# Presentation Abstract

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EATA, ITAA

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## Exploring Skills in Transactional Analysis: Preliminary Research Findings

**Abstract**
This oral presentation introduces an ongoing research project that addresses the question: What skills do TA trainers teach across different fields, and are there skills that can be considered specifically TA? Six researchers from three TA fields (psychotherapy, education, and organization) are collaborating on a study that aims to explore these questions. The book Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy (Berne, 1961) distinguishes between theory and practice, suggesting that TA is intended for already qualified practitioners in other fields. Since then, TA has significantly expanded as a theoretical framework and has recently developed an evidence-based practice treatment manual (Vos & van Rijn, 2025), outlining five competencies. Competencies can be defined as the ability to integrate and apply contextually-appropriate knowledge, skills, and psychosocial factors (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, values, and motivations) to consistently perform successfully within a specified domain (Vitello, Greatorex, Shaw, 2021). And even though TA is very competence-based focused, the question of what are the concrete skills TA trainers teach practitioners across different fields remains insufficiently clarified. As a result, a gap persists between what, why, and how we apply TA. In the first phase of this research, we conducted a literature review. The word "skills" appears six times in the Transactional Analysis Bulletin (TAB) (1962–1970), there are mentions of skills in ITAA Handbook (ITAA IBoC, 2022/2024) as well as two articles in the Transactional Analysis Journal are on the subject of the skill (çam & Akkoyun, 2001; Douglas, 2018), we did not find a clear definition of what skills in TA are. An additional problem is that skills are often conflated with other terms such as "tool(s)", "technique(s)", "operation(s)", "intervention(s)", and "competence(ies)", as well as the broader term "method". Based on practice-based experience, we therefore developed a preliminary framework of TA-relevant skills through a structured reflective process. This framework

will be further explored and refined through focus groups as part of the next phase of this qualitative research. In this presentation, we will share insights from the literature review, highlight challenges related to inconsistent terminology and conceptual ambiguity, and introduce the initial skills framework.

**Professional Picture**

