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IM-PRO-IN-DE

**"Improvement of digitalisation competences of recent and future teachers by
development of advanced training on instructional design of digital training"**

Work package n°3 - Community of practice including dissemination, promotion, exploitation and events

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Introduction

The Community of practice among teachers is a non-formal voluntary body, who is supporting the dissemination, exploitation, mainstreaming and multiplication of the project results under the context of the “IM-PRO-IN-DE” project. This includes establishing and promoting professional standards and supporting teachers’ learning in the field of inclusive education and production of accessible digital training resources. Its establishment in 2023 represented a milestone in the development of teaching as a profession in Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal and Turkiye.

The project consortium consisting of 7 partners is aiming to support professional practice in a holistic and sustainable way. Teachers teach so that others can learn. But the Code also acknowledges that teachers are learners too, and their learning needs to be supported and acknowledged.

Teaching and learning are vital for social and economic progress. By choosing this profession which is charged with leading these processes, teachers are assuming a great responsibility to lead learning for all learners in their care.

The “IM-PRO-IN-DE” consortium is committed to ensuring that the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers is promoted and observed so as to maintain public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

This Code of Conduct for Teachers reiterates and makes explicit the values and standards that have long been experienced by pupils/students through their participation in education.



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Purpose of the Code

The Code of Conduct for Teachers applies to all registered teachers in the collaborative platform under the scope of the pilot implementation of the project. Its purpose is twofold:

1. It serves as a guiding compass as teachers seek to steer an ethical and respectful course through their career in teaching and to uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession.
2. It may be used by the education community and the wider public to inform their understanding and expectations of the teaching profession.

Existing nationally agreed procedures for dealing with difficulties and complaints at school level will continue to operate in the partners' countries. The Consortium believes that, in most cases, these will offer the best means for resolving problems as they arise in the day-to-day operation of the education system.

Only complaints which are of a serious nature relating to registered teachers can progress to an inquiry.

Having regard to the purposes set out above, the Code begins by setting out the ethical foundation for the teaching profession. This is encapsulated in the values of Respect, Care, Integrity and Trust that are reflected throughout the Code. These core values underpin the work of the teacher in the practice of his or her profession.

The Code then sets out the standards which are central to the practice of teaching and expected of registered teachers. The standards identify teachers' professional responsibilities and are framed as statements under six separate headings: values and relationships; integrity; conduct; practice; professional development; collegiality and collaboration. The standards reflect the complexity and variety of teaching and serve to guide professional judgement and practice.



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Context

The Code is in line with the belief that teachers are reflective practitioners whose key role is to educate. It also sees teachers as members of professional learning communities and advocates a role for the profession in supporting student teachers and newly qualified teachers.

In adopting and promoting the Code, the Teaching Council has particular regard for the broader context in which teaching takes place.

The Community of Practice is mindful of the rights of pupils/students, including their right to have a voice in matters affecting them.

The Community of Practice is also mindful of the rights of parents and the rights of teachers and of the responsibilities that accompany those rights. A valuable synergy has been developed between parents and teachers and this has great potential to benefit pupils/students and their education.

The Community of Practice recognises the civic and social value of education and the profound contribution that the teaching profession has made to the social, cultural and economic development of Ireland over many decades. It also recognises the key role of teacher educators in ensuring the quality of teaching. It believes that education, the teaching profession and the process of teacher education merit the active attention and support of the State (Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Türkiye) and the community.

The Community of Practice is also conscious of the myriad factors beyond teachers' control which have a bearing on their work including:

- the engagement of parents and the wider community
- the commitment and engagement of pupils/ students
- the availability of resources and supports
- opportunities for teachers' professional development
- the accelerated degree of educational change
- the pace of legislative change
- economic and societal factors.



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In conclusion, the Code of Conduct for Teachers encapsulates the fundamental ethics that inform the work of teachers. The core values and professional standards that teachers subscribe to are expressed in terms that are accessible to educators and to all others with an interest in education. Since the education system reaches into virtually every home in the country, and affects so many so deeply, it is crucial that the teaching profession's value system and professional standards are clear and readily understandable.

The Project consortium believes that the adoption of this Code of Conduct for Teachers will enhance and deepen the confidence and trust that society places in teachers.



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Standards of Teaching, Knowledge, Skill, Competence and Conduct

The role of the teacher is to educate. The following ethical values underpin the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill, competence and conduct as set out in this Code.



Respect

Teachers uphold human dignity and promote equality and emotional and cognitive development. In their professional practice, teachers demonstrate respect for spiritual and cultural values, diversity, social justice, freedom, democracy and the environment.



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Integrity

Honesty, reliability and moral action are embodied in integrity. Teachers exercise integrity through their professional commitments, responsibilities and actions.

Trust

Teachers' relationships with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and the public are based on trust. Trust embodies fairness, openness and honesty.

Care

Teachers' practice is motivated by the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care. Teachers show this through positive influence, professional judgement and empathy in practice.

On behalf of the teaching profession, the "IM-PRO-IN-DE" Community of Practice sets out the following standards that apply to all registered teachers regardless of their position.

1. Professional Values and Relationships

Teachers should:

1.1 be caring, fair and committed to the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care, and seek to motivate, inspire and celebrate effort and success.

1.2 acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of pupils/ students and promote their holistic development.

1.3 be committed to equality and inclusion and to respecting and accommodating diversity including those differences arising from gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status, and any further grounds as may be referenced in equality legislation in the future.

1.4 seek to develop positive relationships with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others in the school community, that are characterised by professional integrity and judgement.



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1.5 work to establish and maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect in their schools..

2. Professional Integrity

Teachers should:

2.1 act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work.

2.2 respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information gained in the course of professional practice, unless a legal imperative requires disclosure or there is a legitimate concern for the wellbeing of an individual.

2.3 represent themselves, their professional status, qualifications and experience honestly.

2.4 use their name/names as set out in the Register of Teachers, in the course of their professional duties.

2.5 avoid conflict between their professional work and private interests which could reasonably be deemed to impact negatively on pupils/students.

3. Professional Conduct

Teachers should:

3.1 uphold the reputation and standing of the profession.

3.2 take all reasonable steps in relation to the care of pupils/students under their supervision, so as to ensure their safety and welfare.

3.3 work within the framework of relevant legislation and regulations.

3.4 comply with agreed national and school policies, procedures and guidelines which aim to promote pupil/student education and welfare and child protection.

3.5 report, where appropriate, incidents or matters which impact on pupil/student welfare.

3.6 communicate effectively with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others in the school community in a manner that is professional, collaborative and supportive, and based on trust and respect.



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3.7 ensure that any communication with pupils/ students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting and social networking sites.

3.8 ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or other format.

3.9 ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession, illicit materials/images in electronic or other format.

3.10 ensure that they do not practise while under the influence of any substance which impairs their fitness to teach.

4. Professional Practice

Teachers should:

4.1 maintain high standards of practice in relation to pupil/student learning, planning, monitoring, assessing, reporting and providing feedback.

4.2 apply their knowledge and experience in facilitating pupils'/students' holistic development.

4.3 plan and communicate clear, challenging and achievable expectations for pupils/students.

4.4 create an environment where pupils/students can become active agents in the learning process and develop lifelong learning skills.

4.5 develop teaching, learning and assessment strategies that support differentiated learning in a way that respects the dignity of all pupils/ students.

4.6 inform their professional judgement and practice by engaging with, and reflecting on, pupil/ student development, learning theory, pedagogy, curriculum development, ethical practice, educational policy and legislation.

4.7 in a context of mutual respect, be open and responsive to constructive feedback regarding their practice and, if necessary, seek appropriate support, advice and guidance.

4.8 act in the best interest of pupils/students.



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5. Professional Development

Teachers should:

5.1 take personal responsibility for sustaining and improving the quality of their professional practice including under the scope of “IM-PRO-IN-DE” initiative by:

- actively maintaining their professional knowledge and understanding to ensure it is current.
- reflecting on and critically evaluating their professional practice, in light of their professional knowledge base.
- availing of opportunities for career-long professional development.

6. Professional Collegiality and Collaboration

Teachers should:

6.1 work with teaching colleagues and student teachers in the interests of sharing, developing and supporting good practice and maintaining the highest quality of educational experiences for pupils/students

6.2 work in a collaborative manner with pupils/ students, parents/guardians, school management, other members of staff, relevant professionals and the wider school community, as appropriate, in seeking to effectively meet the needs of pupils/students

6.3 cooperate with the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills and other statutory and public non-statutory educational and support services, as appropriate

6.4 engage with the planning, implementation and evaluation of curriculum at classroom and school level.



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Complaints relating to registered teachers in the “IM-PRO-IN-DE” Community of practice

Existing nationally agreed procedures for dealing with difficulties and complaints at school level will continue to operate. The project consortium believes that, in most cases, these will offer the best means for resolving problems as they arise in the day-to-day operation of the education system.

Only complaints which are of a serious nature relating to registered teachers can progress to an inquiry. Complaints can be made by anyone to the project consortium via dedicated email to: info@inclusionteam.org.

The grounds include professional misconduct, poor professional performance, conduct contrary to the Code of Conduct for Teachers and in certain circumstances, convictions.



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Fostering collaborative and supportive environment

The concept of a Community of Practice (CoP) among teachers is an effective way to foster professional growth, particularly in the context of improving digitalization competences. Here are several ways such a community can support teachers in developing advanced training on instructional design for digital education:

1. Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration

- **Resource Pooling:** Teachers can share resources, tools, and best practices related to digital instructional design. This includes sharing lesson plans, digital content, and innovative teaching methods.
- **Peer Learning:** Regular meetings or online forums allow teachers to discuss challenges they face and learn from each other's experiences. Peer feedback can be invaluable in refining digital teaching strategies.

2. Professional Development Opportunities

- **Workshops and Seminars:** The CoP can organize workshops and seminars focused on specific aspects of digital instructional design. These events can feature guest speakers, hands-on sessions, and practical demonstrations.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Experienced teachers can mentor newer colleagues, providing guidance and support as they develop their digital skills.

3. Research and Innovation

- **Collaborative Research Projects:** Members of the CoP can engage in research projects that explore new approaches to digital instruction. This could involve testing different technologies or pedagogical models.
- **Innovation Labs:** Creating spaces where teachers can experiment with new digital tools and techniques without the pressure of immediate implementation in the classroom.



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4. Continuous Improvement and Reflection

- **Reflective Practices:** Encouraging teachers to reflect on their digital teaching practices through journaling, peer observations, and self-assessments. This helps identify areas for improvement and fosters continuous learning.
- **Feedback Loops:** Establishing mechanisms for regular feedback and evaluation of digital instructional materials and methods. This ensures that the quality of digital education continually improves.

5. Networking and External Connections

- **External Partnerships:** Connecting with external organizations, educational institutions, and technology companies to stay updated on the latest trends and innovations in digital education.
- **Conferences and Webinars:** Participating in national and international conferences and webinars related to digital education. This broadens perspectives and provides access to global best practices.

6. Support for Implementation

- **Technical Assistance:** Providing technical support to help teachers integrate digital tools into their teaching. This might include troubleshooting, training on software usage, and assistance with setting up digital classrooms.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Advocating for policies that support digital education at the school, district, and national levels. This includes lobbying for funding, infrastructure improvements, and professional development opportunities.

7. Student-Centered Approach

- **Focus on Student Needs:** Ensuring that all digital instructional designs prioritize student engagement, accessibility, and diverse learning styles. The CoP can facilitate discussions around how to effectively meet these needs using digital tools.

By fostering a collaborative and supportive environment, a Community of Practice can significantly enhance the digitalization competences of both current and future teachers, ultimately leading to more effective and engaging digital education for students.