



Professional development for inclusive teaching and training

Problem statement

Teachers and trainers face the continuous challenge of improving their strategies and methods to motivate and engage students to stay focused on their studies, especially those who have low motivation, face learning or other difficulties. Early leaving from VET can be caused by students' dissatisfaction with teaching or training methods or conflicting relations with their teachers or trainers. Continuous professional development offers teachers and trainers the opportunity to keep developing inspiring ways to re-engage students in the learning process and overcome any problems related to their learning environment.

Professional development for VET teachers and trainers includes those processes and activities designed to enhance their professional knowledge, skills and attitude which can, in turn, improve their well-being and job satisfaction as well as the learning outcomes and well-being of their students, helping them complete their studies successfully.

VET teachers receive their qualification after completing their higher education studies. When their core studies do not include a pedagogical component, they can obtain a pedagogical certificate to complement it and be employed as VET teachers. VET trainers come from a diverse background as they access the training professions from different qualifications. It is common to enter the profession after working for many years in industry. Continuous professional development for both VET teachers and trainers is vital especially for acquiring pedagogical and transversal skills and provide them with competences to detect signs of disengagement and identify learners at risk of early leaving, as well as with competences and tools to support them effectively and in a timely manner.

As school and work-based learning environments are often composed of heterogeneous groups of learners due to migration and international mobility, VET teachers and trainers should be required to give quick and flexible responses to emerging needs, promote inclusion and adopt effective pedagogical approaches to support displaced students, students with different abilities and cultural backgrounds, as well as those with learning difficulties. In the case of [Ukrainians refugee students](#) for example, inclusive teaching and training skills are relevant to smoothly integrate them in a new education system and in the social life of their hosting country. To foster positive relationships and well-being within the learning environment, also CPD on [psychosocial support](#) is necessary for both teachers and trainers to cope with students who may have experienced trauma.



Beneficiaries

- 📖 **Learners at risk of early leaving from education and training**
- 📖 **VET students (school-based learning)**
- 📖 **VET students (work-based learning)**
- 📖 **Migrants / refugees**

Teachers
Low-motivated learners

Addressing the problem

Many VET teachers and trainers face barriers in participating in professional development mostly due to lack of incentives, conflicts with work schedule and lack of employer support or funding. A further obstacle is the low involvement of teachers and trainers in the design and provision of CPD activities, as training should be based upon regular needs analysis and address specific topics of their interest. To offer all teachers and trainers quality CPD and overcome participation barriers, targeted actions and coordination from a wide range of stakeholders are needed. Professional development providers (national and regional government institutions, VET and higher education institutions, industry and professional organisations) should motivate VET teachers and trainers and provide them with the necessary support and resources to participate in professional development programmes.

Depending on the country, participation in professional development can be voluntary or mandatory, where teachers are entitled to a set number of days of CPD each year. Also, the type of programmes varies widely: they can depend upon national provisions or upon local initiatives in schools or training centres. Training can be formal, for example courses

extending over a longer period and leading to a qualification, or non-formal, for example one-day seminars and short online peer learning sessions.

In order to embrace an inclusive pedagogy, to work with diverse and heterogeneous classes and to develop specific targeted strategies for learners at risk, the adoption of a learner-centred approach is highly recommended. [Learner-centred approaches to vocational pedagogy](#) often lead learners to be more motivated, engaged and satisfied with their VET programme. They focus on responding to students' interests and meeting their needs, on individual learning pathways and competence development, and on adopting learner-centred pedagogies including small group work, problem-based learning (PBL) approaches; and project-based teaching and learning.

The following tips are given as advice to policy makers and VET practitioners involved in the design and delivery of continuous professional development programmes for VET teachers and trainers.

Tip 1: Offer different possibilities to VET providers to engage their teaching and training staff in professional development

Training for teachers and trainers should be of high quality, engaging and effective and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. According to Cedefop, CPD can be provided in many different forms such as courses, webinars, workshop, internships, competence sharing in professional networks, higher education programmes for upskilling, study groups and so on. The following six models drawn from international research, are examples of professional development for VET; they can be structured and carried out according to the different situations and teaching abilities, in an online or in-person format:

- Training model: is the most common form of professional development and includes lectures, workshops and seminars. Due to the large number of participants and repetitive content this model may not serve directly to improve teachers' practical skills, but it is still a useful way to introduce new knowledge.
- Deficit model: this model addresses individual teachers' deficits as well as institutional ones and draws on these weaknesses to develop new teaching and organisational strategies. It can be integrated into institutional and/or individual assessment and/or appraisal processes.
- Cascade model: involves the sharing of knowledge, skills and practices among teachers. Through methodological activities for example, teachers can both share their own knowledge while learning from others (peer learning).
- Coaching/mentoring model: this model is based on a one-to-one relationship, where discussions and peer counselling between teachers can function as CPD activities. Coaching is more skills based while mentoring involves an element of counselling and professional friendship.
- Community of practice model: consists in a group of practitioners with the aim of deepening their professional expertise. Community learning has advantages and can be an enriching experience, but it could also bring dominant members of the group to shape other individuals' opinions and understanding.
- Action research model: teachers can conduct research on relevant topics to gain new, evidence-based, professional knowledge and improve their teaching performance accordingly.

Tip 2: Provide incentives to participate in professional development activities

To motivate teachers and trainers and encourage them to take part in professional development, it is necessary to overcome specific barriers that many of them face, such as lack of time, lack of employer support or lack of funding.

International research suggests that the most common support measures for teachers to participate in CPD activities are time off from work, facilitation to access learning material and financial support.

According to Cedefop findings, CPD for VET teachers and trainers working in school-based settings is mandatory in the majority of European countries to ensure that they will have the possibility to update their knowledge, skills and competences and keep abreast of new pedagogical approaches and technical advancements during their professional career.

However, accessibility barriers to CPD should be lifted and countries should further encourage VET teachers and trainers working in schools to participate in CPD. Involving VET teachers and trainers in co-designing their CPD would increase their motivation to actively participate in it. Increasing the attractiveness of their profession is another incentive that could motivate participation in CPD activities. There are various ways to achieve this, including salary increase and/or career progression.

Conducting regular teachers and trainers' satisfaction surveys and caring for their well-being may improve CPD quality and accessibility. Evaluation of CPD programmes may be part of such surveys (see Tip 2).

Additional incentives should be given to encourage VET professionals working in work-based settings to participate in CPD activities, not only for further developing their technical skills but also their pedagogical and tutoring competences. Especially, an exchange of CPD settings involving training of VET teachers in companies and training of VET trainers in schools would be mutually beneficial to address the needs of both groups of VET professionals.

Creating the conditions to encourage more people to opt for a 'dual career' becoming "hybrid" teachers and trainers (i.e. people who work in parallel in VET institutions and companies), may be a promising way to acquaint VET learners and fellow teachers and trainers with state-of-the-art technologies, working methods and skills.

Hybrid teachers and trainers have the potential to strengthen the link between VET programmes and the labour market, address teachers shortages and make their profession more attractive, thus efforts should be made at country level to define legal provisions and specific CPD for this emerging profession.

Tip 3: Customise professional development to teachers' and trainers' needs

Teachers and trainers are more likely to attend and engage in professional development activities when these are interesting and relevant to their teaching

practice and subject.

To tailor professional development opportunities and fill in teachers' skills gaps, it is therefore necessary to identify the diverse and changing training needs of each individual VET teacher and trainer. To this end, a training needs analysis is required to keep training relevant and up-to-date.

According to Cedefop research, needs analyses are conducted in school-based VET systems in almost all European countries, while only in few countries for trainers being employed in work-based settings. In both cases, they should be linked to evaluation or appraisal as part of the entire CPD provision process.

Evaluation and needs analysis processes should be an integral part of CPD, as they could contribute to the design of tailor-made CPD programmes better responding to the needs expressed by teachers and trainers (see Tip 8).

Tip 4: Engage multiple stakeholders in the design and delivery of CPD

To ensure that VET teachers and trainers receive efficient and valuable CPD, a certain level of co-operation is required among different stakeholders involved in the provision and attendance of such programmes.

- **VET institutions** have the role of enabling and facilitating access to PD for their teaching staff. It is therefore important that institutional leadership takes a systemic approach to teachers' CPD.
- **Teachers' and school networks** can be effective channels for encouraging participation in CPD and exchanging experiences, including for VET trainers.
- **Local companies and industry associations** can also provide and encourage CPD by providing industry placements for VET teachers.
- **Local universities and relevant associations** should also work to improve the quality of CPD by sustaining connection between practice and research and by offering the opportunity to VET trainers to receive training on pedagogies.

Partnerships between schools and companies is of great importance as work-based learning (WBL) is particularly useful for school-based teachers as it is for students. Part of VET teachers' initial training can take place in a VET institution to have direct experience of teaching in a classroom, but another part of it can take the form of an internship, externship or secondment to a company to equip future VET teachers with industry-relevant skills. Vice versa, trainers who may come from many years of work experience in industry and may not hold pedagogical skills, would strongly benefit from school-based training.

Different networks and councils can be created to connect the different actors. As for specific formal links between schools and companies agreements or contracts on a bilateral or trilateral level can be made. Exchanges between trainers and schools may be at the discretion of both parties. However, there is a variety of ways to coordinate which may also be more formalised in the form of agreements or contracts.

Tip 5: Promote inclusion through professional development

Inclusive VET should be a main component of CPD.

Teachers and trainers should be appropriately trained and be supported to be able to:

- identify learners at risk of early leaving and help them to complete their studies;
- provide psychosocial support for all students and especially displaced and refugee students;
- refer students to guidance and counselling services;
- know basic principles for the re-integration of NEETs, refugees and migrants, in initial VET;
- support young learners with disabilities and special educational needs in mainstream VET programmes.

CPD for inclusive teaching and training should focus on developing VET teachers and trainers' digital skills for inclusion (see also Tip 5), classroom management, learners' well-being, school climate and students' guidance. Other competences to display include interpersonal and social skills, organisational skills, methodological skills, leadership skills and competences for applying flexible and individual approaches to training, as well as self-reflection skills (see also Tip 8).

Specific activities to promote inclusion through CPD may include:

- master's degree in teaching VET at secondary level with a focus on inclusive VET;
- accredited courses focused on motivating students to engage in schoolwork;
- professional qualification of 'Career counsellor'
- studies for performing specialised activities in the field of prevention of socio-pathological phenomena;
- training schemes and tailor-made coaching for multidisciplinary teams (teachers, trainers and non-pedagogical staff) to prevent drop out / early leaving and reduce social exclusion;
- in-service training for teaching and training staff applying didactic activities for students with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN);
- optimisation of learning outcomes for students with Asperger syndrome in VET.

CPD to promote inclusive VET should be sustained and embraced at both national and EU levels and be supported by appropriate legislation, funding, and mechanisms. Identifying learners at risk of early leaving and how to support them, as well as creating inclusive learning settings in both school and work-based contexts should be an integral part of teachers and trainers' initial education and training as well as part of their lifelong learning opportunities.



Source: Cedefop

💡 Tip 6: Enhance professional development on inclusive digital skills

The right use of digital tools in education plays a key role in [promoting digital inclusion](#).

VET providers may not have sufficient confidence or competences to profit from the benefits that technology can offer to inclusive teaching and learning. This can be due to impediments in accessing digital resources, a negative attitude or resistance to change, or a lack of just-in-time technical support. Some relevant factors should be taken into consideration when addressing teachers' and trainers' inclusive digital skills development:

- Access to training: what are the actual opportunities offered, where and how. Continuous professional development should be available for all levels of education at working hours and free of charge.
- Uptake of training: what are the reasons/obstacles for teachers to engage in such training.
- Capacity to apply digital skills: refers to the ability to effectively integrate digital tools and resources in teaching/training in meaningful ways.
- Propensity to apply digital skills: the ability of applying these tools should be supported by teachers' intention to do so, which is influenced by the presence of institutional structures and culture to support, encourage and enable teachers'/trainers' efforts.

[International research](#) suggests that preparing teaching staff to make effective use of digital tools for teaching should cover two main areas:

- building teachers' and trainers' digital skills, as well as their knowledge of new digital technologies, equipment and practices in the workplace.
- developing teachers' and trainers' skills and competences in applying new pedagogical approaches, instructional tools and educational technologies to deliver learner-centred teaching and training.

A professional development strategy has therefore to consider and address all

these aspects, being able to make digital knowledge accessible and favourable for all VET providers and students.

Tip 7: Provide professional development on psychosocial support

VET teachers and trainers should be provided with professional development on how to focus on learners' well-being and ensure [psychological and social support](#) which goes beyond the student's learning achievements and addresses their specific mental needs and challenges. Refugee students, for instance, do suffer often from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), this requires special attention from VET practitioners to make them feel comfortable in the new setting and positively relate to a new environment. Also, teachers and trainers may also suffer from secondary trauma and need to develop coping strategies or receive psychological support themselves. CPD for VET teachers and trainers should therefore have a twofold aim: a) provide competences regarding how to offer psychosocial support to students and their parents and b) support directly pedagogical workers to reduce the risk of professional burnout.

Tip 8: Promote teachers' self-evaluation and reflection to enhance professional development

Teachers' self-evaluation can help them identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as learning needs and objectives. Teachers may use it to request and plan CPD accordingly. Teachers' self-reflection can also be a means for their CPD. [Cedefop's Evaluation plan for learning providers](#) and [Reflection tool for VET providers](#) are two powerful tools that can be used to this end.

Since factors triggering education success for students and actions taken to prevent early leaving are mostly left up to educators and their competences, their individual ability to assess and rethink their behaviour and to evaluate their teaching practices is fundamental and can affect their choices, motivation and coping mechanisms. Self-reflection can have a great influence on teachers' practice involving interaction with students at risk of ELET and on preventing this phenomenon.




As a tool used by educators to improve their work performance, self-reflection can be considered as one of the three phases of a self-regulatory circular process which includes forethought, performance and self-reflection, where each of this phase influences the other two. In terms of reducing ELET forethought prepares for education interactions and classroom management with the aim of supporting all students. Finally, if teachers observe some indicators that could lead to student's early leaving, a subsequent self-reflection can be useful to put in practice supportive actions that would prevent the student from dropping out.

Expected outcomes

The participation of VET teachers and trainers in professional development activities, and the adoption of vocational pedagogies focusing on learners' individual needs and capacities, have proven according to Cedefop findings to benefit learners, impacting on their attentiveness, engagement, satisfaction, education achievement and lower risk of dropout.

But the positive outcomes are not limited to students: many teachers stated in TALIS the positive impact that CPD had on their teaching. Professional development contributes to also increase teachers' satisfaction with their profession and is often correlated with higher retention rates. CPD is important on an individual level, as each teacher and each trainer may gain new knowledge and develops further skills and competences, but also on a collective one, as the teaching and training staff together contributes to develop their VET institution and the quality of VET programmes. It can also contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the VET teaching profession, which is a major concern expressed by several EU countries.

The following outcomes can be expected at different levels:

 INDIVIDUAL	 INSTITUTIONAL	 SYSTEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved teachers, trainers and students' well-being• Increased teachers and trainers' satisfaction with their job• Improved education outcomes• Improved capacity to deal with one's learning difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision better meets needs of learners, in particular at-risk groups• Increased focus on creating welcoming and inclusive learning environments that encourage learner engagement and motivation• Increased information sharing and collaboration between VET teachers and trainers to ensure effective coordination of measures and interventions• Increased support to teachers and trainers to work with learners with complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved inclusion of learners from minority and high-risk groups• Reduced risk of early leaving• Improved quality of VET programmes

Related protective factors



Inclusive environment



Positive relationships in the workplace and in the classroom



Education achievement and attendance



Health and well-being

Related resources

Good practices

 Good practice

OrientaFP. Networking and innovation to support and guide students in transition to vocational training and work

Orientafp. Treball en xarxa i innovació per al suport i l'orientació de l'alumnat en la transició a l'FP i al món laboral. (Catalan)

The programme is focused on the design and implementation of strategies addressed to improve students' engagement, develop social and personal competences and provide

 Good practice

Youth Guidance Centres

Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning, (UU)

Danish Youth Guidance Centres organise guidance at lower secondary schools in collaboration with school principals, in order to provide an extra guidance resource to teachers.

 **Denmark**

tools for academic and/or professional success.

 **Spain**

 **Good practice**

Integrated Pedagogical System - Integrált Pedagógiai Rendszer (IPR)

The Integrated pedagogical System in Hungary is a national programme that aims to enhance inclusive education. It requires the involvement and cooperation of teachers and external stakeholders. Schools participating in the programme report positive outcomes in classroom management, student autonomy, teacher-student relationships.

 **Hungary**

Tools

 **Tools**

Capacity building for students, companies and vocational schools involved in apprenticeship-training (QuABB)

Qualifizierte Ausbildungsbegleitung in Betrieb und Berufsschule (QuABB)

The [project QuABB \(Capacity building for students, companies and vocational schools involved in apprenticeship-training\)](#) provides a collection of tools for the identification of apprentices at risk of early leaving, and guidance to trainers, VET teachers and parents to deal with this situation.

 **Germany**

 **Tools**

Reaching out to all learners: a resource pack for supporting inclusive education

From the IBE-UNESCO series 'Training tools for curriculum development'

The 'Training tools for curriculum development' resource pack provides a framework to support the development of inclusive schools and classrooms. It provides guidance to support teachers on how to engage all learners.

International

Tools

Stay@School - The School Inclusion Project Transfer of Innovation. Educational Products.

The project Stay @ school developed several tools to help teachers assess the risk of school dropout, including questionnaires for students, teachers and parents.

 **Belgium**  **Italy**  **Romania**

 **Spain**

Tools

Guidelines for Teachers - P2Peer Tutoring

The 'Guidelines for Teachers - P2Peer Tutoring' handbook is aimed at practitioners in secondary VET. The guidelines include "do's and don'ts" and similar practical information to assist practitioners in their daily communication with learners.

 **Italy**  **Romania**  **Türkiye**

 **United Kingdom**

Tools

Training programme for VET teachers developed within the framework of the STAY IN project

The STAY IN project proposes a training programme for VET teachers and youth workers. Its module 1 discusses indicators to identify learners at risk of early leaving

 **Austria**  **Bulgaria**  **Finland**

 **Germany**  **Italy**  **Netherlands**

 **Portugal**  **Türkiye**

Publications

Publications

Teachers and trainers in a changing world - Building up competences for inclusive, green and digitalised vocational education and training (VET): Synthesis report

Publications

Teachers and trainers in a changing world

Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives - 29 country reports

VET teachers and trainers and a comprehensive approach to their

Cedefop research paper

The need for investment and for a holistic approach to VET teachers' and trainers' professional development is at the heart of high-quality and inclusive VET.

 **EU level**

professional development are key to improving education and training processes in Europe.

 **EU level**

Publications

Empowering teachers and trainers to manage change

Cedefop Briefing note

Teachers and trainers are at the forefront of initial vocational education and training (VET) delivery. In the face of the unprecedented challenges created by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, their commitment and creativity have been central to sustaining teaching and learning in schools and workplaces.

 **EU level**

Publications

Educators' self-reflection

This paper focuses on educators' self-reflection as a professional development tool.

The individual's ability to reflect and assess their behaviours and abilities affects their choices, aspirations, motivations and coping mechanisms. This ability should therefore be promoted and developed, especially among educators.

Read the publication  [here](#).

 **EU level**

Publications

Teachers' professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers is one of the most important approaches for preventing ESL. Improving educators' competencies (e.g. communication, discipline management and cooperation competencies) implies improving students' educational experience and reducing their risk for ESL. This article outlines how CPD should intertwine the different modes (e.g. study groups, self-reflection etc.) taking teachers' motivation, interests and their stage of professional development into account.

Publications

VET Teachers and Trainers' Competence in Creating Inclusion and Excellence - European Policy Agenda, Approaches and Challenges

Psifidou I., Pevec Grm S. (2021) - Book chapter in Technical, Vocational Educ., Vol. 34, Frank Bünning et al. (Eds): Technical and Vocational Teacher Education and Training in International and Development Co-Operation (Chapter 7)

Building on the work of Cedefop, this article presents the EU policy agenda and central activities related to VET teachers and trainers as well as

 **EU level**


linkages to the European strategies for vocational education and training (VET); approaches and models of VET teacher and trainer professional development in the member states (MS).

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Vocational pedagogies and benefits for learners: practices and challenges in Europe

Cedefop study on vocational pedagogies finds that good communication and high levels of trust between teacher or trainer and learner are important for retention.

Download the report  [here](#)

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Education and Training Monitor

European Commission's flagship annual publication on education and training in the EU

The Monitor is the European Commission's flagship annual publication on education and training in the EU.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

UNESCO AI competency framework for teachers

Framework on teachers' preparation, development and support how to integrate AI in Education

The UNESCO's AI Competency Framework for Teachers (AI CFT) offers a global vision that outlines the necessary skills and knowledge for teachers to effectively integrate artificial intelligence (AI) into their teaching practices.

International

 **Publications**

Wellbeing and mental health at school

EC guidelines for school leaders, teachers, and educators

The European Commission has developed guidelines for school leaders, teachers, and educators to address wellbeing at school, which are based on a whole-school approach.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Policy Recommendations

 **Publications**

Pathways to School Success

from the Odisseu Project

Transnational impact assessment report

The Erasmus+ ODISSEU project develops online gaming and digital tools to integrate asylum seekers and raise awareness about the refugee crisis in Europe through intercultural education and civic engagement.

 **Cyprus**  **Germany**  **Ireland**

 **Italy**  **Malta**  **Romania**

Replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving

This Council Recommendation aims to provide a framework which serves as a reference tool for national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners in education and training which can inspire a systemic policy response to ensure better educational outcomes for all learners.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Report on the digital transformation in blended learning environments

European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE) analytical report

This report aims to highlight the contribution of blended learning to social inclusion through flexible educational pathways as part of a whole-school approach. Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with digital and online methods, offering a range of benefits such as improved student performance, increased engagement, and support for diverse learning needs, including those with special educational needs (SEN).

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Pathways to school success: A comprehensive roadmap

A practical guide for implementing the Council Recommendation on ensuring school success for all

This report from the European Commission's Working Group on Schools, Sub-group on Pathways to School Success is a practical guide for ensuring school success, aiming to reduce underachievement, prevent early school leaving, and promote inclusion and well-being. It emphasises a whole-school approach, early detection of at-risk students, holistic assessments, and professional development.

 **EU level**