



The hidden heroes of education

Educational Support Professionals @ Work

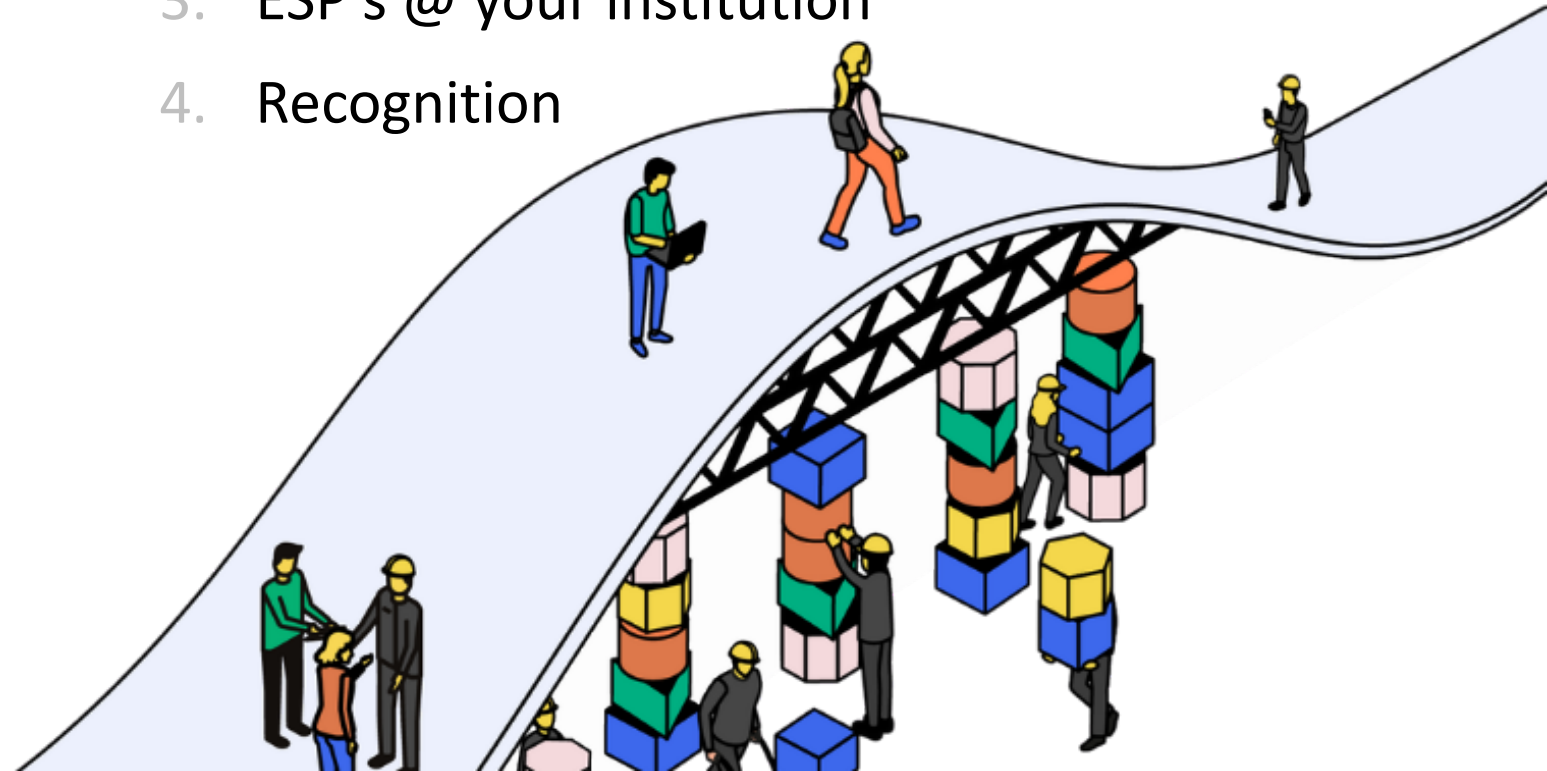
How they empower teachers in the digital transformation

Janiek Bartelds and Milou Timmer

June 18th 2026

Welcome

1. Introduction
2. Competency Framework Structure
3. ESP's @ your institution
4. Recognition



Milou Timmer

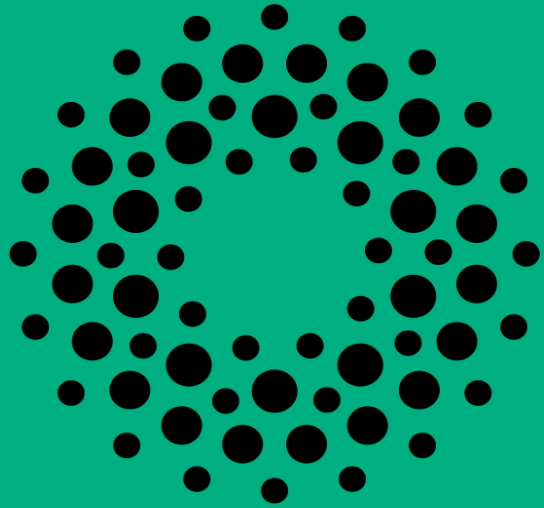
- Researcher @ Npuls
- Teacher and ESP @ Avans University of Applied Science



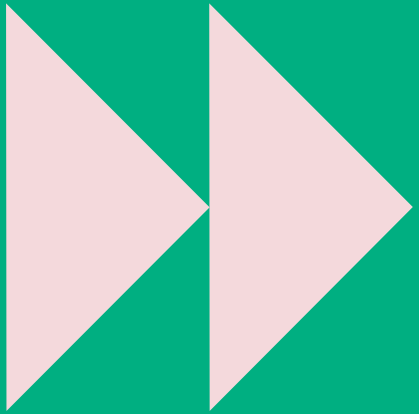
Janiek Bartelds

- Researcher @ Npuls
- Educational consultant @ J O A





Npuls



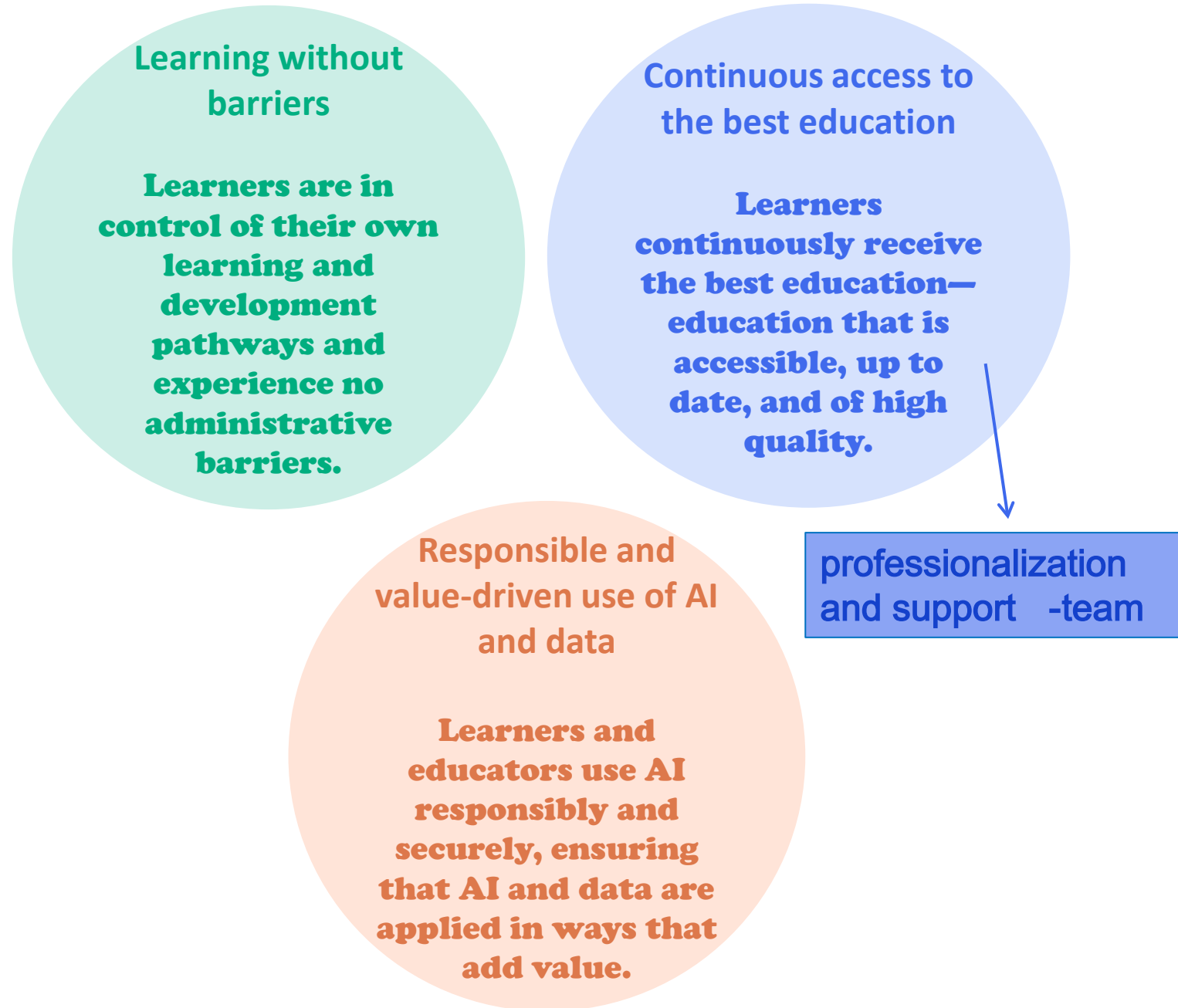
Moving
education.

About Npuls.

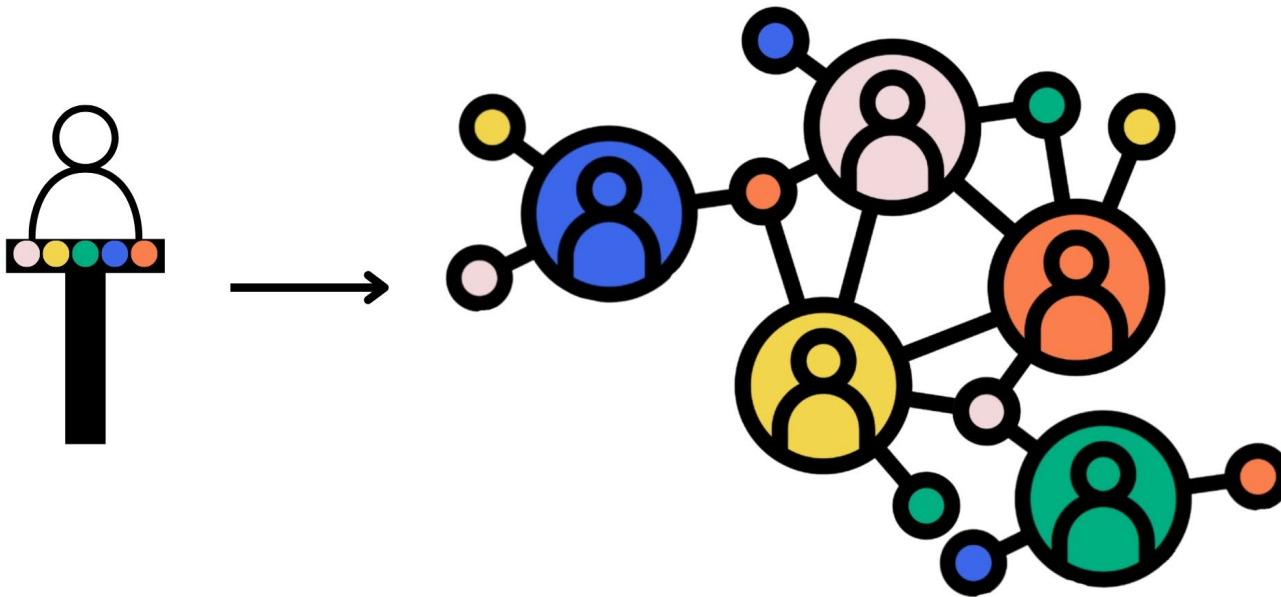
In the National Growth Fund program Npuls, all public vocational schools (mbo), universities of applied sciences, and research universities are working on the transformation of education. Together, we are building an education sector in which learners can study without barriers and continuously receive the best possible education. In this way, continuing education contributes to a resilient society, broad prosperity, and a strong economy.

Two commitments of Npuls

And also...



Competency Framework Structure



- How to organize teaching support professionally and durable for the long term?



- What do ESP's* do? What are their knowledge, skills and attitude?



- Who are the ESP's? Where are they positioned?

Definition: Educational Support Professionals

(ESPs)

- Specific group within the broader educational support processes (like scheduling, logistics and administration)
- Work within the third space
- Focus on guiding and supporting teachers in design, improving and innovating their teacher practice, including the use of technology
- Operational
- Strategic
- Tactical

Competency areas for ESP's



Enhancing educational
quality through didactics



Supporting professional
development



Providing strategic and
practical advice



Guiding educational
innovation

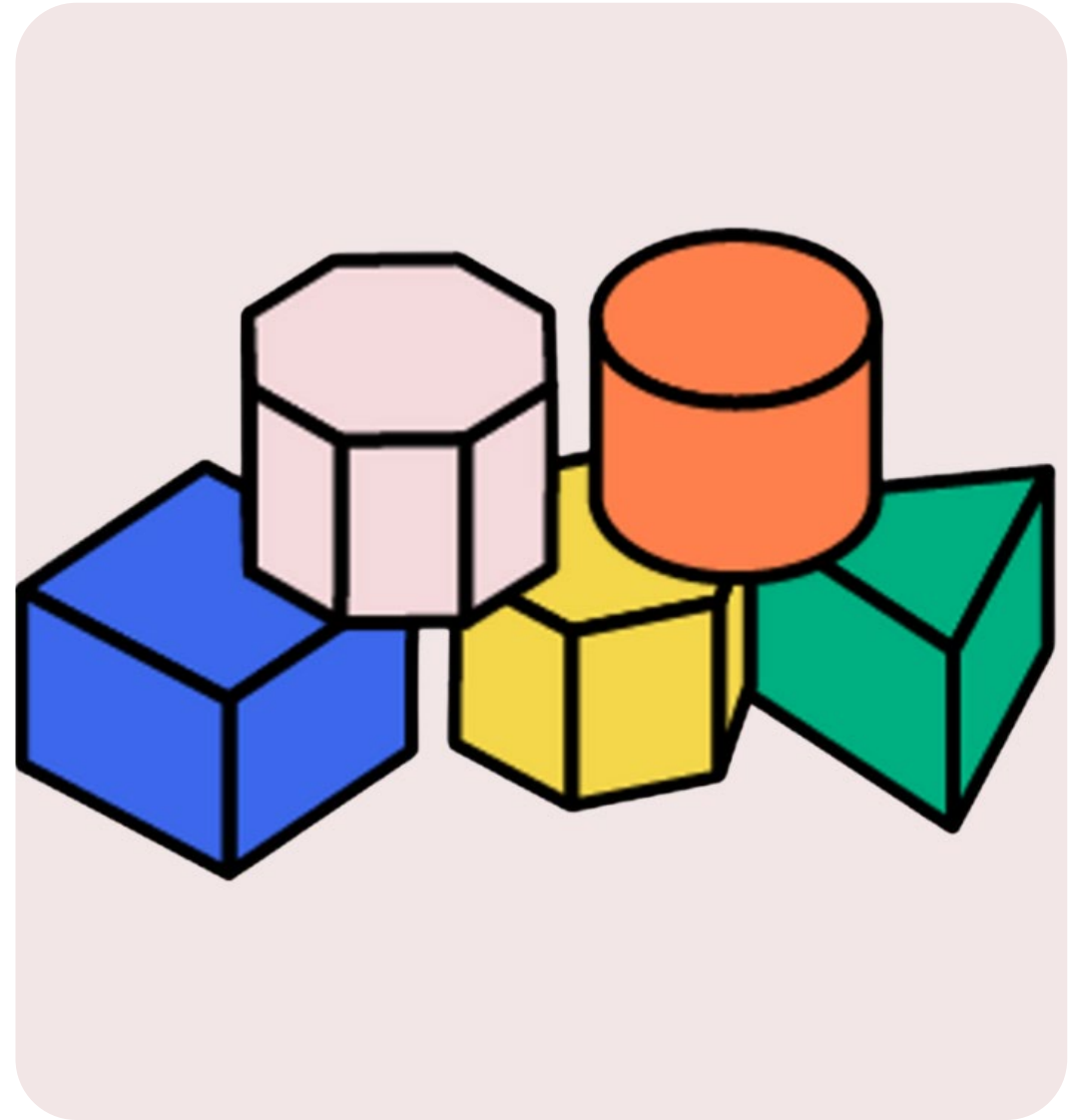


Building connections
across boundaries

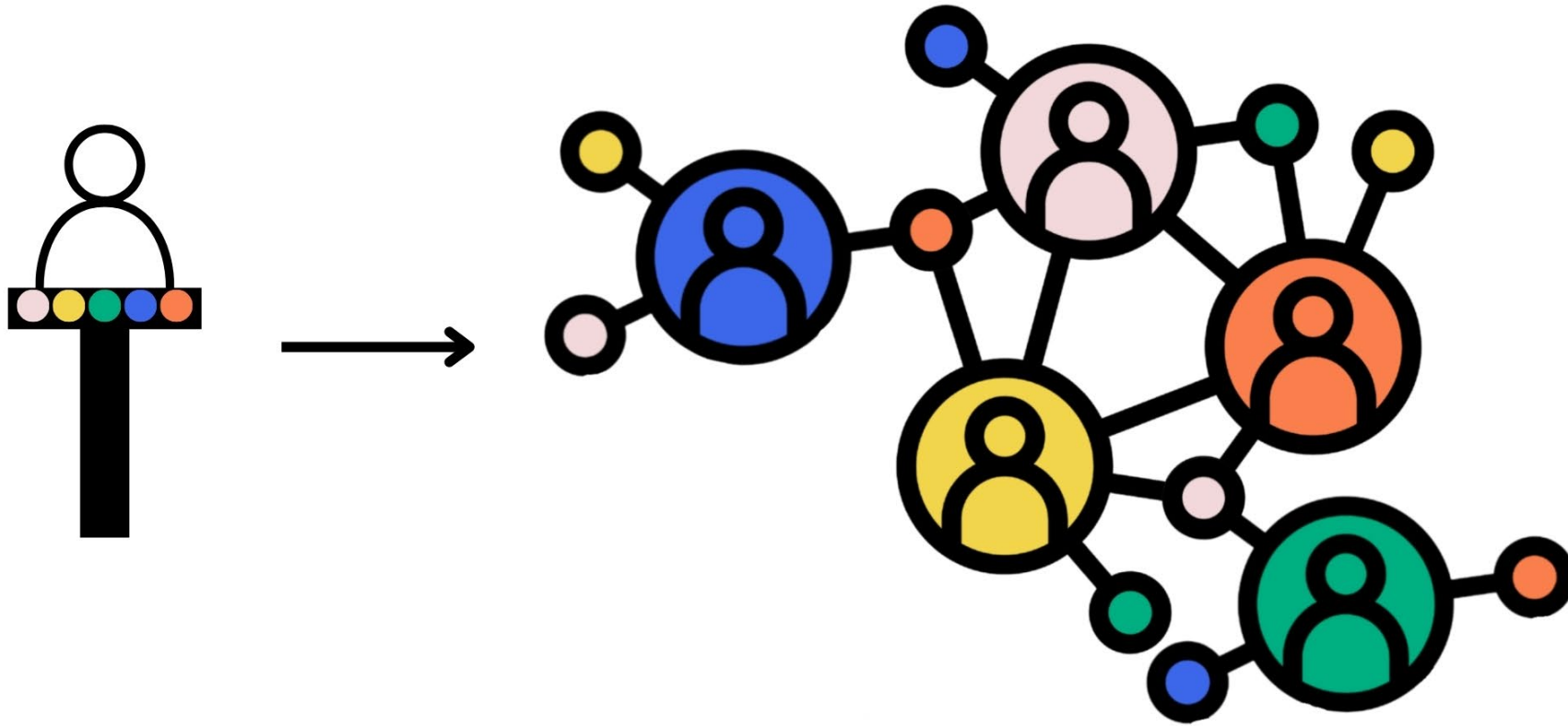


Competencies

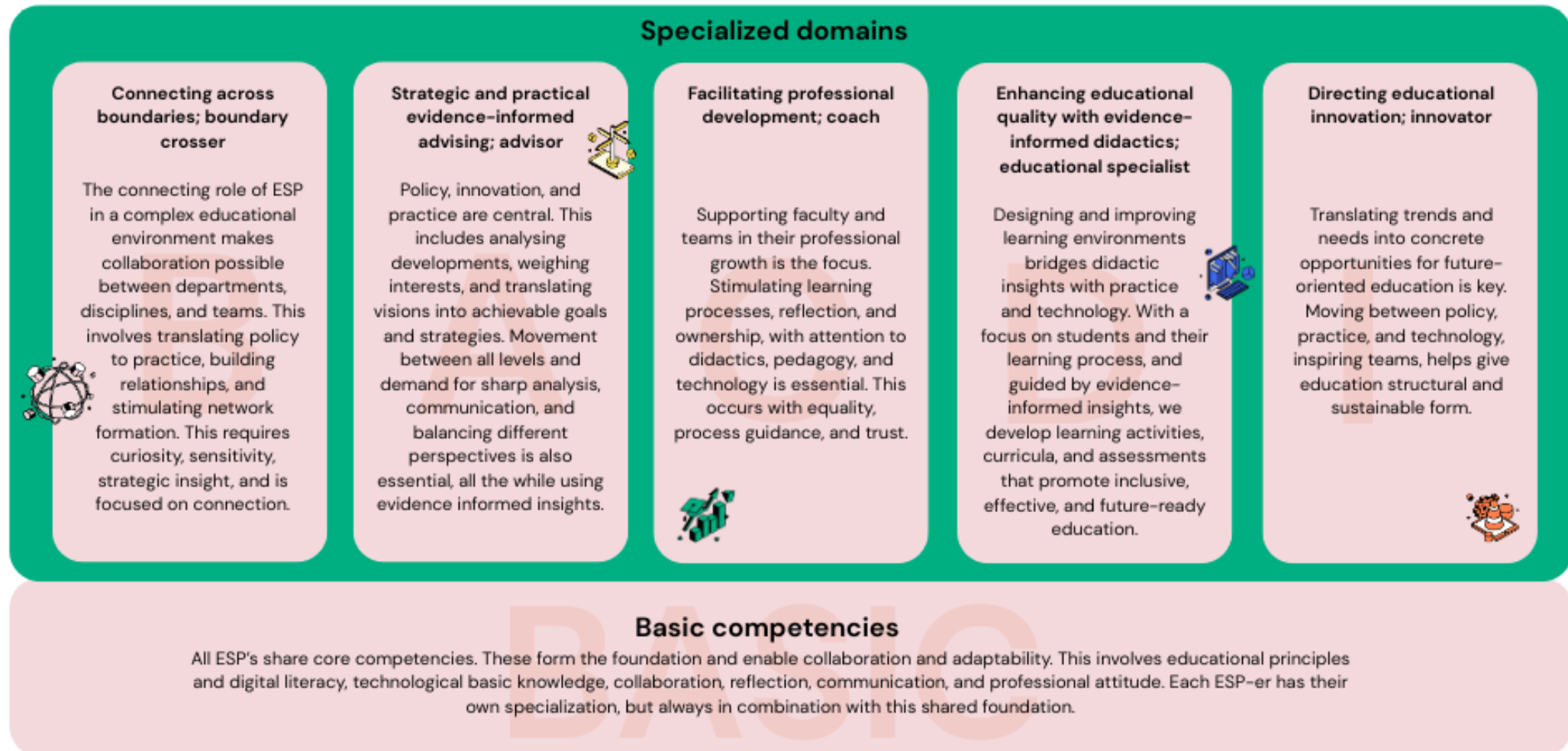
- Building blocks as a foundation
 - Make ESP's recognisable
 - Guide targeted development
 - Deploy ESP's strategically
 - Align with institutional ambitions
-
- 5 competency areas + a foundation layer



From individual to network



Competency Framework Structure



Competency Framework Structure – selfscan

	Connecting across boundaries; boundary crosser	Strategic and practical advising; advisor	Facilitating professional development; coach	Enhancing educational quality with evidence-informed didactics; educational specialist	Directing educational innovation; innovator
Knowledge	- Understands evidence-informed educational innovation, technological developments, and the contextual opportunities and constraints associated with them. - Is familiar with digital collaboration tools and how they can be effectively employed for knowledge sharing and network formation.	- Possesses knowledge of educational innovation, including relevant ICT applications and digital trends. - Has knowledge of change models, implementation strategies, and change processes.	- Is familiar with didactic principles and pedagogical models. - Possesses knowledge of professional development and change processes.	- Possesses up-to-date knowledge of educational principles, learning psychology, and didactic methods, as well as expertise in blended and digital instructional design. - Is familiar with relevant sources, data repositories (such as learning data, evaluation, and practice information), and good practices for evidence-informed educational improvement.	- Is familiar with ed-tech trends, digital transformation, and their implications for education. - Understands the strategic goals and public values (such as inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability) in relation to societal education challenges and educational innovation.
Skills	- Works effectively together and communicates in interdisciplinary and intercultural environments. - Initiates and facilitates networks, learning communities, and collaborations between teams or institutions with diverse backgrounds.	- Advices and guides educational innovation, employing technology as an amplifying tool. - Analyzes stakeholders, their interests, and dynamics; identifies conflicts and power fields.	- Guides & coaches teachers and other education professionals toward the sustained integration of educational applications in their practice, supporting reflective inquiry, the formulation of learning objectives, and the enhancement of pedagogical action. - Applies coaching conversation techniques effectively; recognizes the boundaries between coaching, advising, and instructing.	- Designs learning activities, curricula, and professional development pathways, and evaluates them using various types of knowledge sources. - Supports education professionals in implementing evidence informed improvements.	- Develops scenarios and visions for future oriented education, drawing on design thinking approaches, practical insights, scientific knowledge, and accounting for public values. - Initiates and advises on innovation projects that integrate policy, practice, and technology, while leveraging digital tools and data to support and monitor the innovation processes.
Attitude	- Commits to connecting people, ideas, and worlds with one another. - Remains flexible and resilient, even in the face of tension or uncertainty.	- Holds a proactive, solution-oriented, and results-focused attitude. - Is open to different advising styles and adapts them to the situation.	- Is accessible, motivating, and supportive. - Stimulates growth and development; is inquisitive, reflective, and learning-oriented, including in one's own actions.	- Is curious, critical, and quality-focused when making didactic decisions. - Is driven to sustainably strengthen instructional design and implementation.	- Demonstrates courage, entrepreneurship, and strategic thinking. - Works collaboratively and involves stakeholders in innovation processes.

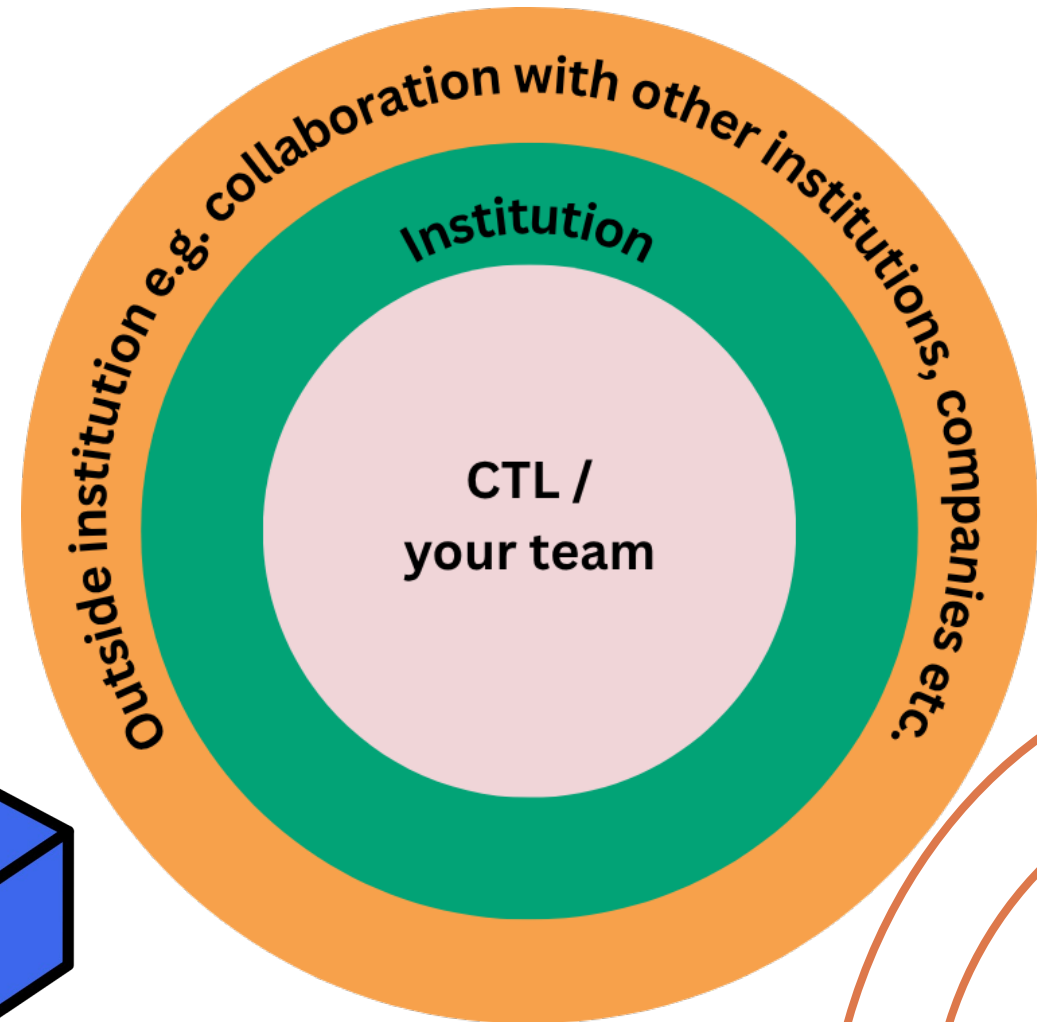
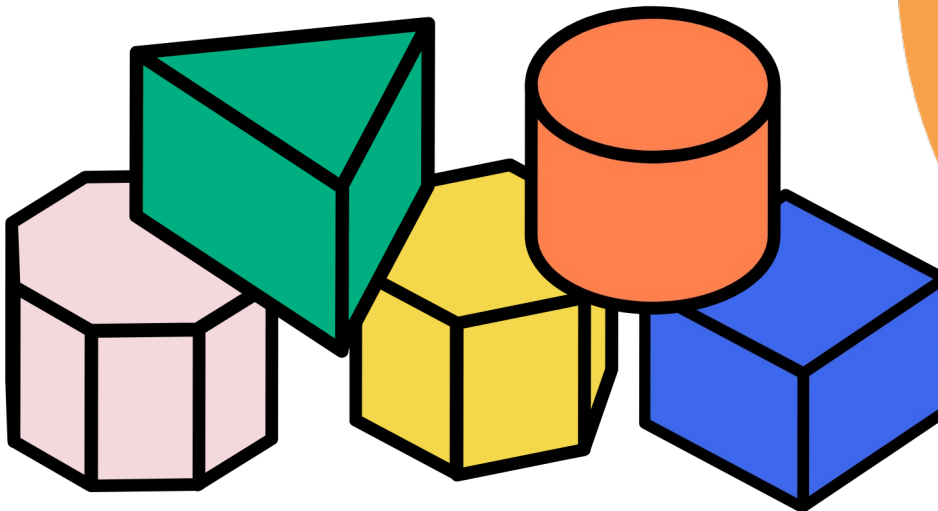
- Step 1 – Highlight your talents**
 Select up to 10 competencies in the table that best describe you.
- Step 2 – Spot your power**
 The competencies with the most selections show where your strengths are.
- Step 3 – See your growth potential**
 Competencies with few or no selections show where you can grow and develop even further.



Paper or our online prototype

ESP's @ your institution

- which competencies are already present
- where strong combinations exist
- where there may still be gaps or opportunities for further development.



ESP's @ your institution

Step 1 – Place your people

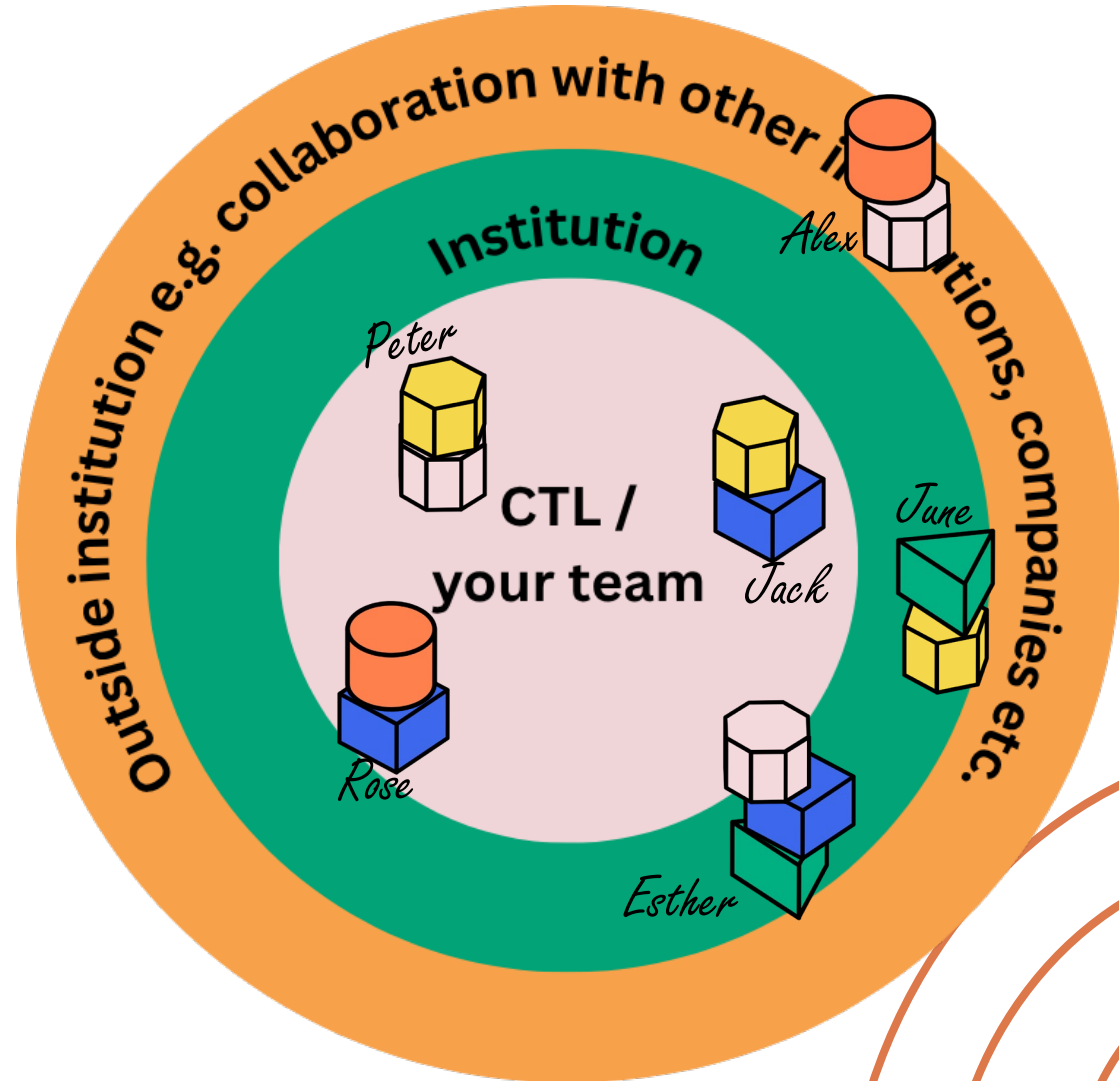
Take yourself, your team members and colleagues you work with regularly and place them in the circle that fits best: team, institution, or external partner.

Step 2 – Link people to competencies

For each competency area in the profile, identify which people or roles contribute to it. Place a sticker for every competency that each person contributes to.

Step 3 – Spot your “multi -talents ”

Look for people with several stickers across different competency areas. These “stack” multiple competencies and cover a larger part of the profile.



Exchange

1. Who is positioned where and what competencies does this person have?
2. What are you missing in the bigger picture?
3. How can the full potential of this network be realised?



Exchange & Share

Share with us:

1. What do you need in terms of professional development to maximise their impact for teachers, institutions and learners?
(time, insight into needs and opportunities/offerings, compensation, policy, HR, etc.)
2. Do you have an example of professional development opportunities?
3. What is your ideal vision of professional development for ESP's?

Exchange & Share

Share with us (in Wooclap):

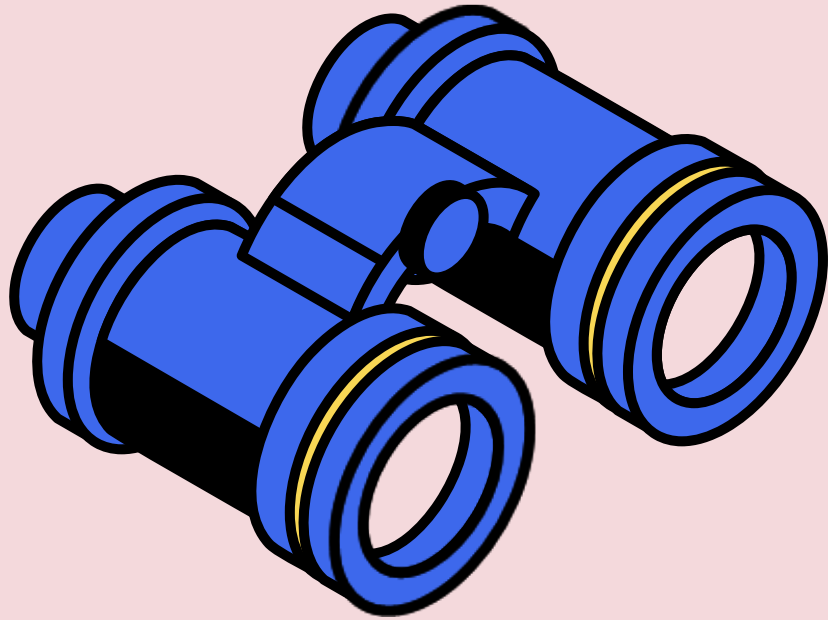
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Go to wooclap.com

Event code

TXAMHTI





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Recap

- Do you have any additional suggestions to make these hidden heroes even more visible?
- How does this profile help you gain insight into your own competencies and those of your team?
- What are you going to do tomorrow? What will you do next week? What will you do in a month?



Thank you for
participating!

Interested?

Please scan this QR ->



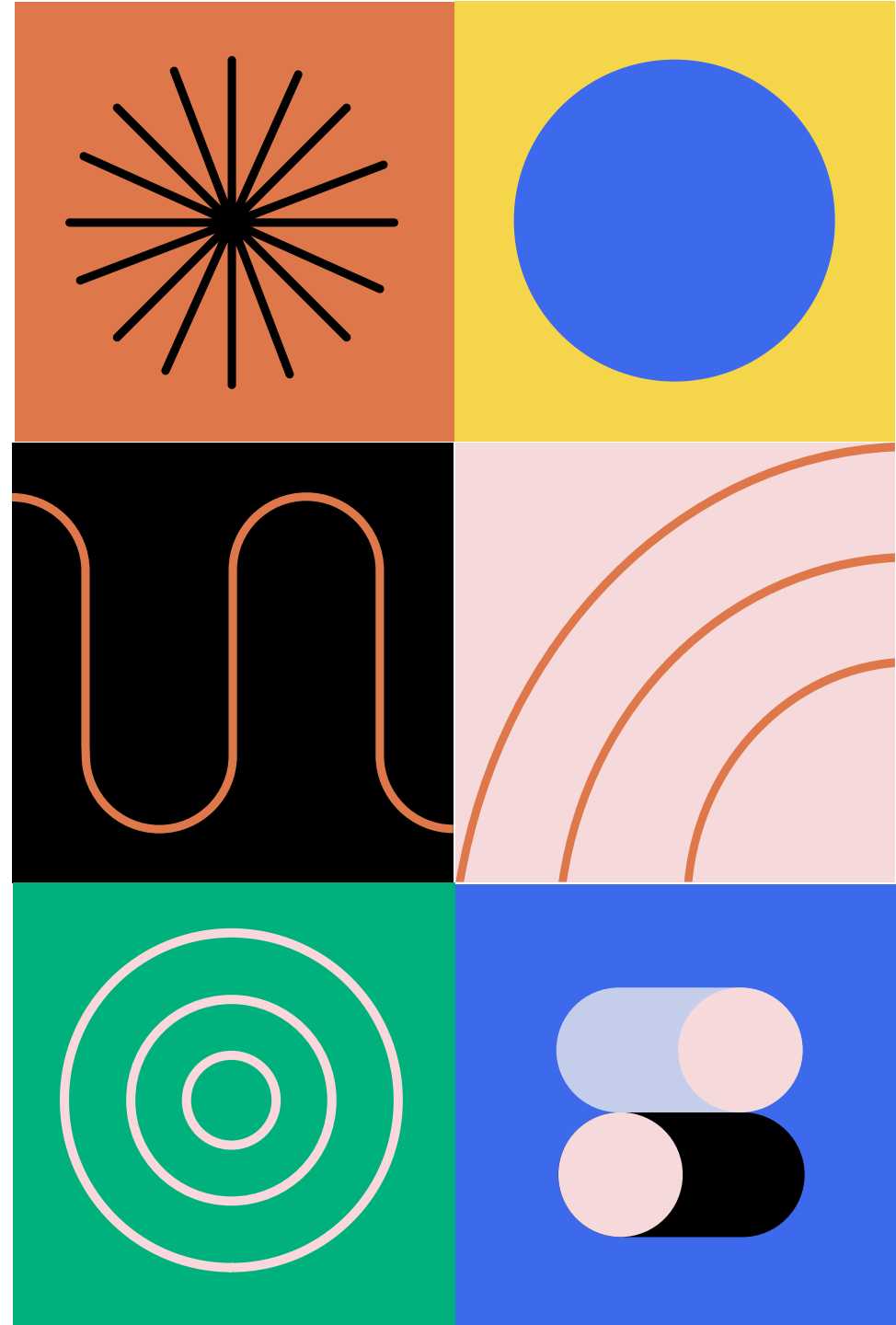
Or contact us:

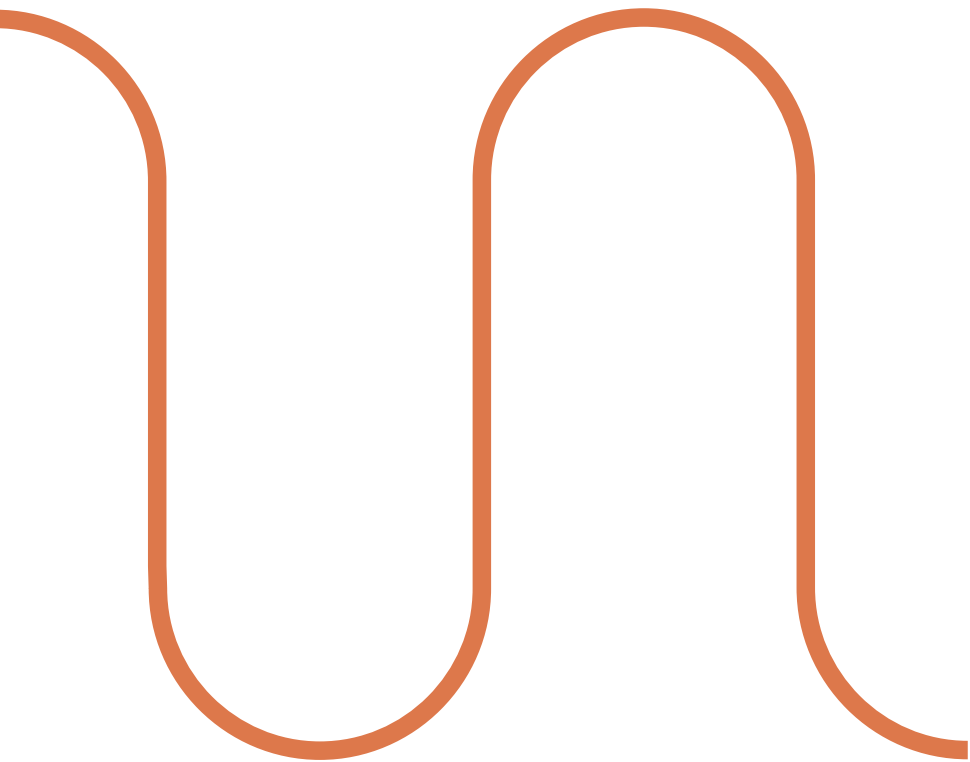
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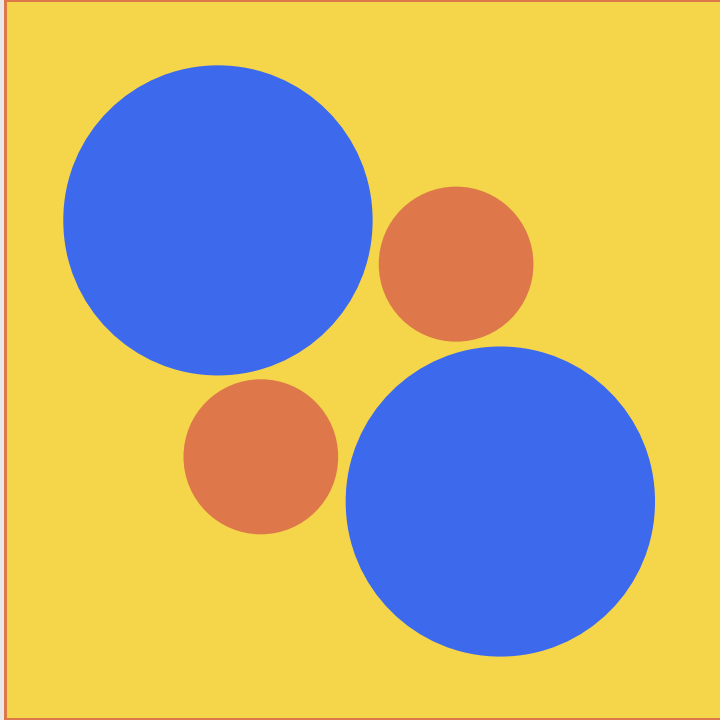
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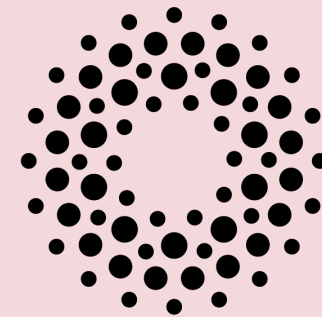


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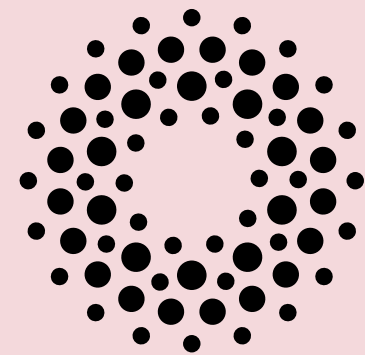








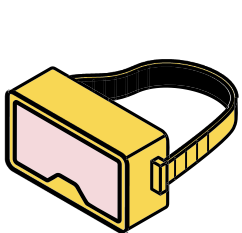
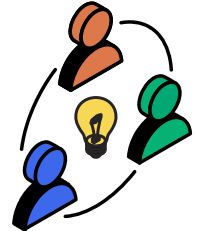
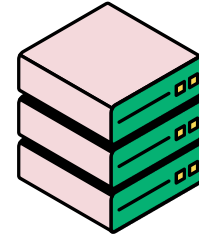
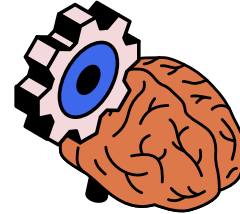
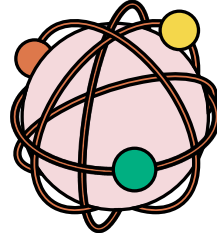
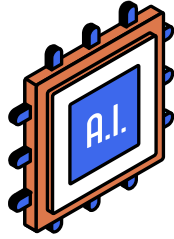
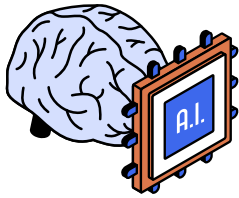
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Illustrations



Illustraties 2

