



European Training Foundation

# SCAFFOLD

*"Learning is like a tower, you have to build it step by step"*



# SCAFFOLD CARDS

This is a quick reference guide on how to use the Scaffold cards which have been produced jointly by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in the framework of its Creating New Learning (CNL) initiative, and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), in the context of its work on key competences with Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL).

This booklet provides you with the essential information you needed to start designing learning activities – from planning to assessment. The Scaffold cards serve as “bricks” helping educators in building learning experiences creatively, according to their goals and their learners’ needs.

Enjoy the read and get ready to try Scaffold!

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# Competence frameworks



**Personal, social  
and learning-  
to-learn  
competences**



**Entrepreneurship  
competences**



**Digital  
competences**



**Sustainability  
competences**

# What is Scaffold?

Scaffold is a deck of cards for educators in formal and non-formal learning sectors, who want to design learning activities that promote digital, entrepreneurial, personal, social, and learning to learn competences, and competences for sustainability. It helps educators design learning activities that integrate multiple key competences and foster their development for learners.

The card deck is based on the European Competence frameworks for personal, social and learning-to-learn competences, for digital competences, for entrepreneurship competences and sustainability competences. It links all competence frameworks with one another, and with the six transversal competences that cut across all frameworks.

The aim of Scaffold is making EU key competence frameworks simple and easy to use by teachers – and more broadly, by all educators – by combining meaningful learning activities for their learners with essential knowledge of what each competence entails, structured with instructional and assessment design prompts.

Scaffold is a tool to be used before entering the classroom, but it also guides you on how to articulate and deliver lessons and learning activities. It is suitable for any subject area and could be applied at any level of the education system or for any type of non-formal learning. It helps educators to draw a clear picture of the educational activity they are planning.

As a deck of cards, Scaffold is portable and easy to use in collaboration. It has a fluid structure to encourage creativity and can be scaled according to the user needs.

## Composition of the card deck

Scaffold is a deck of 102 cards, divided into five groups.

Each group guides you, the educator(s), in designing a learning activity, providing a method and a step-by-step guide on the different steps of the planning process by selecting specific elements from the library.

Scaffold consists of the following groups of cards:

1. **Setting cards** that help to define the learning environment and collect all the relevant information before starting the planning: How much time can the activity last? Who are the learners? What are the goals of the activity? and so on.
2. **Planning cards** guide the design of the educational activity. These cards are numbered and are to be laid down in a set order. They indicate the action needed to build the activity, from choosing competences to drafting a timeline of the lesson, always keeping in mind the setting.
3. **Competence cards** represent the competences in the four EU frameworks (DigComp, LifeComp, EntreComp and GreenComp). Each card is cross-referenced to other competences in the deck and has a visual link to the related transversal competence. In this way, the needed competences can be selected and new and original connections between them can be found. Transversal Competence cards represent the competences that cut across the four EU frameworks. They help in navigating and harmonising the competences of the frameworks.
4. **Teaching Method cards** are a library of modern pedagogical approaches that could be used in the educational intervention. They prompt and promote the selection of appropriate teaching methods with practical guidance on how to put this method into action.
5. **Assessment Method cards** are a library of various assessment methods that can be used for diagnostic, formative or summative assessment, at the beginning of, during or after the activity.

## Structure cards and library cards

While browsing the cards, some cards have a horizontal layout, and some have a vertical one. The horizontal cards are used to plan the lesson: the Setting cards define the big picture of the activity first, and then the Planning cards build a structure to help you plan the activity.

The vertical cards can be considered as libraries, from which competences for development could be chosen, or the teaching and assessment methods to be used as part of the learning activity. They will not all be used, but they are there as a set of tools, to be selected and used as required, for planning purposes.

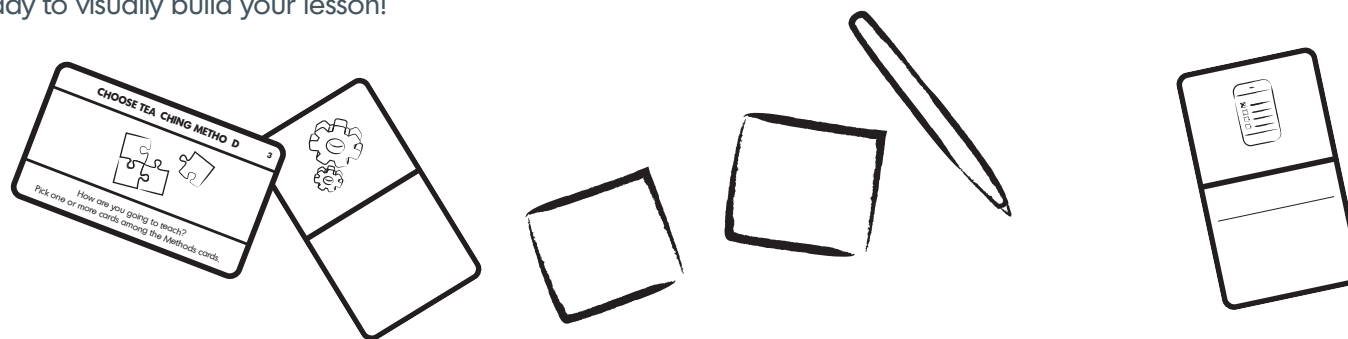
Scaffold contains a lot of cards and – at the beginning – this can seem overwhelming. It is important to remember that users are free to select what they need, and more complexity and different elements can be added as users become more confident in their use of the deck. Scaffold is designed to favour learning-by-doing, so, familiarity will increase with use.

## Get ready!

Scaffold can be used to design both shorter lessons and longer educational activities. It can be used by a single teacher, or in a group of educators.

Gather your colleagues! Find a wall, a desk, or any other available surface! Grab some sticky notes, some adhesive putty or tape and a pen!

Now you are ready to visually build your lesson!



**SETTING**

**TOPIC**

**SETTING**

What part of the curriculum will be the subject of the activity?

**SETTING CARDS**

Place sticky notes around each setting card to define your learning intervention.

**DURATION**

**SETTING**

How long will the activity last?

**OBJECTIVE**

**SETTING**

What's the goal of the activity?

**TARGET**

**SETTING**

Who will the learners be?  
How many people will be in the group?

**RESOURCES**

**SETTING**

What resources/people are needed for the activity?

**REAL LIFE LINKS**

**SETTING**

What real life issues will be addressed?  
Are there real-world links?

**SPACE**

**SETTING**

Where will the activity take place?

**NEEDS**

**SETTING**

What student needs will be addressed?  
Are there general or specific needs?



# Step 1: DEFINE the setting

To begin, start by browsing through the Setting cards and taking notes. The Setting cards are horizontally oriented, featuring a gray and white design. There are eight Setting cards, along with a cover card. These cards are used to determine vital information about the learning environment and the context of the activity. They can be used in any order and can be placed on a flat surface or affixed to a wall using adhesive putty, tape, or sticky notes. Similar to brainstorming, place notes around each card to outline the preliminary information required for activity planning.

After using this set of cards, you will gain a clear understanding of the setting, enabling you to proceed while keeping everything in mind. Consider factors such as the number and types of competences to be developed, as well as the available space, which may vary depending on the activity's duration and other considerations.

When planning a lesson, it is important to take into account various elements. These include studying the learning objectives, using appropriate language, determining the location of the lesson, and estimating the available time. By following the Setting cards, you will gather all the necessary information to start the activity.

Each Setting card contains a title and a question or description that stimulates reflection on specific aspects of the learning environment. Answer the question on the card by jotting down notes on sticky notes or paper, and place them near the respective card. This allows you to reference them easily, both for yourself and for others working with you.

**The duration card:** How long will the activity last? This card reminds you to establish the duration of the learning activity and consider it when planning the lessons or learning activities. It is crucial to be aware of the available time and determine how many lessons or hours can be dedicated to the learning activity. Indicate the expected time span next to this card, whether it's two hours or four weeks!

**The objective card:** What is the aim of the activity? This card pertains to the overarching objective of the activity. The objective should not duplicate the competences directly and should not be solely focused on the curriculum. Instead, it represents a broader objective that you and your colleagues aim to achieve when implementing the learning activity. For example, it could be "To prepare learners for work placement" or "To engage learners and facilitate classroom management," or a combination of multiple goals.

**The topic card** refers to the discipline or subject area you are teaching. It prompts you to reflect on the essential connections with the curriculum, even if the activity is part of an “integrated learning outcome” approach. What will be the main subjects covered in the lesson? While the primary learning objective may be developing competences, teaching often encompasses different subject areas and topics. Use this card to note the content of the educational activity as outlined in the curriculum you need to follow. For example, if you are a history teacher, the topic could be “Napoleon.” You might collaborate with the computer science teacher to develop the learners’ digital programming skills by creating a battle simulator. However, from your perspective, one of the topics you can list beneath this card will still be “Napoleon’s campaigns”.

**The target audience card** is used to define who will participate in the educational activity. Who are the learners? How many students will be in the class? Around this card, outline the number of learners, their backgrounds, experiences, and any relevant information that can assist in tailoring the activity to the target audience.

**The needs card** focuses on the specific requirements of the learners. What needs will be addressed? Are there any general or specific needs? While the Objective card centered on teachers, here you consider the specific needs or preferred learning approaches of individual learners or the class as a whole. For instance, they may respond better to a visual approach, require thorough preparation work, or need additional time to achieve the goals.

**The resources card:** What resources/equipment/people are necessary for the intervention? This card can be used to note the equipment, software, hardware, materials, or teaching aids that will be available or required. If external resources are needed or available for the activity, make a note of them around this card. You can also indicate who is responsible for acquiring them. This method can also be used to list human resources: Will you need support from other teachers or a teaching assistant? Will you need to involve someone from the community to provide instruction? If so, make a note around this card.

**The space card** pertains to the physical setting of the activity. Where will the lessons take place? It is important to know this information prior to planning and define any space requirements for optimal results. The activity may also take place online or in a blended environment. In such cases, consider the platform to be used and any adjustments to the teaching approach needed in the online or blended context, as well as the opportunities the online environment can provide.

**The real life links card:** What real-life issues will be addressed? Are there any general or specific real-world connections? This card helps establish links between the activity and the community, society, and the real world. It could involve connections with other subjects or teachers, as well as links to the external context. Connecting lessons to reality is often overlooked but is crucial for meaningful learning activities.

## Step 2: LAY DOWN the “Planning” cards

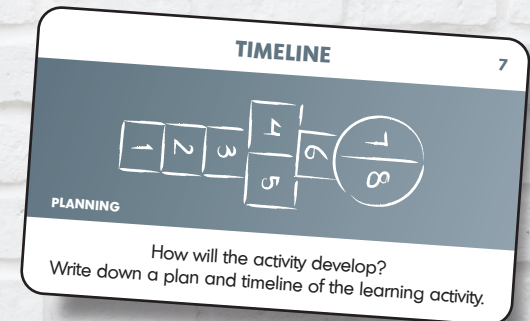
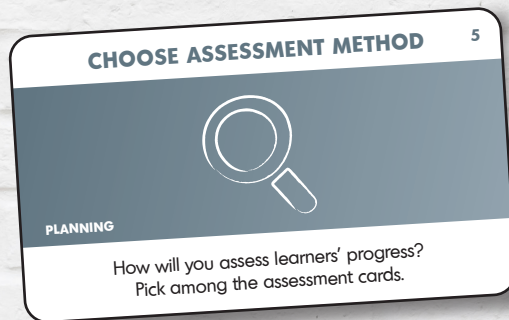
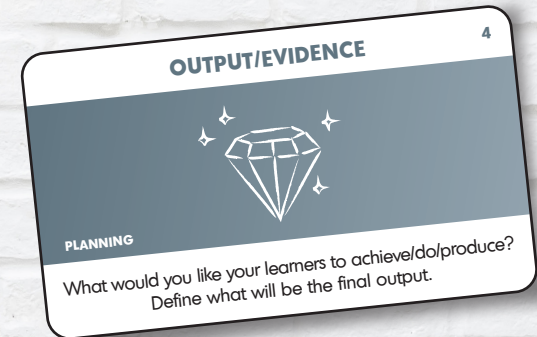
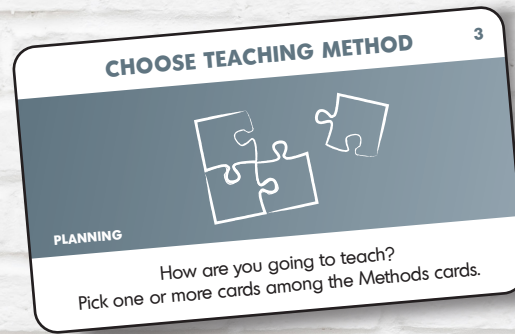
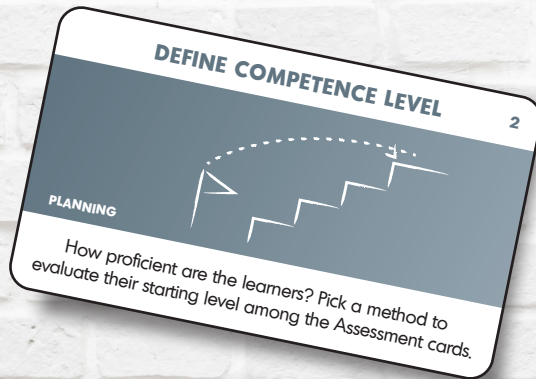
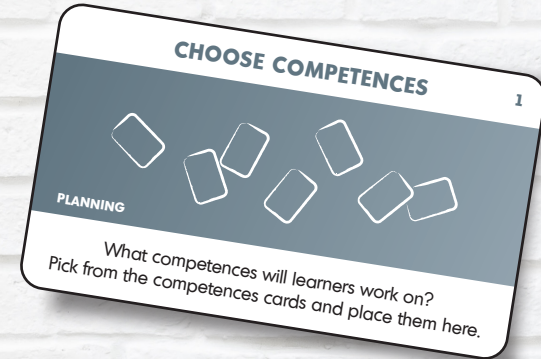
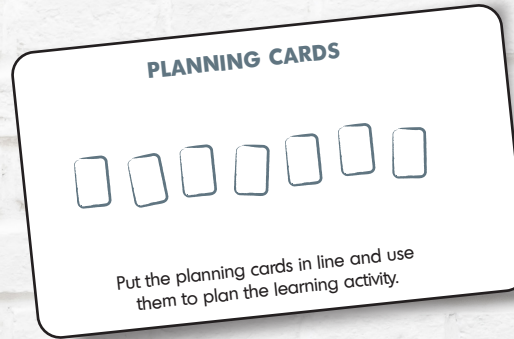
Once you have used the Setting cards, the next step is to utilize the Planning cards. The Planning cards serve as a framework to guide teachers in designing the activity. Numbered and meant to be used in sequential order from 1 to 7, each card prompts a specific action. These actions may involve decisions on teaching methods, the timeline for the learning intervention, or the selection of Competences, Methods, or Assessments cards.

Arrange the Planning cards on a table or wall in numerical order to gain a comprehensive overview of the process. This allows for easy sharing with colleagues or external stakeholders. Each card represents a box to be filled in, where you can make notes underneath it or utilize the library cards from the Scaffold deck.

Similar to the Setting cards, the Planning cards feature a horizontal layout with a grey and white design. Each card is assigned a number, a title, and a brief description. The purpose of these cards is to provide teachers with a systematic process for lesson preparation. They act as a reliable blueprint, ensuring that no important aspects are overlooked or forgotten. The Planning phase entails a series of actions from the educators’ perspective, where they consider and adapt to the setting.

NOTE: The suggested process aims to be as comprehensive and general as possible. It can be a valuable resource for trainers, inexperienced teachers, as well as experienced teachers seeking to reflect on their practice. However, it is important to note that this is a flexible blueprint that can be adapted. Teachers may choose to skip certain cards, especially if they already have a trusted process they are accustomed to. Similarly, the order of the cards can be modified. We consulted numerous teachers and extensively tested the cards with various teams, and some educators had different planning approaches. Additionally, certain situations may require a Method- or Output-driven approach. Therefore, someone may prefer to start with the teaching method, the desired output, or any other step. Since Scaffold’s primary goal is to support the introduction of key competences in teaching, we decided to commence with the Choosing competence stage, emphasizing the importance of this action in the teaching process.

Arrange the planning cards and begin planning your lesson. Take notes beneath each card or incorporate library cards beyond the Planning card. These will be the subsequent steps in using Scaffold.



## Step 3: CHOOSE the competences

The first Planning card focuses on selecting the competences to be taught. Gather the Competence cards from the deck and choose the ones you intend to develop through the learning activity. These Competence cards represent a library of key competences derived from frameworks such as DigComp, LifeComp, EntreComp, and GreenComp. The deck consists of 57 competence cards in total: 21 for DigComp, 15 for EntreComp, 9 for LifeComp, and 12 for GreenComp. Additionally, there are four cover cards, one for each competence category. These cards share a similar graphic design and structure.

Use the Competence cards as a resource for choosing the competences you will teach, and place the selected cards beneath the “Choose competence” card (#1) within the Planning sub-set. The structure of the Competences cards includes the following elements:

**Colour Code:** The competence cards are colour-coded for easy visual recognition. Digital competence cards are orange, entrepreneurship competence cards are purple, personal, social, and learning to learn cards are lime-yellow, sustainability competence cards are green, and transversal competence cards are aqua-blue. This colour code helps to distinguish between the different types of competence cards at a glance.

**Alphanumeric Code:** Each card is assigned an alphanumeric code that indicates its affiliation with the EU competence frameworks and specifies the corresponding section within the framework. This code facilitates easy referencing. For instance, d.1 represents the first competence in DigComp, e.15 signifies the fifteenth competence in EntreComp, and so forth. This system ensures convenient and efficient identification of the competences within the frameworks.

**Card name:** Each card is labelled with a card name that corresponds to the title of the competence. In most instances, this title aligns with the name of the competence as it appears in the respective EU competence framework. However, there are a few exceptions where certain cards required amendments to their competence names. These modifications were made to ensure that the deck keeps its practical and operational focus, moving away from overly academic terminology.

**Description:** The description of each competence card encompasses a rephrased version of the original description found within the EU competence framework. This rephrasing ensures that the description remains aligned with the framework while providing a clearer and more accessible understanding of the competence.

**A hint:** Every competence card offers a practical suggestion for the teacher on how to foster the development of that particular competence. The intention is to provide a useful starting point, allowing the teacher to engage with the selected competence card effectively. These suggestions are designed to be as practical as possible. They are formulated as exercises or requests that can aid the learner in their progress (e.g., “Explore your digital profile to safeguard your privacy and reputation”). By following these hints, teachers can facilitate meaningful learning experiences related to the specific competence.

**Good with:** While it is possible to develop each competence alongside others, certain competences naturally complement each other. On each card, you will find a “Good with” section that suggests other competences that are highly compatible for simultaneous development. These recommended competences are identified by their alphanumeric code (as explained earlier). This guidance aims to assist teachers in selecting and combining competences that synergistically support comprehensive learning experiences.

**Transversal competence icon:** Each card features a small icon indicating the transversal competences that are developed through that specific competence. This icon corresponds to one or more Transversal competence cards (explained below) and signifies the transversal competence that will be enhanced by the respective competence card. Furthermore, this icon enables the alignment and mapping of competence cards from different EU competence frameworks based on the transversal competences they develop. For example, the “Growth mindset” (I.7 competence) and the “Spotting opportunities” (E.1 competence) both contribute to the development of the “Critical thinking” transversal competence. Hence, the icon serves as a valuable tool in identifying a group of competences from diverse EU competence frameworks that collectively foster the growth of the same transversal competences. This alignment facilitates the integration of Scaffold cards into the local curriculum.



There are seven Transversal Competence cards: critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, communication and negotiation skills, analytical skills, creativity, and intercultural skills. These cards serve as reminders, unifying features, and an index for the other competence cards. Each Transversal Competence card includes a title, a prominent icon that appears on the other competence cards, and a brief description of the competence it represents. Together, these Transversal Competence cards provide an overarching framework that highlights the key skills and abilities necessary for comprehensive development across various competences.

## How to choose the competences?

### TRANSVERSAL CRITERION:

To develop a transversal competence without a specific competence in mind, look for the cards with the corresponding transversal competence symbol. For example, if you want to develop intercultural skills, select the cards with the “intercultural skill” icon. This approach allows you to gather a subset of cards from different EU competence frameworks that all focus on the same transversal competence. Then, you can choose the desired number of competences from the pre-selected cards, making the selection process more manageable.

### COMPETENCE-DRIVEN CRITERION:

If you have identified a particular learner’s need or if the learners want to work on specific competences, simply pick those competences from the deck. Start by considering the framework to which the needed competence belongs. If multiple competences are to be developed, refer to the “Good with” section on each card to identify complementary competences. Continue this process until you have the desired number of competences to be developed.

### RANDOM CRITERION:

For a more creative approach, randomly select one or more Competence cards and devise a lesson plan to develop the resulting competences within the given setting. This method encourages you to adapt the topic, setting, method, and other elements based on the chosen competences, fostering original and stimulating activities with innovative combinations of competences.

Place the selected competences under the “Choose competences” card to define and keep them in mind. You can choose as many competences as needed, but we recommend starting with at least three competences from the frameworks.



## Step 4: APPRAISE the starting level

Under the “Define competence level” (#2) card, you will assess the proficiency level of learners in the selected competences. This diagnostic phase helps determine the learners’ starting point in their competence development at the beginning of the activity. Consider the possibility of diverse levels among learners to design an educational activity that accommodates, supports, and challenges each individual appropriately. Assessments, such as entry tests or interviews, can be used to identify these levels. Defining the proficiency level of learners in the chosen competences is crucial.

To define the starting level of a learner or all learners, use the “Define competence level” card. You can select an Assessment Methods card (refer to page 14) to choose the assessment method for the entry test or the diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the activity.

There are seven Assessment Methods cards, along with a cover card. These cards, characterised by a dark blue background and a vertical layout, provide a library of possible assessment methods. The assessment method plays a significant role in the success of the educational activity as it helps determine learners’ starting points, track their progress, evaluate goal achievement, and assess the effectiveness of the chosen teaching method. These cards serve as a starting point for you to decide how the assessment process will be conducted. Assessments can be done at the beginning, during, or after the activity, and the methods can be diagnostic, formative, or summative.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive; it serves as a starting point for selecting an assessment method for your educational activity. It represents the work of expert teachers and scholars who have categorized and defined the main assessment approaches for competence-oriented, experiential learning activities.

Each Assessment Method card includes a title, a description, and a hint. The title represents the name of the assessment method, including the full name if an abbreviation is commonly used to avoid confusion across different countries. The description provides a brief yet comprehensive definition of the method, highlighting its key aspects. It is important to note that the description is not exhaustive, and further research from additional sources is recommended to explore more ways of using the method. The hint offers a three-point suggestion to educators on implementing the assessment during the educational activity. Place the Assessment Method cards below the “Define competence level” card or make a note of your selected assessment method.



## Step 5: SELECT the teaching method

Under the Choose teaching method card (#3), define the teaching method you intend to use. It is important to decide on the teaching method before planning the activity, and some teachers may find it practical to select it even before having chosen the topic or the competences to be taught. Select your preferred method from the Teaching Method cards.

There are seven Teaching Method cards plus one cover card. They have a vertical layout and a light blue background. They present the most common experiential learning teaching methods and approaches that can be used during a lesson or a series of lessons. The list is not complete, and it is meant to be a starting point for you to choose the method you would like to use for the educational activity. Some of the definitions are quite broad and may encompass different teaching strategies, since only the main traits of the approaches are considered. The teaching methods included in the deck have been selected by expert teachers and scholars with the aim to group and define the main ways educators could approach competence-oriented, experiential learning.

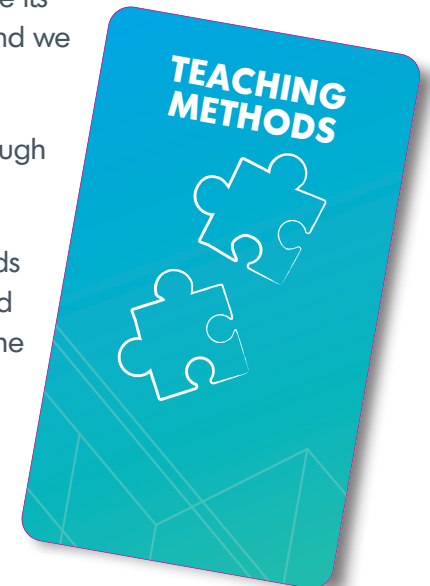
Each card has a title, a description of the method and a hint to help you understand the activity and put it into practice. The title is the name of the teaching method. In case the teaching method is known by an abbreviation, the card presents the full name, to prevent confusion.

The description is a broad but short definition of the method, and it is used to better identify the technique and to underline its most important aspects. It is made of one or two sentences under the Title. The description is not meant to be complete, and we suggest researching the method from various additional sources before using it.

The hint is a practical suggestion to help you put the method into action. It is a five-step process that learners must go through during the educational activity.

You can put the chosen Teaching Method card under the Choose teaching method card, in line with the Competence cards selected before. In case you prefer a different method, i.e., the method developed over time, or the one that is not included in the Teaching Method cards, you can write it on a post-it and put under the Choose teaching method card, in line with the selected competences. More than one method may be chosen and combined for longer activities.

## Step 6: ESTABLISH the desired output



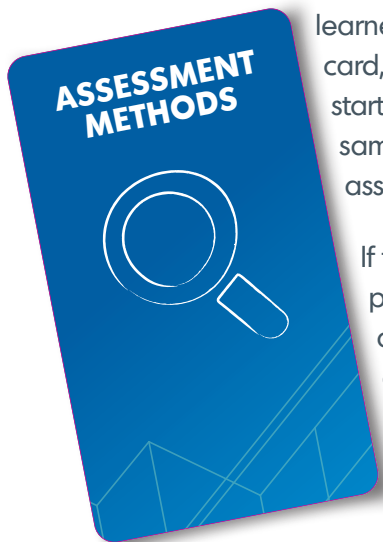
During the planning phase of the educational activity, it is crucial to determine the tasks and expectations for the learners both throughout the activity and at its conclusion. Under the “Output/evidence” (#4) card, describe what you will be asking the learners to do or produce. Clearly define the desired final product or expected result, as well as any specific requirements or tasks to be completed during and/or at the end of the activity. The output serves as tangible evidence of the learners’ engagement and serves as a basis for evaluation or assessment to gauge the quality, progress, and competency achieved.

By articulating the desired output, you provide a clear framework for learners to understand what is expected of them and establish the criteria against which their work will be evaluated. This not only guides their efforts but also allows for meaningful assessment of their performance and growth. Consider including specific details, instructions, or guidelines related to the output or evidence you are seeking from the learners. This may include written work, presentations, prototypes, group projects, or any other form of demonstration or expression that showcases their learning and application of the acquired competences. Remember, the defined output or evidence will play a vital role in assessing the effectiveness of the educational activity and the attainment of desired learning outcomes.

## Step 7: PICK the assessment method

When planning the educational activity, selecting an appropriate assessment method (#5) is crucial. It is important to avoid the common mistake of overlooking assessment until the end of the activity. Assessing only at the end may result in evaluating aspects unrelated to what learners were specifically asked to demonstrate throughout their educational journey. Under the “Choose assessment method” card, determine the assessment approach to be used. Just as you selected an assessment method to evaluate the learners’ starting level, you can choose from the Assessment card library mentioned earlier. You have the option to continue with the same assessment used at the beginning or opt for a different one. Place the selected assessment card under the “Choose assessment” card, aligning it with the Competence cards and the previously chosen Teaching Method card.

If the desired assessment method is not available on the provided cards, you can simply write it on a post-it note and position it beneath the “Choose the assessment method” card, in line with the selected competences. Remember, setting the assessment method is vital to ensure that the evaluation process aligns with the learning objectives and desired outcomes of the educational activity.



## **Step 8: GATHER the necessary resources**

The next step is to gather resources (#6) for the activity. This practical step serves as a reminder to carefully consider what is required for the activity and whether anyone else should be involved. It is essential for educators to anticipate the needs and ensure they are met prior to the activity, preventing the launch of an incomplete learning experience.

Resources can encompass a wide range of items, from simple printed materials to sophisticated digital tools. Additionally, you may choose to involve colleagues or external individuals to enhance the activity. Under the “Gather resources” card, list all the resources needed for the activity and check them off as you acquire them, maintaining an updated checklist throughout the process.

## **Step 9: DRAFT the lesson plan**

Now that everything is in place, it's time to prepare your lesson/activity plan. Use the Timeline (#7) card to vertically outline the schedule of activities for your class. Here, you will mark all the relevant phases of the activity and plan a precise schedule with descriptions of the actions to be completed throughout the anticipated duration of the activity (refer to the duration section on the Setting card).

# List of competence cards

## Digital competences

- d.1 Searching information and digital content
- d.2 Evaluating digital content
- d.3 Managing digital content
- d.4 Interacting through digital technologies
- d.5 Sharing through digital technologies
- d.6 Engaging in citizenship digitally
- d.7 Collaborating digitally
- d.8 Netiquette
- d.9 Managing digital identity
- d.10 Developing digital content
- d.11 Re-elaborating digital content
- d.12 Copyright and licences
- d.13 Programming
- d.14 Protecting devices
- d.15 Protecting personal data
- d.16 Protecting health and well-being
- d.17 Protecting the environment
- d.18 Solving technical problems
- d.19 Identifying needs and technological responses
- d.20 Creatively using digital technologies
- d.21 Identifying digital competence gaps

## Entrepreneurship competences

- e.1 Spotting opportunities
- e.2 Creativity
- e.3 Vision
- e.4 Valuing ideas
- e.5 Ethical and sustainable thinking
- e.6 Self-awareness and self-efficacy
- e.7 Motivation and perseverance
- e.8 Mobilising resources
- e.9 Financial and economic literacy
- e.10 Mobilising others
- e.11 Taking the initiative
- e.12 Planning and management
- e.13 Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk
- e.14 Working with others
- e.15 Learning through experience





### Personal, social and learning to learn competences

- I.1 Self regulation
- I.2 Flexibility
- I.3 Well being
- I.4 Empathy
- I.5 Communication
- I.6 Collaboration
- I.7 Growth mind-set
- I.8 Critical thinking
- I.9 Managing learning

### Sustainability competences

- g.1 Valuing sustainability
- g.2 Supporting fairness
- g.3 Promoting nature
- g.4 Systems thinking
- g.5 Critical thinking
- g.6 Problem framing
- g.7 Futures literacy
- g.8 Adaptability
- g.9 Exploratory thinking
- g.10 Political agency
- g.11 Collective action
- g.12 Individual initiative

### Transversal competences

-  Critical thinking
-  Problem solving
-  Team work
-  Communication and negotiation skills

### Transversal competences

-  analytical skills
-  creativity
-  intercultural skills



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