TRAINING AND LEARNING – IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

MODULE 1. – SKILLS OF TOMORROW'S WELL-BEING FOR THE CHILDREN OF PRESENT

TRAINER MANUAL

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Introduction

Welcome to the introductory training module titled **Skills of tomorrow's well-being for the children of present!** This introductory training material is the first core module of the four-module professional training program for in-service teachers, developed by the SPIRIT project. The other three modules will become really useful once you get familiar with this module, as they all focus on the practical development of the 10 transversal skills described in this module. All four training modules have been structured so that the face-to-face workshops are not about theory, but about thinking together and sharing experiences.

This document is intentionally more in-depth and reflective. It is designed to prepare you not only cognitively but professionally and personally for the dedicated training program.

The SPIRIT framework is grounded in a holistic understanding of education. Education is not limited to knowledge acquisition. It is a developmental process that integrates cognitive growth, emotional regulation, relational competence, ethical awareness, and identity formation. Transversal skills are the connective structure that allows these dimensions to interact coherently.

In this preparatory reading, you are invited to move beyond the question 'What subject do I teach?' and enter the deeper reflection: 'Who are my students becoming through my teaching?'

What to Expect

This foundational module serves as the starting point for the entire training program, upon which further modules are directly built. A clear understanding and knowledge of the 10 SPIRIT transversals skills is essential for understanding the skill-building impact of the tools presented in the following modules - active learning techniques, developmental games, and STEAM projects - and for applying them in practice. This module provides a detailed overview of the 10 SPIRIT cross-curricular skills developed for children ages 6–10.

The following material, which we would like you to read before the workshop, introduces the theoretical, developmental, and pedagogical foundations of the ten SPIRIT transversal skills. It prepares you to engage actively and critically during the face-to-face training session.

- A conceptual clarification of transversal skills within contemporary educational theory.
- An analysis of why these competencies is central in the 21st century for the future well-being.
- A detailed presentation of the ten SPIRIT skills with practical classroom examples.
- An exploration of developmental levels and behavioural indicators.
- A pedagogical connection to experiential learning theory (Kolb).
- Reflective prompts to analyse your own teaching practice.

You are encouraged to read actively. Underline ideas that resonate. Note questions. Identify areas where your practice already aligns with these principles and areas where growth may be possible.

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We highly recommend watching **From the elementary classroom to the Future wellbeing – Bridging soft skills and neuroscience** video discussion in which a neuropsychologist from our Italian partner talks with 34 practicing educators about what brain researchers believe regarding the age at which children can and should begin developing these SPIRIT skills.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this preparatory study, you will be able to:

- Define transversal skills within a theoretical educational framework.
- Explain why competence-based education is increasingly emphasized globally.
- Describe each of the ten SPIRIT transversal skills in depth.
- Identify observable behavioural indicators for each skill.
- Understand how skill development supports long-term well-being and life satisfaction.
- Apply Kolb's experiential learning cycle to classroom situations.
- Critically reflect on your own role as a model of transversal competence.

Have a good learning journey and have fun discovering this really fascinating topic.

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Read before the workshop – The ten SPIRIT skills

1. Why Transversal Skills? Why Now?

Global educational discourse has progressively shifted from a purely knowledge-cantered model to a competence-based paradigm. International frameworks (OECD, UNESCO, European Commission) highlight adaptability, collaboration, creativity, and emotional intelligence as core educational outcomes.

This shift is not ideological; it responds to structural transformations in society.

- Technological acceleration reduces the lifespan of specific technical knowledge.
- Automation transforms job markets and requires cognitive flexibility.
- Globalization increases intercultural interaction and ethical complexity.
- Environmental crises require systemic and collaborative thinking.
- Digital environments amplify emotional and relational challenges.

In such a context, education must cultivate capacities that enable transfer, adaptation, and meaning making. Transversal skills allow knowledge to remain functional across contexts.

A child who develops critical thinking can evaluate misinformation. A child who develops resilience can persist in uncertainty. A child who develops empathy can navigate diversity constructively.

Furthermore, soft skills are the fundamental basis for working on oneself: they allow us to smooth out the rough edges of our character and cultivate those virtues that, over time, make us truly happy and satisfied, strengthening our ability to face life with balance.

2. From Content Delivery to Competence Development

Competence-based education integrates three dimensions:

- Cognitive (knowledge and intellectual processing).
- Emotional (self-regulation and awareness).
- Relational (interaction and ethical responsibility).

Transversal skills operate across disciplines. They are not separate subjects; they are developmental capacities activated within authentic learning experiences.

For example, during a mathematics problem-solving activity, students may demonstrate:

- Resilience when they encounter difficulty.
- Flexibility when they change strategy.
- Collaboration and empathy in group work.
- Critical thinking when evaluating solution validity.

This integrated perspective allows teachers to design learning experiences that simultaneously address curriculum objectives and developmental goals.

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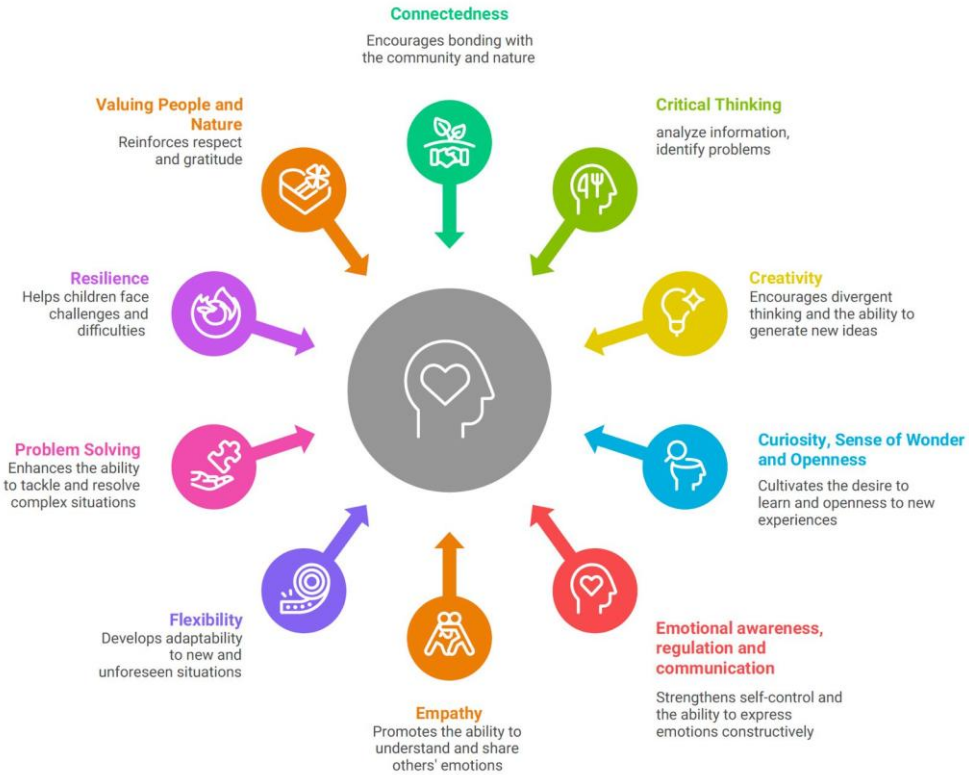
It is essential that teachers become aware of the skills involved: only then can they help their students not only to acquire knowledge, but also to practise and strengthen those transferable skills that will be valuable in everyday life. In fact, attentive teachers do not just convey content but accompany students in training skills that will enable them to successfully face personal, professional, and social challenges, making a real difference in their growth.

3. The Ten SPIRIT Transversal Skills – Expanded Overview

A set of skills necessary for a happy future was identified based on five in-depth interviews (one per partner) with cognitive child psychologists. These skills comprise ten basic skills that can be meaningfully understood and developed by 6- to 10-year-olds at this age.



For a full explanation of the 10 SPIRIT skills, please refer to the SPIRIT website – Skills-set.

4. Developmental Levels and Behavioural Indicators

Skill acquisition is progressive and observable. Recognizing levels prevents static labelling.

- Emerging – The skill appears inconsistently and requires guidance.
- Developing – The skill appears with partial autonomy.
- Consolidated – The skill is transferred independently across contexts.

For example, resilience at the emerging level may involve repeated discouragement. At the developing level, the student attempts again with encouragement. At the consolidated level, the student independently reframes mistakes.

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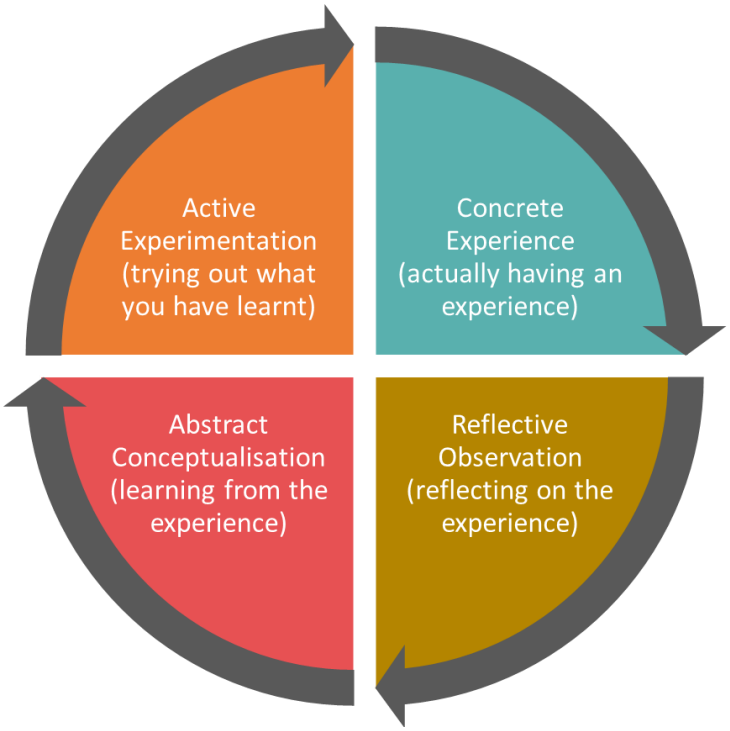
These developmental levels are closely intertwined with cognitive, emotional, and psychological growth processes. Recent advances in neuroscience are shedding light on how students' brains develop in relation to these skills, offering valuable insights for educators. Recognizing where a student is on this developmental spectrum enables teachers to tailor their instructional strategies and set realistic expectations, ensuring that both classroom activities and learning goals are appropriately matched to each learner's current abilities. This awareness fosters a supportive environment that encourages progress and nurtures well-being.

5. How to develop the transversal skills- Experiential Learning and Kolb's Cycle

Teaching transversal skills in primary schools is essential to help children develop social and emotional competencies that will serve them throughout their lives. Yet teaching transversal skills is certainly different from teaching curriculum subjects: the development of transversal skills involves an understanding of the competence itself, (observing and naming it) and the development of functional behavioural habits. To ensure an effective learning experience, teachers can structure their approach using Kolb's Learning Cycle, which consists of four key stages:

- Concrete Experience – Students actively engage in a task.
- Reflective Observation – Students analyse their experience emotionally and cognitively.
- Abstract Conceptualization – Students identify general principles and name the skill practiced.
- Active Experimentation – Students apply learning in new contexts.



Each stage plays a crucial role in developing behavioural competencies in young learners and can be used in different periods of the learning process: anyway, we believe that, for a complete transversal skills learning experience, each stage should be used.

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For example, in a STEAM design challenge, students build a prototype (experience), reflect on failure points (reflection), identify resilience strategies (conceptualization), and redesign the prototype (experimentation).

Without structured reflection, activities risk remaining superficial. With intentional facilitation, they become developmental catalysts.

For a detailed description of the model and its implications for the development of transversal skills between the ages of 6 and 10, please refer to Chapter 7 of the SPIRIT project Handbook and consider how the reading fits into your everyday teaching practice.

THE SPIRIT FRAMEWORK: COMPREHENSIVE HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS – HOW TO TRAIN TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

6. Transversal Skills and Long-Term Well-Being

Research in developmental psychology and Positive Psychology consistently shows that well-being is not determined primarily by external success, but by internal competencies. Emotional regulation, social competence, resilience, and adaptive coping strategies strongly predict life satisfaction across the lifespan.

Within Positive Psychology, Martin Seligman's PERMA model identifies five core dimensions of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Transversal skills directly support each of these dimensions.

Well-being, therefore, is not a temporary emotional state. It is a developmental capacity – the ability to manage emotions, sustain engagement, build constructive relationships, pursue meaningful goals, and respond adaptively to difficulty.

For example:

- Emotionally regulated children manage stress more effectively. They recognize emotional triggers and apply coping strategies. This supports the "Positive Emotions" dimension of PERMA, as emotional balance reduces anxiety and increases psychological stability.
- Empathetic children build supportive relationships. Empathy strengthens the "Relationships" dimension. Students who understand others' perspectives are more likely to cooperate, resolve conflicts constructively, and feel socially connected.
- Resilient children sustain motivation through difficulty. Resilience contributes to both "Engagement" and "Accomplishment." Students who reinterpret failure as feedback maintain effort and experience mastery over time.
- Curious children maintain intrinsic motivation. Curiosity fuels "Engagement." When learning is experienced as exploration rather than obligation, students develop sustained cognitive involvement and deeper learning habits.
- Connected children develop meaning and civic awareness. A sense of belonging and interdependence supports the "Meaning" dimension. Students who perceive themselves as part of larger social and ecological systems are more likely to act responsibly and ethically.

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These competencies interact synergistically. Emotional regulation supports resilience; empathy strengthens connectedness; curiosity enhances problem-solving. Together, they create a stable foundation for psychological well-being.

From a preventive perspective, transversal skills function as protective factors against disengagement, emotional dysregulation, and social isolation. From a promotive perspective, they foster agency, adaptability, ethical awareness, and sustainable happiness.

Therefore, transversal skills are not auxiliary to academic learning. They are foundational to long-term well-being and responsible citizenship. Within the SPIRIT framework, cultivating these competencies aligns educational success with human flourishing — preparing students not only to achieve, but to thrive.

7. The Teacher as Developmental Model

Children internalize not only explicit instruction but observed behavior. What we say matters. What we model matters even more. These are particularly relevant for children aged 6-10 years

In every classroom interaction, teachers communicate implicit messages about how to think, how to feel, how to respond to difficulty, and how to relate to others. Transversal skills are therefore not transmitted solely through structured activities or planned lessons. They are embodied daily in tone of voice, reactions to mistakes, ways of handling conflict, and attitudes toward uncertainty.

Within the SPIRIT framework, the teacher is not only a facilitator of learning experiences, but a living example of transversal competence.

Consider the following reflective questions:

- How do I respond to unexpected challenges? When a lesson does not unfold as planned, do I react with rigidity or adaptability? Do I verbalize my thinking process and model constructive problem-solving? Students observe whether difficulty is treated as a threat or as an opportunity.
- How do I communicate frustration? Do I suppress it, externalize it, or regulate it constructively? Demonstrating emotional awareness — for example, saying "I feel a bit frustrated right now, so I will take a breath and rethink this" — teaches students that emotions are manageable and communicable.
- How do I demonstrate flexibility when plans change? Flexibility is often tested in moments of disruption. By calmly adjusting strategies and explaining the reasoning behind adjustments, teachers model cognitive adaptability and emotional stability.
- How do I model curiosity in front of students? Do I ask genuine questions? Do I show interest in discovering new information? Do I express wonder when exploring a topic? When teachers demonstrate authentic curiosity, they legitimize intellectual exploration.
- How do I respond to students' mistakes? Do I emphasize error as failure or as feedback? A growth-oriented response to mistakes reinforces resilience and reduces fear of judgment.

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- How do I handle conflict between students? My mediation style becomes their relational template. Modelling empathy, perspective-taking, and calm dialogue shapes the classroom's social climate.

Professional growth in transversal competence directly influences classroom climate. A teacher who practices emotional regulation fosters psychological safety. A teacher who demonstrates empathy cultivates trust. A teacher who models resilience normalizes effort and persistence.

This does not imply perfection. On the contrary, authenticity is essential. When teachers acknowledge their own learning processes – "I made a mistake, and I will correct it" – they demonstrate humility, responsibility, and continuous growth. Students learn that development is lifelong.

The SPIRIT approach positions the teacher at the centre of the educational ecosystem. Skill development is not an additional layer added to instruction; it is embedded in daily practice. Every interaction becomes an opportunity for modelling:

- Modelling calm under pressure strengthens students' regulation.
- Modelling reflective thinking strengthens students' metacognition.
- Modelling openness strengthens students' flexibility.
- Modelling respect strengthens students' empathy.

In this sense, transversal competence is contagious. Classroom culture is shaped less by rules and more by relational patterns.

Therefore, the training process is not only about acquiring strategies to teach the ten SPIRIT skills. It is also about cultivating them personally. Teachers who reflect intentionally on their own emotional, cognitive, and relational patterns create more coherent and impactful learning environments.

Ultimately, students remember less about what was explained and more about how they felt in the learning environment. When they experience safety, respect, curiosity, and constructive challenge, they internalize those patterns as part of their own developing identity.

The teacher, within the SPIRIT framework, is both architect and participant in this developmental process – guiding, modelling, and growing alongside students.

Preparing for the Training Day

Before the workshop, we encourage you to think about what you have just read, the importance of transversal skills and how you can develop them in the age group you teach. We would like to support your effective participation in the training with some reflective questions.

- Identify concrete classroom episodes where a SPIRIT skill emerged.
- Reflect on which skills are strongest in your group.
- Consider which competencies need intentional reinforcement.
- Consider how you could make time for purposeful skill development in school days.
- Think about what behavior examples you are showing children to follow and learn in these ten transversal skills

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- How children's behaviours manifest the level or lack of these ten transversal competences.
- Select one personal developmental goal as a teacher.

Bring written reflections. The training day will transform them into shared professional dialogue.

Final Reflection

Transversal skills represent a coherent educational response to complexity. They prepare students not only for professional success but for ethical participation, emotional balance, and meaningful contribution to society.

The SPIRIT project invites you to design learning environments where knowledge and competence grow together – shaping children who think critically, act responsibly, and relate empathetically.

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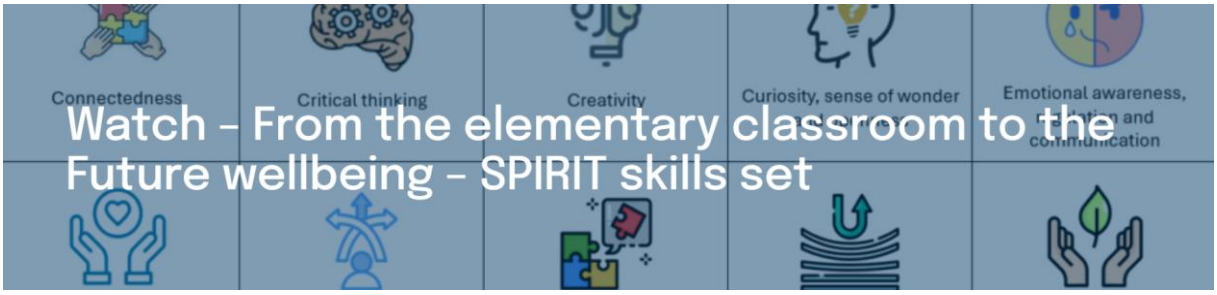
Watch before the workshop – From the Elementary Classroom to the Future Wellbeing – SPIRIT Skills Set

After reading the chapter **"The ten SPIRIT skills"**, please **watch the video presentation about** **From the elementary classroom to the Future wellbeing - Bridging soft skills and neuroscience.**

This video presentation was recorded in the first International Community of Practice - an online knowledge and experience-sharing TeacMeet. The thought-provoking presentation at the event was given by Professor **Grazia Serantoni**, and 35 educators from 8 countries discussed with her and among themselves about the 10 SPIRIT skills and how these can be developed for children aged 6–10**.** The presentation focused on the following three questions, which concern the relationship between brain science and the developing of transversal skills:

1. **Why are these competences trainable?**
2. **When is the brain most ready?**
3. **How do we activate the right brain circuits?**



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Please watch the video

The video presentation is available on the project's YouTube channel. The original language of the presentation is English, but by clicking the CC icon, you can set the subtitles to the languages of the project partners.

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Summary of the video presentation

"Bridging soft skills and neuroscience"

The SPIRIT framework meets the neuroscience of learning.
Grazia Serantoni, Psychologist, PsyD
Patrizio Paoletti Foundation, Rome, Italy

"The brain is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled." Adapted from Plutarch, *On Listening to Lectures* (De Auditu), 46 AD

Why neuroscience matters for teaching transversal skills

Three questions frame the connection between brain science and the teaching of transversal competences:

1. **Why are these competences trainable?** Because the brain physically changes every time a child practises a new skill. This process, called neuroplasticity, means that transversal competences are not fixed traits: they are capacities that can be built through deliberate practice (Pascual-Leone et al., 2005; Draganski et al., 2004).
2. **When is the brain most ready?** Between the ages of 6 and 10, the prefrontal cortex, the region responsible for planning, self-control, and flexible thinking, is undergoing massive structural changes. The brain is selecting which neural connections to keep and wrapping them in myelin, making them faster and more efficient (Gogtay et al., 2004). The peak window for executive function development is ages 5 to 12 (Best and Miller, 2010).
3. **How do we activate the right brain circuits?** Through experiential, reflective learning and teacher modelling. Mirror neurons in students' brains activate the same neural patterns when they observe a teacher demonstrating empathy or calm problem-solving (Rizzolatti and Craighero, 2004).

The SPIRIT framework: three axes, one centre

The SPIRIT framework organises the teaching of transversal skills along three axes.

1. **What to teach:** 10 transversal competences, identified through surveys with over 500 European teachers and interviews with developmental psychologists: emotional awareness, regulation and communication; creativity; problem-solving; critical thinking; resilience; flexibility; curiosity, sense of wonder and openness; empathy; valuing people and nature; connectedness.
2. **When to teach:** Three developmental levels for each competence (emerging, consolidating, advanced) across the K1 to K4 age range, covering children aged 6 to 10.
3. **How to teach:** Three complementary methods: structured learning activities (specific or integrated into core subjects), traditional games (promoting collaboration, creativity, rule-following), and STEAM activities (interdisciplinary projects combining creativity and technology).

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At the centre of the model sits teacher awareness. The handbook states explicitly: teaching soft skills is not just about knowing, it is about being. Teachers are living examples of the competences they aim to nurture.

The 10 competences through a neuroscience lens

When viewed through a neuroscience lens, the 10 SPIRIT competences fall into two natural groups (Tab. 1).

Cognitive-executive group	Socio-emotional group
Problem-solving Creativity Critical thinking Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness Flexibility	**Emotional awareness, regulation and communication Resilience Empathy Valuing people and nature Connectedness**
Rely heavily on the prefrontal cortex: planning, flexible thinking, impulse control.	Engage the "social brain": stress recovery, emotional resonance, moral reasoning.

Tab. 1 – 10 SPIRIT competences: reorganisation, from a neuroscientific perspective

For each competence, identifiable brain processes are at work. Creativity involves the interaction between the prefrontal cortex and the default mode network (Beaty et al., 2016). Critical thinking requires inhibitory control (Miyake et al., 2000). Empathy engages the anterior insula and the mirror neuron system (Decety and Jackson, 2004). Resilience involves adaptive coping (Masten, 2014), supported by the prefrontal-amygdala circuit

SPIRIT's three teaching methods naturally engage both cognitive and emotional brain networks. Research shows that emotion and cognition are deeply integrated in the learning process, and that lasting learning depends on this integration (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007).

Three neuroscience principles

1) Neuroplasticity: The brain physically changes when we practise something repeatedly. Every time a child resolves a conflict, imagines a creative solution, or pauses before reacting, they strengthen neural pathways. Hebb (1949) described the principle that repeated co-activation of neurons strengthens their connections, later summarised as "neurons that fire together wire together.". This is why SPIRIT's use of Kolb's experiential cycle (1984) (experience, reflect, conceptualise, try again) is so effective: it engages multiple brain networks in the sequence that produces durable change (Zull, 2002).

2) Executive functions: The prefrontal cortex manages three core skills: the ability to resist impulses, to hold information in mind, and to shift flexibly between tasks (Miyake et al., 2000). Structured activities, the kind SPIRIT proposes, improve these skills more effectively than free play (Diamond and Lee, 2011). Executive functions represent one important set of processes underlying several of the SPIRIT competences.

3) The social brain: Mirror neurons fire both when we perform an action and when we observe someone else performing it (Rizzolatti and Craighero, 2004). When a teacher models empathy, calm, or curiosity, the students' brains activate the same neural patterns. Teachers' emotional competence directly shapes classroom climate and student wellbeing (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Your emotional state is part of the curriculum.

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SPIRIT and "Envisioning the Future": a developmental continuum

The "Envisioning the Future" programme ("Prefigurare il Futuro"), developed by Fondazione Patrizio Paoletti in collaboration with the Università di Padova, works with adolescents aged 11 to 19 using "Pedagogy for the Third Millennium" ("Pedagogia per il Terzo Millennio") (Paoletti, 2008).

Several conceptual overlaps exist between SPIRIT competences and the dimensions addressed in "Envisioning the Future." Resilience maps onto resilience. Self-regulation maps onto emotional regulation. Empathy maps onto self-compassion. Creativity maps onto the ability to reframe difficult experiences.

Both frameworks share three core principles: teacher awareness at the centre, experiential and reflective learning, and observation of competences rather than just testing. Together, they form a continuum: SPIRIT builds the foundation at ages 6 to 10, "Envisioning the Future" deepens it through adolescence.

What the research shows

Data from over 1,100 Italian adolescents (Serantoni et al., 2025a; Serantoni et al., in Paoletti & Di Giuseppe, Eds., 2025b) reveal that resilience is medium-low and declining. Self-compassion scores show a troubling pattern. A regression analysis showed that emotional regulation, positive coping, and life satisfaction together explain over 50% of the variance in resilience.

The "Envisioning the Future" programme, tested on over 700 students, demonstrates that these competences can be improved: participants showed greater self-compassion, stronger emotional regulation, and less tendency to be overwhelmed (Paoletti & Di Giuseppe, Eds., 2025; Paoletti et al., 2024; Di Giuseppe et al., 2023).

If these competences are already weak in adolescence, building them in primary school is a developmental necessity.

Four things you can do tomorrow

1. **Name the brain.** Teach students that their brain grows when they practise. "I can't do this yet" instead of "I can't do this" engages the brain differently (Dweck, 2006).
2. **Model what you teach.** When teachers are more resilient, students judge themselves less harshly (Perasso et al., 2023). Mirror neurons mean your emotional state directly shapes students' development.
3. **Trust the experiential loop.** SPIRIT uses Kolb's cycle (1984). Let children do, reflect, make sense of it, then try again. The hippocampus consolidates learning through experience and reflection (Zull, 2002).
4. **Help children observe themselves.** When a child notices their own thinking and behaviour, they activate the brain circuits responsible for self-regulation. SPIRIT's observational levels are tools for building this capacity.

Three messages to take home

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1. **Soft skills are brain skills.** Resilience, empathy, creativity, and self-regulation are real capacities that can be trained, measured, and strengthened through practice.
2. **SPIRIT competences match critical brain development windows.** Ages 6 to 10 are exactly the right time, because the brain regions that support them are developing most rapidly.
3. **When teachers grow, students grow.** Mirror neurons make it a biological fact. Your growth as an educator is the single most powerful intervention you can offer your students.

Please watch the video of Grazia Serantoni: „FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TO THE FUTURE WELLBEING"

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Activity 1 - Understanding the 10 SPIRIT Transversal Skills and Their Role in Pedagogical Practice

Check in, warm -up and Introduction: Training methods used during the exercise are - Reflecting on Teachers' Own Experiences of Skills Development. Own experience on the spot, teamwork, guided small group, warm-up Jigsaw, Gallery walk techniques, and plenary discussion on the possibilities, skill development in the classroom.

Learning outcomes

- Participants will be able to interpret the concept of SPIRIT transversal skills, their components, and their importance both in the learning process and in relation to future well-being in a common way.
- Participants are able to identify transversal skills based on students' observable classroom behavior and attitudes.
- They understand the future impact of conscious skill development on children's mental, emotional, and social well-being.
- They understand the internal connections among the 10 SPIRIT transversal skills.
- The participant is able to formulate professionally grounded arguments supporting the necessity of SPIRIT transversal skills development in primary education (ages 6-10).
- Participants understand the concept of the SPIRIT transversal skills and their importance in the learning process.

Further objectives of the activity are to create opportunities of cooperation among participants, establish the conditions for group work, and foster trust-based collaboration across all four modules of the training.

Introduction: 0-10 minutes

The trainer briefly welcomes the participants and introduces herself/himself. Then asks the participants to briefly introduce themselves (name, grade level they teach, teaching location, and number of years of professional experience). After the introductions, the trainer presents the general structure and objectives of the whole training program. Then, in a brief presentation lasting no more than 5 minutes, the trainer introduces the concept of transversal skills (assuming that all participants have read and watched the materials included in the "before the workshop"activities). During the presentation, the trainer explains the definition of transversal skills, provides some key examples, and discusses their role in the learning process. It is important to emphasize that these skills are interrelated and often appear jointly in learning situations. The trainer should not explain any of the SPIRIT transversal skills; that will be the participants' task.

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Detailed description of the activity

Part 1 - Group Work – Identifying and Defining SPIRIT Skills Using the Jigsaw Method

Following a brief introduction, participants are involved in an interactive, collaborative activity (the trainer must consciously use the tools from the next training module - active learning techniques - the Jigsaw method). The goal of the activity is to help participants to understand transversal skills not as abstract concepts, but as elements linked to real teaching situations and future skill requirements. The Jigsaw method is used during the activity to ensure that participants, by leaning on each other's knowledge, fully understand each skill and its complexity, while also fostering team spirit, helping participants get to know one another, promoting group cohesion, and energizing the participants.

For the Jigsaw method, the trainer prepares four types of cards in advance:

1. Skill cards containing the names of the ten transversal skills,
2. Definition cards describing the meaning of each skill,
3. Learning situation cards describing short primary classroom scenarios,
4. Future-oriented cards explaining why the skill is important for the future well-being (for example for learning, collaboration, or future work contexts)

Steps of the activity

1. The trainer asks the participants to pick up a card from the table (there are five pre-selected skill cards on the table, with three behavior, three future impact, and three definition cards associated with each skil - 20 cards in total). The cards are color-coded according to their group (the backs of all five skill cards are orange).
   Participants must find the people who hold the cards that match theirs. As a result, there will be 4 teams of fourparticipants, where each member holds the cards belonging to the same skill (for example, within a group, there will be the "resilience" skill card along with its corresponding future impact, definition, and behavior cards).
2. After this phase, participants return to their home groups, where each member brings different information: one brings the skill, one the definition, one the learning situation, one the future perspective. The group's task is to assemble the full interpretation of the skill by matching the skill with the correct definition, identifying a corresponding classroom situation, and connecting it to its future relevance.
3. The group briefly discusses what the given skill means in their own teaching practice and in what teaching situations they have already encountered it. They will write a brief explanation of how the skill manifests itself in elementary school education, what behavior is expected from young children who have some level of proficiency in the skill, and why it is important for the students' future development.
4. Finally, groups present their results to the whole group.

Plenary discussion

The trainer facilitates a short plenary reflection in which participants identify key pedagogical patterns. For example, participants may notice that certain skills – such as collaboration, empathy, or problem-solving – often appear in the same types of learning situations.

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The trainer highlights that transversal skills rarely appear in isolation but rather in interconnected ways, and that teachers play an important role in supporting their development through: thoughtful questioning, structured learning activities, and supportive feedback.

Part Two – Small group work on the remaining five SPIRIT transversals skills

Following the first plenary discussion, the trainer explains the second part of the exercise. The groups remain in the same formation as before. The trainer distributes the remaining skill cards that were not used in the previous exercise (each group receives one). Along with the skill card, the trainer gives each group a blank flip-chart sheet, onto which they stick the skill card in the center. The trainer asks the groups to use the concepts introduced in the previous activity to create (and write on the flip-chart) three additional cards based on the skill card: a definition card, a behavior and situation card, and a future impact card. In addition, they should provide brief practical examples of how this skill can be developed at school. The completed flip-charts will be reviewed through a Gallery Walk.

Wrap-up and reflections on the exercise

The trainer briefly wraps up the session. The trainer emphasizes that transversal skills rarely appear in isolation but rather in an interconnected manner, and that teachers play an important role in supporting their development by asking thoughtful questions, providing structured learning activities, and offering supportive feedback.

Finally, thank the participants for their work and give each group positive feedback on their work. Be sure to follow the rules of positive feedback (be specific; focus on the process rather than the result; highlight collaborative thinking, group dynamics, etc.).

Guiding Questions for Participants

For this exercise, the trainer does not support the groups with guiding questions, as this would be contrary to the objectives of the exercise. The exception is when a team, for whatever reason, does not want to complete the exercise. It is up to the trainer to assess this situation as it arises, as well as to determine the extent of assistance to be provided.

Time allocation

- Introduction and personal introductions: 10 minutes
- Introductory trainer presentation: 5 minutes
- First part of group work with a presentation: 20 minutes
- Plenary discussion: 15–20 minutes
- Second part of group work: 20 minutes
- Closing: 10 minutes

Total: 90 minutes

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Required materials

- skill cards
- definition cards
- learning situation cards
- poster templates
- post-it notes

Handouts

No handouts are required to complete this assignment

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Activity 1 – Alternative activity for starting the program – Introduction: Reflecting on Teachers' Own Experiences of Skills Development

Check in and Introduction. Reflecting on Teachers' Own Experiences of Skills Development. Own experience on the spot, teamwork, guided small group, and plenary discussion on the possibilities, skill development in the classroom

Learning objective to be achieved

Participants recognise, based on their own teaching experiences, that the SPIRIT 10 transversal skills are already present in classroom situations.

Activity/exercise in details

Explain the purpose of the training – not the procedure – and the rules. Write the rules on a flip chart and put it on the wall so that all participants can see it.

Introduction: 0-10 minutes

The trainer briefly welcomes the participants and introduces themselves. Participants are then invited to briefly introduce themselves as well (name, grade level they teach, place of teaching, and years of professional experience). After the introductions, the trainer presents the overall structure and objectives of the training programme. Participants are then asked to form four groups of four people. Group formation can be supported by a short icebreaker activity, such as: choosing coloured cards, selecting an inspiring quote, or choosing a skill that most frequently appears in their teaching practice. Participants who select the same element form a group.

Sharing pedagogical experiences on how the transversal skills defined in the SPIRIT model appear in the learning process

Participants reflect on their own teaching experiences and consider how the transversal skills defined in the SPIRIT model appear in the learning process. During the discussion, the trainer briefly highlights that these skills are not only important for academic achievement but also play a key role in students' mental health, well-being, and social adaptation. Skills such as emotional awareness, cooperation, or perseverance help children: cope with challenges more effectively, build relationships with peers, and adapt more flexibly to changing learning and life situations. Therefore, during the training, participants reflect not on transversal skills in general, but specifically on how SPIRIT skills appear and can be developed in learning situations in primary education.

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Steps of the activity – Snowball technique

Use the **"Snowball technique"** methods

1. Individual reflection (5 minutes): Participants recall a classroom situation in which one or more transversal skills appeared.
2. Pair discussion (7 minutes): Participants share their examples with the colleague sitting next to or opposite them.
3. Small-group discussion (8 minutes): Two pairs join together and compare their experiences.
4. Each group formulates a shared conclusion, which is later presented during the plenary discussion.

Suggested themes and guiding questions

The trainer may support participants' thinking with guiding questions. These help teachers identify the appearance and pedagogical significance of SPIRIT skills in concrete learning situations.

1. Questions for *individual* reflection
    - What classroom situation comes to mind in which students worked together on a task?
    - What behaviours indicated that a SPIRIT skill (e.g., cooperation, empathy, creativity, perseverance) was present?
    - How did students react when they encountered difficulties or disagreed with one another?
    - What did the teacher do in that situation that helped students solve the problem?
2. Questions for *pair* discussion
    - Which SPIRIT skills were most visible in the situation you described?
    - How could these skills be recognised in students' behaviour?
    - How did the teacher support the development of these skills?
    - How does this situation relate to students' well-being or emotional safety?
3. Questions for *small-group* discussion
    - In what kinds of learning situations do SPIRIT skills most often appear in primary education?
    - Which skills tend to appear together during the learning process?
    - How do these skills contribute to students' mental well-being and social relationships?
    - What pedagogical tools can support the development of these skills in the classroom?

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Plenary discussion

Groups briefly present their conclusions. The trainer writes key ideas on a flipchart. Example guiding questions: What learning situations allowed these skills to appear? What role did the teacher play in these situations?

Time allocation

- Introduction and group formation: 10 minutes
- Snowball activity: 20 minutes
- Plenary discussion: 10 minutes

Total: 40 minutes

Materials

Post-its, flip-charts and blue stick, stationery (including colour markers), coloured cards.

Pay attention – Important note

Encourage participants to talk about specific classroom situations rather than general pedagogical principles. Make sure that all participants have the opportunity to contribute to the discussions

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Activity 2 – The Teacher, as a Role Model in the Transversal Skills Development

How do we develop students' skills by demonstrating through our behaviour what it means to behave in a way that is appropriate to a particular skill?

With this exercise, we want to highlight how important it is for the development of SPIRIT skills for the children to see consistent and authentic behaviour of adults/teachers. For example, the teacher's verbal and non-verbal communication is consistent when he/she wants to reinforce to the student that making mistakes is not a problem, it is part of learning. Or when the teacher communicates his/her feelings honestly, showing that emotions can be realised and communicated.

Learning outcomes

- Participants recognise that teachers' behaviour has a continuous and implicit impact on students' development of transversal skills.
- Participants are able to identify concrete, observable forms of teacher modelling behaviour.
- Participants connect students' behaviours and teachers' modelling practices to the SPIRIT transversal skills.

Detailed description of the activity – Steps of the activity

1. Thought-provoking trigger – trainer brief presentation, small group brainstorming and plenary discussion

To introduce the topic, the trainer presents a short classroom scenario: "*Imagine a student makes a mistake and the teacher responds: 'This is not correct. Pay more attention.' What does the student learn from this situation – beyond the task itself?*" Participants briefly share a few reflections. The trainer uses this moment to highlight that students constantly learn from how teachers respond and behaviours, not only from what they teach.

2. Group work – Identifying modelling behaviours

Participants work in their groups of four. The groups should remain the same as the ones we set up in Activity 1. Keep the participants in flow and do not change the group membership. Each group selects (or gets) one (or two) SPIRIT skill card. Their task is to analyse the skill on three levels:

1. Student behaviours: What observable behaviours indicate that the skill is present? (e.g. for empathy: listening to peers, responding to others' feelings)
2. Teacher modelling behaviours: What does the teacher do that supports this skill? (e.g. for empathy: active listening, acknowledging emotions).
3. In what classroom/teaching situation can/should I demonstrate the existence of my SPIRIT skills through my behaviour?

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Each group prepares a short, structured flip-chart poster about each skill (e.g. in a three-column format): Skills (rows) – Student behaviour (column 1) – Teacher modelling (column 2) – Teaching/learning/Playing situation (column 3).

	Student behaviours: What observable behaviours indicate that the skill is present?	*Teacher modelling behaviours*: What does the teacher do that supports this skill?	Classroom/teaching situation, can/should I demonstrate the existence of my SPIRIT skills through my behaviour
Emotional awareness, regulation and communication			
Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness			
.....			

3. Gallery walk exercise

This is an active, collaborative learning activity where the learner/training participants rotate around the classroom/training room to view, analyse, and discuss displayed individual/peer/group work, often leaving feedback on notes. It promotes movement, higher-order thinking, and peer-to-peer interaction.

Each of the prepared posters is displayed on the wall. The groups walk around, read what is written, discuss what they have read in groups, and add their own thoughts using post-it notes. Then, at the trainer's signal, they move on to the next poster.

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4. Plenary discussion

Groups briefly present one key example. The trainer facilitates a short synthesis by clarifying and refining participants' ideas, highlighting strong examples, and drawing connections between contributions. The trainer may organise the responses on a flipchart using a simple structure: Skill – Student behaviour – Teacher modelling. The trainer concludes the activity by emphasising the key insights. Teachers continuously model behaviours even unintentionally. Transversal (SPIRIT) skills are largely developed through observed behaviour patterns in learning situations. Teacher behaviour creates the framework within which student behaviour develops. Conscious pedagogical presence contributes significantly to students' emotional safety, well-being, and social development. A possible closing statement: "*Students do not primarily learn what we teach, they learn how we are present with them*."

Time allocation

- Thought-provoking trigger – trainer intro, brainstorming and group discussion: 15 minutes
- Group work – Identifying modelling behaviours: 20 minutes
- Gallery walks: 20 minutes
- Plenary discussion: 15 minutes

Total: 70 minutes

Required materials

- flipchart
- markers
- post-it notes
- SPIRIT skill cards

Attention – Important Note

Encourage participants to discuss specific situations and in-class behavior of the children rather than general pedagogical principles. Ensure that every participant has the opportunity to have a voice in the discussions.

Ask participants to ensure that the posters are brief and clear, yet easily understandable even to those who did not participate in the group work.

Handouts

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Activity 3 – Analysing a Concrete Learning Situation

This 40-minute small-group and plenary activity links the development of SPIRIT transversal skills with classroom practice. Participants analyze three short classroom case studies that represent the project's three main tools (active learning exercises, games, and STEAM). The groups identify the skills embedded in the situations, examine the teacher's supportive interventions, and formulate opportunities for further development.

Learning outcomes

- Participants identify the appearance of transversal skills in concrete/case study learning situations.
- The participant will be able to reflect on the applicability of the approach in their own practice
- Give participants a first taste of the comprehensive effects of the 3 tools developed as a significant outcome of the project, in order to a) make them aware of the purpose of the three tools for skills development; b) enable them to understand the relationship between SPIRIT skills and the tools through three case studies.
- By achieving the above-described learning objectives, prepare the participants to attend further modules of the training

Detailed description

Group works

The trainer presents three short classroom case studies/learning situations (these three case studies are in accordance with the three development tools proposed, developed, and summarised by the project partners in the toolboxes: learning activity; games/gamified learning; and STEAM). Please note that the maximum group size is 8 people. If there are more participants in the training, please prepare a fourth case study in advance (choose another STEAM program developed by the project partners).

The participants analyse the three cases in 3 small groups using the following questions:

1. Which transversal skills appear in the situation? How do they appear?
2. How does the teacher support the development of these skills?
3. What else could the teacher do to further support these skills?

Each group prepares a short summary.

Plenary discussion

Groups discuss their responses and briefly share their conclusions with the whole group. The trainer will highlight how the teacher's role is reflected in the situation, for example, by asking questions, organising group work, assigning roles and encouraging learners.

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Guiding Questions for Participants

Participants are generally able to complete the task without assistance or guidance. Accordingly, carrying out the task does not require any special support from the trainer. However, if support is needed, there are three types of support that can be provided:

- to identify skills: Ask the group to observe the students' initial behavior and ask a guiding question about it.
- to analyze the teacher's intervention: Ask the group to observe the teacher's supportive behavior and ask supportive questions about it.
- to identify opportunities for further development: What else could the teacher do to support the group by asking a follow-up question at the end of the task?

It is important that the decision to ask guiding questions is always up to the trainer. The trainer should be mindful that the participants have sufficient experience and independence to carry out the task. Do not be dominant and do not steal the "show" from the participants!

Time allocation

- Presentation of the case: 10 minutes
- Group analysis: 20 minutes
- Plenary discussion: 10 minutes

Total: 40 minutes

Required materials

- case description
- flipchart
- other stationary – post-its, markers

Pay attention – Important note

The success of Activity 3 may depend largely on the choice of case study/learning situation. Be aware that the handouts provided here are only a sample and a suggestion. They are of course, perfectly suitable for use in training. It is very important that each case/learning situation is directly linked to one of the three tools. Choose a learning scenario that is in line with the experiences and needs of the participants. Use the toolkits for selection.

Handouts

For this assignment, you must distribute the necessary case studies. You will find examples of these in the appendix, and they can also be downloaded from the SPIRIT portal. Based on these, the trainer should prepare the case studies they intend to use, selecting those that best suit the composition of the group.

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Activity 4 – Reflection, Transition to the Next Modules, and Closing

Reflection and transition to the next modules

The final stage of the training module concludes with a short reflection activity. Participants individually reflect and write their answer to the following question on a card: "*Which transversal skill will I pay more conscious attention to in my own classroom?*" Participants then briefly share their reflections in pairs. The trainer summarises the key insights of the module and emphasises that developing transversal skills is not a separate task but a natural part of learning activities. Teachers can best support their development through intentional planning and reflective teaching practices. The trainer also briefly introduces the next modules of the training programme, where participants will explore concrete methods for developing these skills.

Required materials

- reflection cards
- "I will try this in my classroom" sheet

Time allocation

Total: 10 minutes

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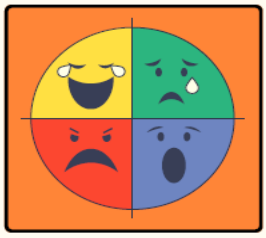
Cards for the Jig-Saw activity – Workshop 1

SKILLS cards

Transversal Skill



EMOTIONAL AWARENESS, REGULATION AND COMMUNICATION

Transversal Skill

CREATIVITY

Transversal Skill

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Transversal Skill

CRITICAL THINKING

Transversal Skill

RESILIENCE

Transversal Skill

FLEXIBILITY

Transversal Skill

CURIOSITY, SENSE OF WONDER AND OPENNESS

Transversal Skill

EMPATHY

Transversal Skill

VALUING PEOPLE AND NATURE

Transversal Skill

CONNECTEDNESS

SPIRIT

Skills of tomorrow for children of present: complex future-skill development with the synergy of learning activities, game-based learning and STEAM

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Definition cards

Transversal Skill

Analysing information and examining problems from multiple perspectives.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Understanding complex situations and exploring possible solutions.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Generating new ideas and engaging in divergent thinking.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Understanding, managing and expressing emotions effectively.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Understanding the feelings and perspectives of others.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

A desire to learn and an openness to new experiences.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Adjusting to new or unexpected situations.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Facing challenges with a positive and constructive attitude.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

A sense of belonging to the community and the natural world.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

The ability to relate to others and the environment through empathy, respect and responsibility.

SPIRIT

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Situation cards

Transversal Skill

Children build a tower, but it collapses. Together, they think of ways to make it more stable.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Children explore different solutions to a task and discuss why some approaches may work better than others.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Children invent a new game or create a new tool using everyday objects.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

The lesson plan changes unexpectedly, and the children need to switch to a new activity.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

A task does not work out the first time, but the child keeps trying until they succeed.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Children ask questions about a new topic and work together to find answers.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

After a shared activity, children talk about how they felt.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

A child is feeling sad, and the others approach them and try to comfort them.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Children work together to tidy up the classroom or the schoolyard.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

During group work, children collaborate, listen to one another and make decisions together.

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Future cards – why is it important for future wellbeing and happiness

Transversal Skill

Helps you solve difficult situations independently in the future.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Helps you navigate information and make informed decisions.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Helps you develop original ideas and innovative solutions for future challenges.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Helps you adjust to change both at school and later in the workplace.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Teaches you not to give up and to keep trying when something does not work out the first time.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Helps you continue learning and growing throughout your life.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Helps you better understand yourself and others.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Helps you build positive relationships and work effectively with others.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Supports responsible living and caring for the environment.

SPIRIT

Transversal Skill

Helps you build friendships and collaborate successfully with others.

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CARD SET 1 – TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

1. Emotional Awareness, regulation and communication
2. Creativity
3. Problem-solving
4. Critical thinking
5. Resilience
6. Flexibility
7. Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness
8. Empathy
9. Valuing people and nature
10. Connectedness

CARD SET 2 – DEFINITIONS

1. Analysing information and examining problems from multiple perspectives.
2. Understanding complex situations and exploring possible solutions.
3. Generating new ideas and engaging in divergent thinking.
4. Understanding, managing and expressing emotions effectively.
5. Understanding the feelings and perspectives of others.
6. A desire to learn and an openness to new experiences.
7. Adjusting to new or unexpected situations.
8. Facing challenges with a positive and constructive attitude.
9. A sense of belonging to the community and the natural world.
10. The ability to relate to others and the environment through empathy, respect and responsibility.

CARD SET 3 – REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS

1. Children build a tower, but it collapses. Together, they think of ways to make it more stable.
2. Children explore different solutions to a task and discuss why some approaches may work better than others.
3. Children invent a new game or create a new tool using everyday objects.
4. The lesson plan changes unexpectedly, and the children need to switch to a new activity.
5. A task does not work out the first time, but the child keeps trying until they succeed.
6. Children ask questions about a new topic and work together to find answers.
7. After a shared activity, children talk about how they felt.
8. A child is feeling sad, and the others approach them and try to comfort them.
9. Children work together to tidy up the classroom or the schoolyard.
10. During group work, children collaborate, listen to one another and make decisions together.

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CARD SET 4 – FUTURE CARDS – WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FORFUTURE WELLBEING AND HAPPINESS

1. Helps you solve difficult situations independently in the future.
2. Helps you navigate information and make informed decisions.
3. Helps you develop original ideas and innovative solutions for future challenges.
4. Helps you adjust to change both at school and later in the workplace.
5. Teaches you not to give up and to keep trying when something does not work out the first time.
6. Helps you continue learning and growing throughout your life.
7. Helps you better understand yourself and others.
8. Helps you build positive relationships and work effectively with others.
9. Supports responsible living and caring for the environment.
10. Helps you build friendships and collaborate successfully with others.

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Handouts for the workshop activity 3 – Analysing a Concrete Learning Situation

Learning situation 1 – Solving a problem collaboratively by STEAM approach

In a third-grade class, the teacher gives students a short group task. The task is to build a bridge using different construction materials (such as wooden blocks, LEGO, or paper) that allows a small toy car to roll across it. The teacher divides students into groups of four. Each group receives the same materials and has 45 minutes to plan and build their bridge together. The teacher encourages students to first discuss their ideas, try multiple solutions, and help each other if someone gets stuck. At the beginning of the activity, two students in one group immediately start building. A third student suggests ideas but does not get much opportunity to speak, while the fourth student quietly observes. The teacher notices the situation and approaches the group, asking: "How could you work in a way that allows everyone to share their ideas?" After a brief discussion, the students decide that everyone will first suggest an idea, and then they will jointly choose which one to try. They continue working and collaboratively attempt to make their bridge more stable. At the end of the activity, each group presents their bridge and tests whether the car can successfully cross it.

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Learning situation 2 – Cooperation and communication development by learning activity

In a second-grade class, the teacher gives students a group task. Using picture cards, the groups create a short story. Each group consists of four students. They receive different pictures (for example: park, dog, ball, rainy day, playground). Their task is to invent a story together and arrange the pictures in the correct sequence. The teacher encourages students to listen to each other's ideas, make joint decisions, and ensure that everyone participates. In one group, two students speak very actively, while a third student struggles to contribute. Meanwhile, the fourth student tries to arrange the pictures, but the group members cannot agree on the correct order. The teacher approaches the group and asks: "What could you do to make sure everyone can share their ideas?" After a short discussion, the students decide that they will share their ideas one by one.

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Learning situation 3 – Perseverance and self-regulation development by game

In a first-grade class, the teacher introduces a simple logic game. Students must recreate a pattern shown in a picture using different shaped pieces. Some students complete the task quickly, while others need more time. One student tries several times but cannot find the correct pieces and becomes increasingly frustrated. The teacher approaches the student and encourages them: "Try again. Look carefully at the picture. Which piece looks most similar to this shape?" The student tries again, and after several attempts successfully completes the pattern. The teacher praises the student's perseverance and highlights that trying again and being patient helped them find the solution.

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