

DIDACTIVE

Developing innovation in digital and
agency skills Training for inclusion
Vocational Education



Work Package 2

Research Report



Co-funded by
the European Union



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Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, the development of agency competences has become a crucial factor in empowering learners to take control of their own educational and professional paths. The EU-Project DIDACTIVE is aimed at fostering agency competences, enabling adult VET (Vocational Education and Training) learners with low levels of formal education to actively shape their learning journeys and professional futures.

The core focus of this Desk Research Report is to explore the various translations, definitions, and cultural applications of the term "Agency" across different national and academic contexts. For this, the six project partners from France, Austria, Italy, Croatia, Greece, and the Netherlands contributed their perspectives, highlighting theoretical and practical applications of Agency in order to create a common working definition of agency for the EU project DIDACTIVE.

As part of the desk research, good practices are identified in each partner country to serve as a foundation for the DIDACTIVE competency framework. Special emphasis is placed on how education can empower adult learners with limited educational backgrounds, equipping them with essential skills for the modern labor market.



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Conceptual Clarifications of “Agency” in the EU

To explore the translation, definition, and cultural application of the term “Agency” across different national and academic contexts all partners conducted a desk research in their countries. The goal was to establish a common working definition as the foundation for developing a training program for adult VET learners with low levels of education.

Theory of Agency: Different Schools of Thought

The concept of agency is widely discussed in social sciences, philosophy, and education. Across different theoretical frameworks, agency is understood as an individual’s capacity to act autonomously and make choices within a given social, institutional, or structural framework.

- **Sociological Perspectives:** Agency is often contrasted with structure. While structuralist theories emphasize the constraints imposed by social systems, theorists like Anthony Giddens (Structuration Theory) and Pierre Bourdieu (Habitus) highlight agency as the ability to navigate and influence social structures.
- **Psychological Perspectives:** Agency is associated with self-efficacy (Bandura) and personal empowerment, focusing on individuals’ motivation and decision-making capacities.
- **Educational Perspectives:** Agency is viewed as the ability to take ownership of learning, with frameworks like competency-based learning emphasizing the development of autonomous, self-directed learners.
- **Economic and Policy Perspectives:** Agency is linked to empowerment in labor markets, decision-making in career development, and social policies that promote active citizenship.

Related Concepts: Overlapping and Boundaries

Several related concepts intersect with agency, sometimes overlapping while maintaining distinct nuances:

- **Empowerment:** Refers to processes that enable individuals to gain control over their lives and make independent choices.
- **Resilience:** Highlights the ability to recover and adapt in the face of challenges, supporting agency by fostering self-confidence and decision-making.



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- **Capacitation:** Emphasizes building capabilities to act effectively, often within educational or vocational training contexts.
- **Self-Efficacy:** Focuses on belief in one's ability to achieve goals, which underpins agency in various disciplines.
- **Autonomy:** A core component of agency, describing an individual's ability to act independently.

While these terms are interconnected, agency remains distinct as it encompasses both decision-making and action within personal and social contexts.

Translations and National Interpretations of the Term "Agency"

The term "agency" does not always have a direct equivalent in all European languages. The following interpretations highlight how agency is conceptualized and applied in the selected EU countries:

France

There is no direct translation of the term „agency“ in French, it is commonly associated with *agentivité* mainly used by Quebecois researchers. Alternative related terms are *empowerment*, *capacity to act*, *power to act* (*pouvoir d'agir*).

Different sociological frameworks influence its definition:

- **Sociology of domination:** Agency as resistance to power structures.
- **Sociology of organizations:** Agency as decision-making within structured roles.
- **Sociology of social action:** Inspired by Weber, emphasizes intentional, meaningful action.
- **Clinical sociology:** Focuses on personal empowerment and self-determination.

Practical applications:

- **ESAT programs** help individuals with disabilities develop agency through employment.
- **Community food preservation projects** promote collective empowerment.

Proposed Definition:

Agency is the capacity of an individual to act (with purpose and autonomously) as well as to influence himself, his own life situations and the surrounding environments. The agent is an active actor in his life.



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Italy

In Italy, there is no alternative translation that is widely accepted; some use *agentività* or *capacitazioni* (influenced by the Capability Approach of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum).

Applications: Used in social policies, labor policies, and education (especially teacher training and vocational training).

Three key policy and practice areas:

1. **Social policy:** Draws from Amartya Sen's *capability approach*, emphasizing individuals' capacity to lead valued lives.
2. **Active labor policies:** Moves from passive welfare toward training individuals to exercise decision-making in employment.
3. **Education and teacher training:** Teachers must develop their own agency to foster it in students.

Proposed Definition:

Agency can be considered a meta-competence that includes a set of capabilities:

- *Ability to recognize one's needs*
- *Ability to define strategies for action (decision making)*
- *Ability to recognize the resources of a context (self-orientation)*
- *Ability to use the resources of a context*
- *Ability to mobilize personal resources according to a specific goal*
- *Ability to identify elements that could be fielded and ability to act with awareness of resources and limits one's power to influence the social/ cultural context in which people find themselves acting*

Croatia

The Croatian approach on "agency" focuses on **empowering individuals** to make decisions and take control of their lives – "**Ključne životne sposobnosti**" (**Key Life Capabilities**) – so now narrative translation to "agency" exists.

Key areas of application:

- **Education:** Competence-based curriculum promotes decision-making and adaptability.
- **Workplace:** Employers emphasize autonomy and self-motivation.
- **Policy:** Government strategies use agency as a tool for addressing unemployment and economic instability.



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Proposed Definition:

Ability to take active control of one's life, make intentional choices, and influence one's environment effectively. This includes skills like decision-making, self-motivation, problem-solving, and resilience.

Greece

No direct translation of the term "agency" exists in Greek, it is often used as a **borrowed English** term and interpreted through related concepts rather than a direct equivalent. Life Skills Collaborative (LSC) defines agency as "the ability to make intentional and informed decisions, take autonomous actions, and navigate social structures."

In Greece, there is a tradition of agency since Greco-Roman philosophy (Odyssey, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics), where the focus lies on **efficacy, optimism and imagination**

Applications: Found in education reforms, vocational training policies, and social empowerment initiatives.

Agency is defined in relation to learning:

- The ability to make intentional and informed decisions.
- Includes **self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and adaptability**.
- Closely tied to **autonomy and empowerment**, particularly in **disadvantaged groups**.

Proposed Definition:

Agency, in the context of DIE (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), refers to an individual's capacity to act independently and make choices that influence their lives and surroundings. It encompasses the ability to advocate for oneself, make decisions, and take control of one's circumstances. Within organisations and communities, agency empowers individuals to voice their perspectives, access resources, and contribute to decision-making processes.

Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the word "agency" is mostly related to *Handelingsvermogen* (capacity to act) and *Zelfbeschikking* (self-determination). Therefore a direct translation does not exist. Commonly used terms related to agency development in the Netherlands are also *Empowerment* (empowerment), *Autonomie* (autonomy), *Participatie* (participation), *Zelforganisatie* (self-organization) and *Eigenaarschap* (ownership, especially personal or organizational responsibility).



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The theory and practice of **agency development** in the Netherlands typically intersect fields like sociology, psychology, governance, and organizational studies.

In the Netherlands, the concept of agency is explored in disciplines such as:

Sociology and Social Sciences:

- Focuses on how individuals or groups develop the capacity to act within societal structures.
- Theories by sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu (*habitus*) and Anthony Giddens (*structuration*) have influenced Dutch academic discourse.
- *Sociale cohesie* (social cohesion) and *maatschappelijke participatie* (societal participation) are common related terms in research.

Psychology and Education:

- Agency is tied to personal development, self-efficacy (*zelfeffectiviteit*), and empowerment (*empowerment*).
- In education, it aligns with *actief leren* (active learning) and *leerautonomie* (learning autonomy).

Governance and Policy Studies:

- Agency in governance, particularly *burgerparticipatie* (citizen participation), emphasizes enabling individuals and communities to influence policies.
- Decentralization trends have encouraged *zelfredzaamheid* (self-reliance) as a key principle in Dutch policy.

Proposed definition:

Our proposal is to use 'agency competences' and not 'agency'. Agency competence is the ability of an individual to apply the knowledge that he/she has, to effectively perform tasks, make right decisions and achieve goals within their responsibility.

Austria

A direct translation of the term "agency" does not exist in German. Related terms and translations are *Handlungsfähigkeit* (ability to act), *Handlungsmacht* (power to act), *Handlungskompetenz* (competence to act).

Multidisciplinary usage:

- Law: Legal ability to make decisions.
- Psychology: Basic human ability to shape one's living conditions.
- Medicine: Cognitive or physical ability to act.



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- Sociology: Independence in decision-making.

Strong focus on education and empowerment:

- Competency-based education integrates agency.
- Lifelong learning policies emphasize self-learning.
- Critical view: Some argue that agency is framed in economically driven policies.

Proposed Definition:

Agency is a psychological concept and comprises four activities:

- 1. Forethought: deciding to take on a challenge, thinking ahead, setting goals, and making plans.*
- 2. Implementation: taking first steps, enacting plans, and persisting toward success.*
- 3. Self-management: taking care of yourself, dealing with emotions and stress, and maintaining good health to sustain your efforts.*
- 4. Learning and adapting: monitoring progress, rethinking strategies and tactics, and making effective adjustments.*



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Relation to EU-Frameworks LifeComp and DigComp

In order to develop a profound competency-based definition of agency the DIDACTIVE partners took already existing and well established Competency Frameworks into account. The DIDACTIVE definition of Agency Competence is built upon **The European Framework for the Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn Key Competence (LifeComp)** and the **Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp)** – two key European frameworks that provide a robust theoretical and practical foundation.

By integrating these frameworks, the Agency Competence Framework ensures a comprehensive approach that aligns personal agency with the demands of an increasingly digitalized world.

LifeComp: The European Framework for the Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn Key Competence

LifeComp defines the key competences individuals need for lifelong learning, focusing on personal and social development, critical thinking, and self-regulation. It emphasizes three interconnected competence areas: Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn.

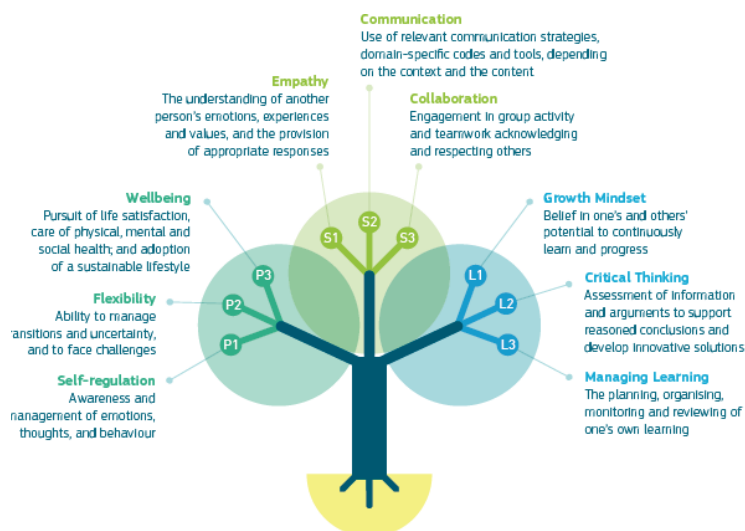


FIGURE 5. LIFEComp AT A GLANCE



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Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp)

DigComp outlines essential digital competences that enable citizens to engage confidently in digital environments, focusing on information literacy, communication, content creation, safety, and problem-solving. It provides a structured approach to digital proficiency, enabling users to critically assess digital content, use technology for collaboration, and ensure digital well-being.



Source: OEAD <https://oead.at/en/expertise/digcomp-zuordnung/kompetenzmodell>

This framework serves as the foundation for designing educational and professional development courses that prepare individuals for success in an increasingly digitalized world.



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DIDACTIVES Definition of the Term "Agency"

Across the partner contributions, as main elements constituting **Agency Competence** were consistently identified: **a combination of autonomy, decision-making, adaptability, and self-determination**. The main differences lie in theoretical emphasis (e.g., capability approach vs. social action) and practical applications (e.g., labour policies, sociology, education, etc.).

Based on the research synthesis, DIDACTIVE proposes the following working definition of agency: **Agency is the capacity of an individual to act purposefully and autonomously, influencing their life situations and surrounding environments. The agent is an active participant in shaping their own development, making decisions, and navigating constraints.**

This definition aligns with theoretical and applied perspectives across different EU countries, ensuring broad applicability in vocational education and training (VET) as well as personal and professional development contexts.

To clarify the context in which we use "Agency" it was agreed to use the term "Agency Competence" in the project. The project's working definition of Agency Competence takes into account the different – national, legal, philosophic, psychological, medical, sociological, educational – traditions and context of the term.

According to Life Skills Collaborative (LSC): Agency is the ability to make intentional and informed decisions about our lives, and take autonomous actions, even in the face of opposition. It is our ability to influence our functioning and the course of events through our actions, and make a difference to a relationship, a decision, or even a set of social assumptions and constraints. It includes the ability to set aspirational goals for ourselves and work towards them, making use of available resources, both internal and external, as well as navigating external power structures as required. Agency also refers to the sense of control or belief we have in our own



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ability to succeed in specific situations. Agency provides autonomy and empowerment to young people, the vulnerable and historically disadvantaged communities. Therefore, the person is able to:

- Express their thoughts and feelings openly.
- Actively participate in taking decisions about themselves, even if they are not in line with societal expectations.
- Assert themselves and stand up for what they want to do.
- Navigate changed circumstances successfully.
- Decide on goals that are in line with their values, interests and desires.
- Work confidently and efficiently towards their goals by utilising and coordinating available resources.
- Actively contribute to bringing about change to themselves, and/or to their environment.
- Use strategies to stand up for any wrong doing in society.

Related Life Skills are:

Self-Awareness, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Negotiation, Communication, Decision Making, Social Awareness, Resourcefulness, Initiative, Participation, Responsibility, Risk Taking.

To enable the development of a profound training program for adult VET learners with low levels of education and to take all relevant elements of agency competences into account, the following **competences and sub-competences** were defined:

Imagination & Future-orientation (LifeComp L1, L2, DigComp 1.1, 1.2, 2.3)

- To analyse status quo and recognize needs ("This is what I need")
- To think ahead and create a vision ("This is what I want to develop into")
- To be motivated and determined to take on a challenge ("I can do it and want to do it")
- To collect data in the digital world and use it for own purposes

Mobilization & Action (LifeComp S2, S3, DigComp 2.1, 2.4)

- To be aware of available own and contextual resources and be able to use these resources adequately
- To make decisions, set goals and define action plan ("These are the concrete steps I will take")
- To work with others and ask for support
- To perform required tasks and enact plans
- To interact and collaborate through digital technologies



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Self-regulation & Resilience (LifeComp P1, P2, P3)

- To deal with emotions and stress
- To know your strengths and limitations
- To maintain good health
- To persist towards achievement

Learning to learn & Adaptation (LifeComp L3, S1)

- To monitor progress
- To review plans
- To consider effects of actions on the surrounding environments
- To make appropriate adjustments



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Good practice approaches and methods of agency development

After conducting a desk research to explore the various translations, definitions, and cultural applications of the term “Agency ” across different national and academic contexts, the DIDACTIVE project partners carried out a second research to identify Good Practices in training and facilitating agency competence in the participating countries and in the European Union as whole.

The research focuses primarily on C-VET, but also Good Practices in I-VET, labour market programmes or adult education courses can be of interest. The project is looking for innovative and effective face-to-face trainings, online learning formats, training methodologies and approaches , tools, learning or training resources or other kinds of Good Practice. Particular focus should be placed on identifying suitable online approaches at developing agency competence.

The following section provides an overview of good practices in agency competence identified across the six European partner countries. These examples showcase a range of innovative approaches, methodologies, and training programs that support the development of agency competence in different educational, professional, and social contexts.

France

The Hologram (Cap Ulysse)

- A personality profiling tool that enables trainers to better understand their learners’ profiles and select appropriate methods and tools for teaching.
- Supports self-awareness and the development of agency by allowing individuals to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth.

AI Vera (Cap Ulysse)

- An AI-powered fact-checker tool, that can be used in group discussions on fake news.
- The tool is available in french and english and can be easily uploaded on one’s mobile.
- Enhances teamwork, oral expression, self-confidence, and critical thinking—key components of agency competence.



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Italy

PROMETHEUS (ENAIP)

- Provides training resources for developing 12 soft skills that partially align with sub-competencies of agency.
- Encourages self-regulation, goal-setting, and resilience in professional and personal development.

VIC: Validating Integration Competences of Refugees (ENAIP)

- A structured approach to describing, identifying, training, and validating soft skills related to the integration of competences that are partially aligned with agency competence.
- Aims to empower refugees with self-determination, decision-making abilities, and adaptability.

Croatia

VET_GPS – Guiding Tools for Professional Skills Development in VET (POU Varazdin)

- A structured methodology and training resource focused on agency competence for learners with low educational attainment.
- Supports goal-setting, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.

2B – DIGITAL (POU Varazdin)

- Focuses on digital inclusion and the use of innovative online training methodologies to enhance agency competence.
- Encourages learners to take ownership of their education and engage in lifelong learning.

Greece

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion: For Improving the Quality of Management Education, Training, and Professions (EDIFY EDU) (HOU)

- A MOOC and specialisation course of 40 EDI modules that aligns with LifeComp and DigComp European Frameworks to develop skills for a more equal, diverse, and inclusive job market.
- Provides a structured methodology for designing and developing a blended course learning materials and assessment.

Neet prevention in Educational systems through positive Future vision Enhancing Learning and teacher Education (NEFELE) (HOU)

- A training initiative for middle school pre-service teachers to help students develop career paths and a positive future outlook.
- Prevents the NEET phenomenon by fostering hope, adaptability, and future orientation.



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- Includes a MOOC with five modules and Open Educational Resources (OERs) available in multiple languages. The MOOC is including the NEFELE BOX, a toolkit using Tangible User Interface to help students visualize and shape their future.

Netherlands

DI – Differentiated Instruction (Pressure Line)

- A teaching methodology that increases learner engagement, autonomy, and agency competence.
- Supports personalized learning approaches and adaptive teaching strategies.

Practoraten (Teachers–Researchers) (Pressure Line)

- Integrates research into daily teaching practices to create dynamic and effective education.
- Encourages teachers to develop research-based methodologies, fostering inquiry-driven learning and professional development.

Austria

Therapy–Tools on Self-Esteem (die Berater)

- Provides practical exercises and techniques to strengthen self-awareness, self-confidence, and agency competence.
- Can be adapted to DIDACTIVE materials to enhance self-determination and career planning skills.

The Big Six – 6 Steps to Increased Assertiveness (die Berater)

- A structured course designed to enhance agency by improving self-reflection, confidence, and decision-making.
- Helps individuals develop assertiveness and the ability to pursue professional goals independently.



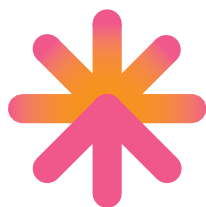
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Conclusion

The desk research conducted as part of the EU project DIDACTIVE has provided valuable insights into existing good practices across the partner countries. By identifying successful approaches to fostering agency competences in adult VET learners with low levels of formal education, the research has laid a solid foundation for the next phase of the project. These findings highlight the importance of structured support systems, learner-centered methodologies, and the integration of digital tools to enhance educational engagement and self-efficacy.

A key insight from the desk research is that the concept of agency does not have a single direct translation in most partner languages. Instead, it is linked to notions of empowerment, self-regulation, and active participation in learning and work. This highlights the necessity of contextualizing agency competences within the specific cultural and educational environments of each country while maintaining a shared framework for their development. Building on the outcomes of this desk research, the next step will be the development of a competency framework for agency competences. This framework will serve as a guiding structure for educators and training providers, ensuring that adult learners receive targeted support to develop their autonomy, decision-making abilities, and problem-solving skills.



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Annexes

Annex 1: Desk Research per project partner Desk Research from Cap Ulysse (France)

Partner	Cap Ulysse
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Definitions and research literature on agency or related terms

Source 1	The role of agency in learning
Full citation	Chuter, C. (2020, January 20). The role of agency in learning. The Education hub. Retrieved November 14, 2024, from https://theeducationhub.org.nz/agency/
Link	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/agency/
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	This document presents the definition of agency with a direct link to learning. Agency is the "ability to identify valued goals and desired outcomes, and to pursue those goals and outcomes proactively, purposefully and effectively." Self efficacy, self awareness , self regulation and individual variation are core elements that can guide the student to their development and also that can help the teacher to better adapt their methods to their students with learning differences. Agency in learning increases the chance of academic success and is an essential element for lifelong learning. This text presents a tool based on a set of questions that teachers can use to measure their students' agency.
Relevant definition(s)	"The ability to identify valued goals and desired outcomes, and to pursue those goals and outcomes proactively, purposefully and effectively."



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	<p>There are 3 important components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the identification of one's values and priorities• a belief in one's abilities• the capacity to intentionally direct one's efforts towards specific goals
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Source 2	Toward a Psychology of Human Agency
Full citation	Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a Psychology of Human Agency. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1(2), 164–180. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00011.x
Link	http://wexler.free.fr/library/files/bandura%20(2006)%20towards%20a%20psychology%20of%20human%20agency.pdf
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>This journal article made by Albert Bandura presents the agentic theory of human development, which considers that the human ability to utilise symbols is crucial to control and modify the world and are not limited by its circumstances. Human beings shape their own life circumstances and development and not just a product of the environment. This text also points out the different modes of agency (individual, proxy, and collective) as well as the impact of agency in the different areas of life.</p>
Relevant definition(s)	<p>Human agency is related to the fact that humans have the ability to influence their own functioning life circumstances. They are contributors and active parts of their life circumstances and not products of them. This definition include the following core properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Intentionality: People form intentions that include action plans and strategies for realizing them.– Forethought: People set themselves goals and anticipate likely outcomes of



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	<p>prospective actions to guide and motivate their efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-reactiveness: the ability to adopt an intention for execution, and put in practice appropriated courses of actions as they regulate their motivation and execution - Self-reflectiveness: People are self examiners of their own functionning. Humans reflect on their self efficacy as they think about their actions, goals, motivations and make adjustments that they find necessary
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Source 3	Agency for learning: Intention, Motivation, Self-efficacy and Self- Regulation
Full citation	Code , J. (2020). Agency for Learning: Intention, Motivation, Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation. Frontiers in Education, 5. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.00019
Link	https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.00019/full
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Code builds upon the concept of agency, a specific learning concept of agency, Agency for learning (AFL). This concept frames agency as an emergent capability that mediates the interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in the context of learning. This emphasizes students' ability to intentionally regulate, control, and influence their own learning processes by highlighting intentionality, forethought, self-regulation, and self-efficacy.</p> <p>Code pursues this research by presenting the methods and results of the measurement of student's AFL.</p>



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Relevant definition(s)	<p>Agency for learning (AFL)- Theoretical framework that applies the concept of agency specifically to the learning process. It defines agency as a mediating capability that helps learners interact with personal, behavioral, and environmental factors to regulate their learning.</p> <p>Agency in AFL is dynamic and context-dependent as it enables learners to achieve personal and collective goals, integrating insights from social cognitive theory, sociocultural perspectives, and developmental framework</p>
Source 4	Understanding agency in Sociology
Full citation	Edwards (2024, February 4). Understanding Agency in Sociology. Easy Sociology. Retrieved November 18, 2024, from https://easysociology.com/general-sociology/understanding-agency-in-sociology/
Link	https://easysociology.com/general-sociology/understanding-agency-in-sociology/
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Edwards presents the place of agency in a sociological context, as it explores its meaning, and how it intersects with structure identity and social constraints.</p> <p>The author presents a significant debate between Agency (the capacity of individuals to act independently and make choices, as an active part of society, who can resist the force of structural forces) versus Structure (norms and institutions external to the individual that limit its choices). Edwards presents how agency is viewed differently in sociological theories. Some prioritise the role of structure in determining human behaviour, others emphasise the capacity of the individuals to shape their own lives and societies, resisting the constraints of the structures.</p>



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Relevant definition(s)	<p>Agency in a sociological aspect is the capacity to act and make choices, that are to some degree, independent of the constraints imposed by social structures.</p> <p>In sociological field, agency involves the following core elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intentionality: Agency involves purposeful actions, where individuals set goals and take steps to achieve them.• Autonomy: Agency implies a degree of independence from external forces, allowing individuals to act in ways that are not entirely controlled by social structures.• Reflexivity: Agency includes self-awareness, where individuals reflect on their actions, make adjustments, and understand the broader impact of their choices.• Power and Resistance: Agency often involves exercising power and, at times, resisting dominant structures or expectations.
Source 5	
Full citation	Vorhölter, Julia. 2024. "Agency". In The Open Encyclopedia of Anthropology, edited by Rachel Cantave. Online: http://doi.org/10.29164/24agency
Link	https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/agency
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	The author explores the concept of agency showing its evolution and introduction in anthropology. The concept is related to the study of how people would pursue their motivations and goals in specific contexts of dominance (colonial, patriarchal...). Agency is viewed differently according to historical and cultural contexts that are influenced by the



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Relevant definition(s)	<p>society's beliefs, social norms, and power structures.</p> <p>The term of agency is challenged in other parts of the globe and can differ to the occidental concept emphasising the term "patency" or "passivity" as ways to be in the world.</p> <p>"The concept is applied to fields like language, resistance, and non-human actors, exploring the complex interactions between intention, action, and outcomes."</p> <p>Agency in anthropology is the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act. The concept helps to understand and analyse "how people try to influence, or change, their lifeworlds and how they act within, or even resist, powerful structures."</p>
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Translation of agency into your language. If not available, provide translations of related terms.

Agentivité (Quebec)

There is no official translation of the term agency in France. There are related terms that involve or are in relation with the concept of agency, these terms are: *empowerment, capacity to act, power to act, agence and conscience to act*.

However, this concept was also adopted in the French vocabulary by some francophone researchers (mostly from Quebec) in the field of social sciences and psychology that used and diffused the term *agentivité*.

In France, the translation of this term generates both pragmatic and conceptual ambiguities as it tends to focus attention on the french word "agent". However, depending on the current of thought, this term varies, originating different scientific meanings, depending on whether it is approached by the sociology of domination, the sociology of organisations, the sociology of social action or clinical sociology (Jézégou, 2022).



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Jézégou (2022) conceptualizes *agentivité* as the capacity of the individuals to be agents of their existence. 'In the broadest sense, agency refers to the capacity of human beings to act intentionally on themselves, on others and on their environment.

Jézégou, A. (2022) . Agentivité. Dans Jorro, A. (dir.), Dictionnaire des concepts de la professionnalisation. (2e éd., p. 41 –44). De Boeck Supérieur. <https://doi.org/10.3917/dbu.jorro.2022.01.0041>.

Theory and practice of agency development and related terms in your country (1 –2 pages max.)

The theory and practice of agency development in France vary depending on the conception of the agent within different sociological frameworks. Depending on the academic context, the concept evolves, creating ambiguities in how we interpret and define the meaning of agency, or *agentivité*.

Several theoretical foundations conceptualize agency within the context of French social sciences. These foundations are rooted in the sociology of domination, the sociology of organizations, the sociology of social action, and clinical sociology.

In the sociology of domination, *agentivité* is explored through the interplay between power relations and structural inequalities. Here, the individual, or "agent," is understood as resisting systems of domination, such as those present in colonialist and patriarchal societies (Edwards, 2023).

In the sociology of organizations, agency is associated with the roles, responsibilities, and decisions of individuals operating within the rules of the society to which they belong. This perspective emphasizes how individuals exert influence within organizational settings (Mullaly, 2015).

In the context of the sociology of social action, this view, inspired by Weber, claims that individuals act intentionally and with meaning, situating their actions within the framework of the social world.

Finally, clinical sociology examines how individuals or groups can reclaim or strengthen their agency in response to social or psychological challenges. In this framework, agency is linked to empowerment, autonomy, and the capacity for self-determination. It is also tied to the idea that agency represents the affirmation of one's desire in relation to the desires of others (Widmer, 2010).



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Practices and actions involving the term agency or agentivité

The term "agency" is not commonly used in practice in France. However, projects and programs often incorporate the concepts of empowerment, referred to as *pouvoir d'agir* or *puissance d'agir*.

The French ESAT (*Établissements et Services d'Aide par le Travail*) are supported employment establishments and services designed to assist individuals with disabilities. These establishments provide a combination of medical, social, and educational support through training, aiming to enhance the socio-professional skills of the participants. Workers are trained in professions that align with their interests and receive personalized support to develop their individual abilities and promote social integration.

This continuous support places the individual at the center of decision-making, allowing them to take ownership of their personal projects. By fostering the individual's *pouvoir d'agir*, ESAT social workers; trainers and trainees collaborate to achieve both social and professional growth and development (ESAT, 2024).

Another example of the implementation of *développement du pouvoir d'agir* (the development of the power to act) is the project *Conserverie mobile et solidaire*. Initiated by social centers in the village of Romans, in collaboration with the startup *Conserverie mobile et solidaire*, this project contributes to sustainable, local food production and consumption. It combats food waste while fostering social connections between towns and villages.

The initiative utilizes an innovative, adapted vehicle that serves as both a processing laboratory for canning and a kitchen for workshops and activities. This promotes active community participation (Maison de quartier des Romans, 2017).

Empowerment and the power to act are central to the project's philosophy. Villagers are active participants, playing a crucial role in decision-making and activities, thereby influencing both their own lives and their broader environment.

Your proposed working definition of "agency"

Agency is the capacity of an individual to act (with purpose and autonomously) as well as to influence himself, his own life situations and the surrounding environments. The agent is an active actor in his life.



DIDACTIVE

Additional Sources

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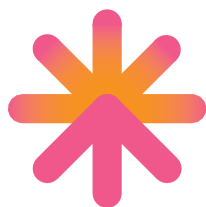
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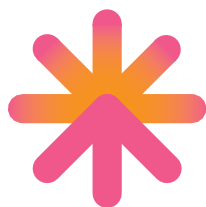


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Desk Research from EnAIP PIEMONTE ETS (Italy)

Definitions and research literature on agency or related terms

Source 1	Report
Full citation	Whitten D. (2020) Exploring adults' lifelong-learning capacity through the integration of learner agency, language, literacy and numeracy
Link	https://ako.ac.nz/about-us/ako-aotearoa-news/project-update-exploring-and-developing-adults-lifelong-learning-capacity-through-the-integration-of-agency-literacy-and-numeracy
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Some studies deal with the issue of agency by focusing on learner agency and situating itself in the lifelong learning perspective. With the aim of promoting innovation in school/training systems, these contributions place attention on the construction of contexts that can foster the development of agency in the learning process. The assumption of these studies is that if agency is experienced and developed within a learning context, it can then be developed in other life contexts as well.</p> <p>This report defines human agency (Bandura, 2006; Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015) as the outcome of human consciousness capable of visualizing future states and then constructing, evaluating and modifying courses of action to achieve desired outcomes. Four priorities are identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. intentionality (choosing to act)2. forethought (visualising a desired future and planning)3. self-reactiveness (managing the process)4. self-reflection (reflecting and making changes as necessary).



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Relevant definition(s)	<p>Agency is the capability of individuals to make choices to act (intentionality), visualising a desired future and planning (forethought), applying self-reactiveness in managing the process and activating self-reflection processes (reflecting and making changes as necessary).</p>
<p>Source 2</p> <p>Full citation</p> <p>Link</p> <p>Brief description (max. 10 lines)</p>	<p>Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ellenani P., Morselli D. (2020) Verso un programma di ricerca sull'agency in accordo al capability approach – Giornale Italiano della Ricerca Educativa – Italian Journal of Educational Research XIII – 24 – 2020 © Pensa MultiMedia Editore srl Ellenani P., Morselli D. (2021) Lo studio dell'agency secondo il Capability Approach nei paradigmi d'indagine qualitativa – Formazione & Insegnamento XIX – 1 – 2021 © Pensa MultiMedia Editore <p> https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/sird/article/download/3991/3609/14997 https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/siref/article/download/4636/4024/17112 </p> <p>The papers address the issue of agency in educational/training contexts following the Capability Studies approach. Through an analysis of existing literature, the authors highlight some key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agency competence, according to a social ecological approach, is defined as the freedom to act to acquire a status that is valued (Sen 2010) agency is influenced by both individual capabilities (personal and material goods and capabilities) and collective/ community capabilities (having a voice, organization, representation, and identity); the recruitment and



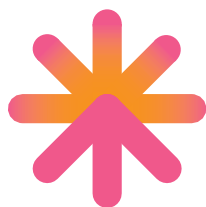
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Relevant definition(s)	<p>development of agency occurs in specific contexts; agency is (also) a collective/ social phenomenon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• agency can be related to the lifelong learning perspective. People, in fact, should exercise their agency in terms of managing their careers and life courses, having in mind the changing working conditions of globalized societies; people create subjectively meaningful careers, cope with work transitions, and manage breaks of inactivity (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Agency is a capacity that is acted out, intentionally (and thus discretionary) in specific temporal and relational contexts.• during training sessions, agency can develop in five forms: 1) resisting the intervention facilitator or direction; 2) explicating new possibilities or potentials of the activity; 3) conceiving new configurations or patterns of activity; 4) engaging in concrete actions that aim to change the activity; 5) taking consequential actions to change the activity (Engeström 2011)• the teacher/trainer as an “agentive professional” is himself a person who decides to act to reshape the (educational) environment of which he is a part rather than letting things happen on his own; the development of agency in teachers is linked to the co-construction of the conditions that also allow its acquisition in learners (Sarojini 2014)• Agency, in the lifelong learning perspective, is the capacity to act understood as a person’s ability to manage his or her career and life trajectory, coping with work transitions and managing breaks of inactivity.
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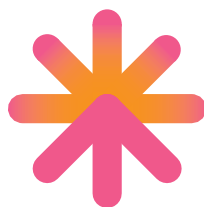
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Training agency in adults cannot be separated from what the teacher/trainer does on himself and his agency (in terms of thoughts, behaviours, action and reflection process) and the co-construction of contextual conditions that enable its acquisition in learners.
Source 3	Book
	Full citation Giddens, A. (1984). The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Link	np
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Giddens defines agency in relation to his theory of social structure. Giddens defines agency as the ability of individuals or groups to act consciously and intentionally, making decisions and influencing the social/cultural context in which they find themselves.</p> <p>Giddens has been credited with treating agency not as "an ontological carryover of individuals" but as what emerges in the relationship between agents" (Santi, 2018) and should be viewed from an eco-logical perspective (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) 'as a factor in the larger system of relationships' (Aiello, 2018).</p>
Relevant definition(s)	Agency as the capacity of individuals or groups to act consciously and intentionally, making decisions and influencing the social/cultural context in which they find themselves.



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Source 4	Paper
Full citation	Evans, K. (2024). Putting knowledge and experience to work: the role of agency. IUSVEducation, Supplemento al n. 23, 54–68.
Link	https://www.iusveducation.it/putting-knowledge-and-experience-to-work-the-role-of-agency/
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Agency can be conceptualized as a socially embedded, active and potentially transformative process. The author introduces the concept of “bounded agency.”</p> <p>Agency in adult life is exercised in varied and diverse contexts (institutional, work, in daily life) characterized by specific relational networks and social structures that change over time. The concept of “bounded” agency recognizes that the insertion of human agents into these relationships and structures limits and extends dispositions to act, leading to new expressions of agency.</p> <p>The expression of “bounded” agency in a life course perspective is a temporal process (Carré 2013). Decisions and actions in the contingencies of the present moment are influenced by past habits and experiences, just as possible futures can be reflexively reformulated and rethought. In working life, adults express agency in the work roles they are willing to assume, limited by what is available to them and what they believe is possible. Agency can also be “conditioned” from the perspective of the processes that underlie action in everyday work practices.</p>
Relevant definition(s)	Agency is a socially embedded, active and potentially transformative process. The term “bounded” agency highlights the fact that the embeddedness of human agents in relationships and structures limits and extends dispositions to act, leading to new expressions of agency.



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Source 5	Paper
Full citation	Giuseppa Cappuccio, Martina Albanese, Lucia Maniscalco, Il dialogo tra Capability Approach e la formazione delle competenze digitali in "EDUCATION SCIENCES AND SOCIETY" 2/2020, pp 395-409, DOI: 10.3280/ess2-2020oa9494
Link	https://francoangeli.it/rivisteSchedaRivista.aspx?IDArticolo=67408&Tipo=Articolo&idRivista=191
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>The Capability Approach, because of its inherent characteristics, prompts various reflections in the educational field. In this perspective, education is seen as a relational process within each person is enabled to develop his or her capacities – related to the sphere of doing and being – to make chooses from a set of opportunities that contexts and society promote for the same. The expression of one's freedom to act and build has in it the construction of not only personal, but also social development (Ellerani, 2013).</p> <p>The authors, within this conceptual framework, address the issue of digital skills development from the perspective of digital education and emphasize how revisiting the "modes of use" of literacy (Hoggart, 1957) instead of viewing (digital) literacy as an end in itself is a strategy for bringing such "modes of use" into dialogue with Sen's (2005) capabilities approach.</p> <p>In the perspective of Capability studies, the welfare of a nation is measured by the desirable standards to be achieved; in the area of digital skills, the desirable standard is the achievement of digital citizenship. The standard is measured through functioning that is, by people's ability to be, do and participate; critical participation, creative construction and</p>



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Relevant definition(s)	<p>awareness of the new digitized reality is the functioning that makes welfare possible. Following this perspective, training is aimed at making people free and capable of making choices critically among different options (Sen, 2000; Nussbaum, 2012). And, in relation to digital skills, there is no digital competence if there is no development of critical and informed choice-making skills. Training for digital citizenship (understood as the set of rights and duties that, thanks to services and tools, aim to simplify the relationship between citizens, businesses and public administration through digital technologies) should therefore be conceived and designed with this goal in mind.</p> <p>Agency cannot be described without taking into account the digital dimension that runs through the different contexts of people's lives.</p> <p>In the training to develop agency, it is therefore essential to include digital citizenship's issue.</p> <p>The paper suggests the need to revisit the "modes of use" of literacy (Hoggart, 1957) instead of considering (digital) literacy as an end in itself. This shift in perspective allows such "modes of use" to engage in dialogue with Sen's capability approach (the freedom to act to acquire a status that is valued). There is no digital competence if there is no development of critical capacity and conscious choice (digital citizenship).</p>
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Translation of agency into your language. If not available, provide translations of related terms.

In Italian literature and practice, AGENCY is used.
Other terms used less frequently: AGENTIVITÀ e CAPACITAZIONI (the latter not perfectly substitutable from an analytical point of view).

Theory and practice of agency development and related terms in your country (1 –2 pages max.)

The agency – and the capabilities approach – from a theoretical/practical perspective is treated in Italy mainly in three areas: social policies; active labor policies; teaching innovation and training for teachers/trainers perspective. The following summarizes some elements of the debate on these areas that can contribute to the construction of the theoretical–methodological framework for the training and development of agency in the specific contexts of vocational training courses aimed at adults.

Agency in the debate on social and welfare policy

The “capability approach” (A. Sen, M. Nussbaum) introduced the issue of individuals’ capabilities into the social policy debate. A person’s capability is his or her “substantial freedom,” and “from the totality of a person’s capabilities is reflected his or her freedom to lead different kinds of lives.” In this perspective, one is free to do a certain thing insofar as one is endowed with the capacity to do it, endowed with the “actual power to acquire what one would choose.” All internal capacities (physical or mental of individuals) are combined with favorable external circumstances: “internal capacities combined with external conditions suitable for exercising that particular functioning” (Nussbaum).

In its practical applications, this approach has led to a revision of the meaning and content of the care profession by founding it on the concept of agency and capabilities to develop viable life projects (Colaïanni). Social intervention toward users is therefore based on the restitution of skills and the training of capabilities (the skills to act) rather than on the mere response to a need. The professionals therefore need to become an “agent of change.” Professional knowledge and practice is configured as a “methodology of life planning” (methodology of life planning, Ferguson 2001) that requires an active and decision-making role of the stakeholders–individuals, families, primary and secondary networks–crucially, according to the capacity/rights pair. “To improve the quality and efficiency of





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interventions, professionals involve and empower individuals and families in the organization of services" (Colaïanni).

Recently, the debate within social policy has focused on the issue of digitization related to the exercise of agency. The digitization of public services, and of welfare in particular, offers great opportunities but hides pitfalls, especially for the most vulnerable people (see <https://www.secondowelfare.it/>). On the one hand, in fact, digital platforms can make it easier for people to access services and information; on the other, there is a risk of marginalizing those without digital skills or access to technology, thus limiting their agency in crucial areas of social life.

Agency in the debate on active labour policy and training

The capability approach and the focus on agency has made it possible, from a theoretical point of view, to shift the debate from passive labor policies (incentives and benefits) to active policies aimed at strengthening the capacities of individuals to exercise their power of action and choice within the labor market. In the debate on labour policy (Ciarini A., Lavoro e politiche di attivazione. L'investimento sociale e lo sviluppo dell'occupazione) and on the „activation" strategies two different points of view are compared.

On the one hand, activation is understood as a process aimed at expanding the channels of labor market participation through a mix of conditionalities, employment services and tax incentives designed to make work "attractive" as opposed to inactivity or passive assistance. According to this approach, action is taken primarily on the supply side of the labor market, but the issue of the quality and stability of the employment created remains in the background.

On the other, activation is understood as a process aimed at strengthening users' capacities through longer-term training programs. This approach recognizes that there are also contextual conditions on which to act in order to foster more durable placements and effective empowerment of individuals' capacities (Barbier, 2005; Bonvin and Favarque, 2005). These policies look at users as individuals endowed with resources (motivations, identities, skills, preferences and even responsibilities) to be mobilized in the insertion process, while also recognizing their possibilities for choice and margins for self-determination.

From a practical point of view, the "agency" has been declined through the proposal of training and guidance initiatives aimed at promoting



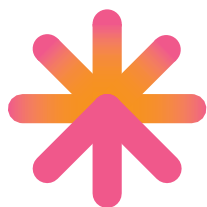
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workers' empowerment and fostering active career planning processes. The "competence to act" in the labor market is declined, in practice, in other specific skills: problem solving, decision making, continuous updating, etc.

In the Italian context – and in the Piedmont Region – VET courses have the main objective of developing technical skills to support the process of integration into the labor market. Soft skills, generically understood, are considered transversal and implicitly trained, but without a specific approach geared to support their training, and no specific methods of assessing learning outcomes are provided. Training for the development of digital citizenship is included in these courses but often limited to the development of technical skills in the use of digital tools. Guidance and support pathways to support job search are aimed at strengthening the personal resources (and implicitly the agency of unemployed people) through individual and/or group coaching. Again, however, there are not always pathways that work explicitly on agency.

Agency in the debate on educational system innovation and teacher training

In recent years, studies has developed that, in the debate on methodological innovation in the educational system, explores the issue of agency in relation to teaching processes and teachers' professional development paths. According to this perspective, a development of teachers' skills centered exclusively on the acquisition of technical knowledge is inadequate to qualify a professionalism capable of responding to the educational needs and challenges of contemporary society (Urbani C., *Oltre le competenze: il valore dell'agency professionale. Un progetto di ricerca sullo sviluppo professionale docente nei contesti prescolastici*). Viceversa, professional development should be interpreted in terms of the capacitation of agency. Therefore, personal and professional development and training does not depend solely on the possession of competencies such as those traditionally associated with the profile of the teacher, but rather on the possibility that the teacher himself has to develop, acquire and renew them through competent action (agency) in order to achieve the chosen functioning. This possibility is expressed in the freedom/ability (capability) to choose among several alternative options available to them, and in the possibility of actually realizing them in terms of functioning (Urbani C.). The development of teacher's agency is also crucial to develop learners' agency. The teacher is himself an "agentive professional" who acts in the training context to co-construct the conditions that enable the acquisition of agency in learners.



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Your proposed working definition of "agency"

Agency is the freedom and ability to act consciously and intentionally to acquire a state that is valued (Sen). Agency is the ability of individuals to visualize a desired future, to plan, to make choices of actions, to act and react proactively to events that occur, to activate processes of self-reflection and make changes if necessary. Agency is "bounded" in the sense that people act within relationships and structures that limit and/or extend its activation and is therefore to be understood as a capacity that is consciously acted upon in accordance with specific temporal and relational contexts.

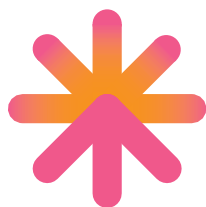
Agency can be considered a meta-competence that includes a set of capabilities:

- Ability to recognize one's needs
- Ability to define strategies for action (decision making)
- Ability to recognize the resources of a context (self-orientation)
- Ability to use the resources of a context
- Ability to mobilize personal resources according to a specific goal
- Ability to identify elements that could be fielded and ability to act with awareness of resources and limits one's power to influence the social/ cultural context in which people find themselves acting

AGENCY AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP: Agency cannot be described apart from the digital dimension of people's various life contexts. The development of agency includes the development of the ability to recognize, develop and mobilize personal digital skills to achieve a specific goal.

AGENCY IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF TRANSITIONS: through the exercising of agency people, aware of the changing working conditions of globalized societies, act to create subjectively meaningful careers, cope with work transitions and manage breaks in inactivity (Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

FORMAZIONE DELL'AGENCY E RUOLO DEL FORMATORE: Training agency involves developing a person's ability to act intentionally, make decisions, and shape their environment or circumstances. This requires building skills in self-awareness, decision-making, goal-setting, and resilience. Training for the development of agency in adults cannot be separated from work that the trainer does on himself and his agency and the co-construction of contextual conditions that enable its acquisition in learners. In agency



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training, therefore, special attention is to be paid to the role of the agent trainer in developing agency in adult learners.

Any comments on the research exercise

- Sharing a common way to write references (a proposal: <https://www.scribbr.dk/apa-reference-generator/>)
- The research highlights how the concept of agency from a theoretical point of view has its own definition, while from a practical/methodological point of view, agency can be treated as a meta-competence that includes more easily operationalized skills. In the search for best practices/projects, it may be more likely to find projects that deal with empowerment or soft skills or citizenship skills rather than explicitly with agency. In addition and in outlining the competence descriptor, it might be useful to consider agency as a meta-construct that encompasses sub-competencies.

Desk Research from Pučko otvoreno učilište Varaždin (Croatia)

Definitions and research literature on agency or related terms

Translation of agency into your language. If not available, provide

Source 1	
Full citation	European Commission's LifeComp Framework
Link	https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6c6e9bc3-d9f6-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	The LifeComp framework defines essential life skills like self-regulation, flexibility, and lifelong learning. It offers scientific and practical applications for developing personal and social competences in education.
Relevant definition(s)	Self-regulation, flexibility, lifelong learning skills, adaptability



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Source 2	
Full citation	OECD's Skills Strategy and Croatia
Link	https://www.oecd.org/croatia/skills-strategy-action-plan.htm
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	The OECD Skills Strategy outlines skills development strategies, including recommendations on fostering critical thinking and autonomy necessary for Croatia's social growth.
Relevant definition(s)	Critical thinking, autonomy, resilience.

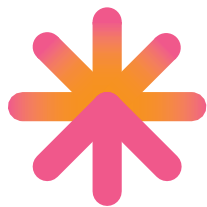
Source 3	
Full citation	Psychology Today
Link	https://oapub.org/edu/index.php/ejes/article/view/3710/6346
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	Agency is defined as the highest level of personal competence, encompassing self-motivation, decision-making, and problem-solving skills essential for personal and professional growth.
Relevant definition(s)	Agency as personal competence, self-motivation, decision-making, problem-solving.



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Source 4	
Full citation	European Journal of Education Studies
Link	https://oapub.org/edu/index.php/ejes/article/view/3710/6346
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	This study focuses on agency, expertise, and working life skills, emphasizing generic competences required for thriving in modern work environments.
Relevant definition(s)	Working life skills, expertise, adaptability

Source 5	
Full citation	Croatian Ministry of Science and Education Reports
Link	https://mzo.gov.hr
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	The Ministry's National Curriculum Framework highlights lifelong learning competencies like self-efficacy and adaptability that align with the concept of agency.
Relevant definition(s)	Self-efficacy, lifelong learning, adaptability



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Translation of agency into your language. If not available, provide translations of related terms.

„Ključne životne vještine“ (key life competences)

Theory and practice of agency development and related terms in your country (1 –2 pages max.)

Agency development in Croatia has become an increasingly important focus in educational, professional, and societal contexts. The concept encompasses empowering individuals to take control of their lives through intentional decision-making, adaptability, and resilience—key skills for personal and professional success. The country’s approach to fostering agency can be analyzed through the following aspects:

Education and Lifelong Learning

The Croatian education system emphasizes lifelong learning and the development of critical life skills. Key national initiatives, such as the “National Curriculum Framework,” integrate competencies like self-efficacy, adaptability, and decision-making into educational programs. These efforts aim to prepare students not only for the workforce but also for active and independent participation in society.

Vocational education and training (VET) programs are particularly relevant in this context. They include practical modules that equip learners with problem-solving, time management, and goal-setting skills. These programs are often aligned with European frameworks, such as the LifeComp Framework, to ensure compatibility with broader EU standards.

Workplace and Professional Development

In professional settings, Croatian employers increasingly value agency-related skills such as emotional intelligence, initiative, and collaboration. Training programs often incorporate these competencies, promoting a culture of self-motivation and adaptability. Leadership workshops and team-building exercises focus on developing autonomy and personal effectiveness, enabling employees to contribute meaningfully to organizational goals.



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Social and Policy Dimensions

Agency development extends beyond individual growth to societal and policy-level initiatives. Croatian government strategies, such as those outlined by the Ministry of Science and Education, highlight the importance of fostering agency as a means to address societal challenges, including unemployment and economic instability. Policies often encourage partnerships between educational institutions and industries to create skill-building opportunities.

Psychological and Emotional Aspects

The development of emotional intelligence and resilience is gaining recognition as essential for agency. Croatian culture, which values community and interpersonal relationships, provides a unique framework for nurturing these skills. Programs that focus on emotional well-being, such as mindfulness training and stress management workshops, are becoming more prevalent, supporting individuals in navigating personal and professional challenges effectively.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite these advancements, challenges remain. The traditional emphasis on rote learning in some educational settings can hinder the full realization of agency development. Additionally, disparities in access to quality education and training programs can limit opportunities for marginalized groups. However, ongoing reforms and increased collaboration with European partners offer promising avenues for overcoming these obstacles.

Your proposed working definition of “agency”

Ability to take active control of one’s life, make intentional choices, and influence one’s environment effectively. This includes skills like decision-making, self-motivation, problem-solving, and resilience.

Any comments on the research exercise

The research highlights the need for a contextual understanding of agency skills tailored to Croatian educational and cultural frameworks.



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Desk Research from Hellenic Open University (Greece) Definitions and research literature on agency or related terms

Source 1	
Full citation	Martin Seligman (2021) Agency in Greco-Roman philosophy, The Journal of Positive Psychology, 16:1, 1-10, DOI: 10.1080/17439760.2020.1832250
Link	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17439760.2020.1832250
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Agency, the theme of my life's work, consists of efficacy, future-minded optimism, and imagination. In this paper the author attempts to trace the history of agency in Western thought over the Greco-Roman epoch. The Iliad presents mortals without any agency, the gods having it all, whereas in the Odyssey, humans have considerable agency, and the gods less. Later, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics postulate full-blown human agency. The emphasis on will, responsibility, and choice continues through early Christianity and then is renounced by Augustine in the fourth century, CE, with human agency relegated to being grace, a gift from God. Human progress seems linked to these beliefs, with strong human agency beliefs linked to progress and weak human agency beliefs linked to stagnation. The gods and the mortals, in about equal number, are the characters of Iliad and Odyssey. Who has agency?</p> <p>In general, across history, there is a trade-off between human agency and supernatural agency. In Iliad the gods have almost full agency and the mortals have almost none. Human fate is entirely in the hands of the gods. In the later poem, Odyssey, the trade-off tilts toward human agency. The gods still have quite a lot of agency, although not as much as in the Iliad, but so too do the mortals. Human fate is determined by both the gods, and for the first</p>





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Relevant definition(s)	<p>time in Greek literature, by us mortals. What changes is the balance between supernatural agency and human agency.</p> <p>The first component of agency is efficacy, and it has two other components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Optimism (which contains Future-mindedness): The goal is likely achievable in the future, perhaps in the quite distant future.2. Imagination: The goal is broad and not present to the senses. It is beyond, perhaps well beyond, the here and now. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agency is not all or nothing. Different individuals, different cultures, and different epochs may have a lot or only a little efficacy, a lot or only a little optimism, and a lot or only a little imagination. <p>Example: Odysseus repeatedly shows more efficacy, optimism, and imagination, as he deals with the cyclops:</p> <p>"So, we lay there groaning, waiting Dawn's first light. And now I ordered my shipmates all to cast lots – who'd brave it out with me to hoist our stake and grind it into his eye when sleep had overcome him? Luck of the draw: I got the very ones I would have picked myself, four good men, and I in the lead made five . . . But I was already plotting . . . what was the best way out? how could I find escape from death for my crew, myself as well? My wits kept weaving, weaving cunning schemes – life at stake, monstrous death staring us in the face – till this plan struck my mind as best."</p>
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Source 2	Book
Full citation	ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗΣ Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια (1103a-1103b) / Aristotle's Ethica Nicomachea (1103a-1103b)
Link	https://www.greek-language.gr/digitalResources/ancient_greek/library/browse.html?text_id=78&page=14 , link and link
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Book 2</p> <p>"Virtue being, as we have seen, of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue is for the most part both produced and increased by instruction, and therefore requires experience and time; whereas moral or ethical virtue is the product of habit (ethos) and has indeed derived its name, with a slight variation of form, from that word. And therefore, it is clear that none of the moral virtues formed is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit. [...] The virtues therefore are engendered in us neither by nature nor yet in violation of nature; nature gives us the capacity to receive them, and this capacity is brought to maturity by habit. Moreover, the faculties given us by nature are bestowed on us first in a potential form; we exhibit their actual exercise afterwards. This is clearly so with our senses: we did not acquire the faculty of sight or hearing by repeatedly seeing or repeatedly listening, but the other way about—because we had the senses we began to use them, we did not get them by using them. The virtues on the other hand we acquire by first having actually practised them, just as we do the arts. We learn an art or craft by doing the things that we shall have to do when we have learnt it: for instance, men become builders by building houses, harpers by playing on the harp."</p>



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	<p>Aristotle here quotes the full definition of virtue, which is distinguished for the clarity, fullness and precision of the elements that compose it and characterize it. He concludes by saying that ethical virtue is a permanent element of character freely chosen by man. He therefore presents the the next genus of virtue, which is the «ἔξις» "hexis" (habit, tendency). Each «ἔξις» is formed by the the repetitive performance of certain acts. From the quality of actions depends the quality of the quality of the words. As an «ἔξις» is optional: in the Aristotelian terminology, preference is the free and rational choice and will of the man, accompanied by the magnitude of personal responsibility, therefore it takes courage and strength. It is a necessary condition, in order for the person to make the right choice of actions and to reach the right decision, avoiding extremes, i.e. excess and deficiency. In order for this to happen, however, it is necessary to the person to have realized the high meaning of virtue. If the path to the virtue was not the result of free will but of compulsion, then virtue would have no value for that person. The word προαίρεσις (preference) does not denote an unreasonable and unjustified desire. It is structurally connected with person's intellectual capacity, thinking and judgment. It is a choice between good and bad and the pursuit of one or the other.</p>
Relevant definition(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ἀρετῆς οὐσης, τῆς μὲν διανοητικῆς τῆς δὲ ἠθικῆς, ἀρετή is here as often in this (Book2) and the following Books employed in the limited sense of 'moral excellence' or 'goodness of character,' i.e. virtue in the ordinary sense of the term.• In the context of Aristotle's ethical teaching it is assigned a decisive role to προαίρεσις (preference), it could be translated as volition (the act of willing, choosing, or resolving; exercise of willing, the faculty or capability of conscious choice, decision, and intention; the will)



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aristotle does not equate character with habit (ethos in Greek, with a short "e") because character involves conscious choice. It is probable that ἔθος, 'habit' and ἥθος, 'character' whence 'ethical,' moral) are kindred words. Instead, character is an hexis like health or knowledge—a stable disposition that must be maintained with effort. However, good habits are a precondition for good character. Virtue / preference it constitutes a free and conscious choice of one way of life or another, a choice that leads to specific decisions in each individual case. According to Aristotle, righteous is not the one who happens to do some fair actions, but the one who has consciously chosen the justice as an attitude of life and follows in his/her individual choices the corresponding consistent approach.
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<p>Source 3</p> <p>Full citation</p> <p>Link</p> <p>Brief description (max. 10 lines)</p>	<p>PhD dissertation (In Greek)</p> <p>Ελεύθερη βούληση & ηθική υπευθυνότητα : κριτική εξέταση των σύγχρονων συμβατοκρατικών θεωριών (Free will & moral responsibility: a critical inquiry of contemporary compatibilist theories), Παπαδαμιανός, Χaráλαμπος (Papadamianos Charalampos), School of Philosophy--Department of Philosophy & Social Studies--Doctoral theses, University of Crete, Greece.</p> <p>https://elocus.lib.uoc.gr//dlib/5/a/9/attached-metadatadlib-1543307435-916719-14213/20181121_Papadamianos_Charalampos_Mc_2021.pdf (in Greek)</p> <p>In what sense does the notion of free will and moral responsibility preoccupies human subjects? Under what circumstances is the</p>
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Relevant definition(s)	<p>individual free to do what he wishes and free to choose this particular choice to be a part of his or her own will? Under what circumstances is the individual, as a person, responsible for carrying out certain acts and choosing decisions that create his own will? Under what circumstances is a person morally responsible for his actions and choices? This dissertation is an attempt to investigate the above questions. As a compatibilist, the author believes that a unified theory of free will and moral responsibility should agree with Science's picture of the human and the world. Therefore, he thinks that philosophical thinking should consider seriously the fact of Evolution.</p> <p>Ελευθέρη βούληση & ηθική υπευθυνότητα (Free will & moral responsibility).</p>
Source 4	Paper
Full citation	Edwards, Jonathan. (2023). Doyle's Two-Stage Approach to Free Will: A Biophysics for Real Choice? University College London, University of London, UK
Link	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373031163_Doyle's_Two-Stage_Approach_to_Free_Will_A_Biophysics_for_Real_Choice & https://www.informationphilosopher.com/freedom/cogito/
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	Robert Doyle has argued that traditional difficulties associated with the concept of free will can be resolved by a two-stage approach, explored by several philosophers and scientists. Possibilities for action can be generated within the brain, more or less randomly, from which an 'adequately determined' choice can be made. A similar selective process is well worked out within immune cells, which may provide a useful



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Relevant definition(s)	<p>model. A degree of randomness is pervasive in the physical world but living systems have evolved to both tame and exploit this aspect at the interface between fluid and solid phases. Random and systematically determined processes are used in combination. These cell biological considerations support the plausibility of the two-stage model and may help point to specific mechanisms but may also raise a question about ‘who’ is doing the choosing. Computer modelling may sharpen the focus of that question. It may also highlight a paradox – that ‘freedom’ may only exist as the flipside of limitations or constraints imposed by real world situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robert Doyle (2013) has made the case for a two-stage model for free will in which a degree of randomness in events in the brain generates a range of possibilities (or representations of possibilities), from which an ‘adequately determinate’ selection can be made. This provides a basis for the notion of free will, or choice, but with the ‘freedom’ perhaps dissociated from the will or choice.• The division into two-stages breaks the impasse in providing a coherent account of ‘free will’. It may seem to separate freedom from will. However, that freedom arises essentially from the combination of discrete events and a continuous symmetric dynamic metric (with infinitesimal precision disallowed), which applies in biological systems at all levels. In computers it might normally be engineered out but in practice for complex systems something very similar can be put back in (Blum and Blum, 2022).• In humans, creative new ideas can be critically evaluated and deliberated. On reflection, options can be rejected and sent back for “second thoughts” before a final responsible decision and action. When the indeterminism is limited to the
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	<p>early stage of a mental decision, the later decision itself can be described as adequately determined. This is called the two-stage model, first the “free” generation of ideas, then an adequately determinism evaluation and selection process we call “will.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cogito Model combines indeterminacy – first microscopic quantum randomness and unpredictability, then “adequate” or statistical determinism and macroscopic predictability, in a temporal sequence that creates new information.
<p>Source 5</p> <p>Full citation</p> <p>Link</p> <p>Brief description (max. 10 lines)</p>	<p>Article in Blog</p> <p>“The Concept of Agency and Its Four Helpers” – Pattison Professional Counseling and Mediation Center (PPCC, Inc.)</p> <p>https://www.ppccfl.com/blog/take-control-of-your-life-the-concept-of-agency-and-its-four-helpers/</p> <p>Agency and It’s Four Helpers Agency is the power we have to pilot our lives in the direction we want to go. To use our agency, we have to become familiar with it’s four helpers, or aspects. According to professor Albert Bandura, here are the four helpers that will assist you in achieving your goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intentionality. You must make a proactive commitment to take action to change your life or your environment. You are not letting others around you force your actions – you are choosing to act and take control. 2. Forethought. Forethought helps you to visualize the future and set goals for yourself. It allows you to motivate yourself and to guide your actions in anticipation of future events. 3. Self-reactiveness. You have the ability to act on your plans and monitor your progress, plus make a course correction if you stray.



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	<p>Self-reactiveness means that once you have intention and a plan, you cannot sit back and wait for the results to appear but you must be deliberate in acting towards reaching your goals.</p> <p>4. Self-reflection. Allows you to think about and evaluate your motives, your values and your life goals. Self-reflection lets you address any conflicts in your motivations and choose to act in favor of one over the other.</p> <p>Together with it's four helpers, agency allows you to choose the direction that your life will take, help you to influence others to affect changes in your life, and work with others to change lives locally and globally.</p>
Relevant definition(s)	<p>Stanford University professor of psychology Albert Bandura, a leader on agency and self-efficacy research, stated in his talk "The Psychology of Human Agency" that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• people act as agents who intentionally regulate their behavior and life circumstances. They are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. "They are producers of their life circumstances and not just the products of them."• Bandura goes on to say that "while people have the ability to influence themselves, they are also very capable in influencing others to affect change".• Today's society is undergoing drastic social, informational, and technological changes, and these "revolutionary advances in technology and globalization are transforming the nature, reach, speed, and the loci of human influence. These new realities present vastly greater opportunities for people to exercise control over how they live their lives,".



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Translation of agency into your language. If not available, provide translations of related terms.

Agency is rather found in literature with the translation of preference, According to [Life Skills Collaborative \(LSC\)](#): Agency is the ability to make intentional and informed decisions about our lives, and take autonomous actions, even in the face of opposition. It is our ability to influence our functioning and the course of events through our actions, and make a difference to a relationship, a decision, or even a set of social assumptions and constraints. It includes the ability to set aspirational goals for ourselves and work towards them, making use of available resources, both internal and external, as well as navigating external power structures as required. Agency also refers to the sense of control or belief we have in our own ability to succeed in specific situations. Agency provides autonomy and empowerment to young people, the vulnerable and historically disadvantaged communities. Therefore, the person is able to:

- Express their thoughts and feelings openly.
- Actively participate in taking decisions about themselves, even if they are not in line with societal expectations.
- Assert themselves and stand up for what they want to do.
- Navigate changed circumstances successfully.
- Decide on goals that are in line with their values, interests and desires.
- Work confidently and efficiently towards their goals by utilising and coordinating available resources.
- Actively contribute to bringing about change to themselves, and/or to their environment.
- Use strategies to stand up for any wrong doing in society.

Related Life Skills are:

Self-Awareness, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Negotiation, Communication, Decision Making, Social Awareness, Resourcefulness, Initiative, Participation, Responsibility, Risk Taking.

The role of agency in learning

Agency describes the ability to identify valued goals and desired outcomes, and to pursue those goals and outcomes proactively, purposefully, and effectively. The key components of agency include:

- the thoughtful identification of one's values and priorities
- a belief in one's abilities
- the capacity to intentionally direct one's efforts towards specific goals.



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It is important that agency is understood in educational contexts to incorporate both action and intention. The concept of agency is derived from the fields of sociology and psychology, and has been used in different ways for different purposes in education. It is sometimes used interchangeably with concepts like proactivity, autonomy, the ability to exercise choice, and self-regulation. This conceptual instability, combined with a limited empirical evidence base, means that the evidence for the role and impact of agency is less emphatic than that for other, more stable concepts such as self-efficacy. While some factors of social emotional learning, such as self-efficacy, motivation, or engagement, may be lower in some domains and higher in others, agency is a characteristic specific to an individual.

Students have a sense of agency in guiding their own educational pathways as a whole regardless of how they feel in specific content areas. Importantly, it is malleable, and teachers can support students to develop their sense of agency.

The benefits of an agency-focused education are not controversial: indeed, some are fairly obvious. Agency supports all aspects of achievement while students are at school as well as powerfully setting them up for life beyond school. Agency, like many other factors of social emotional learning, is both an enabler of success at school and an outcome of schooling.

The building blocks of agency

While agency is complex, it comprises several core components, all of which can be developed and supported by teachers in the classroom.

➔ Self-efficacy: Confidence in one's abilities

Students' beliefs in their own abilities affect the degree to which they feel stress when confronted with a problem. Students with low capability beliefs will feel threatened when they are assigned difficult problems[iii] and may react with anxiety, depression, anger, or frustration when they feel threatened by activities that they do not feel equipped to accomplish. Students may shut down or act out due to low self-efficacy when given a challenging problem or assignment. Conversely, students with high competency beliefs do not feel threatened by taxing or confusing problems. They know that they can work through them with effort, drawing on their stable confidence. Associating optimistic outcome beliefs with difficult academic tasks largely dictates the extent to which students seek out and



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engage in challenging academic assignments and courses. This is a self-perpetuating cycle because the more a student pushes through a difficult task, the stronger their skills become, leading in turn to higher personal self-efficacy.

➔ Self-awareness: Thoughtful identification of one's values and priorities

A student who clearly understands their personal values has a much stronger drive to actively pursue their goals. Whether consciously or not, students' values and priorities shape every decision they make regarding their education. Clarifying these priorities is a valuable yet often ignored step for students in setting proximal and long-term goals and plans. Students who regularly reflect on what authentically matters to them will have a sense of agency in their schoolwork. This self-awareness will push them to actively make changes later in their academic or professional lives if their work misaligns with their personal priorities.

➔ Self-regulation: The ability to direct one's efforts towards specific goals

In an era of constant distractions, students without the internal tools to guide their attention will be at the mercy of their impulses. However, self-regulating students set short and long-term goals, check progress towards those goals, manage their time, and develop positive learning strategies. These students will be able to put their values into practice. The ability to inhibit one's impulses can be especially useful for supporting agentic independence in students with learning differences. Goal-setting and tracking abilities, time management, and impulse control are fundamental skills from which to build student agency. Coupled with high confidence in one's abilities and an understanding of one's values, self-regulating students direct their own educational, professional, and personal trajectories.

➔ Individual variation

Some students may be more inclined to develop these skills or may come to school already equipped with a positive sense of agency. These traits are impacted by factors such as the student's home environment and early years, which are out of a teacher's control. However, a sense of agency is highly malleable, and there are a number of strategies that teachers can use to support and promote the development of students' self-efficacy, self-awareness, and self-regulation.



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The value of prioritising agency in education

Agency is important in educational settings because agentic students act on their environments and life trajectories in thoughtful and purpose-driven ways. A student with a high sense of agency creates rather than responds to educational opportunities. In the classroom, students with a sense of agency regularly communicate their level of interest and express preferences, ask for a say in how problems are to be solved, and seek ways to add personal relevance to the lesson. They will work intentionally by recommending goals or objectives to pursue, soliciting resources or learning opportunities, finding study strategies and spaces that work for them, and seeking clarification or assistance. They will contribute to lessons by offering suggestions or contributions, asking deep questions and sharing their thoughts and opinions. Students who develop a sense of agency are advocates for themselves and the issues they care about.

Agency supports students during their school years

Agency predicts highly valued academic outcomes. For example, students who actively seek clarification or request assistance from their teachers have been found to score higher on standardised exams. Conversely, students who are hesitant to seek help or clarification have lower grades than those who enjoy interacting with their teachers. In addition, students who connect to the deeper meaning of an assignment will also enjoy the task more and experience higher achievement. Finally, students who evaluate how they best focus and act on their findings have higher learning outcomes. In sum, students who seek out ways to personally relate to their learning and find ways to grow and improve have better academic outcomes. While students will naturally feel a predilection for specific subjects, agency describes the stable internal trait of being able to motivate and regulate their learning across content areas. Agency is variable from one individual to the next, but stable within the individual in various contexts.

Students with a high sense of agency are also much more likely to engage in or lead clubs and sports teams. Agentic students take initiative in social issues that matter to them, and are more willing to regularly challenge themselves and intentionally engage in activities in which they have the opportunity to make and learn from mistakes. Agency can also empower students to promote positive change within their communities, as a belief in one's ability and a willingness to take action can propel individuals and their communities forward.



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For example, agentic students are more likely to advocate for one another or argue a point with an intimidating counterpart rather than turning a blind eye or feeling disempowered to act when they witness bullying or injustice. Similarly, students who are comfortable sharing their voice and actively engaging in their learning contribute to building a stronger school community.

Agency prepares students for life beyond school

A vital role of education is to prepare students to thrive professionally after they finish school. In order to be successful in today's fast-paced and constantly developing world, students must develop a desire and an aptitude for life-long learning. In a marketplace where companies are increasingly likely to contract the talent they need for a particular job or project, employees must often be responsible for developing skills on their own rather than relying on their employers to provide workplace training. Students entering the workforce will often be in unfamiliar territory in terms of their skills and knowledge base, and, in order to thrive, must have both the capability to determine what they need to learn and the inner drive to learn it, even if it is hard. Agentic people will more actively pursue challenging projects, share their thoughts and opinions, and take on leadership roles within their teams. The unpredictable and evolving nature of the job market today emphasises the need for students to actively take charge of their professional lives and learning.

In a democracy, the wellbeing of the public relies on the active participation of its citizens. Agency directly shapes an individual's democratic citizenship through personal responsibility and a justice orientation. Personal responsibility refers to an individual's propensity to care for their community, while social justice-oriented citizens actively engage in civic and social affairs at the local, state, and national levels. These high agency individuals challenge social, political, and economic injustices, and consider strategies by getting to the root of systemic issues. Citizens with a high sense of agency are the backbone of any thriving democracy. Therefore, part of the role of education in democratic countries must be to energise students to develop their own opinions, share their voice, and take action.

Students who develop a strong sense of agency in their formative years will also be more likely to enter into healthy personal relationships in adulthood. Agentic individuals have a stable sense of self-worth, so they are willing to address issues in interpersonal relationships. A lack of agency in a relationship can, in severe cases, devolve into abuse.



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Learning environments that promote student agency

In this new age of seemingly endless information, the opportunities for students are enormous. Self-directed individuals can pursue any skill set or content area that interests them. Students who have a strong belief in their own capabilities and the self-regulation to effectively stick to their goals will exercise agency if their environments are conducive to autonomy. Below are several ways to create such learning environments.

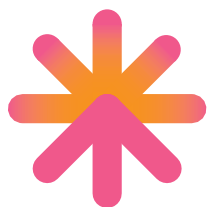
Congruence between students' social and academic identities

This involves ensuring that students' activity in the school community does not conflict with their social worth in their friend group. In traditional schools, students not already strongly committed to an academic identity face powerful pressures, both internal and external, to define themselves in ways that minimise identification with schooling. Internalised voices argue incessantly against the alignment of values with teachers and their academic tasks, making schoolwork seem incompatible with popularity or loyalty to some key reference groups (such as a student's culture, ethnic group, gender, family, or peers). By the time they reach high school, very few students engage in groups primarily defined by academic excellence.

However, a classroom that recognises a student's need to keep their social image intact can adapt teaching and learning to fit an agentic academic identity. Creation of identity congruence with academic behaviour can be achieved by building student pride in ethnic and family heritage while opening doors to 'code-switching' and other strategies that deal with the sharply different behavioral expectations of school, the workplace, and peer groupings. When a student evaluates a given academic task as high in personal relevance without a risk to positive social image, the result is a willingness to actively engage with that task and that environment.

Student-directed learning through clear formative assessment

Discussions about assessment in the classroom may focus on marks and grades, the weight of different assignments in comparison to tests and projects, the impact of turning assignments in late, and the amount of material to be covered on tests. Rarely, it seems, do these conversations focus on student learning. In addition, grading often feels final to students. They may not review the comments on marked assignments or take the time to learn the problems they missed on a test because they don't perceive that learning this information will have any impact on their future grade. All this may lead to students feeling disengaged or even disempowered when it comes to their academic outcomes.



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Purposeful formative assessment dispels student passivity associated with academic results. For example, a quiz can clearly denote which learning objectives the student has mastered and which they have yet to master. Clear formative assessment supports student agency by communicating a student's specific strengths and areas of growth. A student in this system is better able to determine how to improve their grade based on the most important aspect of education—how well they comprehend and can apply the content of the course.

Autonomy through 'just-in-time' support

While engagement might shift on a day-to-day basis for various reasons, teachers can promote a more stable sense of agency to learn that determines students' orientation towards school in general. Agency is developed by providing the delicate balance of supportive scaffolding with autonomy. Teachers who regularly gauge student understanding will be able to positively manage this balance by giving students a degree of autonomy in their learning while providing instruction on a 'just-in-time' basis. For example, a teacher monitoring a student working on a STEM project may step in to provide explicit instruction on a particular scientific or mathematical principle in order to allow the student to move forward with their hypothesising and problem-solving. Similarly, a teacher might support a group discussion about a novel by providing a piece of contextual knowledge pertaining to the historical setting of the novel that enables the students to draw pertinent insights but does not dictate or dominate the nature of the discussion. This kind of support allows students to continue to work independently or collaboratively towards their learning goals without being held up by a gap in their knowledge.

Teaching that promotes agency

The following instructional models optimise agency development by encouraging students to decide what they need to learn and how best to learn it in order to be able to accomplish their project. Students discover for themselves the gaps in their current knowledge and seek out resources (such as their teacher) in order to progress.

➔ Problem-based learning

Problem-based and project-based learning create opportunities for students to develop agency by making sense of a problem at the edge of their current understanding or skill level (although note that problem-based learning is not an efficient way for students to learn new content). As they follow similar patterns, only problem-based learning is used below as an example. This instructional model follows a series of steps and may seem



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more specific than other strategies included here, but teachers should feel free to develop, add to, or eliminate any pieces from the following to better suit their own students. Teachers may also choose to incorporate elements of the model rather than using it as a whole.

➔ **Present the problem**

Students are divided into small groups, and each group is assigned a facilitator. The facilitator's task is to manage group discourse by ensuring that everyone has the chance to voice their thoughts. The students are then presented with the problem 'cold.' In other words, they are not given context. This pushes students to explore various areas of their prior knowledge and make connections between these areas.

➔ **Discuss the problem**

The group then discusses the problem and generates hypotheses of the solution based on the prior knowledge or experience they bring to the table. They then identify several 'learning issues,' which are relevant topics that the students do not feel they understand as well as they should in order to solve the problem. Each student verbally reflects on the problem and potential solutions based their existing knowledge and assumes the responsibility of researching one of the learning issues. Therefore, rather than having pre-assigned learning objectives, students assign themselves objectives (these are the learning issues they identify).

➔ **Engage in self-directed learning**

Following the discussion, students direct their own learning, using the resources they have available in the way they feel is most effective. Resources should always include the teacher, who carefully responds to questions in order to push student thinking further rather than simply supplying the answer.

➔ **Re-evaluate the problem**

The students meet again to re-evaluate the problem using their collective new information and skills. Students also share what strategies or resources they use in gathering information, and how each was or was not useful. This part of the process makes students aware of positive learning habits. As new learning issues arise, students again revisit step three (engaging in self-directed learning). This cycle is repeated generally over a period of five to six weeks, with smaller sub-questions along the way. However, the length of time on each problem is up to the teacher's discretion.



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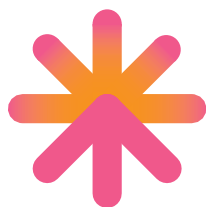
Student-designed units

This instructional approach involves students employing a framework provided by the teacher to develop their own units. Students then pitch their units to the class and everyone votes on the topics that the whole class will learn about. This framework allows students to inquire about areas of interest and gain conceptual understanding of the key concepts, the global context, the statement of inquiry, and factual, conceptual, or debatable inquiry questions associated with that topic. It also requires students to decide on the best way to test mastery of the concept and create a summative assessment. The role of the teacher in this approach is crucial in terms of ensuring that the topic of focus is not only of interest to the students but aligned to valued knowledge and learning outcomes. The teacher may also need to explicitly teach students how to design an assessment tool that effectively evaluates their mastery of the topic. This approach promotes agency by requiring students to identify a valued learning goal and then determine how best to attain it, but should be used to complement rather than replace teacher-designed units.

Measuring agency

Periodically evaluating students' social emotional learning serves the dual purpose of informing the teacher of their students' progress and wellbeing and prompting students to practise self-awareness. While formal school-wide social emotional assessments are valuable for collecting comprehensive data, these measures are time-consuming and cannot practically be implemented more than once or twice each year. For these formal assessments, one reliable measure with strong evidence of validity is the Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey. However, on a fortnightly or monthly basis, teachers can informally gauge student agency by asking the following questions:

- When you are working independently, how often do you stay focused? (Almost never/Sometimes/Fairly often/Almost always)
- How sure are you that you can complete all the work that is assigned in your classes? (Not at all sure/Quite Sure/Sure/Very sure)
- When complicated ideas are presented in class, how confident are you that you can understand them? (Not at all confident/Quite confident/Confident/Very confident)
- How sure are you that you can do the hardest work that is assigned in your classes? (Not at all sure/Quite Sure/Sure/Very sure)
- When you get stuck while learning something new, how likely are you to try a different strategy? (Not at all likely/Quite likely/Likely/Very likely)
- Before you start on a challenging project, how often do you think about the best way to approach the project? (Almost never/Sometimes/Fairly often/Almost always)



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- How much effort do you put into your homework for class? (Very little effort/Some effort/Quite a bit of effort/A lot of effort)
- When your teacher is speaking, how much effort do you put into trying to pay attention? (Very little effort/Some effort/Quite a bit of effort/A lot of effort)
- How often do you seek to challenge yourself in your learning? (Almost never/Sometimes/Fairly often/Almost always)
- How often do you make connections between your learning and the things that are important to you in your life? (Almost never/Sometimes/Fairly often/Almost always)
- How often do you seek help and feedback so that you can improve your work and reach your goals? (Almost never/Sometimes/Fairly often/Almost always)
- How confident are you that you can achieve the goals that you set for yourself at school? (Not at all confident/Quite confident/Confident/Very confident)
- How confident do you feel to evaluate your progress towards achieving your goals at school and work out what else you need to learn or master? (Not at all confident/Quite confident/Confident/Very confident)

Theory and practice of agency development and related terms in your country

Persianis, P. K. (2003). Structure and Agency in Modern Greek Education. *European Education*, 35(3), 44–59. doi:10.2753/eue1056-4934350344

Since its foundation in 1828 the modern Greek state, for reasons that will be explained later, has placed enormous emphasis on structure while downplaying agency in all its functions. The result has been a confusing polynomy and a "system of legal, administrative, and structural rigidities" coupled with the assumption that "the passage of a law guarantees the setting into place of a policy" (OECD 1995, pp. 2, 6). Legalism and emphasis on structure have been particularly strong in education.

OECD (2011), Education Policy Advice for Greece, Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264119581-en>.

The future of Greece's well-being will depend on improving educational performance to boost productivity and improve social outcomes. In the current economic context, with the need to get best value for spending, Greece must and can address inefficiencies in its education system. The challenges are significant. For example, Greece lags behind many OECD countries in performance on PISA, including countries with the same or lower



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levels of expenditure per student as well as countries with the same and lower levels of economic development. Salary costs per student are above the OECD average, mostly because Greek teachers have less teaching time and Greece has smaller classes. A smaller percentage of students who enter tertiary education complete a first degree within the statutory study time than in any other country in Europe. To address the challenges, the Greek government has established a bold agenda and sought advice from a task force on the development and implementation of reform proposals that reflect best practices in OECD countries. The report (OECD, 2011), provides the outcomes of the work of the task force. It presents a roadmap for how the reforms can be successfully implemented, with pointers to relevant experience in other countries. As a contribution to the on-going policy discussions in Greece, it recommends specific short-, medium- and long-term actions that can improve efficiency in the country's education system.

- Vocational education and training (VET) includes green skills training. The new national skills strategy of October 2023 (Cedefop, 2024) identifies intervention areas to improve workforce skills. They include cultivating environmental awareness and promoting responsible environmental behaviour, developing the circular economy and promoting energy saving activities, investing in professions and skills for the future, and strengthening innovation and resilience of companies by upgrading the population's level of digital skills. On continuous VET, the Greek Public Employment Service has implemented 'Skills upgrading and retraining programmes in high-demand sectors with emphasis on digital and green skills' for both the unemployed and employees, supported under the Recovery and Resilience Facility.
- Greece is introducing green specialities and thematic schools in VET. According to Law 4763/2020, which substantially reformed VET, four green subject areas were introduced in upper secondary VET schools (ΕΠΑΛ) in 2022: technician in organic farming, technician in renewable energy sources installation, technician in heating installations and in oil and natural gas technology, and landscape and environmental technician in technological application projects (Hellenic Republic, 2020). Following the provisions of the same law, three post-secondary vocational training institutes (IEK) were transformed into thematic institutes in 2021 with a focus on natural environment and sustainability (Cedefop, 2024).
- A new law aims to further reform VET in Greece. Law 5082/2024 aims to strengthen the integration of different VET structures and improve



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synergies within the national qualifications framework (NQF). The law provides for significant changes such as upgrading post-secondary vocational training institutes (IEK) and renaming them into higher vocational training schools (AEK). The establishment of vocational education and training centres (KEEK) is foreseen, with the aim to a) strengthening the reach-out to society and b) connecting to the labour market taking into account the particularities of local societies and economies. The law also provides for the establishment of professional development and career offices (ΓΕΑΣ)) together with a relevant digital information portal. The programmes run by the model vocational high schools (ΠΕΠΑΛ) will be expanded to all vocational high schools (ΕΠΑΛ).

- Greece increased the number of apprenticeship placements. In Greece, 45.3% of students in medium-level education attended programmes with a vocational orientation in 2022¹⁹. Only one third (35.4% in 2023) of recent VET graduates in Greece had experienced work-based learning²⁰ far below to the EU average of 64.5%. In school year 2023/2024, in the apprenticeship scheme offered at level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (post-secondary year – apprenticeship class), a total of 9 550 apprenticeship placements were made available. This corresponds to a significant increase of 45.5% in apprenticeship placements compared to the previous school year. This trend is expected to continue for the years to come.
- The ESF+ supports VET in Greece. Under the operational programme 'Human Resources and Social Cohesion' of the cohesion policy funds, the ESF+ supports measures on VET governance. They include the establishment of a project management unit dedicated to supporting the governance of the strategic plan for VET, lifelong learning, and youth. In addition, it encompasses the development of a certification system for career and professional guidance counsellors and an observatory to track the transition of VET graduates into the labour market. This focuses on NQF levels 3 and 5 and contains actions geared to monitoring progress, analysing the role of certification, and mapping educational and professional pathways. Vocational training initiatives are also covered by the ESF+, such as the action on vocational training for students at public schools of higher vocational training that focuses on financing theoretical and laboratory-based training, as well as practical training for new students.
- Efforts were made to increase the labour market relevance of skills acquisition supported by the EU Technical Support Instrument. Recent VET graduates in Greece have a relatively low employment rate (67.4%



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in 2023, compared to the EU average of 81.0%)²¹. The objective of a relevant project by the Technical Support Instrument which goes beyond VET, is to support the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security as well as the Public Employment Service (ΔΥΠΑ) in developing a comprehensive approach to skills acquisition from school to adult learning to increase their labour market relevance. The expected results are a) the establishment of a skills and competences framework for primary and secondary education; b) the development of a methodology for evidence-based profiling of jobseekers and feedback mechanisms for upskilling and reskilling programmes; and c) the development of a performance-based evaluation framework for relevant non-formal learning providers.

- Decisive actions related to VET are included in Greece's recovery and resilience plan: A new strategy for lifelong learning and the national upskilling system, including measures for the development of the new Institutional Framework for Lifelong Learning and Skills Development, quality control of educational material and the development of a national portal on skills (portal skills.gov.gr).

Your proposed working definition of "agency"

➔ Understanding Agency in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Definition and Examples

Definition:

Agency, in the context of DEI, refers to an individual's capacity to act independently and make choices that influence their lives and surroundings. It encompasses the ability to advocate for oneself, make decisions, and take control of one's circumstances. Within organisations and communities, agency empowers individuals to voice their perspectives, access resources, and contribute to decision-making processes.

Importance of Agency in DEI:

1. Empowerment: Agency is fundamental to empowering marginalised groups. It enables them to challenge systemic barriers, advocate for their rights, and actively participate in initiatives aimed at achieving equity and inclusion.
2. Voice and Representation: Agency ensures that diverse voices are heard and valued. By granting individuals the autonomy to express their identities and experiences, organisations can cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and represented.
3. Ownership and Accountability: When individuals possess agency, they take ownership of their actions and responsibilities. In the context of



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DEI, this means holding oneself and others accountable for promoting fairness, challenging biases, and fostering a culture of inclusivity.

4. Innovation and Creativity: Agency fosters innovation by fostering diverse perspectives and ideas. When individuals feel empowered to contribute their unique insights, organisations can leverage a broader range of talents and experiences to drive creativity and problem-solving.

Examples of Agency in DEI:

1. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Many companies establish ERGs to provide a platform for employees from diverse backgrounds to come together, share experiences, and advocate for change. Through ERGs, employees exercise agency by initiating conversations about workplace inclusion, proposing policies, and organising events to celebrate diversity.
2. Community Advocacy: In the community, agency manifests through grassroots movements and advocacy efforts. For instance, LGBTQ+ activists may mobilise to promote inclusive policies, challenge discrimination, and create safe spaces for their community members. This collective agency drives social change and fosters greater acceptance and equality.

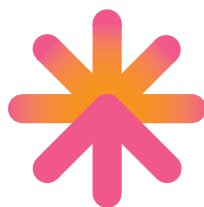
Conclusion:

In the journey toward building inclusive environments, fostering agency is paramount. By empowering individuals to exercise autonomy, advocate for their rights, and contribute meaningfully, organisations and communities can advance the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Recognising and valuing agency not only promotes fairness and respect but also cultivates a culture of belonging where everyone can thrive.

References:

Schlosser, M. (2015). Agency. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/agency/?trk=public_post_comment-text
Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency?. *American journal of sociology*, 103(4), 962–1023. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/231294>

- ➔ Agency is perceived as people's capacity to act on their ideas and plans to transform current thinking or practice (Virkkunen, 2006). Agency is also related to autonomy and self-fulfillment, serving as a force that brings about change and resistance to structural power (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). In more general terms, agency describes how human beings function as influential agents who can change their environment (Bunnin & Yu, 2009; Goller & Harteis, 2017).

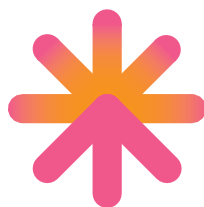


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- ➔ Teachers' agency refers to their active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions (Hadar & Benish-Weisman, 2019). As a construct, teachers' agency emphasizes the capacity for doing the work of teaching and learning given the resources and limitations of the working environment, and considers teachers' personal beliefs, values, and attributes (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020).
- ➔ Teachers' agency refers to an important combination of people's "sense of intentionality and their perceived possibilities and opportunities" (Priestley et al., 2016, p. 3). Teachers must have the knowledge, skills, and ability to not only improve student learning but also critically reflect on and advocate for teaching and learning issues and policies (Coffman, 2015; Wilcox & Lawson, 2018). This requires teachers with a sense of agency and some sense of their own collective power (Colvin, 2013).
- ➔ Teachers' agency is influenced by school leaders who treat their teachers as professionals, prefer innovative implementation strategies, and have built trust–communication connections (Lawson et al., 2017). In fact, agency results from the interplay of individual and group/collective perceptions and intentions, and the conditions provided by the school, district, and surrounding community (Wilcox & Lawson, 2018). Researchers exploring teacher agency thus must examine the cultures, structures, and relationships that shape the particular "ecologies" within which teachers work, including school organizational climates, routines, and rituals (Lawson et al., 2017).
- ➔ In existing research, human agency usually has very positive connotations of creativity and motivation, well-being and even general happiness (Chen-Levi et al., 2022; Welzel & Inglehart, 2010).

Any comments on the research exercise

- ➔ Useful Tool: Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey. (USER GUIDE Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey Topics and Questions for Students, Teachers, and Staff). Panorama Education is an education technology company founded in 2012 that helps students achieve academic success and well-being and gives schools and school districts a platform to hear what families, students and teachers need in the classroom. Educators use Panorama's software platform to understand and support students across academics, attendance, behavior, and life skills development. District leaders use the same platform to track progress toward strategic goals, such as literacy, graduation, and school safety, US.



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➔ POLICY PAPER – OECD EDUCATION POLICY PERSPECTIVES © OECD 2020, Education Policy Outlook in Greece: <https://doi.org/10.1787/f10b95cf-en> & Education and Training Monitor 2024 – Country report: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor/en/country-reports/greece.html>

Desk Research from PRESSURE LINE (Netherlands)

Definitions and research literature on agency or related terms

Source 1	What Is Agency? A journal article
Full citation	What Is Agency? Mustafa Emirbayer, Ann Mische American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 103, No. 4 (January 1998)
Link	https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/231294?seq=2
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	This article aims (1) to analytically disaggregate agency into its several component elements (though these are interrelated empirically), (2) to demonstrate the ways in which these agentic dimensions interpenetrate with forms of structure, (3) to point out the implications of such a conception of agency for empirical research. The authors conceptualize agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its "iterational" or habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a "projective" capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a "practical-evaluative" capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment).
Relevant definition(s)	The scholars Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement informed by the past, oriented toward the future, and acted out in the present.



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Source 2	Learning throughout working life A journal article
Full citation	Learning throughout working life: a relational interdependence between personal and social agency
Link	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2007.00394.x?src=recsys
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	An article by Stephen Billet published in British Journal of Educational Studies, 2010
Relevant definition(s)	Agency in VET is closely linked to identity development, as learners form a professional identity in their chosen trade or field. Vocational learners construct their identities by engaging in learning activities that reflect their future roles. This "agentic engagement" helps them internalize professional standards, shaping both their agency and identity.

Source 3	Agentic Engagement A journal article
Full citation	Agentic Engagement: Transcending Passive Motivation
Link	https://selfdeterminationtheory.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024_Patall_AE_PrePrint.pdf
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	An article by Erika A. Patall Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California, 2024
Relevant definition(s)	Agency is an important construct in psychology, long emphasized as critical to learning, development, psychological functioning, and life outcomes. With connections to research traditions within



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	<p>social, personality, education, health, and organizational psychology, as well as other areas of social science, agency has been defined in numerous ways and labeled with many terms. However, at its core, agency most typically reflects people's belief, capacity, and motivation to influence and transform the social world and their own outcomes, with an agent being someone who intentionally asserts this capacity, attempting to influence his or her own functioning and life circumstances (e.g., Bandura, 2006; 2018).</p> <p>In the classroom, students sometimes assert their agency by leveraging their inner sources of motivation and engaging in ways that change the conditions for their learning. Indeed, research in educational contexts has made it clear that teachers and students mutually influence what each believe, feel, say, and do in the classroom.</p>
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Source 4	A journal article in Dutch
Full citation	Actief leren hoe doe je dat (Active learning, how do you do it)
Link	https://tleerlab.nl/actief-leren-hoe-doe-je-dat/
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>In this example the method 'Active Learning' is described. With active learning, it is important that students rework the lesson material. They make a new product of it, as it were. In this way, they have to actively think about the lesson material. The harder you have to think, the greater the learning gain.</p> <p>Brain cells: When students learn actively, strong connections are created between the brain cells. That is what we want, because then the lesson material can be stored in the long-term memory. Then the students are really learning.</p>
Relevant definition(s)	



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Source 5	Autonomie (in Dutch)
Full citation	Autonomie (Autonomy)
Link	https://wij-leren.nl/autonomie.php
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>What is autonomy?</p> <p>Autonomy is self-determination, freedom from external control. The word autonomy is derived from the Greek autonómia or autos, which means self, and from nomos, which refers to the law. Autonomos therefore indicates that you impose your own laws on yourself.</p> <p>In many (international) studies, autonomy of students appears to increase the motivation and performance of students. Autonomy is one of the psychological basic needs, together with the need for relationship and competence.</p> <p>In the Netherlands, many schools have renewed their educational concept with a view to improving the motivation of their students and thus improving learning results. Especially by giving students more autonomy, their motivation and learning would be strengthened. An important trend in this is the so-called adaptive education. The three psychological basic needs relationship, competence and autonomy play an important role in this.</p>
Relevant definition(s)	



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Translation of agency into your language. If not available, provide translations of related terms.

Agency = Handelingsvermogen / Zelfbeschikking

Theory and practice of agency development and related terms in your country (1 –2 pages max.)

The theory and practice of agency development in the Netherlands typically intersect fields like sociology, psychology, governance, and organizational studies.

1. Theoretical Frameworks

In the Netherlands, the concept of agency (often translated as handelingsvermogen or autonomie) is explored in disciplines such as:

➔ Sociology and Social Sciences:

- Focuses on how individuals or groups develop the capacity to act within societal structures.
- Theories by sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu (habitus) and Anthony Giddens (structuration) have influenced Dutch academic discourse.
- Sociale cohesie (social cohesion) and maatschappelijke participatie (societal participation) are common related terms in research.

➔ Psychology and Education:

- Agency is tied to personal development, self-efficacy (zelfeffectiviteit), and empowerment (empowerment).
- In education, it aligns with actief leren (active learning) and leerautonomie (learning autonomy).

➔ Governance and Policy Studies:

- Agency in governance, particularly burgerparticipatie (citizen participation), emphasizes enabling individuals and communities to influence policies.
- Decentralization trends have encouraged zelfredzaamheid (self-reliance) as a key principle in Dutch policy.



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2. Practice in the Netherlands

Social and Community Development:

→ Participatory Models:

The Dutch government encourages citizen-led initiatives (initiatieven van burgers) through policies promoting self-management (zelfbeheer) and bottom-up approaches.

Examples include:

- Neighborhood projects (buurtinitiatieven).
- Local co-operatives (lokale coöperaties).

→ Empowerment Programs:

Nonprofits and municipalities often run empowerment training for vulnerable groups, emphasizing handelingsperspectief (perspective for action) and sociaal ondernemerschap (social entrepreneurship).

Education and Personal Development:

- Dutch schools emphasize fostering student autonomy through competentiegericht leren (competency-based learning) and 21e-eeuwse vaardigheden (21st-century skills), which include critical thinking and self-directed learning.
- Programs like Talentontwikkeling (talent development) aim to enhance personal agency in students.

3. Key Related Terms in Dutch

Here are some commonly used terms related to agency development in the Netherlands:

- Zelfbeschikking (self-determination)
- Empowerment (empowerment, often used as-is in Dutch)
- Autonomie (autonomy)
- Participatie (participation)
- Zelforganisatie (self-organization)
- Eigenaarschap (ownership, especially personal or organizational responsibility)



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Your proposed working definition of "agency"

Our proposal is to use 'agency competences' and not 'agency'.

Definition:

Agency competence is the ability of an individual to apply the knowledge that he/she has, to effectively perform tasks, make right decisions and achieve goals within their responsibility.

Any comments on the research exercise

ChatGPT explanation on agency:

In Vocational Education and Training (VET), the concept of 'agency' is crucial, as it pertains to how individuals make choices and take actions in their learning and professional development. Agency in VET research often explores how learners, trainers, and institutions navigate educational and workplace contexts to shape career paths, acquire skills, and manage challenges. Here's an overview of key definitions and related research literature on agency and related terms within VET.

1. Definition of Agency

Agency generally refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently, make choices, and influence their environment. In VET, agency can manifest in the ways that learners take responsibility for their learning, adapt to work environments, and make career-related decisions. Scholars like Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement informed by the past, oriented toward the future, and acted out in the present.

In VET, agency is not only about individual autonomy but also about negotiating constraints and opportunities within educational structures, training programs, and labor market demands.

2. Dimensions of Agency in VET

VET research often explores agency through several dimensions:

- **Personal Agency:** Refers to the learner's ability to set goals, self-regulate, and reflect on their own learning processes. This is linked to Bandura's (1989) concept of self-efficacy, where belief in one's capabilities influences the capacity to take initiative.



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- **Relational Agency:** Acknowledges that agency is exercised within social contexts. VET learners interact with trainers, mentors, and peers, and these relationships shape their agency. Edwards (2005) highlights relational agency as the capacity to work with others by understanding their perspectives and developing shared solutions.
- **Transformative Agency:** This aspect focuses on the ability of individuals to challenge and change the conditions that constrain their actions. Transformative agency is often discussed in relation to Engeström's (2001) activity theory, which looks at how individuals and groups address contradictions within their environment to bring about change.

3. Agency and Identity Development in VET

Agency in VET is closely linked to identity development, as learners form a professional identity in their chosen trade or field. Billett (2010) emphasizes that vocational learners construct their identities by engaging in learning activities that reflect their future roles. This "agentic engagement" helps them internalize professional standards, shaping both their agency and identity.

4. Agency in Learning and Work Transitions

In VET, transitions from school to work or between training phases are crucial moments where agency becomes especially relevant.

Ecclestone (2007) discusses how learners need agency to manage transitions, especially in adapting to workplace norms and expectations. Agency enables individuals to navigate uncertainties, respond to new responsibilities, and ultimately support career resilience.

5. Agency and Learning Pathways

The concept of *learning pathways* in VET relates to the ways that learners make choices in their educational journeys, such as selecting courses, pursuing certifications, or engaging in work-based learning. VET scholars such as *Guile and Young (2003)* argue that agency is central in navigating these pathways, as learners need to make informed decisions that align with their career goals and adapt to changing job markets.

6. Agency and Institutional Contexts in VET

VET learners' agency is often constrained or enabled by institutional contexts, such as policies, curriculum design, and workplace culture. For example, *Wheelahan (2010)* highlights how institutional structures in VET can either limit or expand learners' capacity to exercise agency, depending on how flexible or restrictive the curriculum and training environments are.



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7. Current Research Trends

Recent research in VET highlights several trends around agency:

- **Agency in Digital Learning Environments:** With digital tools increasingly integrated into VET, researchers are exploring how online learning environments support or hinder agency.
- **Agency in Inclusive VET Programs:** Scholars are examining how agency manifests among diverse populations in VET, such as disadvantaged or minority learners, and how to design inclusive practices that empower all learners.
- **Lifelong Learning and Career Agency:** As VET increasingly prepares learners for lifelong adaptability, researchers are interested in how agency supports ongoing career development and learning beyond initial VET programs.

Conclusion

Agency in VET is a multifaceted concept that plays a crucial role in how learners engage with their educational pathways, develop their professional identities, and transition into the workforce. By examining how agency is facilitated or constrained by personal, relational, and institutional factors, VET research provides valuable insights into creating supportive learning environments that empower learners.



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Desk Research from die Berater (Austria)

Definitions and research literature on agency or related terms

Source 1	Action competence model
Full citation	Hülshoff, Theo (2002), Leadership Tätigkeiten
Link	https://www.landsiedel-seminare.de/coaching-welt/wissen/lexikon/handlungskompetenz.html#:~:text=Die%20Handlungskompetenz%20setzt%20sich%20aus,die%20Methodenkompetenz%20sowie%20die%20Fachkompetenz
Brief description (max. 10 lines)	<p>Hülshoff's action competence model (2002) has four dimensions.</p> <p>Only cooperation in action and the interplay of professional and the interplay of professional and methodological competence as well as personality and emotional competence enables competent behaviour.</p> <p>In addition, Hülshoff (2010) categorises personality competence as an ego or self-concept, as identification with moral values and convictions and as the foundation of action competence.</p>
Relevant definition(s)	<p>The ability to act is made up of four other competences. There are therefore various influencing factors, the quality of which can already be characterised at an early age.</p> <p>The four sub-competences are personal competence, social competence, methodological competence and professional competence.</p>
Source 2	Article
Full citation	Bateman, T. (2022), Agency Is the Highest Level of Personal Competence, Psychology Today
Link	https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/getting-proactive/202203/agency-is-the-highest-level-personal-competence#:~:text=Agency



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<p>Brief description (max. 10 lines)</p> <p>Relevant definition(s)</p>	<p>US business psychologist Concise, clear 4-pillar definition of Agency, also providing a 4-step hierarchy of agency development</p> <p>Human agency is a mindset plus a set of learnable actions that help us attain what we want in life. Agency is a psychological concept and comprises four activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forethought: deciding to take on a challenge, thinking ahead, setting goals, and making plans. 2. Implementation: taking first steps, enacting plans, and persisting toward success. 3. Self-management: taking care of yourself, dealing with emotions and stress, and maintaining good health to sustain your efforts. 4. Learning and adapting: monitoring progress, rethinking strategies and tactics, and making effective adjustments. <p>"Agentic" is the strongest competence-related mindset, sitting atop a hierarchy including empowered, competent, passive, and declining</p>
<p>Source 3</p> <p>Full citation</p> <p>Link</p> <p>Brief description (max. 10 lines)</p>	<p>Article</p> <p>Oppermann, B. (2023), Handlungskompetenz: 5 notwendige Fähigkeiten & 9 Tipps</p> <p>https://www.lernen.net/artikel/handlungskompetenz-27836/</p> <p>Article in German educational magazine lernen.net. The article stresses that Agency is an important set of competencies necessary for not only in the domain of life but in many areas of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work - Education - Personal relationships - Parenting



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<p>Relevant definition(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health and well-being - Finances - Leisure activities <p>The article, as many other German-speaking papers, defines 5 competence areas of agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional expertise - Methodological expertise - Social and communication skills - Self-competence - Learning competence <p>Agency means that someone can act appropriately and successfully. It is about finding your way in certain environments, making decisions and solving problems</p>
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<p>Source 4</p> <p>Full citation</p> <p>Link</p> <p>Brief description</p> <p>Relevant definition(s)</p>	<p>Publication</p> <p>Schorn, B. (2007), Die Tableaus der Kunstsparten Arbeitsmaterialien zum Kompetenznachweis Kultur</p> <p>https://kompetenznachweiskultur.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/KK_Tableaus_174081.pdf</p> <p>This paper lists Agency as one of the competences that can be acquired or further developed in youth cultural work.</p> <p>It differentiates between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-competence / Personal ability to act - Social competence /Interpersonal ability to act - Methodological competence / Technical ability to act with 5-6 sub-competences each. <p>-</p>
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Translation of agency into your language. If not available, provide translations of related terms.

Handlungsfähigkeit: ability to act

- Law: Being able to act means that someone can acquire or enter into rights and obligations in a legal context through their own actions.)
- Psychology: Handlungsfähigkeit characterises the basic need for humanly justified action (as opposed to only conditional behaviour in animals), which is aimed at achieving control over one's own living conditions within the social maintenance of life.
- Medicine: In medicine, we also speak of Handlungsfähigkeit. This can be limited or lost due to injury or illness.
- Sociology (since 70s): Agency is defined as the ability of individuals to act independently in specific situations and to make their own free decisions.

Handlungsmacht: power to act

Handlungskompetenz: competence to act

Empowerment: Empowerment stands for working approaches that encourage people to discover their own strengths and develop a greater degree of autonomy and self-determination. Originating from the field of education, empowerment aims to strengthen people's existing abilities and utilise their resources. The term is particularly widely used in connection to disadvantaged groups, minorities and women rights

Theory and practice of agency development and related terms in your country (1 –2 pages max.)

The terms 'agency' and 'empowerment' have been central in the education policy debate in Austria over the last 25 years, in particular in the first decade of this century. In educational policy practice, the two terms are often used together in order to strengthen competences on the one hand and to promote critical reflection and active participation in shaping social processes on the other. They have been addressed in various contexts, from school education to adult education, labour market training and continuing vocational training. The discussions reflect the endeavour to understand education as an instrument for promoting individual and collective action skills.





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Agency

"Agency" has been discussed in Austria primarily in connection with the concept of key competences, referring to the ability to act in a self-determined and competent manner in different areas of life. The introduction of competence orientation in the curriculum (e.g. 2003 in upper secondary level) aimed not only to teach specialised knowledge, but also to strengthen social, methodological and personal skills.

In adult education, Agency was emphasised as a central aspect of lifelong learning, particularly in the 'Lifelong Learning 2020' strategy.

Promotion of self-learning competences: The ability to learn independently was seen as essential in order to be able to respond to the demands of a changing labour market.

Development of digital skills: In the face of digitalisation, the ability to act was increasingly linked to the mastery of digital technologies.

Critical voices complained that the focus on Agency was often economically motivated in order to make workers fit for the market, while social and cultural dimensions of education were neglected.

Empowerment

The term Empowerment has been increasingly discussed in the context of equal opportunities and the promotion of disadvantaged groups. It is about empowering people to actively shape their living conditions and reduce social inequalities.

Social inclusion: empowerment was seen as a key concept for programmes to integrate migrant women and disadvantaged groups. Projects such as 'Mentoring for migrant women' or youth coaching were promoted as educational policy measures.

Women rights: Empowerment was used specifically in women's education work, for example through initiatives such as 'Frauen in Handwerk und Technik (FiT)' (Women in Crafts and Technology) to make it easier for women to enter male-dominated occupational fields.

Educationally disadvantaged groups: Empowerment became central to the discussion about early school leaving and the promotion of disadvantaged young people.



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A controversial topic was whether empowerment really has an emancipatory effect or whether it primarily serves to promote adaptation to existing structures without questioning them.

Your proposed working definition of "agency"

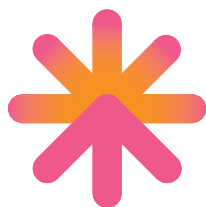
Agency is a psychological concept and comprises four activities:

5. Forethought: deciding to take on a challenge, thinking ahead, setting goals, and making plans.
6. Implementation: taking first steps, enacting plans, and persisting toward success.
7. Self-management: taking care of yourself, dealing with emotions and stress, and maintaining good health to sustain your efforts.
8. Learning and adapting: monitoring progress, rethinking strategies and tactics, and making effective adjustments.

"Agentic" is the strongest competence-related mindset, sitting at the top of a hierarchy including empowered, competent, passive, and declining

Any comments on the research exercise

Agency and especially its German translations is a multidisciplinary concept occurring not only in education but also in law, medicine, psychology and sociology. Some of the concepts are very differentiated. For DIDACTIVE it is advisable to take a simplified working definition to allow for operationalizing the concept and measuring competence development.



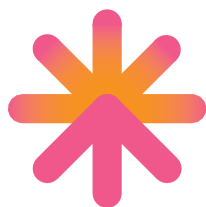
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Annex 2: Good Practices per project partner

Good Practices from France – Cap Ulysse

Good Practice 1	AI Vera
Title	The trusted number to verify facts
Link/full citation	https://www.askvera.org/en
Country	France
Year	2024
Type of Good Practice	<div><div>Methodology/approach</div><div>Tool/learning or training resource</div><div>Face-to-face training</div><div>Online training</div><div>➔ Other: IA Tool</div></div>
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>It's called Vera and presents itself as 'the trusted number for checking facts'. It is a French AI, free and easy to use. All you have to do is save its number – 09.74.99.12.95 – and write to it on WhatsApp or call it to ask if a particular rumour is true. It answers immediately with a 'Hello, my name is Vera. What information would you like to check today?'</p> <p>To the question 'Is it true that there is more and more violence in the countryside?', she replies 'I'll check the facts for you, just wait a moment'. In just a few seconds, she searches 300 reliable news sites selected by a committee of experts, including around 100 fact-checking sites.</p> <p>When asked if it is true that Haitian migrants in the United States eat cats or dogs, she denies it, citing Le Monde and Le Figaro. When asked if it is true that the Ukrainian president bought a castle with money given to Ukraine to help it in its war against Russia, Vera says that</p>



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Value for DIDACTIVE:

Why is it a Good Practice?
What can we learn from it?
(max. 200 words)

'this claim is disinformation', and quotes 20minutes.

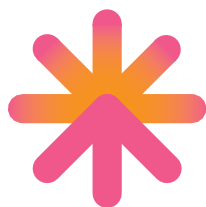
Vera was created by the NGO LaReponse.tech, a collective of volunteer citizens working in tech that was formed after the 2024 legislative elections. 'During the legislative elections, we still saw politicians who were capable of saying absolutely anything on the air, with fake news everywhere, and I think they had a huge influence on public opinion,' Florian Gauthier laments.

But the co-founder guarantees that Véra is not politically orientated. 'She is supposed to be completely impartial,' he assures us.

Vera is more a Tool than a Good Practice but we can imagine introducing it in VET by developing its use as a Good Practice in DIDACTIVE's blended course (create a mini debate about fake news and some learners' false beliefs and deconstruct them by asking and using Vera – then imagine the creation of small presentations made by the learners on subjects of their choice verified by Vera to present to the class). This activity will enhance teamwork (soft skills), oral expression in front of a group (self-confidence) and the development of critical thinking.

It will be useful to integrate this kind of Tool in the Didactive project as developing critical thinking, helping learners to think for themselves and question their environment, providing a sort of "critical media education" in order to contribute to the development of autonomy and digital citizenship, which is the core of DIDACTIVE's Project – (To improve Agency Competence).

PS : Vera is free, even used all over European Union countries but searches are only possible in French and English languages.



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Good Practice 2	Scalable & evolutive positioning tool (wheel)
Title	The Hologram – Anne Vinériér
Link/full citation	https://prfc.scola.ac-paris.fr/Doc/Hologramme.pdf
Country	France
Year	2005
Type of Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face training Online training ➔ Methodology/approach Tool/learning or training resource Other:
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>Author of numerous books and essays, A. Vinériér also trains those involved in the fight against illiteracy. She has worked on developing a methodology based on a comprehensive approach for people wishing to relearn basic skills, and is part of a united approach to popular education.</p> <p>The Hologram was created as part of a study that lasted 7 years and involved 400 learners – people starting training. It has 4 axes and 14 parameters.</p> <p>For knowledge and psycho-cognitive aspects (southern part): individuals are categorised according to their level (levels 1–2–3). For the northern part, there are 3 types of profiles (profiles A, B, C).</p> <p>‘The causes of illiteracy are multiple [...] it is a set of factors, of parameters that produce illiteracy in a given history and socio-economic and cultural context. If we consider the historical aspect, we can isolate three parameters: the family background, the school background and the socio-professional integration background. [...] It is with this perspective of the interaction of multiple factors in mind that we have constructed a</p>



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(max. 200 words)

hologram that allows us to visualise them and use them as a starting point, first to ask ourselves about the meaning that individuals give to learning in relation to the place that society gives to each of its members, and then to construct a pedagogy of awareness-raising'.

The author's postulate: "People with literacy difficulties find it difficult to take the step of 'relearning' in a formal training environment. This raises the question of support for the training process".

People with a low level of education...
'sometimes find it difficult to find their place in society [...]. We don't learn to read for the sake of reading, but because we have a reason to learn. One of the reasons is to be able to exist fully without having to go through a third party (sometimes perceived as welfare), to be able to speak up and defend an opinion, to participate in social organisation. [...] Experience tells us that the involvement and participation of learners is of a completely different nature when we see things in this light. In concrete terms, this means that the tools we offer are at the service of a purpose and no longer just a 'technical object': this purpose makes reading (and learning basic skills) a means of emancipation, 'gives access to freedom' as one learner said - freedom to dare to speak, write, make choices, claim one's place, take responsibility'.

➔ Agency Skills

This hologram is part of a comprehensive approach aimed at gaining a better understanding of people who start training, so that they can be supported on their path to relearning.

For Trainers, tutors, career guidance and job placement experts, it can be a gateway to choosing the right tools: those that will help develop the knowledge and psycho-cognitive



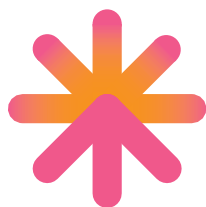
DIDACTIVE

aspects. It also can be used as a scalable and evolutive positioning tool all along the trainings for each Learner (the goal is to expand, for the 14 parameters of the wheel, the chips from the center to the outside of the target).

Didactive's second target audience, 'Adults with low skills and low educational qualification' who find it difficult to reorient themselves professionally, corresponds fully to its research. Indeed, illiteracy is not just a matter of 'not knowing how to read or write', but has different degrees and very often impacts all the elements that make up people's personal and professional lives (see the 14 parameters of the Hologram). It deals with everything except digital competence.

This tool/wheel can be linked to the definitions and work axes established together previously such as:

- Imagination & Future-orientation : * To analyse status quo and recognize needs ; * To think ahead and create a vision,
- Mobilization & Action : * To be aware of available own and contextual resources ; * To work with others and ask for support ; * To perform required tasks and enact plans,
- Self-regulation & Resilience : * To know your strengths and limitations ; * To maintain good health,
- Learning to learn & Adaptation : * To consider effects of actions on the surrounding environments ; * To make appropriate adjustments.



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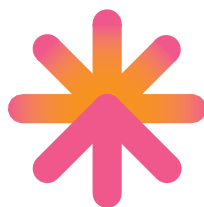
Good Practices from Italy – EnAIP Piemonte

Good Practice 1	
Title	PROMETHEUS – Bringing Soft Skills in VET
Link/full citation	(E+) 2023-24 PROMETHEUS – Bringing Soft Skills in VET. N.2022-2-IT01-KA210-VET-000101250. www.institutoikigai.org/en/project-prometheus/
Country	Skill Up (Italy) Instituto Ikigai (Spain) Stichting UIF (Netherlands)
Year	2023-2024
Type of Good Practice	<p>Face-to-face training</p> <p>Online training</p> <p>Methodology/approach</p> <p>➔ Tool/learning or training resource</p> <p>➔ Other:</p>
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>Soft skills are an important asset for employability, especially for young people and people from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>The project aimed at filling the soft skills educational gap by providing VET and VET-C trainers with the necessary knowledge to innovate the education sector and allow youngsters to acquire the most sought-after skills for employability. To this end, the project identified 12 main soft skills for employability:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness 2. Problem solving 3. Adaptability/Flexibility 4. Structure/organisation 5. Active listening 6. Effective communication 7. Presentation skills



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<p>Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">8. Empathy9. Application of creative thinking10. Followership11. Reliability12. Critical thinking <p>It provided the community of VET and VET-C trainers with a portfolio (toolkit) for the development of these skills aimed at improving the employability of youth in disadvantaged situations. It includes training modules to improve young people's interpersonal and organizational skills, formalizing informal learning and raising awareness of effective behavior.</p> <p>PROMETHEUS is a valuable Good Practice for DIDACTIVE as it directly addresses the development of 12 soft skills that are similar and consistent with sub-competencies of Agency and essential for the development of social and organizational behaviors. The portfolio and training resources, that are validated and promoted through verification, evaluation and promotion actions at the national and European level, can be useful tools and a good starting point for the DIDACTIVE's blended course design. Focusing on soft skills and employability of people with a low cultural and educational background aligns well with the project's goal of fostering agency competence in C-VET.</p>
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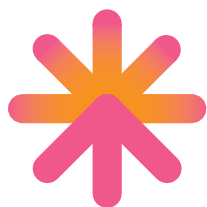
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Good Practice 2	
Title	VIC: Validating Integration Competences of refugees
Link/full citation	https://integrationcompetence.eu
Country	Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV) and DVV International (DE) – LEAD PARTNER BUPNET GmbH/ Education and Training Network Ltd. (DE) ENAIP NET (IT) die Berater (AT) EUROCIRCLE (FR) ARISTOTELIO PANEPISTIMIO THESSALONIKIS (GR)
Year	2018/2019
Type of Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face training ➔ Online training ➔ Methodology/approach ➔ Tool/learning or training resource ➔ Other:
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>VIC project developed tools and practices to train the trainers who work with migrants and increase their teaching competences in “soft skills training”.</p> <p>In detail, during the project, the following activities took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an operational working definition of “integration competence” – a blended course (https://vic.dieberater.com/) addressed to adult educators working with refugee immigrants to share methods and tools to promote, plan, actively develop and validate integration competences among the target group – a piloting – a feasibility study <p>The “integration competence” was defined as competence to “learn to live together in a multicultural society” (Unesco) and described as a meta-competence that includes sub-</p>



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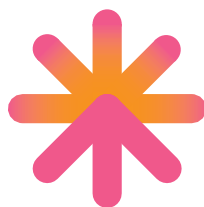
<p>Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)</p>	<p>competences: Reliability, Autonomy, Collaboration, Intercultural competence, Communication, Willingness to learn, Flexibility, Conflict management, Networking, Social participation, Critical thinking, Problem solving , Resilience, Dealing with diversity. Each sub competence was described and for each ones a set of exercises and tools to support its development among the migrants was developed.</p> <p>VIC is a good practice because it focuses on the soft skills development tools. In the Italian VET system, soft skills development is considered implicit and cross-cutting to the development of professional skills such as the identification and validation of competence procedures are focused on the professional skills. VIC represented the challenge to develop a structured approach to describe, identify, train and validate soft skills, some of them could also be included in "agency" competence.</p> <p>We can learn: the "integration competence" description model; the exercises and tools to teach and learn the "integration competence" and its sub-competences; the structure of the blended course programme.</p>
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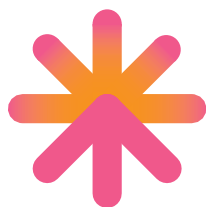
Good Practices from Croatia – POU Varazdin

<p>Good Practice 1</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Link/full citation</p> <p>Country</p> <p>Year</p> <p>Type of Good Practice</p> <p>Brief description (max. 200 words)</p> <p>Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)</p>	<p>VET_GPS – Guiding Tools for Professional Skills Development in VET</p> <p>https://www.vetgps.eu/</p> <p>Portugal, Italy, Spain, France</p> <p>2018–2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Face-to-face training ➔ Online training ➔ Methodology/approach ➔ Tool/learning or training resource <p>Other:</p> <p>The VET_GPS project aimed to integrate soft skills into regular VET curricula to prevent early school leaving and enhance employability. It provided concrete tools and methodologies for VET professionals to assess and develop students' transversal competencies, ensuring a holistic approach to vocational education. The project targeted learners with a low level of education (primary school or early vocational school levels), making it highly relevant for cross-sector application in DIDACTIVE. The developed resources include training materials, assessment tools, and professional development strategies for VET teachers and trainers.</p> <p>VET_GPS is a valuable Good Practice for DIDACTIVE as it directly addresses the development of agency competence among learners with low educational attainment. The structured methodology and training resources provide practical approaches that can be adapted to DIDACTIVE's blended course design. Focusing on soft skills and employability aligns well with the project's goal of fostering agency competence in C-VET. Additionally, its cross-sector relevance makes it a strong reference point for designing inclusive and effective training strategies.</p>
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DIDACTIVE

Good Practice 2	
Title	2B – DIGITAL
Link/full citation	https://www.asoo.hr/en/projects-and-cooperation/project-archive/erasmus-plus/2b-digital-inclusive-digital-learning-to-reduce-early-leavers-in-vet/
Country	Spain, Belgium, Latvia, Croatia
Year	2021-2023
Type of Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Face-to-face training ➔ Online training ➔ Methodology/approach ➔ Tool/learning or training resource Other:
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>2B-Digital supports VET teachers in delivering fully online courses that develop emotional and transversal competencies in students at risk of early dropout. The project's inclusive methodology involves various stakeholders to ensure effective implementation. Key outputs include a framework of transversal competencies, digital tools for skill development, an open MOOC for VET teachers, and an online skills assessment tool. A key advantage for DIDACTIVE is that the project is partially implemented in Croatia, making it particularly relevant for local applications.</p>
Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)	<p>This project offers valuable insights into designing online training programs that enhance agency competence among VET students. The focus on digital inclusion and innovative methodologies aligns with DIDACTIVE's blended learning approach. The tools and frameworks developed within 2B-Digital can serve as direct references for DIDACTIVE's curriculum. Its implementation in Croatia strengthens its relevance for local adaptation and practical integration into the project's course design.</p>



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Good Practices from Greece – Hellenic Open University

Good Practice 1	Erasmus+ Partnerships for Innovation: Alliances Agreement number: 101056253 – EDIFY_EDU – ERASMUS-EDU-2021-PI-ALL-INNO
Title	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion: For improving the quality of Management Education, training and professions (EDIFY EDU)
Link/full citation	https://www.edifyeduproject.eu/
Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) – IRELAND: Project Coordinator • The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Chamber of Commerce (DUNCHAMB) – IRELAND • European Grants International Academy (EGInA) – ITALY • API Servizi – ITALY • Aalto University School of Business & its Centre for Knowledge and Innovation Research(AALTO) – FINLAND • IEKE Finnish Information Society Development Centre (TIEKE) – FINLAND • Technische Universitaet Dresden (TUD) – GERMANY • Pro Arbeit (PROARB) – GERMANY • Hellenic Open University (HOU) – GREECE • Achaia Chamber Development Entity (Achade) – GREECE • Talent Garden (TAG) – ITALY • The Female Factor (FEM) – AUSTRIA
Year	01/09/2022 – 31/08/2025
Type of Good Practice	<p>Face-to-face training</p> <p>➔ Online training</p> <p>➔ Methodology/approach</p> <p>➔ Tool/learning or training resource</p> <p>➔ Other: Report</p>



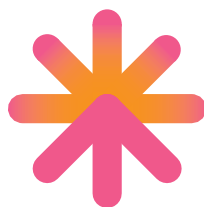
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Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>The project tackles the skills gap in Management education by enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) competencies, essential in today's evolving society. It supports management students and medium-sized business managers in acquiring EDI and transversal skills through a system for skill assessment, learning, validation, and recognition. The EDIFY EDU partnership developed 40 modules for both the MOOC and Specialisation courses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Introduction to EDI in Business Management2 Integration of EDI into the roots of Business3 Managing Diversity and Inclusion in Human Resources (HR)4 Inclusive Leadership and Managerial Practices5 Fostering Diversity in Teams and Organizations6 Gender Equality and Inclusion Strategies7 Disability Inclusion and Accessibility in Business8 LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Supportive Policies9 European legal frameworks on EDI in Employment10 Comparative national legal frameworks on EDI in Employment11 Educating Employees and Employers on Employee Rights and Protections12 Ethical Aspects on EDI in Employment13 Cultural Competencies – National, World, and Business14 Effective Conflict Resolution for EDI Advocates15 Implementing EDI Policies and Driving Organizational Change16 Inclusive Business Language and Communication Strategies17 EDI Metrics and Data Analysis for Organizations18 Integrating LifeComp, EntreComp and DigComp in EDI19 Equality VS Equity in social policy making
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DIDACTIVE

<p>Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">20 Intercultural Communication21 Conflict Management22 Emotional Competence (EI) Basics23 Upskilling in Emotional Competence24 Unconscious Bias Awareness25 Critical Self-Reflection and Objectivity26 Active Listening and Empathy27 Self-Compassion and Self-Awareness28 Interpersonal Communication29 Intrapersonal Communication30 LifeComp basics31 DigComp basics32 Digital Equity and Digital Inclusion33 Digital Inclusive Collaboration Tools and Platforms34 Using Digital Content to increase EDI35 Digital Literacy and GDPR36 Copyright legislation and licenses37 Netiquette38 EDI in the design of Digital Services39 Digital Wellbeing and Self-Regulation40 Digital Competence in Business Management. <p>The curriculum aligns with EntreComp and LifeComp frameworks to develop skills for a more equal, diverse, and inclusive job market. The MOOC consists of 6 sections with core modules, quizzes, and 6 live expert webinars. Specialisation blended courses are delivered nationally in Ireland, Greece, Italy, Finland, and Germany, combining online materials, quizzes, practical assignments, and work-based learning (WBL). We can learn from the EDIFY EDU methodology for the design, development & assessment of the online and the blended course, as well as the course content using the LifeComp and DigComp European Frameworks.</p>
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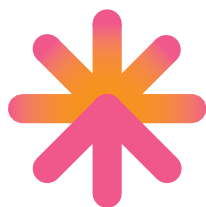
DIDACTIVE

Good Practice 2	Program KA220–HED – Cooperation partnerships in higher education – Project number: 2021-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000027538
Title	Neet prevention in Educational systems through positive Future vision Enhancing Learning and teacher Education (NEFELE)
Link/full citation	https://www.nefele-project.eu/
Country	<p>Universita Degli Studi Di Napoli Federico Ii Unina – ITALY</p> <p>Hellenic Open University, DAISy Research Group – GREECE</p> <p>Universitat De Valencia – spain</p> <p>University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland – SWITZERLAND</p> <p>Smarterd Srl – ITALY</p> <p>Vereniging Van European Distance Teaching Universities – NETHERLANDS</p>
Year	
Type of Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Face-to-face training ➔ Online training ➔ Methodology/approach ➔ Tool/learning or training resource Other: Report
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>The NEFELE project aims to train middle school pre-service teachers to support adolescents in building their career paths and developing a positive vision of the future. The project highlights the crucial role of teachers as scaffolders, helping students shape their vocational identity, enhance personal interests, and foster adaptability and flexibility. Since middle school is a pivotal time when adolescents start planning their future careers, NEFELE focuses on preventing the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) phenomenon by promoting hope and optimism in career construction.</p>



DIDACTIVE

<p>Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)</p>	<p>A key outcome is the MOOC entitled "Promoting students' career development at school", designed to train teachers with theoretical and practical tools based on career development theories and positive psychology. The MOOC consists of 5 training modules, including the NEFELE BOX, a toolkit using Tangible User Interface to help students visualize and shape their future. The MOOC platform is available in five languages (English, Italian, Greek, Spanish, and Dutch) and provides Open Educational Resources (OERs), lectures, videos, and presentations.</p> <p>The NEFELE project aim to certificate the short-training program with micro-credential in Teacher Education. Having more countries involved will be useful also in the NEFELE BOX creation and co-design with users. More scenarios for the game promoted by the users of different countries, that will include different socio-economic contexts. In order to favour effective upscaling and promoting the APP game are available in English, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Dutch. What we learn: Useful material by the MOOC, the OERs Shared Platform and the report "EU Framework of Career Development in Teacher Education". The NEFELE handbook contains an innovative framework for teachers which will include the Career Development Framework, the Positive Youth Development Framework and the TUIs-Tangible User Interfaces.</p>
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DIDACTIVE

Good Practices from the Netherlands – Pressure Line

Good Practice 1	
Title	Good practices for differentiated instruction in vocational education
Link/full citation	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603116.2024.2305652
Country	The Netherlands
Year	2023
Type of Good Practice	<div><div>Face-to-face training</div><div>Online training</div><div>➔ Methodology/approach</div><div>Tool/learning or training resource</div><div>Other</div></div>
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>Differentiated Instruction (DI): Research from Maastricht University</p> <p>Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a teaching methodology that adapts instructional approaches to meet the diverse learning needs of students. Research from Maastricht University highlights DI as an effective strategy in Vocational Education and Training (VET) to enhance learner engagement and autonomy. The approach involves tailoring content, processes, and learning environments to accommodate different learning styles, abilities, and interests.</p> <p>In VET education, DI supports students in developing agency competence by encouraging active participation in their learning journey. Educators use flexible grouping, varied instructional materials, and assessment methods to create personalized learning experiences. Maastricht University's research has contributed to professional development programs that equip VET teachers with the necessary skills to implement DI effectively.</p>



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Value for DIDACTIVE:

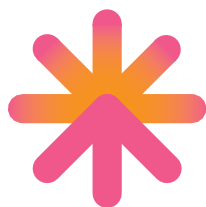
Why is it a Good Practice?
What can we learn from it?
(max. 200 words)

By fostering student-centered learning, DI promotes inclusivity and enhances motivation, ultimately preparing learners for dynamic work environments.

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a good practice because it enhances learner engagement, autonomy, and agency competence by tailoring education to individual needs. In VET, where students have diverse backgrounds, skills, and learning preferences, DI ensures inclusivity and personalized learning experiences. By implementing flexible teaching methods, educators can better support students in developing self-directed learning skills, which are essential for lifelong learning and adaptability in the workforce.

What can we learn from it?

From Maastricht University's research on DI, we learn that effective teaching strategies must be adaptable and responsive to student needs. Educators should integrate varied instructional approaches, assessment methods, and learning materials to foster active participation. The research also highlights the importance of professional development for teachers to implement DI successfully. For DIDACTIVE, this demonstrates that supporting teachers with targeted training and digital tools can enhance student-centered learning in VET. Additionally, DI aligns well with online and blended learning environments, reinforcing the need for innovative digital methodologies in education.



DIDACTIVE

Good Practice 2	
Title	Practoraten (Teacher-Researchers)
Link/full citation	https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/netherlands-promoting-research-vet-schools?utm_source=chatgpt.com
Country	The Netherlands
Year	2019
Type of Good Practice	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face training <input type="checkbox"/> Online training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Methodology/approach <input type="checkbox"/> Tool/learning or training resource <input type="checkbox"/> Other </div>
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>Practoraten is an innovative approach in Dutch Vocational Education and Training (VET) that integrates applied research into teaching practice. A practior (teacher-researcher) leads research within a VET institution, focusing on educational themes such as digitalization, sustainability, or work-based learning. The aim is to bridge the gap between research and practice, ensuring that teaching methods remain relevant and evidence-based.</p> <p>By collaborating with teachers, students, and industry professionals, practiors help develop new insights and best practices that improve both teaching quality and student learning outcomes. This model fosters a culture of inquiry, where VET institutions continuously innovate and adapt to changing labor market demands.</p> <p>Practoraten promotes professional development for teachers, encouraging them to engage in reflective practice and evidence-informed decision-making. The research findings are shared within and beyond the institution, contributing to broader educational improvements in VET.</p>



DIDACTIVE

Value for DIDACTIVE:

Why is it a Good Practice?
What can we learn from it?
(max. 200 words)

Practoraten is a good practice because it strengthens the connection between research and vocational education, ensuring that teaching methods evolve based on real-world insights. By embedding teacher-researchers (practors) within VET institutions, this approach fosters a culture of continuous professional learning, innovation, and collaboration. It empowers educators to adopt evidence-based strategies that enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and agency competence.

What can we learn from it?

From Practoraten, we learn that integrating research into daily teaching practices leads to more dynamic and effective education. It highlights the importance of professional learning communities where teachers actively participate in applied research. For DIDACTIVE, this demonstrates the value of fostering inquiry-driven education and supporting teachers in developing research-based methodologies. Additionally, the model can be adapted for online and blended learning environments, where digital tools can facilitate collaboration, data collection, and dissemination of best practices. By embracing this approach, VET institutions can create a more adaptive and future-oriented learning environment.



DIDACTIVE

Good Practices from Austria – die Berater

Good Practice 1	Day Course on Assertiveness
Title	The Big Six – 6 Steps to Increased Assertiveness
Link/full citation	https://www.wifiwien.at/kurs/1102x-the-big-six-6-schritte-zu-mehr-durchsetzungskraft
Country	Austria
Year	2025
Type of Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➔ Face-to-face trainingOnline trainingMethodology/approachTool/learning or training resourceOther
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>In the course "The Big Six – 6 Steps to Increased Assertiveness," participants will reflect on their self-perception and strengthen their competencies to achieve their goals independently and convincingly. Participants will be able to competently convey their positions to others.</p> <p>This day course is structured into six steps, focusing on strengthening personality, asserting oneself in communication, choosing the right approach for different situations, saying "no" firmly yet kindly, networking effectively, and gaining the courage to succeed. By the end of the course, participants will have reflected on their strengths and weaknesses, learned how to use their strengths for self-promotion, developed strategies to prepare and enforce their topics, understood the components of powerful language, practiced tools for confident behavior, and learned how to build social capital through networking.</p>



DIDACTIVE

<p>Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)</p>	<p>This course aims at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- individuals interested in optimizing their assertiveness and their capacity to act,- people who want to strengthen their confidence working in teams- those in or aspiring to leadership positions. <p>This course is ideal for enhancing one's agency and pursuing professional goals independently because it equips participants with the necessary tools and strategies to take control of their actions and decisions. By reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses, participants gain a deeper understanding of their abilities, which builds self-confidence. The course teaches effective communication and assertiveness, enabling individuals to convey their positions confidently and handle various situations with ease.</p> <p>Moreover, participants learn to set clear boundaries. These skills are crucial for maintaining focus on personal and professional objectives. The course also emphasizes the importance of networking, helping participants build valuable connections and leverage social capital to support their career advancement.</p> <p>Overall, by fostering self-awareness, assertiveness, strategic planning, and effective networking, this course empowers individuals to take charge of their professional journey, which is also an important part of DIDACTIVE's approach on agency.</p>
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DIDACTIVE

Good Practice 2	
Title	Comprehensive Manual including exercises on self-esteem Therapy-Tools on self-esteem (Therapie-Tools – Selbstwert), Authors: Chmielewski, Hanning
Link/full citation	https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/psychologie/produkte/details/55699-therapie-tools-selbstwert.html
Country	Germany
Year	2021
Type of Good Practice	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face training <input type="checkbox"/> Online training <input type="checkbox"/> Methodology/approach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tool/learning or training resource <input type="checkbox"/> Other </div>
Brief description (max. 200 words)	<p>The "Therapy Tools" manual on "Self-Esteem" contains creative and engaging techniques for working on one's self-esteem. Self-esteem, as a central psychological variable, affects all areas of life, particularly one's profession and career. Improving self-esteem and alleviating self-esteem issues are therefore fundamental building blocks for pursuing one's professional goals independently.</p> <p>The authors base their self-esteem therapy on the assumption that people have not one, but three self-concepts: the Actual Self, the Ought Self, and the Ideal Self. Self-esteem problems arise when there are discrepancies between these three self-images: "I am not how I should be or how I would like to be." From this concept, exercises and interventions are derived, aiming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct the Actual Self to establish a complex, realistic self-image. • Disempower the Ought Self and discard its rules.



DIDACTIVE

<p>Value for DIDACTIVE: Why is it a Good Practice? What can we learn from it? (max. 200 words)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illuminate the Ideal Self, gradually approach it, and achieve a friendly relationship with oneself. <p>The Therapy Tool contains over 130 worksheets and information sheets, i.e. exercise on Positive Biography: Write your autobiography and professional experiences as a success story. The goal is to describe a realistic and multifaceted image and to contrast it with the usually automatically generated negative biography in your mind. This will help you create a more positive and improved overall picture of your own personality and professional development.</p> <p>The “Therapy Tools” manual on the topic of “Self-Esteem” can help individuals act with more self-determination and pursue their professional goals independently by providing practical exercises and techniques that strengthen self-awareness and self-esteem.</p> <p>The excercises and tools can easily be adapted to the professional context in order to develop materials for C-VET and I-VET for DIDACTIVE.</p>
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