

# HANDBOOK



## S4B

### DIGITAL SOFT SKILLS FOR BLENDED LEARNING



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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCING THE HANDBOOK





## 1.1 THE SCOPE OF THE S4B PROJECT

The DIGITAL SOFT SKILLS FOR BLENDED LEARNING project (S4B) is the journey to the destination of visual learning, successful blended learning, and empowered teachers in digital soft skills. The S4B project has three key outcomes:

- R1: DISCOVERING THE WAY
- R2: WALKING IN THE PATHWAY.
- R3: SKILLS PATHWAY

The S4B project is dedicated to teachers (in general, but especially from secondary schools) and it plans to support them to (better) adapt to the 3 learning dimensions: e-learning, face-to-face and blended learning. 12 digital skills followed by 12 videos and specific microlearning tasks are available and freely accessible within the S4B project.

The main purpose of the S4B project was to develop a training system of learning skills based on practice. In addition to it, the S4B project successfully succeeded:

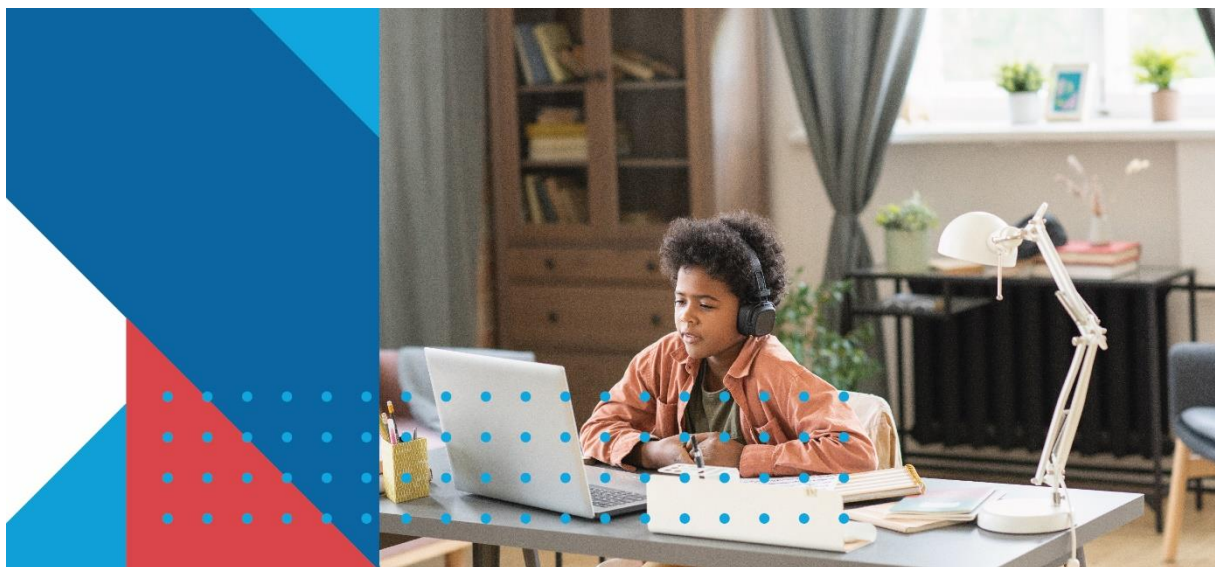
- To train teachers following simple and effective methods of acquiring skills based on micro-videos, and micro-tasks that will create micro-habits for teachers.
- Offer support to the education system in the digital transformation of education.
- Promote the results of the training system to other institutions that can benefit from this product.

The key objective of the S4B project is to provide educational and socio-emotional support for teachers to face the external pressure and help them learn how to manage their learning process under crisis circumstances. But the benefits of the project do not stop here because S4B project has proposed to provide training materials and resources to support teachers in adapting to the new learning environment.

As a positive consequence a better understanding and recognition of skills and qualifications related to the management of digital learning will be enhanced. It will also improve the access to innovative learning materials tailored

to the teachers' specific needs. Soft skills are the key to efficient learning process. It is crucial to know how to effectively communicate with students in an online environment; to have the ability to manage and solve conflicts; and to support and enhance students' motivation.

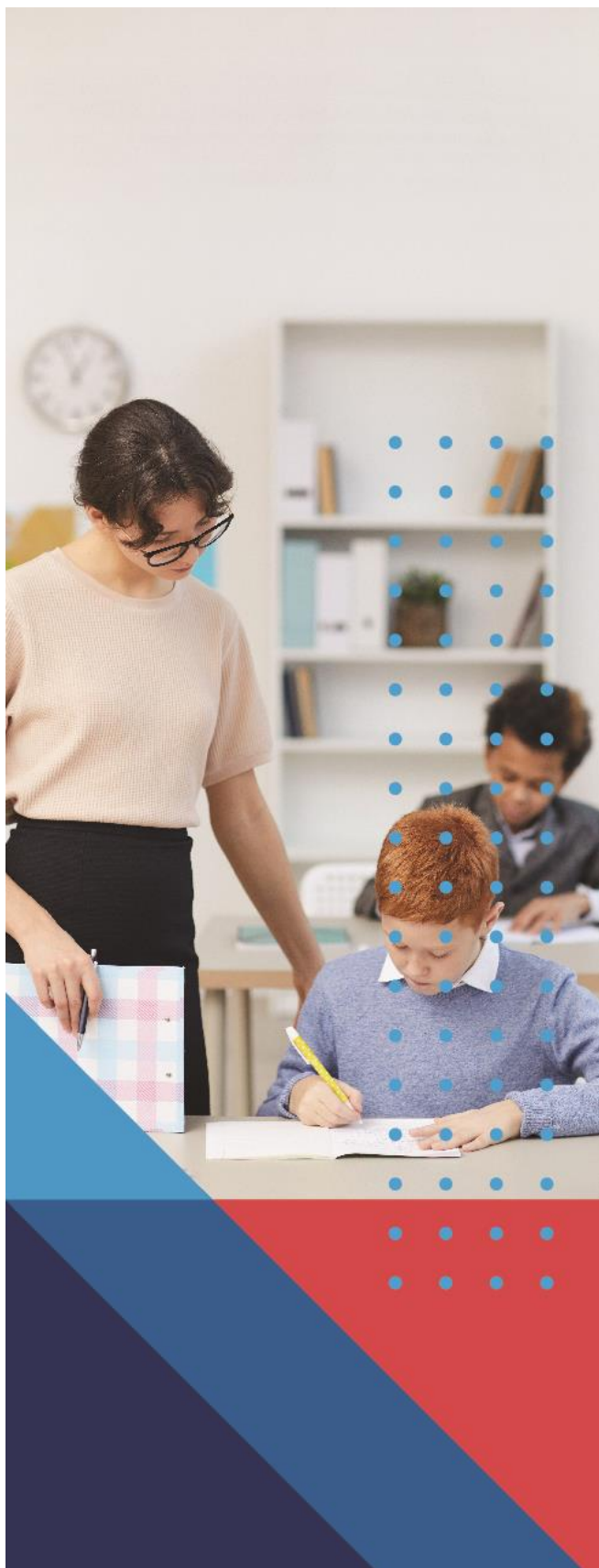
The ultimate purpose of the S4B project was to respond to the worldwide pandemic declared in early 2020 including its restrictions and social isolation. It caused the largest disruption of education in the modern history, having a severe impact on learners and teachers all around the world, from pre-primary to secondary schools, technical and vocational education, and training (VET) institutions, and universities.



## 1.2 ABOUT THE S4B HANDBOOK & REPETITION OF THE SKILLS

These days, soft skills and technology may play a similar significant role in the lives of the families of most of the children in our classrooms and teachers, but this significance may be unknown to these two parties. To develop an effective learning process in classes and beyond, it is important to build on the existing soft and digital competence of our students, their families, and teachers. This can only be achieved when schools reach out to parents' communities, experts in a spirit of partnership.

The S4B Project's partnership intended to create a practical digital document that would impact teachers' mindset, would shape new teaching perspectives. Thus, one of the expected products of the project S4B, is this Handbook that comprises guidelines for practical application of 12 soft digital skills (active listening, adaptability, creativity, effective communication, empathy, innovation, passion and self-motivation, positive attitude, problem solving, resilience and stress management, teamwork, time



management and organization), along with explanations about the training materials or tools, and detailed instructions on how to use all the project results.

The Handbook targets mainly secondary school teachers and trainers performing in face-to-face, remote, or blended teaching environments. However, it is expected for this tool to impact a wider audience, other educators working in different educational spheres.

This subchapter looks at the question of what benefits can be identified and promoted in a teacher’s day-to-day activity and in classes, and whether the constant use of these soft digital skills is the key to an efficient face-to-face, digital, or blended learning process.

True learning takes many shapes and forms: it can be a negotiation of emerging identities in the interactions between teachers and students; an instructional process based on either a collaborative generation of knowledge between teacher and student, or a reinforcement of the coercive relations of power which prevail in wider society.

A key principle underlying the Handbook is that in schools both teachers and learners have the right to high attainment and support in adapting to new learning environment, as well as access to innovative learning materials.

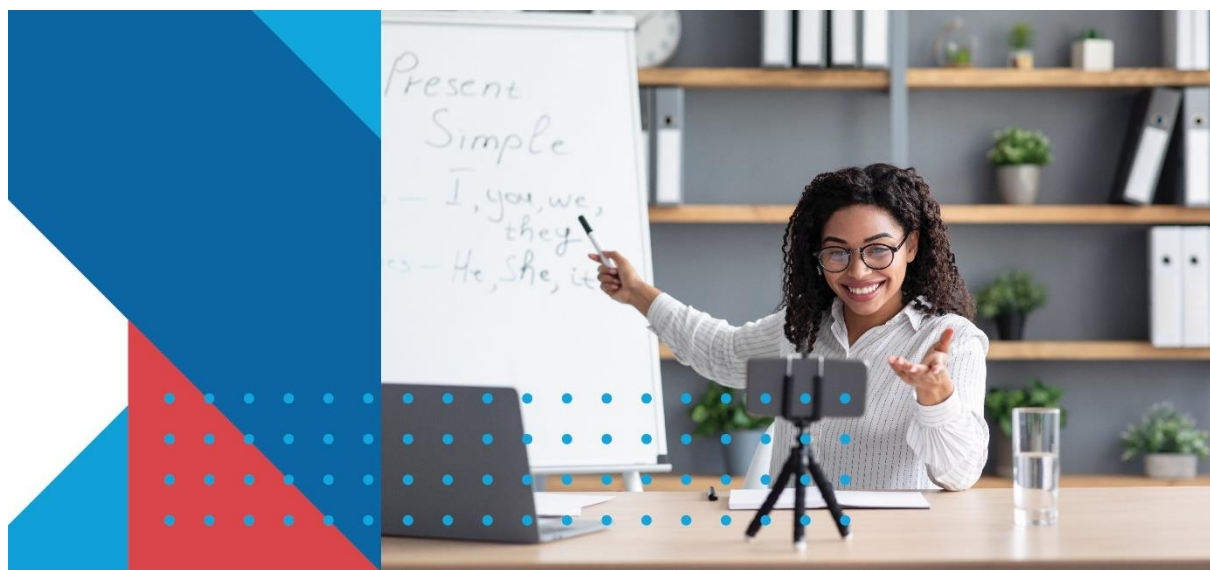
The Handbook moves from the theoretical to the practical, initially outlining fundamental benefits of repeating the 12 soft skills when teaching in face-to-face, blended, or digital contexts, then moving into case studies of teachers applying these skills through micro-tasks in their daily practice. The paper comprises tips and tricks for practical regular application of the 12 soft skills with the help of short videos called video pills and micro-tasks templates.

For each of the 12 soft skills, there is a practical and audiovisual presentation (video pill), teachers need to watch to familiarise with the knowledge and further on perform micro tasks. Testing and implementing these materials aim

to motivate and support teachers when improving respective competences.

In the classroom the teacher plays an important role in ensuring that the students learn to participate appropriately in discourse and practice with peers and can acquire new skills and knowledge. The teacher also plays a critical role in motivating learners to learn. The literature on effective teachers suggests several major functions of the class teacher: a mediator of learning; as a facilitator in the acquisition; a model of a proficient competence; a representative of the mainstream culture; a mediating agent of the socialisation and acculturation of the learner. The ways in which teachers operate in the classroom will almost certainly reflect their underlying, often implicitly held, principles and beliefs.

This Handbook illustrates not only effective, successful teaching habits developed with the help of training materials such as video pills, micro tasks, but also, ways in which these habits meet the needs and interests of students.



During Covid 19 lockdown, the teachers encouraged learners to bring their prior knowledge and understanding of digital tools into the classroom with them, and it was these students' helping hands that most often stood out as the foundations of online lessons. Reaching out to parents and student communities introduced all parties involved to the use of a very wide range of technologies.

It was found that it wasn't always the case that new technologies replaced old ones. In some cases, a newer technology was not always available, what drove teachers' choices was the needs of the lesson and the perceived needs of the learners. It was vital to encourage students to oversee their own

learning through meaningful activities, to discourage them from passive engagement and participation.

Allowing them to come up with own digital technical experiences not only captured their interest, but also, showed the invaluable role they can play in their learning. Identifying and promoting skills such as teamwork and problem solving in this context, added value to one’s identity since learners need to understand and apply what they are learning by engaging in content rather than purely listening.

Therefore, it is crucial that the teachers give credit to and activate students’ prior knowledge. Moreover, it builds-up on the adaptability, effective-communication and active listening of both students and teachers.

During the new school year 2020-2021 it became evident that the digital transformation of education can no longer be reversed: educational activity will cease to be face-to-face or online only and will become a mixture, able to move from one to the other immediately and fluidly, continuously, throughout the learning process.

The fact that technology is teachers’ best and strongest ally in organising the learning process is undeniable, but in order to function effectively in this new educational reality, the teachers and trainers have to enhance and update not only their technical or hard digital skills, but they have to work also on their soft digital skills- active listening, adaptability, creativity, effective communication, empathy, innovation, passion and self-motivation, positive attitude, problem solving, resilience and stress management, teamwork, time management and organization.



The Handbook offers clear instructions on how each skill can be implemented by teachers in their daily activity. The practical application and mastering of the skills require teachers to perform repetitive micro tasks over one or two months stretch of time; this process helps teachers to expand



a deep and shared understanding of learners' problems, how they experience them and what motivations they have.

For instance, the empathy map micro task aims at understanding learner's explicit and implicit needs. Sometimes, teachers lack proper training in facilitating early identification of students' mental and behavioural health risks. Improving a skill like empathy might be the stepping stone to address students' struggles.

By joining forces in implementing school-NGO partnership, S4B project provides teachers with the opportunity to develop 12 soft skills in a simple and effective method with the benefits of: The DIGITAL SOFT SKILLS FOR BLENDED LEARNING project (S4B) is the journey to the destination of visual learning, successful blended learning, and empowered teachers in digital soft skills. The S4B project has three key outcomes:

- "Allowing oneself to be creative, more resourceful and to open one's mind to new possibilities" (Mădălina Larisa Kimak-English Teacher, Liceul Teoretic William Shakespeare, Timișoara)
- "Developing my creativity and have an eye for detail when it comes to showing empathy, to display a positive attitude in my class and find new ways to settle down disruptive classes" (Ana-Maria Avrămuți-Latin Teacher, Liceul Teoretic William Shakespeare, Timișoara)
- "Improving my active listening skills by listening to TED talks similar to the one by the author John McWhorter" (Angelia Subin-English Teacher, Liceul Teoretic William Shakespeare, Timișoara)
- "Being attentive to body language, more empathetic" (Adina Muntean-History Teacher, Liceul Teoretic William Shakespeare, Timișoara)



### 1.3 WHO THIS HANDBOOK IS FOR

The S4B Handbook is dedicated to the educational system, to teachers and other school actors (in general, but especially from secondary schools) and it plans to support them to adapt to the 3 learning dimensions: e-learning, face-to-face and blended learning. The purpose of this Handbook is to provide teachers with ways to transform the methods of disciplinary in such learning messages. What can the teacher learn? An effective approach to self-discipline and accountability.

It is useful for teachers to learn new ways of doing positive things for the classroom management because at this moment many teachers are facing disciplinary problems (tasks that are not completed by students, aggressive behaviour, or disturbing other students, etc.)

Teachers should also master the technique of student-centred learning in blended learning. If meeting the needs of students is at the heart of student-centred learning, teaching must meet their needs. For this to be possible, teachers must first to determine their needs. Remembering is in connection with the context, and the choice of learning methods and using techniques such as research helps teachers make the connection between new knowledge and contexts. When later faced with such contexts during work, their ability to remember will increase.

Replacing lectures with active learning makes a valuable contribution to teachers who have sometimes difficulty concentrating. This does not mean that the change is disadvantageous for those who are academics and can concentrate. Through active teaching and learning, high achievers can be challenged, and they can provide opportunities to develop their thinking. This is also an approach facilitated by the S4B Handbook.



The use of information and communication technology often occurs in student-centred learning, and it is also a key skill at all levels for teachers. The S4B project promotes many of the advantages of supporting lifelong learning result from adoption of teacher-training centred.

The S4B Handbook demonstrates that in recent years, more and more educational institutions have turned to blended learning to increase student engagement and improve academic performance.

Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online activities such as multimedia presentations, virtual classroom discussions, real-time assessments, and interactive simulations.



## CHAPTER 2 - INTRODUCING THE HANDBOOK





## 2.1 INTRODUCTION TO S4B 12 DIGITAL SKILLS IN CONNECTION TO THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, mastering digital skills is no longer an option but a necessity. The S4B project identifies 12 key digital soft skills that are indispensable for modern educators. These skills are deeply intertwined with the technological advancements that have permeated every facet of education.

- Teamwork

Teamwork in the digital age involves the ability to collaborate effectively with others using various online tools and platforms. It encompasses skills like communication, coordination, and conflict resolution in virtual environments. Teachers should guide students on how to work together on group projects, facilitate online discussions, and provide constructive feedback to peers. They must also model effective teamwork in their interactions with colleagues and students.

- Adaptability

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, adaptability is the capacity to adjust to new technologies, tools, and educational approaches. It involves embracing change and being open to learning and applying new skills. Teachers should stay updated on emerging educational technologies, be willing to experiment with different digital tools, and adapt their teaching methods to suit the preferences and needs of their students.

- Innovation

Innovation in education means creatively integrating technology to enhance learning experiences. It involves devising inventive teaching methods, incorporating digital resources, and encouraging students to think critically and solve problems using technology. Teachers can foster innovation by introducing project-based assessments, encouraging brainstorming sessions, and showcasing examples of innovative technology use in education.

- Active listening

In the digital realm, active listening involves paying careful attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues in online communications. It requires empathy, patience, and the ability to understand and respond effectively to students' questions and concerns. Teachers can utilize digital polling and survey tools, facilitate asynchronous discussions, and provide prompts for reflective writing to promote active engagement and comprehension.



- Positive attitude

Maintaining a positive attitude in the digital environment means fostering an encouraging, approachable, and uplifting atmosphere. It involves using positive language, celebrating achievements, and providing constructive feedback. Teachers can share motivational stories or quotes, acknowledge small wins, and maintain an encouraging tone in their digital communications with students.

- Resilience and stress management

In the digital age, resilience involves the ability to bounce back from challenges and adapt to new technologies and teaching methods. Stress management entails strategies for maintaining mental well-being in the face of digital overload. Teachers can integrate mindfulness exercises, provide resources on time management, and foster a supportive online community to help students cope with challenges.

- Passion and self-motivation

Having passion and self-motivation in the digital realm involves maintaining a genuine interest in teaching and learning with technology. It means proactively seeking opportunities for growth and staying motivated even in the face of challenges. Teachers can share personal anecdotes about their passion for teaching, recommend relevant online resources, and encourage students to pursue their own interests within the digital learning environment.

- Effective communication



Effective communication in the digital age encompasses the ability to convey ideas clearly and engage students through various online platforms. It involves using multimedia, visual aids, and interactive elements to enhance understanding. Teachers can model clear and concise communication, provide guidelines for effective online discussions, and use visual aids like infographics and videos to reinforce key concepts.

- Problem solving

Problem-solving in the digital era involves using technology to analyse, evaluate, and find solutions to complex issues. It requires critical thinking, logical reasoning, and the ability to leverage digital tools effectively. Teachers can present students with real-world problems that require digital solutions, encourage them to collaborate on problem-solving tasks, and provide guidance on using specific digital tools for problem-solving.

- Organizational skills and time management

In the digital environment, organizational skills involve efficiently managing digital resources, files, and schedules. Time management entails prioritizing tasks, setting goals, and using digital tools to optimize productivity. Teachers can provide tips on organizing digital files, introduce time management techniques, and recommend productivity apps or tools to help students stay organized and meet deadlines.

- Empathy

Empathy in the digital age involves understanding and appreciating the perspectives, emotions, and challenges of students in virtual environments. It requires active listening, responsiveness, and providing emotional support online. Teachers can create opportunities for students to share their thoughts and feelings, use empathy-building exercises, and provide a safe space for open and honest communication.

- Creativity

Creativity is the ability to generate new and innovative ideas, approaches, and solutions in the digital realm. It involves thinking outside the box, combining existing concepts in novel ways, and producing original content. In education, creativity can be expressed through designing engaging lesson plans, developing interactive multimedia content, and encouraging students to express themselves creatively through various digital mediums.

These 12 crucial digital skills collectively empower educators to navigate the complexities of digital learning environments, ensuring that students receive the best possible education in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world.



## 2.2 REGULATE YOUR ABILITY TO PRACTICE THE 12 DIGITAL SKILLS

Mastering the 12 crucial digital skills is akin to honing a craft. It requires a deliberate and structured approach. Here, we delve into strategies to regulate and refine your proficiency in each of these skills:

**Teamwork:** Encourage collaborative projects that necessitate collective decision-making. Leverage digital platforms for group discussions and co-creation of content. Provide feedback on teamwork dynamics, emphasizing the value of diverse contributions.

**Adaptability:** Stay abreast of emerging technologies and educational methodologies. Participate in workshops, webinars, and forums dedicated to educational innovation. Foster a culture of adaptability by showcasing your own willingness to embrace change.

**Innovation:** Create an environment that sparks creativity. Introduce design thinking principles and project-based learning. Encourage students to explore unconventional solutions and celebrate inventive thinking.

**Active Listening:** Integrate interactive digital tools that facilitate discussions and feedback loops. Emphasize the importance of paraphrasing and seeking clarification in online interactions. Model active listening behaviours during virtual sessions.

**Positive Attitude:** Infuse a sense of optimism in your digital interactions. Share success stories and inspirational content. Foster a growth mindset, emphasizing that challenges are opportunities for growth.

**Resilience and Stress Management:** Introduce mindfulness practices and stress-relief techniques. Provide resources for time management and prioritization. Normalize discussions about mental health and well-being in the digital realm.

**Passion and Self-Motivation:** Share your own enthusiasm for learning and technology. Showcase examples of how digital tools can amplify one's passions. Encourage students to set personal goals and pursue independent projects.

**Effective Communication:** Provide guidelines for clear and concise online communication. Share examples of well-structured messages and presentations. Incorporate activities that focus on digital literacy and information discernment.



**Problem Solving:** Present students with real-world scenarios that require digital problem-solving. Guide them through the process of identifying, analysing, and implementing solutions using technology.

**Organizational Skills and Time Management:** Introduce digital tools for task organization and scheduling. Teach students how to use productivity apps and platforms effectively. Provide strategies for maintaining a balanced digital life.

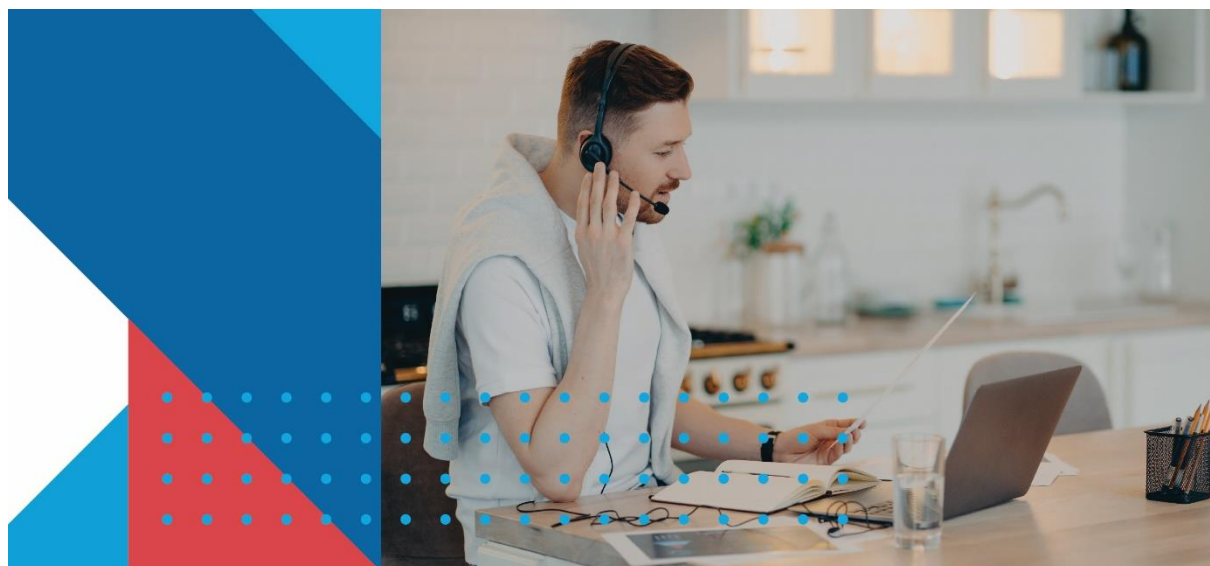
**Empathy:** Foster a sense of community in digital spaces. Encourage students to share their experiences and perspectives. Create opportunities for collaborative projects that require understanding and respecting diverse viewpoints.

**Creativity:** Encourage imaginative thinking and the generation of innovative ideas. Provide platforms for students to express themselves creatively using digital tools. Celebrate and showcase unique and inventive approaches to learning.

Regulating your ability to practice these skills is an ongoing journey. It requires a combination of self-reflection, professional development, and a genuine dedication to enhancing your digital



proficiency. By consciously integrating these skills into your teaching practice, you pave the way for a transformative educational experience.





## 2.3 REGULATE YOUR ABILITY TO PRACTICE THE 12 DIGITAL SKILLS

Effectively incorporating the 12 crucial digital skills into your teaching practice requires a nuanced approach. Here, we provide actionable tips and tricks tailored to each skill:

### Teamwork

- Encourage open communication channels through digital platforms.
- Assign roles within group projects to promote accountability.
- Foster a culture of constructive feedback and mutual respect in online collaborations.

### Adaptability

- Stay updated on emerging educational technologies and trends.
- Experiment with different digital tools to find what works best for your teaching style.
- Encourage students to provide input on the digital learning experience to adapt accordingly.

### Innovation

- Introduce regular brainstorming sessions to inspire creative thinking.
- Incorporate project-based assessments that encourage out-of-the-box solutions.
- Showcase innovative uses of technology in education to inspire students.

### Active listening

- Utilize digital polling and survey tools to gauge student comprehension.
- Encourage asynchronous discussions to allow for thoughtful responses.
- Provide prompts for reflective writing on digital platforms to promote active engagement.

### Positive attitude:

- Share uplifting stories or quotes in your digital communications.
- Acknowledge and celebrate small wins and achievements in the digital learning environment.
- Maintain an encouraging and approachable tone in your online interactions.

**Resilience and stress management:**

- Integrate short mindfulness exercises or breathing techniques into virtual sessions.
- Provide resources on time management and productivity tools.
- Foster a supportive online community where students feel comfortable discussing challenges.



**Passion and self-motivation:**

- Incorporate student choice and autonomy in digital projects and assignments.
- Showcase your own enthusiasm for the subject matter and the potential of digital tools.
- Encourage students to set personal learning goals and track their progress digitally.

**Effective communication:**

- Model clear and concise communication in all digital interactions.
- Provide guidelines for professional email etiquette and online discussion etiquette.
- Offer opportunities for students to practice effective digital communication skills.

**Problem solving:**

- Present authentic, technology-driven challenges that require critical thinking.
- Encourage collaboration in problem-solving tasks through digital platforms.
- Provide guidance on how to approach complex problems using digital resources.

**Organizational skills and time management:**

- Introduce digital planners and task management tools to help students stay organized.
- Teach strategies for setting priorities and managing deadlines in the digital realm.
- Provide templates and examples for creating digital study schedules.

**Empathy:**

- Encourage students to share their perspectives and experiences through digital reflections.
- Foster a culture of respect and inclusivity in online discussions and collaborations.
- Provide resources for developing empathy and understanding in the digital age.



**Creativity:**

- Incorporate activities that encourage imaginative thinking and the generation of innovative ideas.
- Provide platforms for students to express themselves creatively using digital tools.
- Celebrate and showcase unique and inventive approaches to learning.

These tips and tricks serve as practical guidelines for infusing the 12 crucial digital skills into your teaching practice. By incorporating these strategies, you create a dynamic and inclusive digital learning environment that empowers students to thrive.



## CHAPTER 3 - MASTERING THE 12 CRUCIAL DIGITAL SKILLS



### 3.1 INTRODUCTION TO S4B TRAINING TOOLKIT & VIDEO PILLS

The global pandemic declared in early 2020 and the original measures, restrictions, and social isolation in almost all countries caused the biggest disruption of education in modern history, having an impact on everyone from pre-school to secondary education, including technical and vocational training centres (VET), universities, adult education centres and many more.

The sudden and unexpected situation put teachers, trainers, and students in a very difficult and unprecedented situation: in the middle of the school year 2019/2020 classrooms, notebooks, books, and homework papers were replaced by electronic platforms by electronic platforms, websites, mobile apps and online classes, and teachers and students have been forced to switch to distance learning, often without specific guidelines and without adequate training.

Teachers found it much more difficult to adapt to the new educational reality because, in addition to facing the technical challenges, they had to ensure that all learning objectives and outcomes were successfully met; help students cope with the negative effects and stress of online education; and, finally, manage to maintain their professional motivation and enthusiasm for teaching. Today it is essential that teachers, schools, and communities are supported and better prepared to respond to the needs of their students and create inclusive learning.

Technology alone cannot guarantee good academic and learning outcomes for teachers and students.

There is no doubt that having the right pedagogical knowledge and skills is a must for all teachers and educators, but it is far from enough. Today more than ever, interpersonal skills are the key to an effective learning process. It is vitally important to know how to communicate effectively with learners in an online environment; to have the ability to manage and resolve conflicts; to support and

increase learner motivation; to make online learning sustainable and valuable; to avoid burnout; to be able to communicate effectively with learners in an online environment; to have the ability to manage and resolve conflicts; to support and increase learner motivation; to make online learning sustainable and valuable; to avoid burnout.

Modern technology offers an almost unlimited number of tools and options to facilitate and enrich the online learning process, but technology alone is not enough to guarantee good academic and learning outcomes for both teachers and students. Today, more than ever, it is not enough to have deep pedagogical knowledge to be a good teacher.



To function effectively in this new educational reality, teachers and trainers must improve not only their "hard digital skills" but also their "soft digital skills" (critical thinking, communication, problem solving, creativity and innovation, persuasion and influence, adaptability and cognitive flexibility, emotional intelligence, etc.) which in many cases are not so well developed and, in some cases, do not even exist.

The overall objective of the S4B project is to address the above-mentioned challenges by strengthening and supporting the profession of teachers, as it focuses on the creation of training system aimed at improving key skills and attitudes, necessary for an effective implementation of digital learning and proper functioning in the new educational reality.

To achieve this, the SB4 project pursues the following objectives:

- Develop a system of practice-based learning skills training.
- Train teachers in this simple and effective method of acquiring skills based on
- micro videos,
- micro tasks that create micro habits that will turn into micro success.
- Offer support to the educational system in the digital transformation of education.

- Promote the results of this training to other institutions that can benefit from this product.

### 3.2 TRANSITION FROM THEORETICAL TRAINING PILLS TO PRACTICAL TRAINING MATERIALS

Teachers need to continuously improve, they are required to innovate in the way they teach, to engage with students. To do this, teachers need to have the right skills, their attitudes and competencies must be aligned with what education and students need.

Skills are only learned by practicing them; a habit is only acquired after at least 20 continuous days of practice. In the S4B methodology, a skill is learned when micro-tasks are practiced, daily, for enough days to become micro-habits.

You will see that part of the practical work you will have to do daily is the elaboration of the "Habit Trackers" tool, in which you will write down the skills you have chosen to train and how you are progressing, how you are feeling and what difficulties you are encountering when applying it. If you practice a certain skill, for example Effective Communication, for at least one month, you will end up with a much more developed Communication skill than at the beginning.

We must start from the premise that skills cannot be taught as if they were knowledge. Training is not the same as forming, forming only involves the mind.

The key to the S4B methodology is training, working daily, over a sufficiently long period of time on a series of tasks. This is the basis for the success of the S4B training system. For the training to be effective, we use short videos, which we call video pills, to help us discover the competency we are working on.

Then, the methodology suggests a series of concrete tasks, but it is up to each of us to choose what we want to practice. And finally, we get down to work.

This is training: To know, to choose, to practice. This is the key to the success of the S4B methodology.





## HOW TO BENEFIT FROM THE S4B TRAINING SYSTEM.

There are four keys to getting the most out of the course. It is convenient that you know them and then apply them. They are simple but very powerful and if you follow them, you will get the most out of your effort.

- View a video pill every day
- Choose which tasks you are going to do
- Check your progress
- Ask for feedback
- Share a success story with your community.



### 1. Watch a video pill.

#### Video pills convey the what? And the how?

Within the methodology of the S4B Project we use videos because our mind processes them 10 times better, retains them and remembers them much better. We use and create short videos because it is scientifically proven that attention drops after 3 minutes of watching the video. That is why we work with this method.

The S4B methodology recommends that you:

- WATCH A VIDEO EVERY DAY. 3-4 minutes of your time
  - At any time of the day.
  - From any place where you have an internet connection and on any device.
  - It's worth it to get into your routine, it has no effect if you watch all the videos on the same day
- CHECK OUT THE VIDEOS THAT IMPACT YOU.



- Each one has a unique personal and work situation; each teacher has specific needs.
- According to your needs some videos will appeal to you more than others, review and view the videos as many times as you like.

**2. Choose the task you will perform.**

The goal of the video pill is to get you into action. When watching a video-pill you must choose which tasks you will put into practice. The S4B methodology suggests 3 tasks for each video. But you are the one who chooses which one you are going to put into practice, since no one better knows what you need and what is best for you to practice. Applying the tasks is the key to master the skill.

Micro tasks are objectives, not intentions. They are tasks:

- Concrete
- Short
- Easy to do
- Repeatable

**3. Check your progress.**

Every day you should use your Habit Trackers tool;

- If you have applied a task, mark it as done.
- Write down your progress, how you are feeling as you apply the tasks.
- Practice especially the tasks that you have not been able to apply systematically.

**4. Share a success story in your community.**

Share your experiences in your school community. Record a video of less than a minute where you tell us about a micro task that you have managed to turn into a habit, what was it, how did you feel, how did it have a positive impact on you and others, how did you feel about it, how did it have a positive impact on you and others?

### 3.3 TIPS AND TRICKS FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION



Before you begin you need to know and understand what the 12 essential skills are to complement the technical skills of teachers in blended learning. It is also important that you know how we learn and acquire these skills and that "training" is not the same as "becoming trained".

"Train" and "training" are two terms that are often used interchangeably, but they have slightly different connotations and the proper way for skill development is training as it focuses on acquiring specific skills or improving performance in a particular task or activity. Training is associated with the acquisition of practical skills, is more oriented towards practical application and often involves repetitive practice and drills.

Although you are free to select the skills you need to work on and the micro tasks you want to put into practice according to your specific needs, we do suggest that you respect the sequence of the methodology for proper skill development.

Developing a skill through the creation of micro habits can be challenging, but with practice and consistency, it is entirely possible. Here are some tips that can help you establish and maintain effective habits:

- a. **Start with a clear objective:** Clearly define what skill you want to develop. The more specific you are, the better. For example, "I need to improve my communication skills, "I want to do this micro task during each day".
- b. **Set reminders:** Use visual reminders, alarms, or reminder apps on your phone to remind you to perform the skill-related activity.
- c. **Create a routine:** Associate the habit to a specific activity or time in your day.
- d. **Track your progress:** Keep track of your micro tasks. Use HABIT TRACKERS. Marking your progress will give you a sense of accomplishment and keep you motivated.



- e. **Be patient and persistent:** Developing a habit takes time, so don't get discouraged if you don't see immediate results. The key is consistency over time.
- f. **Reward yourself:** Celebrate your successes. Set small rewards for when you reach milestones in habit formation. This reinforces the desired behaviour.
- g. **Adjust and adapt as needed:** Life is full of changes, and you may need to adjust your routine or habit based on your changing circumstances. Flexibility is key to long-term maintenance.

In a nutshell.

The S4B methodology has been designed to train you in a series of competencies that will make you a teacher more adapted to the new ways of teaching where blended learning has been and will be key. Remember:

- Watch a video carefully every day
- Choose the specific micro-tasks that you are going to perform.
- Write them down so you can see your daily progress
- Share successes

Remember that developing a skill through the creation of micro habits takes time and effort. Don't get discouraged if you face difficulties along the way. The key is perseverance and consistency in practicing the desired skill until it becomes a natural part of your life.



## CHAPTER 4 - A WAY FORWARD





#### 4.1 FULL PACKAGE BENEFITS OF VISUAL LEARNING

The visual learning style is an efficient method of assimilating information for students and teachers. Visual learning is linked with active learning. Active learning can represent a starting point for didactic design as it consists in solving problems, exploring real-life situations and concrete involvement of students in the educational process. This is also the basis of the foundation in the S4B project of the 12 crucial skills for teachers today.

By promoting teamwork, teachers develop their socialisation and communication skills and understand the need for working groups in schools and everyday life, but also the challenges that accompany these experiences. Teachers' creativity is one of the key skills needed for the workplace of the future and one of the hardest to train through traditional methods.

Introducing visual learning methods in schools brings benefits in the 3 components of emotional intelligence: understanding emotions, expression, and emotional self-regulation. The 12 videos designed within the S4B project demonstrate the full potential of visual learning under current learning requirements. Visual learning arises from instructional activity that involves the use of images, regardless of how they are presented.

Why is visual learning important for teachers, students, and schools? In this style of learning, receiving, processing, storing, and updating information is done more efficiently using means and techniques of visual communication. The study of learning styles has received significant attention in recent years, and at a time when academic achievement is under external control, it is vital that educators know how to use the best possible methods to help students learn successfully.

Learning, through its contents, leads to a change in behaviour conditioned by an individual experience and which includes both a strictly cognitive side, summing up knowledge, the development of cognitive functions, the ability to understand, as well as a practical side that refers to the learning of some scheme's actions, to the formation of skills and habits, to the acquisition of models of social behaviour, etc. (Lowe, 1978, after Bonchiş, 2004).

The 12 key skills of the S4B project, together with the 12 videos and microtasks, are the ultimate "guide" for teachers who want to improve their teaching process and create a more relaxing atmosphere in class. All this because the content has been developed visually, attractively, easy to use and colourful to emphasise the ease of assimilation of information.



The package of benefits of the visual teaching-learning style is closely related to the well-being at school. Nowadays, well-being is a major concern of educational policies in schools. There is a relationship between the visual learning and well-being of the factors involved in education, but also the values imposed by society.

The visual style of the S4B project supports the didactic strategy, defines, and expresses the teacher's conception of how to approach a teaching-learning activities, a concept that determines, governs, and guides the teaching behaviour (of the teacher) and the learning behaviour (of the student).

It is very important for the teacher to make the student to become responsible for what he learns and to make a commitment, to participate in his own learning. For this, the teacher must know the student's interests and build an action plan. John Dewey is a follower of pedagogy based on activity, experience, situation, interaction.

The activities that arise from the student's needs and interests Favor learning. He is an adept of using didactic games in the teaching-learning process. The teacher must awaken the student's curiosity and the desire to solve certain problems. Unlike traditional techniques, characterised using transmission as the main form of teaching, reproduction as the main form of learning and evaluation after the teaching of massive informational units, nowadays the idea of building self-regulated learning is promoted.

Evans and Waring (2006) found that most teachers involved in their study typically used an approach based on the delivery of information rather than one specifically geared towards developing



student understanding. The visual learning style supports the new school trends. Learning is not an independent process. It depends entirely on the context in which it takes place.

Teachers should be attentive to the attitude, knowledge, and inclinations that children bring to the classroom. Furthermore, they can create learning contexts that reveal how students think. The angle from which they see the world is the best starting point for a formal understanding of a certain subject. The management of learning (or learning how to learn) has become, together with the fast and permanent access to information, an essential competence for each of us.

Typically, the visual learning style of the S4B project was selected as a prompt because it minimises the assistance of a teacher and increases the child's attention and awareness of his environment. Visual learning can come in many forms. It can be a flipchart (like a calendar), a series of pictures showing each step, or a written checklist. The memory is good regarding the visual aspect of the environment, written texts, layout, drawings, human faces.

The S4B project shows that learning styles can be used very well individually or in various combinations, depending on the subject or the information we want to assimilate. But before using them, we must know what style we fit into and how we can use it in our favour. Assimilating new information in a limited time can be more difficult than you imagined at first. It takes some patience and effective learning methods. In general, everyone has a learning style, a unique way to retain information and always have the best results.

Those who learn by visualising information seem to be privileged. They retain information only when they can visualise relationships and ideas. Basically, they need drawings, pages with information as colourful and underlined as possible, they retain diagrams, maps, anything that appears in visual form. Teachers must consider that all information must be very well structured and presented visually or transformed into schemes, drawings of all kinds, mental maps.



## 4.2 CONCLUSIONS

The S4B project demonstrates that blended learning can be a pleasant and effective approach if it is well structured and based on the visual teaching-learning style. Motivation is an important psychological process for teachers because it drives, and triggers action through the reverse connection that influences the very motivational base and its dynamics.

Motivation and positive attitude are a source of activity and that is why it is considered the "engine of personality". This mental process has a particularly important role in the student's learning activity and consequently in the formation of his personality. The concept of motivation of teachers is often given a much too general meaning. The problem of motivation is still a specific one, that is "you are motivated to do something specific".

That is the reason we must relate this concept to a target task. We do not have a universal and general motivation, but one oriented precisely towards solving or not solving specific problems. Researchers on the motivational process start from the assumption of the existence of three important factors, which compete for the explanation of motivation: biological, learning, and cognitive.

The S4B project promotes motivation, positive attitude, and passion as key skills for today's teachers. Looking at motivational conflict, faced with a decision or engaging in a certain activity, a teacher can be dominated by a motivational conflict represented by positive motivations (which push and urge him to engage in that decision or activity), and negative motivations (which hold him back, inhibit him).



Other key skills of the S4B project respond to negative emotions, namely critical thinking, stress management, effective communication, adaptability, and active listening. By the concept of school learning motivation, we mean the set of internal factors of the teachers and student's personality that determine, orient, organise and support their learning efforts.

To become active listeners, teachers must assume a new role, that of counsellor, because most are used to using morals, criticism, evaluation, without offering solutions or leading to them. Active

listening is also a good way to facilitate learning because it has created a climate where students feel free to express themselves, think, discuss, explore, ask questions.

During active listening we can use verbal and non-verbal cues to show that we are receiving messages (these are also called acceptance responses): nodding in the affirmative, leaning forward, frowning (non-verbal cues) and verbal cues. Active listening involves more interaction and more evidence that the message is understood by the adult outside of silence (passive listening).

Performance in the classroom is also achieved through increased adaptability, changing the lesson or activities spontaneously, against the background of an unpredictable situation. If students don't seem to grasp a concept, for example, a teacher needs to identify on the spot the best way to explain it. The ability to collaborate effectively with other teachers, parents, school administrators, and other parties directly or indirectly involved in the education of students is another essential quality of a good teacher.



Empathy is a skill strongly promoted by the S4B project. Being sensitive to the difficulties that students face, although at first glance it does not fall into the duties of the classroom, is an exceptional quality of a teacher. When a teacher manages to see things from the perspective of their students, they truly become a mentor to them on their way to success.

Organisational skills are also a good way to facilitate learning because it has created a climate where students feel free to express themselves, think, discuss, explore, ask questions. Effectively communicating one's feelings and focusing on finding a solution (facilitated by the teacher) increases the student's confidence and self-esteem. He will feel closer to the teacher and therefore much closer to the learning process and contents.

How should the modern teacher be? It is very important to know how to communicate with students, parents, colleagues if you want to become a modern teacher. Understanding psychological dynamics can be an important advantage for communication and relationships. The modern teacher knows how to communicate in any situation, avoids conflicts and understands what real communication means, regardless of the context.



The S4B project is about the balance of teachers, about digital skills and about the relevance of blended learning today. Especially in these complicated times, understanding technology is even more important. The good teacher will know how to use it, will try to learn how the latest technologies work, and will use them at school, in the classroom, at home to organise the teaching as well as possible and help the students to understand the lessons taught more easily.

Modern technology will be an effective tool for teaching and presenting information that is more difficult to understand in a very simple way. Microtasks support the use of technology even more with 12 videos on 12 different key skills demanding the teacher's attention today. The blended learning facilitates lifelong learning. The modern teacher always learns new things, new techniques, is up to date with all the news in the educational field.

From the moment you choose to be a teacher, you practically assume continuous learning, continuous training to be able to provide access to quality and professional education every time. The more creative the teacher is and tries to use this creativity during the lessons taught, the more he will have students who will learn more easily and will succeed in obtaining very good results in education.

The S4B project is about the adaptability of teachers, stress management, adopting a positive attitude but also their passion. Creativity, persuasion, collaboration, and emotional intelligence are the most sought-after soft skills among new teachers. Watch the 12 S4B videos on key soft skills in blended learning and you will be able to improve your teaching skills!





[www.s4b-project.eu](http://www.s4b-project.eu)