

# Continuing professional development in digital education for VET



## Module 1: Competences of the VET teacher Unit 1.2: Defining the role of the facilitator



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Entire training program is available at: <https://www.covet-project.eu/>

# Module 1: Competences of the VET teacher

## Unit 1.2: Defining the role of the facilitator



# At the end of this Unit you will be able to:

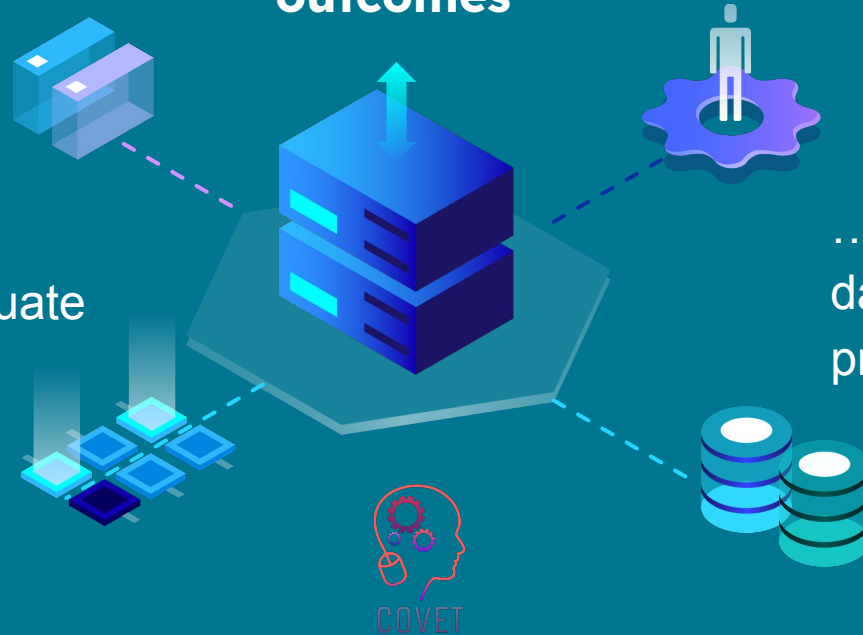
... understand the tasks and competencies of an online course instructor.

...use and organize the facilitation of an e-learning course.

## Learning outcomes

...know how to Evaluate your own facilitation skills.

...apply and visualize data about your own progress.





The second part represents a delving into the issue that collects suggestions, ideas, and more details to explore.



The third part is a collection of videos, testimonials, written documents, cartoons, etc. to explore the focused issue surfing the Internet.



The first part lets you to focus on the issue by an analysis of the Unit key words and by an expositive short text.

## Each Unit is composed of 4 parts



The fourth part is a testing section through which you can test yourself and reflect on what you learnt.

# Content of the Unit

The aim of this unit is to enable participants to organize their own work as professional e-learning course providers and develop the ability to evaluate their own skills. It is also the unit in which we summarize the course.

This unit addresses:

- the responsibilities and competencies of an online course facilitator;
- the role of the facilitator in online learning;
- organization and facilitation of an e-learning course;
- evaluation of teachers own facilitation skills;
- visualize data about teachers own progress.



# Introduction

With the developments in science and technology, technology is now an integral part of everyone's life. Accordingly, the effective use of digital technologies has become a prominent parameter among the competencies that future generations should possess. However, gaining this competence to future generations is only possible if teachers are also competent. In this context, first of all, it is extremely important to improve the situation of teachers on digital competence.

The question of how to properly use ICT in teaching practice remains challenging – a challenge for existing teachers, but also a challenge for future professionals whose professional development starts at the University (Tsankov and Damyanov, 2019).

Adequate digital education is at the core of vocational training and lifelong learning. Digital competences are an essential element of the European Competence Reference Framework and one of the eight competences needed to improve personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability.

# The inclusion of digital technologies in education



Without the inclusion of digital technologies in education, the school fails credit of modern educational institutions, one of the reasons for the use of digital technologies in education.

Without digital technologies, students cannot be prepared for further education and application in the knowledge society and industry 4.0.



Digital competences correspond to key lifelong skills and must be considered in the field of teacher education.

A VET teacher who has a digital competence effectively works with information and data using modern information and communication technologies.

It is orientated in current new trends in education and is able to apply it to practice.

# The reasons for the VET teachers to have digital competences

- Innovative teaching practices, examples of good practice, motivation,
- Importance of digital technologies for management activity, the contribution of change and school development,
- Management skills—e.g. change management, knowledge management, implementation management, time management







# What is a facilitator?

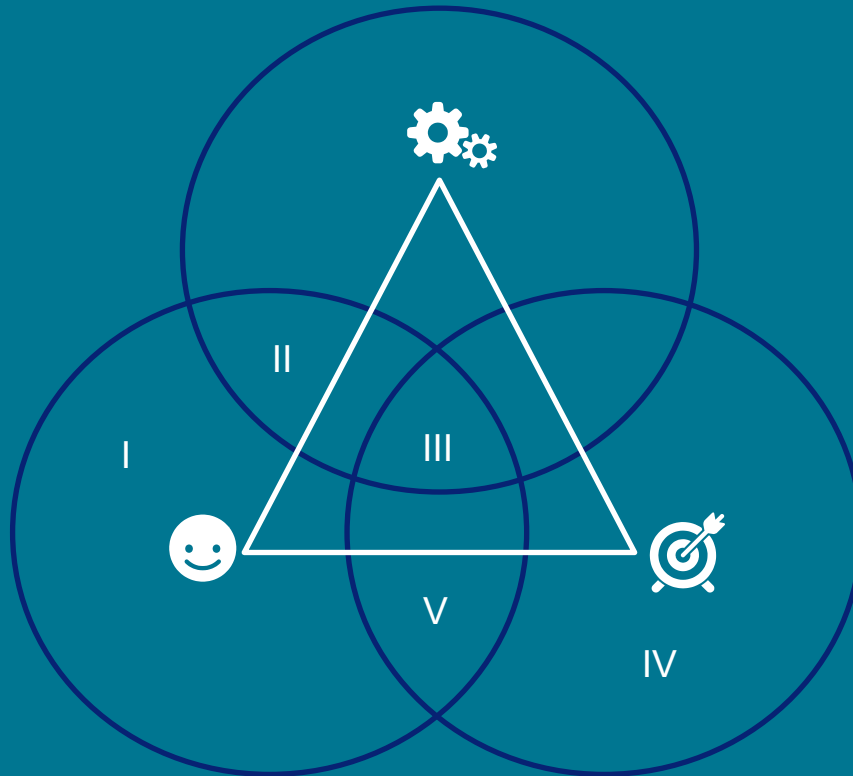
A facilitator plans, guides and manages a group event to meet its goals.

To facilitate effectively, you must be objective and focus on the "group process." That is, the ways that groups work together to perform tasks, make decisions and solve problems.

Good facilitation involves being impartial and steering the group so that its ideas and solutions flow.



# The responsibilities of an online course facilitator



- I: Preparing instructions to teach online
- II. Selecting appropriate tools
- III. Facilitating online learning
- IV: Preparing learners to learn online
- V: Conducting meaningful appraisals of student learning

(Wang et al, 2019)



**“Being a  
‘connected educator’  
can provide you with  
on-going inspiration  
and support.”**

**Elana Leoni,  
Edutopia's Social Media Marketing Manager**

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# The responsibilities of an online course facilitator



The online course instructors have to know the language of online education. This is one of the first teaching tasks and skills needed for becoming a more effective online teacher. Online teachers should be familiar with all the essential tools and online infrastructures such as; learning management, and content management systems.

Also, you should have a clear understanding of the uses of each system to support online course design and delivery. For instance, teachers should know how to use the grading method within the online course program. Additionally, online teachers should have enough facility with content management to re-check or change courses to meet students' learning methods and needs.

Source: [Johnacademy](#)



# Responsibilities of online course facilitator



- Understand the terms of online education
- Revise and prepare course documents in CMS
- Use CMS tools efficiently to facilitate course object
- Design and deliver the course to proper online design and content standards
- Utilise technology to support curriculum design
- Update course documents to maintain accuracy
- Incorporate Internet resources into course documents

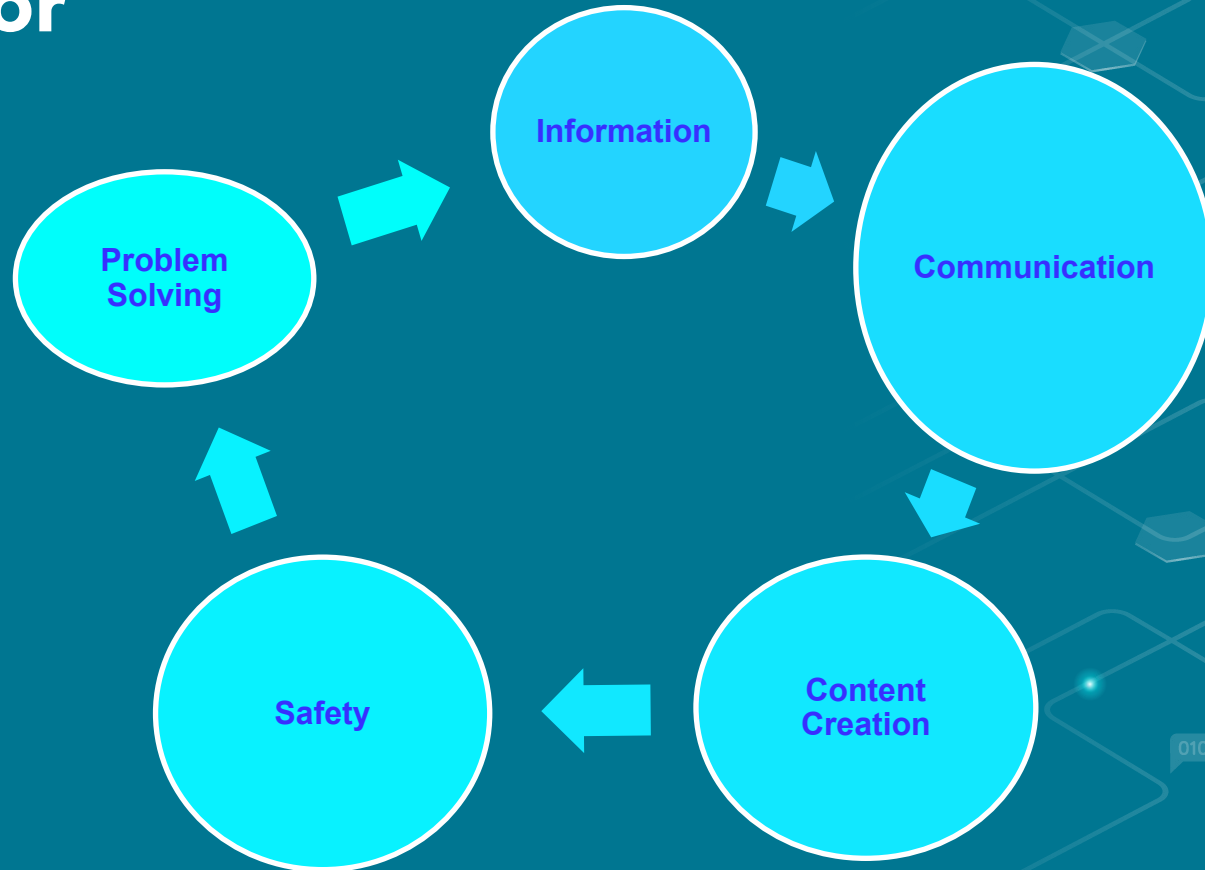
- Communicate a suitable online tone during course delivery
- Promote student-to-student discussion and Engage students in collaboration
- Provide appropriate and timely feedback to students
- Participate and be present in an online course
- Provide course materials to students in a timely manner
- Track students' participation in the online course
- Track students' basic technical support

# Interesting sources

As a teacher, whenever you are acting online, you need to know your responsibilities clearly!  
[Read this for more details....](#)



# The competencies of an online course facilitator





# The competencies of an online course instructor



- The first one is about “**Information**”. This area refers to identifying, browsing, searching, filtering, evaluating, storing and retrieving information.
- The second refers to “**Communication**”. This area is about the interaction through technologies, sharing information and content through digital technologies, engaging citizenship, collaboration and empowerment in using technologies and digital environments.
- The third dimension regards the “**Content creation**”. This area is about the development, the integration and the re-elaboration of content. Furthermore, it refers to copyrights and licenses.
- The fourth dimension is about “**Safety**”. This area refers to protection of devices, content, personal data and privacy in digital environments. To protect physical and psychological health, and to be aware of digital technologies for social well-being and social inclusion. To be aware of the environmental impact of digital technologies and their use.
- The fifth and the last dimension regards the “**Problem Solving**”. This area is about innovating, creating, problem solving and using digital tools. Moreover, this area attempts to identify and solve conceptual problems or issues through technological means, to improve and innovate with ICT, to actively participate in collaborative digital and multimedia production.



“

„Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important.“

- Bill Gates



# Four different facilitator roles

## Pedagogical

- Make the prompt relevant to your course content
- Make the prompt current, such as a recent news story
- Add a twist such as controversy or ethical consideration
- Give learners choice by allowing them to choose from multiple prompt styles

## Social

- Model (and praise) the behavior you seek.
- Be careful with humor (particularly sarcasm).
- Guard against fear.
- Use introductions.

## Managerial

- Be responsible
- Be patient
- Be clear
- Anticipate time to prep

## Technical

- Providing time to learn the tool
- Give students choice
- Plan a backup tool
- Direct students to help

# Interesting sources

Central to the concepts of both learning face-to-face and online is the notion of interaction. Three types of interaction can be facilitated in learning: students can interact with content, they can interact with the instructor, and they can interact with each other. Of course, these three events don't take place independently. They require the support and facilitation of the instructor. The notion of interaction is fundamental to the educational framework known as the Community of Inquiry, which puts learning as the central purpose and promotes fostering social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence.

[Watch this webinar for more.](#)

# Organization and facilitation of an e-learning course



FAO (2021) states that e-learning is the use of electronic devices and Internet technologies to deliver a variety of solutions to enable learning and improve performance. E-learning can reach a wide target audience, including learners who are :

- geographically dispersed,
- with limited time and/or resources to travel;
- busy with work or family commitments, which do not allow them to attend courses on specific dates with a fixed schedule;
- contingent workers, such as consultants, professionals working part-time, independent contractors;
- located in conflict and post-conflict areas and/or restricted in their mobility due to security reasons;
- limited from participating in classroom sessions due to cultural or religious beliefs;
- facing difficulties with real-time communication (e.g. foreign language learners).



# How to facilitate an online course effectively

To facilitate an event well, the facilitator must first understand the group's desired outcome, and the background and context of the meeting or event. With the group's objective clear, the facilitator can then structure the event and select the best tools to reach course outcome.

In the literature, there is a five-step strategy for facilitating an online course effectively. These steps are presenting following and these steps are not limited but required for the main beneficiaries.



# Step 1 – Plan the Structure

An open, well-facilitated discussion could be the simplest option for the group. But if the facilitator has a large group, he/she may need a structured process to get everyone to participate, generate ideas, and cover a variety of topics.

Consider setting up smaller "break-out" groups (at an event or via virtual meeting apps) to make people more comfortable contributing ideas. Also, give participants time in the agenda to think about points they want to raise. The facilitator can schedule a brainstorming session to get ideas flowing.



Whether you're planning a straightforward meeting or big event, always keep the outcome in mind – and how you're helping the group to reach it. If the event spans different days and topics, be clear on the desired outcome for each and how they contribute to the overall objective.





## Step 2 – Create an Agenda

A solid agenda focuses on outcomes and lets the event flow. When planning it, consider the following:

- In what order will you present topics?
- How will participants get to know each other? In-person and virtual icebreakers can help.
- How will they understand the objectives? The Modified Borda Count is useful for prioritizing issues to reach a consensus.
- If an event is spread over separate sessions, how much time will you allocate each?
- Will all participants be in every session? As well as break-out groups, the Charette Procedure can help large groups to brainstorm effectively.



**Information and materials.** What do participants need to know before or at the event? How and when will you provide this information?

**Room or online arrangements.** What set-up will best encourage participation? Do you need separate rooms or to set up a virtual meeting space?

**Tech.** Is your presentation saved offline in case of WiFi issues? Or do you need to give participants access to virtual whiteboards?



How will the outcomes of one session flow into the next?

How will you achieve closure of the overall event?



## Step 3 – Guide and Control the Event

With the agenda and group process in place, it's time to think about how the facilitator will guide and control the proceedings. These tips and suggestions will help:

- **Set the ground rules:** these could include respecting everyone's contribution, letting only one person speak at a time, and avoiding disparaging comments.
- **Set the scene:** Run through the objectives and agenda. Make sure that everyone understands their role, and what the group is seeking to achieve.
- **Get things flowing** let everyone introduce themselves, or perhaps use appropriate icebreakers to get the meeting off to a positive start.

Listen, engage and include: stay alert, listen actively, and remain interested and engaged.



Be flexible and balance the need for participation with the need to keep things running efficiently. If a discussion isn't reaching a natural conclusion, you may need to park topics, gather more information, and schedule time to address outstanding points.





## Step 4 – Record and Action

The responsibilities of a facilitator is the recording of outputs, and of bringing these together, sharing them, and making sure they are actioned.

The key to successful recording of outputs from an event is to be clear about what will be recorded, how and by whom.

So, make sure participants hear, see and understand the information presented. Keep an accurate record of what's going on. If in doubt, record first and summarize later. When taking notes, try to use words that the group chooses.

Record all decisions and actions. The facilitator may want to enlist a note taker so that facilitator can focus on the group. It's a good idea to take photos of brainstorming notes, or use collaborative whiteboard apps.



Remember to keep people focused and moving forward. If in doubt, ask for clarification before the discussion moves on. And record everyone's responsibility for, and commitment to, action After the event, follow up to ensure agreed actions have progressed.





## Step 5 – Reflect and Improve

After the facilitating an online course, reflect on the facilitator own performance and consider how the facilitator could do things better next time. Here are some useful tools and techniques to improve:

- Strategy tools that help you understand your environment and think about the best way forward.
- Creativity tools for finding solutions to complex problems.
- Decision-making techniques for making difficult decisions.



It is important to start with a clear definition of what we mean by creativity, as there are two completely different types. The first is technical creativity, where people create new theories, technologies or ideas. This is the type of creativity we discuss here. The second is artistic creativity, which is more born of skill, technique and self-expression. Artistic creativity is beyond the scope of these articles.



“

Leading is about learning to be a  
facilitator.

- Ashif Shaikh



# Interesting sources

Read about the [top 6 skills of an effective facilitator...](#)



# Test yourself

## Question 1:

What are the reasons for the VET teachers to have digital competences?

- a. Innovative teaching practices, examples of good practice, motivation.*
- b. Importance of digital technologies for management activity, the contribution of change and school development.*
- c. Management skills—e.g. change management, knowledge management, implementation management, time management*
- d. All of them are true*

## Question 2:

Which of the given promises does not define a facilitator?

- a. A facilitator plans, guides and manages a group event to meet its goals.*
- b. A facilitator facilitates effectively and s/he must be objective and focus on the "group process."*
- c. A facilitator should have subjective ideas.*
- d. Good facilitation involves being impartial and steering the group so that its ideas and solutions flow.*

# Test yourself

## Question 3:

What are the responsibilities of an Online Course Facilitator?

- a. Preparing instructions to teach online*
- b. Selecting appropriate tools and Facilitating online learning*
- c. Preparing learners to learn online and Conducting meaningful appraisals of student learning*
- d. All of the above*

## Question 4:

Which of the given competencies is not for an Online Course Facilitator?

- a. Problem solving*
- b. Marketing*
- c. Content creation*
- d. Communication*

# Test yourself

## Question 5:

..... is about the interaction through technologies, sharing information and content through digital technologies, engaging citizenship, collaboration and empowerment in using technologies and digital environments.

- a. *Problem solving*
- b. *Safety*
- c. *Content creation*
- d. **Communication**

## Question 6:

..... refers to protection of devices, content, personal data and privacy in digital environments. To protect physical and psychological health, and to be aware of digital technologies for social well-being and social inclusion. To be aware of the environmental impact of digital technologies and their use.

- a. *Problem solving*
- b. **Safety**
- c. *Content creation*
- d. *Communication*

# Test yourself

## Question 7:

*Being responsible, patient, clear and anticipate time to preparation is related to ..... roles of facilitator. .*

- a. Technical*
- b. Social*
- c. Pedagogical*
- d. Managerial*

## Question 8:

*“E-learning can reach a wide target audience, including learners who are geographically dispersed”*

- a. True*
- b. False*



# Test yourself

## Question 9:

*“In the literature, there is a five-step strategy for facilitating an online course effectively.”*

- a. True
- b. False

## Question 10:

*“E-learning can reach a wide target audience, including learners who are located in conflict and post-conflict areas and/or restricted in their mobility due to security reasons”*

- a. True
- b. False

# Test yourself

Answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think as a facilitator creating an agenda for an online class is important?
2. How do you facilitate effectively an Online Course?

# Summary – key takeaways

- Without digital technologies, students cannot be prepared for further education and application in the knowledge society
- A VET teacher who has a digital competence effectively works with information and data using modern information and communication technologies.
- Good facilitation involves being impartial and steering the group so that its ideas and solutions flow.
- Central to the concepts of both learning face-to-face and online is the notion of interaction. Three types of interaction can be facilitated in learning: students can interact with content, they can interact with the instructor, and they can interact with each other.

# REFERENCES

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# Continuing professional development in digital education for VET

This training material is one of the outcomes of the Erasmus+ project: **“Continuing professional development in digital education for VET”** and it has been created to help teachers across Europe to address the challenging situation in online training delivery in VET.

The CPD program consist of three independent parts:

- Training modules
- Instruction set of sample online lessons
- Guide to the CPD training program

All project outputs have been produced by seven partners from seven European countries working together:

- ProEduca z.s., Czech Republic
- Archivio della Memoria, Italy
- Asociatia Pentru Sprijinirea Initiativelor Educationale, Romania
- Solution Based Training & Consultancy (SBTC), Turkey
- CEBEM FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL SL (Daniel Castelao), Spain
- TUS Midwest, Ireland
- Northern Regional College, UK

All materials are available (downloadable) free of charge from the project web-page: <https://www.covet-project.eu/>



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