



EMPOWERING VET TEACHERS AND EXPERTS ON CAREER MANAGEMENT IN THE INFLUENCER ERA

Curriculum for VET educators

TITLE:

Curriculum "Empowering VET teachers and experts on career management in the influencer era"

PROJECT:

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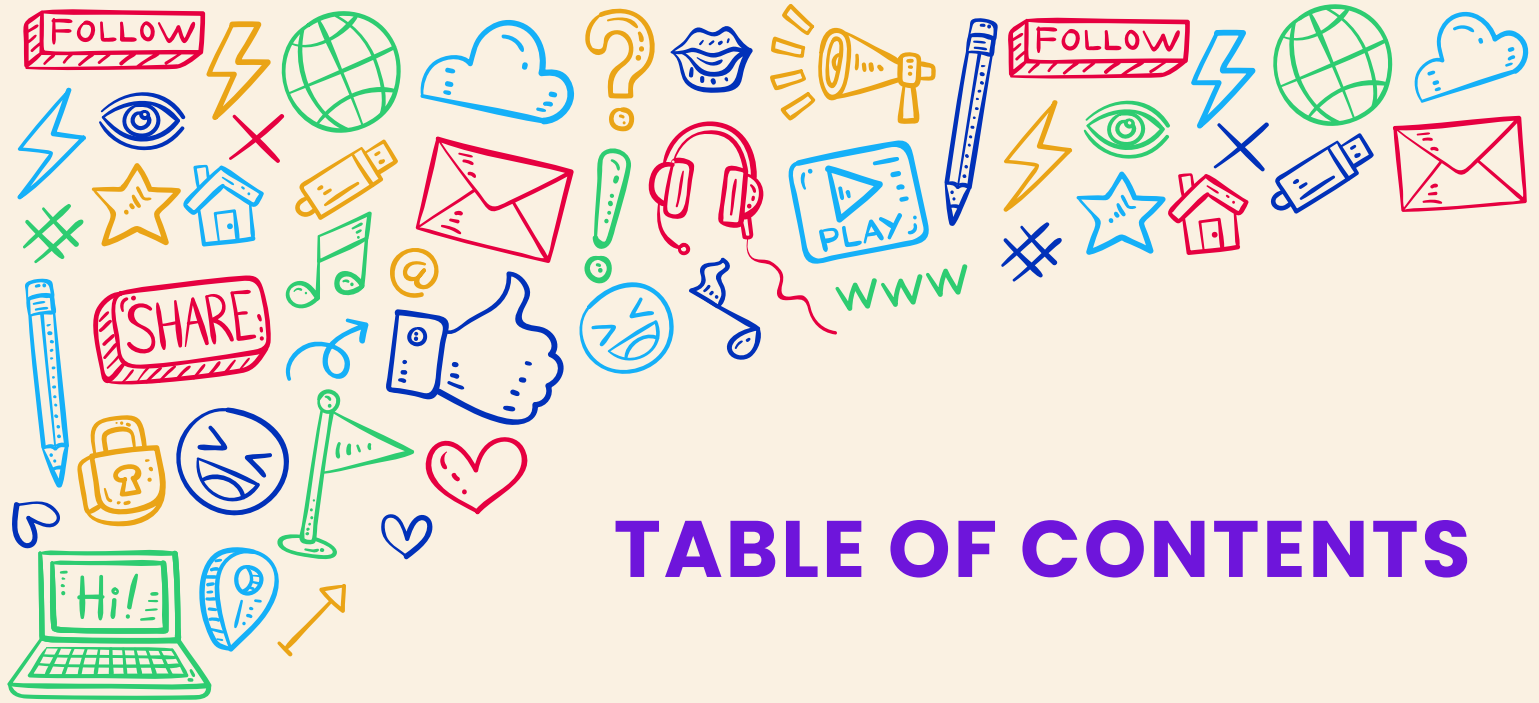


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SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Despite the growing economic opportunities and societal impact of influencer careers, there is a significant gap in structured career management education and support for individuals aspiring to succeed in this fast-evolving, non-traditional profession.

Young influencers face numerous challenges, including the lack of formal structures, recognition and the need for strategic planning. When designing this project, our goal was to develop career management programmes specifically tailored to the needs of influencers, thus to provide them with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate the complexities of this profession. By addressing the unique challenges and requirements of influencer careers, our project also aims to empower VET teachers in developing capacities in their work with young people in building sustainable and successful careers in this rapidly changing industry.

Our project specifically targets teachers and students in vocational education and training (VET) schools, where there is a significant interest in becoming influencers but a lack of specialised career planning and counselling. Our surveys, observations and research indicate that while many VET students are drawn to the idea of influencing as an easy way to earn money, they soon realise the challenges and educational gaps that exist. Furthermore, VET teachers are often not equipped to provide career planning and counselling that aligns with modern technology trends and the realities of the influencer profession.

Our project aims to fill this gap by empowering VET school teachers to organise career planning and counselling for their students, with a focus on the influencer profession and its unique challenges. We also aim to promote the appreciation of social values in careers, encouraging students to use their influence for positive social impact. By providing structured support and education for both teachers and students, our project seeks to ensure that young people are well-prepared to navigate the world of influencing and make informed decisions about their careers.

Finally, the project aims to bridge the gap between vocational education and evolving digital professions by equipping both students and teachers with the tools needed for long-term success and responsible engagement in the influencer industry.

The main goal of the project is:

To contribute to education of VET students in informed career orientation and empower VET school teachers to provide effective career planning and counselling that aligns with social media trends and promotes social values among students.

Specific objectives:

- To educate VET students in making informed career choices as influencers, understanding the nuances of influencer work in relation to career management, through an innovative toolkit with practical guidance and piloting workshops;
- To empower VET teachers and associated experts in career management for emerging professions in digital and creative industries through a comprehensive 6-day curriculum with key concepts, educational sessions, and local training courses.
- To foster partnerships with VET schools and enhance the capacities of partner organisations in career management for influencers through online project platform, dissemination activities and networking events at the local and national levels.



Project activities are:

- Online kick-off meeting
- R1 Toolkit “Empowerment of VET students on making informed career choices in influencer careers”
- Piloting workshops of the Toolkit with VET students – in Serbia, Germany, Croatia
- Online mid-term meeting
- R2 Curriculum "Empowering VET teachers and experts on career management in the influencer era"
- Local training courses of VET teachers and experts – in Serbia, Germany, Croatia
- R3 Online Project platform
- National conference in Serbia
- National conference in Germany
- National conference in Croatia
- Online evaluation meeting



INTRODUCTION AND HOW TO USE THE CURRICULUM

The digital transformation of the labour market has significantly reshaped career pathways and professional opportunities for young people. One of the most visible manifestations of this shift is the emergence of influencer careers and digital professions, which have become increasingly attractive to VET students. These new career pathways demand new and innovative approaches to career guidance, requiring educators to understand the mechanics of social media platforms and broader implications of digital entrepreneurship, personal branding, and the evolving nature of work in the 21st century.

This curriculum addresses the urgent need to equip VET teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, and associated experts with the knowledge, skills, and practical tools necessary to provide high-quality career guidance in this rapidly changing landscape. The curriculum recognizes that influencer careers represent more than a trend that will soon disappear - these careers are presenting us with fundamental shifts in how young people conceptualize work, identity, and professional success. Understanding these shifts is essential for educators who want to support students in making informed, realistic, and sustainable career choices.

The curriculum is structured around three interconnected modules, each addressing critical dimensions of career management in the influencer era. Module 1 explores the foundations of influencer work and marketing, examining how influencer culture shapes career choices and the ethical considerations that guides both educators and students. Module 2 focuses on career management methodologies and the competences required to support students in navigating the complexities of influencer-driven career expectations, including critical media literacy, financial literacy, and the tension between authenticity and image. Module 3 addresses the practical application of social media platforms in career development, providing educators with concrete strategies for teaching students how to leverage digital tools effectively and professionally.

Throughout the curriculum, emphasis is placed on developing critical thinking skills that enable educators to evaluate influencer-driven trends, recognizing both opportunities and risks. The curriculum also acknowledges the importance of cross-curricular integration, demonstrating how career guidance related to influencer professions can be embedded within existing VET subjects and aligned with national educational frameworks. By connecting career guidance to broader competences such as entrepreneurship, digital literacy, personal and social development, and citizenship education, the curriculum ensures that students receive holistic support that prepares them for specific career paths and lifelong learning and adaptability in a dynamic labour market.

This curriculum is designed to be accessible, practical, and adaptable. It provides detailed workshop plans, learning objectives aligned with Bloom's taxonomy, interactive methodologies, and ready-to-use worksheets.

Ultimately, this curriculum aims to **empower educators to become confident, informed guides for students exploring influencer careers and digital professions**. By equipping teachers and experts with the tools to navigate this complex topic, the curriculum contributes to the development of a generation of **young people who can make thoughtful, informed career decisions that align with their values, talents, and aspirations in the world that is becoming more and more digital**.



This curriculum is designed as a comprehensive resource for VET teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, and career guidance professionals who work with students interested in influencer careers and emerging digital professions. The structure of the curriculum supports both formal training courses and self-directed professional development, offering flexibility in implementation while maintaining pedagogical aspects.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF CURRICULUM

The curriculum is organized into **three modules**, each addressing a distinct but interconnected aspect of career management in the influencer era. Each module is designed to be delivered over two days of training, with a total curriculum duration of six days. This structure allows participants to explore topics in details, but it also provides time for interactive activities, practical application and reflection.

Each module includes the following components:

- **Module overview:** It provides a concise description of the module's focus, rationale, and relevance to VET educators and students.
- **Learning outcomes:** Outcomes are based on Bloom's revised taxonomy, ensuring that learning objectives are measurable, observable, and aligned with cognitive levels ranging from remembering and understanding to analyzing, evaluating, and creating.
- **Connections to VET subjects (classes):** Curriculum also provides explicit links to existing subjects and cross-curricular topics within the VET system, including entrepreneurship, personal and social development, citizenship education, digital literacy, and health. These connections facilitate integration of career guidance content into existing curricula and demonstrate the relevance of influencer-related topics across diverse vocational programs.
- **Workshop descriptions:** Within this curriculum, plans for each workshop session, including background, aims, objectives, competences addressed, methodology, step-by-step activities, materials needed, and recommendations for adaptation and implementation are provided, for anyone who wants to multiply them with VET educators and experts.
- **Worksheets:** As an integral part of the curriculum, hand-outs for participants have been created. They support active learning, reflection, and skill development. Worksheets are designed to be photocopied or digitally shared, which will help in implementing the training course.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The curriculum is based **non-formal education methodologies** that focus on active participation, experiential learning, and collaborative knowledge construction. Workshops incorporate a variety of interactive methods, including group discussions, case studies, role-playing, world café, brainstorming, multimedia analysis, and hands-on activities. This approach recognises that adult learners, particularly educators, benefit from opportunities to engage with content in ways that mirror the teaching strategies they will use with their own students.



Each workshop is designed to balance **theoretical input with practical application**, ensuring that participants not only understand concepts but also develop the confidence and competence to implement them in their own educational contexts. Reflection activities are embedded throughout the curriculum, encouraging participants to critically analyse their own assumptions, experiences, and practices related to career guidance and digital professions.

ADAPTING THE CURRICULUM

Even though this curriculum is structured as a six-day training program, it can be adapted to meet the needs of different contexts and audiences. Individual modules can be delivered as standalone sessions, allowing institutions to focus on specific areas of interest or need. Workshops within modules can also be selected and combined to create customized training programmes that address particular learning objectives or time constraints.

USING THE WORKSHOPS

Each workshop follows a consistent structure that helps in easier preparation and delivery::

1. **Workshop title and duration:** Clearly identifies the focus and time allocation for the session.
2. **Background:** Explains the importance of the topic and what participants will gain from the workshop.
3. **Aim:** States the overarching purpose of the workshop in infinitive form (e.g., "to explore," "to develop," "to analyze").
4. **Objectives:** Lists 3-5 specific, measurable learning objectives that participants will achieve.
5. **Competences addressed:** Identifies which of the eight key competences for lifelong learning are developed through the workshop.
6. **Methodology and methods:** Describes the pedagogical approaches and specific techniques used (e.g., group work, discussions, case studies).
7. **Workshop flow:** Provides a step-by-step guide to activities, including timing and detailed instructions for facilitators.
8. **Materials needed:** Lists all resources required for the workshop, including papers, markers, digital tools, and multimedia resources.
9. **Background documents and further reading:** Offers academic and professional sources for deeper exploration of the topic, with full citations and links.
10. **Recommendations for multiplying this session:** Suggests strategies for scaling or adapting the workshop for different audiences or settings.
11. **Usage in different VET surroundings:** Explains how the workshop content connects to various VET professions and subject areas, demonstrating cross-sectoral applicability.

USING THE WORKSHEETS

For some of the workshops, there are worksheets prepared, that serve as participant handouts. The intention of the worksheets is to guide individual reflection and self-assessment, to provide structure frameworks for analysing case studies and scenarios, to support skill development through practical exercises and to serve as reference materials that can be used in further teaching practice.

Worksheets are included after each workshop. Facilitators are encouraged to review worksheets in advance and adapt them to reflect the specific needs and contexts of their participants.



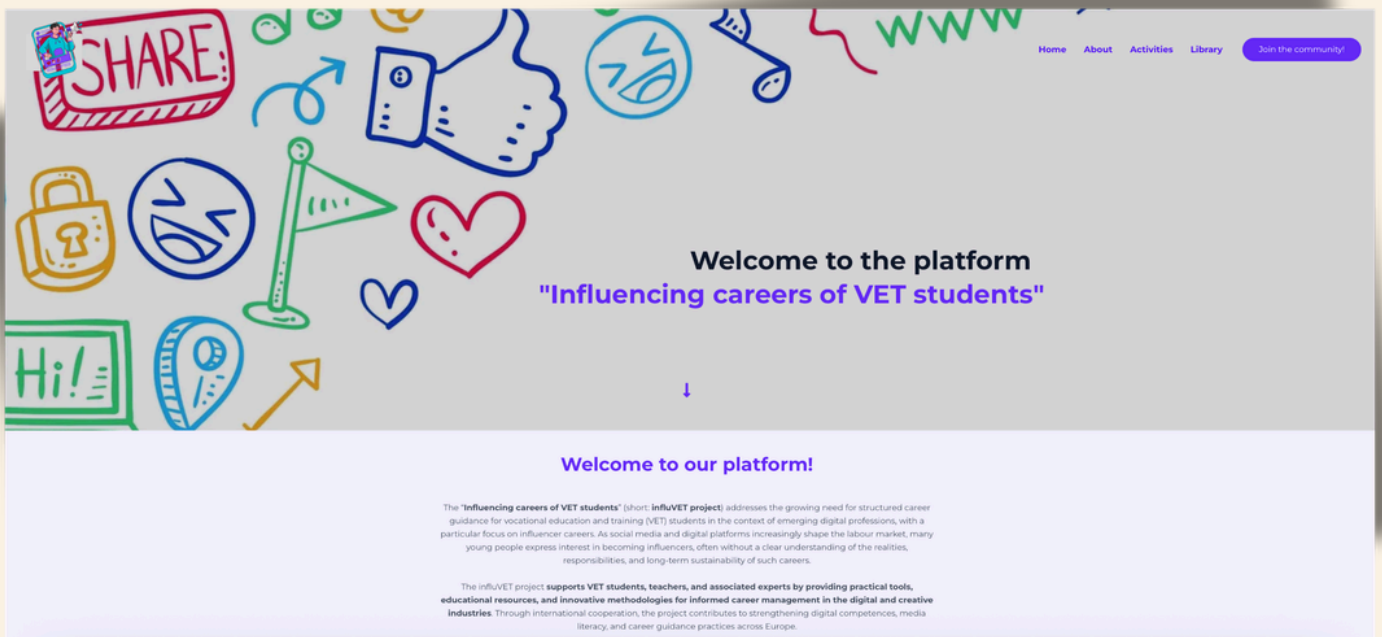
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Each module is concluded with an evaluation session that allows participants to reflect on their learning, provide feedback on the training, and identify areas for further development. Evaluation methods may include group discussions, written reflections, self-assessment tools, and feedback forms. These **evaluation activities serve both formative and summative purposes**, helping facilitators to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and participants to consolidate their learning.

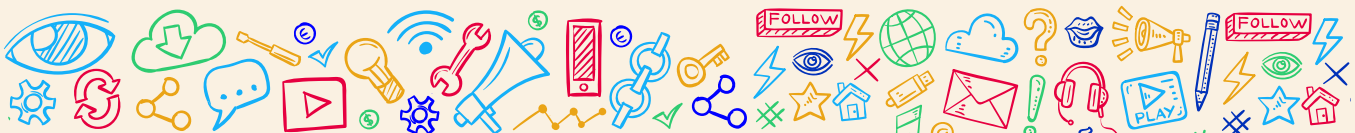
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

This curriculum serves as a foundation for ongoing professional development in the area of career guidance for influencer careers and digital professions. Participants are encouraged to engage with the recommended readings, explore additional resources, and participate in communities of practice where they can share experiences, challenges, and innovations with peers.

The InfluVET project website and online platform provide more opportunities for networking and collaboration. **Join our platform on www.influvet.eu** and network with other VET educators and experts!



Online project platform: www.influvet.eu



EXPLANATION OF THE CURRICULUM TOPICS

This curriculum addresses three interconnected domains that are essential for effective career guidance in the context of influencer careers and digital professions. Each domain represents a critical area of knowledge and competence that VET educators and experts should develop in order to support students in making informed, realistic, and sustainable career choices in the digital age.

Down below, you will find more information about each topic, which corresponds to the module developed.

TOPIC 1: INFLUENCER WORK AND MARKETING

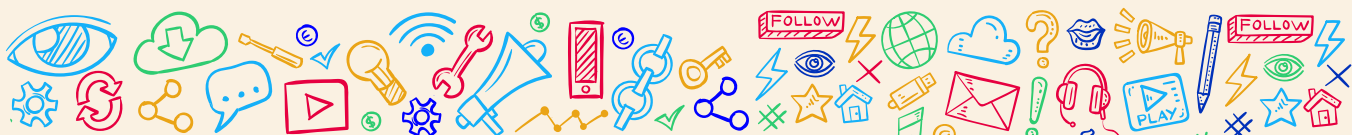
The rise of influencer culture represents one of the most significant shifts in how young people conceptualize work, success, and professional identity. Influencers intertwine the areas of content creation, entrepreneurship, marketing, and personal branding, creating career pathways that did not exist before (Audrezet and Charry, 2024). For many VET students, influencer careers appear attractive, accessible, and are corresponding to their interests in digital media and self-expression (WorldSkills, 2024; ASA JFF, 2025). However, the realities of influencer work, including the business models, income volatility, ethical considerations, and psychological demands, are often poorly understood by both students and educators.

This topic equips educators with a comprehensive understanding of basics of influencer marketing, how it functions as an industry, and how it shapes career choices of young people. The influencer marketing industry has grown into a 17,4 billion USD industry by 2023 (Lou and Yuan, 2023), and the creator economy is a 250 billion USD global force (Forbes, 2025). In this module, educators learn to distinguish between the aspirational narratives promoted by influencers and the practical realities of building sustainable careers in this field. The topic also addresses the ethical dimensions of influencer culture, including issues of authenticity, transparency, consumer protection, and the potential for influencers to share unrealistic standards or harmful behaviors.

When they develop expertise in this area, educators become more equipped of guiding students through different questions: ***What does it mean to work as an influencer? What skills, resources, and strategies are required? What are the risks and good sides? How can students evaluate if influencer careers are in contact with their values, talents, and long-term goals?*** This knowledge enables educators to provide informed career guidance that is based in reality: it's not romanticised or being looked as the worst profession.

Key concepts covered within this topic will be the following:

- Definitions and typologies of influencers (nano, micro, macro, mega influencers);
- Business models and revenue streams in influencer marketing (sponsored content, affiliate marketing, brand partnerships, merchandise) (Lou and Yuan, 2023; PMC, n.d.);
- The role of social media platforms and algorithms in shaping influencer success;
- Ethical considerations, including disclosure requirements, authenticity, and responsibility to audiences;
- The impact of influencer culture on consumer behavior and career aspirations;
- Trends and future directions in influencer marketing and digital entrepreneurship (Audrezet and Charry, 2024; Forbes, 2025).



TOPIC 2: CAREER MANAGEMENT METHODS AND STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

Effective career guidance requires more than knowledge of specific professions; it demands a spectrum of methods and approaches that will help educators to support students in exploring their interests, understanding their competences, and making informed decisions. In the context of influencer careers, this challenge is particularly visible, as students are often influenced by ideal representations of influencer lifestyles that don't mention the challenges (Cabell, 2021).

This topic focuses on improving competences of educators with practical career management methods that empower students to critically evaluate expectations about influencer careers. Educators learn how to facilitate self-assessment processes and identify their passions, strengths, and values, and to connect these insights to realistic career pathways. The topic also puts the attention to the development of critical media literacy, enabling students to deconstruct influencer content and recognize the techniques used to show idealised images (Kellner and Share, 2019; European Journal of Training and Development, n.d.). Financial literacy is also addressed, as understanding income variability, business expenses, and financial planning is crucial for students considering entrepreneurial or freelance careers (PMC, 2024).

A central theme of this topic is the tension between authenticity and image crafting. Influencers often present specific and polished versions of their lives, which then can **raise questions about personal authenticity over professional success**. Therefore, educators learn strategies to help students navigate this dilemma, and at the same time how to foster self-awareness and ethical decision-making. This topic also addresses the psychological dimensions of influencer careers, including the pressures of public visibility, the impact of social comparison, and the importance of resilience and mental health.

When they develop expertise in this area, educators become equipped to support students in making career choices that are grounded in self-knowledge, critical thinking, and realistic expectations. This empowerment sees students as actively included actors in their own career development, who can make appropriate decisions when provided with quality guidance and support.

Key concepts covered within this topic will be the following:

- Career management theories and frameworks (e.g., Holland's typology, Super's life-span theory, social cognitive career theory) (Nayak, 2020; ScienceDirect Topics, n.d.; ALIS, n.d.; Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 2002);
- Methods for facilitating self-assessment and career exploration (interest inventories, values clarification, skills audits);
- Critical media literacy: analyzing influencer content, recognizing persuasion techniques, evaluating credibility (Kellner and Share, 2019; European Journal of Training and Development, n.d.);
- Financial literacy for digital entrepreneurs: income streams, budgeting, taxation, financial planning (PMC, 2024);
- Navigating unrealistic expectations: addressing social comparison, perfectionism, and the gap between perception and reality;
- Authenticity and identity in career development: balancing personal values with professional demands;
- Supporting mental health and resilience in the context of public-facing careers.



TOPIC 3: SOCIAL MEDIA AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Social media platforms have become important tools for career development, networking, job searching, and professional branding in every sector of work (Tkachuk et al., 2025). For students interested in influencer careers, social media is a primary medium that is used in these kinds of careers. However, effective use of social media for career purposes requires more than technical knowledge - it also needs strategic thinking, ethical awareness, and an understanding of how different platforms are used for different professional purposes.

This topic provides educators with the knowledge and skills to teach students how to use social media effectively and responsibly for career development. Educators learn about the distinctive features and professional applications of major platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn. While Instagram and TikTok are central to influencer careers, LinkedIn represents a critical tool for professional networking and job searching in most of the VET sectors, making it relevant for all VET students regardless of their career aspirations.

The topic also highlights the importance of personal branding, which is the process of strategically presenting online in ways that communicate professional identity, values, and competences (Harvard Business School Online, 2024; Northeastern University, 2024). Educators learn how to guide students in developing authentic, coherent personal brands that are in contact with their career goals. The topic also addresses professional etiquette and online communication skills, including how to engage with audiences, respond to criticism, protect privacy, and navigate the risks associated with digital visibility (Digital Marketing Institute, 2025).

A critical dimension of this topic is digital safety and security. Educators are equipped with skills to understand the risks of oversharing personal information, the permanence of digital content, the potential for cyberbullying and harassment, and strategies for protecting online reputations. The topic also addresses the ethical responsibilities of content creators, including the importance of accuracy, transparency, and respect for intellectual property.

When they develop expertise in this area, educators become capable of preparing students to use social media as a tool for career advancement while keeping in mind the ethical, psychological, and security considerations that accompany digital visibility.

Key concepts covered within this topic will be the following:

- Platform-specific features and professional applications (Instagram, TikTok, Twitter/X, LinkedIn);
- Personal branding: defining professional identity, creating coherent narratives, visual and verbal communication (Harvard Business School Online, 2024; Northeastern University, 2024; Digital Marketing Institute, 2025);
- Content creation strategies: planning, producing, and optimizing content for different platforms and audiences;
- Professional etiquette and online communication: tone, responsiveness, conflict resolution, audience engagement;
- Privacy and security: managing personal information, understanding platform policies, protecting digital reputation;
- Using social media for career exploration: researching industries, following professionals, identifying trends (Tkachuk et al., 2025);
- Networking and relationship-building in digital spaces;
- Ethical content creation: accuracy, transparency, intellectual property, responsible influence.



MODULE 1 OVERVIEW

Module 1 provides an introduction to the world of influencer marketing and its impact on career management and career choices of young people. This module addresses the need for educators to understand influencer work as a significant dimension of the modern labour market that shapes how students perceive professional success, identity, and opportunity.

The module begins by establishing basic knowledge about what influencer marketing is, how it functions as an industry, and the various forms it takes across different platforms and sectors. Participants will explore business models that are connected with influencer careers, including sponsored content, brand partnerships, affiliate marketing, and merchandise sales. The module examines the role of social media algorithms in determining influencer visibility and success, providing participants with insights into the technical and strategic dimensions of influencer work.

A central focus of the module is the relationship between influencer marketing and career choices. Participants will analyse how influencer culture shapes students' career choices. The module improves the competences of educators to help students navigate influencer-driven trends in career development, recognising both the opportunities and the risks associated with influencer careers or being influenced by influencer narratives in making career decisions. Ethical considerations are integrated throughout the module, where participants engage in critical discussions about the ethical responsibilities of educators in guiding students toward careers that align with their values and well-being.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (BLOOM TAXONOMY)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

REMEMBERING

Define key terms related to influencer marketing, including influencer, sponsored content, engagement rate, brand partnership, and algorithm

List the main types of influencers (nano, micro, macro, mega) and their distinguishing characteristics

Identify the primary social media platforms used by influencers and their distinctive features

UNDERSTANDING

Explain how influencer marketing functions as a business model and industry

Describe the various revenue streams available to influencers and the factors that determine income levels

Summarize the ways in which influencer culture shapes career aspirations and choices among VET students

APPLYING

Demonstrate the ability to analyze influencer content to identify marketing strategies and persuasion techniques

Apply career guidance frameworks to support students in evaluating the suitability of influencer careers for their individual circumstances

Use case studies of influencers to illustrate key concepts and facilitate student discussions



ANALYSING

Differentiate between authentic self-expression and strategic image crafting in influencer content

Examine the ethical implications of influencer marketing practices, including transparency, authenticity, and audience responsibility

Compare the realities of influencer work with the perceptions commonly held by students.

EVALUATING

Assess the potential benefits and risks of influencer careers for students with different interests, skills, and values

Critique influencer-driven trends in career development, identifying both opportunities and problematic aspects

Judge the ethical acceptability of specific influencer marketing practices using established ethical frameworks

CREATING

Design career guidance activities that help students critically evaluate influencer careers and make informed decisions.

Develop strategies for integrating discussions of influencer marketing into existing VET curricula and career counseling practices.

Formulate ethical guidelines for students interested in pursuing influencer careers, addressing issues of transparency, authenticity, and responsibility.

CONNECTIONS TO SUBJECTS AND CROSS-CURRICULUM TOPICS

Module 1 content can be integrated into existing subjects and cross-curricular topics within the VET system. Down below, there are some examples.

Connection to subjects:

- **Economics and business subjects:** Influencer marketing provides a contemporary case study for exploring business models, entrepreneurship, marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and digital commerce. Students can analyse influencer businesses as examples of small-scale entrepreneurship, examining revenue streams, cost structures, market positioning, and competitive strategies.
- **Marketing and sales:** Influencer marketing is a core component of contemporary marketing practice. VET programs in marketing, advertising, and sales can incorporate influencer marketing as a topic, exploring how brands collaborate with influencers, how influencer campaigns are designed and evaluated, and how influencer marketing can be a part of bigger marketing strategies.
- **Media and communication:** Subjects focused on media production, journalism, public relations, and communication can examine influencer content as a form of media, analysing production techniques, narrative strategies, audience engagement, and the ethical responsibilities of content creators.
- **Information and communication technology (ICT):** Influencer work relies heavily on digital technologies, including content creation software, social media platforms, analytics tools, and digital marketing technologies. ICT programs can explore the technical dimensions of influencer work, including video editing, graphic design, search engine optimization, and data analysis.



- **Tourism and hospitality:** Influencers play a significant role in promoting tourism destinations, hotels, restaurants, and travel experiences. VET programs in tourism and hospitality can examine how influencers shape consumer preferences, how businesses collaborate with influencers for promotional purposes, and how students might use influencer strategies to promote their own future businesses or employers.
- **Fashion and design:** Fashion influencers are among the most prominent and influential figures in the influencer economy. Subjects in fashion, textile design, and styling can explore how influencers shape fashion trends, how they collaborate with brands and designers, and how students might use social media to showcase their own creative work.
- **Health and social care:** Influencers in the health, fitness, and wellness sectors have significant impact on public perceptions and behaviors. VET programs in health and social care can critically examine the role of influencers in promoting health information, the risks of misinformation, and the ethical responsibilities of health-related content creators.

Connection to cross-sectorial topics in VET curriculum:

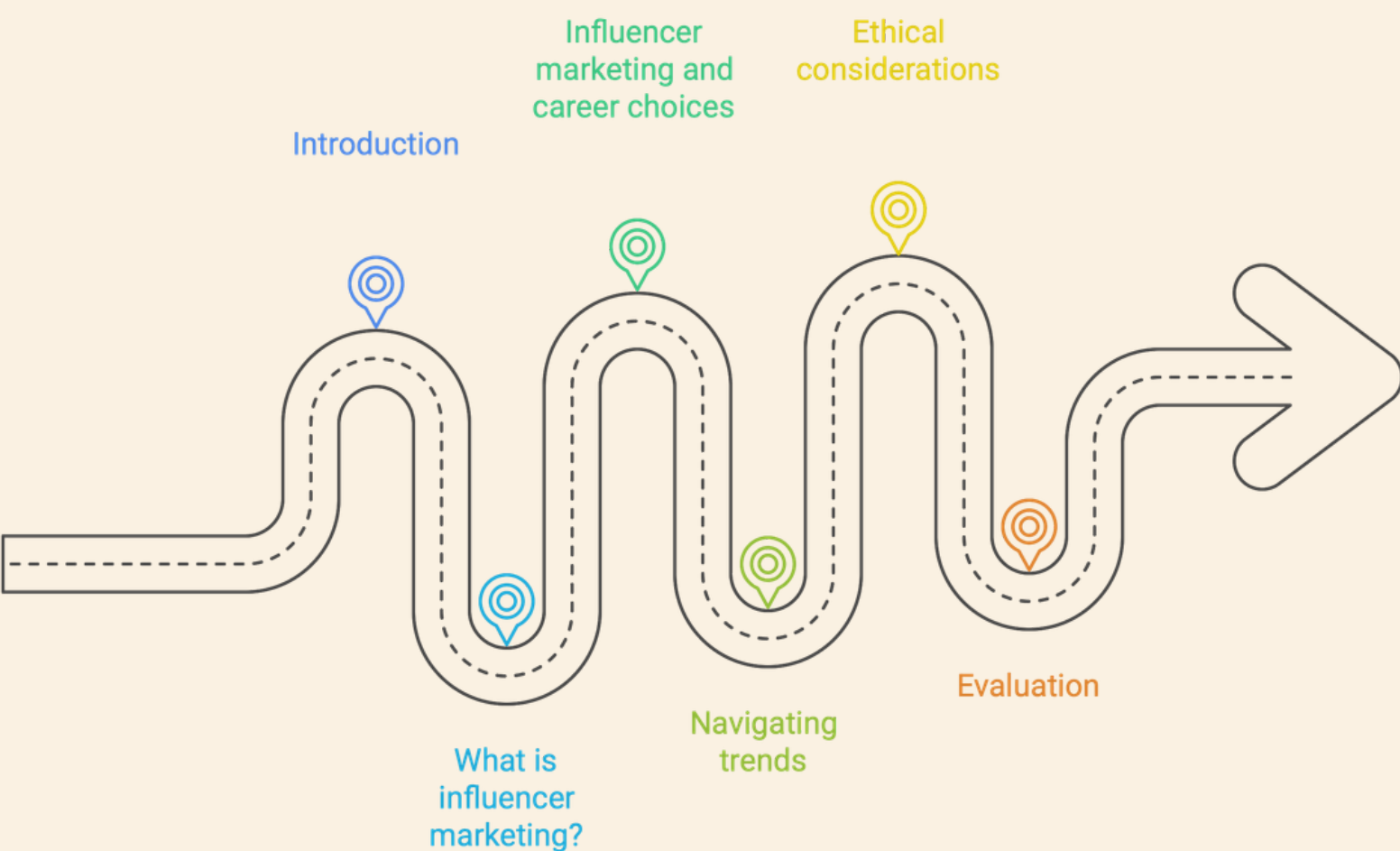
- **Entrepreneurship:** Influencer careers are inherently entrepreneurial, requiring individuals to identify opportunities, build personal brands, negotiate partnerships, and manage their own businesses. Module 1 content directly supports the cross-curricular topic of entrepreneurship by providing concrete examples of digital entrepreneurship and by equipping educators to guide students in developing entrepreneurial mindsets and skills.
- **Personal and social development:** Exploring influencer careers involves critical reflection on identity, values, self-presentation, and the relationship between personal authenticity and professional success. Module 1 activities support personal and social development by encouraging students to examine their own values, to develop self-awareness, and to make career choices.
- **Citizenship education:** Influencers have significant social influence and bear ethical responsibilities to their audiences and to society. Module 1 addresses citizenship education by exploring the ethical dimensions of influencer work, including transparency, honesty, social responsibility, and the potential for influencers to contribute positively or negatively to public discourse and social values.
- **Use of ICT:** Digital literacy and the effective, ethical use of information and communication technologies are central to influencer careers. Module 1 content supports the cross-curricular topic of ICT use by addressing digital platforms, content creation technologies, online communication, and the critical evaluation of digital content.
- **Health:** Influencers in the health, fitness, beauty, and wellness sectors have significant impact on young people's health behaviors and body image. Module 1 can be connected to health education by critically examining the health-related messages promoted by influencers, the risks of misinformation, and the importance of evidence-based health information.
- **Learning to learn:** Career management itself is a dimension of learning to learn, as it involves self-assessment, goal-setting, information gathering, and reflective decision-making. Module 1 supports learning to learn by modeling career exploration processes and by equipping educators to facilitate student self-assessment and career planning.

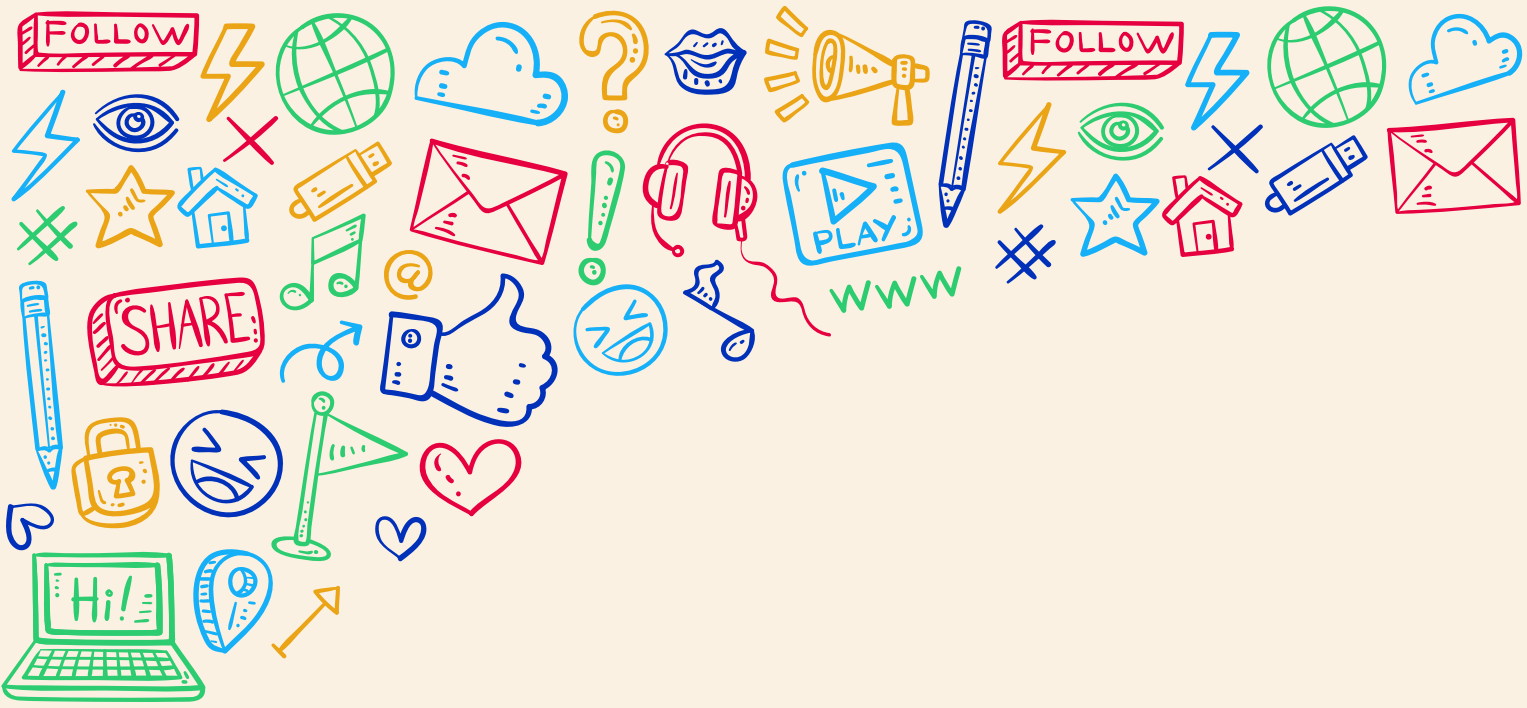


WORKSHOPS CONNECTED WITH THE MODULE 1

Module 1 consists of the workshops, which are designed to address specific learning objectives and to provide interactive learning experiences for participants:

- Introduction and welcome for participants (120 minutes)
- What is influencer marketing? (135 minutes)
- Influencer marketing and career choices (120 minutes)
- Navigating influencer trends in career development (160 minutes)
- Ethical considerations in influencer culture (120 minutes)
- Evaluation of the module (90 minutes)





Workshops

for the Module 1



Workshop title: Introduction and welcome for participants

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: The opening workshop of any training program sets the tone for the entire learning experience. This session helps in creating a safe and relaxing learning environment, clarifies expectations and objectives, builds connections, and creates a shared understanding that will support learning throughout the module. For many participants, the topic of influencer careers and digital professions may be unfamiliar or may raise skepticism. Some educators question the legitimacy of influencer work as a career pathway. At the same time, others may feel overwhelmed by the quick digital changes we are witnessing. This workshop acknowledges these perspectives and positions the curriculum as a resource for understanding new careers, regardless of participants' previous knowledge or attitudes toward influencer culture.

Aim of the workshop: to welcome participants and establish a positive learning environment, including explaining the objectives and structure of Module 1.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to identify** the key topics and learning outcomes of Module 1;
- **to articulate** their own expectations, questions, and concerns related to influencer careers and career guidance;
- **to recognize** the relevance of influencer culture to their professional practice as VET educators;
- **to establish** connections with other participants.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence
- Digital competence

Methodology and methods:

- Icebreaker activities
- Group discussion
- Interactive presentation
- Expectation mapping
- World café



Workshop flow:

Activity: Welcome and getting to know each other (20 minutes)

Educator welcomes participants of the training. Introduction to the influVET project is given, as well as the purpose of the curriculum (more information can be found in the first part of this curriculum where topics covered are detailedly explained). The training course will focus on empowering VET educators and experts to provide quality career guidance related to influencer careers and digital professions.

Participants are then invited to share in a big group the following:

- their name
- school they are working at and what is their role (e.g. teacher or associate expert)
- how was their travel
- one thing that comes to the mind when they hear the word “influencer”

Activity: Getting to know each other and expectations (20 minutes)

After the circle, ask participants to pair up with someone they do not know well. Each pair should discuss in their pairs (5 minutes) in which they once again introduce themselves, share their professional role, and respond to the following question: *"What is at least one thing you find interesting or problematic about influencer culture?"* After they are finished, invite participants to share their partner's response with the larger group.

Then, tell participants that we will talk about expectations. Give out post-it notes and markers to participants. Afterwards, ask participants to write down their expectations for the training course, including what they hope to learn, questions they have and any fears or uncertainties they bring to the training course. Participants should write one expectation, question, or fear per sticky note. Participants can write as many things as they want.

Explain to participants that they can put the post-it notes on the flipchart, with three columns:

- **Expectations:** What I hope to learn
- **Questions:** What I want to know
- **Fears / Concerns:** What I'm uncertain about

When they are finished, ask participants to place their post-it notes on the poster. Once done, educator groups similar themes and explain the diversity of perspectives.

Afterwards, educator explains how the module will address many of the expectations and questions raised and acknowledge concerns with empathy and transparency. If anything is not covered within the modules, then say that you can provide them with additional support afterwards and with literature.



Workshop title: What is influencer marketing?

Duration: 135 minutes

Background: Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the biggest developments in modern marketing and digital sales. This type of marketing is changing the way how brands reach customers and how individuals can build their own professional identities on the web. For VET educators and experts, understanding influencer marketing is important, as it will help in better guiding students who are interested in this type of career. Also, it can help students to develop media literacy skills, as they will understand how digital consumption of services looks like. During this workshop, educators will get knowledge in the field of influencer marketing, business models and the role of algorithms. In this workshop, one part will be dedicated to how influencers make their own income and what factors could be seen as successful in this field.

Aim of the workshop: to provide participants with knowledge about influencer marketing, including definitions, typologies, business models, revenue streams and the role of algorithms in shaping influencer success.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to define** influencer marketing and explain differences from traditional advertising;
- **to identify and describe** the main types of influencers (nano, micro, macro, mega) and their characteristics;
- **to explain** the primary revenue streams available to influencers, including sponsored content, affiliate marketing, brand partnerships and sales;
- **to analyse** the role of social media algorithms in determining influencer visibility;
- **to evaluate** case studies of influencers to understand the strategies and competences required for success in this field.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Digital competence
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Literacy competence
- Mathematical competence

Methodology and methods:

- Interactive presentation
- Case study analysis:
- Group discussion
- Multimedia analysis



Workshop flow:

Activity: Defining influencer marketing (25 minutes)

The educator begins the session with the question to participants to share their understanding of the term influencer. Key words and phrases are written on the flipchart. Usually, responses include visibility, popularity, promotion, lifestyle, marketing, or social media.

When everything is collected, the educator notes that there are different definitions, and that we will present one of them now.

Influencer marketing can be defined as a form of digital marketing in which brands collaborate with individuals who have established credibility and an engaged audience on social media platforms in order to promote products, services, or ideas through content that integrates commercial messages into personal communication.

(adapted from De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Abidin, 2016)

Then educator discusses briefly:

- Why might students trust influencers more than advertisements?
- What role does identification play?
- How does this connect to career aspirations?

The educator holds a brief discussion, connecting participants' insights to concepts of trust, relatability, and parasocial relationships. This discussion should be practical and connected to classroom experiences.

After this, educator provides a structured presentation that cover the following topics:

- **How Influencer marketing is different from traditional advertising:** Completely contrary to traditional advertising, which relies on paid media placements and one-way communication, influencer marketing is based on trust, authenticity, and two-way engagement. Influencers are perceived as peers or inspirational persons. They are not seen as corporate persons, or even companies, so their recommendations could be more impactful.
- **The rise of influencer marketing:** Then, the factors that have contributed to the growth of influencer marketing are presented, including the decline of trust in traditional advertising, the rise of social media platforms, the democratization of content creation and the shift toward personalized, authentic communication.

Activity: Typologies of influencers (30 minutes)

Educator explains that influencers are often categorised based on their follower counts, as different influencer “tiers” are connected with different marketing purposes.



Educator then presents the four main types of influencers:

Influencer type	Number of followers	Characteristics	Marketing applications
Nano Influencers	1,000 - 10,000	High engagement rates, niche audiences, strong personal connections, perceived as highly authentic	Local businesses, niche products, community-based marketing
Micro Influencers	10,000 - 100,000	Strong engagement, specialized expertise, trusted by followers, cost-effective for brands	Targeted campaigns, product launches, brand awareness in specific niches
Macro Influencers	100,000 - 1 million	Broad reach, professional content creation, established personal brands	Large-scale campaigns, brand partnerships, mainstream product promotion
Mega Influencers	1 million+	Massive reach, celebrity status, high production value, often represented by agents	Major brand campaigns, mass market products, high-budget collaborations

After this presentation, participants are divided in four groups, and each group has one influencer type. Each group should have printed profiles of 2 to 3 real influencers. Alternative is that they search influencers on their phones, if internet is available. They can also recall who students say they follow online. Then, groups analyse their influencer type and should prepare a short 5 minute presentation answering these questions:

- What makes this influencer type distinctive?
- What advantages and disadvantages does this influencer type have?
- What types of students might be suited to pursuing this influencer tier?

Each group presents their findings - 5 minutes per group. Educator summarises key insights and emphasizes that most influencers begin as nano or micro influencers and that being successful requires strategic thinking, consistency, and audience engagement.

Activity: Revenue streams and business models (30 minutes)

The educator then explains that understanding how influencers make a living (generating income) income is essential for helping students evaluate the economic sustainability of this type of careers. Educator presents the main revenue streams for influencers:

- **Sponsored content:** Brands pay influencers to create content featuring their products or services. Payment varies based on follower count, engagement rate,



and what topic they are mostly covering. Sponsored content must be shared with audiences (e.g., #ad, #sponsored);

- **Affiliate marketing:** Influencers earn commissions by promoting products through unique affiliate links. When followers purchase products using these links, influencer receives a percentage of the sale (e.g. using the code for a discount);
- **Brand partnerships and ambassadorships:** Some influencers create long-term collaborations in which influencers become ambassadors, and they create ongoing content and represent the brand at events (e.g. being ambassador for sports brand, or even fast-food chains);
- **Merchandise and product lines:** Some influencers create and sell their own products, such as clothing, accessories, digital products, or courses;
- **Platform revenue sharing:** Some platforms (e.g., YouTube, TikTok) share advertising revenue with content creators based on views and engagement (e.g. sending a rose on TikTok live, or number of likes and shares count into income);
- **Subscriptions and memberships:** Platforms like Patreon allow influencers to offer exclusive content to paying subscribers (e.g. subscribing to a special comic book editions or podcast episodes only for members);
- **Public appearances and speaking at events:** Successful influencers may be paid to appear at events, conferences, or brand happenings.

After that, participants are divided into smaller groups. Each group receives the same hypothetical scenario:

"A micro influencer with 50,000 followers in the fitness niche is approached by a sportswear brand for a sponsored post. The brand offers €500 for one Instagram post and three Instagram stories. The influencer's average engagement rate is 5%. Should the influencer accept this offer? What factors should they consider?"

In their groups, they should discuss:

- What should this person consider before accepting?
- Is the follower count enough to evaluate the offer?
- What about audience trust?

After they are finished, groups go together through questions and discuss about different factors, such as: audience expectations, financial needs of influencers, and possibility of long-term brand relationships. The educator closes the activity with highlighting that influencers need to always make this business decisions, and they also involve strategic thinking.



Activity: Revenue streams and business models (30 minutes)

Furthermore, educator says that one part of understanding influencer marketing is also being aware that social media algorithms play a crucial role in determining which content is seen by audiences. This can help influencers be successful or not visible.

Educator then provides an overview of how algorithms work:

- **Engagement metrics:** Algorithms prioritise content that generates high engagement (likes, comments, shares, saves). Influencers must create content that encourages interaction;
- **Consistency and frequency:** Algorithms favor accounts that post regularly and consistently, rewarding active content creators;
- **Relevance and personalization:** Algorithms analyse user behavior so that personalized content is delivered to audiences. Influencers need to understand their target audiences and create content that aligns with their interests;
- **Platform-specific features:** Algorithms often prioritize new platform features (e.g., Reels on Instagram, Shorts on YouTube) to encourage adoption.

After this presentation, educator should facilitate a short discussion that highlights the importance of digital literacy, strategic thinking, adaptability, and resilience. Some questions asked could include:

- What skills do students need if success depends on algorithms?
- How does this affect mental health and resilience?
- How might metrics that are created by algorithms (likes, views, followers) influence young people's self-esteem and motivation?
- How does dependence on algorithms influence the stability and sustainability of an influencer career?

Educator notes in the end that there are many more questions that we will open in this training course, but algorithms are one of the important aspects that influence if someone is success or not.

Activity: Case study analysis (20 minutes)

Educator should give to groups a brief case study of a successful influencer (choose an example relevant to the local context or a well-known international figure). Participants should research information about their niche, follower count, content strategy and revenue streams.

Ask participants to reflect on the following questions:

- What factors contributed to the success of this influencer?
- What skills and competences does this influencer demonstrate?
- What challenges might this influencer face?
- How could we use this case study in career guidance with students?



Facilitate a brief discussion, emphasizing that successful influencers typically should have different skills, including creativity, strategic thinking, communication skills, and resilience.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers, laptop and projector, printed influencer profiles (or internet access for participants to search), case study handouts worksheet 1 (printed copies for participants).

Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- This workshop can be adapted for use with VET students by simplifying concepts and increasing hands-on activities (e.g., students create fake influencer profiles or analyse influencers they follow).
- For online delivery, use breakout rooms for group activities and digital whiteboards for analysis.

Background documents and further reading:

- Abidin, C. (2016). "Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram." *Media International Australia*, 161(1), 86-100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X16665177>
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). "Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude." *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798-828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Influencer Marketing Hub. (2025). *The State of Influencer Marketing 2025: Benchmark Report*. Retrieved from <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/>
- Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). "Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and the rise of Social Media Influencers." *Celebrity Studies*, 8(2), 191-208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1218292>
- Sprout Social. (2025). *The Sprout Social Index: Social Media Trends*. Retrieved from <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/index/>



WORKSHEET: UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCER MARKETING

Which revenue stream do you think would be most sustainable for a beginning influencer? Why?

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Influencer Name/Example:	Niche/Topic:	Follower count (approximate):

What factors contributed to this influencer's success?



What skills and competences does this influencer demonstrate?

What challenges might this influencer face?

ROLE OF ALGORITHMS

How do social media algorithms affect influencer success?

What does this mean for students who want to become influencers?

What questions might students have about influencer careers that I can now answer?



Workshop title: Influencer marketing and career choices

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: The relationship between influencer culture and career choices among young people is a topic that becomes more and more present in everyday realities. Research shows that social media influencers become significant role models for young people, shaping consumer preferences, but also influencing career aspirations, perceptions of success, and understanding of what constitutes meaningful work. For many VET students, influencers represent inspirational persons, who achieved success, financial independence and are creative. However, the influence of influencer culture on career choices is not uniformly positive. Therefore, this workshop helps educators understand how influencer marketing shapes career choices and how to develop strategies for helping students make informed and realistic decisions. The workshop explores the psychological and social mechanisms through which influencers shape career aspirations, including parasocial relationships, social comparison, and the appeal of autonomy and creativity.

Aim of the workshop: to explore how influencer marketing shapes career choices among VET students and to equip educators with strategies for helping students make informed decisions about influencer careers and digital professions.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to explain** the psychological and social mechanisms through which influencers shape career aspirations among young people;
- **to analyse** student testimonials and case studies to identify common themes in students' perceptions of influencer careers;
- **to differentiate** between realistic and unrealistic perceptions of influencer work;
- **to apply** career decision-making frameworks to support students in evaluating influencer careers;
- **to develop** guidance strategies that help students critically assess their motivations and readiness for influencer careers.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
- Digital competence
- Citizenship competence
- Entrepreneurship competence

Methodology and methods:

- Testimonial analysis
- Gap analysis
- Group discussion



- Case study analysis
- Role-playing

Workshop flow:

Activity: Why are students attracted to influencer careers? (25 minutes)

The educator opens the session by asking participants to think about their experiences with students who have expressed interest in influencer careers. Ask: *"What reasons do students give for wanting to become influencers?"*

Write all responses on a flipchart. Common reasons might include: creativity, autonomy, financial success, fame, passion for content creation, desire to inspire others, flexibility, possibility to be mobile and work from anywhere in the world.

Tell participants there are different reasons why an influencer career would be interesting for young people and students. Tell them there are different psychological and social factors that influence this (this can be shown on the slide):

- **Parasocial relationships:** Young people develop one-sided emotional connections with influencers, perceiving them as friends or mentors. This creates trust and identification, making influencer careers seem accessible and desirable.
- **Social comparison:** Constant exposure to influencer lifestyles leads young people to compare themselves and their circumstances to idealised representations they see online, and it sometimes then brings the will to have similar success.
- **Autonomy and creativity:** Influencer careers are seen as ones offering freedom from traditional workplace limitations. They allow people to express creativity, set their own working schedule, and work on projects they are passionate about.
- **Perceived accessibility:** Traditional careers that require specific qualifications or credentials. On the other hand, influencer careers appear accessible to anyone with a smartphone and internet connection, lowering perceived barriers to entry.
- **Financial success narratives:** High-profile influencers often showcase luxury lifestyles, creating perceptions that influencer work is highly profitable.

Then ask participants: *"Which of these factors do you think is most influential in shaping students' career aspirations? How can we address these factors in career guidance?"* Write all the answers on the flipchart.

Activity: Student testimonial analysis (30 minutes)

The educator then says that we will discuss student testimonials. Participants are handed out with printed copies of 3 to 4 student testimonials (authentic and hypothetical) that reflect different perspectives on influencer careers. Down below are some examples that could be used in the workshop:



Common perceptions	Realities
Influencers make a lot of money quickly	Most influencers earn little or no income; building a sustainable income takes years of consistent work
You just post content and brands pay you	Influencer work involves business management, negotiation, content strategy, analytics, and continuous learning
It's easy and fun	Influencer work requires long hours, creativity under pressure, dealing with criticism, and maintaining consistency
You become famous	Most influencers remain micro or nano influencers; fame is rare and often comes with significant downsides
You have complete freedom	Influencers must align with brand expectations, platform algorithms, and audience preferences, limiting autonomy
You don't need education or skills	Successful influencers typically have skills in content creation, marketing, communication, business management, and digital literacy

After this discussion, educator asks participants: *"How can we help students understand these realities without discouraging them from pursuing legitimate interests in digital careers?"* Discussion is held about this.

The educator closes the activity with noting the importance of providing balanced information that acknowledges both opportunities and challenges, and of helping students develop realistic expectations and backup plans.

Activity: Framework for making decisions in careers (25 minutes)

Educator introduces a simple career decision-making framework that participants can use with students interested in influencer careers.

Framework: Four P's of career decision-making

- **Passion:** Does the student have genuine interest and passion for the content they want to create? Is this passion sustainable over time?
- **Preparation:** What skills, knowledge, and resources does the student currently have? What do they need to develop? Are they willing to invest time in learning?
- **Plan:** Does the student have a realistic plan for building an influencer career? Have they set specific, measurable goals? Do they have a timeline?
- **Plan B:** Does the student have alternative career pathways or backup plans? Are they pursuing education or skills that provide flexibility?



- If possible, you can invite VET graduates who have pursued both traditional and non-traditional career pathways to share their experiences and insights with students.

Background documents and further reading:

- Duffy, B. E., & Hund, E. (2015). "'Having it all' on social media: Entrepreneurial femininity and self-branding among fashion bloggers." *Social Media + Society*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115604337>
- Glucksman, M. (2017). "The rise of social media influencer marketing on lifestyle branding: A case study of Lucie Fink." *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 8(2), 77-87.
- Super, D. E. (1980). "A life-span, life-space approach to career development." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 16(3), 282-298. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(80\)90056-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(80)90056-1)



WORKSHEET: INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CAREER CHOICES

Activity: Student testimonial analysis

Choose one student testimonial from the workshop and analyze it:

Student's main motivation:	Realistic perceptions this student holds:
Unrealistic perceptions or misconceptions:	Questions I would ask this student:
Guidance I would provide:	

Activity: Perception vs. reality gap analysis

Identify three common misconceptions students have about influencer careers and the corresponding realities:

Common perception	Reality
1.	
2.	
3.	



How can I address these misconceptions with students without discouraging legitimate interests?

Activity: Four P's career decision-making framework

Apply the 4 P's framework to a hypothetical student interested in influencer careers:

<p>1. Passion Questions to explore: Does the student have genuine, sustainable interest?</p>	<p>2. Preparation Questions to explore: What skills and resources does the student have/need?</p>
<p>3. Plan Questions to explore: Does the student have realistic goals and a timeline?</p>	<p>4. Plan B Questions to explore: Does the student have alternative pathways or backup plans?</p>



Additional activity: Case study

Think of a real or hypothetical student you work with, who has expressed interest in influencer careers:

What is the background and interests of this student?

How would I apply what I learned in this workshop to support this student?



Workshop title: Navigating influencer trends in career development

Duration: 160 minutes

Background: One important element of influencer culture are trends that change quickly. And yes, they can significantly impact the career aspirations and choices of young people. In the previous few years, there have been developments in the rise of specific content formats (e.g. short and snappy videos) and new platforms have been created. All these trends create opportunities and challenges in career development. For VET educators, it is important that they have competences to help students to navigate the dynamic landscape. Therefore, this workshop has a focus on developing critical analysis of trends that are driven by influencer culture, but also to guide students to make strategic career decisions. In the module, participants will learn how to identify emerging trends and help students to develop adaptable skills.

Aim of the workshop: to improve educators skills to critically analyse career trends in the influencer world, so they could guide students in the future.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to identify** current and emerging trends in influencer marketing and digital content creation;
- **to analyse** the factors that drive trends;
- **to develop** strategies for helping students build adaptable skills that are transferable to different trends and platforms;
- **to apply** a trend analysis framework to guide students in making informed career choices.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Critical thinking
- Initiative and entrepreneurship
- Digital competence

Methodology and methods:

- Input
- Trend analysis
- Scenario-based learning
- Group discussion



Workshop flow:

Activity: Megatrends in the world (75 minutes)

The educator opens the session by asking participants to brainstorm current trends in the world. If they know some trends, it should be written on flipchart. Some examples could be: rising technology, pandemics becoming more common, health issues rising, etc.

Educator shortly presents some of the Megatrends developed by organisation Sitra from Finland (<https://www.sitra.fi/tyokalu/digitaaliset-megatrendikortit/>).

After the input from the educator, participants are divided into smaller groups of three persons. Each of the group receives several Megatrends cards (that can be found on the link above) and one flipchart paper with markers. Usually 5 cards per group is more than enough. Their task is the following: *“Think about what factors are driving that change and what factors are influencing its direction. What effects might this trend have on the future in 5 or 10 years’s time? What positive things could happen?”*

Participants in groups discuss the cards and write their findings. The most important things are written on a flipchart they received with the cards. Enough time should be provided to participants to think and reflect - usually 35 minutes should be enough.

When finished, participants are invited to present the Megatrends to others and their answers. Short discussion is held after each presentation of trends.

Educator then asks the following questions:

- How was this for you?
- How can you connect this with understanding the trends?
- What did you get out of this?
- Can you connect this anyhow with influencer careers?

The activity should be closed by announcing that there will be still more talking about trends in this session and that we are going more narrow in the topic.

Activity: Identifying trends in influencing world (30 minutes)

Participants should be in the beginning of this activity introduced with the overview of recent trends - specifically connected with the influencer world. Some of them can include: rise of AI influencers, growth of live shopping, importance of social responsibility.

To get a better overview, there is a summary from Oglivy about these trends:



Trend	What is happening?	Why this matters for VET
Creator commerce & social selling explosion	Influencers are moving from brand performance and revenue generation. promotion to direct selling via TikTok, Shop, live shopping, affiliate systems, and integrated checkout tools. The commerce is rapidly expanding globally.	Influencer work is shifting from visibility to entrepreneurship. Students need entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, negotiation skills, and social understanding of sales psychology. The pressure of algorithm-driven sales increases instability and stress.
AI influencers & hybrid human-AI models	AI-generated influencers and avatars are scaling quickly. AI automates editing, analytics, content production, and even negotiations. However, trust still largely favors human creators.	Students may compete with AI systems, not only other creators. Creativity, authenticity, ethical awareness, and critical digital literacy become more important than pure technical skills. Educators must address transparency and AI ethics.
From posts to serialized creator “worlds”	Creators are building recurring formats, episodic storytelling, cross-platform IP, and long-term audience relationships. Brands prefer sustained partnerships over one-off posts. Audiences increasingly “return” rather than just scroll.	Influencer work is evolving into media production and long-term brand building. Students need storytelling skills, format development, consistency, and strategic thinking. This shifts focus from short-term virality to long-term identity building.
ROI over vanity metrics	Likes and impressions are no longer sufficient. Brands demand ROI: revenue, conversions, customer lifetime value, brand lift, and performance analytics.	Influencer careers are becoming data-driven and performance-based. Students need data literacy, KPI understanding, analytical thinking, and the ability to interpret metrics. Creative work is increasingly evaluated through commercial impact.
Equity partnerships & creator-owned brands	Top creators seek ownership, equity stakes, and co-founded brands rather than payment per post. The shift is from “rented reach” to “co-owned IP.” Athletes and creators are becoming entrepreneurs.	Influencer careers increasingly require business knowledge, contract literacy, intellectual property awareness, and long-term strategic planning. Students must understand ownership models and entrepreneurial risk.
Social beyond the feed: IRL & private communities	Growth of private communities (Discord, Patreon, Substack), “dark social” channels (WhatsApp, Telegram), and in-real-life (IRL) creator events. Audiences seek more authentic, smaller-scale interactions due to AI fatigue.	Community management, moderation skills, ethical leadership, and offline engagement skills become important competences. Students must understand trust-building and responsible management of private digital spaces.

Afterwards, In small groups, have participants research and present on a specific trend, using their phones or laptops. Each group should identify the key characteristics of the



trend, its potential impact on career development, and examples of influencers who are already talking or using this trend. Participants can use the worksheet (at the end of this workshop) to record their findings.

Harvesting and presentations are done in the plenary.

Activity: Developing adaptable skills (40 minutes)

The activity starts with a short brainstorming session on the core skills that are needed and important to have no matter the trends of platforms. These might include storytelling, video editing, community management, and data analysis.

Individually, participants should create a "skill map" that identifies the core competences students can develop through their interest in influencer culture, and how these skills can be applied to a variety of career paths.

To help the process, in the worksheet, there is a table that can help fill in these findings.

In the end, the educator asks participants to share in a big group and writes them down on a flipchart.

Activity: Closing and reflection (15 minutes)

For the end, ask participants to write down a short reflection on their learning, using a tool like a "3-2-1" prompt (3 things I learned, 2 things I found interesting, 1 question I still have).

Invite some volunteers to share their findings. Try to answer the questions they still have, or tell them we will come back to it in the next modules.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers laptop and projector (for presentation), worksheet (printed copies for participants).

Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- This workshop can be updated regularly to reflect the latest trends in influencer marketing. You can always check Oglivly and Megatrend websites to update with the new trends.
- This workshop could be quite demanding for some participants. Allow time to detect things, and go around the room to provide help when needed.



Background documents and further reading:

- Ogilvy. (2026). *2026 influencer trends: You should care about*. retrieved February 2, 2026 from https://www.ogilvy.com/sites/g/files/dhpsjz106/files/pdffdocuments/O260210_Influencer%20Trends%202026-2.pdf
- Sitra. (n.d.). *Digitaaliset megatrendikortit*. retrieved February 2, 2026, from <https://www.sitra.fi/tyokalu/digitaaliset-megatrendikortit/>



Activity: Skill mapping

Identify the core skills that are important in different trends and platforms. For each skill, provide an example of how it can be applied in different career paths. The list has been started, but there are empty rows to add skills.

Skill	Application in influencer career	Application in other careers
Storytelling		
Video Editing		
Community management		
Data analysis		



Workshop title: Ethical considerations in influencer culture

Duration: 140 minutes

Background: The rise of influencer culture has also brought significant ethical challenges that are often not clear to young people. Issues such as hidden advertising, promotion of unrealistic body images, and the spread of misinformation are quite common in the influencer world. This workshop will give VET educators knowledge and tools to guide students in critically examining the ethical dimensions of influencer marketing and in developing ethical thinking.

Aim of the workshop: to raise awareness of the ethical issues which are part of the influencer culture.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to identify** and **analyze** a range of ethical issues in influencer marketing;
- **to understand** the importance of transparency and disclosure in advertising;
- **to critically evaluate** the concept of authenticity in influencer culture;
- **to discuss** the social responsibility of influencers;
- **to develop** and **apply** a framework for making ethical decisions in the context of influencer marketing.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Literacy competence
- Personal, social and civic competence
- Citizenship competence

Methodology and methods:

- Case study analysis and ethical dilemma scenarios
- Debate
- Group discussion
- Working in pairs

Workshop flow:

Activity: What is "ethical" in influencer culture? (20 minutes)

The educator begins the session with a brainstorming session on what it means to be an "ethical" influencer. Key themes and ideas are noted on a flipchart.



Afterwards a brief overview of the key ethical issues in influencer marketing are presented. More information can be found below, and under recommended readings, there are articles related to each of the topics.

Ethical dilemma	Short description	Why is it important?
Transparency	Transparency means clearly telling audiences when content is sponsored or paid for by a brand. This is crucial because many followers trust influencers as if they were friends, not advertisers. When paid content is not labelled clearly, audiences can feel abused. Furthermore, this can break advertising rules.	Unclear sponsorship can damage trust, harm consumers' ability to make informed decisions, and lead to legal consequences (e.g., fines in some countries). A transparent approach protects audiences, influencers, and brands.
Authenticity and deception	Authenticity refers to being honest and genuine with the audience. Ethical questions are often risen when influencers exaggerate, share fake experiences, or promote products they don't use. Followers may feel betrayed if content blurs the line between honest opinion and paid promotion.	Losing authenticity means that influencers lose trust and credibility, and this can have potential to happen to the whole influencer world. Hiding the commercial motivation behind content leads to skepticism and reduced engagement by followers or audiences.
Social responsibility	Social responsibility shows how influencer content affects audiences' wellbeing, behaviour, and perceptions of social norms. Influencers have quite a significant reach, especially among younger people, so their choices matter - for example, how they talk about body image, lifestyles, materialism, or mental health.	Influencers can (sometimes unconsciously!) promote unhealthy ideals, unrealistic expectations, or harmful products. Ethical consideration means thinking beyond commercial goals to understand impacts on followers, including emotional wellbeing and social norms.
Misinformation	Misinformation refers to false or misleading information that spreads either unintentionally or intentionally. Influencers, as any other content creator, can play a role in sharing misinformation - especially when algorithmic systems prioritise engaging (but unverified) content.	Widespread misinformation can harm public understanding of health, science, politics, and social issues. Because influencer content is often seen as "trusted advice," this can make misinformation even more persuasive.



Activity: Case studies in influencer ethics (45 minutes)

After the input, participants are divided into small groups. Each group is provided with a case study of an ethical controversy involving an influencer. Each group should discuss their case study identifying the ethical issues. Each group will then present their findings to the larger group.

Dilemma 1:

A popular fitness influencer is offered a lucrative sponsorship deal with a company that sells weight-loss teas. The influencer has never used the product and has doubts about its effectiveness and safety. However, the money from the sponsorship would allow her to quit her part-time job and focus on creating content full-time.

Dilemma 2:

Lana (22) is a lifestyle influencer with 85,000 followers on Instagram. She recently posted a photo promoting a new skincare serum. In the caption, she wrote about how much she “loves the product” and how it “changed her skin.” At the very end of the caption - after 15 hashtags and three paragraphs - she added “#sp.” The brand paid her €1,200 for the post. Some followers later commented that they did not realize it was sponsored and felt misused for hidden marketing. A local journalist shared the story and questioned what is a proper disclosure of an advertising.

Dilemma 3:

Sara (24) runs a popular “wellness and beauty” Instagram page. She launches a “30-day summer body challenge” with daily workout routines and strict meal plans. She frequently edits her photos to enhance her looks. Several teenage followers begin posting that they feel “ugly” or “not good enough.” Because of that, one parent contacts Sara, writing that the content she is creating promotes unrealistic standards. Sara responds: “I’m just sharing my lifestyle. I’m not responsible for how people feel”.



Dilemma 4:

Leo (21) built a following by sharing “crypto investment tips.” He recently promoted a new cryptocurrency project, claiming it is “safe and guaranteed to grow.” However, he did not share that he was paid with tokens from the project. Two months later, the cryptocurrency collapses. Some followers lose significant amounts of money. Leo says: “I’m not a financial advisor. People should do their own research.”

Dilemma 5:

Marko (19), a fitness influencer on TikTok, promotes a protein supplement. He tells his audience it’s “part of his daily routine.” In reality, he has never used the product consistently. He accepted the sponsorship because it was paid well. Later, one of his friends publicly reveals that Marko privately complained about the product’s taste and quality. Followers start questioning his authenticity.

Each group should answer the following questions:

- What is the ethical dilemma in this scenario?
- Who are the stakeholders in this situation? (who could be affected by the influencer's decision?)
- What would you do if you were the influencer in this situation? What consequences might your decision have in the short and long term?

When finished, groups present - each group will have 3-5 minutes to present their findings.

Activity: Price of authenticity (40 minutes)

Educator leads a discussion on the concept of authenticity in influencer culture. The activity starts by asking participants:

- What does “authentic” mean in the context of social media?
- Can authenticity exist in a commercial environment?
- Is authenticity a personal quality, a strategy, or both?

Then, the educator briefly introduces the idea of the “authenticity paradox”: which is the issue between being genuine and earning income through sponsored partnerships. When content becomes monetised, authenticity may become part of a brand strategy rather than personal expression.

Afterwards, the group is divided into two sides. Side A argues in favor of the statement:

“It is impossible to be an authentic and successful influencer at the same time.”



Side B argues against the statement.

Allow groups 10 minutes to prepare arguments. Each side then presents its position (5 minutes per side). Use the remaining time for further discussions or reflection.

Some questions for side A (Authenticity and success are incompatible)

- If income depends on brand partnerships, doesn't that automatically influence what you post?
- Can someone remain neutral when they are financially dependent on sponsors?
- Is "authenticity" often a marketing strategy and not a real quality?
- Does becoming a successful influencer require compromising personal values?

Some questions for side A (Authenticity and success can coexist)

- Can transparency about sponsorship help with saving the authenticity?
- Isn't every profession influenced by income? Why should influencers be different?
- Can long-term success depend on maintaining genuine trust?
- Are audiences sophisticated enough to make distinction between authentic and fake influencers?
- Can selective brand partnerships strengthen or weaken authenticity?

Educator invites short reflection in the big group:

- Has your position changed after hearing the other side?
- Is authenticity a fixed state, or something that can be changed over time?
- What does this debate mean for VET students who want to become influencers?

Activity: Developing an ethical framework (35 minutes)

Educator introduces a simple and practical framework for ethical decision-making that students can apply when facing dilemmas in influencer culture or digital careers.

Explain that ethical decision-making does not require complex legal knowledge. Instead, it requires structured reflection. Present a simple 3-step framework that students can remember and apply in real situations.

Step 1: Golden rule test: Would I consider this fair if I were on the receiving end?

Some additional questions: If I were a follower, would I feel misled? If I were a parent of a young follower, would I be comfortable with this? If this decision were made public, would I feel proud of it?

Step 2: Stakeholder analysis: Who could be affected by this decision?



- Abidin, C. (2016). “Visibility labour”: Engaging with influencers’ fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, 161(1), 86–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X16665177>
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- Tandoc, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining “fake news”: A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143>



WORKSHEET: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN INFLUENCER CULTURE

ACTIVITY: CASE STUDIES IN INFLUENCER ETHICS

Analyse the case study using the following questions.

What is the ethical dilemma in this scenario?	Who are the stakeholders in this situation? (who could be affected by the influencer's decision?)	What would you do if you were the influencer in this situation? What consequences might your decision have in the short and long term?



Workshop title: Evaluation of Module 1

Duration: 90 minutes

Background: Evaluation is an important component of any learning experience. This provides a structured opportunity for participants to reflect on their learning, check their knowledge, and provide feedback on the content and delivery of Module 1. It also is a connection with the next module, helping participants to see the connections between the different parts of the curriculum.

Aim of the workshop: to evaluate the learning outcomes of Module 1, consolidate knowledge, and gather feedback for future improvements.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to recall** and **summarise** the key concepts and themes of Module 1.
- **to reflect** on their own learning and identify key takeaways.
- **to apply** their knowledge to a real-world case study.
- **to provide** constructive feedback on the content and delivery of Module 1.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Literacy competence
- Personal, social and civic competence

Methodology and methods:

- Group discussion
- Individual reflection
- Feedback session

Workshop flow:

Activity: My learning journey through the module (45 minutes)

Participants are invited to individually reflect on their learning journey through Module 1. For that purpose, they will receive papers and markers, so they can be creative. They can draw a river of their journey or express themselves as they want. Within the river, or their other creative work, they should include the following questions:

- What was the most surprising thing I learned?
- What is one thing I will do differently as a result of this module?
- What is one question I still have?

When finished, participants are divided in pairs to share their learning journeys with each other.



The educator says that the learning journeys will be collected, as they would be updated in the next modules.

Activity: Recalling the learning outcomes and objectives (10 minutes)

The educator goes through the learning outcomes and asks participants in an interactive session did we manage to reach them. If something is still missing or there is some additional things needed, educator says they will receive additional support afterwards with literature, sources or books they can research in their free time.

Activity: Associative cards final round (35 minutes)

On the floor, the educator puts different associative cards. They are showing people and objects in different relations. The task of the participants is to stand up and walk around and check the cards. They should pick two cards, which should correspond to these questions:

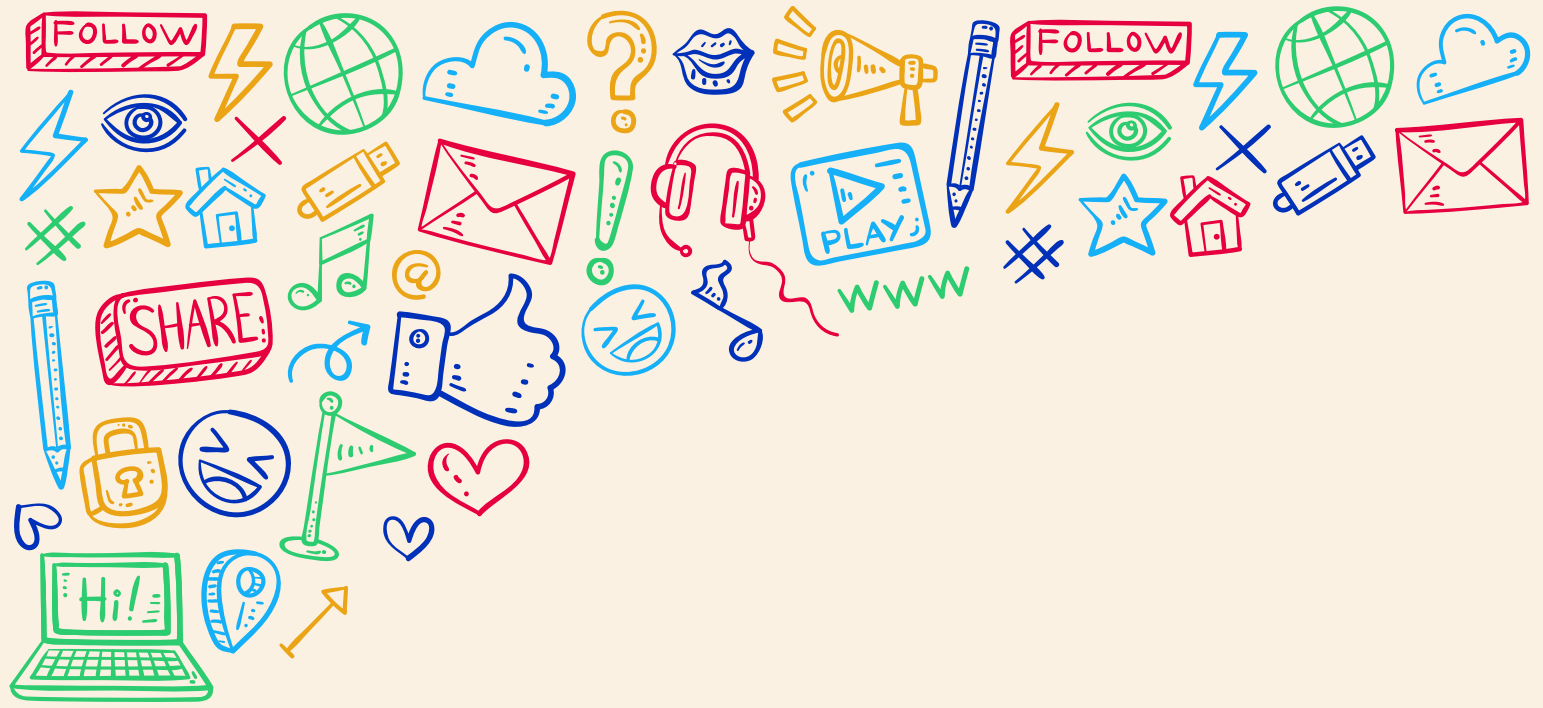
- *How was Module 1 for me? What am I bringing back?*
- *What should be improved in the future?*

Participants share their cards and answers to the questions, including the educator.

The educator thanks participants for their active engagement and announces the dates for the next module.

Materials needed: markers and pens, A3 papers, laptop and projector (for presentation), associative cards.





Module 2

Introduction to career methods and empowering students to choose the best career



MODULE 2 OVERVIEW

Module 2 shifts the focus from understanding influencer marketing as an industry to developing practical career management methods that empower students to make informed and realistic career choices. This module recognises that effective career guidance requires more than knowledge of specific professions. It also needs to have a variety of approaches that will help educators to facilitate self-assessment, critical thinking, and decision-making processes.

The module begins by exploring foundational concepts of career management, including theories of career development, the importance of self-awareness, and methods for helping students identify their passions, strengths, and values. The module highlights the importance of helping students connect their self-knowledge to realistic career pathways.

A central focus of Module 2 is the development of critical media literacy - the ability to analyse, evaluate, and critically engage with media content, particularly influencer content. Educators will learn strategies for teaching students to deconstruct influencer narratives, recognize persuasion techniques, identify commercial motivations, and differentiate between authentic expression and strategic image crafting. Media literacy is crucial for helping students make career choices that are informed, not guided by the image they see on the social media.

Financial literacy is another key component of the module as understanding the economic realities of influencer careers and digital entrepreneurship is important for making an informed decision. Educators will explore how to teach students about income variability, business expenses, taxation, financial planning, and the importance of financial stability and security. The module “debunks” the common misconception that influencer careers offer easy paths to wealth.

The module also addresses the psychological and emotional dimensions of career choices, particularly in the context of expectations from influencer jobs. Participants explore how to help students navigate unrealistic expectations, social comparison, and perfectionism.

A recurring theme throughout Module 2 is the tension between authenticity and image crafting. Influencers often present carefully curated versions of their lives, raising questions about the extent to which professional success requires compromising personal authenticity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (BLOOM TAXONOMY)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:



REMEMBERING

Identify key career management theories and frameworks relevant to VET education

List methods for facilitating student self-assessment and career exploration

Know the components of financial literacy relevant to digital entrepreneurship and influencer careers

UNDERSTANDING

Explain the importance of self-awareness and values clarification in career decision-making

Describe strategies for promoting critical media literacy

Summarise the financial realities of influencer careers, including income variability, expenses, and financial planning needs

APPLYING

Demonstrate the ability to facilitate self-assessment activities that help students identify their passions, strengths, and values

Apply critical media literacy frameworks to analyze influencer content with students

Use financial literacy tools to help students evaluate the economic viability of influencer careers

ANALYSING

Examine the psychological impact of social comparison and unrealistic expectations on students' career choices and well-being

Differentiate between authentic self-expression and strategic image crafting

Analyse case studies of students navigating career choices influenced by influencer culture

EVALUATING

Assess the suitability of different career management methods for different student populations

Critique influencer narratives that promote unrealistic expectations or problematic values

Evaluate students' readiness to pursue influencer careers based on their self-awareness, skills, and financial literacy

CREATING

Design career guidance activities that integrate self-assessment, critical media literacy, and financial literacy

Develop strategies for supporting students in understanding the tension between authenticity and image crafting

Formulate approaches for promoting resilience, self-acceptance, and realistic expectations among students influenced by influencer culture

CONNECTIONS TO SUBJECTS AND CROSS-CURRICULUM TOPICS

Module 2 content is highly relevant in different VET programmes and surroundings. Topics covered could be integrated in different subjects and cross-curricular topics.



Connection to subjects:

- **Psychology and pedagogy:** If the school has subjects of psychology or pedagogy, Module 2 can provide valuable content on self-awareness, identity development, social comparison, and the psychological dimensions of career choices. Educators can explore theories of identity, motivation, and decision-making, and apply them in the context of career expectations in the field of influencer work.
- **Economics and business/accounting:** Financial literacy is a core component of economics and business education. Module 2 content on income variability, budgeting, taxation, and financial planning can be integrated into economics curricula, using influencer careers as case studies for exploring entrepreneurial finance and financial decision-making.
- **Language class and communication:** Critical media literacy involves analyzing texts, identifying rhetorical strategies, and evaluating the credibility of sources: all these skills are important to language and communication education. Module 2 activities can be integrated into language classes, and can revolve around persuasion communication.
- **Civic education and ethics:** The ethical dimensions of career choices, including questions of authenticity, integrity, and social responsibility, are relevant to civic education and ethics curricula. Module 2 content can support discussions about ethical decision-making, the relationship between personal values and professional choices, and the responsibilities of individuals in shaping their own lives and contributing to society.
- **Career guidance and counseling:** Module 2 is directly relevant to career guidance and counseling programmes in schools, as they provide practical methods for facilitating self-assessment, career exploration, and decision-making. The module equips career counselors with tools to address the specific challenges that arise with influencer culture and digital career pathways.

Connection to cross-sectorial topics in VET curriculum:

- **Personal and social development:** Module 2 is connected with the topic of personal and social development, as it emphasizes self-awareness, values clarification, identity development, and the ability to make informed decisions. Activities in Module 2 support students in developing a strong sense of self, and recognising their unique strengths and interests, as well as making choices that are contacted with their identity.
- **Learning to learn:** Career management is a dimension of learning to learn, as it involves self-assessment, goal-setting, information gathering, reflective thinking, and adaptive decision-making. Module 2 equips educators to facilitate these processes, helping students develop metacognitive skills and taking ownership of their own learning.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Financial literacy and the ability to evaluate business opportunities are core entrepreneurial competences. Module 2 content on financial planning, income variability, and economic viability supports the cross-curricular topic of entrepreneurship, preparing students to make informed decisions about entrepreneurial career pathways, including influencer careers.
- **Citizenship education:** Critical media literacy is a key component of active citizenship, which helps individuals to critically evaluate information, recognize manipulation and misinformation, and make informed decisions as consumers and citizens. Module 2 content supports citizenship education by equipping students with the skills to critically engage with influencer content and to recognize the commercial and ideological dimensions of media messages.

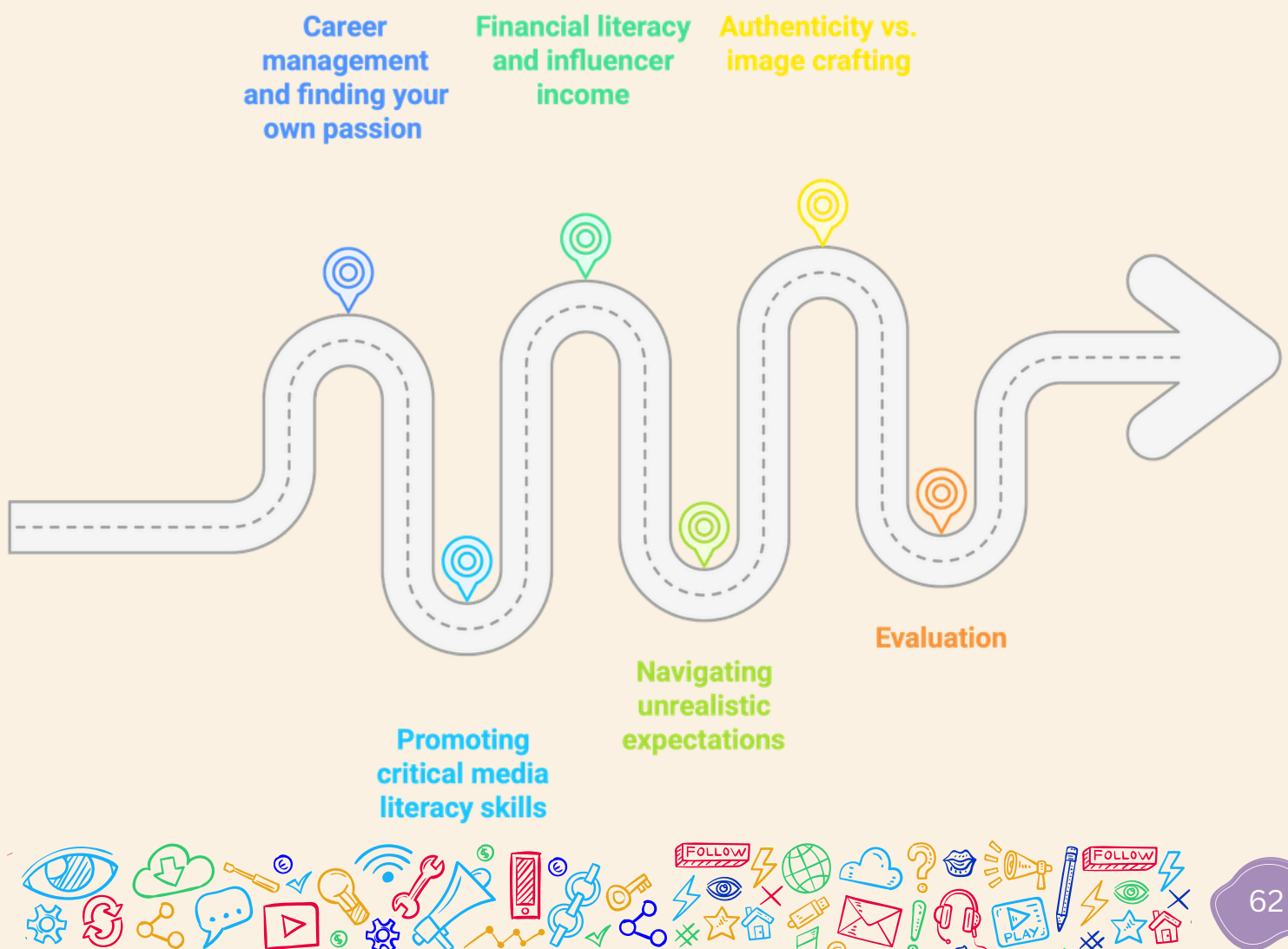


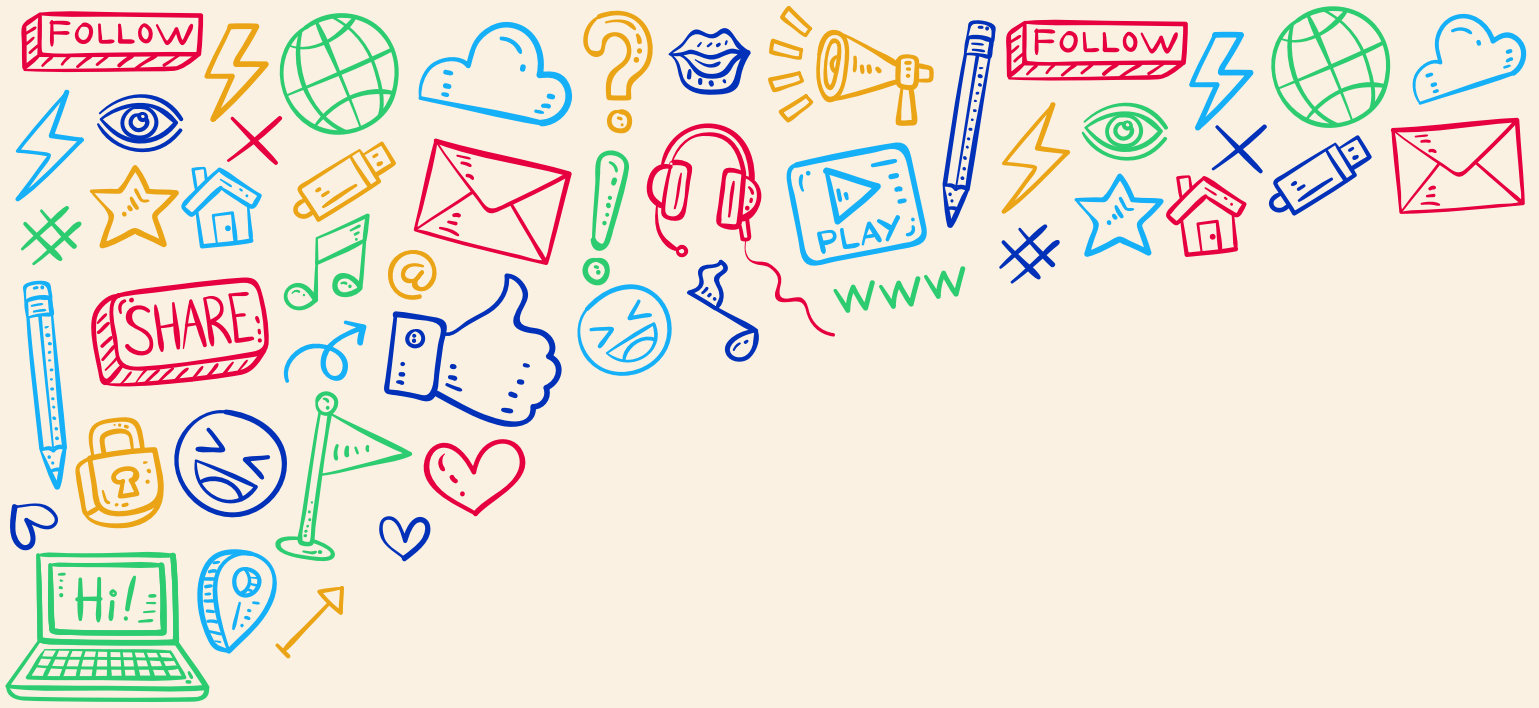
- **Health:** The psychological and emotional dimensions of career choices, including the impact of social comparison, unrealistic expectations, and perfectionism are relevant to health education. Module 2 content can be connected to health curricula by addressing the mental health implications of social media use, the importance of self-acceptance and resilience, and strategies for maintaining well-being in the context of digital visibility and public-facing careers.
- **Use of ICT:** Critical media literacy involves understanding how digital technologies shape communication, influence, and information dissemination. Module 2 content supports the cross-curricular topic of ICT use by addressing the role of algorithms, the construction of online identities, and the ethical use of digital platforms.

WORKSHOPS CONNECTED WITH THE MODULE 2

Module 2 consists of the following workshops, each designed to address specific learning objectives and to provide interactive learning experiences for participants:

- Career management and finding your own passion (115 minutes)
- Promoting critical media literacy skills (120 minutes)
- Financial literacy and influencer income (120 minutes)
- Navigating unrealistic expectations set by influencers (115 minutes)
- Authenticity vs. image crafting in career development (120 minutes)
- Evaluation of the module (90 minutes)





Workshops

for the Module 2



Workshop title: Career management and finding your own passion

Duration: 115 minutes

Background: Effective career management crucial for personal and professional fulfillment. In an era of quick economic change and job markets that are changing on a daily basis, having the skills to navigate careers became as important as ever. Therefore, in this workshop, VET educators will get knowledge in career management theories and practical tools for helping students analyse their own passions, strengths and values. Educators can support young people in career choices that are realistic, but also in line with their own personal and professional wishes.

Aim of the workshop: To raise the knowledge of VET educators and experts related to career management theories and the skills to facilitate self-assessment and career exploration processes.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to understand** key career management theories and their application in VET education;
- **to facilitate** self-assessment activities to help students identify their interests, strengths, and values;
- **to guide** students in exploring career pathways that are connected with their personal and professional goals;
- **to make a difference** between passion and profession, and help students find meaningful connections between the two;
- **to create** personalized career exploration plans for students.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence
- Literacy competence
- Entrepreneurship competence

Methodology and methods:

- Self-assessment tool
- Group discussion and brainstorming
- Action planning



Workshop flow:

Activity: Introduction to career management (20 minutes)

In the beginning of the activity, the educator starts with a quick discussion on why career management matters today (rapid changes in labour markets, new occupations, non-linear career paths). Participants are invited to think of one typical question their students ask about careers (e.g., “What job will still exist in 10 years?”). Collect 5 to 6 examples on a flipchart and use them to point out that career guidance is increasingly about building skills in making decisions, not just giving information.

Educator then does a short input (5-7 minutes) introducing two classic career development perspectives:

- Holland’s Theory of Career Choice (RIASEC): people-environment fit and how interests align with work environments;
- Super’s Life-Span, Life-Space Theory: careers develop over time, with changing roles and life stages.

One simple example for each theory is presented (e.g., how a “Realistic” profile might prefer hands-on learning; how a student’s roles as learner/worker/family member influence choices). Educators note how these theories help educators structure conversations and avoid advice that fits everyone, but it is individualised.

Finding your passion - self-assessment (40 minutes)

Next, the educator introduces three short self-assessment tasks and explains that participants will experience them before adapting them for students. Educator’s role is to set a clear, supportive tone, where there are no “right” answers.

- 1) **Values clarification** (What matters most in work and life for you?)
- 2) **Strengths spotting** (What do you do well and enjoy doing?)
- 3) **Interest inventory** (What topics or activities energise you?)

Educator explains timing (about 8 minutes per task) and encourages participants to write honest notes for themselves - only what they are comfortable sharing. Participants complete the exercises individually.

Educator then invites participants into small groups (3-4 people) to discuss:

- Which questions felt easiest/hardest and why?
- What students might struggle with (language, confidence, limited experience)?
- How to adapt the exercises for different age groups and study profiles?

Educator circulates, listens for themes, and notes practical adaptation ideas on the flipchart (e.g., using examples, offering choice, doing a short version). Some voices are shared in the plenary.



Activity: From passion to profession (30 minutes)

Afterwards, the educator leads a discussion on the difference between a passion (what energises you) and a profession (what the labour market rewards). Some of the questions are the following:

- What can go wrong when young people feel pressured to turn every hobby into income?
- What helps passions remain sustainable over time?

Educator presents two brief case studies (one ‘success’, one ‘challenge’) showing how passions can be developed into careers. Group is divided into small groups of 3 to 5 people. Each group identifies:

- What supported success (skills, mentors, planning, learning from feedback)
- What created difficulties (financial pressure, burnout, lack of market fit)
- What guidance they would give the person at an earlier stage

Groups share one key insight each in plenary. Educator summarizes patterns and links back to the self-assessment results from previous activity.

Examples of case studies:

Case study A (success): From weekend repairs to a micro-business

Ivan (19) is a VET student in automotive mechanics. Outside school, he has always enjoyed fixing scooters and bikes for friends and neighbours. He started posting short “before/after” repair clips on TikTok and Instagram, mainly to document his work and connect with other mechanics.

A local garage owner noticed his videos and offered him a part-time placement. Ivan used the placement to improve his diagnostic skills and learn customer communication. He also asked for feedback from experienced mechanics and gradually improved the clarity of his videos (showing tools used, safety steps, and explaining common mistakes).

After finishing VET school, Ivan began offering weekend services legally (invoicing, basic budgeting, and setting aside money for tools and taxes). He built his reputation through consistent quality work and transparency (he would say when a repair was not safe or cost-effective). Over time, he developed a niche: affordable maintenance for e-scooters and delivery riders. A year later, he partnered with a small workshop and now earns stable income through a mix of repairs and a small online course for beginners.

Case Study B (challenge): When “Content Creation” Becomes Pressure

Lea (18) is a VET student in hospitality and loves baking. She started an Instagram account to share recipes and quickly gained followers because her content was visually appealing. People around her began saying, “You should do this professionally!” and she felt



pressure to prove she could turn it into a career. Lea began taking brand collaborations early (free products at first, then small paid deals). She started posting almost daily to keep engagement high. Baking stopped feeling like a hobby - it became performance-driven. She also compared herself constantly to other creators and felt guilty when posts “didn’t do well”.

Lea spent money on ingredients, props, and equipment without tracking costs. Some sponsored products didn’t match her values (overly sugary “health” snacks), but she accepted because she wanted the income and validation. She started losing sleep, her schoolwork suffered, and she felt burnt out. After a few months, her growth slowed due to algorithm changes, and she felt like she had “failed”.

Activity: Creating a career exploration plan (25 minutes)

Then, the educator presents a simple Career exploration plan template and briefly explains SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound). It is emphasized that the plan is not a ‘final decision’, but a structured journey. Educator shares one example of the SMART goal on the flipchart (e.g., “*Within 4 weeks, I will interview one professional in field X and record 5 insights about required skills*”).

Participants are then divided in pairs to create a career exploration plan for a hypothetical student (provided by the educator). Pairs should include 3 - 5 SMART actions in different areas (exploration, skills building, networking, wellbeing). The plan can be found in the worksheet.

The educator then invites pairs to share their strongest SMART goal in plenary.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers, laptop and projector (for presentation), printed copies of worksheet.

Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- Encourage participants to share their own career journeys and experiences.
- If there are available, you can use online career assessment tools to make the workshop more interactive.

Background documents and further reading:

- Holland's Theory: Career Key. (n.d.). Holland's theory of career choice. Retrieved from <https://www.careerkey.org/fit/personality/hollands-theory-of-career-choice>
- Super's Theory: ALIS. (n.d.). Super's theory: A career path that evolves with you. Alberta Learning Information Service. Retrieved from <https://alis.alberta.ca/plan-your-career/learn-more-about-yourself/super-s-theory-a-career-path-that-evolves-with-you/>
- Values Clarification Exercise: Therapist Aid. (n.d.). Values clarification worksheet. Retrieved from <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/values-clarification>



WORKSHEET: CAREER MANAGEMENT AND FINDING YOUR OWN PASSION

CAREER EXPLORATION PLAN TEMPLATE

This plan is not a final decision. It is a structured pathway for the next steps.

Name / ID: _____

Age / Year group: _____

VET field / programme: _____

Current situation (brief): _____

Interests / topics they enjoy: _____

Strengths / skills they already have: _____

Career direction (working idea)

Possible career area(s) to explore (one or two): _____

Why these areas? (link to interests/strengths/values): _____

What I need to find out: _____

SMART Goals (3-5 actions)

Write actions across different areas: exploration, skills building, networking, wellbeing.

Area	
Exploration	
Exploration	
Skills building	
Networking	
Wellbeing	



Support and resources

People who can support (teachers, mentors, family, employers):

Useful resources (websites, events, guidance services, local employers):

Risks and Plan B

What might get in the way and how will we adapt if it does?



Workshop flow:

Activity: Introduction to Media literacy (25 minutes)

Educator starts with an interactive presentation on the Five core concepts of media literacy.

You can use different frameworks, as the MediaSmarts key concepts page (<https://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/general-information/digital-media-literacy-fundamentals/key-concepts-digital-media%20literacy>) or the NAMLE core principles (<https://namle.org/resources/core-principles/>) to present the framework.

For each concept, show a clear example from social media (e.g., a sponsored post, a viral challenge, a news-style TikTok video).

After the input, ask participants:

- Why is media literacy important to students?
- Which of these five concepts do you think is most challenging for your students to grasp? Why?
- What are your suggestions for teaching media literacy?

Activity: Deconstructing influencer content (45 minutes)

After this, educator presents the most common persuasion techniques used in advertising. There are several techniques, but all of them are rooted in the three main principles: ethos, logos and pathos. Also, sometimes influencers use new methods, such as social proof or scarcity. To find out more about the persuasion techniques, you can check the Mailchimp guide (<https://mailchimp.com/resources/persuasive-advertising-techniques/>).

Following the input, in small groups, participants should analyse a piece of influencer content (a video, a series of Instagram posts, etc.). Ask participants to use Worksheet to identify which of the Five core concepts are most relevant and which persuasion techniques are being used. They should also discuss the intended audience and the overall message of the content.

Participants can search for influencers they follow online and go through their videos and stories. Within the group, they need to agree which influencer they will analyse.

When they are finished, each group shares their analysis with the larger group. The facilitator should highlight the similarities and differences in their findings, sharing that media analysis is an interpretive process.



WORKSHEET: PROMOTING CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY SKILLS

Activity: Media deconstruction

Choose a piece of influencer content and use the Five core concepts of media literacy to deconstruct it.

<p>Who created this message?</p>	<p>What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?</p>
<p>How might different people understand this message differently from me?</p>	<p>What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?</p>
<p>Why is this message being sent?</p>	



Workshop flow:

Activity: Reality of influencer income (30 minutes)

The session should start with a myth vs. reality activity. Ask participants to stand up. The room should be divided into 2 parts. Each part should represent one answer – yes or no. You can also allow for people who are uncertain to stand in the middle.

When an educator reads a statement, participants should position themselves - where do they stand. After each positioning, a small discussion is held.

Some statements are the following:

- You can become rich quickly as an influencer.
- Influencers get paid a lot for a single post they create.
- More content you post, the more money you receive.
- Influencers live a luxurious life because of the income they generate.

Afterwards, the educator presents a realistic overview of influencer income streams. Some of the key findings from the data is the following: influencer income is extremely variable - there's no “standard salary”, and earnings depend on engagement quality, niche, platform and deal type than follower count alone. Nano creators may earn in the low thousands per post while macro/mega creators can earn tens of thousands and more. However, micro/nano influencers often have higher engagement and are increasingly attractive to brands for cost efficiency.

To help you find information, you can use data and infographics from sources like **Influize** (<https://www.influize.com/blog/how-much-do-influencers-make>) or **Business.com** (<https://www.business.com/articles/social-media-stars-how-much-do-they-really-make/>) to show the wide range of earnings and the factors that influence income (niche, engagement, platform, etc.).

Activity: Business of being an influencer (45 minutes)

Educator explains that being an influencer is like running a small business, with all the financial responsibilities that entails. Educator introduces the basic concepts of budgeting, saving, and investing.

Then, in small groups, participants should create a simple monthly budget for a fictional influencer using Worksheet. They should consider both business expenses (equipment, software, marketing) and personal living expenses. This will help them to understand the importance of financial planning.

Next, the educator introduces the topic of being self-employed. Taxes for self-employment are different from country to country, so we invite the educators to check on the website of their financial authority the instructions for taxes.



Activity: Teaching financial literacy (45 minutes)

Participants are then invited to design a mini “escape room” with 3 locks (3 tasks students must solve). Each lock teaches one concept.

Each group needs to create:

- scenario (2–3 sentences)
- three locks (Lock 1, 2, 3), and for each lock:
 - the student task/puzzle (what students see)
 - the correct answer
 - the learning point (1 sentence: what skill/concept it builds)

To help participants, you can give them scenario ideas:

- “First paycheck from apprenticeship / student job”
- “Moving out / renting a room”
- “Starting a side gig (repairs, hair, baking, photography...)”
- “Buying a phone/laptop needed for school/work”
- “Preparing for a work trip / seasonal job”

Lock themes (use these exact 3 to keep it simple):

- Lock 1: Spot the trap (fees & fine print): Students identify what’s risky in an offer.
- Lock 2: Budget fix (income–expenses + surprise cost): Students balance a simple budget and adapt to a surprise.
- Lock 3: Smart choice (compare options): Students compare 2-3 offers and justify the best decision.

Each lock should give a code (a number, a word, or 3-letter code). When they have all 3 codes, participants escape.

Participants have 30 minutes to prepare the activity, and 5 minutes each to test it in a big group.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers laptop and projector.

Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- Invite a financial advisor or an accountant who works with self-employed individuals to be a guest speaker.
- Have students research and present on the different income streams available to influencers in a niche they are interested in.



Background documents and further reading:

- Derbyshire, L. (2026). How much do influencers really make? (2026 edition). Influize. <https://www.influize.com/blog/how-much-do-influencers-make>
- Dublino, J. (2026). Social media stars: How much do they really make? Business.com. <https://www.business.com/articles/social-media-stars-how-much-do-they-really-make/>



WORKSHEET: FINANCIAL LITERACY AND INFLUENCER INCOME

Activity: Business of being an influencer

Create a monthly budget for a hypothetical influencer with an income of €2,000 per month.

Down below, try to think what could be the expenses:

Rent for an apartment:	Food:
Transportation:	Business equipment (e.g., equipment, software):
Taxes including the social taxes (estimate):	Savings or other expenses:
Remaining income:	



Workshop title: Navigating unrealistic expectations set by influencers

Duration: 115 minutes

Background: The idealised lifestyles presented by social media influencers can create unrealistic expectations for VET students. This can have an impact on their mental health, self-esteem, and career aspirations. Therefore, this workshop addresses the psychological impact of social media, focusing on the phenomenon of social comparison and the importance of developing self-compassion. The goal is to equip educators with the tools to help students navigate the pressures of influencer culture and develop a more realistic and healthy perspective on success and failure.

Aim of the workshop: to equip educators with an understanding of the psychological impact of social media and to provide them with strategies for helping students develop resilience, self-compassion, and a realistic perspective on influencer careers.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to explain** social comparison theory and its relevance to influencer culture;
- **to identify** the potential negative impacts of social media on students' mental health and self-esteem;
- **to describe** the three components of self-compassion;
- **to practice** and facilitate simple self-compassion exercises;
- **to develop** strategies for fostering resilience and a healthy mindset in students.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
- Digital competence
- Citizenship competence

Methodology and methods:

- Interactive presentation
- Mindfulness and self-compassion exercises
- Group discussion

Workshop flow:

Activity: Comparison game (40 minutes)

The session is kicked-off with an interactive presentation on Social comparison theory. Use the Verywell Mind article (<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-social-comparison-process-2795872>) to explain the difference between upward and downward social comparison. You can use relatable, non-influencer examples first (e.g., comparing



grades with a classmate, comparing athletic ability with a teammate) before moving on to social media.

Then, in small groups, have participants discuss the following questions:

- In what ways do you see your students engaging in social comparison online?
- What are the emotional consequences of this comparison?

Additional questions that could be useful:

- What exactly are students comparing online? (looks, lifestyle, money, relationships, skills, fitness, travel, “success”, popularity, brands)
- Which platforms drive it most in your context, and why?
- Do you notice differences by programme/sector or gender? If yes, what patterns?
- What emotions show up most often after scrolling?
- What coping strategies do students use?
- Can you share one example of upward comparison and one of downward comparison you’ve seen recently? (without naming students)
- When might downward comparison be harmful too? (mocking others, exclusion, “at least I’m not them” mindset)

Ask groups to list both the potential negative impacts (envy, low self-esteem) and any potential positive impacts (motivation, inspiration).

Activity: Antidote: Self-compassion (45 minutes)

Educator introduces the concept of self-compassion as an antidote to the negative effects of social comparison. Three components of self-compassion are explained: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. To make input easier, use the work of Dr. Kristin Neff (<https://self-compassion.org/self-compassion-practices/>) to present the model. Play a short guided meditation or video from her website.

Afterwards, participants will be guided through a simple self-compassion exercise. "Self-Compassion Break" (<https://self-compassion.org/exercises/exercise-2-self-compassion-break/>) is a great way to do this. This is a brief, powerful exercise that can be easily taught to students. After the exercise, have participants share their experiences in pairs.

In the end of this activity, start a discussion on how self-compassion can help students to be more resilient in the face of failure and criticism, both of which are common in the world of social media.

Activity: Fostering a healthy mindset (30 minutes)

The educator then leads a discussion on practical strategies for helping students to develop a healthier relationship with social media.



Workshop title: Authenticity vs. image crafting in career development

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: In the world of social media, the line between authenticity and crafted image can be blurry. For VET students, navigating this challenge is tricky. Therefore, this workshop explores the concept of personal branding and the importance of authenticity in building fulfilling career. It will equip educators to guide students in developing a personal brand that is both strategic and true to themselves. Participants will explore how a strong personal brand can help students to stand out in overwhelming digital surroundings, attract opportunities that are connected with their goals, and build their community.

Aim of the workshop: to raise the level of knowledge and provide VET educators and experts with personal branding skills, so they can help students in making distinction between image crafting and authenticity, which is important for their future career.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to define** personal branding and explain its importance in career development;
- **to identify** the key elements of a strong personal brand;
- **to analyse** the conflict between authenticity and image crafting in influencer culture;
- **to explain** the concept of vulnerability and its role in building connection and influence;
- **to develop** strategies for helping students to build an authentic personal brand.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Literacy competence
- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

Methodology and methods:

- Interactive presentation
- Personal branding exercise
- Small group work
- Group discussion



Workshop flow:

Activity: What is a personal brand? (30 minutes)

The session starts with the educator asking participants what they think of when they hear the term "personal brand." Write their responses on a flipchart. Address any negative connotations (e.g., "it's fake," "it's all about self-promotion").

The educator reframes personal branding as a process of identifying and communicating one's unique value. To make presentation easier, Northeastern University guide (<https://graduate.northeastern.edu/knowledge-hub/tips-for-building-your-personal-brand/>) can be used to present the key elements of a personal brand. These, for example, include values, skills and passions.

After the input, participants are invited to complete a personal branding exercise. Ask them to identify their own core values, strengths, and passions, and to think about how they could communicate these to others.

In the end, ask some participants to share in a big group.

Activity: How to communicate my personal brand? (20 minutes)

The educator then emphasizes that personal branding is closely connected to employability (CVs, portfolios, interviews, online presence). Once again, it is shared that personal branding is not about pretending; it is about clarity and consistency.

Educator then presents a simple formula for a personal brand statement:

"I help [who] with [what] by [how], and I value [values]."

Participants draft a first version individually, then share in pairs and refine.

The educator invites 2 - 3 examples (voluntary) and models supportive feedback focused on clarity and authenticity.

Activity: The power of authenticity (30 minutes)

The educator then introduces the concept of authenticity and its importance in building trust and connection. A clip from Dr. Brené Brown's TED Talk, "The Power of Vulnerability" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4Qm9cGRub0>) is shown. Lead a discussion on how vulnerability can be a strength, not a weakness.

In small groups, have participants analyze the personal brands of two different influencers: one who is known for their highly polished and curated image, and one who is known for their authenticity and vulnerability. Ask them to discuss the pros and cons



of each approach. Which influencer do they trust more? Which one do they think has a more sustainable career?

When finished, educator leads a group discussion:

- How was this for you?
- What were your main findings?
- How can students be true to themselves while also being strategic about their personal brand?

Activity: Having an authentic brand (30 minutes)

The group is divided into small groups. Each group should find an influencer dealing with specific skills (cooking, mechanic, handy person, accounting) on social media or TikTok. The educator can help with examples of persons, however, it is good that these profiles are local.

After the influencer is chosen, participants should go through the videos and posts and answer the questions:

- What values and strengths are communicated?
- What platforms and formats are used?
- What makes the brand feel authentic/professional?
- What risks or ethical issues could appear?

Groups share their findings and the educator highlights transferable elements for students.

Activity: Closing and connecting with school realities (10 minutes)

Educator closes with a final reflection round with a question: *What advice would you give a student trying to balance authenticity and professionalism online?* Advice that is practical is always encouraged (values, boundaries, transparency, long-term trust).

Divide participants in pairs and let them share one piece of advice and let them write each down on post-it. When done, they should post them on flipchart paper. With this, there is a **wall of advice** visible on the spot regarding personal branding. The educator summarizes recurring themes and encourages participants to translate them into the classroom.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers laptop and projector (for presentation).



Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- Students can create their own personal brand statements and get feedback from their peers.
- If you have an entrepreneur in the local community, the person can be invited to share how they have built their personal brand.

Background documents and further reading:

- Joubert, S. (2024, July 3). *How to build a personal brand: 10 tips*. Northeastern University Graduate Programs. <https://graduate.northeastern.edu/knowledge-hub/tips-for-building-your-personal-brand/>
- TEDx Talks. (2010, October 6). *The power of vulnerability | Brené Brown | TEDxHouston* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4Qm9cGRub0>
- Pebbles-Perretti, N. (2025, July 24). *How to build your personal brand as a student or young professional*. St. John's University. <https://www.stjohns.edu/news-media/johnnies-blog/building-personal-brand-college-students>



Workshop title: Evaluation of Module 2

Duration: 90 minutes

Background: Evaluation is an important component of any learning experience. This provides a structured opportunity for participants to reflect on their learning, check their knowledge, and provide feedback on the content and delivery of Module 2. It also is a connection with the next module, helping participants to see the connections between the different parts of the curriculum.

Aim of the workshop: to evaluate the learning outcomes of Module 2, consolidate knowledge, and gather feedback for future improvements.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to recall** and **summarise** the key concepts and themes of Module 2;
- **to reflect** on their own learning and identify key takeaways;
- **to apply** their knowledge to a real-world case study;
- **to provide** constructive feedback on the content and delivery of Module 1.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Literacy competence
- Personal, social and civic competence

Methodology and methods:

- Group discussion
- Individual reflection
- Feedback session

Workshop flow:

Activity: My learning journey through the module (30 minutes)

Participants receive their learning journeys. Each of them should now add to their learning journeys, and if they need additional paper, they can use it for themselves. They should answer the questions:

- What was the most surprising thing I learned?
- What is one thing I will do differently as a result of this module?
- What is one question I still have?

When finished, participants are divided in pairs to share their updated learning journeys with each other.



The educator says that the learning journeys once again be collected, as they would be updated in the last module.

Activity: Recalling the learning outcomes and objectives (15 minutes)

The educator goes through the learning outcomes and asks participants in an interactive session did we manage to reach them. If something is still missing or there are some additional things needed, the educator says they will receive additional support afterwards with literature, sources or books they can research in their free time.

Activity: Pizza evaluation and round of impressions (45 minutes)

The educator presents the flipchart, with a circle on it. The circle (or “pizza”) is divided in several aspects: content of the module, educators, group atmosphere, my own participation, organisation, lunch.

Participants should come to the flipchart and pick their own unique sign. When they have the sign, they should rate how the module was for them. If their sign is closer to the middle, it means that they were more satisfied. If they have the sign going towards the outer part of the pizza, it means that some things could be improved.

With this, a quick visual summary of satisfaction is received.

In the circle, participants are then asked to share in two sentences:

- *How was Module 2 for me? What am I bringing back?*

The educator thanks participants for their active engagement and announces the dates for the next module.

Materials needed: markers and pens, A3 papers, laptop and projector (for presentation), flipchart, markers.



MODULE 3 OVERVIEW

Module 3 focuses on the practical application of social media platforms in career development, improving competences of educators on how to use digital tools effectively, strategically, and responsibly for career purposes. The background of the module is understanding that social media has become a key component of career management in all sectors, and is used for different purposes, such as networking, personal branding, learning, job searching and even freelance work.

The module begins by introducing the concept of personal branding, which is the process of strategically presenting online in ways that communicate professional identity, values, and competences. Participants learn how personal branding is different from traditional CV presentation and how personal branding is functioning in different social media platforms. The personal branding is about sharing strengths, interests and values, in a way that will be interesting for other audiences.

In this module focus is also put on different social media platforms including Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn. Even though Instagram and TikTok are central to influencer careers and creative professions, LinkedIn still is an important tool that is used for professional networking and job searching.

The module is also dealing with professional etiquette and online communication skills, as effective digital communication needs more than technical usage. Participants explore how to teach students to engage respectfully and professionally with audiences, respond constructively to feedback and criticism, manage conflicts, and build positive online reputations.

One more important topic of Module 3 is connected with digital safety and security. Participants learn how to help students understand the risks associated with digital visibility, including privacy violations, cyberbullying, harassment, identity theft, and reputational damage. The module deals with strategies for protecting personal information, managing privacy settings, understanding platform policies, and responding to online threats.

In the end, the module also explores usage of social media for career exploration, showing how students can use digital platforms to research industries, follow professionals, identify trends, and gain insights into different career pathways. Participants learn how to teach students to use social media as a learning tool, recognizing that digital platforms provide access to professional communities, industry news, and career-related information that can inform career decision-making.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (BLOOM TAXONOMY)

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:



REMEMBERING

Identify social media platforms used for career development and their features

List the key components of personal branding including visual identity, narrative, and audience engagement.

Recall strategies for protecting privacy and security on social media platforms

UNDERSTANDING

Explain the concept of personal branding and its role in career development

Describe the professional applications of Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn

Summarize the principles of professional etiquette and effective online communication

APPLYING

Demonstrate the ability to guide students in creating personal branding strategies

Apply platform-specific content strategies to different career contexts

Use case studies and examples to illustrate effective and ineffective uses of social media for career development

ANALYSING

Examine the differences between personal and professional uses of social media platforms

Differentiate between effective personal branding and problematic self-presentation practices

Analyse the risks and benefits of digital visibility for students

EVALUATING

Assess the suitability of different social media platforms for students with different career goals

Critique examples of personal branding and online communication

Evaluate students readiness to use social media professionally, taking into consideration digital literacy, ethics and risks

CREATING

Design educational activities that teach students to develop personal brands and use social media in strategic way for career purposes

Develop guidelines for professional online communication and digital etiquette

Formulate strategies for integrating social media literacy into existing VET curricula and career counseling

CONNECTIONS TO SUBJECTS AND CROSS-CURRICULUM TOPICS

Module 3 content is important for all VET schools, as social media literacy and digital communication skills are becoming important in every VET sector.

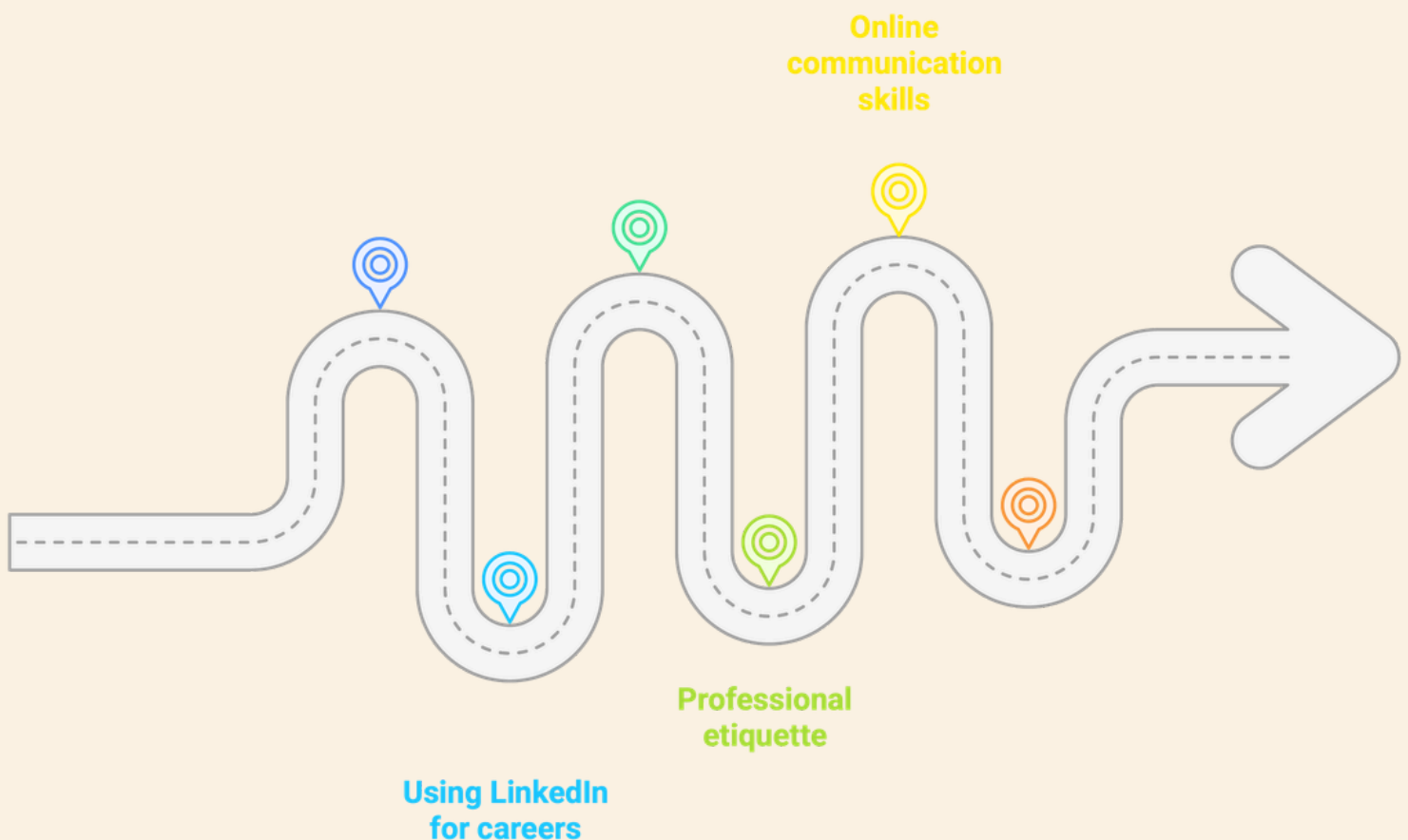


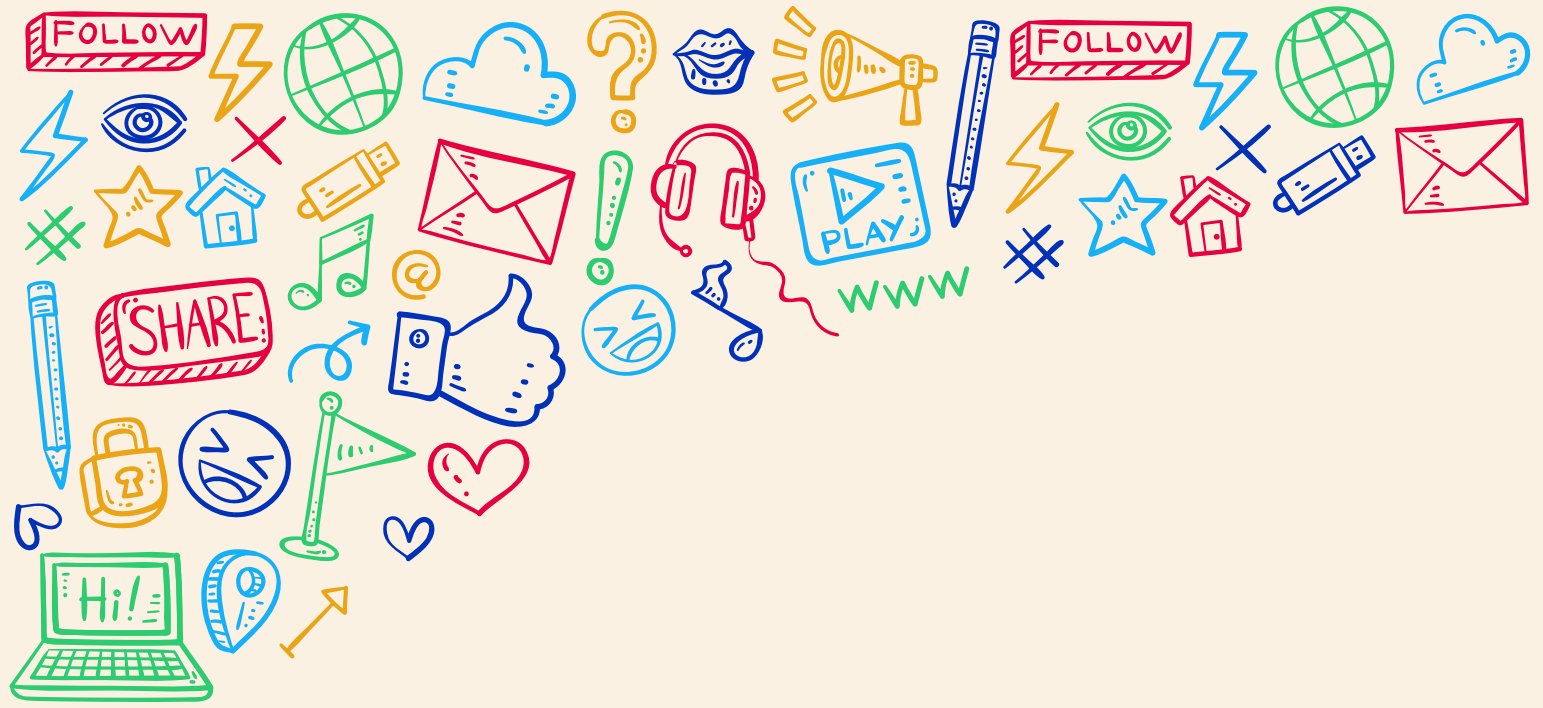
- **Citizenship education:** Ethical online communication, respect for intellectual property, and the responsible use of digital platforms are dimensions of active citizenship. Module 3 content deals with ethical responsibilities of content creators, importance of accuracy and transparency and how to use social media for online debate.
- **Learning to learn:** Using social media for career exploration and learning is a dimension of learning to learn, as it involves information gathering, critical evaluation, networking, and self-directed learning.
- **Health:** The module addresses the psychological and security risks associated with digital visibility, including privacy violations, cyberbullying, and reputational damage.

WORKSHOPS CONNECTED WITH THE MODULE 3

Module 3 consists of the following workshops, each designed to address specific learning objectives and to provide interactive learning experiences for participants:

- Social media: explore the importance of personal branding on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok (120 minutes)
- Utilising LinkedIn for career development (120 minutes)
- Utilising social media for career exploration (120 minutes)
- Professional etiquette and online communication skills (120 minutes)
- Evaluation of the module (90 minutes)





Workshops

for the Module 3



Workshop title: Social media: explore the importance of personal branding on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: In today's digital age, a strong online presence is no longer optional, it's essential. For VET students, learning how to build a personal brand on social media is a critical skill for career success. This workshop provides a practical, hands-on introduction to personal branding on three of the most popular platforms for young people: Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. The workshop moves beyond the theoretical concepts of personal branding covered in Module 2 and focuses on the practical application of these concepts. Participants will explore the unique features and culture of each platform, and will learn how to tailor their content and communication style to each one.

Aim of the workshop: to provide educators with the practical skills and knowledge to teach VET students how to build a professional and authentic personal brand on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to compare and contrast** the features and culture of Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok;
- **to analyze** the social media presence of successful professionals in different field;
- **to develop** a content strategy for a personal brand on one or more of these platform;
- **to identify** the potential risks and challenges of using social media for professional purposes;
- **to create** a set of guidelines for students on how to use social media responsibly and effectively for their career development.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Literacy competence
- Multilingualism competence
- Digital competence
- Entrepreneurship competence

Methodology and methods:

- Platform analysis
- Case study analysis
- Content creation exercise



Activity: Learning from the professionals (40 minutes)

In the same small groups, participants need to choose a professional or a company in a field that is relevant to their students and analyse their social media presence. They should look at their profiles on at least two different platforms and answer the questions on the **worksheet**. This will help them to see how professionals adapt their content and style to different platforms.

Activity: Your personal brand on social media (45 minutes)

The educator reminds participants about the personal branding session from the Module 2. Ask them:

- What do you remember about personal branding?
- What are key elements?
- Why is it important for students?

Afterwards, participants should work individually to create a simple content plan for a fictional student. They should choose a platform and brainstorm a week's worth of content ideas that would help the student to build their personal brand. They should think about a mix of content types, such as educational posts, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and personal stories.

Participants should share their plans, it is not necessary they share all the plans, but just some interesting aspect of them.

Activity: Closing (5 minutes)

After all of this, the educator asks participants to write down one piece of advice they will give to their students about using social media for their career and share it in a circle.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers, laptop and projector (for presentation), printed copies of worksheet.

Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- Students can create their own social media content plans and get feedback from their peers.
- You can invite a social media manager or a digital marketing professional to be a guest speaker.

Background documents and further reading:

- Pebbles-Perretti, N. (2025, July 24). How to build your personal brand as a student or young professional. St. John's University, <https://www.stjohns.edu/news-media/johnnies-blog/building-personal-brand-college-students>



- Beu, A., Brown, T., Bulanda, J., Li, F., Mason, T., Mayed, S., & Pena, N. (2025, November 7). Gen Z gets career guidance on social media. JFF Britebound Center, <https://asacareernav.jff.org/gen-z-gets-career-guidance-on-social-media/>



WORKSHEET: SOCIAL MEDIA: EXPLORE THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL BRANDING

Activity: Learning from the professionals

Group members: _____

Field relevant to your students: _____

Chosen professional/company: _____

Name of platform 1: _____

Name of platform 2: _____

1) First impressions

In one sentence, what do you think this profile is trying to achieve on **Platform 1**?

In one sentence, what do you think this profile is trying to achieve on **Platform 2**?

2) Audience and tone

Who is the target audience on each platform? What makes you think so?

Platform 1: _____

Platform 2: _____

How would you describe the tone/style on each platform (e.g., professional, friendly, humorous, trendy, technical)?

Platform 1: _____

Platform 2: _____

3) Content patterns (look at 6-8 recent posts per platform)

What are the 3 most common content themes/topics on Platform 1?

1. _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

What are the 3 most common content themes/topics on Platform 2?

1. _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

What formats do they use most on each platform (e.g., short video, photos, carousel, stories, text)? Why do you think they chose those?

Platform 1: _____

Platform 2: _____



4) Compare and adapt

What stays consistent across platforms (identity/brand/message)? Give 2 examples.

What changes across platforms (content, style, posting rhythm, interaction)? Why?

5) Credibility and media literacy

What signals of professionalism/expertise do you notice (proof of work, behind-the-scenes, certificates, client feedback, results)?

Do you notice promotion/advertising/sponsorship? If yes, how is it presented?

Is there anything that could be misleading, risky, or problematic (e.g., unrealistic claims, missing context, stereotypes)?



6) Transfer to teaching practice

What could your students learn from this example (skills, communication, employability, entrepreneurship)?

Create one quick classroom task inspired by this analysis (10–20 minutes). What would students produce?



Activity: Social media posts for a student

Day	Type	Topic/Idea (What will the post be about?)	Value (What will the audience learn/feel?)	Evidence (What will you show as proof (process/result?))	Format (Reel/TikTok/Carousel/Story/Photo/Thread)	CTA (What should people do: Follow/Save/Comment/DM/Share
Mon						
Tue						
Wed						
Thu						
Fri						
Sat						
Sun						



Workshop flow:

Activity: Live demonstration of the profile creation (60 minutes)

Educator starts with a live demonstration of how to create a LinkedIn profile. To make it easier, there is the possibility to use the official LinkedIn for Students Guide (<https://careers.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/careers/StudentCareers/about/LL-Students-Guide-To-LinkedIn.pdf>) as a framework for the demonstration. The educator goes through each section of the profile, from the photo and headline to the experience and skills sections, providing tips and best practices along the way.

Participants are invited to either: work on their own LinkedIn profiles, applying the tips and best practices from the demonstration; or create a new profile to see how it can look like. Educator should encourage participants to focus on writing a strong headline and summary, as these are the most important parts of the profile. The Jobscan guide (<https://www.jobscan.co/blog/linkedin-summary-examples/>) provides good examples, which can be presented.

Art of networking (30 minutes)

The educator should lead a discussion on the do's and don'ts of networking on LinkedIn. Ask participants: What do you think is important to network on LinkedIn - what are do's and don'ts?

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Personalize every connection request: mention <i>how you found them</i> and <i>why you're connecting</i>.● Be specific and respectful: ask for something small (e.g., “one tip” or “5 minutes of advice”), not a big favor.● Show genuine interest: reference their role, project, post, or company work.● Keep it short: 2-4 sentences is usually enough.● Use a professional profile first: clear photo, headline, and a few lines in “About” so people trust you.● Make it mutually relevant: explain what you share (school, field, event, topic) and what you hope to learn.● Follow up politely (once): if they accept, thank them and <i>don't immediately ask for a job</i>.● Engage before you ask: like/comment on a post or read their work so your message feels natural.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Don't send the default “I'd like to add you...” with no context.● Don't start with “Hi, can you give me a job?” or push your CV in the first message.● Don't write a long life story or a paragraph-heavy message.● Don't copy-paste the same message to everyone (it's obvious).● Don't be overly casual (“Hey bro”, emojis overload) or overly intense (“I NEED...”).● Don't ask for confidential info (salary details, internal hiring decisions, personal contacts).● Don't tag or DM repeatedly if they don't respond—avoid spamming.● Don't criticize their company/industry in the first interaction.● Don't misrepresent yourself (fake titles, exaggerated experience).● Don't forget to say thanks after acceptance or help.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be transparent: if you're a student, say so—people often respond well to honest learning goals. ● Respect boundaries and time: if they don't reply, leave it. 	
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Emphasize the importance of personalizing connection requests and building genuine relationships.

Then, the educator instruct the participants to practice sending personalized connection requests. They should find three people they would like to connect with (e.g., alumni from their school, professionals in their field of interest) and write a personalized connection request to each one. They should not actually send the requests, but should share them with a partner for feedback after the task is over.

Activity: LinkedIn as a research tool (25 minutes)

Educator shows participants how to use the alumni tool to see where graduates from their school are working, how to research companies and industries, and how to follow thought leaders to stay up-to-date on industry trends. Then, ask participants to use LinkedIn to research a company or industry they are interested in. Ask them to find three interesting facts and share them with the group. This will help them to see the value of LinkedIn as a research tool.

Activity: Reflection (5 minutes)

Educator asks participants to write down one action they will take to encourage their students to use LinkedIn for their career development.

Materials needed: computers for participants, post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers, laptop and projector, worksheet.

Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- Offer a "LinkedIn Lab" where students can come to get one-on-one help with their profiles.
- If you teach photography, you can organise class to create LinkedIn profile pictures and that VET students learn how to make them.

Background documents and further reading:

- LinkedIn. (2016). *The Student's guide to LinkedIn* [PDF].
LinkedIn. <https://careers.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/careers/StudentCareers/about/LI-Students-Guide-To-LinkedIn.pdf>



- Henderson, R. (2025, May 19). *How to write a LinkedIn summary (with examples)*. Jobscan. <https://www.jobscan.co/blog/linkedin-summary-examples/>
- University of Cincinnati. (2025, November). *LinkedIn profile examples for students: What to include*. UC News. <https://www.uc.edu/news/articles/2025/11/linkedin-profile-examples-for-students.html>



Workshop flow:

Activity: The social media scavenger hunt (30 minutes)

The educator starts with an interactive presentation on how to use social media for career exploration. A great source of inspiration is an UMGC guide (<https://www.umgc.edu/career-connection/articles/how-to-leverage-social-media-for-job-search-success>) that can provide a framework for the discussion. The educator can cover topics such as following industry leaders, joining relevant groups, and using hashtags to track trends.

Participants should go on a "social media scavenger hunt" They should use at least two different social media platforms to find information about a career they are interested in. This could include finding a professional in that field, a relevant company or organization, a recent news article or blog post, or an upcoming event.

The task goes like this: Choose a career and use social media to find the following information:

- What is the career you have chosen?
- What is the typical salary?
- What are required skills and education?
- What are day-to-day responsibilities?
- Who are professionals in this field to follow?

Introduction to Informational Interview (45 minutes)

The educator introduces the concept of an informational interview, including explaining what it is, why it is a valuable career exploration tool, and how it is different from a job interview. To find more information about the informational interview, Duke Career Hub guide (<https://careerhub.students.duke.edu/resources/informational-interviewing-guide/>) provides a clear definition and overview.

In small groups, participants should brainstorm a list of questions they could ask in an informational interview. The educator encourages them to think of questions that are open-ended and that will help them to learn about the person's career path, their industry, and their company.

If someone is stuck with the questions, University at Buffalo guide provides a great list of potential questions (<https://management.buffalo.edu/career-resource-center/students/networking/mentorlink/40-questions-to-ask-in-an-informational-interview.html>).

Then, divide participants in pairs - they should have a role-play requesting and conducting a short (10-minute) informational interview. One person plays the VET



student, and the other plays the professional. The "student" should practice their introduction, their key questions, and their closing. After 5 minutes, the roles switch.

Activity: Building a contact-yes profile (35 minutes)

For this task, participants can think of a fictional VET student or even take themselves as an example. Besides them or a student, they should find a professional whom they want to contact. Participants will need to make a small brief by using the following questions:

- Who are they and what do they do?
- What signals credibility/expertise?
- What common ground can we mention?
- What would be a respectful ask?
- What is the best channel (LinkedIn/email) and why?

Share your findings in trios, and discuss: What could be easy or challenging for VET students? Could they reach out? What could I do as an expert?

Activity: Closing (10 minutes)

Educator summarises the key strategies for using social media for career exploration and once again mentioned the value of informational interviewing.

To reflect, participants are asked to write down one thing they will do to encourage their students to be more proactive in their career exploration.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers laptop and projector

Recommendations for multiplying this session:

- Host a "career exploration fair" where students can practice their informational interviewing skills.
- Create a database of alumni and other professionals who are willing to be contacted by students for informational interviews.

Background documents and further reading:

- UMGC Career Services. (2024, July 17). *How to leverage social media for job search success*. University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) Career Connection. <https://www.umgc.edu/career-connection/articles/how-to-leverage-social-media-for-job-search-success>



- Duke Career Center. (n.d.). *Informational interviewing guide*. Duke Career Hub. <https://careerhub.students.duke.edu/resources/informational-interviewing-guide/>
- University at Buffalo, School of Management, Career Resource Center. (n.d.). *40 questions to ask in an informational interview*. <https://management.buffalo.edu/career-resource-center/students/networking/mentorlink/40-questions-to-ask-in-an-informational-interview.html>



Workshop title: Professional etiquette and online communication skills

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: As we live in the digital age, skills of online communication and etiquette became crucial for everyday functioning. VET students need to be equipped with the skills to communicate professionally and effectively in different online contexts: these can include emails, social media or having a Zoom call. Therefore, this workshop provides an overview of professional etiquette and online communication skills, empowering educators in this field. They will improve their communication and digital competences.

Aim of the workshop: to improve the competences of educators in the field of professional etiquette and online communication skills, so they can transfer the knowledge about effective communication and online reputation to their VET students.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to explain** the key principles of professional communication;
- **to apply** the rules of email etiquette;
- **to describe** the concept of a digital footprint and its importance;
- **to develop** strategies for helping students to build and maintain a positive online reputation;
- **to teach** their students how to communicate professionally in a variety of online contexts.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Literacy competence
- Digital competence
- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence

Methodology and methods:

- Interactive presentation
- Email critique
- Persona building
- Group discussion

Workshop flow:

Activity: Professional e-mail writing (30 minutes)

The educator kicks off the session with an interactive presentation on the basics of email etiquette. For the purpose of this input, the **Grammarly** blog post or the **Purdue OWL** guide can cover the key do's and don'ts.



(<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/emailing/email-etiquette-rules-to-know/>)
 (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/email_etiquette.html)

Down below in a table is a short overview:

DO's (What you should do)	DON'T's (What you should avoid)
Use a clear, detailed subject line - so the recipient knows the purpose. (grammarly.com)	Don't use vague or empty subject lines (e.g., "Hi", "FYI"). (grammarly.com)
Begin with a proper greeting (Dear/Hello + name). (grammarly.com)	Don't skip a greeting or use overly casual starters. (owl.purdue.edu)
Use a professional sign-off (Regards, Sincerely, Best). (grammarly.com)	Don't end abruptly without a closing. (grammarly.com)
Keep emails concise but complete - include necessary info. (grammarly.com)	Don't write long, meandering emails that waste time. (owl.purdue.edu)
Proofread before sending (grammar, spelling, names). (grammarly.com)	Don't send without proofreading - mistakes look unprofessional. (grammarly.com)
Wait 24 hours before following up on unanswered emails. (grammarly.com)	Don't rush follow-ups; immediate repeat messages may seem pushy. (grammarly.com)
Use CC/BCC appropriately (keep privacy & relevance in mind). (grammarly.com)	Don't hit "Reply All" unnecessarily - don't clutter inboxes. (grammarly.com)
Describe attachments clearly so the reader understands them. (grammarly.com)	Don't attach files without explaining what they are. (grammarly.com)
Use professional tone and audience-appropriate language. (grammarly.com)	Don't use casual slang, jokes, or emojis in formal emails. (grammarly.com)
Adjust level of detail for your audience (student, professor, employer). (grammarly.com)	Don't use text abbreviations (like "u" for "you"). (owl.purdue.edu)
Be direct and to the point - start with purpose early. (owl.purdue.edu)	Don't bury your main message later in the email. (owl.purdue.edu)

In small groups, participants should analyse two poorly written emails. For each email, they should identify the mistakes and then rewrite the email to be more professional.



E-mail 1:

Subject: hey

Hi,

I need the papers you mentioned and also can you send me the thing we talked about? I don't remember what it was called but you know. Anyway I need it asap because I have stuff to do and this is taking too long. Also last time you didn't answer so please don't ignore this again.

Send it today.

Thanks

E-mail 2:

Subject: URGENT!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you because I have a problem and it's really not ok. I emailed already like 3 times and nobody cares. I want you to fix this immediately. I was told the deadline is next week but maybe it's this week?? you need to tell me now. If you don't answer I will complain because this is unprofessional.

Also can you schedule a meeting tomorrow at 8am. I'm free then so it should be fine. Please confirm.

Regards,

Mark

Activity: Your digital footprint (20 minutes)

The educator gives a challenge to the participants, which should be divided in pairs. They should use their smartphones or other devices, for 15 minutes, to find as much information as possible about their pair. The results are shared in the plenary.

In the end, the concept of digital footprint is introduced and a video about digital footprint is presented: <https://youtu.be/F7pYHN9iC9I>.



Discussion is held:

- How to build a positive digital footprint?
- What do you need to do? And your students?
- What about GDPR?

Activity: Persona building (60 minutes)

The educator says that up until now we have talked about what NOT to do. Now we should look at something more strategic: Who are you professionally online? And in order to do this, the method which is usually used is Persona building.

Persona building is not a marketing strategy, but it is a tool that helps educators and others understand who they are online, or they can think about their VET students when doing the exercise.

For the purpose of the exercise, they should think about a typical VET student from their school. In small groups of three, they should answer the following questions:

- How old is your persona? (age range, be as precise as possible)
- What are this person's values and attitudes?
- Which everyday life topics interest this person the most?
- What are their biggest challenges in life or at school?
- What motivates your persona and what do they want to achieve in life?
- In which region/local community does the person live and how does that influence them?
- How do they prefer to communicate (online or in person, which platforms do they use...)?
- How do they get information (radio, television, newspapers, flyers, websites, social media, through education...)?
- What would someone learn about the persona from their: email tone, LinkedIn profile or public comments on social media?
- Who does your persona communicate to? What is the communication style they use (formal, semi-formal, short, direct,...)?

On a flipchart paper, they should draw a typical VET student, in the middle. Around the student they should answer these questions. They should name their persona as well.

When they are finished, personas are presented. Educator starts the debrief of the activity:

- How was this exercise for you?
- What surprised you while creating this persona?
- Was it easy or difficult to define their values and motivations? Why?
- Which questions were hardest to answer?
- Does this persona resemble someone you already work with?



Activity: Closing and reflection (10 minutes)

Educator summarizes the key principles of professional etiquette and online reputation management.

The participants are asked how they can use this in everyday practice and do they find the tools they received useful.

Materials needed: post-it notes (multiple colors), markers and pens, flipchart papers laptop and projector (for presentation)

Background documents and further reading:

- Kramer, L. (2023, July 20). *19 email etiquette rules to know, with examples.* Grammarly. <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/emailing/email-etiquette-rules-to-know/>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Email etiquette.* Purdue University. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/email_etiquette.html
- Listen360. (2025, January 21). *Your guide to online reputation management: Keep customers coming back!* <https://www.listen360.com/blog/guide-to-online-reputation-management/>



Workshop title: Evaluation of Module 3

Duration: 90 minutes

Background: This final session of the curriculum provides an opportunity for participants to consolidate their learning from Module 3, reflect on the program as a whole, and plan for the future. The session will begin with a review of the key themes and strategies covered in Module 3, with a focus on the practical application of social media for career development. Participants will then have the opportunity to develop a personal action plan, outlining the specific steps they will take to integrate the tools and concepts from the curriculum into their work with VET students.

Aim of the workshop: to evaluate participants' learning and gather feedback on Module 3 and the curriculum as a whole.

Objectives of the workshop:

- **to reflect** on learning and growth throughout the Module and entire curriculum;
- **to create** a personal action plan for implementing the curriculum in their own work.

Competences addressed by this workshop:

- Literacy competence
- Personal, social and civic competence

Methodology and methods:

- Group discussion
- Video watching
- Action planning

Workshop flow:

Activity: My learning journey through the module (20 minutes)

As on previous modules, participants receive their learning journeys. Each of them should now add to their learning journeys, and if they need additional paper, they can use it for themselves. They should answer the questions:

- What was the most surprising thing I learned?
- What is one thing I will do differently as a result of this module?

When finished, participants are divided in pairs to share their updated learning journeys with each other.



Activity: By the time you wake up, you have scrolled five lives! (30 minutes)

In order to consolidate what we have learned, the educator suggests that we watch a documentary called “A new form of capitalism: Influencer culture”, which summarises some of the topics covered within the modules.

The video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vl3Kkjbvryk>.

When the watching is finished, educator asks the questions:

- How was the video for you?
- Did you recall some of the things we did in the modules?
- Did you get anything new?

Activity: My InfluVET action plan (20 minutes)

The educator shares that the end of the training is just the beginning of their journey. The goal is to take the knowledge and tools from the curriculum and use them to make a real impact on their students.

Therefore, participants should create a personal "InfluVET action plan." This can be a simple document where they outline 1 to 3 specific goals for the next 3 to 6 months. For each goal, they should identify the steps they will take, the resources they will need, and how they will measure success.

When done, in pairs, participants share their action plans and provide each other with feedback.

Activity: Final feedback and closing (20 minutes)

In the end, participants are thanked for their commitment and hard work throughout the training courses.

Educator starts a short reflection:

- How was the whole training course for you?
- Do you see applicability in your school surroundings?
- What was the most useful for you? And is there anything to change?

The educator closes the training course and says to participants that they can network more on the influVET platform.

Materials needed: markers and pens, A3 papers, laptop and projector (for presentation), speakers, flipchart, markers.





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