European Commission

Teaching basic skills: Digital skills

Digital skills – The confident, critical and responsible engagement with digital technologies for learning, working and participating in society (including information literacy, communication, media literacy, digital content creation, online safety and digital wellbeing).

The development of digital skills is crucial for personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability in an increasingly digitalised world. Digital skills empower children and young people to access information, communicate effectively, create, innovate and solve problems using technology, and foster critical thinking and media literacy. Developing these skills enables individuals to better understand and navigate complex information landscapes, contributing to their overall wellbeing and ability to make informed decisions.

In the EU:

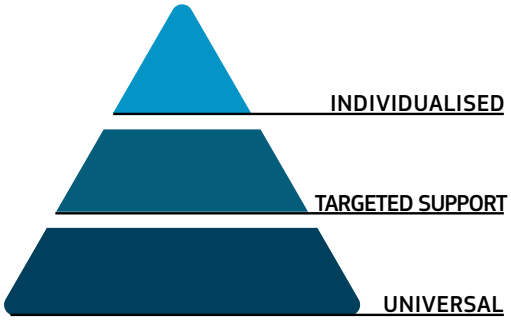
1 in 3
eighth-year pupils underachieve in basic digital skills, and most countries show a decline (or no improvement) compared to previous years

56%
of adults have at least basic digital skills (target: 80% within the EU 2030 Digital Decade programme)

30%
of Europeans do not feel appropriately equipped for the digital decade

Different levels of support in the whole school approach for enhanced digital skills acquisition:

- universal approach: all pupils are supported in developing their digital skills
- targeted support: in small groups or at individual level, for pupils at risk and/or with specific learning needs



Building a culture of digital skills for all

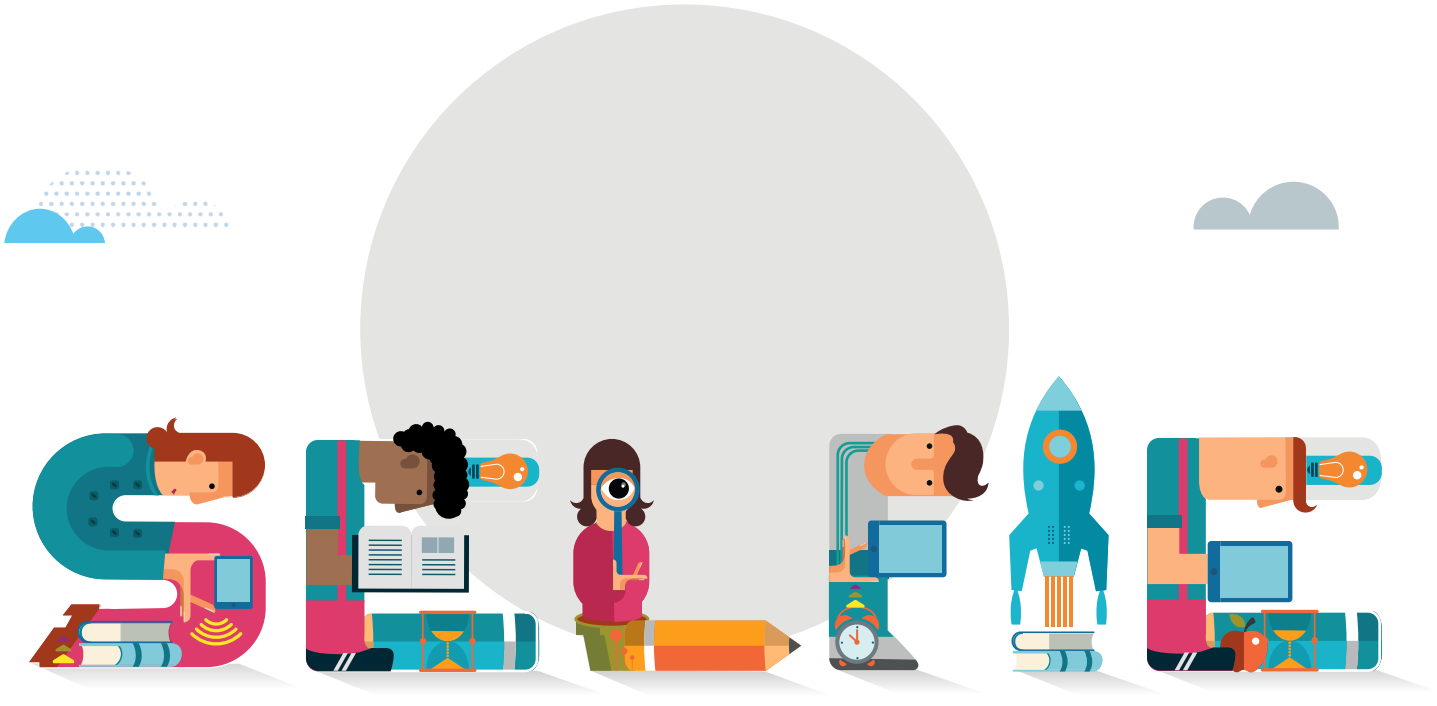
Every learner can benefit from high-quality, inclusive digital skills education that fosters confidence, critical thinking and responsible online behaviour. This includes:

- **explicit curriculum integration** of digital skills, e.g. embedding digital skills across multiple subjects and/or as a separate subject
- **digital skills in secondary schools** across the curriculum, with every teacher equipped to support the use of digital tools for research, creation and collaboration in their subject
- **use of digital tools** such as collaborative learning and formative assessment tools to promote innovative teaching methods and make learning experiences more engaging
- **whole school approach** to reinforce digital safety and skills, e.g. by establishing clear school policies and raising awareness among pupils and parents
- **parental engagement** to strengthen responsible use of digital tools at home and counter potential excessive use or misuse
- **community engagement** to offer support for use of digital devices beyond the classroom, e.g. in local libraries or community centres
- **capacity-building for teachers** through evidence-based teacher education and professional development to enable effective use of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) for teaching and learning

Explore further

Develop a strategy for digital skills in your school: based on self-reflection (e.g. using the SELFIE tool) and aligned with DigCompEdu, create a clear vision and action plan for integrating digital technologies and competences across the school.

Foster a culture of collaboration and innovation: encourage teachers to remain up-to-date by exploring key resources such as the Teacher corner of the Better Internet for Kids platform, experiment with digital tools, share best practices and collaborate on digital projects.



Providing additional support to struggling learners

Digital skill gaps may be related to access and confidence issues, but schools can help every child acquire the skills they need. This involves:

- **ensuring access to technology and infrastructure,** especially in disadvantaged contexts, so that all pupils have enough opportunities for skills development. Pupils who do not have a suitable equipment at home should be able to practise and develop their digital skills at school.
- **early intervention** to identify and support pupils who are struggling and falling behind their peers, without stigmatising them.
- **using game-based learning and challenges** (e.g. digital escape rooms, educational games) to motivate disengaged learners to acquire problem-solving and digital skills in a fun, low-stakes environment.
- **boosting motivation** through projects that directly connect with pupils' interests (e.g. creating podcasts, videos, infographics, interactive presentations about a pupil's culture, favourite sport or hobby).
- **using peer support,** in which digitally confident pupils mentor their peers in small groups on specific tasks.

Explore further

Integrate **collaborative digital tools** into teaching practice, such as Miro, Jamboard, Mentimeter, to promote communication and collaborative work. See the Digital skills playbook for educators (by the European Digital Education Hub), which provides case studies and suggested tools for each educational level.

Personalised learning pathways

Certain learners (including those with special educational needs) require additional personalised support to develop their digital skills. This involves:

- **targeted individual support** from trained specialists in digital education or special educational needs teachers who can provide one-to-one guidance.
- **personalised learning pathways** that adapt digital tasks and tools to pupils' specific learning profiles, enabling them to progress at their own pace.
- **equal opportunities for all learners,** e.g. through inclusive role models, equal encouragement and neutral design of tasks to include all pupils regardless of their gender, socio-economic background, special educational needs or cultural/linguistic background.
- **applying structured interventions or assistive technologies** to help pupils access the curriculum and express their learning in different ways, including text-to-speech software, adaptive keyboards and specific apps for accessible education.
- **ongoing, research-informed professional development** for teachers on how to use assistive technologies and differentiate instruction using digital tools.

Explore further

Ethical guidelines for educators on using artificial intelligence: The guidelines offer practical support and guidance, mostly for primary and secondary teachers with little or no experience in using AI. The guidelines explain how AI can be used in schools and help teachers and pupils to use AI in their teaching and learning.

Explore the European School Education Platform for resources and professional development courses on integrating digital skills and technologies into teaching and learning.

Via eTwinning – the community for schools in Europe – teachers can join featured groups to exchange with peers:

- Literacy, media literacy and critical thinking
- Basic skills in action group: digital literacy
- Mathematics, science and other STEM topics

More learning resources online

- SELFIE for Teachers – a free online tool to help teachers review and get feedback on how they are currently using digital tools and technologies in their work (all EU languages)
- SELFIE for Schools – a free, easy-to-use, customisable tool to help schools assess where they stand with learning in the digital age (all EU languages)
- The European Digital Education Hub – an active community of practice connecting digital education enthusiasts across Europe and beyond
- EU Code Week – resources and activities for teaching coding and computational thinking
- Better Internet for Kids – European Commission's dedicated platform for information, guidance and resources on internet issues
- National Safer Internet Centres – local resources, lesson plans and support for online safety

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