



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

A terminology on transversal skills and competences and its integration in ESCO v.1.1

ESCO MSWG 19 November 2020

Jens Bjørnåvold



The expert group on transversal skills and competences (TSC)

Mandate spring 2019 from EQF Advisory Group and ESCO MSWG; to refine and structure the existing terminology on transversal skills and competences in ESCO

Mapped and analysed existing terminological sources and approaches (+250 sources – building on these for the new proposal – 1200+ concepts identified – a final selection of 100+ concepts to populate the structure).

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John Hart, Martin Noack, Claudia Plaimauer (External experts) and Jens Bjørnåvold (Cedefop)



The definition of transversal skills and competences

*Transversal skills and competences (TSCs) are **learned and proven abilities** which are commonly seen as necessary or valuable for effective action in virtually **any kind of work, learning or life activity**. They are “transversal” because they are **not exclusively related to any particular context** (job, occupation, academic discipline, occupational sector, group of occupational sectors, etc.).*

(Source: ESCO expert group on transversal skills and competences)



Categories of TSC

The working group suggests operating with five main categories of transversal skills and competences:

- Language skills and competences
- Thinking (cognitive) skills and competences
- Self-management skills and competences
- Social and communication skills and competences
- Life Skills and competences

These five categories are closely interconnected and moves from the individual's reasoning and self-awareness to the social and external.



Language skills and competences - Clusters of skills and competences

Language is at the core of any human activity and provides the starting point for any terminology in this area. Skills and competences will relate to the four dimensions of language competence:

- Reading;
- Writing;
- Speaking;
- Understanding.



Thinking skills and competences – clusters of skills and competences

Being in possession of thinking skills and competences allows the individual to deal with abstract cognitive concepts. Thinking skills and competences can be divided into the following clusters:

- Acquiring and managing information;
- Analysing or processing information;
- Planning and organising;
- Addressing problems and issues;
- Creating and innovating.

Self-management skills and competences - clusters

Being in possession of self-management skills allows the individual to reflect on and make best use of own abilities and potential. Self-management skills can be divided according to the following clusters:

- Responding to routine requirements and tasks
- Acting according to values
- Acting independently and showing initiative
- Managing negative factors in life and work
- Reacting constructively to change
- Engaging in self-development



Social and communication skills and competences - clusters

Being in possession of social and communication skills and competences allows the individual to interact with other people. Social and communication skills can be divided according to the following clusters:

- Using language, symbols and text to communicate effectively
- Showing respect and consideration for others
- Supporting others
- Collaborating with others in teams and networks
- Managing and leading others
- Conciliating and negotiating



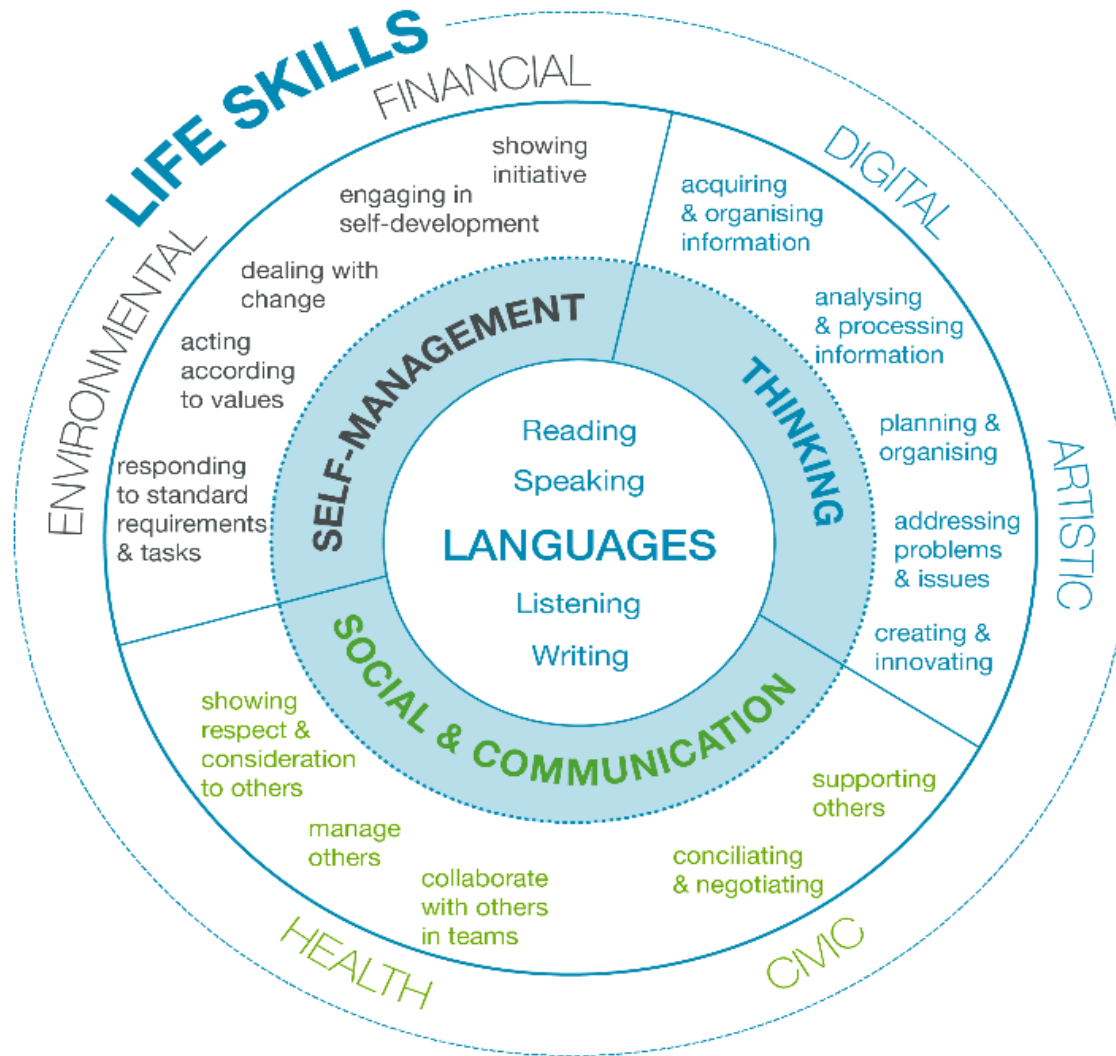
Life Skills and competences - clusters

Being in possession of Life Skills and Competences allows the individual to deal with the conditions and responsibilities of life in modern society:

- Maintaining physical and emotional well-being (Health literacy)
- Managing financial and other resources to realise opportunities and achieve (Financial Literacy)
- Working with computers (Digital Literacy)
- Adopting environmentally responsible strategies, objective and practices (Environmental Literacy)
- Seeking opportunities for civic empowerment and involvement (Civic Literacy)
- Appreciating and expressing artistic potential (Artistic Literacy)

The selection of single TSC concepts for the categories and Clusters

- Selection based on existing TSC terms in ESCO + extensive literature review (which identified more than 1200 single concepts and terms)
- Aimed for a limited number of concepts (100-200); allows for detail but supports user friendliness
- Single concepts were chosen so as to reflect the range defined by each Category and Cluster
- The basic structure of categories leaves room for future additions and improvement



TSCs in ESCO

- ESCO v1.0. never fully integrated TSCs; this needs to be systematically addressed by ESCO 1.1
- The revised terminology of transversal skills and competences should form part of version 1.1 of ESCO to be published in 2021
- The revised terminology should strengthen the overall ESCO skills pillar (+/-13000 concepts).

A terminological reference point

The new TSC structure needs to act as a reference point and resource for the overall development of the skills pillar. It can support

- a simplification of terminology by avoiding duplication and unnecessary confusion of terms
- a template to be used across sectors to systematically express and highlight transversal skills across occupations and sectors.
- a starting point for contextualisation; allowing for a more consistent expression of cross-sectoral, sectoral and occupation-specific skills.



Use of TSC structure outside ESCO

- The structure is designed as a map of transversal skills and competences allowing users to clarify the orientation of own applications (along a continuum from the internal personal to the interaction with the external world).
- The logic behind the structure is critical when (for example) defining and writing learning outcomes statements to be used for an education or occupation standard, when designing a curriculum for vocational training or writing the specifications for an assessment procedure.

What does contextualisation of transversal skills mean?

Skill contextualisation: examples

work in teams (transversal skill)

collaborate with animal related professionals
collaborate with coaching team
collaborate with engineers
consult team on creative project
coordinate engineering teams
develop design ideas cooperatively

make decisions (transversal skill)

decide on infestation treatment type
decide on insurance applications
decide on loan applications
decide on make-up process
decide on products to be stocked
decide on providing funds
decide on type of genetic testing
decide on wig making process

Why is skill contextualisation useful?



Francoise is an employer who needs to draft a CV for a profile in civil engineering and tries to understand the importance of transversal skills.

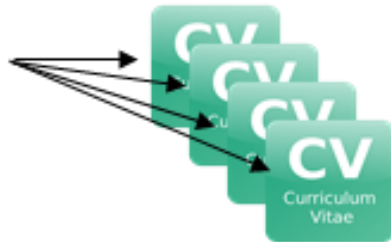
Example

Work in teams: abstract

Collaborate with engineers: precise



Martin is a jobseeker with experience in collaborating with engineers.



Job matching: links to contextualised transversal skills facilitate transition to another job/sector. In their absence, **employers** and **job seekers** will need to link all transversal skills to every occupation → abstract

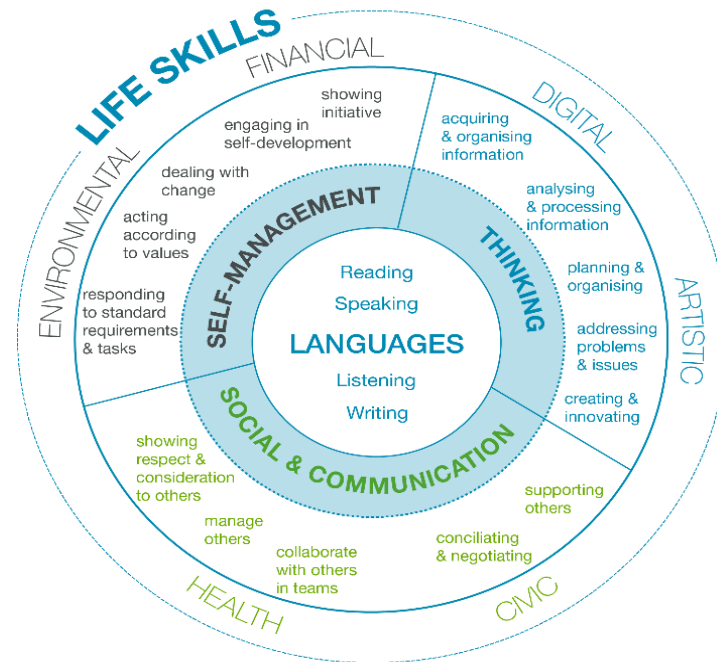
Placement of the newly created transversal skill clusters and skills in the ESCO skill hierarchy

1st scenario: Separate listing of transversal skills

ESCO skill hierarchy

- ▼ S - skills
 - › S1 - communication, collaborati...
 - › S2 - information skills
 - › S3 - assisting and caring
 - › S4 - management skills
 - › S5 - working with computers
 - › S6 - handling and moving
 - › S7 - constructing
 - › S8 - working with machinery an...

New list of transversal skills



2nd scenario: listing of transversal skills within the ESCO skills hierarchy

✓ S - skills

- › S1 - communication, collaborati...
- › S2 - information skills
- › S3 - assisting and caring
- › S4 - management skills
- › S5 - working with computers
- › S6 - handling and moving
- › S7 - constructing
- › S8 - working with machinery an...

✓ S1 - communication, collaborati...

- › S1.0 - communication, colla...
- › S1.1 - negotiating
- › S1.2 - liaising and networking
- › S1.3 - teaching and training
- › S1.4 - presenting information
- › S1.5 - advising and consulting
- › S1.6 - promoting, selling an...
- › S1.7 - obtaining information ...
- › S1.8 - working with others
- › S1.9 - solving problems
- › S1.11 - designing systems a...
- › S1.12 - creating artistic, vis...
- › S1.13 - writing and composi...
- › S1.14 - performing and ente...
- › S1.15 - using more than one...

+
S1.16 T-skill clusters

...

✓ S1.1.3 - responding to co...

- follow up complaint reports
- › handle complaints
- › handle customer com...
- handle game complaints
- handle incoming insuranc...
- handle jewellery and wat...
- handle returns
- handle spectator complai...
- investigate complaints ab...
- manage employee compl...
- respond to emergency ca...
- respond to visitor compla...

+
T-skills

...

3rd scenario: systematic contextualisation of transversal skills

work in teams (transversal skill)

collaborate with animal related professionals
collaborate with coaching team
collaborate with engineers
consult team on creative project
coordinate engineering teams
develop design ideas cooperatively

make decisions (transversal skill)

decide on infestation treatment type
decide on insurance applications
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