Subunit 2.2: Competence framework

Learning goals

- Knowing what a competence framework is about.

- To distinguish between transversal and specific competences.

- Learning about European competences frameworks.

- To define the usage of the Europass CV.

Definition

A **competence framework** is a structured and comprehensive set of knowledge and skills required for effective performance within a specific organization role, or professional position. It serves as a foundation for various human resources management processes, including recruitment, performance assessment, and training. In Europe, there are various competence frameworks and models used across different countries and sectors (educational, labour market, etc). These frameworks are designed to standardize and assess competences, skills, and qualifications within specific fields.

The European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, often referred to simply as the Key Competences Framework, is a comprehensive reference tool developed by the European Union (EU) to promote and assess a set of essential competences and skills necessary for personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employability throughout an individual's life. The framework was introduced as part of the EU's efforts to enhance education and training systems across member countries and to foster a more cohesive and competitive European workforce.

The Key Competences Framework outlines eight key competences, which are grouped into two categories: **transversal competences** and **specific competences**. While the first type of competences are considered essential for all individuals and have broad applicability across different life domains – those being literacy and multilingual competences, mathematical competence and competence in science and technology and engineering, digital competence, personal, social and learning to learn competences, cultural awareness and expression, citizen and entrepreneurship competences -, the second ones are more context-specific and are relevant for particular domains or professions. Some of the transversal competences are the same of the specific ones, like entrepreneurship, since involve particular domains (business, democracy, culture industry, etc.) that shapes professional categories, which entail pertinent responsibilities and tasks at an expertise degree that not all individuals possess.

The Key Competences Framework serves as a guide for educators, policymakers, employers, and individuals to understand and develop these essential competences. It informs curriculum design, educational strategies, and lifelong learning initiatives across the European Union. By fostering the development of these key competences, the EU aims to support personal growth, social cohesion, employability, and competitiveness in the global workforce.

Transversal competence-based framework: LifeComp

Even if not widely recognised or implemented as it should, **LifeComp**, or The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence, is an example of transversal set of competences that allowed the definition of a framework. It has to be considered as a complement to specific competence-based frameworks (EntreComp, DigComp), and contemplates a series of knowledge, skills and attitudes such as empathy, critical thinking, wellbeing, flexibility, growth mindset, communication, among others that are valuable in both personal and professional contexts.
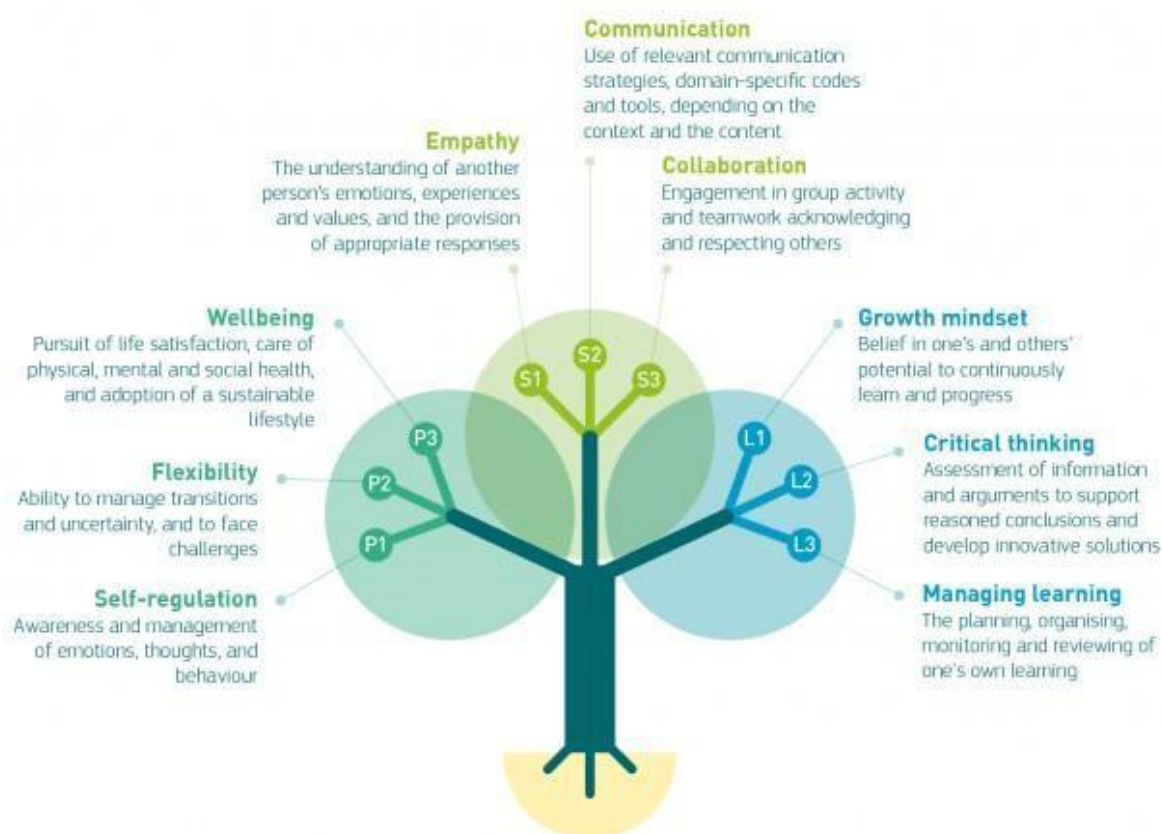
LifeComp refers to the idea that life skills are valuable across various real-life contexts, enhancing personal development and overall well-being. LifeComp applications are wide, such as in education

with information literacy, labour market with communication, relationships with conflict-resolution, health with emotional intelligence, citizenship with civic responsibility, cultural expression through tolerance, and even parenting, helping raising resilient children. Nonetheless, the framework involves the comprehension and development of competences related to XXI century trends and challenges, such as a healthy and concerned usage of the digital ecosystem, including internet and social media, and environmental awareness promoting sustainable living and reducing one's ecological footprint.

Specific competence-based framework: DigComp

A remarkable example of transversal competence-based framework, alongside with EntreComp (Entrepreneurship Competence Framework) is DigComp, or Digital Competence Framework for Citizens. The European Commission created this reference framework to assess and promote digital competence among citizens (and educators in its DigCompEdu version), in order to become confident and responsible digital users.

DigComp is applicable to various contexts, including education, employment, and personal life. It helps individuals, educators, employers, and policymakers understand the digital environment and evaluate someone's interactions in it, promoting a culture of lifelong learning in the digital age, where understanding online risks and managing the sources of the huge amount of information is key.

With 21 competences, assessable in different level of proficiency, DigComp identifies 5 areas of competency:

1. Information and Data Literacy: competences oriented to locate, manage, organize, evaluate, and critically analyse digital information.

2. Communication and Collaboration: competence to communicate, interact, and collaborate with others through digital channels.

3. Digital Content Creation: competences for editing digital content, including text, images, audio, and video, as well as understanding issues related to intellectual property and copyright.

4. Safety: competences for understanding the risks and threats associated with digital technologies and being able to take steps to protect personal data and digital security.

5. Problem-Solving: competences for using digital tools and resources to solve problems and make informed decisions.

DigComp can be used for certification and recognition of digital skills, making it easier for individuals to demonstrate their competences to employers and educational institutions. Moreover, it emphasizes responsible and ethical use of digital technologies (netiquettes) and the importance of being a responsible digital citizen. Nonetheless, the competence framework underscores the need for digital technologies and content to be accessible to all, including people with disabilities.

Europass CV in few steps

On this regard, with a strong link with the European competences frameworks, the EU also created **Europass**: a set of documents and tools designed to help individuals communicate their skills, qualifications, and experiences more effectively when seeking employment, education, or training opportunities within the European Union and European Economic Area (EEA). Europass provides standardized formats and guidelines for presenting information about one's educational and professional background, making it easier for employers, educational institutions, and other organizations to understand and evaluate qualifications and competences.

The **Europass CV** (standardized template for creating a curriculum vitae or resume) is the most know tool of this EU initiative, but it also contemplates the Europass Mobility and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which support the cross-border study/work experience and lifelong

learning throughout Europe. In fact, the first helps individuals certify the training or job international experiences, the second translate the national qualifications into comparable learning outcomes.

Whether you wish to become an entrepreneur or not, knowing how to fill out a Europass CV in a compelling way demonstrate a self-awareness ability that is key to plan and go through a career goals. For presenting your qualifications, experiences, and competences in an organized, and engaging manner, and make a positive impression on potential employers, clients or educational institutions, you can follow some tips below listed.

1. **Use a professional format**: The Europass website offers several template options. Select one that suits your style and the nature of the position you are applying for.

2. **Provide a clear profile**: Start your CV with a concise profile or personal statement. This section should highlight your key qualifications, career goals, and what you can bring to the role or program.

3. **Highlight relevant experience**: List your work experience in reverse chronological order, emphasizing relevant positions and achievements that you demonstrate through other Europass tools (Europass Mobility for international staying). Use action verbs and specific examples to showcase your contributions and impact, for example, use "managed," "implemented," "led," etc.

4. **Emphasize Education**: Introduce your educational background, including degrees, institutions, and graduation dates. Highlight any awards, if you have.

5. **Showcase Skills**: Include a section for your skills, focusing on those most relevant to the job or educational program. Be specific and provide evidence of your proficiency, such as for the digital and multilingual ones, using common European framework references (DigComp, CEFR).

6. **Quantify Achievements**: Whenever possible, quantify your achievements with numbers or percentages. For instance, "increased sales by 20% in the first quarter" provides a more tangible impact than a generic statement.

7. **Organize and proofread**: Use bullet points to make your CV more scannable and easier to read. This format allows for quick, targeted information retrieval. Afterward, check your Europass CV for grammatical errors, typos, and formatting issues. A well-edited CV conveys professionalism and attention to detail.

8. **Keep it concise and authentic**: Europass CVs should typically be no longer than two pages. Prioritize and customize information relevant to the job application or educational program and avoid unnecessary details, or inaccurate data that could mislead the recruiter.

9. **Include relevant interests**: Consider including a brief section about your hobbies and interests. Highlight activities that demonstrate your skills or character traits that align with the job or educational program. For instance, volunteering experiences are saying something relevant about your attitude and behviours.

10. **Include References**: If references are required or can be provided, mention that they are available upon request at the end of your CV. This is linked to possible publications you could have made or projects results you handled.

Practical activity: ***Create your updated Europass CV***

Materials: Personal computer, wi-fi connection.
Time: 3 hours.
Methodology:

1. Visit the Europass website, watch this tutorial video (https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-193054?language=EN&tout=NaN) and enter the Europass CV page (https://europa.eu/europass/eportfolio/screen/cv-editor?lang=en), from where to create a CV, without having to register the platform - if you don't want to - by following the following instructions.

2. Select the language you want to fill the CV, your personal information, and keep on adding sections to your "Edit" CV part, for a general purpose, mainly self-awareness. Take 1 hour of your time to complete "Work experience", "Education and training", "Language skills", "Digital skills" suggested sections.

3. Following the same mechanism, add sections that highlight the competences with references to the European frameworks, such as "Organizational skills", "Communication and interpersonal skills", "Management and leadership skills". At the very end, consider to include sections that well represent LifeComp set of skills, knowledge and attitudes, through the completion of sections such as "Creative works", "Projects", "Hobbies and interests". This second step could take between 1 or 2 hours.

4. When you feel satisfied about it, click on the "Next" bottom, and enter the "Select template" part. There you can pick the colour, paging, size of your Europass CV, and you can even add a final statement. Then, click on "Next" again to have a preview of your edited CV, and then download it. This passage takes about 10 minutes. In case you haven't registered at the

beginning of the CV making task, you can save the newly made CVin the Europass Library at this very stage. It takes 5 minutes to register.

5. Consider to ask an educator, a career tutor, or a peer to read your CV and provide you with feedback. Then revise it based on the comments received.

6. If you feel confident, try to fill out another CV considering that this second should be uploaded to a job searching platform, such as Linkedin, for a position you would like to candidate. You may customize your newly made CV, better highlighting the educational or work milestones, competences and expertise you think should be attracting the recruiter attention. You can do that from the same Europass CV webpage by entering in your Library space or by importing the newly made CV for editing.

Food for thought:

Did you ever inform of your personal and professional competences in a way different than a Europass CV to convince someone to accept you for a job or a programme?

A good way to do so could be a concise presentation of you, or even a video where storytelling your abilities, taking always in mind the European frameworks for competences acknowledgement.

Take some time to search for some examples on the internet, and think if you could be able to do such a thing.

Learning materials suggestions

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages

Europass: https://europa.eu/europass/en

Europass CV: https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv

Europass Mobility: https://europa.eu/europass/en/work-europe/mobility

European Qualifications Framework: https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/european-qualifications-framework