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SKILLS MISMATCH

WORLD CAFÉ

GROUP

VET design

1. AT A GLANCE

Activity title	*Skills Mismatch World Café*
Format	*Group, in-person facilitated workshop*
Duration	*90 minutes*
Group size	*12-25 participants*
Challenge	*Challenge 1 - Closing the Skills Mismatch* *Labour Market priority*
Setting	*Physical workshop room arranged into three World Café tables*
Method / framework	*World Café combined with a Skills Gap Matrix.*

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- A completed Skills Gap Matrix for the selected programme (worksheet, page 7)
- A shared overview of the key skills gaps, grouped into themes
- 3–5 prioritised, realistic actions agreed by the group
- One concrete next step per participant to test in their own VET context

2. DESCRIPTION

The Skills Mismatch World Café is a group activity for VET teachers, trainers, curriculum designers, managers, career guidance staff, and, where possible, employer representatives. The activity helps participants compare a selected VET programme, course, or module with the skills currently required by employers and the labour market.

Participants work with real evidence, such as job advertisements, employer feedback, apprenticeship experience, graduate feedback, or sector trends. Through three World Café rounds, they discuss current employer needs, identify gaps in the existing curriculum, and propose realistic improvements.

By the end of the activity, participants create a shared overview of key skills gaps and agree on 3–5 practical actions. These may include updating learning outcomes, adding practical tasks, involving employers, adapting assessment, or introducing short workplace-related projects.

2.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Identify current labour-market skills needs using available evidence and employer-related information.
- Compare these needs with the existing VET curriculum and recognise where skills are covered, partly covered, or missing. Analyse gaps in learning outcomes, teaching content, practical training, assessment, and employer cooperation.
- Prioritise realistic improvements that can support learners' employability. Translate general skills into concrete learning activities that learners can practise and demonstrate.



- Use real evidence, not only assumptions.
- Invite a mixed group of participants, including employers where possible.
- Keep the discussion specific and linked to real workplace situations.
- Focus on small changes that can be tested soon.

WHO IS IT FOR?

VET teachers & trainers | Curriculum designers | Employers & career guidance

3. PREPARATION

Before the activity, the facilitator selects, or asks participants to select, one VET programme, course, or module for analysis.

The facilitator prepares three World Café tables with guiding questions:

1. What skills do employers need now?
2. Where is our curriculum out of date, unclear, or incomplete?
3. What should we change first?

Participants should bring relevant evidence, such as job advertisements, employer comments, apprenticeship feedback, graduate feedback, curriculum documents, or sector information.
The facilitator also prepares a simple Skills Gap Matrix with these columns: employer-needed skill, current curriculum coverage, identified gap, proposed action, and next step or responsible person.

3.1 MATERIALS NEEDED

- [ ] Flipchart paper for each table.
- [ ] Sticky notes. Dot stickers for prioritisation.
- [ ] Wall space or board.
- [ ] Selected VET curriculum, course, or module.
- [ ] Labour-market evidence (job ads, employer feedback, sector data) and printed Skills Gap Matrix worksheets (page 7).

ROOM SET-UP

Arrange three World Café tables, each with a table host who stays and summarises the previous round. Participants rotate every 15 minutes. Keep one wall free for clustering results in the final round. Print one Skills Gap Matrix worksheet (page 7) per table.

SESSION FLOW AT A GLANCE

Intro 10'	Scan 10'	Round 1: Needs 15'	Round 2: Gaps 15'	Round 3: Actions 15'	Cluster & vote 15'	Next 5'

4. STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Step	Time	What the facilitator does
1	*10 min*	*Introduce Challenge 1 and explain that the goal is to compare labour-market needs with the current VET curriculum.*
2	*10 min*	*Participants scan the selected curriculum and labour-market evidence, marking recurring skills, tools, behaviours, or certifications.*
3	*15 min*	*World Café Round 1 – Employer needs. Participants identify the technical, digital, transversal, and workplace skills employers currently need.*
4	*15 min*	*World Café Round 2 – Curriculum gaps. Groups compare employer needs with the curriculum and identify missing, weak, or too theoretical areas.*
5	*15 min*	*World Café Round 3 – Improvements. Groups propose realistic changes, such as new practical tasks, revised assessment, updated learning outcomes, or employer-led inputs.*
6	*15 min*	*Table hosts present key points. The facilitator clusters them into themes. Participants vote for the most relevant and feasible actions. The group selects the top 3–5.*
7	*5 min*	*Each participant or team writes one concrete next step to test in their own VET context.*

5. DEBRIEF QUESTIONS



- Which labour-market skills appeared most important?
- Where is the biggest mismatch between employer needs and the curriculum?
- Which proposed change would most benefit learners' employability?
- Which action can be tested quickly?
- What further evidence do we need?
- How will we know whether the action helped reduce the skills mismatch?

5.1 KOLB EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

Concrete experience	*Participants analyse a real VET curriculum together with labour-market evidence.*
Reflective observation	*Participants review the World Café outputs and discuss the most important findings.*
Abstract conceptualisation	*Participants group the gaps into broader patterns, such as technical, digital, transversal, or assessment-related gaps.*
Active experimentation	*Participants select 3–5 practical actions and define one next step to test in their own VET context.*

VARIATIONS

• Short on time (60 min): run two rounds only and combine "gaps" and "improvements".
• Online: use breakout rooms and a shared digital board – see the Online activity of this challenge.
• Employers in the room: let an employer host the "employer needs" table.
• Follow-up: revisit the Skills Gap Matrix after 3 months to check what changed.

6. WORKSHEET

6.1 SKILLS GAP MATRIX

Use this matrix during World Café Rounds 2 and 3. Write one skill per row, rate how well the current curriculum covers it (covered / partly covered / missing) and agree on a concrete action. The first row shows an example.

Programme / module: _____ **Table:** _____ **Date:** _____

Skill employers need	Current curriculum coverage	Identified gap	Proposed action	Next step / responsible
e.g. Basic data analysis with spreadsheets	*Partly covered – theory only, no real data*	*No practical task with company data*	*Add a short case task using employer data*	*IT teacher + partner company, next term*

6.2 TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS

Agree on 3–5 actions as a group, then write one next step you will test in your own VET context.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My next step: _____

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AI

Parts of this document were drafted with AI. Reviewed and approved by the VETdesign consortium.

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