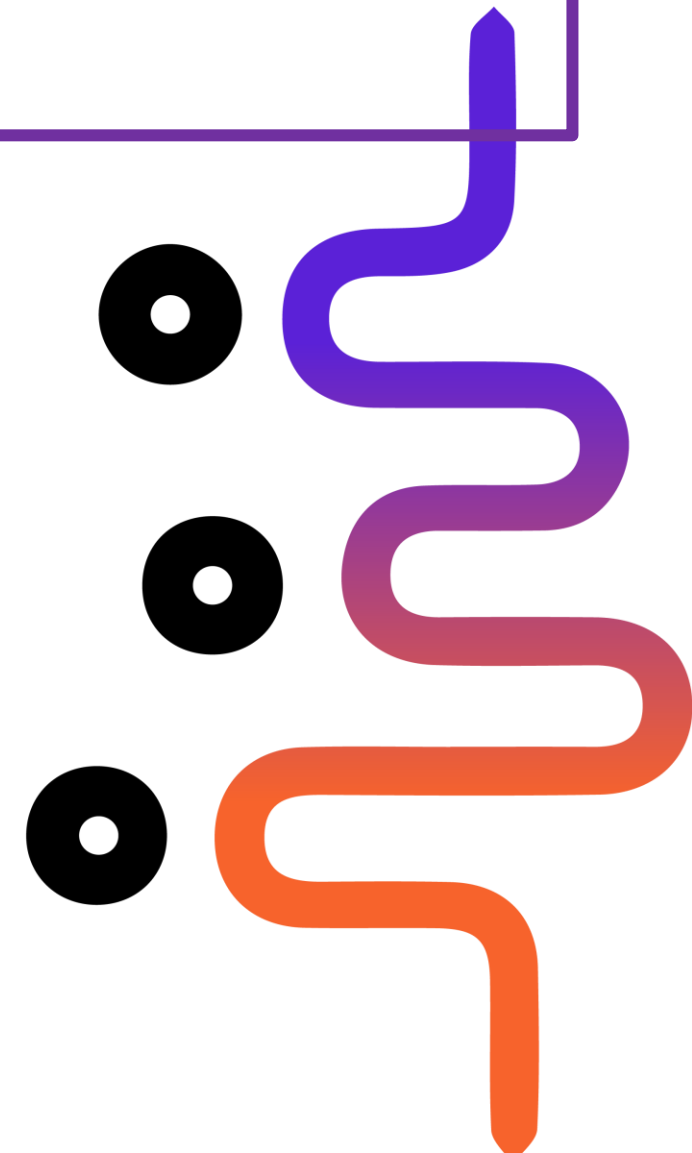
Objectives of the workshop

In terms of Skills

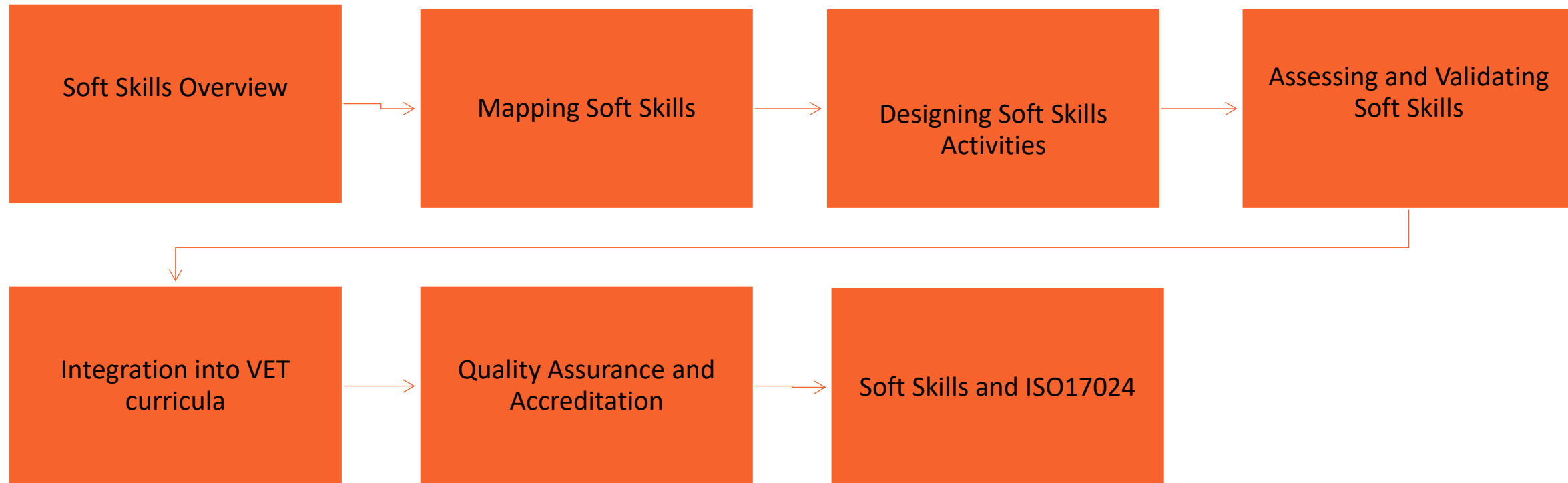
- To apply techniques for mapping soft skills to specific VET subjects and occupational areas.
- To design learning activities and teaching strategies that embed soft skills into technical training.
- To develop assessment criteria and tools for evaluating learners' soft skills.
- To integrate EU competence frameworks (LifeComp, EntreComp, DigComp, etc.) into VET curriculum planning.
- To adapt good practices and resources for the continuous improvement of soft-skills training in VET.

In Terms of Attitudes

- To value the importance of embedding soft skills as a core component of quality VET.



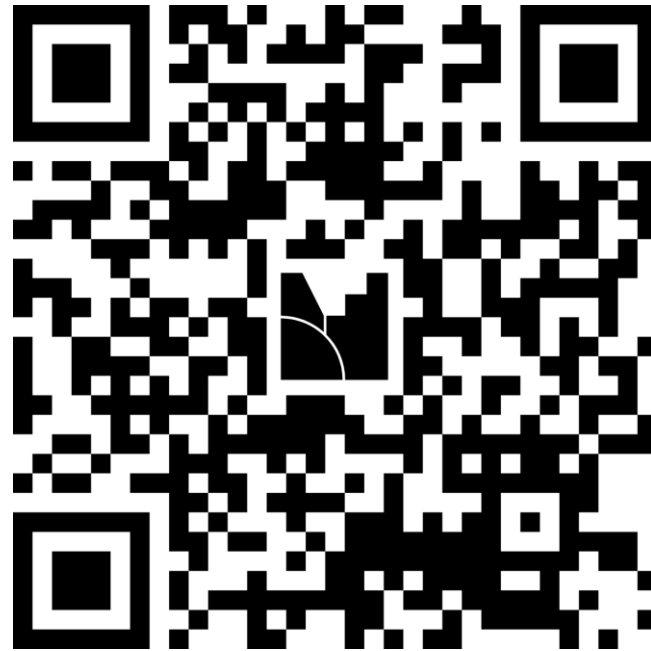
Workshop Routemap



Soft Skills Overview

Unit 1

What are Soft Skills?



Official definition of Soft Skills

Soft skills are understood as nontechnical competencies made up of personal characteristics, interpersonal abilities, and communication-related capacities that enable individuals to interact productively and constructively within professional settings. These abilities include emotional intelligence, collaborative effectiveness, and creative problem-solving, all of which support smooth social exchange, strengthen teamwork, and enhance organizational outcomes (Munich Business School, n.d.).

Why Soft Skills Matter in VET

- Employers consistently rate soft skills as critical for success, regardless of industry.
- In VET, they help learners transition smoothly into employment and adapt to change.
- Soft skills improve workplace communication, collaboration, and customer relations.

Types of Soft Skills

Problem solving
& creativity

Readiness to
learn & critical
thinking

Adaptability

Self-motivation &
positive attitude

Communication

Teamwork

Types of Soft Skills

Soft skills include three broad categories:

- Personal Skills – self-awareness, motivation, responsibility.
- Interpersonal Skills – communication, teamwork, empathy.
- Cognitive/Thinking Skills – creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking.

How Soft Skills Are Developed

- Learned through experience, interaction, and reflection.
- Developed in formal (classroom), non-formal (workshops), and informal (life experience) settings.
- Strengthened by feedback, practice, and real-world challenges.

Exercise: Spot the Soft Skill

Scenario 1 – The Missed Message

During a group project, Maria sends an important email about task changes but doesn't explain the new instructions clearly. Her teammates misunderstand, duplicate some work, and fall behind schedule. When the trainer asks for progress, confusion spreads and frustration grows within the team.

→ *Which soft skill is missing?*

Exercise: Spot the Soft Skill

Scenario 2 – The Schedule Change

Halfway through a training module, the instructor announces that deadlines will move forward by one week. Most learners react negatively, saying it's unfair, but Alex stays calm, reviews the new plan, and helps his peers reorganize tasks so the group stays on track.

➔ *Which soft skill helped Alex handle the situation positively?*

Exercise: Spot the Soft Skill

Scenario 3 – The Unspoken Idea

During a team brainstorming session, the group is looking for creative ways to attract customers to a student-run café project. Elena thinks of an original idea for a promotional campaign but decides not to share it, assuming others won't like it. Later, when another group presents a similar idea and receives praise, Elena regrets staying quiet.

➡ *Which soft skill was missing, and how could Elena have contributed differently?*

Exercise: Spot the Soft Skill

Scenario 4 – The Customer Complaint

In a simulated work-based learning task, a client complains about a service error. Instead of getting defensive, David listens carefully, apologizes for the inconvenience, and works with the client to find a quick, fair solution. The customer leaves satisfied and praises David's professionalism.

 *Which soft skill did David demonstrate, and how did it affect the outcome?*

Importance of Soft Skills

Unit 2

Why Soft Skills?

Increase employability
and open up more career
opportunities

Enhance communication
and teamwork in any
professional setting

Adapt effectively to
change and solve
problems creatively

Complement technical
skills to achieve overall
professional success

Why in VET?

- VET prepares learners for real workplaces, not only exams.
- Soft skills make technical skills usable at work (e.g. explaining, coordinating, reporting).
- Integrating soft skills → better employability, mobility, and progression for learners.

Role in Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

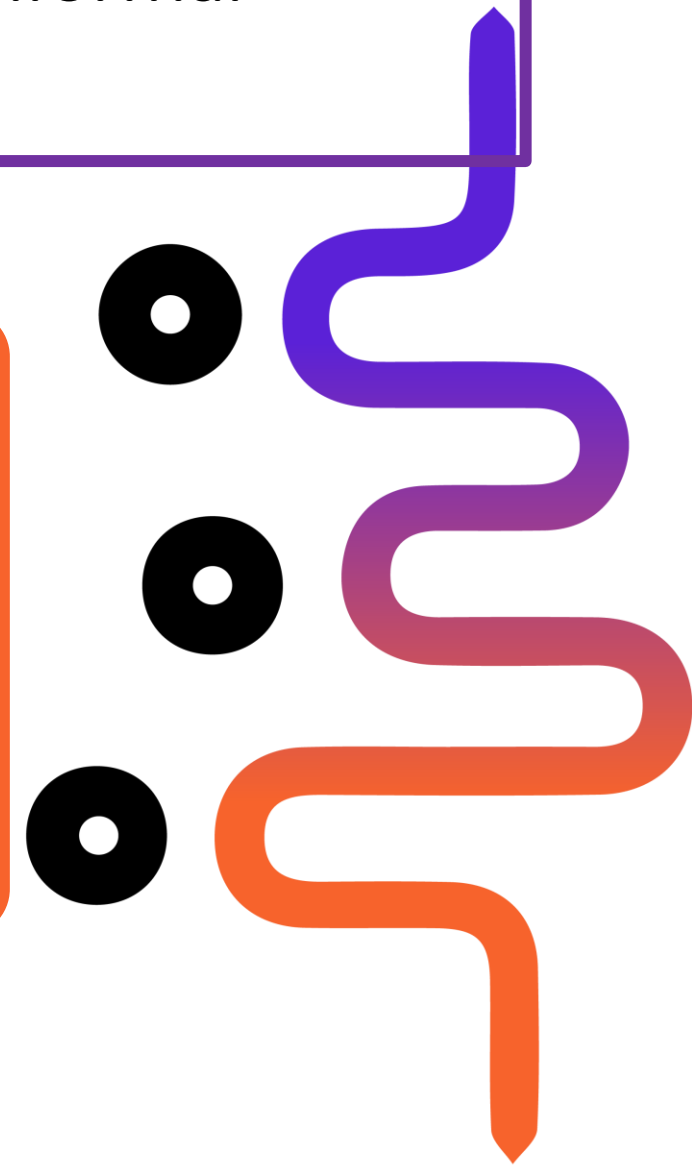
Many soft skills are developed outside formal education (work, volunteering, family, community)



Validation allows these competences to be recognised by VET providers or employers



This supports lifelong learning, progression, and inclusion



For example

A young person who developed leadership, teamwork, and communication skills through volunteering can have these competences validated by a VET institution or employer.

→ This recognition helps strengthen their CV, open new training opportunities, and support career progression.



Benefits from Soft Skills

Learners

Improve employability and career opportunities

Enhance confidence, communication and adaptability

Support lifelong learning and personal growth

Employers

Increase productivity and team effectiveness

Strengthen workplace culture and reduce conflicts

Boost innovation and customer satisfaction

Education & Training Systems

Promote holistic learning that integrates personal and technical competences

Align training with labour market needs

Foster inclusive and flexible learning pathways

Categories of Soft Skills

Unit 3

Categories of Soft Skills

Transversal (Universal) Soft Skills

- applicable across all sectors and occupations.

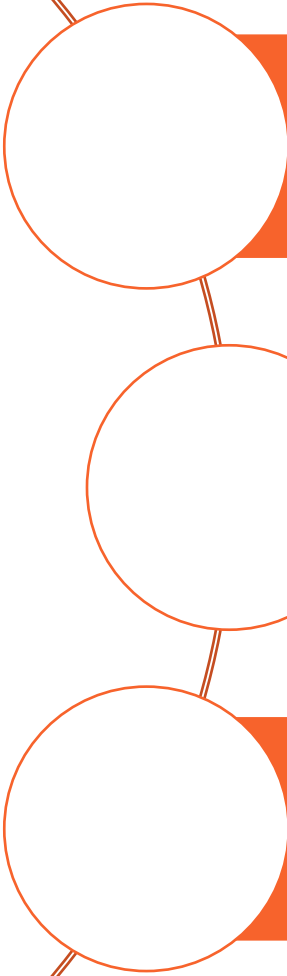
Sector-Specific Soft Skills

- relevant to particular industries or professional areas

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

- the foundation that supports all soft skills through self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management.

Transversal (Universal) Soft Skills



Apply across all industries and occupations.

Are core to employability, adaptability, and lifelong learning.

Enable learners to perform effectively in diverse work and social environments.

Transition to Sector-Specific Skills

- While transversal soft skills are needed in all professions, each sector also requires specific soft skills linked to its working environment and tasks.
- These skills connect interpersonal abilities with the technical and ethical demands of a particular occupation.

Healthcare & Social Care

Industry-Specific Soft Skills	Context / Examples in VET
Empathy & Compassion	Understanding patients' emotional needs.
Ethical Responsibility	Handling confidentiality and ethical dilemmas.
Communication under Stress	Delivering clear information in emergencies.
Team Collaboration	Working in multi-professional health teams.
Emotional Resilience	Managing burnout, grief, or trauma exposure.

Sector-Specific Soft Skills (by Industry / Occupation)

Education & Training

Industry-Specific Soft Skills	Context / Examples in VET
Empathy & Active Listening	Understanding learners' needs.
Motivational Communication	Inspiring and supporting learners.
Conflict Mediation	Managing classroom or workplace tensions.
Adaptability	Adjusting methods to learner diversity.
Reflective Practice	Evaluating one's teaching or mentoring.

Sector-Specific Soft Skills (by Industry / Occupation)

Can you think of the soft skills needed for your sector?

Emotional Intelligence & Soft Skills

Emotional intelligence underpins all soft skills and involves four key components:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Social awareness (empathy)
4. Relationship management

Why EI & Soft Skills Matter in the Workplace

- Enhances employability and career adaptability
- Supports decision-making under pressure
- Improves teamwork and collaboration
- Reduces workplace stress and burnout



From Practice to Frameworks

The **European competence frameworks** help us:

- Define these skills clearly,
- Ensure consistency across VET systems, and
- Make them **visible, measurable, and transferable**.

Competence Frameworks and Soft Skills

European competence frameworks provide a **structured approach** for defining, teaching, and assessing soft skills.

They help align learning outcomes with:

Labour market needs



Lifelong learning goals



Quality assurance in VET

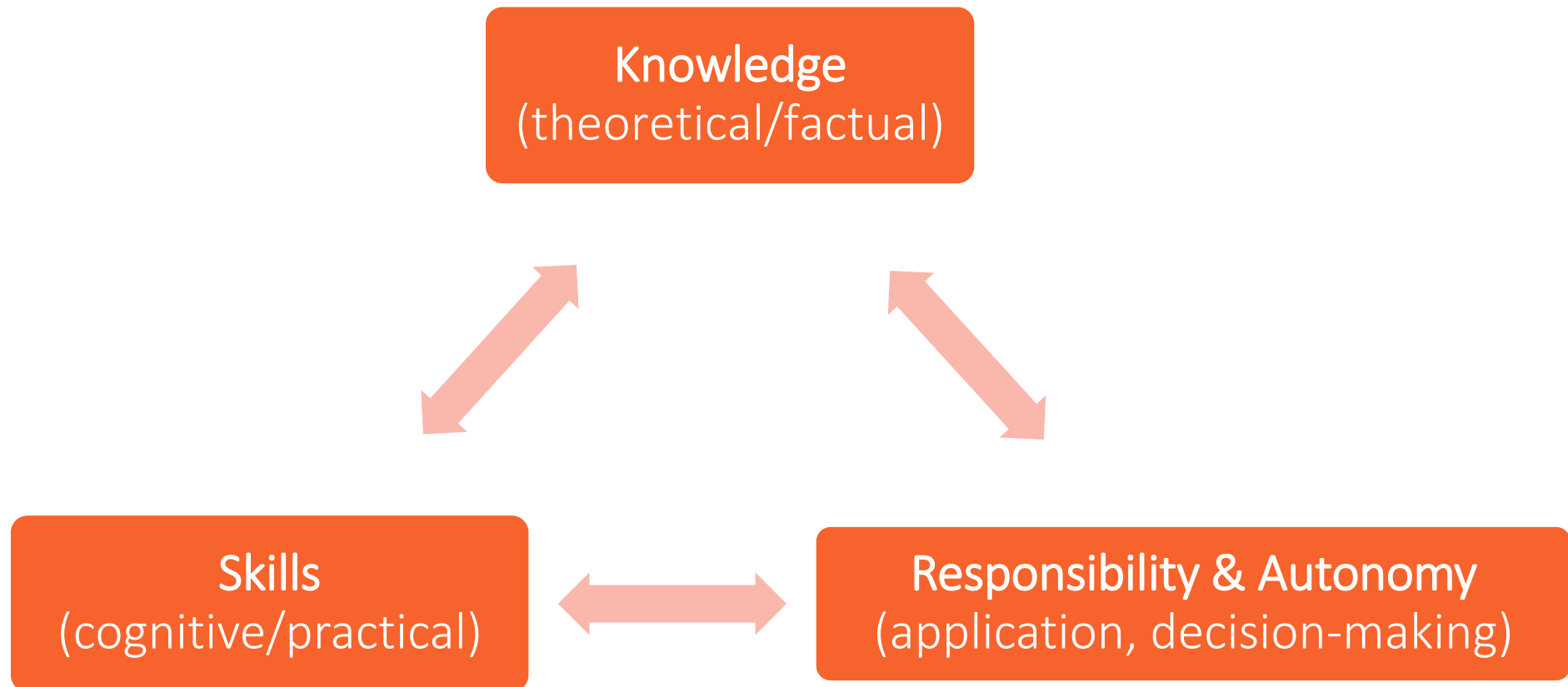


Key frameworks

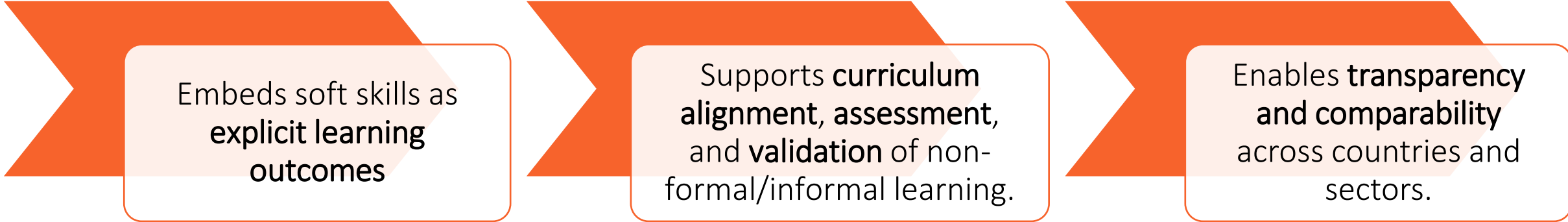
- **EQF** – European Qualifications Framework
- **LifeComp** – Personal, social & learning to learn
- **EntreComp** – Entrepreneurship competence
- **DigComp** – Digital competence
- **GreenComp** – Sustainability competence

EQF (European Qualifications Framework)

EQF is an **8-level reference framework** that describes learning outcomes in terms of:



Why it matters for Soft Skills:



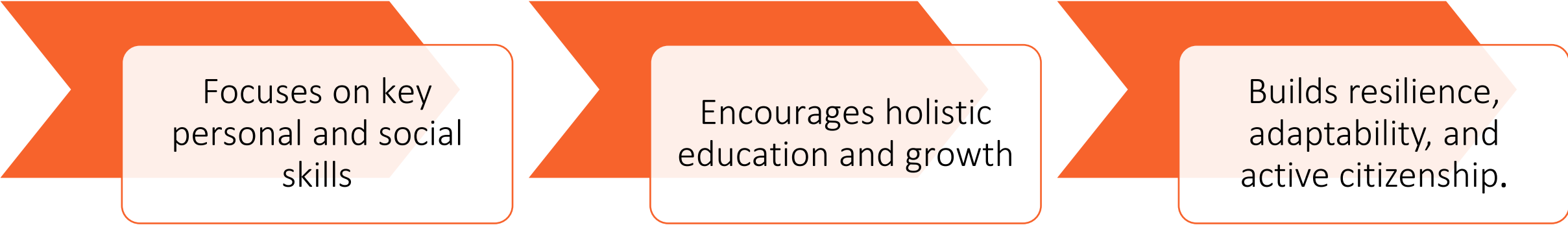
Embeds soft skills as **explicit learning outcomes**

Supports **curriculum alignment, assessment, and validation** of non-formal/informal learning.

Enables **transparency and comparability** across countries and sectors.

- LifeComp (2020) focuses on the core transversal competences that every person needs for lifelong learning and wellbeing.
- It is divided into three areas:
 1. Personal – managing yourself (self-awareness, resilience, flexibility)
 2. Social – relating to others (empathy, communication, teamwork)
 3. Learning to Learn – developing and reflecting on your learning process

Why it matters for Soft Skills



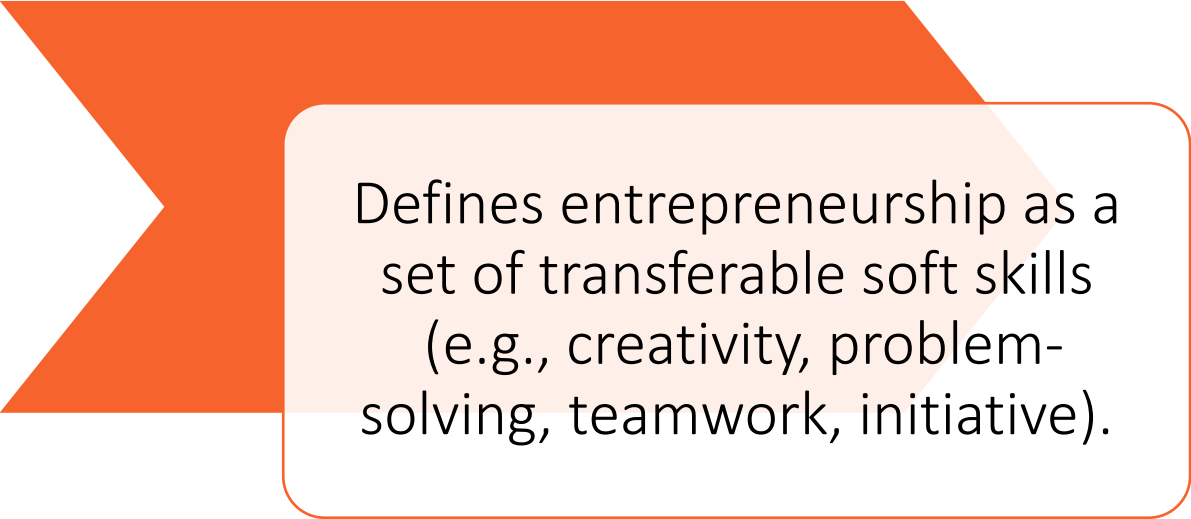
Focuses on key personal and social skills

Encourages holistic education and growth

Builds resilience, adaptability, and active citizenship.

- EntreComp (2016) describes what it means to act entrepreneurially — not just to start a business, but to take initiative and turn ideas into action.
- It has 15 competences grouped into three areas:
 1. Ideas & Opportunities (creativity, vision, ethical thinking)
 2. Resources (self-awareness, motivation, mobilising others)
 3. Into Action (initiative, planning, resilience, learning from experience)

Why it matters for Soft Skills :



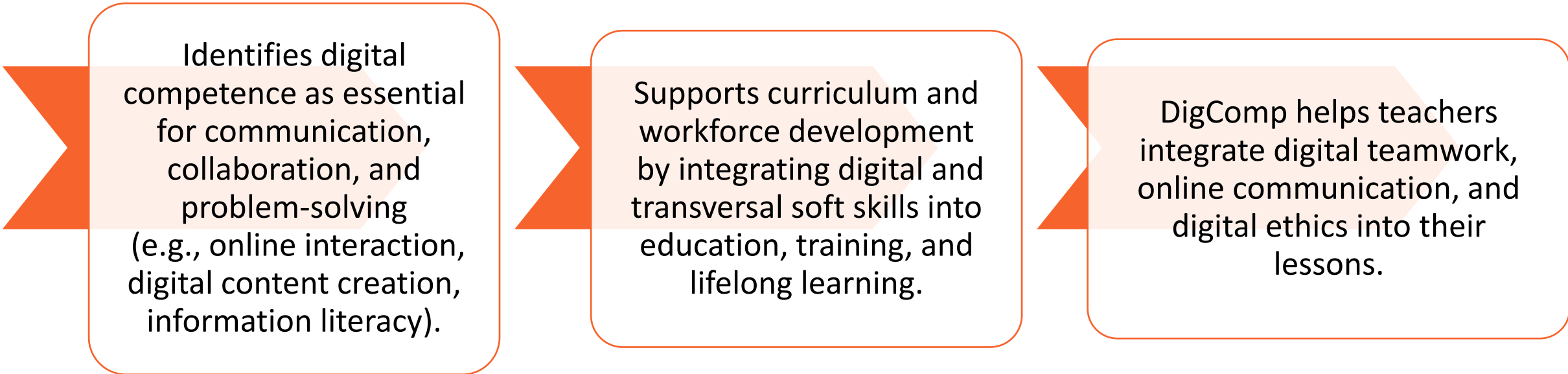
Defines entrepreneurship as a set of transferable soft skills (e.g., creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, initiative).



It's especially useful for VET programs aiming to develop innovation and employability mindsets.

- DigComp defines what it means to be digitally competent for learning, work, and participation in society.
- It covers five areas:
 1. Information & data literacy
 2. Communication & collaboration
 3. Digital content creation
 4. Safety & cybersecurity
 5. Problem-solving

Why it matters for Soft Skills:



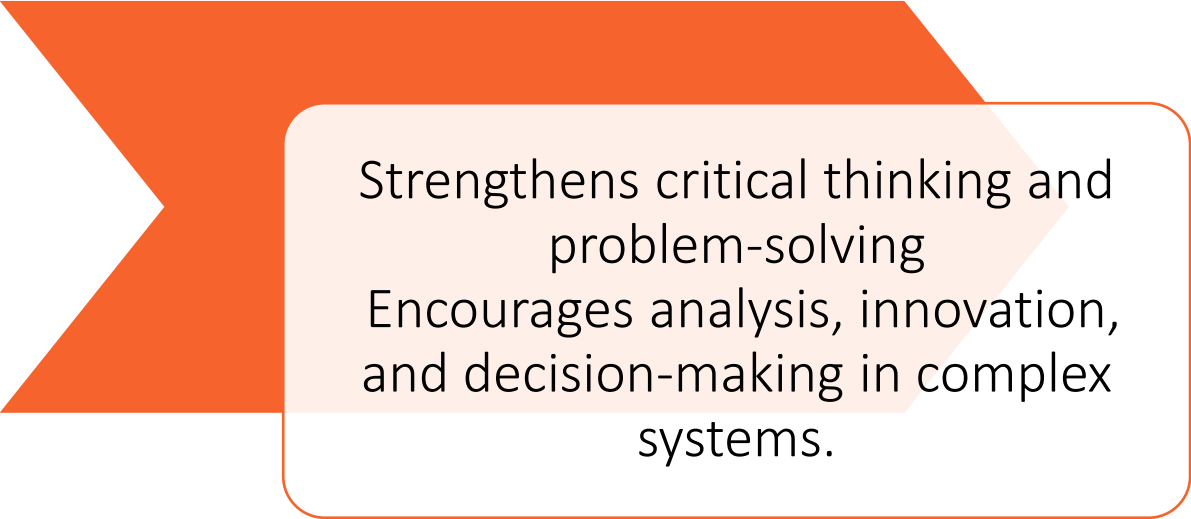
Identifies digital competence as essential for communication, collaboration, and problem-solving (e.g., online interaction, digital content creation, information literacy).

Supports curriculum and workforce development by integrating digital and transversal soft skills into education, training, and lifelong learning.

DigComp helps teachers integrate digital teamwork, online communication, and digital ethics into their lessons.

- GreenComp (2022) defines competences for sustainability learning and action — understanding systems, valuing the environment, and taking responsibility.
- It includes four key areas:
 1. Embodying sustainability values
 2. Embracing complexity in sustainability
 3. Envisioning sustainable futures
 4. Acting for sustainability

Why it matters for Soft Skills :



Strengthens critical thinking and problem-solving
Encourages analysis, innovation, and decision-making in complex systems.



Fosters ethical awareness and adaptability
Builds responsibility, resilience, and commitment to sustainable actions.

Mapping Soft Skills to Frameworks

Soft Skill	Framework Connection	Example in Practice
Communication & Teamwork		Learners collaborate effectively to plan and complete group tasks.
Creativity & Initiative		Learners generate innovative ideas and take the lead in implementing them.
Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving		Learners analyse challenges, evaluate options, and choose appropriate solutions.
Digital Collaboration		Learners use digital tools to share information and coordinate tasks online.
Adaptability & Self-Management		Learners manage their workload, respond to change, and maintain focus under pressure.
Sustainability Mindset		Learners make environmentally responsible decisions in projects or workplace tasks.

Mapping Soft Skills to Frameworks

Soft Skill	Framework Connection	Example in Practice
Communication & Teamwork	LifeComp (Social) • EQF (Skills; Responsibility & Autonomy)	Learners collaborate effectively to plan and complete group tasks.
Creativity & Initiative	EntreComp (Ideas & Opportunities; Into Action)	Learners generate innovative ideas and take the lead in implementing them.
Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving	LifeComp (Learning to Learn) • DigComp (Problem-Solving)	Learners analyse challenges, evaluate options, and choose appropriate solutions.
Digital Collaboration	DigComp (Communication & Collaboration)	Learners use digital tools to share information and coordinate tasks online.
Adaptability & Self-Management	LifeComp (Personal) • EQF (Responsibility & Autonomy)	Learners manage their workload, respond to change, and maintain focus under pressure.
Sustainability Mindset	GreenComp (Acting for Sustainability)	Learners make environmentally responsible decisions in projects or workplace tasks.

Why and How to Integrate Soft Skills in VET curricula

Unit 4

Why Integration Matters

Integrating soft skills in VET ensures learners are ready for the real workplace.

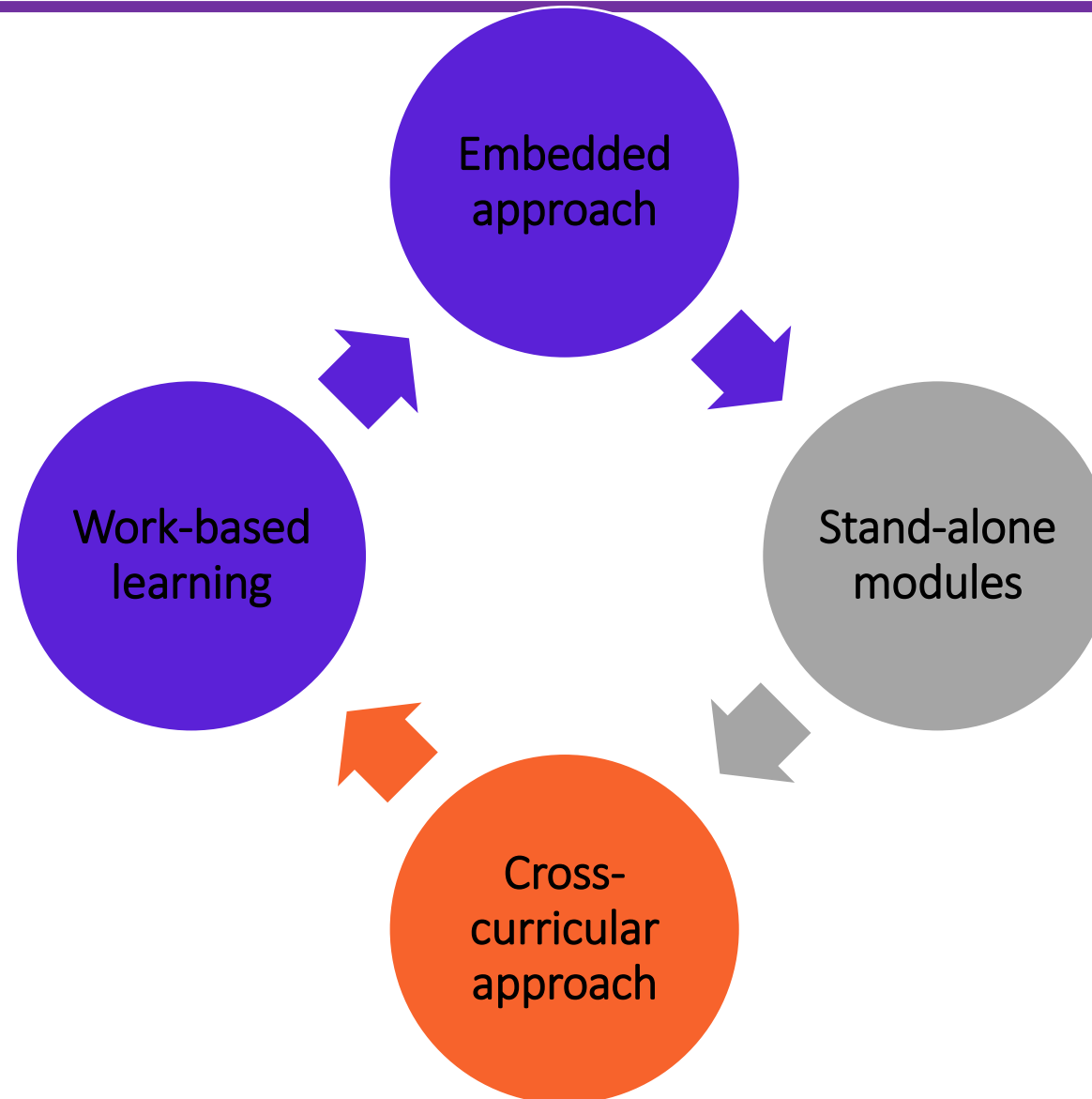
It helps them

- Adapt to change and new technologies
- Collaborate effectively in teams
- Solve problems independently
- Communicate confidently
- Continue learning throughout their careers

Guiding Principles for Integration

1. **Contextualised:** Embed soft skills in authentic vocational tasks.
2. **Learner-Centred:** Let learners practice and reflect, not just listen.
3. **Experiential:** Use real or simulated situations to build competences.
4. **Progressive:** Develop soft skills gradually, alongside technical ones.
5. **Visible:** Make soft skills explicit in learning outcomes and assessments

How to Integrate Soft Skills



Effective Training Methodologies

EFFECTIVE TRAINING METHODOLOGIES



Project-Based
Learning



Work-Based
Learning



Role-Play &
Simulations



Collaborative
Learning



Reflective
Practice



Coaching &
Mentoring

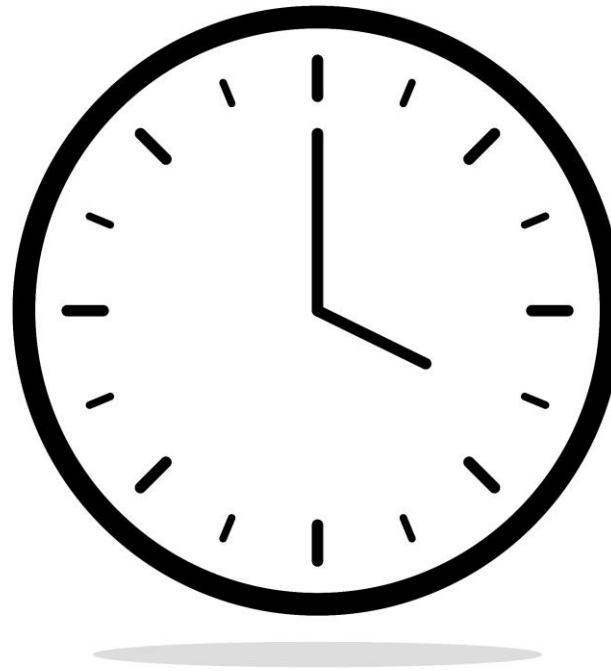
Assessing Soft Skills

- Observation checklists (during group tasks or simulations)
- Peer and self-assessment
- Employer feedback (in work-based training)
- Reflective portfolios
- Presentation and interview evaluations



Case Study

10 minutes!



Case Study

The TechWorks VET program trains learners for careers in precision manufacturing. Although apprentices perform well in technical tasks, trainers have observed communication gaps and teamwork breakdowns during collaborative production work.

Your Tasks (in groups):

1. Identify the soft skills essential for success in this program.
2. Suggest teaching methods to integrate these soft skills into existing modules.
3. Propose assessment approaches to track learners' progress.

Sharing of resources, best practices, and success stories

Unit 5

What Counts as a Good Practice?

What Counts as a Good Practice?

- ✓ Effective (produces real results)
- ✓ Transferable (other partners can adapt it)
- ✓ Sustainable (not a one-off activity)
- ✓ Inclusive (works for diverse learners)
- ✓ Evidence-based (supported by feedback or observation)

Example: Platform Roo Vet

- Roo Vet is an online platform offering **webinars and resources** for veterinary professionals.
- Focuses on developing **soft skills** alongside technical expertise.
- Supports continuous professional development and well-being.

Key Soft Skills Highlighted:

- Communication & Empathy
- Problem-solving & Critical Thinking
- Teamwork & Collaboration
- Adaptability & Flexibility
- Resilience & Emotional Regulation

Why It's a Good Practice

- Shows how **soft skills** are essential for **professional success** — even in highly technical fields.
- Demonstrates an **integrated learning model** that combines practical and interpersonal competences.
- Serves as an **inspirational example** for all **VET sectors** — proving that human skills matter in every workplace.



1. Creative Soft Skills Training Toolkit

- Erasmus+ toolkit to identify, develop, and recognise creative soft skills in early-career artists.
- Explains key soft skills and their importance in artistic and entrepreneurial contexts.
- Provides practical training methods, activities, and tools (including hackathons).
- Includes case studies showing how creative soft skills can be developed and assessed.
- Designed for artists and organisations supporting creativity and skills development.

Soft Skills Guides



Supporting artists in developing creative skills



creativesoftskills.eu

creativesoftskills.eu
[@creativesoftskills](https://www.facebook.com/creativesoftskills)

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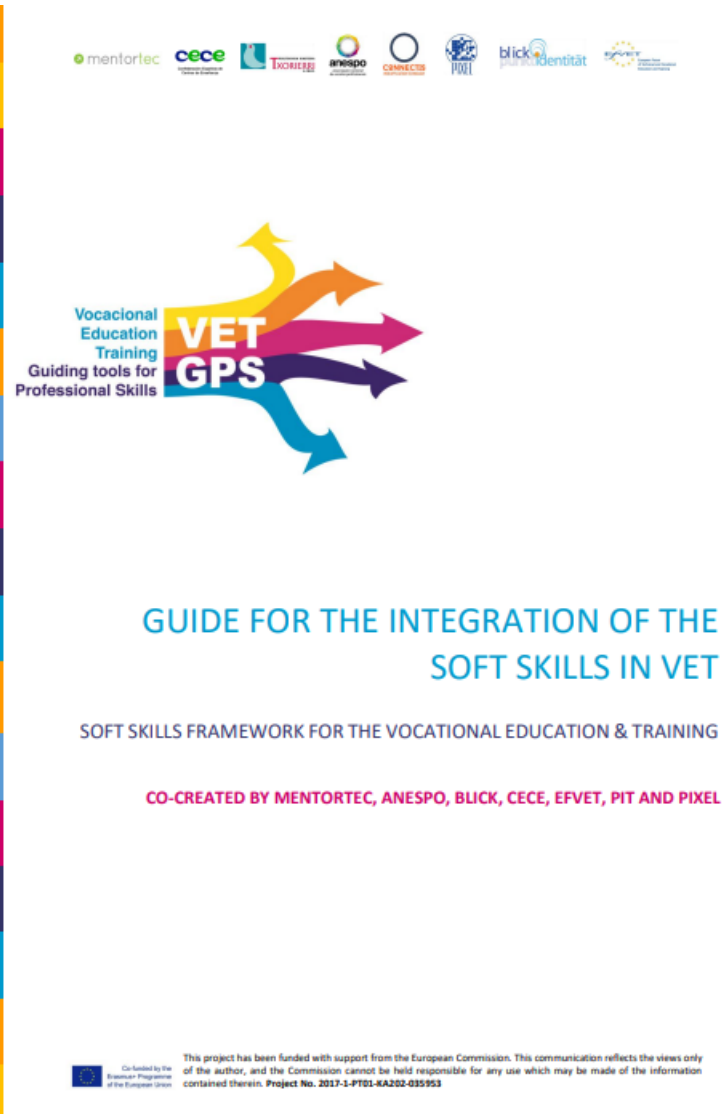


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2. Guide for the Integration of Soft Skills in VET

- Erasmus+ guide helping VET providers integrate soft skills into training programmes.
- Presents a soft skills framework with six key competences and clear definitions.
- Provides principles and methods for embedding soft skills into VET curricula and daily training.
- Includes tools such as self-assessment instruments, trainer support, and a cooperation model between VET centres and companies.

Soft Skills Guides



Erasmus+ Teacher Training (KA1 Courses)

- Provides EU-funded mobility opportunities for VET trainers to attend specialized courses across Europe.
- Offers training on soft skills such as communication, teamwork, conflict management, emotional intelligence, and learner-centred teaching.
- Enables trainers to gain new methods, exchange practices with peers, and improve the quality of soft skills integration in their institutions.

Trainer Development Programs

CCS Online Learning (Clinical Communication Skills Platforms)

- Provides video-based simulations to develop communication, empathy, confidence, and interpersonal skills in health and social care contexts.
- Allows learners to practice realistic clinical scenarios and receive structured feedback.

https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/clinical-communication-skills-for-healthcare-professionals?utm_source=chatgpt.com

European Schoolnet Academy – CPD Courses for Teachers

- Offers free online courses on collaboration, digital communication, creativity, and active learning.
- Provides practical, classroom-ready methods with peer interaction and certificate-based learning.
- Supports teachers in developing 21st-century competences and integrating soft skills into everyday teaching.

<https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/>

Online Learning Platforms for Soft Skills Development

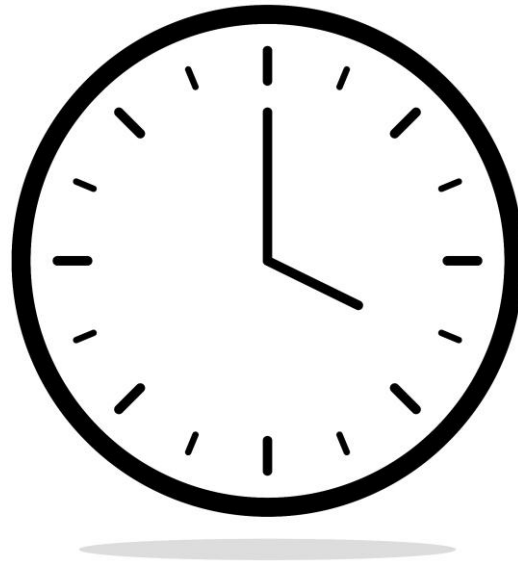
Coursera / edX – Professional Soft Skills Collections

- Hosts high-quality courses on communication, teamwork, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and digital collaboration.
- Offers practical assignments, peer activities, and certificates that support employability.
- Widely used by VET providers to integrate flexible, online soft skill training into blended programs.

https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=soft%20skills&utm_source=chatgpt.com

Group Activity: Success Story Exchange

In groups, identify and discuss a success story, then present this best practice to the rest of the participants in 3–4 sentences.



10 minutes!

Key points

- Clarified what soft skills are and why they matter in VET.
- Explored key soft skills across transversal, sector-specific, and emotional intelligence areas.
- Learned how to map soft skills to VET curricula using EU frameworks (EQF, LifeComp, DigComp, EntreComp, GreenComp).
- Reviewed practical methods for teaching and integrating soft skills in training programs.
- Examined tools and approaches for assessing soft skills in VET.
- Shared resources, best practices, and success stories from partners.



Thank you !

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