



# Manifesto for the teaching profession in the era of digital education



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Digital technology has found its way into all aspects of our lives. **Our digital society is now shaped by networks that transform the way we access information, communicate and work together.** The transition towards a digital society has also altered schools and the role of teachers in terms of knowledge, know-how and skills.

Preparing the citizens of tomorrow means enabling young people to acquire the knowledge and skills needed in the digital world. The internet is a boundless, yet unfiltered source of information. **It is essential to equip young people with the skills to manage it and be able to separate out fact from fiction. A mature and critical mind is needed.**

Digital tools and skills have been on the agenda of national and European education policies for several years (in particular the European Digital Education Action Plan). However, there are still **differences and inequalities** between Member States in the provision of digital infrastructure, equipment and skills.



## Against this background, CESI recognises that:

1. Digital technology offers us a unique opportunity, and we know that **huge progress** is set to be made in the coming years.
2. The use of digital technology needs **lifelong learning** and continuous training that take account the needs of people and their experience.
3. Incorporating digital technology into education schemes requires **new teaching strategies** which:
  - consider that digital technologies are changing our relationship to space and time;
  - link individual and collective learning;
  - set up a reference framework for the digital literacy of teachers;
  - aim at learning as part of a network and on the networks.
4. The digital divide creates **inequalities in education systems** due to:
  - connectivity that is sometimes too weak or even non-existent;
  - equipment that is not accessible to all students;
  - inability of the education system to make the use of digital tools widespread across the school curriculum;
  - complete lack or insufficient level of digital skills among many teachers, particularly among the most senior members of the profession.
5. Technology can never replace teachers, but it can help to make their work more efficient, so it is important to strike the right **balance between technology and the human factor**. Digital technology is an educational ally.
6. Digital technology is one of the **driving forces of change** in schools. It can only be applied as part of a renewed educational governance, based on effective consultation of those involved on the ground.

**7.** Teachers face **two major challenges** in the field of digital education\*:

- The acquisition of digital equipment and infrastructure;
- Appropriate training for the use and application of digital tools and teaching methods.

**8.** **Initial and continuous training** is needed to develop advanced digital skills. As digital tools contribute to pedagogical innovation, acquiring these skills is an essential lever.

**9.** The schools of the future will have to **combine face-to-face and distance learning**. Learning pathways will be hybrid and new methods of participation will have to be created in close cooperation with teaching professionals. New learning methods and tools must comprise robotics and artificial intelligence.



## Based on these findings, CESI is demanding:

**More public investment in education**, including support for digital infrastructure and connectivity, as well as access to IT tools and the internet for all students and teachers. to educational resources and content.

**This is an absolute prerequisite for high quality hybrid teaching and learning.**

A **high quality initial and continuous training policy** for teaching staff and trainers. This must take place during working hours.

**Integrating the digital component into the initial training of all education professionals, regardless of their discipline (theoretical and technical), will also help to avoid creating a digital divide between pupils and teachers.**

**Constructive dialogue between all the sector's actors and stakeholders** (schools, education professionals, pupils, families, trade-unions) and the systematic exchange of good practice on how to better shape digital education, for the mutual benefit of all.

**The education system needs technology to consolidate and enrich the role of the teacher; education needs cooperation between education professionals, parents and the wider community.**

The recognition that **digital learning and teaching tools and methods are, and should remain, complements to classroom- and distance-learning.**

**Teachers and human interaction are key components of effective teaching and learning. Digital tools and methods complement the human factor, supporting staff in an increasingly changing educational landscape.**

## Education professionals and ...

### THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic, which brought about the largest and most sudden systemic transformation in the education sector since the Second World War, was a test of resilience for all of those involved in European education systems: pupils, students and their families, but also teachers and vocational training professionals.

It must be recognised and appreciated that, despite the lack of preparation and equipment, the continuity of education largely came down to the tireless efforts of teachers themselves.

Children and young people, especially those living in vulnerable and disadvantaged circumstances, also found distance learning a challenge, both because of digital poverty and because of the difficulties parents have in supporting their children through the learning process.

Overall, the education sector was not prepared for such an emergency, yet it managed to keep going.



## Education professionals and ...

### SOCIAL NETWORKS



How people choose to communicate, especially young people, has changed dramatically in less than a decade.

Social networks are playing a leading role, and are themselves evolving at sometimes dizzying speeds. The communication methods of young people can often baffle adults who are not used to them.

Educating young people in the proper use of these social networks is an essential part in helping them to make intelligent use of these tools and to protect them from the dangers associated with them.

The role of teachers, and of educational communities in general, has become all-important; they must be trained in discernment and critical thinking against a constantly changing backdrop.

## Education professionals and ...

### CYBERBULLYING



As we have seen, information technologies can open up vast new horizons, but their liberal use is in itself a source of major risks. Attacks on an individual's reputation, particularly that of teachers, and cyber-bullying are no longer isolated incidents, whether between pupils, between pupils and teachers, between parents and teachers, or sometimes even between colleagues.

CESI demands that:

- These acts be severely punished using appropriate legal tools.
- Education professionals be effectively protected against these threats.
- Teaching staff be trained to be able to educate pupils on the proper use of social networks in a way that is respectful of people, including themselves, as well as the values that are fundamental to life in society as a whole.



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