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TITLE: VET AS A KEY FACTOR IN A MORE CREATIVE EUROPE

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If Europe is to retain its creative and innovative capacity, then vocational education and training must play a key role. Both service-oriented and productive industries need employees who are creative, e.g. capable of recognizing new opportunities and inventing new products and undertakings. Moreover, the rapid rise of technology in the global economy has highlighted the need for our human capacity to adapt to these technological changes and continue creating and developing.

In much research on creative learning, we are taught that for creativity to develop among young people, this requires that they are in a very active role as students. There is a reasonable weight of research evidence to support the importance of the following factors in supporting creative skills development in young people: flexible use of space and time; availability of appropriate materials; working outside the classroom/school; 'playful' or 'games-bases' approaches with a degree of learner autonomy; respectful relationships between teachers and learners; opportunities for peer collaboration; partnerships with outside agencies; awareness of learners' needs; and non-prescriptive planning. There is also evidence for impact of creative environments on student attainment and the development of teacher professionalism. Compared with earlier descriptions of VET, this sounds very similar to the characteristics often described here; e.g. productive learning involving a subject matter or a concrete task, consequential feedback, learning outside the class-room situation, peer collaboration and partnerships. This key-note gives an outline of how to retain these factors in VET, deemed vital in a more creative and innovative Europe.