rectec

Identifying transversal skills for employability and certifications

HANDBOOK

EUROPEAN PROJECT 2016-2019

Translated by Elsa BERT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Translated from French, August 2019

The European RECTEC project: identifying transversal skills for employability and certifications

Started in 2016, the RECTEC project aims at promoting employability by identifying transversal skills and matching them with professional certifications. Managed by the GIP-FCIP of the Académie de Versailles[1] (France), it brings together actors from the field of professional training and integration from three French-speaking countries: Belgium, France and Luxembourg[2].

The RECTEC project is an answer to the need of workers from the fields of education, training, certification and career exploration to have assessment tools with both qualitative gradings and correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)*. This need comes from the principles guiding the securing of career paths, according to which a graded system allows for a better visualization of one's positioning and/or progress.

RECTEC's main challenge is to create and put to use a competency reference guide[3] that would be common to the whole system of actors working in the professional training and integration fields. Graded skill proficiency scales allow us to acknowledge partially mastered skills and to identify those to be developed to reach EQF's level 2, 3 or 4.

The elaboration of this reference guide is based on the work of AEFA France* (European Agenda for Adult Learning) which developed an approach that included and graded skills from both the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* and the Key Competences for lifelong learning*[4]. Particular attention is paid to the so-called "basic" skills, which are named and integrated in the transversal skills. The logic of progression follows an approach by situations, promoting links between experience, activities and skills on one side, and factual and guided self-assessment by beneficiaries on the other.

Skills are also calibrated using two other criteria defined in the EQF: autonomy and responsibility, at levels corresponding with activities and jobs from the first four levels of the EQF.

The collective elaboration of the intellectual production was done in three steps:

1. Creation of a consensual competency reference guide whose scales followed the EQF's first four levels.
2. Experiments monitored and analysed with a protocol developed by Ingrid de Saint-Georges from the University of Luxembourg.
3. Formalization in this handbook of the most frequent uses and goals identified during the experiments.

For more information: **http://rectec.ac-versailles.fr/le-projet/** (fr).

* See Resources, p. 50.

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[1] Public Interest Consortium—Continuing Education and Professional Integration (*Groupement d'Intérêt Public - Formation Continue et Insertion Professionnelle*).

[2] Belgium: ASBL AID, Alter Form and the Skills Validation Consortium (*Consortium de validation des compétences*). France: GIP-FCIP of the Versailles Academy, ID6 and Nantes's CAFOC. Luxembourg: 4Motion, De Reso and the University of Luxembourg.

[3] Translator's note: *Référentiels de compétences*, translated here as competency reference guides can also be referred to as competency dictionaries.

[4] Cf. AEFA, *Évaluer les compétences transversales : un guide pour identifier, évaluer et développer les compétences transversales*, p. 9.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. What do we mean by "transversal skills"?

Competency is a concept without clear delimitations. Many academic studies have been conducted on this subject and there are probably as many definitions as there are experts who have worked on the question. As an illustration, we can quote:

Philippe PERRENOUD for whom "a skill is the ability to act efficiently when confronted with a family of situations that one manages to master because they have both the necessary knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge appropriately and with the right timing, to identify or solve real problems"[5].

Jacques TARDIF considers that "a skill is to know how to act in a family of situations thanks to the complex and efficient combination and mobilization of a variety of internal and external resources"[6].

Guy LE BOTERF specifies that "competency does not lie in the resources to be mobilized (knowledge, abilities…), but in the mobilization of the resources itself. Competency is a form of "know how to mobilize"[7].

Common traits emerge from these definitions.

- A skill relies on the mobilization, integration and connection of a variety of resources: internal resources unique to each individual (knowledge, capacities, abilities) but also external resources that can be mobilized in the environment (other people, documents, digital tools…).
- This mobilization of resources happens in a specific situation in order to act: competency is always contextualized. However, it deploys itself in a variety of situations through a process of adaptation, not just through the reproduction of standard mechanisms.

The RECTEC approach is based on this definition that synthesizes the views of the three authors aforementioned.

Transversal skills are discussed in a rich literature that also investigates other concepts used in the field of adult and young adult support (basic skills, key competences, professional knowledge and skills base, professional behavioural skills, soft skills, etc.).

The notion of transversal skills is found more particularly in a professional context and can describe skills that are common across different jobs or different situations within a specific job.

Transversal skills contribute to improving people's career development, professional mobility and employability—that is to say, their ability to be in employment.

The importance currently given to the field of transversal skills will be illustrated at the beginning of Chapter II through the situation of a family conversation.

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[5] PERRENOUD Philippe, *Construire les compétences dès l'école*, ESF, Paris 1999.

[6] TARDIF Jacques, April 27th conference at the Université de Sherbrooke, *L'évaluation des compétences : de la nécessité de documenter un parcours de formation.*

[7] LE BOTERF Guy, *De la compétence : essai sur un attracteur étrange*, Éditions d'organisation, 1994

I.2. Conceptual background

Even though the usefulness of transversal skills is unanimously agreed on, their acknowledgment is not a given. To be able to acknowledge them, we need concrete and shared elements. The chosen conceptual background relies on principles that facilitate access to examples illustrating those skills.

I.2.1. An approach to skills focused on action in context

The notion of competency implies that everyone is aware of the frameworks of the actions they carry out (regulations, quality standards, social norms in various situations…) and plays their part in the good "health" of the production system and workplace relationships. A "competency philosophy" emerges, characterized by themes like "taking initiative, taking responsibility, power of cooperation, and need for rectitude"[8].

These dynamics are not specific to one type of position nor one type of company or professional field, but they accompany changes both deep and transversal in the "individual's relationship to their work and the organization"[9].

In the context of changes caused by digitalisation and artificial intelligence, skills related to problem-solving and management of uncertainty are very much sought after by recruiters.

To support these changes and develop evaluation processes with a skill and mobility focus, we need to give objective definitions of these transversal skills, in relation to job-specific skills. Actors of the labour market agree on "people-oriented skills deployed with either clients, colleagues or supervisors, and skills involved in adaptation to change".

I.2.2. A transversal approach to work organization

The emphasis put in the workplace on "strategic skills" and the need to have a transversal approach to work highlights the use of these skills on at least two levels: collective skills and individual skills.

Building a collective skill from individual skills can be compared to building a statement from words: it is a complex combination whereby meaning transcends the signification of individual elements.

Communication allows the weaving and interlocking of individual skills into collective ones. As a meeting place between thoughts and environments, communication makes it possible to act. Therefore, this approach to competency is centred on communication: explicit, implicit, verbal, non-verbal, written, etc.

I.2.3. An action-based approach to discourse

An action-based approach to discourse is embedded in the inherent relationship between language and action (discourse creation, either oral or written, is always related to the context and the elements of the communication situation).

Language in the workplace is determined by the environments and operating modes set by organizations, as well as by the distribution of production and information management activities. The functional and utilitarian dimension of language prevails over its general and form-oriented

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[8] ZARIFIAN Philippe, *Le Modèle de la compétence. Trajectoire historique, enjeux actuels et propositions*, Éditions Liaisons, 2001.

[9] *Ibid.*

dimension which considers language "in a vacuum". Language, when contextualized into professional actions, possesses several interlocking dimensions that reveal its transversal position.

→ Discursive and communicative dimension

Words are put into discourse to tell someone to do something (directly or indirectly), tell someone how to do something, report, explain what is done and how it is done, justify oneself and one's choices, apologize and forgive, describe to have something done, etc. Discourse allows the sharing of information and the checking of its good reception from the moment instructions are given (either through voice, writing or gestures) to the moment of their completion and verification. This dimension includes the knowledge and application of appropriate social conventions to the different situations in which discourse is used. This dimension also covers the linguistic component: acoustic and graphic forms needed to communicate in the desired situations.

→ Cognitive dimension

The mental resources that are mobilized to access meaning and produce language are numerous and intertwined: observing an operating mode to understand it, anticipating, deducing, making connections, making comparisons, memorizing and so on.

→ Critical and practical dimension

This dimension is the one which allows us to evaluate the level of acceptability of our own discourse and to authorize or legitimize the release of a spoken or written production depending on the recipient. For example, it helps us decide appropriately between refuting something or not (depending on who, when, how). The more developed the communicative skill is, the more diverse the perceived and emitted intensions are. As for the critical skill, it develops through ease, fluency and one's capacity to self-assess one's performance in comparison with "expectations" of interactional environments.

→ Socio-emotional dimension

This dimension allows us to adjust our communication according to the reactions of the different environments (internal and external) and to handle our relationship with error. For example, we will be able to produce discourse in spite of unsympathetic judgement from others; and feel legitimate in stating something even if it is not well put and despite an actual or perceived strangeness. The socio-emotional component allows one to bear relational mishaps (teasing, irony…) while maintaining communication. It can prevent or cause paralysis or other types of mental block. The less developed it is, the more misunderstandings and wrong perceptions will prevent good communication.

The RECTEC skills map makes transversal skills and their proficiency levels visible. This tool is complementary to a training and assessment design process that should involve crossing documents like job-specific frameworks or job descriptions (which define what the job is supposed to be) with the needs assessed in each context (which reflect what the job really is) and according to the intended use: assessment, training, counselling, recruitment or certification.

II. THE TRANSVERSAL SKILLS REFERENCE GUIDE DESIGN PROCESS (the reference guide and its four levels)

II.1. Introduction

Imagine the scene: two parents, Isabelle and Stephen, and their children, Nicolas and Anna, are at the dinner table.

Nicolas brings back his report card that night. Nothing out of the ordinary except that this time, it comes with a document highlighting the "skills and knowledges" Nicolas is to have acquired during his 3rd trimester and his internship. On this sheet is a table with a list of items and in front of each one, a tick in one of four columns: "level 1", "level 2", "level 3" or "level 4".

Anna comments that she has also heard someone mention the word "skills" today at her workplace, a community centre where she does civic service[10]. Even though she already has a certificate to work as an activity leader with children, her director explained that he wanted to offer her the opportunity to go through a process before, during and after her work as an activity leader in the centre to help her assess the skills she would use to complete her tasks.

Upon hearing this conversation, their father starts to smile. Stephen, who would like to start his own business, has just learned that he could benefit from a skills validation program. This opportunity to have his previous years of experience acknowledged and validated will allow him to get a certification in part or in full, and to access training to develop the missing skills if needed.

Her husband's situation reminds Isabelle of one of her colleagues, Jimmy, who works as an assistant cook at the same shelter. He meets every expectation at his current position, but he can barely read and it is a serious obstacle to his promotion as team leader.

To facilitate this transition, Isabelle contacted a training centre specializing in training for working people and which offers reading and writing communication training sessions. After a placement test, Jimmy was able to work on transversal skills, in connection with professional writing and teamwork.

Common features and differences in these four situations

These examples all come from specific sectors: Nicolas's situation in the educational sector, in which he has just started his exploration of the working world, differs greatly from the situation of people already employed (Isabelle, Jimmy, Stephen) or exploring career options (Anna's civic service). However, these four situations all have in common the fact that skills are regarded as transferable. In other words, a skill can be developed in one context and activated in another. For example, the ability to use the four mathematical operations can be developed and later activated in any of the four previous contexts: one can practice the four mathematical operations with a math problem (disciplinary knowledge taught in school), through budget planning (to estimate travel costs for an internship) or through inventory management (a workplace situation). In the same line of thought, planning a New Year's Eve party requires the same skills as hosting a dance gala or the closing seminar of the RECTEC project. However, autonomy requirements and responsibility levels vary depending on the personal or professional finality of these actions. The RECTEC competency reference guide addresses only professional contexts.

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[10] Translator's note: Civic service (*service civique* in French) is a French program created in 2010 and designed to promote civic engagement and support public services. It allows young volunteers between 16 and 25 to complete a 6- to 12-month mission in one of nine priority sectors: education, community work, health, recreation and culture, environment, international development and humanitarian aid, remembrance and citizenship, sports, and interventions in emergency situations. The volunteers receive financial compensation for their work (€473 per month in 2019).

One way the RECTEC project contributes to easing progressions is by dividing requirements for specific work situations into "basic skills". For example, a person working as a kitchen aid may have to read technical documentation corresponding to level 3 of the writing competency but would need only to communicate orally with their colleagues and direct supervisors, which corresponds to level 2 of the speaking competency.

Let's see now how these transversal skills, which this family intuitively identified, can be formalized.

II.2. One generic map for all professional situations

This map is divided into 12 transversal skills described below. This kind of map has been in use for more than 12 years now[11].

Skills are organized into four sections:

- **Organization** (in blue) with four skills: "organizing one's activity", "taking regulations into account", "working in a team" and "mobilizing mathematical resources";
- **Communication** (in green) with four skills: "using oral communication", "using written communication", "taking social norms into account" and "using digital resources";
- **Thinking and reasoning to act** (in red) with two skills: "managing information" and "reacting to the unexpected"; and
- **Self-development** (in yellow) with two skills: "building one's career path" and "updating one's knowledge and ways of learning".

Getting familiar with and learning to use this 12-transversal skills map was one of the first steps of the RECTEC approach during the experiments described in Chapter III.

In a second phase—and this is what set the RECTEC project apart—these 12 skills were decomposed into proficiency levels matching the first four levels of the EQF.

- **Organizing one's activity**
- **Taking regulations into account**
- **Working in a team**
- **Mobilizing mathematical resources**
- **Using oral communication**
- **Using written communication**
- **Taking social norms into account**
- **Using digital resources";**
- **Managing information**
- **Reacting to the unexpected**
- **Building one's career path**
- **Updating one's knowledge and ways of learning**

II.3. Progression logic on proficiency scales

II.3.1. Creating correspondences with the first four levels of the EQF

Each proficiency level was determined using the EQF concepts of "autonomy and responsibility" as guidelines. As an example, the table on the next page shows the progression for the "activity planning" skill from the Organization section.

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[11] Work initiated by Mariela DE FERRARI and Florence MOURLHON-DALLIES, in Collective, « Outil de positionnement transversal », Paris, CLP, 2007. This approach was adopted by the region of Île-de-France in 2012. Two publications are available online (see Resources, p. 50).

PROGRESSION PARAMETERS				
	Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
Relevant parameters	When asked, I can help on certain tasks (under supervision).	I complete my tasks on my own and can solve certain common issues under supervision.	I perform all my activities autonomously and I apply techniques to solve arising problems within the limits of the given instructions.	I manage and plan my own activity and I supervise the activity of a team within the limits of the action plan.
Tasks, activities	Completes certain simple tasks.	Completes daily tasks and solves current issues.	Adapts their way of doing things when confronted with a problem.	Diagnoses and solves problems in a variety of ways.
Autonomy and responsibility	Under constant supervision.	Certain level of autonomy, partial supervision.	Complete autonomy, uses techniques and methods under no supervision.	Imagines and offers solutions.
Relation to the profession or the field	Partial completion of certain tasks of the profession.	Realisation of certain activities involving several tasks.	Realisation of all the profession's activities.	Supervision and evaluation of the activity in order to improve it.
Job examples	Training situations: apprentices, interns, trainees	Kitchen help, assistant bricklayer, junior cook, room clerk.	Cook, bricklayer, hairdresser, waiter/tress (money management), call centre operator.	Kitchen chef, foreman, team manager (e.g. chief operator in a call centre, head waiter), manager of a hair salon.

For the other sections—**Communication**, **Thinking and reasoning to act** and **Self-development**—other parameters are to be considered in the logic of progression.

Communication section

→ Skills related to recurring and familiar situations involving known interlocutors and receivers are the first ones to be mastered. Then come skills used in contexts that are gradually more formal or further from routine practice and involve the use of multiple communication techniques and channels.

We move from simple communication to a variety of complex and intertwined language productions.

At the first level of proficiency, one is able to name, describe and tell what is seen, heard or written to interlocutors/receivers who share the same environmental references. Available linguistic means can be partial or imprecise but allow, nonetheless, the production of this kind of discourse.

When these skills are fully mastered, one can move towards more complex and interlocking productions: explain in order to justify, recount in order to convince, describe in order to have something done and so on. These messages can be addressed to interlocutors/receivers who do not share the same professional references, which implies that the speaker/sender has the ability to explain even what is obvious or implicit (e.g. unwritten rules or ways of working in their organization) for them.

Going from transcription to transcoding: as the communicative skill evolves, the messages received are transformed and adapted to the interlocutors/receivers with more and more ease and success. Messages from colleagues can now be transformed to be sent to supervisors and/or clients. And in

turn, messages from clients can be transcoded in different ways to match different objectives and be sent to colleagues and/or supervisors. Transcoding can either be from speech to writing, writing to writing, speech to speech or writing to speech.

Thinking and reasoning to act and Self-development sections

→ From observation to decoding to autonomy: realizing the need for personal investment in skills development is a factor in progress.

Observation is used to decode how a professional act works or to identify organizational rules and conventions for a position (operating modes, social norms…). This thought process is a key element in the path to reaching autonomy and these self-teaching dynamics contribute to mobility within the company and between professions. Putting into words and explaining these rules and conventions encourages the development of increasingly distanced and complex discourses.

In the previous reasoning, progress in learning is made possible by the fact that an organization is both learning and teaching: simply by working, workers learn new skills taught by the organization. In return, workers develop new and improved ways of doing things that they teach back to the organization. Every work situation is an "immersion situation" in which the employee moves and evolves. Furthermore, a professional situation, at any qualification level, is always a communication situation in which information is exchanged according to the following pattern: "tell to have something done/do it/report it"[12]. Thus, every professional situation can be interpreted through these components, and skills specific to each communication mode—internal (close colleagues, distant supervisors) or external (clients, providers, inspectors)—can be extracted from it.

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[12] After the work of Louis Faverge.

II.3.2. An example of a skill proficiency scale adapted for a specific profession

Each of the 12 skills on the map is an independent entity with its own proficiency scale and generic indicators. The following example shows the "adaptation" of the oral communication skill in the sign and signage industry including content specific to this field.

EQF levels	Using oral communication General map	Interacting orally in a professional setting Sign and signage professional certificate[13] specific map
1	**Level 1** Communicates very partially in a one-to-one situation.	**Level 1** Communicates very partially with their colleagues.
2	**Level 2** Communicates on familiar topics.	**Level 2** Communicates easily with colleagues and partially with clients.
3	**Level 3** Communicates according to their needs and in various situations.	**Level 3** Communicates with colleagues and clients about sign placing and possible issues.
4	**Level 4** Adapts their way of communicating to the stakes of each interaction.	**Level 4** Adapts their way of communicating to various situations: changes affecting placement, compliance with security standards...

See the complete competency reference guide in the Annex.

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[13] Translator's note: French *CAP (Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle) Métiers de l'enseigne et de la signalétique*.

III. FROM CONCEPTS TO PRACTICE

III.1. The different uses from theory to practice

The general competency reference guide is valid for all professional sectors and was deployed in various contexts and aimed at different publics. Four main finalities were aimed at in these experiments:

- **Career exploration**
- **Training**
- **Certification**
- **Hiring and human resources management**

The experiments' general characteristics

→ The experiments were conducted on two types of public:

- young adults (16-25 years old) with little or no professional experience, who were in a work integration, training or career exploration process at the time of the experiment; and
- adults with more professional experience, who were in a work integration, training or career change process at the time of the experiment.

→ Experiments were conducted in France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

In French-speaking Belgium, the Skills Validation Consortium acted as an observer and did not conduct any experiments due to the specific nature of the organization. However, the conclusions drawn from these observations are developed later in this chapter.

→ Experiments were conducted on ten transversal skills since the skills "Building one's career path" and "Updating one's knowledge and ways of learning" were not stabilized at the time the experiments started.

→ The ten most significant experiments developed a four-stage evaluation approach:

1. **Adoption** of the skills-based approach, the specific vocabulary and the indicators of the RECTEC skills map.
2. **Self-assessment** or a mix of peer-, instructor- and self-assessment.
3. **Transfer** of the approach to other contexts (internships, other workshops, workplace…)
4. **Promotion and conservation** of the identified and/or developed transversal skills with a written trace (portfolio, resume, interviews for performance evaluations, skills assessment, career change…)

III.2. Experiment findings

III.2.1. Using transversal skills for career exploration

Experiments set in the career exploration field were conducted in five organizations from two countries:

ID6 (France)

This non-profit association based in Lille is developing innovative tools for actors in the educational and training fields. ID6 notably created SkillPass, both a serious game and a tutoring app, which allows one to identify, gather and showcase in a portfolio skills developed during recreational activities, sports, travels, internships or volunteering.

Its target audience is mainly teens and young adults, specifically those engaged in civic service.

INSUP (France)

This non-profit training centre designs educational and professional activities in a lifelong learning perspective. It aims at the qualification and professional reintegration of unemployed people and people in demand of professional training as well as the promotion and retraining of employees.

Their target audience for the experiment was **young people under 26** enrolled in a career exploration program.

Nantes's CAFOC (France)

The CAFOC's first mission is to support and offer training to actors in the training field. As part of the experiment, their target group was **young people from underprivileged neighbourhoods or school dropouts**. The experiment was conducted within the Mission Against Early School Leaving and a vocational school in Marseille.

COSP – Differdange Career Exploration Centre (Luxembourg)

The Centre's missions are the stabilization, evaluation, counselling and activation of **job seekers** registered at the ADEM (Luxembourg's public employment agency)[14], who have difficulties finding a first job and who need to be prepared for future employment.
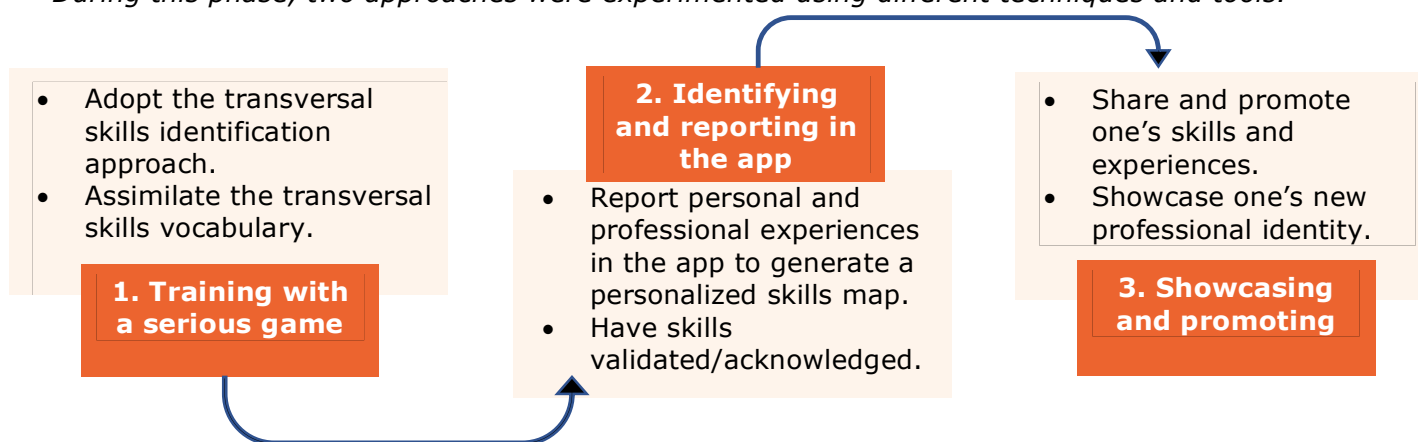
ARCUS (Luxembourg)

ARCUS is a non-profit organization doing social, educational and therapeutic work with children, young people and families. It hosts a training centre where youth workers and parental assistants can find information and professional support. The experiment target group was composed of **parental assistants**.

When we compared common and specific practices between the experiments, we were able to identify four phases.

Example of a typical experiment: ID6 (France)

Phase 1: adoption of the transversal skills-based approach

During this phase, two approaches were experimented using different techniques and tools.

- Adopt the transversal skills identification approach.
- Assimilate the transversal skills vocabulary.

1. Training with a serious game

2. Identifying and reporting in the app

- Report personal and professional experiences in the app to generate a personalized skills map.
- Have skills validated/acknowledged.

- Share and promote one's skills and experiences.
- Showcase one's new professional identity.

3. Showcasing and promoting

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[14] Equivalent to Pôle Emploi in France, or Forem and Actiris in Belgium.

→ A deductive approach starting with a PowerPoint presentation and a printed version of the transversal skills map and its indicators. Through a question-answer approach, each skill and indicator were explained and illustrated with examples and real professional or personal life situations. The whole competency reference guide was also printed on a deck of cards, giving a playful turn to the discovery of the skills and indicators.

→ An inductive approach starting with experienced situations to gradually understand the concept of transversal skill. Thanks to the experiment team's creativity, a variety of tools and scenarios were developed.

- Participants first listed the skills they think they have, then as a group, they learned to name and sort transversal skills from know-hows, knowledges and personality traits activated by each skill.
- They then individually played the SkillPass serious game before they identified transversal skills through a group activity.
- The next step was a small group activity with playing cards aimed at familiarizing the group with the indicators and the reference guide vocabulary.
- The last part was the review and assessment of fictional case studies on the skills map.

Phase 2: linking the transversal skills map to real-life situations

In this phase, situations or a family of situations created for the experiment or extracted from the participants' life experiences were analysed through the skills map lens.

→ Two options were available to have participants experience new situations. The first was to generate playful experiences. For example, groups were asked to build a tower using straws, sheets of paper and paper clips. This situation was observed by the instructors or other participants before being analysed by the whole group to identify the transversal skills mobilized. The second approach was to recreate professional situations with real professional equipment in a workshop, for example.

→ Situations extracted from the participants' life experiences (internship, job, civic service, and personal, social or recreational life) were also used to identify transversal skills in situations. Using a family of situations grid (for example, "Prepare; Make; Report" vertically and "What; Where; When; Why; How" horizontally), participants were asked to analyse their experience before self- or co-assessing their level on the skills map.

Phase 3: transfer of the approach to other situations or families of situations

Depending on the situation in each group, various types of transfer were tested.

→ Transfer was done on other situations taken from life experience (personal life, recreational activities, previous jobs).

→ When engaged in a career exploration process, the main transfer was done during the internship period. The preparation and then the analysis of these workplace immersion periods were key moments for transversal skills identification:

- Before the internship, some transversal skills were selected, and goals were set and expressed in terms of levels to reach.
- Besides the internship agreement, an objectives sheet was completed to provide evaluation material for the internship supervisor and the instructor from the training centre.
- At the end of the internship, back in the training centre, evaluation grids were analysed, and individual transversal skills maps were filled out with the level for each skill.

Phase 4: promotion and showcasing of transversal skills developed in situations

This last phase was part of the RECTEC objective, specifically the identification of transversal skills for certification or employability.

Various promotion tools were used.

→ *Europass CV*: having the transversal skills map completed helped the resume creation (specifically, the personal skills section), and the SkillPass skills map can also be uploaded on the Europass website.

→ *Portfolio*: in career exploration programs, it is common practice to create paper or digital portfolios. In this instance, an app was built in addition to the SkillPass device to allow gradual reporting of transversal skills during phase 3-activities. This compilation resulted in the creation of summaries that can be attached to resumes or cover letters when looking for a job or joining a training program leading to certification.

The following conclusions can be drawn from these experiments.

Support in **career exploration** for young people and adults

- happens in various contexts in France and Luxembourg and can be addressed to people experiencing a career change that is wanted or forced by circumstances;
- is done through programs of various lengths (from 2 to 10 months) with a group dynamic; and
- is based on an approach mixing the identification and promotion of transversal and job-specific skills.

Common traits between participants are:

- chaotic past experiences in terms of career choice and exploration;
- a negative image of these experiences and of the skills they acquired through them; and
- a need to give value to every experience they had in the past or during the course of the program.

The end goals of the RECTEC experiments match the objectives of these career exploration programs, that is to say:

- identify a clear and realistic career plan;
- and/or compare the acquired skills with the ones expected in a future position;
- and/or formalize the work done on the promotion of their skills into an internship report, a resume or an application to a program leading to a certification;
- and/or develop the ability to promote one's own employability.

III.2.2. Using transversal skills for training

Example of a typical experiment: Alter Form (Belgium)

Alter Form is a training centre whose target audience is people away from employment and/or living in social and economic uncertainty. It offers two training programs to become construction workers and healthcare assistants. The trainees are **between 18 and 65 years old**, they have no school obligations at the time of the training and have a degree inferior or equal to the CESD2, the certificate of secondary education in Belgium[15].

The experiment was part of a partnership between Alter Form and Plurielles Social Promotion School. It was conducted with a group of 27 healthcare assistant trainees over a period of 18 months.

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[15] Translator's note: Certificate of secondary education of the second degree (CES2D—*Certificat de l'enseignement secondaire du deuxième degré).*

The initial assumption was that the RECTEC competency reference guide would allow Alter Form to

→ identify and clearly define skills expected in the job market

→ define training content based on these skills

→ in collaboration with the trainee, assess the skills acquired at the end of the training.

1. Using oral communication
2. Using written communication
3. Using digital resources
4. Mobilizing mathematical resources
5. Taking social norms into account
6. Managing information
7. Organizing one's activity
8. Taking regulations into account
9. Reacting to the unexpected
10. Working in a team

Phase 1: consultation with RECTEC experts and familiarization with the RECTEC tool by the educational team

The educational team acquainted themselves with the map and prepared its use with trainees.

Phase 2: trainees' introduction to the approach

Using the map and their personal or professional experience, the trainees were asked to self-assess their proficiency in the most relevant skills for them. They then reviewed the results in pairs and tried to envision how the map could be a useful tool for them from a job perspective.

Organizing activities	Organizing activities	Organizing activities	Organizing activities
Circle 1	**Circle 2**	**Circle 3**	**Circle 4**
Identifies the key elements in the organization of their activity	Follows the planned organization of their activity.	Adapts their organization to the constraints of the situation.	Plans and organizes their own activity and their team's activity.
WITH WHOM?	**WITH WHOM?**	**WITH WHOM?**	**WITH WHOM?**
The organization of the activity is decided and imposed by the supervisor.	The organization leaves some room for initiative, under supervision.	Organization of the activity is done autonomously and adapted to situational constraints.	One is responsible for the organization of their own activity and that of their team.
HOW?	**HOW?**	**HOW?**	**HOW?**
Key parts of the activity organization are clearly outlined.	The activity is carried out according to the imposed organization.	The activity's organization: • takes all requirements into account. • allows completion of the activity within the time limit.	The chosen organization takes multiple variables into account (objectives, schedule, deadlines, constraints, team composition…).

Examples of cards from the deck produced for Alter Form's experiment.

Phase 3: familiarization with the approach by the trainee group

In small groups and with the complete map, the trainees familiarized themselves with the indicators' terminology, getting help from the instructors if needed.

Step 4: use of the skills map as a self-assessment tool after each internship and as a cross-evaluation tool during intervisions[16] with instructors

Objectives were defined by instructors for each stage of the training process and according to the learning progression. The instructors decided to give the objectives to the trainees before the start of their first internship.

The map was the reference tool; it was to be kept during the whole duration of the training and completed after each intervision with the instructors at the end of each internship period.

At the end of the training, the map offered a global vision of the trainee's transversal skills progression.

Self-assessment process and comparison with instructors during intervisions

→ After each internship period and for every transversal skill mobilized, the trainee used the map to self-assess. For each skill, they provided a real-life example to justify their choice of level.

→ When they met the instructors for the intervision, the trainee detailed their self-assessment using the real-life examples they chose.

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[16] The intervision is a specific type of peer meeting during which participants are invited to share experiences and think collectively based on an example of the practice from one of the members.

Observations made during intervisions were included in the trainee's Individualised Training Program and used to provide a formative evaluation and define each trainee's individual needs.

A self-assessment and a cross-evaluation were set after internships 4 (1 week) and 5 (3 months) in medical institutions.

Other similar experiments centred on training:

- **Croc'Espace (Verviers, Belgium)** A *Learning Through Work* company[17] offering training experience that combines theoretical knowledge with real-life practice in a teaching restaurant.

  The centre offers kitchen help and waiter/waitress training to **people "away from employment and/or living in social and economic uncertainty"**. The trainees and target audience of the experiment were between 18 and 65 years old and did not have school obligations at the time of the training.

- **THE MINISTERIAL PLATFORM (Île de la Réunion, France)**

  The Interdepartmental Support Platform for Human Resources Management (Indian Ocean), is under the prefect's authority and is responsible for supporting the implementation of the priorities set by the interdepartmental human resources strategy. Amongst other things, the Platform coordinates the hiring of apprentices for public administration at the state level in the Indian Ocean area.

  The target audience of the experiment was **apprentices and their tutors**. A 100-apprentice cohort was introduced to transversal skills during their training in order to develop them and showcase them when looking for a job.

- **JEAN MOULIN PROFESSIONAL REHABILITATION CENTRE (Fleury-Mérogis, France)**

  The Centre is a socio-medical and training centre for people forced into a career change due to a disability. The target audience was therefore trainees with a disabled worker status, engaged in a professional rehabilitation process leading to a certification, and aiming to return to work in a regular setting.

  At the end of a 5-month preliminary training, they joined an office clerk training program leading to a certification.

The following conclusions can be drawn from these experiments.

Support in **professional training** for young people and adults

- happens in various contexts in France and Belgium (work rehabilitation centres, social enterprises, public service) and can be addressed to different target audiences (apprentices, disabled workers…);
- is done through programs of various lengths (from 5 to 18 months) with a group dynamic; and
- is based on an approach mixing the identification and promotion of transversal and job specific skills.

Common traits between participants are:

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[17] Translator's note: Belgian EFT—*Entreprise de formation par le travail*.

- difficult past experiences (recent immigrants, long-term unemployed people, apprentices, disabled people);
- frequent under- or overestimation in self-assessment of their skills;
- several opportunities for self-assessment and cross-evaluation during the whole training process with specific transversal skills development objectives; and
- a progressive realization of the interweaving of transversal and technical skills.

The end goals of the RECTEC experiments match the objectives of these professional training programs, that is to say:

- identify a clear and realistic career plan;
- and/or compare the acquired skills with the ones expected in a future position;
- and/or formalize the work done on the promotion of their skills into an internship report, a resume or an application to a program leading to a certification, a job or the validation of experiential learning[18];
- and/or develop the ability to promote one's own employability.

III.2.3. Using transversal skills for certification

The goal is to support access to EQF-level-3 certifications either through training or validation of experiential learning.

The RECTEC approach highlights the connections between transversal skills, professional certification standards and expectations for specific positions and organizations.

The main feature of this approach is to cross the transversal skills reference guide with the certifications content requirements resulting in a specific version of the RECTEC map valid for a particular professional sector.

Example of a typical experiment: support for the validation of experiential learning to obtain an early childhood care certificate (France)[19]

In this program, the beneficiary receives support in the writing of a booklet summarizing their professional experiences and in the preparation of its presentation to a jury. Matching the RECTEC competency reference guide with the early childhood care certificate contents helped in the development of the communicative skills of writing (needed for the experience booklet) and speaking (needed for the interview with the jury).

The program has five main phases with individual interviews with instructors in between.

Phase 1: collectively

Contents

- Introduction to the approach, and presentation of the connections between the RECTEC transversal skills map and professional activities.

Objectives

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[18] Translator's note: French *VAE—Validation des acquis de l'expérience*.

[19] Translator's note: French *CAP AEPE—Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle Accompagnant·e éducatif·ve petite enfance*.

- Promote exploration of the material and interactions between candidates.

→ Work between sessions: rewriting work.

Phase 2: individual interview

Contents

- Identification of the four most significant activities in their booklet.

Objectives

- Give an oral presentation of all the steps needed to complete these activities (before, during, after).

→ Work between sessions: rewriting work and doing examples and illustrations research.

Phase 3: collectively

Contents

- Presentation of the families of situations recap tables.

Objectives

- Within the families of situations, describe and explain the contexts and the skills mobilized.
- Choose a proficiency level.
- Using these written records, transcribe activities in the experience booklet.

→ Work between sessions: rewriting work on the four activities chosen in phase 2.

Phase 4: finishing the experience booklet

→ Work between sessions: preparing the interview with the jury—professional path and acquired skills.

Phase 5: preparing the interview with the jury through role-play

As an example, here are two candidates' experiences:

→ Mrs Z, 41, has no certification, 10 years of experience as a childminder and 2 years of experience as a waitress.

Phase 1: through a brainstorming activity, the group creates a word cloud revealing significant families of situations in the profession.

Mrs Z. decides to present the meal preparation situation.

In relation to this activity, she chooses the skills on the map that correspond to the situation. She then progressively details each step of the activity, the skills involved and the level of proficiency she thinks she has for each one. To do so, she uses a template detailing means, resources, chronology, etc. for the chosen activity.

Mrs Z. quickly becomes familiar with the tools and is relieved to understand what was expected of her in the validation of experiential learning process.

Phase 2: thanks to the work that was done in phase 1, she can easily estimate her autonomy and initiative levels in the chosen activity. She cites freedom in the choice of menus and ingredients as an example.

→ Mrs H. presents a perfect outing to the park.

Phase3: using the skills map, another candidate notices the idealistic turn of Mrs. H's presentation and questions her on emergency situations.

During the intersession, Mrs H. rewrites her description of the activity and adds elements related to problematic child behaviour and how she would react.

Crossing the RECTEC competency reference guide with the early childhood care professional standards showed that the general descriptors of the RECTEC reference guide, valid for all professional fields, need to be adapted to fit a specific situation. Adaptations can take the form of addition, suppression or replacement of skills, and/or modification of descriptors.

RECTEC is therefore a flexible approach where every specific context influences the skills and their descriptors.

Example:

KEPT	DELETED	MODIFIED	CREATED
Using oral communication	Building one's career path	Working in a team → Working in various contexts	Supporting early childhood development
Using written communication	Updating one's knowledge and ways of learning	Organizing activities → Anticipating activities	Adopting an ethical attitude
Reacting to the unexpected			Analysing one's professional practices

New skills had to be added to showcase these profession specificities.

ADOPTING AN ETHICAL ATTTITUDE			
Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
Identifies and names the obligations of the childcare worker.	Observes family practices within the limitation of child protection legislation.	Executes the contract binding them to the structure and the family in keeping with the regulatory framework.	Adapts their practices and their posture depending on the family context.

ANALYSING ONE'S PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES			
Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
Names and differentiates their activities.	Describes their way of doing things with no judgement.	Questions and justifies their practices based on the regulatory framework.	Designs improvements to their professional practices.

The "Working in a team" skill was replaced by the "Working in various contexts" one.

WORKING IN A TEAM			
Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
Identifies the operating modes of a team.	Identifies the role of each team member and their own position in the group.	Makes proposals and takes other team members' opinions into account.	Leads and develops collective work, is able to change position and role.

WORKING IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS			
Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
Identifies and names the actors in the child's environment.	Identifies their position and those of other actors in relation to the child.	Cooperates with all the actors involved in the child's care.	Contributes to the continuity of the child's care.

To achieve this modification, the descriptors of the four proficiency levels were rephrased and contextualized based on the activities specific to these professions.

Other versions of the map were developed to match the signs and signage professions.

Similar actions were conducted with a training perspective at the Jean Moulin Professional Rehabilitation Centre mentioned earlier since the centre offers training leading to a certification. Their experiment was conducted on a 9-person group starting with a 5-month preliminary training program before joining an office clerk training program leading to certification.

In phase 5, participants worked on establishing possible connections between transversal skills, the professional standards of the desired position and the profession-specific skills map.

Through educational role-play, participants were trained to identify the transversal skills used to complete a task.

Again, connections between transversal skills and professional activities were shown and explained.

The following conclusions can be drawn from these experiments.

Support in **access to professional certification** for young adults and adults

- happens in various contexts in France (high schools or *Missions locales*—youth job centres in France);
- is addressed to heterogeneous groups of young adults with various levels of qualification (early childhood care professional certificate, signs and signage professional certificate, secondary education diploma in business[20]); and
- is based on an approach mixing the RECTEC competency reference guide and the professional standards of a given profession.

Common traits between participants are:

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[20] Translator's note: French *Bac pro commerce*.

- their search for certification through training or the validation of experiential learning (France *VAE* process);
- a vague representation of the skills they have; and
- a need to promote and showcase every past and current experience that is going to be used during the process of getting a certification.

The end goals of the RECTEC experiments match the objectives of these programs, that is to say:

- identify a clear and realistic career plan;
- and/or compare the skills developed with the ones required for the certification;
- and/or formalize the work done on the promotion of their skills into a booklet or an application to a program leading to a certification or the validation of experiential learning.

III.2.4. Using transversal skills for human resources management

Example of a typical experiment: Corse and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Human Resources Platform (France)

The Interdepartmental Support Platforms for Human Resources Management are French regional structures acting as experts and consultants in human resources for state services. One of their missions is to support internal and external mobilities, interdepartmental training and promote better hiring practices.

The target audience of the experiment was a group of 10 state employees working at the time of the experiment and willing to change positions.

Once familiarized with the approach, they identified with the recruiter the transversal skills relevant for the position they were aiming for and their proficiency level for each of them. To do so, they intersected the job description and the transversal skills reference guide. In a second important step, they created a candidate evaluation form to assess the skill levels needed for the position.

Role-play corresponding to the identified work situations allowed for the objective assessment of the candidates' applications in regard to the required skills and proficiency levels.

The following experiment was conducted by the Environment, Planning and Housing Regional Department of Corse (*DREAL Corse*) during the hiring of three administrative assistants, a position at level 3 of the EQF.

Excerpt:

Skill	Participating in oral interactions	Participating in written interactions	Using digital resources	Taking regulations and social norms into account
Proficiency level required	Adapts their ways of saying or not saying things to situations (level 4).	Manages and deals with complex and various texts. Writes elaborated texts (level 4).	Customizes digital resources according to the situation and their needs (level 4).	Applies procedures and adopts social codes in use in the environment (level 2).
Job descriptors	Participates in formal debriefings and meetings, shares their point of view. Greets and informs people from outside the company (clients, suppliers, users), transfers requests and adapts their discourse if needed.	Writes activity reports, professional correspondence (either with predetermined formats or not), and meeting minutes.	Adapts or creates tables, charts, slides and other mediums.	Respects break length, dresses according to office requirement, adapts their conduct to their interlocutors (formal and informal).

A hundred applications were received for that position. The director of the department explained how he made his choice.

Why use the general transversal skills reference guide to hire?

First, because it is a way to avoid putting too much emphasis on technical expertise at the expense of social and organizational abilities or personality traits, "good" and "bad" ones… Second, we want recruiters who write the job descriptions and advertisements to have the same criteria as the jury who will select and interview the candidates.

How did you use the RECTEC transversal skills map?

The first step was to have a two-hour meeting with the head of the department to have her define the required skills for the job. The jury members were also at that meeting, so everyone shared the same information regarding the job expectations. We elected eight transversal skills on the RECTEC map, and for each of them the required proficiency level was defined using concrete examples.

Remark: This work showed the importance of communication skills, both oral and written, information management skills and digital skills. On the other hand, organizational and procedural skills were set at level 3 or even 2 when the procedures are recurring.

What results did you get? What lessons were learned through this experiment?

What struck me was the consensus that was quickly reached when we sorted through the 100 applications. The jury members quickly found 25 candidates whose resumes and cover letters fitted the requirements of the position. Eight candidates were then selected to come for an interview.

The second important lesson was drawn during the interview phase. At that moment, jury members displayed a great coherence in their questionings and reasonings. Again, the three successful candidates were chosen unanimously and based on objective criteria thanks to the skills descriptors and examples provided by the candidates.

Comments: The director wants to generalize the use of the approach to future recruitments in other departments of the Environment, Planning and Housing Regional Department.

The following conclusions can be drawn from these experiments.

Support to **human resources management**

- happens in various contexts in France (professional mobility or recruitment);
- is addressed to HR professionals during the recruitment process or to people concerned with professional mobility; and
- is based on an approach mixing the identification of transversal and technical skills.

The end goals of the RECTEC experiments match the objectives of these programs, that is to say:

- identify a clear and realistic career plan;
- and/or compare the skills developed with the ones required for a position;
- and/or develop the ability to promote one's own employability.

III.3. Final observations

Now that we have covered all the experiments, whether they followed the suggested 4-stage process in their execution or not, let us have a second look at our initial hypothesis.

On the selected transversal skills and their relevancy in context	On the proficiency scales and their connection to the certification or validation of professional skills	On the scope of situations that can be used to explain or confirm the proficiency level
We hypothesized that all 12 selected skills would be mobilized and essential in: **Employability** (access to stable jobs), and **Access to criteria-based certification** or validation of professional skills.	We hypothesized that acknowledgment of transversal skills proficiency on an incremental scale (thus allowing acknowledgement of partial proficiency) plays a positive part in the: **Explanation and verbalisation** of their skills by beneficiaries themselves, allowing them to make objective criteria-based career decisions; **Development of training paths** and career paths.	We hypothesized that the situation-based approach (through families of situations) would improve the definition and description of professional activities and help the beneficiaries explain their past experiences in the following contexts: **Work integration, long-term unemployment or training programs;** **Certification or skill validation processes.**

→ The experiments' various uses and end goals confirmed the initial assumptions similarly.

→ The main differences lie in

- the number of transversal skills analysed and used; and
- the way the skills were introduced and explained: gradually, through groups of skills, or directly through the complete skills map.

We can see that the initial hypotheses remained relevant.

→ The variety of uses and goals in the experiments shows the flexibility of the RECTEC competency reference guide in all of these professional fields. For the validation of experiential learning (see the early childhood care example) and the Jean Moulin Centre, the RECTEC competency reference guide was adapted by crossing it with the certification reference guide; for recruitment, the transversal skills map was fleshed out with examples of activities and tasks required by the position; and for career exploration, the map was not modified.

Every professional will be able to adapt it to their context and their end goals: career exploration, training, access to certification, mobility, and recruitment.

However, invariable elements are to be kept in every use, specifically the logic of progression and the descriptors attached to each level (1 to 4).

What is subject to change and needs to be specified for every new use are the examples and the proficiency indicators for each level and each skill that is assessed/explained/developed.

The number of skills can also vary depending on the context and their relevance for the beneficiaries.

Transversal skills do not appear out of nowhere; they are always contextualized, based on personal or professional experience (especially in career exploration).

They are compared and **intersected with professional requirements, certification content and job descriptions**.

They are sometimes **modified** if some skills need to be rewritten or added (see the early childhood care example) or if some terms need to be clarified.

In the professional training and certifications field, matching the competency reference guide with professional standards and certification criteria guarantees the validity of the transversal skills assessment and leads to clarifying and specifying professional situations and activities.

→ *Thoughts from the Skills Validation Consortium:* the Consortium did not conduct any experiment since it did not have access to a specific target audience that it could have observed in a significant period of time. However, it was particularly attentive to the experiment conducted by the Jean Moulin Centre for Professional Rehabilitation, especially with the educational role-plays they created for the office clerk training.

The Consortium's methodology to assess skills used primarily role-play. Therefore, role-plays where job-specific skills manifested within transversal skills seemed extremely relevant and adaptable to the current methodology. This methodological improvement is a step to solving the feelings of distrust that exist towards transversal skills assessment.

With the exception of recruitment, every experiment presented a playful way of getting acquainted with the RECTEC map, therefore making the connection with professional standards, training content or certification criteria easier.

Besides the assessment methodology based on role-play, the Consortium developed a second skills assessment methodology based on the creation of a personal file. The RECTEC tool will also be added to this methodology, confirming the intuition that one's awareness of their transversal skills improves their ability to build connections between activities and skills, and then connections between their skills and the job description for the desired position.

Crossing between professional standards and the RECTEC framework will help promote the entirety of one's skills, and improve the preparation and presentation of their file in front of a validation jury.

According to the Skills Validation Consortium, the experiments conducted in the four sectors of the RECTEC project will lead to major progress in transversal skills assessment.

IV. POINTS OF ATTENTION AND CONCLUSIONS

IV.1. Points of attention

At the end of these very positive experiments, we would like to draw attention to the essential prerequisites for an efficient use of the RECTEC competency reference guide.

→ **The training of the project's actors**: whatever the field they are working in, people who plan to use the RECTEC competency reference guide should be trained to use the approach. This would provide a coherent answer to the question of proficiency levels and descriptor definitions and guarantee the creation of a progression between levels that gives a scaled skills map all its strength and relevance.

Not all transversal skills will be useful depending on the context and the end goals.

→ **The risk of subjective evaluation** should not be dismissed. Both the beneficiary's assessment and their interlocutor's (recruiter, instructor, counsellor) are needed to guarantee the objectivity of the approach. In the same line of thought, it is important not to deviate too much from the original text of the competency reference guide when explaining vocabulary. It is essential to always refer to a specific situation in a given context.

Depending on the end goals, changes will have to be made (for example, to the names of the skills, the descriptors, the examples…) but the graduations will stay the same.

→ **The ambivalent position** of certain people towards transversal skills: even if everybody agrees that organizing work, managing the unexpected, and communicating in the oral or written form are skills used by all workers, which improve their mobility and professional evolution, some people are still reluctant to assess transversal skills within technical skills, and prefer to keep transversal skills apart from technical ones.

This stance could lead to discrimination within a group of workers. Only the approach presenting skills as interconnected can lead to another vision.

IV.2. Conclusions

Assessing transversal skills for employability and certification

At the end of this journey through various places and institutions, we would like to highlight the following points:

1. **The evolution** offered by transversal skills for individuals.

We can objectively get from the experiments that a public who was not acquainted with an introspective approach based on a competency reference guide reached a new level of awareness of their skills. As an example, we can take the healthcare assistants who realized their ability to work in a team when they had to help a patient lie down during an internship. Their realization that they had mobilized underlying though essentials skills for their daily practice, their future activity or their professional development allows us to state that transversal skills are intertwined in technical work activities.

Besides this example taken from an internship, other examples from self-assessment, career exploration and certification show every time a positive change through better self-confidence and connections with technical skills.

2. **Crossing** between the RECTEC competency reference guide and training and certification standards guides—especially relevant for certification—showed that the divide or even the opposition

drawn between transversal skills and technical skills tends to disappear or to simply lose its relevance in the same way that the distinction between form and content in a text does.

When matching certifications with the EQF, the crossing approach would allow for a higher level of certification and more importantly, to aim at the human and skilled dimension of the beneficiary (learner, applicant, worker).

V. ANNEX: COMPLETE TRANSVERSAL SKILLS REFERENCE GUIDE

Note: in the following pages, the word "circle" is used as an equivalent of an EQF level.

TRANSVERSAL SKILLS REFERENCE GUIDE

The 12 skills included in this document are the ones the project members agreed on and approved.

These skills are graded into four levels corresponding with the first four levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The proficiency levels follow the increments of the "Responsibility and autonomy" criteria used in the EQF.

Language skills are learned through interaction.

Reflective skills (either used to decide how to act in a professional setting or for self-development purposes) are built through the observation and decoding of environments.

Organizational skills depend on the tasks and position assigned at work: they develop in contexts with more or less supervision depending on the job, the worker's status (apprentice, intern, employee) and the level of qualification required for the position.

WRITING CONVENTIONS

The following conventions should be applied when creating a specific version of the RECTEC reference guide.

TRANSVERSAL SKILL: the phrasing of the transversal skill should convey generality and cover all the know-hows described at each proficiency level. The **present participle form** should be used.			
SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	**AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY LEVEL**	**GENERIC INDICATORS**	**EXAMPLES**
Descriptors specify what one is able to do at each of the four proficiency levels. They should be phrased with **a verb at the third person in the present tense**.	Autonomy and responsibility level expected at that proficiency level should be described in **a complete sentence**.	Generic indicators describe the components of the skill at that level. They should be phrased in **a complete sentence**.	Specific examples should be provided by each user's context. They can take various forms: • Quotes are put into **quotation marks and in italics**. • Know-hows are described in a sentence starting with a **verb in the third-person singular form**. • Lists use **bullet points**.

Skills are divided into four categories: **organization**, **thinking and reasoning to act**, **communication** and **self-development**.

SKILL 1

ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Level of organization in carrying out activities;

→ Consideration of multiple elements to rank and set priorities;

→ Anticipation in planning out activities.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Identifies the key elements in the organization of their activity	The organization of the activity is decided and imposed by the supervisor.	Key parts of the activity organization are clearly outlined.
CIRCLE 2 Follows the planned organization of their activity.	The organization leaves some room for initiative, under supervision.	The activity is carried out according to the imposed organization.
CIRCLE 3 Adapts their organization to the constraints of the situation.	Organization of the activity is done autonomously and adapted to situational constraints.	The activity's organization takes all requirements into account. The organization allows completion of the activity within the time limit.
CIRCLE 4 Plans and organizes their own activity and their team's activity.	One is responsible for the organization of their own activity and that of their team.	The chosen organization takes multiple variables into account (objectives, schedule, deadlines, constraints, team composition…).

SKILL 2

TAKING REGULATIONS INTO ACCOUNT

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Extent of regulations knowledge and adaptation of professional actions accordingly;

→ Connections between multiple instructions and rules in order to conform to regulations.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Identifies the regulations related to their activity.	The identification of instructions and procedures is done under supervision.	The key elements of the prescribed activity are correctly identified and named.
CIRCLE 2 Follows instructions and procedures related to their activity.	The application of the instructions and procedures is done under supervision.	The activity is performed according to the given instructions and procedures.
CIRCLE 3 Takes every instruction and procedure into account in every aspect of their activity.	Instructions and procedures are followed autonomously.	The risks related to non-compliance of instructions and procedures are clearly identified.
CIRCLE 4 Controls and guarantees the compliance with instructions and procedures.	The choice of corrective measures is under their responsibility.	Instructions and procedures are transmitted, reminded of and applied. If needed, corrective measures are applied.

SKILL 3

WORKING IN A TEAM

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Attitude toward others in order to work together;

→ Ability to question their own opinions and to broaden them based on other's contributions;

→ Understanding of the worth of collective work, from the perspective of the individual, their project, and the team's work and efficiency.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Identifies the operating modes of a team.	Their participation in a group or a team is decided by the supervisor.	Attendance and potential participation happen according to given instructions.
CIRCLE 2 Identifies the role of each team member and their own position in a group.	The team leader is in charge of the designation of roles and positions in the group. One is in charge of the management of interpersonal relationships.	Group participation corresponds to their role and position in the group.
CIRCLE 3 Makes proposals and takes other team members' opinions into account.	Contribution to group exchanges and work is done autonomously.	Contributions take multiple variables into account, including other members' opinions.
CIRCLE 4 Leads and develops collective work, is able to change position and role.	One takes responsibility for the collective work.	One is responsible for the definition of operation modes and role designation in the team.

SKILL 4

MOBILIZING MATHEMATICAL RESOURCES

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Knowledge of mathematical operations techniques allowing the solving of contextualized calculations;

→ Use of strategies to manage information related to size, volume, figures, durations;

→ Attitude towards situations involving the mobilization of mathematical resources.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Makes simple calculations in recurring situations.	Calculations are done with someone's help.	Calculations are partially done, and assistance is provided.
CIRCLE 2 Makes calculations and measures needed in their environment.	Calculations and measures are done autonomously and checked by a supervisor.	Calculations and measures that are made are part of situations from the environment, and instructions are given.
CIRCLE 3 Chooses suitable mathematical reasonings to a given situation.	The choice of mathematical reasonings is done autonomously.	Results for calculations and measures are based on reasoning relevant to each situation.
CIRCLE 4 Adapts suitable mathematical reasoning to various situations.	Mathematical problem solving is one's responsibility, either for their own work or their team's work.	Mathematical problems are verified and corrected as needed. One supervises the calculations of their team members.

SKILL 5

MANAGING INFORMATION

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Extent of knowledge required to select information;

→ Critical thinking when assessing the relevancy and quality of the information;

→ Methods for information research and transmission.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Identifies the information given to complete their activity.	Access to information is guided by a supervisor.	The connection between the information and the activity is made.
CIRCLE 2 Checks the availability of the information required to complete the activity.	One researches information partly on their own initiative.	Available information is checked. If needed, missing information is sought.
CIRCLE 3 Selects information according to the activity objectives and context.	One processes information on their own initiative.	The choice of information is relevant. The sharing of the information is suitable.
CIRCLE 4 Assesses the information's relevancy and shares it appropriately.	One is responsible for how and what information is shared.	Chosen information is suitable. Information reaches their intended recipient through suitable channels.

SKILL 6

REACTING TO THE UNEXPECTED

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Capacity to analyse problems (related to a given situation, or to internal or external resources);

→ Deployment of problem-solving protocols;

→ Capacity to anticipate the unexpected and to plan solutions that factor in multiple variables.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Identifies problems and notifies someone when confronted with a problem or an unexpected situation.	The problem is reported to the correct person.	The person in charge is notified within the prescribed time limit.
CIRCLE 2 Identifies the procedure and suggests solutions to a possible contingency.	The procedure is approved by a supervisor before its execution.	The identified procedure corresponds with the contingency.
CIRCLE 3 Applies the correct procedure to common issues related to their activity.	Dealing with contingencies related to the activity is one's responsibility.	The applied procedure corresponds with the contingencies.
CIRCLE 4 Solves common problems related to their activity or their team's activity.	Decision-making to solve problems related to one's activity and/or their team's activity is one's responsibility.	The chosen solution allows the pursuit of the activity.

SKILL 7

USING ORAL COMMUNICATION

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Ability to interact with various interlocutors on less familiar subjects in more varied circumstances;

→ Purpose of the interaction and variables of the communication situations: formal/informal, simple/complex, high/low stakes;

→ Ability to choose appropriate content to the situation (what can be said or not depending on the situation).

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Communicates partially in a one-to-one exchange.	Participation in the interaction is limited to brief answers to the interlocutor's solicitations.	Answers to questions on familiar subjects are partial.
CIRCLE 2 Communicates on familiar subjects.	Ability to take initiative depends on their familiarity with the subject and the interlocutor's status.	Exchanges happen with known interlocutors and cover activities and objects related to one's daily activity.
CIRCLE 3 Communicates according to their needs in various situations.	Management of the exchanges is done autonomously with various interlocutors.	The array of possible exchanges covers multiple communication situations and interlocutors, known and unknown. Communication channels are varied.
CIRCLE 4 Adapts their way of communicating to the stakes.	Speech is used appropriately in multiples interactions including ones with high stakes.	Ways of saying things and questioning are adapted depending on the interlocutors—known and unknown—and the type of exchanges. Dealing with complex communication situations is achieved by the use of paraphrasing strategies (anonymization, generalization…).

SKILL 8

USING WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Literacy proficiency (quantity and variety of written and read material, cognitive and metacognitive skills used in reading and writing) based on the 5-stage scale from beginner to A1 to be used if previous education is under 5 years[21].

→ Array of discourses mastered and variety in the recipients of the written productions (close or distant, known or unknown).

→ Level of acceptability in form and content in each piece of writing depending on the recipients.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Identifies the key elements in very short informative written pieces. Writes a couple of words related to their environment.	Reading and writing are done using help and resources available in context.	The spatial and typographical organization in the main documents found in one's environment allows identification of these written pieces' nature and function. Recurring documents in one's environment and lists of words about daily activity are written.
CIRCLE 2 Identifies relevant information in short texts from their environment. Writes short informative pieces related to their environment.	Reading and writing depend on how familiar and predictable the text is.	Communication situation and object of the message are understood when reading short informative texts about daily activities. Written documents are about one's daily activities.
CIRCLE 3 Uses most written sources needed for their activity. Writes documents	Texts on various subjects can be read. The form given to a text is appropriate to the situation.	The documents used allows one to describe and inform about one's activity. Discernment and transmission between messages are done with known recipients.

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[21] See BEACCO, DE FERRARI, LOTTE and TAGLIANTE, Paris, Didier 2006, p. 161-178 for the description of the steps 1 to 3 from beginner to A1.1, and DE FERRARI Mariela, « Acquérir les compétences du niveau A1.1 au niveau A1 pour l'écrit », 2010, available online on www.co-alternatives.fr, for the description of steps 4 and 5 from A1.1 to A1. A description of the 5 steps is available on the RECTEC website (see Resources p. 50).

related to their activity and context.		
CIRCLE 4 Manages and processes complex and varied texts. Writes elaborate pieces.	Complex writings are critically examined. Responsibility is taken for one's understanding.	The implications of all types of documents in one's context are known and understood. A wide array of written pieces is produced with various aims: explanation, argumentation, activity development… They cover both the activity's organization and its environment.

SKILL 9

TAKING SOCIAL NORMS INTO ACCOUNT

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Extent of the knowledge of implicit and explicit conventions;

→ Ability to observe and discern these codes.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Identifies basic social norms related to their professional environment.	Social norms are identified with external help.	Respect of social norms follows the instructions given.
CIRCLE 2 Applies social conventions in use in their professional environment.	Social norms and their role are identified with external help if needed.	Rules and social norms are respected in known situations.
CIRCLE 3 Applies social conventions in every situation related to the activity.	Understanding of social norms and their role is done autonomously.	Social norms are respected in all situations implied by the activity.
CIRCLE 4 Adapts to various social norms even when they are implicit.	Social norms application, to oneself and others, is done autonomously. Explaining social norms to others is one's responsibility.	Adaptation to social norms in complex situations ensures the correct completion of the activity.

SKILL 10

USING DIGITAL RESOURCES[22]

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Ability to research or produce information and to sort it autonomously to achieve a certain goal;

→ Capacity to adapt to new digital environments;

→ Ability to use basic functions on a computer, a smartphone, an email service and collaborative tools.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY	GENERIC INDICATORS
CIRCLE 1 Completes basic tasks on or with familiar digital tools.	Use of basic functions is done with external help.	Access to the digital functions in use for the activity is made possible by external help who provides assistance and the elements of content needed for the completion of the task.
CIRCLE 2 Uses basic functions on some digital tools.	Choice of digital function is done with external help if needed. Use of basic functions is done under supervision.	Basic functions are used with instructions and guidance from another person.
CIRCLE 3 Uses digital resources regularly depending on the activity and the context.	Use of basic functions is done autonomously. Choice of digital functions used is under one's responsibility.	Functions and contents used vary depending on contexts.
CIRCLE 4 Customizes digital resources to their needs or the needs of the situation.	Software customization is under one's responsibility.	Digital resources and their functions are analysed and modified if needed.

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[22] This skill was based on the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (or DigComp) which is available on the European Commission website at https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/digcomp-20-digital-competence-framework-citizens-update-phase-1-conceptual-reference-model (last consulted August 9, 2019).

SKILL 11

BUILDING ONE'S CAREER PATH

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Ability to balance pros and cons in one's situations and projects;

→ Extent of knowledge to make decisions/choices;

→ Ability to factor in priorities and to project in time.

This skill was not matched with the EQF's "autonomy and responsibility" criteria, but with individual logics related to educational paths and ways of learning.

This skill's content and relevancy were questioned during the experiments. It turned out that this skill is used and becomes essential when the end goal is to identify a clear career plan, either in a job search perspective or going through the validation of experiential learning process.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	GENERIC INDICATORS	EXAMPLES
CIRCLE 1 Gives one or more ideas for their professional project.	Formulation of the ideas is done alone or with the help of someone else.	• Lists of possible professional fields, jobs, etc.
CIRCLE 2 Compares their professional project to the reality of the desired positions.	The project evaluation is done alone or with the help of someone else.	One is aware of the obstacles and opportunities for their professional project. • Makes lists of pros and cons of their professional project. • Talks with professionals in the field. • Enquires about professions, etc.
CIRCLE 3 Defines and explains their professional project.	Definition of one's career path is enlightened and done autonomously.	Connects training objectives with possible professional objectives. • Updates their resume. • Undergoes professional training. • Meets with professionals from the field. • Presents and explains their professional path to others.
CIRCLE 4 Plans the steps needed to realise their career project.	Choice of the steps are one's responsibility.	• Lists the necessary steps to complete their career project. • Displays concrete motivations for their professional project and

		finds solutions for potential obstacles.

SKILL 12

UPDATING ONE'S KNOWLEDGE AND WAYS OF LEARNING

The following elements were taken into account when defining the proficiency levels:

→ Use of various learning strategies;

→ Ability to negotiate between one's wishes and the surrounding reality;

→ Ability to self-assess the gap between one's knowledge and the needs of the environment and/or their professional project.

This skill was not matched with the EQF's "autonomy and responsibility" criteria, but with individual logics related to educational paths and ways of learning.

This skill's content and relevancy were questioned during the experiments. It turned out that this skill is used and becomes essential when the end goal is to identify a clear career plan, either in a job search perspective or going through the validation of experiential learning process.

SKILLS DESCRIPTORS	GENERIC INDICATORS	EXAMPLES
CIRCLE 1 Names their usual ways of learning.	Follows instructions and recommendations (given during training or elsewhere).	States what they do to memorize the norms or the procedure applicable to a given task.
CIRCLE 2 Considers new ways to enrich and vary their ways of learning.	Selects what could be useful to learn amongst various propositions.	Registers for and follows the elected training, with their supervisor's validation.
CIRCLE 3 Develops new learning strategies in order to improve their actions and their project.	Researches and applies what can fill the gap they noticed in their knowledge.	Varies their learning sources and seizes training opportunities that arise or are possible.
CIRCLE 4 Suggests new ways of learning for them and possibly for their team.	Creates new methods (and/or concepts, approaches…) in a collaborating/sharing perspective.	Analyses, creates links and imagines new or existing solutions.

RESOURCES

RECTEC Project (in French)

http://rectec.ac-versailles.fr/

European Qualification Framework (EQF)

Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework:

https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page

Council recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning in the Official Journal of the European Union (download in English):

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&qid=1565171827395&from=EN

Other languages:

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1565171827395&uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)

European Agenda for Adult Learning (AEFA) (in French)

AEFA French coordination page:

http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/page/agenda-europeen-des-adultes

Guide AEFA, *Évaluer les compétences transversales* (download):

http://www.agence-erasmus.fr/docs/2496_2496_aefa-guide-competences-juin-2017.pdf

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)

Presentation on the Council of Europe website:

https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home

Full text of the CEFR (2001) (download):

https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97

CEFR Companion volume (2018) (download):

https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989

Key Competences for lifelong learning

Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, in the Official Journal of the European Union (download in English):

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604%2801%29

Other languages:

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-
ontent/EN/TXT/?qid=1566391153023&uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)

**Reference guide for professional integration of the region Île-de-France (*Référentiel
d'insertion professionnelle Région Île-de-France*) (in French)**

Évaluer pour se former dans le dispositif régional Avenir Jeunes (download):

https://www.defi-
metiers.fr/sites/default/files/users/229/fiches_du_referentiel_avenir_jeunes.pdf

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