



Turning Creative Skills into Sustainable Business

IO4 – Kre8r Policy Paper

Summary of the Kre8r Project

In Europe, creative industries build upon a rich and diverse core of cultural heritage and skill in the arts. This creative core is surrounded by interconnected and interrelated layers of entrepreneurial and innovation services, aspiring to bring creativity to the market. While promoting and enriching European diversity, they can serve as a powerful economic lever.

“What we can observe now is the opportunity to turn cultural diversity in Europe into a tangible competitive advantage for the rejuvenation of Europe’s economy, whilst preserving specific notions of identity”

As a result of the Kre8r Erasmus+ project, our research and developmental activities, we identified the need to recognise creative and artistic producers as generators of real economic value, and to foster and support their development. If Vocational Education & Training (VET) is to respond appropriately to business and labour market needs, there is an urgent need for a specialist curriculum and resources to address specific creative industry topics.

The ‘Kre8r Entrepreneurship Curriculum’ represents a significant innovation in VET to meet creative and labour market needs, and it will harness the potential of the creative sector as a catalyst for growth. The Kre8r project has developed solutions to target labour market needs and to attain a prescribed level of basic and transversal competences for young people in the cultural and creative industries.

This project also seeks to strengthen the skills of creative entrepreneurs so that their passion can go hand in hand with success.

Policy Paper – Part 1

The changing role of VET professionals in future education provision with the proliferation of online platforms



1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the key issues

Many companies are facing increasing skills demands, and cost and innovation pressures caused by ongoing globalisation and the internationalisation of markets. The internationalisation of many areas of responsibility requires additional qualifications and new skills and has a lasting influence on the learning processes and workflows within companies. Moreover, digitalisation and electronic networking are becoming increasingly prevalent in our everyday lives. The proliferation of computers, smartphones and others digital technology means that we now have access to an ever-wider range of media. As a result, training needs have grown in many companies. In order to meet those changing needs of the business companies VET schools are expected to equip students with skills demanded from the companies which correspond to the latest technologies. However, due to the scarcity of resources as well as cost pressures, this increased need for training can no longer be covered by classroom teaching alone. The appearance of new digital media has supported the spread of e-learning. The use of electronic media is, therefore taking on a more important role. In this context new forms of teaching and learning under the umbrella term “e-learning” are becoming increasingly important in VET.

In recent decades, e-learning has become an important learning and teaching method, especially relating to higher education, vocational education & training and also in primary and secondary schools.

This new way to practice education has changing the role of VET professionals, especially with the proliferation of online platforms.

Some of the discussions around e-learning focus primarily on how to use it as a means of improving the efficiency of VET. Therefore, it's necessary to take a look at the causes behind these trends in order to possibly understand why e-learning has only achieved moderate success in some cases.

1.2. Objective and Approach

The aim of this policy paper is to provide information on the influence of e-learning on the changing role of VET professionals and to develop recommendations for the better use of e-learning in VET. In order to achieve these goals, five areas around the subject of e-learning in regard to VET are treated by means of a field research.

We consulted more than **35** VET Professionals across the Kre8r partner consortium on 4 different areas: **their utilisation of e-learning, if they feel comfortable with it, advantages and disadvantages** of e-learning.

The first and the second sections of the research questionnaire provided data about the degree of e-learning presence across VET professionals, and their confidence working with these kinds of materials. The third and the fourth chapters were dedicated to the positive and negative aspects of e-learning in comparison to classic learning formats used in VET.

The most important findings are presented in a table in order to provide a better overview. A discussion of the pros and cons is accrued out with the aim of developing suggestions for the better use of e-learning in VET.

2. Results

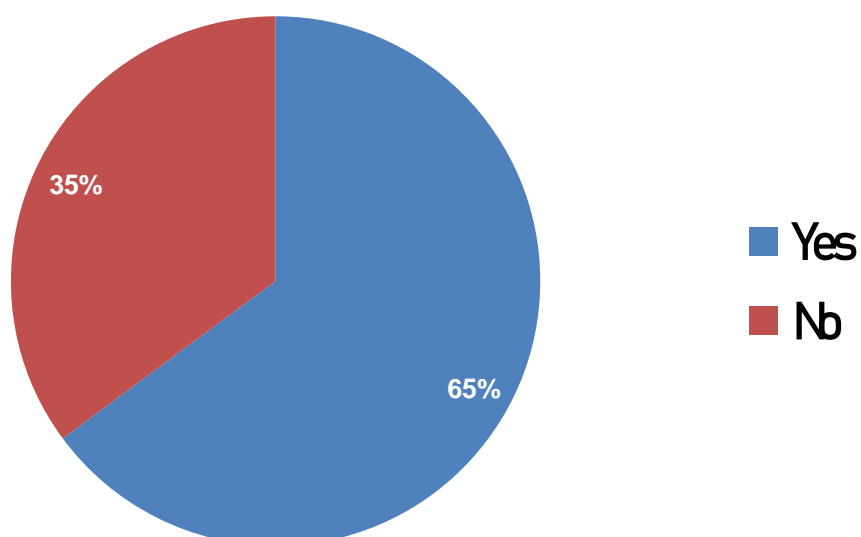
2.1. E-learning presence across VET professionals

Recent technological changes, combined with shifts in global economic power, accelerating urbanization, and demographic changes have put pressure on the VET to become more responsive to the needs of the labour market and society. Through the digitalisation, E-learning has been seen as an effective way of improving the quality of teaching and learning in VET due to its various forms.

The first chapter is related with the degree of e-learning presence across countries.

Based on our questionnaires, it seems, that online platforms have been used by **65 %** of our respondents.

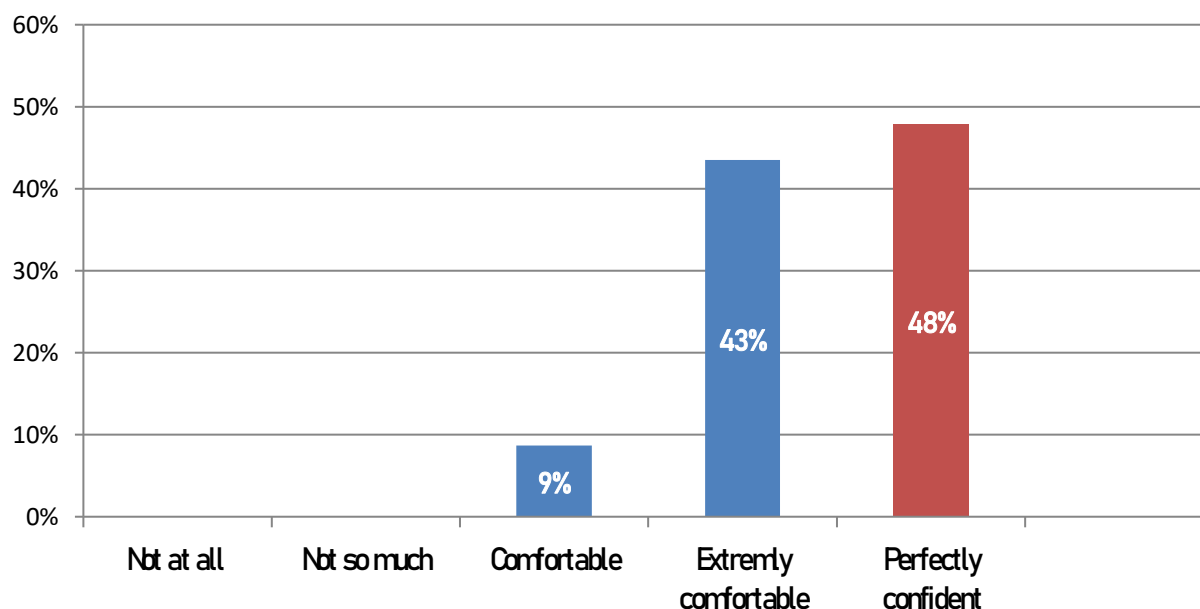
Have you ever used an online platform in your training programme ?



Yes	No	Total
24	13	37
65%	35%	100%

These numbers are relevant on the degree of e-learning presence across partners' countries. Almost 2 out of 3 VET Professionals have already used online platforms during their training.

How comfortable do you feel with the use on e-learning platforms?

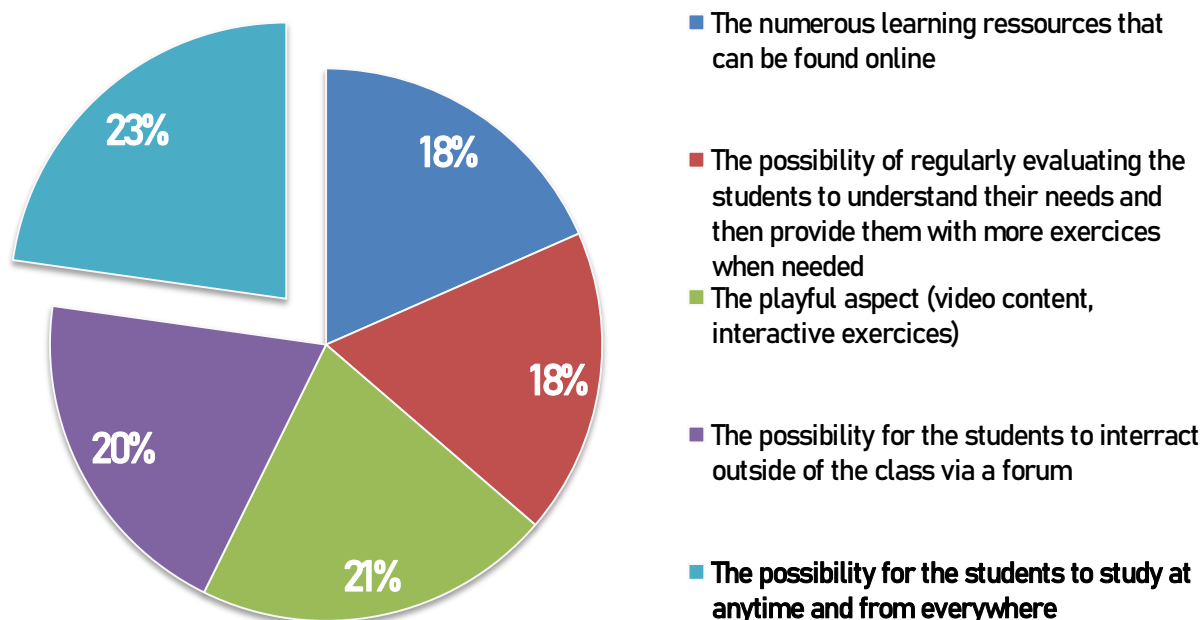


3. Advantages of using Online Platforms in Training Programmes

Based on data collected, one of the main advantages of using an online platform **is the greater flexibility given to learners in the choice of location, timing, pace and lesson content**. 23% of respondents cited this according to our feedback.

Furthermore, e-learning support has a number of advantages over traditional learning formats. They can save participants valuable time that would otherwise spent traveling. In addition, savings can be made in terms of travel and accommodations costs, as well as costs for the rental of training spaces. E-learning is particularly relevant for companies or workers that have multiple locations in different regions or in hard-to-reach or remote areas.

Advantages of using Online Platforms in Training Programmes



The wide range of possibilities developed by multimedia for the learning content is one of the main advantages, in the form of visualisations, animations, simulations, playful learning motivation. (21%)

Also, based on data collected, access to extensive learning content (links, search functions, glossaries, online libraries, etc..) and the use of communication and cooperation scenarios in virtual classrooms between learners and teachers as well as in groups of learners, are additional advantages. (18%)

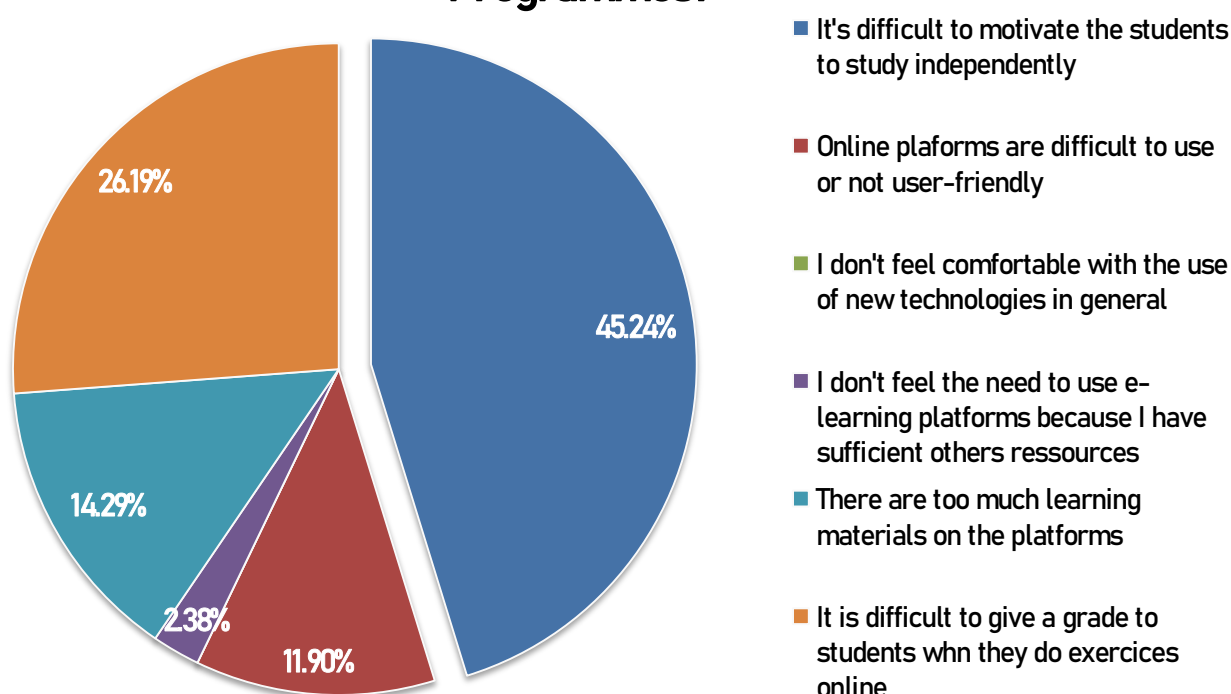
Learners are not afraid that they will have their knowledge gaps “exposed” in front of others participant. It is an interesting opportunity for VET professionals to increase learners’ participation. This point is also connected, to the possibility of individually adapting the learning content and the learning pace to the needs of the learners, which in this opinion to a reduction of the learning time (18%)

4. Disadvantages of using online platform in training program

The advantages of e-learning are offset by the disadvantages. Our field research has shown that the following disadvantages can arise for learners and for VET professionals.

First and foremost, learners must have high degree of self-discipline, time management skills, concentration and possibly pedagogical knowledge in order to independently control the learning process, as disturbances and distractions can occur more frequently than in the training room. (45, 24%)

Disadvantages of using Online Platforms in Training Programmes?



Another perceived disadvantage is the difficulty to set grades for students (26, 19%). It is a fact that VET professionals using online platforms are also faced with a number of problems and challenges. These include technical, didactic and organisational challenges in the design and implementation of learning opportunities and evaluations. In addition, they will need to set new criteria for assessing virtual credentials that are appropriate for online platforms.

There are many additional tasks for e-learning course providers. Because the learning materials need to be designed in such a way as to make them effective and user-friendly (11, 90 %), the learning platforms have to be set up and supervision/support/maintenance must be organised.

Changing the role of a VET professional from a face-to-face learning provider to a digital multi-tasker

The last disadvantage relates to materials and resources. Because of the large diversity of contents available, this means the VET professionals need to know and understand how to articulate this amount of contents. The second thing is the quality of the content so that the learning content has interactive elements and provides opportunities to better understand. Many learners also fear that they will be faced with textbook-like learning content, which will bore them and make little sense.

Besides, some VET Professionals are opposed to the use of new technologies in the classroom and do not recognise the positive aspects of e-learning. Another potential barrier to the use of e-learning in VET is the reticence of some institutions towards innovation. (2, 38 %)

5. Summary and Conclusions

Online platforms have a number of advantages and disadvantages compared to traditional classroom teaching. We examined the Pros and Cons from two perspectives: The learner's perspective (apprentice, staff, students, trainees) and the organisation or provider's point of view (VET institution, training centre, companies, etc...).

Field research found that learners value the following aspects of e-learning; flexibility in choosing location, timing and pace of learning, reduction of the learning time by individualisation of the learning content, increased motivation to learn using multimedia formats, access to online libraries, the use of virtual classrooms and reduction of travel and accommodation costs. However, learners also need to consider some pitfalls: E-learning requires self-discipline and media literacy, can slow the development of social skills through spatial isolation of participants, and requires the workplace to be suitably technically equipped.

Providers of online platforms also benefit from flexibility in terms of time and space, which offers reduced costs. There is, furthermore, the possibility of connecting interdisciplinary learning content and promoting the internationalisation of teaching. However, to take advantage of these benefits, providers must overcome some challenges. Virtual learning offers must be well planned and implemented technically, didactically and organisationally, which requires significant effort. In addition, some sensitive topics are not suitable for teaching by digital media. Controlling the learning process can also be problematic because of the physical distance of the students.

The use of new media in VET offers great opportunities in terms of improving the quality of education and reducing costs but presents major challenges to all stakeholders. Unfortunately, online platforms are currently used by only a small number of stakeholders. Some stakeholders have either turned away from e-learning due to their negative experience or deliberately decided against it because of the existing risks. In such structures, the potential offered by this form of learning cannot be fully exploited. However, further education is a key success for the economy, and much more for the creative economy.

It is clear that our everyday lives are dominated by new media. They often fascinate us and irritate us at the same time. However, there is no way to ignore them, therefore, online platforms and technologies will continue to play an important role in the future. However, only when social, organisational and individual requirements are met, can online platforms and VET professionals truly develop their true potential.

6. Implications

The topic of e-learning in the context of VET is still highly topical and controversial but represents a significant opportunity for education and training. Therefore, providers of online platforms should create the necessary framework conditions and incentives for learners who favour the use of e-learning.

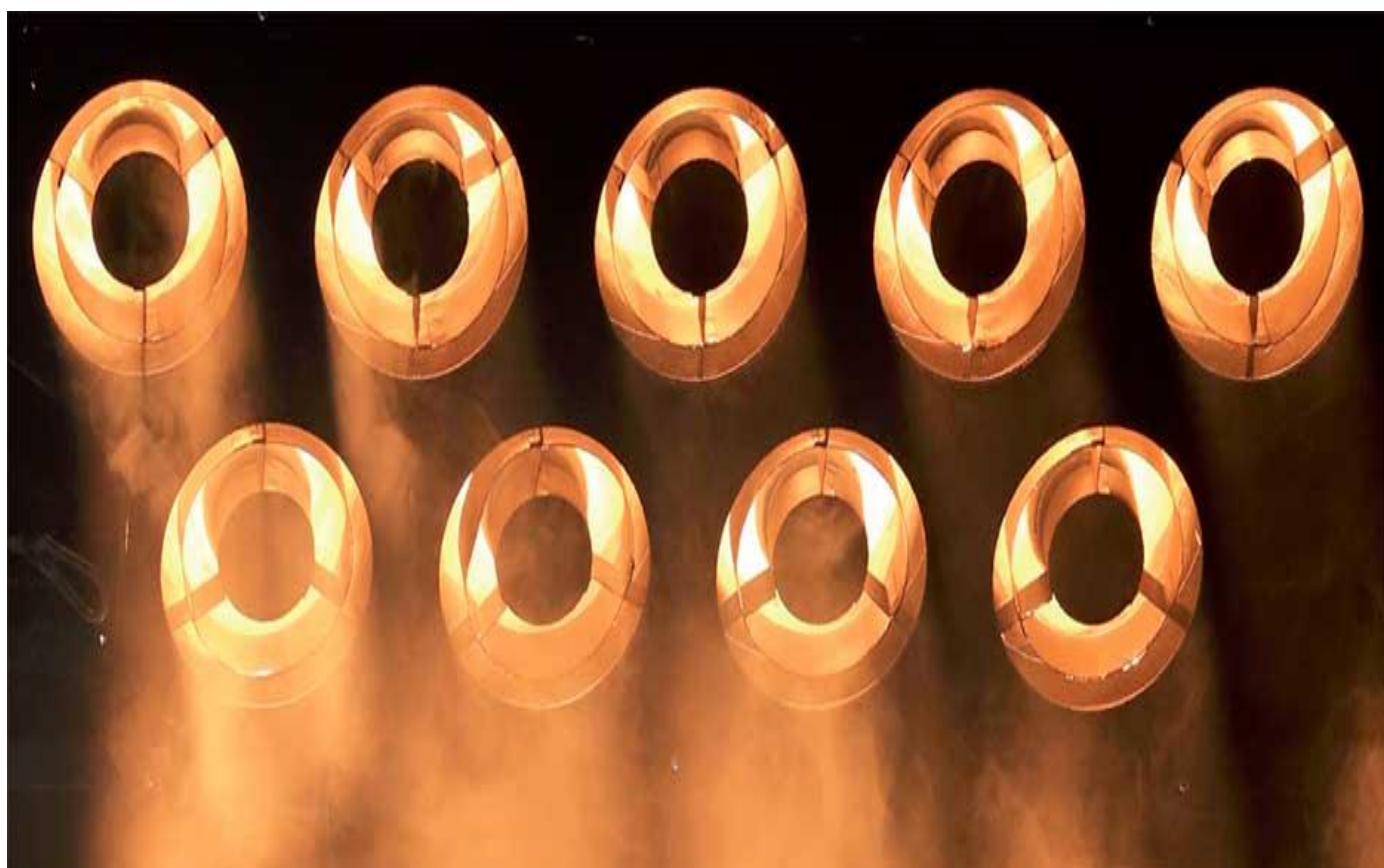
In order to address some of the risks when using e-learning, the concept of **blended learning** (a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction) could be considered. The combination of two forms of learning can address some of the potential downsides, whilst offering the advantages and opportunities of both forms.

Another recommendation addresses the quality of e-learning opportunities of both forms. In order to mitigate against the possible risks and disadvantages of e-learning, pedagogical approaches should be carefully designed and refined explicitly for e-learning. This revisiting of the learning approach should be an integral part of every VET professional's training.

It is also crucial to constantly raise the digital awareness of VET professionals. This sensitisation will help them to develop their abilities offline as well as online. Lesson design and digital media use need to be rethought and adapted as needed. The media skills of learners and teachers should also be verified before the e-learning process begins and revised, if necessary, on a regular basis.

Policy Paper – Part 2

The need for a bespoke, creative industry & business training
programme to stimulate growth and support economic development in
the community



1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Key Issues

In recent years, we have seen how the creative industries are becoming increasingly essential drivers of both economic growth and employment in many European countries. These industries span a diverse mix of sectors including; advertising, architecture, traditional arts & crafts, design, fashion design, film, interactive and digital software, music, performing arts, publishing, television and radio. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the creative industries are “one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy and a highly transformative one in terms of income generation, job creation and export earnings”.

1.2 Objective and Approaches

The aim of this policy paper is to elaborate and distil our findings, and demonstrate the need for bespoke, creative industry & business training programmes to stimulate growth and support economic development on a variety of levels.

We consulted more than **35** VET Professionals across the Kre8r partner consortium to ensure a robust and reliable sample of opinions and to guide the project. The initial element of our research aimed to provide the state of the art concerning creative entrepreneurship focussing on existing business training programmes. The second part was designed to highlight the differences and challenges dealing with such profiles. Whilst the third and the fourth sections were dedicated to offering quantitative insights into the needs for bespoke creative industry programmes and what kind of training material might be relevant.

2. Approaches and Results

2.1 Presence of Creative Entrepreneurship

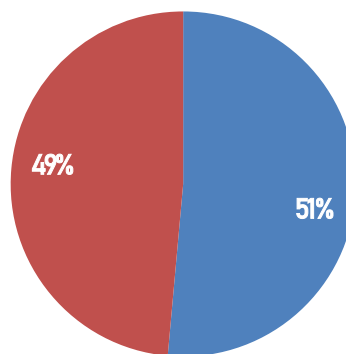
They can be crafts people, designers, makers, organisers, digital specialists, cultural entrepreneurs; but the focus of the creative entrepreneur often differs from that of the [stereo]typical business entrepreneur or, indeed, the social entrepreneur in that they are concerned first and foremost with the creation and exploitation of creative or

intellectual capital. Essentially, creative entrepreneurs might be labelled ‘Investors in Talent’. This might be their own or other people’s, but often they do not necessarily identify themselves as entrepreneurs.

As you can see in the graph below, small majority of our respondents have already engaged with creative entrepreneurs.

In your daily work, do you teach classes to creative entrepreneurs?

■ Yes ■ No



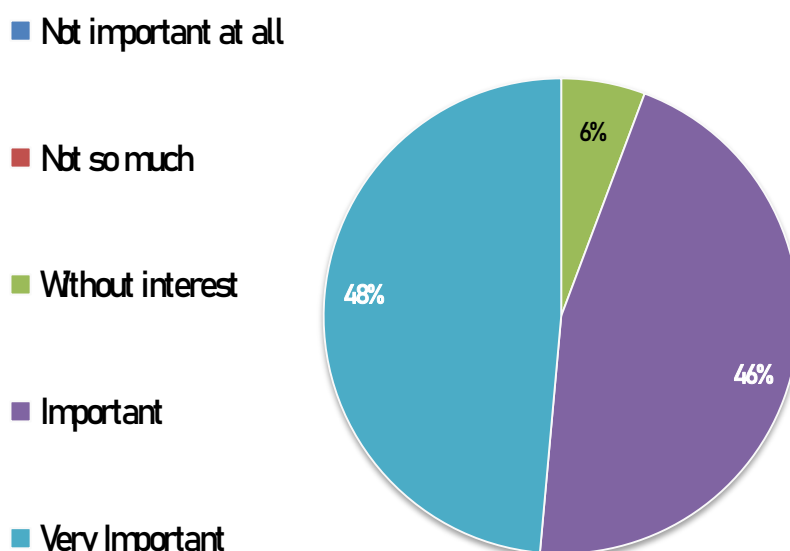
3. The Needs of a Specialised Training Programme

Based on our sample of respondents, you can see that for a significant majority, it was deemed ‘**Very Important**’ to establish specialised training programmes. (see graph below)

The idea to establish specialised training programmes arises from the need to adapt business training programmes to the target groups. Based on our research, the large majority of VET trainers pointed out similar difficulties:

- ***The lack of attention***
- ***A short attention span***
- ***The need to be always engaged to keep learners on track***

In your opinion, how important is it to establish specialised training programs for creative personalities?



4. Building Bridges to Overcome Lack

“They lack business knowledge. It is hard to get them to engage in traditional ways of learning. They often think outside the box which is great, but they need to be realistic in their outlook.”

This quote came from one of our survey respondents and might go some way to explain why we need a tailor-made, business programme adapted for creative entrepreneurs.

These programmes should be specific in their content and ‘creativity friendly’ in their method of delivery.

5. Summary and Conclusions

Entrepreneurship in the creative sector is becoming increasingly important, and striving entrepreneurs in this sector should have the opportunity to gain bespoke training and educational programmes in order to be better prepared for the success of their own business.

While the usefulness of e-learning platforms and blended training is well established, it is all too often the case that VET professionals still face significant difficulties

accessing high quality, relevant resources. Whilst ‘creative’ learners must be encouraged to follow business and entrepreneurial focussed educational programmes, a challenge that is not easy when some learners are not familiar with the rapidly changing business world.

As a result of our findings we also concluded that it is up to VET professionals, especially those dealing with learners destined for the creative sector, to make their training creative, engaging and enjoyable. Although the ultimate objective is to support the learner to gain knowledge specific to their potential career or business a strong focus must be on engagement and creativity.

6. Implications

Considering the rise of the economic importance of the creative industries, it has become increasingly important to create appropriate training programmes and interventions. Whether through an online platforms or face-to-face instruction and guidance, existing and potential entrepreneurs need to have access to bespoke programmes, tailored to their needs and specific to their sector.

94% of our research cohort found it ‘Important’ or ‘Very Important’ to provide specific and customised programme offers to entrepreneurs in the creative industries.

Any bespoke training must involve the professional development of the training professionals themselves. This must in turn support the professionals to adapt their discourse and approach to their future students and their entrepreneurial pursuits.

A sound understanding of the specific challenges and objectives facing today’s young entrepreneurs will allow their business ideas and projects to flourish bring both personal satisfaction and meaningful, creative and economic growth.



Erasmus+

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