



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme



# GAT CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS BOOKLET

PROJECT GATE

“GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN TEACHER'S AND PARENT'S TRAINING”



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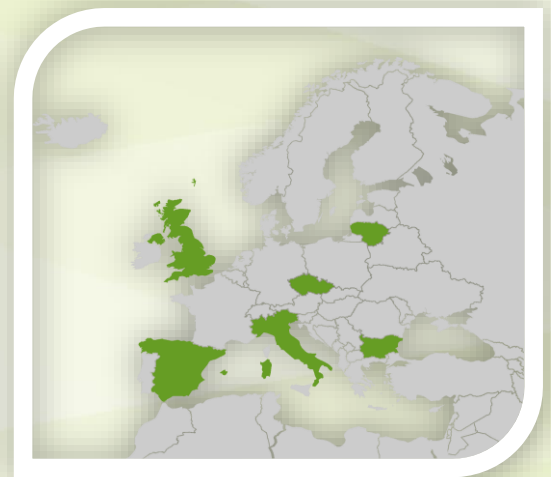
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## INTRODUCTION

The Project LEONARDO DA VINCI PARTNERSHIP GATE (Project number 2013-1-TR1-LEO04-47702) is, indeed, a **gate** provided to teachers, parents and all concerned actors in the educational community regarding the gifted and talented students, which special educational needs not always find an adequate answer and support.

This is a 2 year EU funded project that aims to support teachers and parents who have Gifted and Talented children (GAT children). It involves knowledge generation and sharing between 6 countries: Italy, Lithuania, Spain, United Kingdom, Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

The Programme entitled ***Europe 2020: A European Strategy for smart, green and inclusive growth***, adopted by the European Commission in 2010, includes, as one of its three basic priorities, the quest for smart growth through the development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation. From this point of view, the education of all citizens can be seen as a key resource through which to guarantee the future of the European Union. This includes improved detection, educational care and support for highly able children and young people.



**The GATE Project plays a part in this as it explores how teachers and parents might be supported to:**

- Further develop the cognitive (thinking), affective (emotional) and relational (social) skills and characteristics of GAT students.
- Enrich the existing educational systems with various activities and resources.
- Looking at the current situation in the Member States, there is much variation when it comes to detecting and providing educational care and support for particularly gifted students. It is also clear that there is a need to improve educational practices and activities aimed at this type of student – something that is influenced by the scarcity of targeted teacher training in this area.

## **Therefore in this project the aims are:**

- To further enable teachers and parents to identify children with high abilities and to support their learning in the most appropriate way.
- To support teachers and parents to further improve these children's intellectual capacities and their socio-emotional development.
- To support teachers and parent with materials, suggested activities and networking opportunities.
- To make connections with VET.
- The expected project results/ benefits:
- To broaden awareness amongst project partners, parents and teachers, with regard to the more general situation of the ways gifted and talented young children (young people) are identified and supported.
- To compare education systems and standards for GAT children and enrich each one with insights from the other participating countries.
- To suggest applications of what has been learned, through the mobilities, to vocational and education training contexts.

## **The *GAT CHILDREN'S EDUCATION APPLICATIONS* BOOKLET is divided into four parts:**

- Part 1 *The Context: Bringing together the worlds of learning and working (VET)*
- Part 2 *A digital GAT application: The Spanish case Study*
- Part 3 *Applications to VET: Plans and possibilities from all partners*
- Part 4 *Conclusions: General reflections*

Its main aim of the booklet is to put the GAT factor into the context of VET and to explore the potential of the GAT methodologies in the field of Vocational education and training. The texts introduces not only selected examples of GAT Children's Educational Applications but also a summary of possibilities of GAT methodologies and approaches in the field of VET in the participating countries.

## **PART 1 THE CONTEXT - BRINGING TOGETHER THE WORLDS OF LEARNING (SCHOOL) AND WORKING (VET)**

Young people's gifts and talents come in a variety of forms. However, very often, the focus of school and family with respect to identification and support of gifts and talents is limited to the traditional areas of GAT (sport, visual, performing, literary arts, cognition). As a result, there are many areas where it is not customary to expect and systematically look for gifted and talented students. Many of these respective areas overlap with particular fields of vocational education. It is not customary to look for talented chefs or technicians.

One possible area of giftedness of this kind is in the field of technology. Young people who are gifted in technology may not be identified as gifted by traditional identification methods. Like any other gift (or talent), it is important to recognize technologically gifted students in order that they may be most appropriately supported, by parents and teachers.

Gifted and talented (GAT) children are those, sensed by parents and formally identified by professionally qualified persons, who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school programme in order to realize their contribution to self and society.

This GATE Project has endeavoured, through a series of mobilities (partners visiting other partners and learning from them) to understand the challenges of supporting gifted and talented young people whilst at school and in the home. But it has also tried to link school with the world of work. More specifically with vocational educational training (VET).



## The Gifted

Gifted students are as heterogeneous as any group of students. However, there are some cognitive characteristics that have been identified in many, if not most, gifted students.

These traits can be summarized thus:

Gifted children typically demonstrate above average verbal ability. They are able to use word play, see connections, speak extemporaneously, and communicate their ideas.

Gifted students often appear sponge-like, soaking up and retaining large quantities of information, thereby demonstrating a vast array of knowledge.

Gifted children possess the ability to think quickly, processing information more rapidly than their same-age peers.

Gifted students typically demonstrate high levels of flexibility in thinking. They are able to develop various solutions to problems and readily see alternative perspectives.

Gifted students demonstrate originality and creativity in thought and product. These students are able to “think outside the box.” The gifted child’s ability to process large quantities of information, to think creatively, and to effectively communicate ideas enables him or her to process and work through the vast amount of information available on the Internet. Current technology, especially the Internet, provides the classroom teacher with a tool to challenge the gifted student’s cognitive abilities.

Because technologically gifted students usually experiment and often teach themselves how use new technologies, they show remarkable initiative. Not only are they interested in technology, but they have the initiative to satisfy and extend these interests.

## The Gifted Curriculum

Many teachers of gifted children are continually striving to provide a differentiated curriculum that offers complexity and depth for their students. Differentiation is far more than simply occupying gifted children with more of the same. It is a more individualistic approach with targeted activities that stretch and stimulate. In order to meet the needs of GAT children, teachers must modify the curriculum in the areas of content, process, and expectation of learning outcomes. One way a teacher of gifted children can meet the goal of providing a differentiated curriculum is by using technology in the classroom. The use of technology is providing GAT children with the opportunity to find more information, be more creative, and develop higher level thinking skills than ever before. Through the Internet and Online learning, gifted children now have access to unlimited information and ceilings that were once placed on their creativity have been removed. As GAT children learn to locate large amounts of information, analyze and synthesize that information, and create products based on that information, they can develop creativity and higher-level thinking skills in a way that is enjoyable for both the children and teachers. In addition, using technology motivates gifted children because it gives them ownership and control over their learning in terms of pace and content.

In general GAT children have the ability to transfer learning from one situation to another and the ability to use analytical reasoning to understand complicated material. Using technology, GAT children can collect, integrate, and present information by creating multimedia projects using software programs such as PowerPoint 2003, HyperStudio 4.0, Adobe Photoshop, iMovie 3, and iPhoto2. As we shall see in Part 2 of this booklet, the use of technology with GAT children also encourages the teacher to change and improve their teaching style and strategies.

## PART 2 A DIGITAL GAT APPLICATION: THE SPANISH CASE STUDY.

A mobility meeting was held in Spain between the Spanish and UK partners on June 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> 2015. Part of that mobility was held at IES Alquibla high school. The objective was to share knowledge about the use of digital learning and GAT students.

The central question that was discussed was, 'How can we build bridges between 16+ year old young people and vocational contexts and challenges?' Powerpoint and Prezi presentations were used to illustrate the work undertaken at IES Alquibla.

The full prezi can be found at:

[http://prezi.com/jlcj1csgl0d6/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/jlcj1csgl0d6/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)



One of the most significant developments at this school was the way teachers and GAT students interacted and learned in the classroom, through the use of IT. A full range of teaching strategies was employed including collaborative, discovery and project-based learning. GAT students had opportunities to create and manage their own personal learning environments (PLE's), make new and creative connections with relevant knowledge and skill portals and explore the positive uses of various kinds of digital communication.



Arguably one of the real innovations was the way teachers provided GAT students with opportunities for 'digital creation'. This is supportive of the GAT student traits listed in Part 1 and also very empowering. It is a classic way of inviting GAT students to push, stretch and express themselves. In order for teachers to be sure that these students were being provided with appropriate learning challenges, teachers evaluated this approach. The results can be found in the detailed prezi presentation. Overwhelmingly the students found this way of being challenged to learn, was stimulating and enjoyable. Some of the major learning gains were in improving student's:

- **Creativity**
- **Attention span**
- **Motivation**
- **Connectivity**
- **IT competence**
- **Communication**

## **PART 3 APPLICATIONS TO VET: PLANS AND POSSIBILITIES FROM ALL PARTNERS.**

In order to further develop, towards the end of the GATE Project, partner thoughts about the project's application to VET, a number of mobilities, formally approved by the UK national Agency, were used to try to capture this. These were 2 day intensive mobilities to Spain, Lithuania, Italy and Czech Republic during May-June, 2015. These mobilities involved meetings of the UK co-ordinator & teachers with multiple agencies and schools.

Given the calendar of project meetings, additional mobility to Bulgaria was not necessary. The related problems were discussed as a part of the project meeting in Stara Zagora. Further thoughts were exchanged on the Bulgarian case via e-mail. Moreover, the

The essence of each mobility is summarised below.

### **BULGARIA**

The Bulgarian GATE-project team analysed the training results, the results of partners' project meetings, visits in schools with gifted children and the meeting with teachers with high achievements in working with gifted and talented children. The team decided to continue to work on the same area. A new research project in Trakia University was developed - "Methodology for Talents and Strengths Development" (April 2015 – April 2016). The new project's aim is to develop methods to detect and develop talents and strengths of educators, students, teachers, children and school students. It is expected that the application of the methodology for the development of talents and strengths will lead to the development of competencies to identify and develop the talents and strengths of current and future teachers and students with whom they work. A new elective course for future teachers will be developed. This course will help them to work successfully with gifted and talented students in the vocational schools. An in-service teacher-training for teachers from vocational schools will be offered.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

A wide-ranging discussion with the two co-ordinators from the Czech partnership, about possible applications of GATE project knowledges, skills and values to VET contexts, was held in Praha. (see photo 1 below). The meeting was held at EDUCentrum.



### **Five key issues emerged in the Czech Republic. They were:**

- There is a real need to think through exactly how GAT children are enabled to successfully transition from school into the labour market. It was suggested that even more could be done in the cognate fields of career and education counselling and vocational guidance in the Czech Republic. The Outputs from this GATE project might usefully be a catalyst for this.
- There is an opportunity to more actively link the identification of GAT students in school with a labour market perspective and the labour market itself. This might involve improvements in school practices and some additional professional development. Additionally the nature and extent to which employers themselves and real world workplace scenarios are into the school curriculum for GAT students to engage with, might be reflected upon.
- The notion of individual education plans might be reviewed so that gifts and talents that have been identified can be appropriately supported by adults and children able to flourish.
- Conversations that develop a broader perspective on giftedness might be useful. Conversations that not only focus on the cognitive (how bright the child is) but also on the socio-emotional (how well the child relates to others, is resilient, can work in a team, handles disappointment and success etc).
- There is an opportunity for vocational schools and their curricular to more explicitly work with identifying children's strengths and creating learning spaces for them to use them and also to develop new strengths.

## LITHUANIA

This mobility was characterised by four different but complementary meetings about GATE and its possible applications to VET (see photos 2-5 below). GATE children and cognitive (mental) characteristics are often dominant conversations. So the first meeting was with Mrs. Janina Urnikienė, Head of Šiauliai Pedagogical Psychological Service ([link to their website for info about the visit: http://www.siauliuppt.lt/129-sveciai-is-didziosios-britanijos](http://www.siauliuppt.lt/129-sveciai-is-didziosios-britanijos)) The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was at the National Regional Development Agency with the coordinators of the Lithuanian partner, additionally the Head of Psychological and career counselling department, a career counsellor, and a member of the "Active parents' forum" for example. The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting was with teachers and parents at the Public Institution Kuršėnai Polytechnics' School (vocational training school). Participants in teachers and parents trainings with project tools. Finally the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting was with the Director general and Senior Officer from the Šiauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts.





**Five key issues emerged in Lithuania. They were:**

- An increasing awareness and need to have even more opportunities for sustained, purposeful and useful conversations about the whole nature of *giftedness* and *talentedness*, from national through to local levels. Especially how such conversations might link with ‘Europe 2020: A European Strategy for smart, green and inclusive growth’, adopted by the European Commission in 2010.
- How the Outputs from this GATE project might usefully support further developments in career planning. At the heart of this intention is a generic question that is relevant to identifying gifts and talents namely, ‘What are you good at?’ Interestingly an additional question emerged which was, ‘Tell me (as an adult) what I can do to help you?’
- A need to have realistic and practical conversations with GAT children about opportunities for them within the labour market. For example what can schools and parents do if a GAT child wishes to have a leadership role in the workplace?
- Even more support for teachers around issues of ‘identification’. Not just ‘is this child gifted or talented, in general?’ But more subtly for example, ‘is this child gifted in car mechanics or food preparation and cooking, or bricklaying? In other words in vocational areas and not only in science, languages, maths and so on. For example a child may be exceptionally talented in solving mechanical ‘problems’. So how would this be identified? This was linked to the whole status of vocational education.
- How can two critical employability skills, arguably, creativity and entrepreneurship, be identified in schools and how can teachers be prepared and skilled to identify and develop these skills? This was linked with the more general desire to enable teachers (and parents) to ‘work with’ GAT children and to develop their knowledge and skills.



## ITALY

This mobility was characterised a long and rich meeting with 9 GATE project participants in Verona, about GATE and its possibly applications to VET (see Photo 6 below).



### Five key issues emerged. They were:

- A **greater appreciation** of the meaning of ‘application’ to VET was needed. If application also meant ‘transfer, then the GATE project could optimistically think about transferring activities to VET, learning processes (e.g. discovery), teaching strategies (eg. group work), useful GAT student resources and also supportive classroom climates and school cultures. Supportive of excellence.
- That **identifying GAT** children and particularly in a VET context, need to be ‘framed’ as a problem! For example teachers having a problem with their identification and teaching them. Children having a problem in ‘being seen as different’ or with how they coped with failure. The ‘feeling different’ from peers phenomenon was challenged. The group were keen to stress that adults should stress feeling and being different as a strength, about something to be proud of.
- That teachers are parents needed to keep an eye on the **expectations of the labour market**. Particularly the way in school children can find being different as a ‘problem’. Whereas in the world of work, being different (from others) can be a strength! Conversations about the socialization of GAT children, especially the social and moral, and not just the cognitive, were valued.
- More **support for parents** in helping their GAT child make a positive transition into the world of work was needed. Teacher-parent meetings were seen to be a crucial way of joint detection of a gift and/or talent.
- More **good examples** of how to teach, monitor and evaluate GAT student performance in VET settings was felt to be useful.

## SPAIN

A combination of visits to schools and teacher meetings characterised this mobility (see photo 7 below). With regard to the latter, Spanish staff in photo 7 articulated possibilities for application through both a powerpoint (uploaded on the GATE project website) and prezi presentations (see Part 2 for the latter).



### **Five key issues emerged in Spain. They were:**

- What were the best ways to build a bridge between 16+ year olds and vocational contexts? One major area was seen to be that of teacher training (education) and especially around issues of 'methodology' (teaching styles and strategies) that allow GAT children to develop and use their skills. Some of the key elements that required thought and that were supportive of the question were seen to be:
  - A better understanding of the concept of higher capacities (GAT)
  - Exceptional profiles.
  - Educational responses: School General Actions, Ordinary and specific measures.
  - Human resources: teacher-student relationship.
  - Material resources: ITC and curriculum materials
  - Learning strategies: PBL (Project & problem based learning), research, workshops, collaborative work.
  - Creating different spaces in the classroom
  - Flexible distribution of time, coordinated with other teachers.
  - Achievements in personal and cognitive development.
  - Emotional intelligence.
  - Development of social skills focused on the family.
  - Proposals for creative digital education.

- The value of meetings with parents in order to discuss concerns and opportunities. For example concerns about the ‘labelling’ of children, and about making friends.
- The importance of sharing good practices with other schools, with the University of Murcia and the education authorities, especially on an annual basis. Murcia was seen to be a very good example of working with GAT students, so opportunities for knowledge and skills sharing were important.
- Work placements for students were valued and especially when expectations were clear and there was follow-up, good de-briefing and new horizons sketched out.
- The value of engaging GAT students with digital education was both creative and forward looking (see Part 2). This had three obvious benefits. (a) It was seen to be relevant and motivating for GAT students (b) It enabled teachers to think about new and better ways to organize learning in their classrooms. (c) It was seen to be supportive of the general VET value position of equipping young people to play a positive role in the world of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **UNITED KINGDOM: A Summary of GATE into VET issues**

After the UK team had completed the mobilities described above, a 6 point summary was written and reported at the final GATE meeting in London, July 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Further clarification needed about the potentials and challenges of the application of knowledges, skills and attitudes, shown by GAT children, from schools to VET contexts.

Even more practical work needs to be undertaken to help busy professionals and parents to identify gifts and talents in young people.

More education and training for teachers and better support for parents around the emotional aspects of being a GAT child. This support needs to be seamless from the home, to school and then into VET.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on developing an even more positive view of what it is to be a GAT child and therefore how best young people like this can be supported in schools and in VET learning contexts. From GAT as a problem to GAT being a positive challenge.

Attention needs to be made to the best ways parents knowledge and school teacher insights and curriculums can be transferred into VET contexts.

Parent and professional conversations are needed to address the apparent contradiction between: (a) not being different but learning differently in school and at home and (b) needing to be different to stand out in the world of work.

## **PART 4 CONCLUSIONS: SIX GENERAL REFLECTIONS**

From partner experiences in this GATE project we can suggest five ways that the idea, processes and practices of GAT application to VET might be (further) developed.

- VET and strategies that enable GAT students to learn at an accelerated pace to address their rapid rate of learning.
  - VET and processes that enable GAT students to develop higher order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, critical thinking skills, in order to address their capacity for complex thought.
  - VET and passion to allow GAT students to pursue areas of interest.
  - VET and innovative learning opportunities/challenges as GAT students have the ability to think of multiple ways to represent what they know.
  - VET and an emotionally intelligent curriculum that enables GAT students to development of positive peer relationships.
- 
- VET that promotes the positive and utilizes the strengths of GAT students, their teachers and parents.



## PROJECT PARTNERS

### ASOCIACION INTERCULTURAL LA GALERIA (ES)

- Address: Calle Cuartel 1, Bajo. 30151 Santo Angel, Murcia, Spain
- Website: [www.galeriaintercultural.org](http://www.galeriaintercultural.org)
- Contact person: Andrés Abad ([eu.intergaleria@gmail.com](mailto:eu.intergaleria@gmail.com))
- About the organization: A.I. LA GALERIA is a regional NGO based in Murcia Region. It works in this region since 1994, date of foundation, initially as Regional School for Leisure and Outdoor Time Activities, recognized by the Murcia Regional Government, accreditation and qualifying Outdoor and Time Activities Camp Directors and Trainers. During last years, A.I. LA GALERIA has developed a career in the fields of culture, education, employment, gender and non-formal learning training activities.
- Partner support organisations: IES ALQUIBLA, Murcia - Spain (Secondary School), CEIP REINO DE MURCIA, Murcia - Spain (Primary School) and Pedagogical Cabinet GATEA, Murcia - Spain



### EDUcentrum o. s. (CZ)

- Address: **K Lomu 1056, 252 29 Dobřichovice, Czech Republic**
- Website: [www.educentrum-os.cz](http://www.educentrum-os.cz)
- Contact person: Zdenka Havrlikova ([info@educentrum-os.cz](mailto:info@educentrum-os.cz))
- About the organization: EDUcentrum is a non-profit organization, whose aim is to support unconventional and innovative forms of education, foster motivation for lifelong learning, increase adaptability and promote active attitude towards further education across various age, social and professional target groups. Hence the main activities comprise implementation of innovative methodologies, use of ICT in education, creation of tools for distance and blended learning, creation of materials for trainers and learners, creation of didactic tools to facilitate application of new methodologies or creation of testing and comparative tools for progress evaluation.
- **Partner support organisations:** Vzdělávací centrum Turnov, o.p.s.



## **IC VR3 San Bernardino – Borgo Trento – VERONA (IT)**

- Address: Via G. Camozzini, 5 – 37126 Verona, Italy
- Website: [www.comprendivo03vr.gov.it](http://www.comprendivo03vr.gov.it)
- Contact person: Anna Berti ([vric89200e@istruzione.it](mailto:vric89200e@istruzione.it))
- About the organization: The ISTITUTO COMPRENSIVO STATALE 3



“SAN BERNARDINO – BORGO TRENTO” is a state educational institution, composed of a kindergarten school, three primary schools, a middle school and a permanent territorial center for adult education. It is a place of training and education by means of study, acquisition of knowledge and the development of critical consciousness. The school is a community based on dialogue, research and social experiences, guided by democratic values and aimed at the development of the person in all its dimensions.

## **Reflective Learning – International (UK)**

- Address: Overton Business Centre, Maisemore, Gloucestershire, GL2 8HR, England
- Website: [www.rl-international.com](http://www.rl-international.com)
- Contact person: Professor (dr) Tony Ghaye ([tony.ghaye@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.ghaye@btinternet.com))
- About the organization: REFLECTIVE LEARNING-INTERNATIONAL (RL-INT) is a social enterprise and currently a global leader in building positivity and utilizing strengths that lead to high performance and positive social impact. Its work is collaborative, interventionist and appreciative. RL-INT is a multi- Disciplinary group of highly qualified researchers and work-based practitioners who draw on the disciplines of positive, cognitive and organisational psychology, health, international development, child protection and human rights. It runs practical workshops and seminars for professional practitioners, organises international conferences, participates in funded EU projects and runs the prestigious international peer reviewed journal called, ‘Reflective Practice’.
- **Partner support organisations:** Hartpury College, Sweet Dreams, University of Gloucestershire



### Trakia University – Stara Zagora (BG)

- Address: Student Campus, Stara Zagora 6000, Bulgaria
- Website: [www.uni-sz.bg](http://www.uni-sz.bg)
- Contact person: Elena Lavrentsova (elenavit@abv.bg)
- About the organization: Trakia University – Stara Zagora, Bulgaria is an autonomous state institution. It was founded in 1995. The structure of the university includes 6 faculties - Faculty of Agriculture; Faculty of Veterinary Medicine; Faculty of Medicine; Faculty of Education, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Technics and Technologies, Medical College and Department for Information and In-Service Teacher Training (DITT). The University performs education along programmes with four educational and qualification degrees – professional bachelor, bachelor, master and PhD, as well as programmes for qualification and post-graduation specialization in the system of lifelong education.



### Public institution National Region's Development Agency (LT)

- Address: Vilniaus str. 88, Siauliai, 76285, Lithuania
- Website: [www.nrda.lt](http://www.nrda.lt)
- Contact person: Mrs. Beatričė Poškuvienė (nrda@nrda.lt)
- About the organisation: National Regions Development Agency, operating since 1999, has extensive experience in formulating regional development policies, through various interventions. The Agency gives priority to regional development, strategic management and promotion of small and medium-sized Lithuanian business sustainable development problem region development problem and employment. Since 2001 agency has been successfully carrying out its activities and has implemented and participated in about 50 national and international projects in various areas: social, educational, business development, etc.



**Public Institution  
National Region's Development Agency**

**Partner support organisations:** Public institution KURŠĖNAI POLYTECHNICS SCHOOL (vocational training school), ŠIAULIAI VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SCHOOL