# CROSS CUT

Cross-curricular teaching

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**The CROSSCUT Team**

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# INTRO DUCTION

## How to use this ebook? ............................................

      This eBook is the fourth and last output of the CROSSCUT project. The main purpose of CROSSCUT is to support the professional development of secondary school teachers by training them to develop the competences necessary for the implementation of cross-curricular teaching.

The eBook contains key information and tools produced during three years by participating institutions. It aims at providing the project's targeted audiences with key recommendations backed by research conducted during the three years of the project. This eBook is organised in a way that, depending on who you are, you are directly pointed to the results and messages that may be of interest for you. Nevertheless, the CROSSCUT team invites you to read the eBook in its entirety.

# I.
# WHO ARE YOU ?

## I.1  You are a teacher

You are an **in-service teacher at secondary level**; a *"teacher [being] a person whose professional activity involves the planning, organising and conducting of group activities to develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes as stipulated by educational programmes. Teachers may work with students as a whole class, in small groups or one-to-one, inside or outside regular classrooms"*[1]. Whether you are a beginner or experimented, you are the main target of the CROSSCUT project. Nevertheless, if you are a future teacher, or a primary school teacher, we think you can also find the project interesting. The CROSSCUT project will provide you with information, tools and examples to develop cross-curricular teaching in your class.
You recognize your profile or your organisation's profile in this description? Please click on the following items to see what the CROSSCUT team has in store for you.

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[1] OECD definition: https://data.oecd.org/teachers/teachers.htm

> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT project.**
> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT partners.**
> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT results.**

As a teacher, we think you will particularly be interested in 2 of our recommendations:
> **Teachers must have the necessary resources to implement cross-curricular teaching**
> **Cross-curricular teaching and learning community development should be supported**

We believe the following tools can be helpful regarding the recommendations:
> **The CROSSCUT online training**
> **CROSSCUT Reference Framework**
> **CROSSCUT Situational Survey**

## I.2  You are a school leader

You are **a school leader or a member of the school executive staff**. School leaders and school executive staff ensure coordination of the school staff, lead the pedagogical team, and ensure the smooth running of the classes. They are also in charge of the responsibilities related to the school functioning. The CROSSCUT project will be interesting for you, giving tools and key information about fundamental competences to implement cross-curricular teaching in your school.
You recognize your profile or your organisation's profile in this description? Please click on the following items to see what the CROSSCUT team has in store for you.

> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT project.**
> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT partners.**
> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT results.**

As a school leader or member of the executive staff, we think you will particularly be interested in 3 of our recommendations:
> **Teachers must have the necessary resources to implement cross-curricular teaching**

> Cross-curricular teaching should be assessed with appropriate evaluation tools
> Cross-curricular teaching and learning community development should be supported

We believe the following tools can be helpful regarding the recommendations:
> **The CROSSCUT online training**
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> **CROSSCUT Situational Survey**

## I.3 You are a policy maker

You are **an education decision maker**. A decision maker is a person responsible for or involved in formulating education policies. In the CROSSCUT context, they are individuals who have the authority to set or to influence the policy framework of the educational system, in particular with regards to curricula and teacher training provision. Of course, this includes members of European, national and regional parliaments, or members of executive authorities. It also includes civil servants working on educational issues. On a wider scale, teachers' and students' trade unions, lobbies, and networks can also be considered policymaking institutions, provided that they work on and may influence the policy framework of the educational system.

You recognize your profile or your organisation's profile in this description? Please click on the following items to see what the CROSSCUT team has in store for you.

> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT project.**
> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT partners.**
> You want to know more about **the CROSSCUT results.**

As a decision maker, we think you will particularly be interested in 5 of our recommendations:
> **Cross-curricular teaching and learning must be integrated explicitly in national curricular**
> **Curricula should stay flexible enough to keep the autonomy of teachers when they implement cross-curricular teaching**
> **Teachers must have the necessary resources to implement cross-curricular teaching**
> **Cross-curricular teaching should be assessed with appropriate evaluation tools**

> Cross-curricular teaching and learning community development should be supported

We believe the following tools can be helpful regarding the recommendations:
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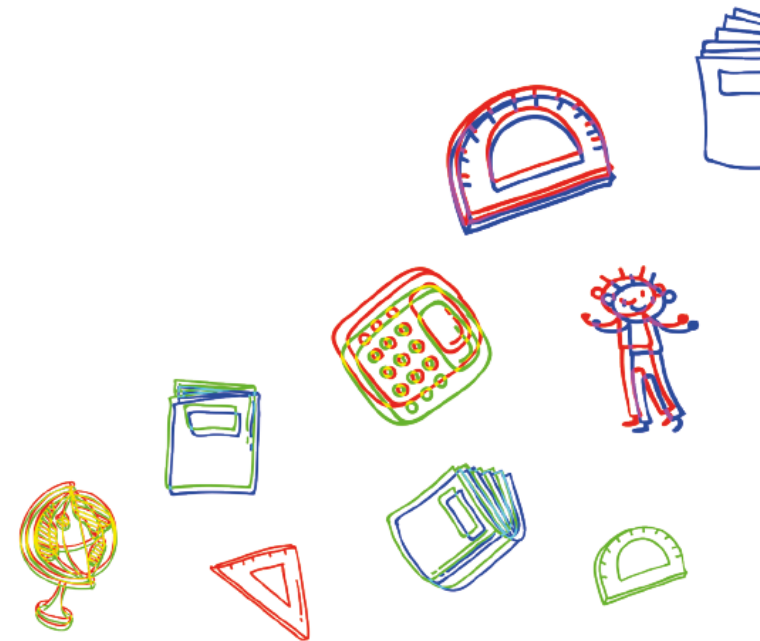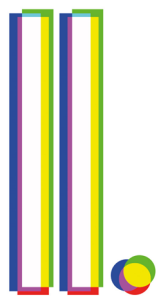
# II.
# THE CROSSCUT PROJECT

## II.1  What is the project about?

**CROSSCUT** stands for "Cross-curricular Teaching". The CROSSCUT project is a European project funded by the ERASMUS+ programme which aims at supporting secondary level teachers' professional development by training them to adopt a cross-curricular teaching approach, in order to enhance the acquisition of key competences by students. The project includes six European countries and eight partners:

- **Denmark**
- **Finland**
- **France**
- **Norway**
- **Poland**
- **Portugal**

The CROSSCUT project is part of the European Union's approach for strong action to support **new ways of teaching and learning**. It contributes to achieving the objectives of the European strategic framework "Education & Training 2020" and completing new priorities defined in 2015 by the European Commission and the Council, particularly "further exploring the potential of innovative and active pedagogies such as interdisciplinary teaching and collaborative methods, to enhance the development of relevant and high-level skills and competences"[2].

Indeed, the acquisition of high-level basic and transversal competences is key to guarantee employability, capacity of innovation and active citizenship of students in a lifelong learning perspective, in order to boost competitiveness and to foster social cohesion. In that sense, the European Parliament and the Council have defined in their Recommendation of 18 December 2006 **eight key competences for lifelong learning** [3], updated on May 2018, that are necessary for individuals to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world. These key competences, to a great extent, are transversal and not subject-based. Moreover, research pinpointed that traditional classroom learning environments are not the most appropriate context for the effective development of key competences; on the contrary, it has been observed that methods focusing on interdisciplinary and cross-curricular teaching were much more conducive to the acquisition of these competences. However, in many European countries, teachers are trained in a single academic discipline and are used to work autonomously, with limited cooperation with other teachers and support from educational staff. Therefore, an important shift in teaching practices is required to improve the development of students' key competences. Teachers need to develop new competences, through professional development, to be able to master and implement the aforementioned innovative teaching methods.

**The CROSSCUT project contributes to strengthening the profile of the teaching profession**. It addresses one of the education main challenges by training teachers to adopt innovative cross-curricular teaching methods and effective collaboration. Students shall benefit from the introduction of new teaching methods since teachers are a key determinant of learners' performances in school.

The CROSSCUT project consists in four consecutive steps with corresponding results:

- **A Situational Survey** gathered evidence on the current state of cross-curricular teaching activities in regard to two aspects: the curricula prescribed in each country and actual practices in schools, in order to identify what promotes and prevents the practice of

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[2] *New priorities for European cooperation in education and training,* 2015, joint report of the European Commission and the Council

[3] *Council recommendations of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (2018/C189/01)*

effective cross-curricular teaching.

   • A **Reference Framework** defines the competences that teachers need to acquire, through their initial and in-service training, in order to implement cross-curricular activities in their classrooms and schools.

   • **The e-Learning platform and the CROSSCUT** training aims at equipping in-service secondary school teachers and school leaders with the competences to create and implement cross-curricular activities that enhance student learning.

   • The present **policy recommendations** have been written by the partners in order to support the work of education decision makers at the European Union, national and regional levels, raise awareness about the state of cross-curricular teaching in the EU as well as the teachers' need for professional development in the field, and to trigger action in the field.

## II.2  Who are we?

The CROSSCUT partnership is composed of eight partners :

### II.2.1  France Education International
Founded in 1945, and a national public institution since 1987, **France Education International** (FEI, formerly named CIEP) is recognised both in France and abroad for its skills with regard to expert evaluation, training, assessment, and management of international projects. FEI is a key public operator under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Youth. It then is a public institution of reference on an international level, in the field of education and training. Its primary mission is to promote French expertise on the subject.

### II.2.2 CICERO Learning
CICERO Learning (**www.cicero.fi**) is a network for distinguished researchers and research groups on learning. It was established in 2006 and is coordinated by the University of Helsinki. The network builds co-operation with research groups and units in Finland and around the world. CICERO Learning network promotes cutting edge research on learning across the boundaries between diverse scientific fields. There are six special interest groups coordinating research and dissemination activities: Arts and Media Education, Brain and Learning, Learning Analytics, Games and Learning, Life-long Learning, and Special Education.

### II.2.3 Educational Research Institute
The Educational Research Institute (IBE) is a public institution under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education, conducting interdisciplinary research in the field of education in Poland. Drawing its origins from The Pedagogical Institute founded in 1952, IBE has become a leading reference regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the national education system, by promoting evidence-based policy and practice. Constantly in development, the IBE participates in international research projects and carries out advisory functions. Its growing network of cooperation includes local authorities, schools, NGOs, universities, national and international research centres as well as international organisations.

### II.2.4 Institut Français de l'Éducation
The French Institute of Education (**IFE**) is an integral part of the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon and is the French research and innovation platform dedicated to educational issues in connection with local field actors and a large international network of educational communities. It provides research-based expertise, training and trainer training, resources and experimentation for educational innovation. IFE is conducting research or projects supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

### II.2.5 Laboratory for Coherent Education and Learning
The Laboratory for Coherent Education and Learning (LSUL) is a strategic research, development and education centre based on a collaboration between the Faculty of Science at University of Southern Denmark (SDU) and the University Colleges, UCL and UC Syd. The aim of LSUL is to work with interdisciplinarity and, thereby, enabling more coherent teaching practices in mathematics, science and technology in order to create better learning opportunities. LSUL collaborates with researchers, students and teachers in the fields of mathematics, science and technology from day care to higher education.

### II.2.6 Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR) is the agency under the

auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research responsible for kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools.

The Directorate ensures that Norwegian education policy is implemented, and upholds the rights of children at kindergartens, school pupils and apprentices to equality of care and education.

The Directorate is responsible for inspecting kindergartens and schools, and for managing and interpreting legislation on the kindergarten and compulsory education sectors in Norway. It is also responsible for developing framework and teaching plans, and for producing various kinds of exams and national tests for Norwegian primary schools, secondary schools and further education colleges.

### II.2.7 Univerdade Aberta

Established in 1988, Universidade Aberta (UAb) is the Portuguese public higher education institution fully dedicated to flexible, distance and online learning. A pioneer in the field, UAb remains the major provider in the country, making use of the most advanced technologies and methods of open, distance and online learning. Since 2008, all its provision is delivered online using an internationally acclaimed Virtual Pedagogical Model developed in-house by its expert researchers. UAb is a global player, providing quality higher education across the world (Undergraduate, Master and Doctorate degrees, as well as Lifelong Learning courses) reaching out to all Portuguese speaking countries and communities and actively contributing to disseminate the Portuguese language and culture.

A reference European institution in the area of advanced e-learning and online learning, UAb is also the main research centre in Portugal in the field of open education, flexible, distance and eLearning. The contribution to the advancement of MOOC design has been widely acknowledged. But, also in such emerging areas as e-assessment, serious games, virtual mobility and curricular flexibility UAb has been in the forefront. Moreover, UAb has contributed as well to the introduction and development of other fields in Portugal as intercultural studies, women studies, environmental studies and global studies.

### II.2.8 University of Minho

Founded in 1973, the University of Minho (UMinho) is renowned for the competence and quality of its faculty and for the level of excellence in research as well as the wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses offered and the remarkable degree of interaction with other institutions and the society in general.

The Institute of Education (IE) is a new teaching and research unit of the UMinho created in 2009. IE's mission is to develop projects on education, research (CIEC and CIEd, Research Centres) and interaction with society in the broad area of Education, thus contributing to the development and well-being of individuals, groups, education organisations and society. The teaching activity of IE comprises undergraduate, masters and doctoral level of Education and specific training of IE or shared with other Schools of UMinho. IE also covers advanced scientific internships, doctorates in partnership with foreign universities and post-doctorates. In conjunction with the teaching activities, research developed in IE is focused on the educational processes, agents and contexts, on teaching, learning, training and socio-educational development. The activities concerning the interaction with society, involve in-service training courses, studies and consultancy, and are a way of making the knowledge and skills of the Institute's professors and researchers available to the community.

# III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on three years of European cooperation about cross-curricular teaching with teachers and executive staff of secondary school level, the CROSSCUT partners wish to deliver recommendations.

The five recommendations formulated will improve the development and implementation of innovative cross-curricular teaching. They are in line with the recommendations made by the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission in the report entitled "**Key competences for lifelong learning**"published in March 2019.

## III.1 Cross-curricular teaching and learning must be integrated explicitly in national curricula.

This first recommendation is simple yet fundamental. For three years, the experts of CROSSCUT have worked on how to support and train teachers of secondary school to develop and implement cross-curricular teaching and have been able to observe that in most of the countries, cross-curricular teaching is not explicitly mentioned in the students' curricula, as reported in the **Situational Survey**. Reference to transversal competences and cross-curricular teaching are, if they exist, vague. Thus, the development of cross-curricular teaching in secondary schools is often perceived as non-compulsory or extra-curricular and depends on the goodwill of school leaders and especially teachers.

Including cross-curricular teaching in the official curricula with a definition and explanation, potentially examples of subjects to be developed during these hours, would give teachers the **legitimacy** and the **motivation** to devote time and energy to develop their cross-curricular teaching activities. It would also **clarify the meaning** of the concept and what is expected of the teachers, who in turn could be inspired by cross-curricular topics. Moreover, it would give schools leaders the legitimacy to **include hours in their timetable** to develop projects, study common topics, co-create pedagogical tools and plan didactic sequences. Furthermore, the CROSSCUT experts encourage the integration of cross-curricular teaching as

such in the curricula and other relevant policy frameworks in a sustainable way. Mentioning it in the official texts would create a **sustainable environment** that would give the necessary stability and confidence to teachers to take the time to attend a training, develop their competences and implement cross-curricular teaching.

> **> Click here to further explore the tools** we developed to help implement this recommendation.

## III.2 Curricula should stay flexible enough to keep the autonomy of teachers when they implement cross-curricular teaching.

If a general framework encompasses cross-curricular teaching, notably via its integration in curricula and official texts, it is important to keep in mind that **teachers' autonomy** should be preserved. As the CROSSCUT experts observed through the **Situational Survey**, teachers and school leaders have various interpretations on how to implement cross-curricular teaching. Indeed, the national curricula give very general orientations that must be adapted to **different local contexts**, this is why teachers require some flexibility in regard to their practice. If teachers, as pedagogical experts, have the legitimacy, thanks to a stable curriculum, and the flexibility, thanks to autonomy, they will feel **confident** and it will **foster their creativity**.

To summarize, autonomy allows teachers to be creative and to adapt cross-curricular teaching to the local context and students' life.

> **> Click here to further explore the tools** we developed to help implement this recommendation.

## III.3 Teachers must have the necessary resources to implement cross-curricular teaching.

In order to develop and implement cross-curricular teaching, teachers must have the necessary intellectual, human and material resources.

### III.3.1 Intellectual resources.

The willingness and confidence of teachers is a key element, as reported in the **Situational Survey**, for the development of cross-curricular teaching. When they feel insecure and lack of interest, teachers will not explore and develop innovative teaching ideas.

The best way to build someone's confidence is **education and training**. Initial training should integrate cross-curricular teaching and the competences needed to develop innovative teaching. The continuous training for teachers should be supported and the training opportunities should also include the development of the cross-curricular teaching competences. The CROSSCUT experts worked on a generic **Reference Framework** defining the competences required by teachers for cross-curricular teaching that can be useful to develop the training programmes. They also developed the **CROSSCUT online training** for teachers to develop their cross-curricular teaching competences.

### III.3.2 School community resources.

Teachers should be encouraged by the educative system to continuously improve and adapt their teaching practice. This is achieved through training opportunities and also through school leaders -and more generally- educational staff support and incentives.

For this purpose, **educational staff and school leaders** should build a common understanding on what is cross-curricular teaching and have an overview of what is needed to provide cross-curricular teaching. **Training and support** should be offered to promote this goal. The CROSSCUT experts developed **the CROSSCUT online training** for teachers that can also be useful for school leaders and educational staff to develop their own transversal competences and understand what teachers need to implement cross-curricular teaching.

### III.3.3 Practical resources.

Among the enablers and obstacles quoted by teachers and school leaders in the **Situational Survey**, one of the main elements is time. Time is crucial. Time is needed to train, to develop competences, to study which subjects can be useful to explain a given topic, to share and work with fellow teachers, and so on. When teachers have a **formalised, dedicated and common time to** develop cross-curricular teaching, they have the willingness to cooperate

with their colleagues, explore, create projects. When they do not have the allocated time in their planning, teachers do not necessarily have the possibility to exchange with colleagues and only teachers who have an extra-motivation will get involved in cross-curricular teaching. We recommend dedicating allocated time to cross-curricular teaching development in teachers' schedules and a **dedicated space** where teachers can work together in a quiet work environment. A dedicated space would be a furnished room where teachers can discuss their experience and build common project for instance.

Finally, we recommend providing teachers with **appropriate tools** to develop cross-curricular teaching, especially technological tools such as computers and programmes that will facilitate collaborative work.

Time, space and tools are necessary conditions for teachers to develop innovative teaching methods as cross-curricular teaching.

> **> Click here to further explore the tools** we developed to help implement this recommendation.

### III.4 Cross-curricular teaching should be assessed with appropriate evaluation tools.

Transversal key competences taught during cross-curricular teaching must be evaluated with appropriate tools. As observed during this project, student evaluations, just as curricula and training remain organised by disciplines/subjects… Only rarely the transversal competences are emphasised in **student evaluations**. Given that transversal competences are rarely valued as a learning outcome, they are rarely worked on during lessons at school. As a consequence, teachers, as well as students, lack time and motivation for cross-curricular teaching.

Cross-curricular teaching and the competences taught in these classes must be evaluated adequately. For this purpose, new evaluation tools and framework need to be created.

> **Click here to further explore the tools** we developed to help implement this recommendation.

### III.5 Cross-curricular teaching and learning community development should be supported.

The CROSSCUT experts started from the premise that learning transversal key competences through the use of cross-curricular teaching would enable students to be better prepared for their future lives in an increasingly complex and constantly changing world. To this end, adequate teacher training must be developed to support teachers in this transition from traditional subject-based teaching to more cross-curricular teaching.

Teacher training is therefore at the heart of this transition. And while initial training is essential, **continuing learning throughout their career** is just as important. This continuous learning can take several forms. Training can be presential, through individual coaching, online training or blended learning (combining presential and online learning). A teacher's lifelong learning can also be organised in a horizontal way through exchanges between peers, with colleagues in his or her school, colleagues from other schools in the region, or even from other national and European schools.

This is why the CROSSCUT experts recommend the **creation of a learning and teaching community** composed of various local actors which would constitute a space for the exchange of experiences in order to identify and develop good practices, and a space for experimentation. Such a space would encourage the inspiration and creativity of the

participants. It would also provide an opportunity to develop new competences and partnerships.

A cross-curricular teaching and learning community would **create synergies between local actors**:

- Within schools:
  • Between teachers of all disciplines.
  • Between teachers and educational teams: librarians, management, nurses, etc.
  • Between teachers, educational teams and students.
- Outside the school:
  • Between educational teams and parents.
  • Between educational teams, including teachers, and local actors such as companies, associations, public institutions, etc.
  • Between students and local actors.

Such a community would help to develop everyone's **creativity and competences**. It would inspire students in terms of career, cultural, artistic and associative projects. Finally, it would allow teachers to have a space for exchange and experimentation, to feel supported by the local community, to gain confidence through the generated dialogue.

> **Click here to further explore the tools** we developed to help implement this recommendation, as the **CROSSCUT training platform** that encourages the creation of a CROSSCUT community through forums.
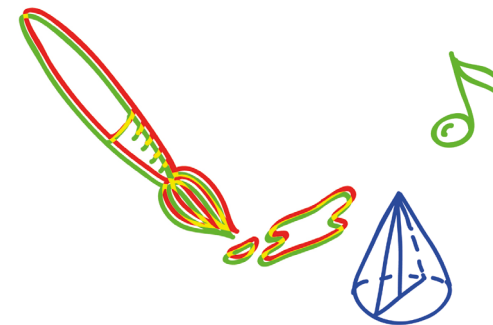
# IV.
# TOOLS..........

During the timeframe of the CROSSCUT project, the partners developed three tools so that, provided that their recommendations are considered, implementing cross-curricular teaching would be easier at all levels:

• **Classroom level**: teachers can find support in the CROSSCUT online training to develop their competences, to understand better the concept of "cross-curricular teaching" and to find inspirations in the various examples of cross-curricular teaching activities presented by teachers from different European countries. They can also find valuable examples of good practices in the Situational Survey. Finally, they can self-assess their ability to implement cross-curricular teaching through the Reference Framework.

• **School level**: educational staff, particularly school leaders, can find practical key information and tools in the Situational Survey, the Reference Framework and the CROSSCUT online training, in regard to what they can do to implement cross-curricular teaching in their school. Particularly they can support the teachers' continuous training to strengthen their capacity.

• **System level**: decision makers and teacher trainers can find key information on cross-curricular teaching in practice in the Situational Survey. They can also use the Reference Framework and the CROSSCUT online training as tools to design teachers' and students' curricula and trainings.

## IV.1 CROSSCUT online training: https://crosscut.uab.pt

The CROSSCUT online training (**https://crosscut.uab.pt**) is the major achievement of the CROSSCUT project. **Based on the practices and needs of teachers and school leaders** studied in the **Situational Survey**, the CROSSCUT online training aims at equipping the competences, defined in the **Reference Framework**, that teachers need to acquire to develop and implement cross-curricular teaching.

The main goal of the CROSSCUT online training is to help learners understand better, by giving **key information, tools and examples**:

• What is cross-curricular teaching?
• How and why to develop cross-curricular teaching in your classroom?
• How to implement cross-curricular activities at school?

The main target of the CROSSCUT training is in-service secondary school teachers, although the CROSSCUT experts believe the training can also be interesting for all future and in-service teachers and school executive staff. The CROSSCUT training helps the learner feel more confident about developing cross-curricular activities alone and with colleagues. It gives key information, good practices, tools and incentives to implement cross-curricular teaching. Learners are able to share their best practices with a European community of teachers and learn theirs. They are also able to talk about the CROSSCUT training to the school executive staff and colleagues to involve their entire school in cross-curricular teaching.

The CROSSCUT training is composed of 4 modules, in English[4], both complementary and independent. Indeed, each module highlights specific competences and can be achieved in any order at the learners' pace. They offer both:

• **Classical exercises** through text studies to learn more about cross-curricular teaching and transversal competences

• **Practical and sometimes collaborative exercises** that place learners in a real situation and in cooperation with their colleagues at school and their European colleagues using forums.

> Click here to read the discover the **CROSSCUT online training**
> Click here to know more about the **Situational Survey**
> Click here to discover the **Reference Framework defining the common competences for cross-curricular teaching**

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[4] French and Polish versions of the training are also available on the same platform: https://crosscut.uab.pt
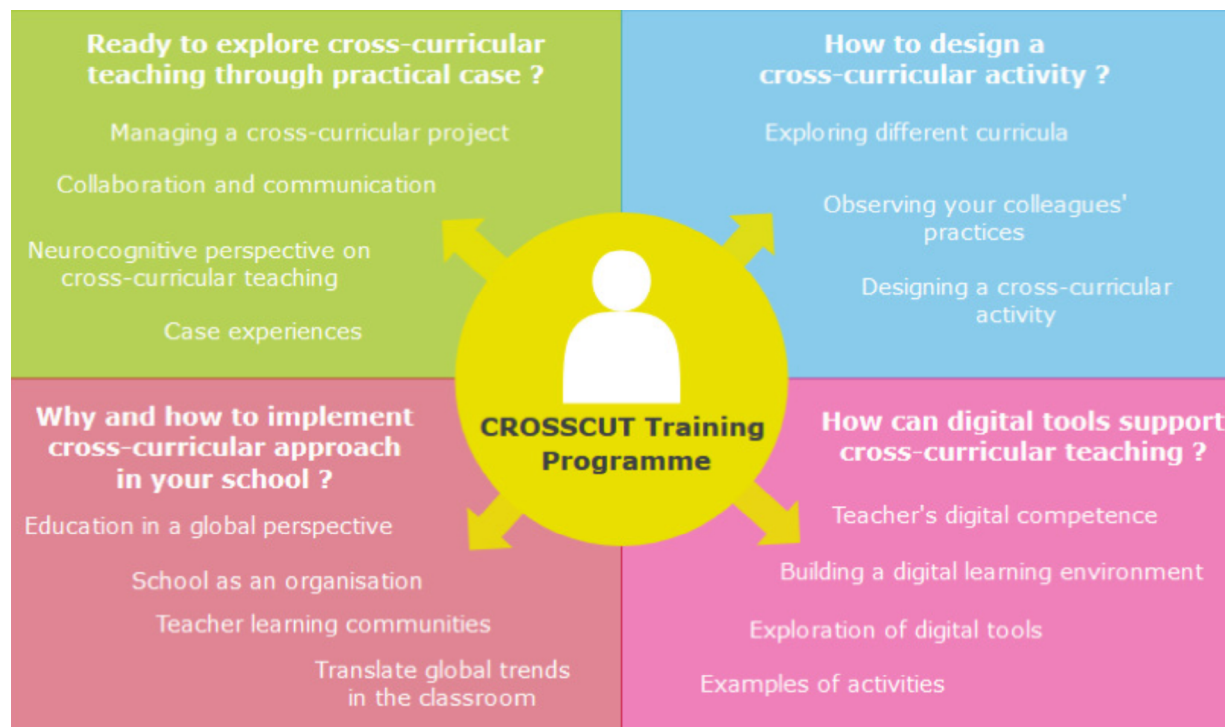
**Figure 1: Summary of the content of the four CROSSCUT training modules.**

**Ready to explore cross-curricular teaching through practical cases?**
With this module the learner will dive into practical cross-curricular challenges and solve them. The module aims to deepen the understanding of cross-curricular teaching and learning through practical cases.

**How to design a cross-curricular activity?**
This module is for the learner to discover the curricula, subject syllabuses and practices of their colleagues who teach other school subjects. It will help to design a cross-curricular activity focused on the learning objectives for his or her students.

**How can digital tools support cross-curricular teaching?**
With this module the learner will reflect and explore how digital tools can support cross-curricular teaching. The learner will dive into practical cross-curricular challenges and solve them. The module aims to deepen the understanding of the impact technology has on education.

**Why and how to implement cross-curricular approach in your school?**
This module sheds light on different aspects of global thinking and cross-curricular approach at the school level. The module aims to deepen the understanding of the global trends in education, schools as a learning organisation, professional development through teacher learning communities. It will also help the learner translate the global trends in his or her classroom.

## IV.2 Reference Framework

To facilitate the understanding of cross-curricular teaching by trainee and in-service teachers, as well as educational staff, including executive staff and teacher trainers, the CROSSCUT partners designed a Reference Framework compiling the competences that teachers should acquire through their training and along their career, in order to implement cross-curricular teaching in their classroom and in their school.

The whole document gives an exhaustive overview of teacher's **competences needed for cross-curricular teaching**, based on teachers' practices that the CROSSCUT team observed and studied in the **Situational Survey**. The Reference Framework is meant to be generic so that it can be adapted in all initial and continuous teacher training and any school system.

Beyond providing an overview of competences required, the Reference Framework is seen as an effective tool to **support teachers' self-reflection and competence development**. They can use it to evaluate and train themselves on new competences. It also gives a framework for teacher trainers to develop their training.

There are 14 competences listed as shown in the figure 2 below[5]. They are categorised in the three following competence areas: 1) work with others to develop and implement cross-curricular teaching, 2) work with knowledge, technology and information to develop and implement cross-curricular teaching, 3) work with and in society to develop and implement cross-curricular teaching.

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[5] In the detailed descriptions of the competences in the reference framework, cooperate with students, colleagues and partners are individually referenced.

> Click here to read the complete report "**Reference Framework, common competences for cross-curricular teaching in Europe**"
> Click here to know more about the **Situational Survey**
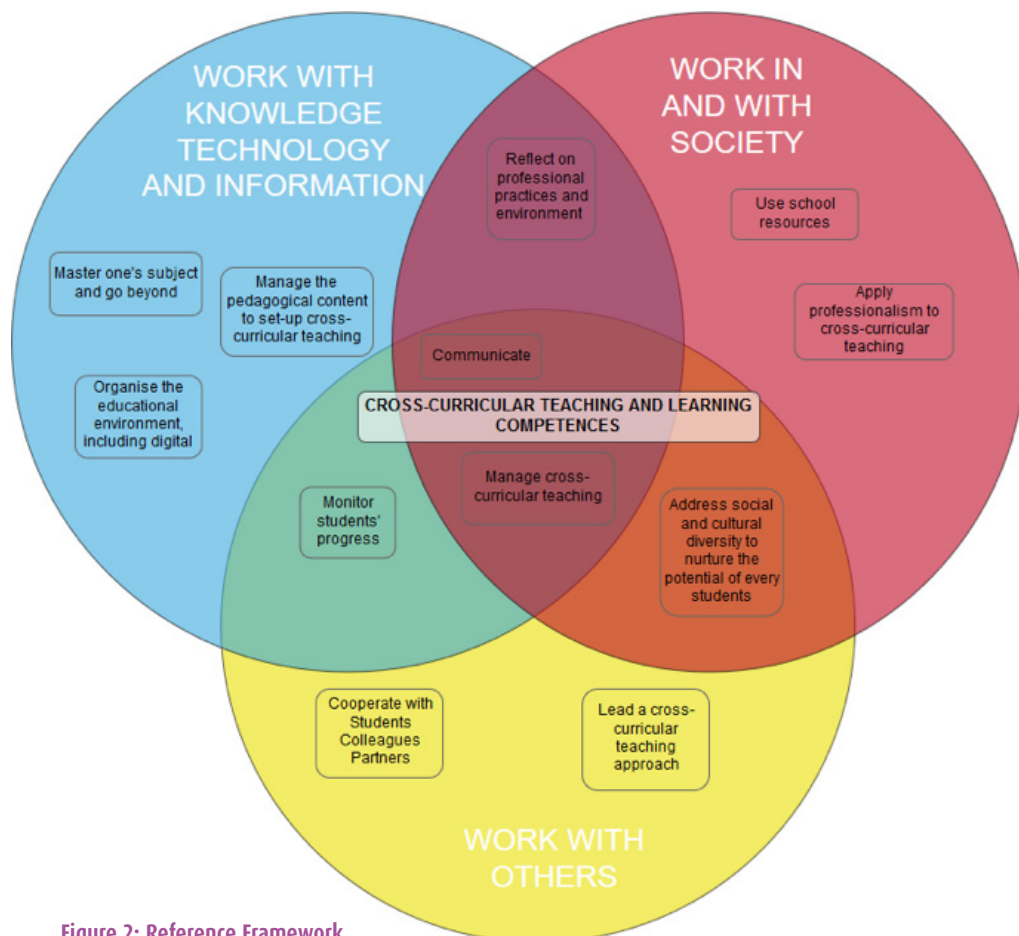> Click here to discover the **CROSSCUT online training**



**Figure 2: Reference Framework diagram showing the categorisation of the competences for cross-curricular teaching in the three competence areas.**

## IV.3 Situational Survey

The CROSSCUT partners conducted a Situational Survey to give an **insight on interdisciplinarity in Europe today**. This tool gives an overview of cross-curricular teaching, highlights good practices and can help raising awareness of teachers, educational staff and decision makers on levers and obstacles to the implementation of cross-curricular teaching, on the training system and curricula. The CROSSCUT team believes that it is an excellent tool to give teachers and school leaders confidence and inspiration understanding that they share the same desires and difficulties as their European colleagues. Furthermore, the Situational Survey highlights the desire to develop innovative pedagogical practices and its difficult operationalisation. **In order to be effectively implemented by the decision-makers, innovative ideas must be associated with appropriate tools and support for teachers and school leaders**.

Indeed, the study maps the status of cross-curricular activities on two levels: the intended curricula and the actual practices at schools to identify enablers and obstacles for effective cross-curricular teaching. The Situational Survey was conducted in three steps.

First, a review of national curricula, policy and resource documents in each participating country was conducted in order to observe the degree of definition, anchoring and guidance regarding cross-curricular teaching. The main observation was that the common teaching structure in the studied countries is mainly discipline/subject based. In the past few years, there has been an evolution on education and a real will to develop students' transversal competences including through cross-curricular teaching. Though, transversal competences and cross-curricular knowledge are not often mentioned and, when they are, they are often mentioned in a non-explicit way. References to cross-curricular teaching and learning are mostly vague and curricula as well as examinations and evaluations remain disciplinary. Cross-curricular teaching approaches remain even less important, considered optional. The compatibility of the curricula mainly based on subjects and the will to develop cross-curricular teaching must be found in the freedom of each schools and teachers to adapt their practices within curricula defined by national governments. The degree of freedom of adaptation is different in each country.

Then, 29 school leaders were interviewed to observe the willingness of institutions to set up cross-curricular teaching at the school level. In parallel, focus group interviews with 136 teachers were conducted to understand their vision of cross-curricular teaching and of the way to implement it.

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Finally, cross-curricular teaching sessions were observed. The main observations were that teachers and school leaders have a positive attitude towards cross-curricular teaching. There is a great diversity of interpretation concerning what cross-curricular teaching is. The most common practices are cross-curricular project work and cross-curricular didactic sequences during subject based lessons. Cross-curricular teaching initiatives highly depend on motivated and engaged teachers, but they lack time and space to plan such activities in very strictly defined curricula. Diverse enablers and obstacles to cross-curricular teaching were identified (see table 1 below).
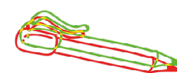
| Enablers | Obstacles |
|---|---|
| Planned times and places for teacher cooperation | Lack of time and space |
| Flexible curriculum with greater institutional autonomy | Curriculum focused on rigid disciplines or programs |
| Alignment of assessment (taking into account cross-curricular competences in tests or examinations) | Lack of assessment of cross-curricular competences |
| Mutual understanding and awareness of other disciplines and teaching subjects | Lack of interest or willingness on the part of teachers |
| Open-mindedness | Insufficient familiarity with the interdisciplinary approach or feeling insecure |
| Lifelong training | |

**Table 1:**
**Enablers and obstacles to cross-curricular teaching identified by teachers and school leaders.**
**Source: Situational Survey lead by the CROSSCUT team published in October 2018.**

Some needs for teacher training and professional development were identified. First, they need a common understanding of cross-curricular teaching as well as to be aware of its advantages for student learning and skills development. Teachers would also need to be inspired by specific examples of transversal educational activities as well as good practice in regard to developing joint activities, discussing and sharing practices among colleagues. They would like support in order to develop collective leadership.

The results of the Situational Survey supported with an online survey sent to a hundred teachers led to the **Reference Framework** and the **CROSSCUT online training**.
> Click here to read the complete report "**Situational Survey, an insight on interdisciplinarity in Europe today**"
> Click here to read the **national Situational Surveys**
> Click here to discover the **Reference Framework** defining the common competences for cross-curricular teaching
> Click here to discover the **CROSSCUT online training**

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