



Distance Educator

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Distance Educator- Training Educators of Adults in the digital age.
IO1 The DigiEduAdult curriculum for VET providers
O1.A1. Current status review report



DISTANCE EDUCATOR TRAINING EDUCATORS OF ADULTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

O1 **THE DigiEduAdult CURRICULUM FOR VET PROVIDERS**

O1.A1. **CURRENT STATUS REVIEW REPORT**

2022

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IO1 The DigiEduAdult curriculum for VET providers

The aim of the curriculum is to define the framework for developing the training content in the application under the IO3. The size of the program will about 80 pages. It is an innovative curriculum on online distance learning addressed to concrete target groups of educators, i.e. groups of people who are responsible for vocational education and training. This group of persons includes, for example, trainers of instructors, instructors in companies, head of the department, institution leader, consultants, mentors, and in inter-company training centers, etc.

The idea of the Distance educator is a response to the report from the ET2020 working group on adult learning. Based on the report the COVID-19 pandemic has forced a digitalization of education and rapidly pushed education and training systems to explore new ways of teaching and learning. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on adult learning (AL) has also been acute. Participation in adult learning has been impacted, with adult learning providers and educators facing multiple challenges in continuing their learning offers and adapting to the situation.

The main challenges relate to:

- Transforming face-to-face courses into online courses, establishing online relationships with learners, and securing the required equipment and infrastructure.
- Challenges include a lack of sufficient skills of the practitioner.
- There is therefore a need to learn more about how different groups are coping with the transition to distance learning, and what can be done to help them equal access to learning opportunities.

The crisis, and its widespread impact on economies and societies globally, have also highlighted the prominent role of adult learning in a COVID-19 affected world. Within and beyond the crisis, adult learning is key in ensuring people can obtain the (new) skills and competencies required in a COVID-affected labor market and society.



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O1/A1. Current status review report

The project partners had a first transnational meeting during which they established the method of providing the evaluation report of the current situation, regarding the existing situation in the partner countries, related to the development of digital skills necessary for the implementation of the project idea.

The methodology of the current state assessment report was established, based on a focus group with LAGs in each country.

Focus groups were organized in each partner country in which experts discussed and analyzed the situation of digital education during the crisis. The leader of the activity was Dimitrie Cantemir University (DCU), which developed, after consultation with all partners, a detailed focus group plan.

During the Consultation Workshop, the project was presented, and the learning outcomes were discussed. The European framework of digital competences was presented, the experts expressing their interest in each individual competence. It is proposed that the new curriculum that will be proposed consider the current state and the national specifics. At the same time as the content of the units, the program proposal should be updated and refined at the national level.

The experience of the partners suggests that this type of workshops are the best way to involve the target groups from the beginning.

DCU prepared a questionnaire that was agreed and implemented by each partner.

The reports of the focus groups from each country were sent through the AdminProject platform, made available to the project by the Polish partner, DANMAR.

The information from the partners formed the basis of this summary report of the assessment of the current state.



Introduction to the Focus Group



Picture: <https://www.onwardsearch.com/blog/2017/10/user-research-critical-product-success/>

Romania

The LAG of Romania consisted of seven experts, who have long-term professional and practical experience in VET and Adult Training. For the purposes of the DISTANCE EDUCATOR project, a two-hour hybrid online meeting and F2F was held with them, to identify the key issues that we need to consider when developing the training curriculum of the DISTANCE EDUCATOR project. The focus group took place online on the 1st of September, from 12:00 to 14:00. The facilitator of the focus group was Assoc. Prof. PhD. Sorina-Mihaela Bălan, the director of Strategies, Programs and Projects from Dimitrie Cantemir University. She gave a brief presentation about the project and its aims/goals at the start of the meeting.

Greece

Technical Institute of Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry conducted a focus group in Crete for the Distance Educator project, which consisted of 6 experts in the field of vocational training and education. All focus group participants were given an agenda a few days before, and the meeting itself lasted about 2h. The meeting took place online at 29.08.22. The purpose of this meeting was to identify key issues that Distance Educator project partners should consider developing a training program. At the beginning of the meeting, all participants were introduced to the purpose and objectives of the project,

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followed by a discussion between the participants and the organizers of the event. The participants were asked to answer several questions. The results can be found below.

Poland

Danmar Computers conducted a focus group in Poland for the Distance Educator project, which consisted of 6 experts in the field of vocational training and education. All focus group participants were given an agenda a few days before, and the meeting itself lasted about 2h. The purpose of this meeting was to identify key issues that Distance Educator project partners should take into account in order to develop a training program. At the beginning of the meeting, all participants were introduced to the purpose and objectives of the project, followed by a discussion between the participants and the organizers of the event. The participants were asked to answer several questions. The results can be found below.

Cyprus

The LAG of Cyprus consisted of six experts, who have long-term professional and practical experience in VET and Adult Training. For the purposes of the DISTANCE EDUCATOR project, a two-hour online meeting was held with them, to identify the key issues that we need to consider when developing the training curriculum of the DISTANCE EDUCATOR project. The focus group took place online on the 8th of July, from 10:30 to 12:30. The facilitator of the focus group was Dr. Celia Hadjichristodoulou (Founder and Managing Director of GrantXpert Consulting) and the Project Manager on behalf of GrantXpert, gave a brief presentation about the project and its aims/goals at the start of the meeting.

Lithuania

VMU Distance Educator Focus Group Discussion Feedback was mentored by Aistė Čapienė, Vytautas Magnus University. The aim has to identify the attitudes of experts and employees as far as current (digital) skills for remote working are concerned. The main questions were covered, like how do they cope with the situation regarding digital competencies and what gaps can be identified? Moreover, there was a need to identify possible training activities that could be implemented in The DigiEduAdult curriculum for VET providers and the online training program. Therefore, the decision was made to employ a focus group interview method. Depending on the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation, VMU chose to invite 10 interviews, but when was a focus group meeting entailed 7 participants with experience in adult training. The duration of a focus group discussion was 110 minutes. Focus-group discussion provided qualitative data, which was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the qualitative data program MAXQDA2020 by searching for themes that occurred across the discussion.



The component of local Action Group -LAG



<https://jamtechcorp.com/blog/ventajas-y-desventajas-de-hacer-focus-group/>

The LAG of Romania's

1. P1- Mures County School Inspectorate (I.S.J. MŞ)

One of the directions of action of the ISJ Mures Inspectorate for the 2022-2023 school year is to ensure and promote the quality of educational services by reorganizing and re-credibility of professional and technical education by developing a real partnership between school institutions and the business environment (carrying out awareness and accountability campaigns of parents and students from the 7th and 8th grades in order to support the strategy of promoting professional education as an alternative to technological education). P.E. is School Inspector for Professional and Technical Education at the Mureş County School Inspectorate, teacher of technical disciplines in the field of tourism at Economic College "Transylvania" Tg. Mures. With long experience in the training of adults, being a Methodist teacher at the House of the Mures Didactic Body, he could apply new teaching methods for teaching staff in the VET field. As School Inspector, he coordinates all professional and technical teachers in Mures County.

2. P2- owner at Professional Foundation

Being a medium-sized organization but with a very active profile ProF has organized a lot of events being immersed in human rights activities with children, teenagers, youth, adults, seniors, women and people with special needs, offering training and assistance to

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over 2000 trainees, with an emphasis on the new communication strategies as well as specialized methodology courses A.C. is an expert in conducting research, producing reports and administering education programs, evaluating curriculum programs and e-learning methodologies through the national and European projects.

3. P2.- teacher at Transylvania Economic College Tg.Mures (C.E.T.Tg.M.)

CET prepares VET specialists for economic, administrative, tourism and public catering specializations. Within these specializations, special importance is also assigned to foreign languages, which are so useful in these sectors of activity. Mrs. V is a professor of French and Italian and at the same time a doctoral student at the University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology at the Faculty of Letters. In his capacity as a doctoral student, he teaches courses to students from the Modern Applied Languages specialization, using such useful digital tools. Among the topics addressed in the courses is the specialized language, in different fields, including in the professional technical field.

4. P4- teacher at “Unirea” National High School from Târgu Mureş

Is the coordinator of the Erasmus+ project, KA2, “Recover outdated machines using Arduino for scaling up ESTEAM and green skills in VET students. Also is partner in project DS4All: Digital Skills 4 All there they experiment of educational leaders, teachers, educators, teaching tutors, trainers and VET designers, new digital tools and methodologies for improving the integrated teaching, for the benefit of the students. P4 has very large experiences in Erasmus+ project and in work with adults-she has director of „Casa Corpului Didactic Mures”. CCD Mures The House of the Mures Teaching Body whose main objective is the continuous training of pre-university education staff through continuous training programs, scientific, methodical and cultural activities.

5. P5 is Social horker at Mureş County Educational Resource and Assistance Center (C.J.R.A.E. Mureş)

County Resource and Educational Assistance Center is a related unit of education pre-university with legal personality, subordinate to the Ministry of National Education, methodologically coordinated by the Mureş County School Inspectorate, financed by the County Council. CJRAE offers services aimed at correlating the educational offer with the specific requirements of the labor market and implementing modern teaching-learning-evaluation and counseling strategies, by carrying out specialized studies and research, as well as services to facilitate the relationship between units and institutions from pre-university education with the community through partnerships, projects, and programs. P5 is a social worker, thus having contact with all educational actors, having the opportunity to disseminate information to the targeted target group."



6. P6- is head at Romania Electric Energy Distribution (D.E.E.R) SA- Mures

DEER's mission is the distribution of electricity to high quality standards, safely, permanently, affordably, and sustainably. Vision: Excellence and robustness in electricity distribution, by promoting innovation in the development of networks, energy efficiency and green energy, to meet the demands of customers in the communities in which we operate. P6 is Head of the Technical Support Service at DEER-Mures Branch, he has under him about 350 employees specializing in the distribution of electricity. Staff training is an essential component within the teams, that's why the training is done continuously, monthly F2F and online sessions are organized for one day.

7. P7- dean of the Geograpy Faculty from Dimitrie Cantemir University

P7. was the practical coordinator for UDC students in several projects. The last project she was involved in during the pandemic was the project "Innovative Practice for students-UDC", being the coordinator of practical tutors for employers. Partnerships were concluded with the business environment, and the challenges were great. Among the practice partners, some are active in the VET field, but also in liberal professions that are closely related to VET education, such as psychologists, lawyers, jurists, human resources managers. (<https://cantemir.ro/departamente/strategii-programe-si-proiecte/proiecte/practica-inovativa-a-studentilor-udc/parteneri-de-practica-practica-inovativa-a-studentilor-udc/>)

The LAG of Greece

1. P1- Freelancer educator

He is an educator, and his expertise is in adult education. His seminar has the title « how to become an adult educator» His experience and knowledge will help us create education material focused on the principles of adult education.

2. P2. - Freelancer educator

P2 is a Bakery Chef. has been practicing the art of baking for 23 years. He has worked as a production manager at Tsatsakis, Epioulios, Magarakis, Damianakis, etc. Finally, he conducts seminars in bakeries in the program of EL.ME.PA. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, he gave online seminars on beekeeping, etc. His experience in delivering the online seminar on practical skills will be crucial to our project

3. P3 - Freelancer educator

P3 holds a degree in Computer Science from the University of Crete. He is a certified adult educator by the EOPPEP. He has many years of teaching experience in vocational training and general adult education.

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4. P4 - Freelancer educator

P4 is a professional welder, and He is an experienced educator in the welding field with ten years' experience.

5. P5 Freelancer educator

P5. has a degree in education and has served in education as a substitute for six years P5 is an educator and gives seminars on beekeeping and the production of herbal cosmetics. Since 2012 she has been working as a professional beekeeper and soap maker. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, she gave online seminars on beekeeping, etc. Her experience in delivering the online seminar on practical skills will be crucial to our project.

6. G.K. - Freelancer educator

G.K. Graduate of the Department of Statistics and Insurance Science of the University of Piraeus (formerly A.B.S.P.) with a master's degree in business administration. He has been practicing the profession of Accountant - Tax Consultant for 20 years. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, he gave online seminars on beekeeping, etc. His experience in delivering the online seminar will be a great asset to the project.

The participants here from:

- ME AGRI-FOOD COMPETENCE CENTER- it is a knowledge-intensive company, based on 38 partners from all over Greece. MACC's partners include actors from academia, society, industry and public authorities, therefore, it fully meets the requirements of a Quadruple development.
- ELMEPA UNIVERSITY- The Hellenic Mediterranean University (HMU) is a new, qualitative, extroverted University with a strong international presence. The ELMEPA goal is to provide to the students with modern, comprehensive, quality education, as well as all those supplies that will help them in their professional career.
- Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry- The Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a local organization of businesses and companies in Heraklion with the intention to develop and further the interests of local companies and businesses in Greece. Many businesses are international operating companies with offices in Greece.

The LAG of Poland

- 1. P1. Centrum Kształcenia Edukator Sp. Z o.o.**
- 2. P2- Type of institution The Center for Training and Research INNEO – association**



The Center for Training and Research INNEO is an association based in Rzeszów (Poland). It was founded in 2011 to provide training for young people, mostly as a part of the Human Capital programme. After two years of working on the local level and developing the network of contacts the members of INNEO have decided to develop EU projects. The association is currently involved in multiple Erasmus+ projects, mostly in fields like: entrepreneurship, computer service, education and creative industries. The staff of INNEO is highly experienced in the training provision, research, dissemination activities, as well as project management and administration.

3. **P3- Centrum Kształcenia Edukator Sp. Z o.o.**
4. **P4. SME DORADO Poland**
5. **P5. Rzeszowska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego S.A.**
6. **P6. - Rzeszowska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego S.A**

The LAG of Cyprus

1. **P1 from A.T. -CARDET-NGO, Nicosia, Cyprus**

CARDET (Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental, research and development organization based in Cyprus, with partners around the world.

2. **P2 from NGO Semi-Government**

The Cyprus Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) is a public law legal entity that began its work in 1979. The Mission of HRDA is to create the conditions for planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus, at all levels and in all sectors, to meet the needs of the economy in the context of the social and economic policy of the state

3. **P3. From SME (Recruitment and Consulting Services in HR)**

A team of Human Resources professionals, passionate about delivering exceptional service in training and recruitment, in addition to top of the line Performance Management and L&D solutions. Established in 1998, Human Asset take a Growth Mindset approach toward helping our clients transform their human capital into genuine human assets.

4. **P4 from SME (Recruitment and Consulting Services in HR)**

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A team of Human Resources professionals, passionate about delivering exceptional service in training and recruitment, in addition to top-of-the-line Performance Management and L&D solutions. Established in 1998, Human Asset take a Growth Mindset approach toward helping our clients transform their human capital into genuine human assets.

5. P5 from Private University

Rising in the rankings, European University Cyprus has been gaining local, regional and global acknowledgement of its efforts to be a student-focused and innovative institution, with an emphasis on an international orientation, sustainability and industry/community engagement. With a history of more than 60 years, European University Cyprus has grown into a leading academic and research institution in the region with Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Sciences, Business, Law, and Humanities, Social & Education Sciences and a Distance Education Unit.

6. P6 from SME (Research and VET/Adult Training Services)

CSI is a team of professionals with over 50 years of collective experiences in the fields of Education, System Rationalization, Information & Communications Technologies, Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, Global Health Process – Life Sciences, Business Forensic Intervention, Youth Development & Motivation, and Resource Realignment with Goals and Objectives.

The LAG of Lithuania

The participants' experience in adult training was ranged from 5 to 24 years. 2 males and 5 females participated in the study.

1. P1. Head of E-Learning Technology Centre

Kaunas University of Technology- Kaunas University of Technology had its beginning on 16 February 1922, when the University of Lithuania and its technical faculties were established. The development of Lithuanian scientific ideas continued in the first Lithuanian independent technical school of higher education (in 1950–1990 titled Kaunas Polytechnic Institute (KPI)). It was famous for the ultrasound and vibrotechnics laboratories, and scientific research of textiles.

2. P2. Innovative studies institute. Teachers' consultant on online studies.

Vytautas Magnus University VMU is a comprehensive university devoted to excellence in teaching, learning, research, arts and innovation, and fostering critical thinking,

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imaginative response as well as the desire and capacity for lifelong learning of our students who will have an impact on the world, locally and globally.

3. P3.Chief Specialist of Group of Educational Competencies

Vilnius Gediminas Technical University

4. P4. Study Programmes Director, E-learning specialist

Kaunas University of Technology Vilnius Gediminas technical university (VILNIUS TECH) is an innovative Lithuanian university that prepares creative and highly qualified specialists. The university is a leader in the field of technological sciences with modern and labour market-oriented approach to studies.

5. P5. Study Programmes Director, E-learning specialist

Kaunas University of Technology

6. P6. Coordinator in international department

Kaunas University of Applied Sciences is a multi-profile state higher education institution training specialists in technology, informatics, engineering, medicine, humanities, social, art, education, business and public management, law, and agricultural sciences.

7. P7. Membership Coordinator

German Baltic Chamber of Commerce – AHK

The AHKs are institutions of German foreign trade promotion. The Association of German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) continuously coordinates and develops the network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad. They are co-funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK).



PART I. QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE



Picture: <https://fieldworkhub.com/case-studies/focus-groups-on-public-policy-uk-europe/>

Procedure

At the beginning of the discussion, the participants were asked about their actions and experience, gradually moving to their opinion and feelings. Thereby, speaking about the experience, the respondent would find it easier to present the context of interest, and explore the topic more profoundly, which helped them to realize their feelings and express their own opinion (Mays and Pope, 2020).

Later the mentor of the focus group discussion) explained the main project objectives, activities and expected outcomes. The confidentiality policy was presented and checked that all participants understood it. After the presentation, the question about their experience as educators during the Covid-19 crisis was asked, and what obstacles or concerns appeared then.

Responses of participants: Regarding their educational experience during Covid-19, most of the participants reflected that they had an immediate need to change the teaching/ learning process with weak or no additional resources or support from their organization.

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Some of them have expressed that it was a clear and big gap between young and older colleagues, who have employed different digital skills and knowledge. Few of them were already familiar with some digital programs, and the changed situation was not very stressful. For distance learning implementation were used some digital tools like mentioned tools and platforms: MS Teams, Zoom, Moodle, Loom, BBB system, WhatsApp, Mentimeter, Kahoot, and Hangout. Most of them were adopted during the duration of the Covid-19 crisis.

1. The situations faced by the experts during the crisis. Obstacles and concerns



Picture: <https://fieldworkhub.com/2021/01/08/six-points-to-consider-when-looking-for-a-focus-group-moderator/>

Question 1: What situation you face as an educator during the crisis? What obstacles or concern appeared?

Romania

P1. At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, I had to adapt to online teaching. I only had a few days to familiarize myself with the online teaching tools.

P2. Countless educational institutions across Europe are enduring a period of rapid pedagogical transformation as teachers, trainers and other academic staff are increasingly having to rely on technology to deliver blended or online learning to their learning cohort.

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The same is also true of learners who have also had to make seismic shifts as a response to the Covid 19 pandemic, contact limitations, and physical distancing measures. The crucial issues we faced were: are teachers appropriately equipped to deal with the shift in pedagogical or technical terms? And have education managers considered the end users' needs and perspectives? To ensure that learning was disrupted as little as possible, educators had to quickly install, adopt and become experts with digital tools — Online learning management systems, video conferencing tools and messaging platforms etc — just to make sure students could access course materials and communicate with teachers. There wasn't any time to lose as you have to adapt instantly to the new situation.

P3. During the crisis were connection problems, adaptation problems regarding virtual teaching, the reorganization of the school program to online teaching and I had to learn on the go the use of meeting programs.

P4. Considering the fact that I work in pre-university education, I was put in the situation to start teaching on-line. This change in the way of working happened very quickly, from one day to another.

P5. I did not have to work online or remote.

P6. In the field of electricity distribution, the most delicate problem is the care of operative personnel (electricians, dispatchers) who must be healthy, able to be in the field to maintain the functionality of the electrical networks. The second problem is the remote communication between the departments that work together permanently, which requires a quality technical communication support (internet). It is very difficult to communicate remotely and access an internal network of a company, being the risk of viruses and low transmission speed.

P7. Due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic and the quarantine, we had to find a solution very quickly to continue the educational process. It took about two weeks until we had access to an E-learning platform, and we posted there materials in electronic format for students.

Greece

P1. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we experienced a high need for delivering online courses that we were not necessarily prepared for. We faced a Lack of Motivation in Students, Lacking technical and digital skills from the side of students and educators too
P2. It wasn't easy to transfer from face-to-face courses to online in such little time. Lack of training in online tools and loneliness make you have far fewer chances to discuss with the learners.



P3. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education. We faced a lot of obstacles such as lack of interaction and digital skills. Education is an intense human interaction endeavor, and the educators must be familiar with digital tools.

P4. Pandemic was a major challenge for us in reaching the target audience of our projects. Many education systems pay little attention to what teachers know, what they do in the classroom, and in some cases whether they even show up. The obstacles that appeared was lack of digital skills, online distractions, lack of motivation etc

P5. I am an experienced educator, and I am teaching practical skills such as beekeeping, production of herbal cosmetics, etc. it was tough to teach practical skill online, so the obstacles were the lack of instant communication lack of eye contact, lack digital knowledge from my side and the learner's side too.

P6. Some of the online learning challenges faced by students are adaptability, technical issues, computer knowledge, distraction, self-motivation, etc. some of the online learning obstacles faces as educator was poor time management, lack of motivation, technical issues, lack of digital skills etc

Poland

P1. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we experienced a high need for remote work that we were not necessarily prepared for. We faced a major challenge in moving our work to our homes. Of course, most of our employees had no problems with this due to their highly developed digital skills. Unfortunately, there were times when some employees are not sufficiently prepared for this, and we had problems with communication and management during this period.

P2. Lack of training in online tools, not all employees had the digital skills to work remotely. Face-to-face conferences had to be transferred online, but not all participants knew how to log in to the platform we were using.

P3. Training services during the pandemic were very difficult, most of our target group values F2F contact, and we believe that this form of education is the most effective. However, we were forced to organize online training, so our staff received training to learn how to use online tools in our daily work.

P4. Training services during the pandemic were very difficult, most of our target group values F2F contact, and we believe that this form of education is the most effective.





However, we were forced to organize online training, so our staff received training to learn how to use online tools in our daily work.

P5. Our institution during the pandemic experienced problems communicating with our target group. It turned out that not all employees had sufficiently developed digital skills, so we had to fill this gap through employee training.

P6. Contact with the target group, as well as online communication. During the pandemic, we looked for various online solutions. The e-solutions have stayed with us to this day and make our work much easier.

Cyprus

P1. Very simple tools that the company had to learn how to use in the right way so that they could then get the result they wanted.

P2. There was a problem on the part of the learner going to attend a seminar without knowing exactly how to handle the specific tool offered to him.

P3. It creates a great challenge to the digital skills of the trainees themselves because however well prepared and knowledgeable the trainers are, they should be able to manage the difficulties or even the refusal of each person to follow through an electronic means, therefore this creates a difficulty in engagement and interest in maintaining groups.

P4. How quickly could he become so familiar with the new tools that it has gone into his subconscious mind so that he doesn't think of them as tools and can give 100% to the action of the trainees and how to let them understand that the fact that they are hidden behind a camera which sets this physical distance because this at the same time results in their feeling that they are not 100% present.

P5. The degree of readiness of the participants. The transition to change is objective, but it is subjective for each person since the change was for everyone. Transition is subjective so the degree of change management was very subjective and there was resistance from little to very much so the sociological resistance of some people who didn't want this medium had to be managed while others were more willing because they thought it was an opportunity for education. Software themselves has improved in 2 years since they were not as user-friendly in the beginning as they are now.

P6. The engagement was a big challenge for his company. It is difficult to objectively evaluate everyone. Many jobs require the physical presence of employees so that they can be properly trained.



2. The evolution of the crisis. New obstacles and concerns have arisen.

Question 2. How did this situation continue and further developed during the crisis? What obstacles or concerns appeared?

Romania

P1. There was a need to know and master as many online teaching tools as possible. So, I started looking for as much information as possible about the possible tools that would make my work easier, but that would make the information attractive to the students, so that they would stay in front of the computer for a few hours without getting bored.

P2. To switch effectively to online learning, three overarching requirements need to be fulfilled; access to the internet, the right technology, and skills to use the technology. We have seen a rapid transition to online learning across the board, where professionals who might have been previously 'resistant' to using technology to support their teaching and learning or lacked confidence to make the transition, have now been forced at pace to gain experience and expertise with a wide array of digital tools.

P3. The students had a hard time adapting to the pandemic situation, given the pressure of illnesses in the family, we had to use simple applications, with everyone's understanding so as not to leave anyone behind

P4. This situation continued for about 2 years. I was not prepared to carry out my activity in this way, I did not have the necessary technical equipment, the school did not have the resources to support us. Also, the government did not make any effort to come to our support.

P5. I still worked as normal because my workplace requires physical attendance.

P6. The measures taken in time managed to avoid the unavailability of directly productive personnel, they are being divided into groups, without meeting at the change of shifts. In this way, the number of people who could have sickened others has been reduced to a minimum, as well as the risk of not having operational staff in the field and at the dispatch center. Obstacles were such as not all adapting to an isolated activity, without contact with outside staff, especially for those from the dispatcher who should have slept in the institution, away from their family. This was not the case because the measures taken and health monitoring were permanent, and the staff understood that they should not encounter too many during their free time.





P7. Unfortunately, the situation lasted longer than we initially anticipated and we had to think of alternative ways of examining the students, most of the teachers opting for larger projects that the students had to work on and on which they later received grades.

3. Digital tools used before the crisis and during the crisis.

Question 3. What digital tool did you use before the crises and what used in the duration of crisis?

Romania

P1. Before the crisis I only used power point and yahoo and Gmail email addresses, and now I use Google Drive, Classroom, Teams, Meet, Google Docs, Calendar, Forms, etc. During this period, I discovered that you can be close to someone, to explain certain things to them, even if they are physically very far away.

P2. The use of digital content in all levels of education was relatively uncommon before the Covid crisis. Only 20% of countries had digital learning resources in teaching, and only in some schools. Worldwide, a mere 10% of countries had robust digital learning capabilities offering some of the educational materials available outside of school. According to the World Bank, no country had a universal digital curriculum for teaching and learning. These numbers paint a picture of the efforts that governments and schools had to take to rapidly move to distance learning to ensure continuity of learning. (europeandataportal.eu/)

P3. Before the pandemic I used word, email, excel, and after I continued with meeting applications and virtual classes (Zoom, Skype, Google Meets). We learned to use technology in teaching and evaluation.

P4. The e-mail, Google Drive, WhatsApp, social media etc. Now: all of these, plus: Google Classroom, MC Teams. I learned different platforms and programs, I bought different IT equipment's and learned how to use them.

P5. Before and after the crisis we used Zoom for call meetings and Gmail.

P6. Before the crisis, digital tools do not used to the maximum, but with this crisis, the use of these modern tools and the Internet of Things was accepted. Here, I mean sending documents in electronic format (doc, .pdf), using digital signatures for decision-makers, using communication platforms (Temas, skype, Webex, etc.) to avoid physical interaction, to be much more efficient in use of working time, reduction of travel expenses. it is a paradigm shift for these times.



First of all, I believe that special attention is needed for the implementation of resilience measures in any field. The lack of primary, human resources, major environmental events are the factors that can lead to major crises, with repercussions in the chain, like in a domino.

Secondly, who would have thought that after containing the Covid crisis, we would quickly face an energy crisis in Europe? How we are prepared for major environmental events (earthquake, tornadoes, heavy rains, prolonged drought). Are there concerns about implementing resilience measures to minimize the material and human damage that can occur in such situations.

P7. Before crisis: email communication programs, file-sharing programs OneDrive, Google Drive. Currently: Outlook, MS Teams. The most important thing I learned was that the flexibility in the educational process is very important and you always could find solutions that work at least acceptably at first and then, of course, they can be improved.

Greece

P1. Before the crises I used to use MS office tools and after the crises I forced to use communication tools such as skype, zoom, Viber and management tools such as Monday, Asana etc.

P2. As a baker chef, I used technology only for pleasure, not work. So after the crisis, I start to use management tools such as Trello and one drive and communication tools zoom and skype.

P3. Before the crisis we only used email, Viber, messenger for communication. During the crisis until now we use zoom, skype, Big Blue Button as communication tool.

P4. Before the crisis we used only social media for personal use and after the pandemic we used communication tool such as zoom and skype, and we used management tool such as asana.

P5. Before the crisis we used email and zoom, after the crisis we use skype and Trello, google drive.

P6. Before the pandemic, we used emails, Vibers and Skype. At this point, we use Zoom, Google Drive, Asana.

Poland

P1. Our company participates in Erasmus Plus projects, so we have been frequently exposed to platforms that help in project management, among others AdminProject, Slack. On top of that, we used Skype for internal communication on a daily basis. During



the pandemic, in order to keep in touch, we started using the Zoom platform, where during weekly meetings we could discuss urgent topics and share ideas and experiences.

P2. Communication tools: Slack, Zoom, Skype, e-mails. Online tools for digital content creation: Canva, Crello

P3. Before the pandemic, we only used email for communication. During the pandemic and now we use Zoom for conferences, for online training and for daily communication. To make online training more interesting, we try to use interactive solutions. Our presentations are prepared in the free program Canva. For feedback, we create Padlet boards. To test participants' knowledge and skills, we prepare interactive quizzes (H5P).

P4. We work with many partners from Europe on a daily basis, so even before the pandemic we were using online communication programs (AdminProject, Slack, Google Drive, etc.). At this point, I can say that our knowledge and digital competence have increased significantly. Our employees themselves eagerly searched for online tools that help us in daily communication as well as in project management and communication with the target group.

P5. Email communication has always been with us, during the pandemic we used Zoom, Slack and other various digital tools that helped us manage the projects.

P6. Before the pandemic, we used emails to communicate, as well as Skype. At this point, we use Zoom, Google Drive, Google Meetings. Our digital competence has increased significantly.

Cyprus

P1. He started telecommuting before the pandemic and while he was abroad, he was working for a company based in Cyprus to be able to work remotely someone from that company had to give him access through a browser something which no longer exists today in most companies. Any software that has to do with direct communication such as Zoom, Skype, Google Meets offers the same things with different licenses, while from there the organization that works now makes its own tools mainly functional learning platforms.

P2. As he told us, he didn't use anything before the pandemic except the use of simple emails. After the pandemic, he started using the Zoom platform which he considers having many advantages as well as Microsoft Teams. He also finds Google classrooms quite helpful, whether the course is held remotely or in person.

P3. Before the crisis, the company used tools that were mainly open source, such as Big Blue Button, and Open Meetings, to hold video conferences, and at some point, they

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switched to Cisco. But when the pandemic started, the company found the Zoom platform very easy to use and then they started using Microsoft Teams, and Webex as well. In her own opinion Zoom platform is the best of all.

P4. Before the crisis, the company used tools that were mainly open source, such as Big Blue Button, and Open Meetings, to hold video conferences, and at some point, they switched to Cisco. But when the pandemic started, the company found the Zoom platform very easy to use and then they started using Microsoft Teams, and Webex as well. In his own opinion Zoom platform is the best of all.

P5. At the university, before the pandemic, they used Blackboard collaborate a lot, which they continue to use, and it has a very big difference in the tools and especially in the analytics it provides, which is why this platform costs. Of the free platforms, she believes that Skype has been abandoned and is not used as much anymore. Zoom has been upgraded so much that anyone can integrate multiple apps within it and she agrees that the Microsoft Teams platform is not very easy to use and also noticed a big difference for the better in the Webex platform and the Big Blue Button. Very important parameters are the subscription cost and whether it offers synchronous and asynchronous communication.

P6. His company before the pandemic used a lot of Webex and Skype for their meetings but during the pandemic and until today, they started using Zoom which they relied a lot on it while slowly they already started to transfer to Microsoft Teams completely as an organization in all levels. He believes that the pandemic was the one that accelerated the digital transformation, which he believes was planned anyway through the policies of the European Union. The positive thing that came out of the pandemic case is that we managed to move to a digital world very quickly and a lot of people who would most likely spend the rest of their lives without doing any digital transactions at all now know how to do it and it has become a part of their lives.

4.1. Obstacles to working remotely. Ways in which they can be exceeded by LAG/company/client.

Question 4.1. What are possible obstacles to remote working? What can help you/your company/your client to overcome them?

Romania

P1. Possible obstacles to remote working would be lack of internet connection, lack of computer skills and learners' online tools. Remote work will continue even after the pandemic for some projects.

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P2. The quality of online education doesn't simply depend on access to internet, it also requires the right technology, and the requisite skills to use and deploy them for learning. The digital divide could deepen if the effectiveness of education is directly linked to access to the latest technologies, and without special attention to the pedagogical theories and demands that underpin their use in the classroom. Educators needed to match theory with the newfound technical demands and expectations and take their next steps into delivering effective online learning and assessment which is critical in this uncertain time.

P3. The fact that it was more difficult to create a working atmosphere at home and not everyone can afford high-performance equipment (laptop, tablets, video cameras, headphones, etc.) It could help more training courses for virtual learning, create flexible programs for home learning (such as recording courses)

P4. Now I am ready for the on-line teaching.

P5. My work requires physical attendance, therefore remote working is not possible.

P6. An obstacle is the limited technical resources for the remote assurance of optimal communication between the decision-makers and the operational ones. The second factor is the isolation of the staff and thus a reduced efficiency in making optimal decisions for problems that can appear instantly and require a technical-economic solution in a short time. The third factor is legislation that still does not mandate the use of digital tools in all areas What can help you/your company/your client to overcome them?

P7. The obstacles can be of a technical nature on the part of both involved parties but also of a psychological, emotional nature, online teaching having advantages and disadvantages, the lack of face-to-face interaction being the most difficult to manage. Can help you/your company/your client to overcome them? a hybrid system, in which there are also face-to-face meetings.

4.2. Opinions on continuing remote work after the pandemic

Question 4.2. Will remote work be continued in your/your client company after the pandemic?

Romania

P1. Possible obstacles to remote working would be lack of internet connection, lack of computer skills and learners' online tools. Remote work will continue even after the pandemic for some projects.

P2. If will remote work be continued in your/your client's company after the pandemic? We will use probably remote working but for my foundation, the on-site work is very



important due to its specific meaning of training and teaching. Compared with 2010, the share of people doing an online course doubled from 4%. Young people, aged 16 to 24, were generally doing online courses more frequently than the average adult population. In 2019, 13% of young people reported doing an online course in the last 3 months, compared to 9% among adults aged 25 to 64. Among older people (aged 65 to 74), only 1% did an online course. Even larger differences between the age groups are observed in one further aspect of online learning activities: communication with instructors or students via educational websites or portals. In 2020 28% of young people aged 16 to 24 reported to have communicated with instructors and students online in the last 3 months, while only 7% of those aged 25 to 64 were doing this. (ec.europa.eu/Eurostat)

P3. Will remote work be continued in your/your client's company after the pandemic? Yes, because online teaching will remain an alternative and complement face-to-face teaching.

P6. Yes, the implementation of modern communication tools has led to a paradigm shift in remote communication for the analysis of the specific activity, the approval of some technical-economic documentation, the participation of a larger number of interested persons and the reduction of expenses. The interaction between the company and customers is greatly improved by using the Internet, they can submit complaints, notifications, documentation for obtaining approvals, without going to the institution's headquarters.

P7. Yes, partially!

5. New jobs to cover the needs arising from digitization and/or remote working. Training employees on the new procedures adopted due to remote work.

Question: Have new employment positions been created in your company/client company to cover the needs deriving from digitalization and/or from remote working or did employees receive any training on new procedures adopted by your/client company due to remote working?

Romania

P1. Employees were trained on the new procedures adopted due to remote work.

P2. The use of digital content in all levels of education was relatively uncommon before the Covid crisis. In our company, the opportunity to have online courses even in other localities took us by surprise. We found out that people tend to save time and money to be trained which forced us to adjust to their needs. We were sharing everything among the staff and trained ourselves on the go which sometimes created inconveniences but also

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developed our habit of using the Internet for self-training. The time and circumstances came over us in such an amount and without any warning that we had to adjust instantly.

P3. As a rule, the computer scientist had more work and was helped by his colleagues. No, no new positions have been created.

P4. NO

P5. No

P6. The CallCenter service has been implemented at the area level, which receives in digital format the scheduled and accidental activities that may affect the electricity supply of a specific or extended area. Employees were trained with the new platforms and digital applications for processing documentation, such as scanning them and saving them on a central server from where decision-makers can retrieve the data needed to issue opinions, On the other hand, the employees were trained to communicate on the internal network and in this way reducing to the maximum the time required for a response or analysis. Digital tools are a win for the company, but also for employees to make their work more efficient. The elaborated procedures clearly specify the steps to be followed, the obligations of each level, the attributions of each decision-maker and the communication method for the efficiency of the activity.

P7. NO



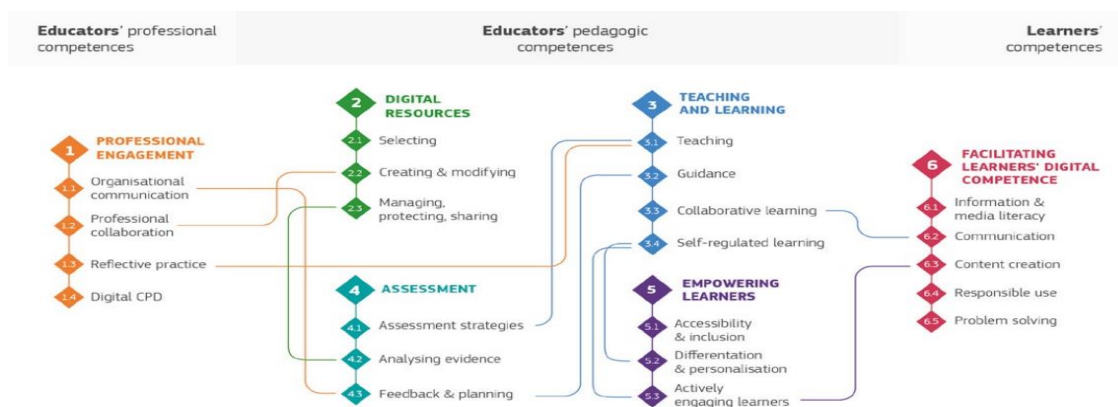
PART II. The importance of the Digital competences

The mentors of the Focus groups presented six different groups of competencies: professional engagement, digital resources, teaching and learning, assessment, empowering learners, and facilitating learners' digital competence. Each group of competencies was presented separately, and after the presentation, participants discussed them. During the focus group discussion, the participants were consequently asked what they thought about the presented competencies.



Picture: <https://fieldworkhub.com/case-studies/online-group-service-management-uk/>

The Eu document DigCompEdu framework¹ propose 22 competences grouped in 6 area:



Picture: DigCompEdu.competences. https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcompedu/digcompedu-framework_en

¹ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcompedu/digcompedu-framework_en



Area 1: Professional Engagement

C1.1. Organisational communication

To use digital technologies to enhance organisational communication with learners, parents and third parties. To contribute to collaboratively developing and improving organisational communication strategies.

C1.2. Professional Collaboration

To use digital technologies to engage in collaboration with other educators, sharing and exchanging knowledge and experience, and collaboratively innovating pedagogic practices.

C1.3. Reflective Practice

To reflect on individually and collectively, critically assess and actively develop one's own digital pedagogical practice and that of one's educational community.

C1.4. Digital Continuous Professional Development

To use digital sources and resources for continuous professional development.

Lithuania

***Lithuania:** related to the first competence area – professional engagement. First, it was discussed from the organizational communication perspective. Few participants have highlighted that it was sometimes difficult to communicate between organization members or social partners because they use different programs like Zoom or MS Teams.*

Notably, not all organization members know how to use diverse digital technologies and have some problems with that. It was noted that organizational communication is not developed properly and was evaluated by participants as neither very good nor very bad. The next aspect regarding professional collaboration was touched on. Focus group participants have highlighted that professional collaboration is developed well. They have mentioned using diverse channels like social media platforms, websites, messenger, and e-mail. Then, the focus group has started to discuss about digital resources necessary in professional development. Participants have noted that they use specialized websites for educators where they could find the newest information.

The following competence - a video conference was discussed. Based on participants' opinions, it was highlighted as necessary competence, and all participants rated themselves as competent. Moreover, focus group participants have argued that organization assistance in daily life would be viewed as the best catalyst for educators' encouragement and enhancement of their motivation in digital learning.

The focus group participants have supported an idea that digital competencies should be developed, and it should be considered as priorities of all organization/institutions. The participants' organizations/institutions have digital learning centers or experts who support educators. according to the interviews using digital technologies there are





problems with financing, information flow and complex strategy. Then, the focus group talked about strategy, and they came up with that: it should be changed from the pedagogical approach (teacher-centred) into a learner-centred, small-group orientated, multi-dimensional model of teaching where the structure can be very different, either based on linear learning or completely unstructured, individualized, self-paced, modular, or even personal curriculum based on learning outcomes or competencies.

Area 2: Digital Resources

C2.1. Selecting digital resources

To identify, assess and select digital resources for teaching and learning. To consider the specific learning objective, context, pedagogical approach, and learner group, when selecting digital resources and planning their use.

C2.2. Creating and modifying digital content

To modify and build on existing openly licensed resources and other resources where this is permitted. To create or co-create new digital educational resources. To consider the specific learning objective, context, pedagogical approach, and learner group, when designing digital resources and planning their use.

C2.3. Managing, protecting and sharing digital resources

To organise digital content and make it available to learners, parents and other educators. To effectively protect sensitive digital content. To respect and correctly apply privacy and copyright rules. To understand the use and creation of open licenses and open educational resources, including their proper attribution.

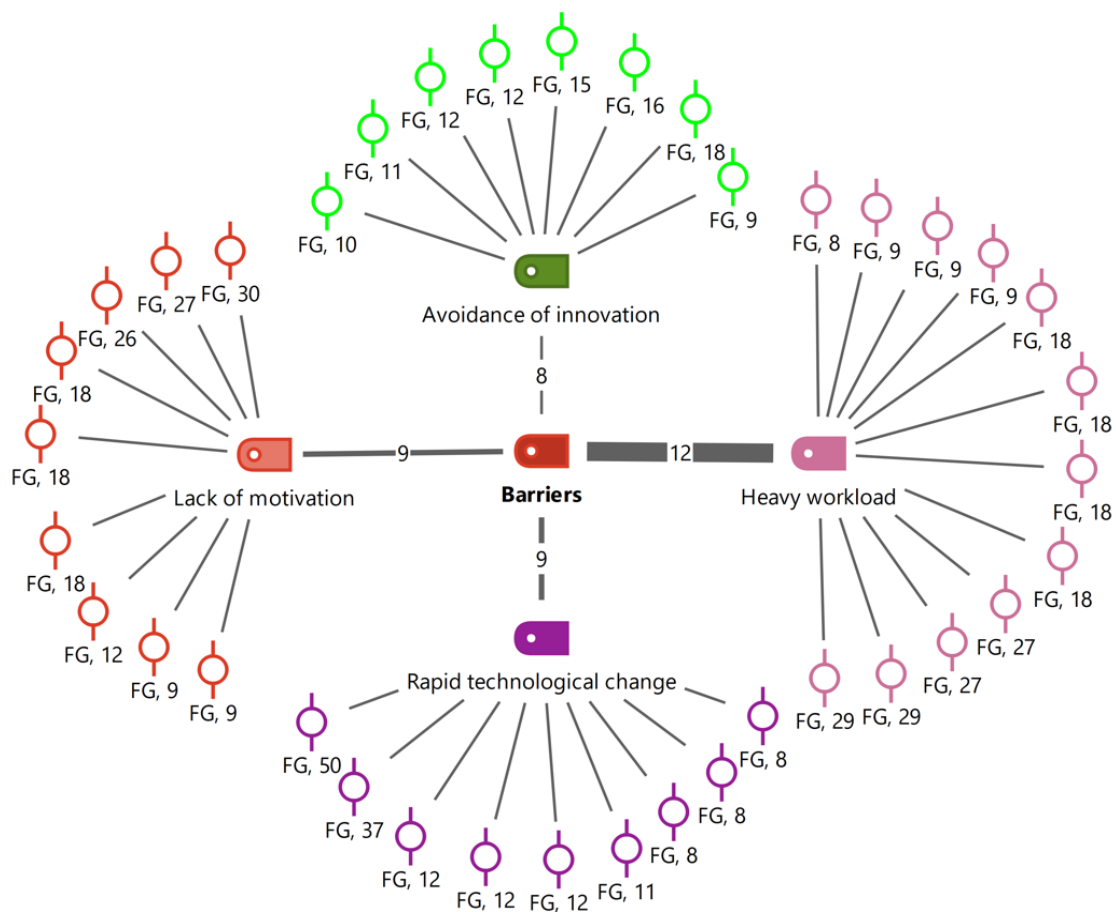
Lithuania

Lithuania: *related to the first competence area digital resources. The focus group emphasized that one of the most important things is to select the right resources in the education process. In the organizations, they are using different methods for diverse target groups. The participants of the focus group have argued that more digital programs should be adopted in Lithuania; therefore, it would offer more opportunities. It is important to stress the lack of resources that were applied to people with disabilities.*

Then, the discussion continued about the creation and modification of digital content for education. Participants highlighted that it is much easier to update information within digital technologies. Despite that, participants have mentioned that sometimes it takes time and could be some technical problems as well. Interestingly, some educators were more involved in creating and updating digital resources than others. Focus group noticed that digital competence in managing, protecting, and sharing digital resources with other interested parties become more and more important. Focus group participants discussed privacy and copyright policies.



In Lithuania, requirements for data protection are strictly regulated. Therefore, all institutions/organizations try to satisfy these requirements. This focus group revealed that when educators adopt their digital knowledge, they do meet several barriers (see Figure1). The participants of the focus group have highlighted that the main aspect to engage educators in digital learning activities should be to overcome through several barriers like heavy workload, rapid technological change, lack of motivation and avoidance of innovation. Participants have argued that it is crucial to solve these issues before starting a teaching-learning process.



*Figure 1. Barriers of educators digital learning
 Author Aistė Čapienė, Vytautas Magnus University*



Area 3: Teaching and Learning

C3.1. Teaching

To plan for and implement digital devices and resources in the teaching process, so as to enhance the effectiveness of teaching interventions. To appropriately manage and orchestrate digital teaching interventions. To experiment with and develop new formats and pedagogical methods for instruction.

C3.2. Guidance

To use digital technologies and services to enhance the interaction with learners, individually and collectively, within and outside the learning session. To use digital technologies to offer timely and targeted guidance and assistance. To experiment with and develop new forms and formats for offering guidance and support.

C3.3. Collaborative learning

To use digital technologies to foster and enhance learner collaboration. To enable learners to use digital technologies as part of collaborative assignments, as a means of enhancing communication, collaboration, and collaborative knowledge creation

Lithuania

*Lithuania focus group started to discuss **teaching and learning competence** areas. They agreed that it is essential to receive digital technologies during the teaching process. All participants have noted that their organizations have necessary resources and ensure the teaching process is more straightforward. Participants emphasized that digital technologies would provide an opportunity to teach online.*

Based on participants opinions, digital technologies encourage better learning processes and ensure collaboration. Digital technologies can help to perform tasks faster, and more creatively. In most cases, learners have access to digital platforms and can complete or correct tasks individually. Notably, one of the focus group participants has emphasized that sometimes could be difficult to cooperate with other learners. Learners are individualists and have their own opinions; therefore, these opinions may differ from others, and disagreements may arise within the team.

According to the participants' opinion that educators' competence requires a specific professional, didactics, instructional design, and Learning Management Systems' knowledge, and e-moderation skills. But when the interviewers were consequently asked about encouragement from the organization/institution side, participants noted three aspects such as the need for organization/institution assistance, community and sharing good experiences (see Figure 2).

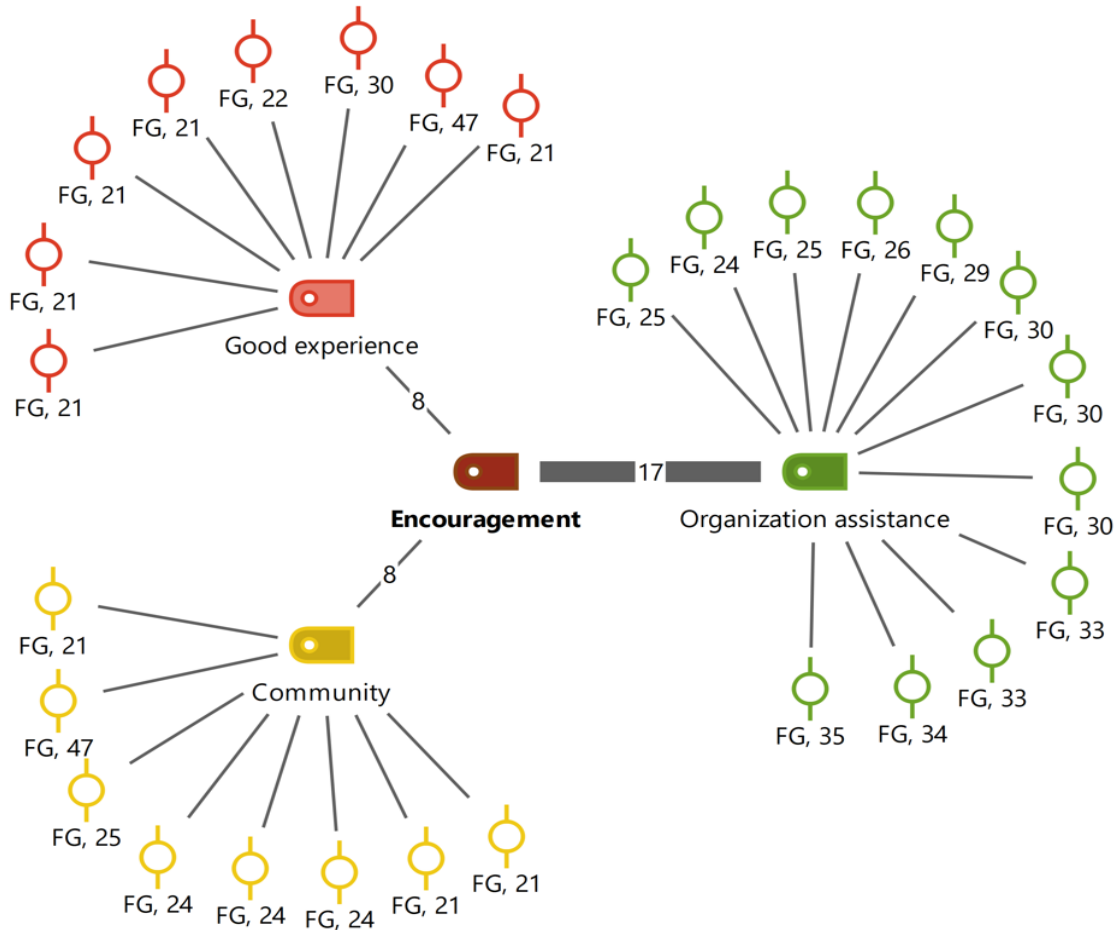


Figure 2. Digital learning encouragement of educators.
Author Aistė Čapienė, Vytautas Magnus University

Participants have emphasized that it is very important to share the good digital learning experience in the attempt to find their own individual path. Regarding the good experience/best practices, most focus group participants argued that community is an excellent example of achieving goals. Notably, a few focus group participants have indicated that it would be essential to spread good experiences among colleagues' communities and focus intensely on the educational system itself. The focus group's participants have highlighted that the organization/institution assistance would be the best catalyst to encourage educators.



Area 4: Assessment

C4.1. Assessment strategies

To use digital technologies for formative and summative assessment. To enhance the diversity and suitability of assessment formats and approaches.

C4.2. Analysing evidence

To generate, select, critically analyse and interpret digital evidence on learner activity, performance and progress, in order to inform teaching and learning.

C4.3. Feedback and Planning

To use digital technologies to provide targeted and timely feedback to learners. To adapt teaching strategies and to provide targeted support, based on the evidence generated by the digital technologies used. To enable learners and parents to understand the evidence provided by digital technologies and use it for decision-making.

Lithuania

Lithuania focus group continued a discussion about the assessment's question. All participants have agreed that it is a requirement to use digital information and communication technologies for that. It is important to note that many participants have agreed that digital technologies enable them to make the assessment process more straightforward. Moreover, Lithuanian schools and universities are using Moodle and Tamo digital platforms for student/learner assessment. Participants also have highlighted that they do use various digital technologies to communicate with students/ learners about their tasks and assessment. Notably, the automatization process for evaluation/discussions is not used. For instance, a digital assistant can be used for automated responses about grades and other essential material.

Area 5: Empowering Learners

C5.1. Accessibility and inclusion

To ensure accessibility to learning resources and activities, for all learners, including those with special needs. To consider and respond to learners' (digital) expectations, abilities, uses and misconceptions, as well as contextual, physical or cognitive constraints to their use of digital technologies.

C5.2. Differentiation and personalisation

To use digital technologies to address learners' diverse learning needs, by allowing learners to advance at different levels and speeds, and to follow individual learning pathways and objectives.

C5.3. Actively engaging learners

To use digital technologies to foster learners' active and creative engagement with a subject matter. To use digital technologies within pedagogic strategies that



foster learners' transversal skills, deep thinking and creative expression. To open up learning to new, real-world contexts, which involve learners themselves in hands-on activities, scientific investigation or complex problem solving, or in other ways increase learners' active involvement in complex subject matters.

Lithuania

Lithuania. *The discussion continued about **learner empowerment**. All focus group participants agreed that in their organization's learning opportunities are provided for all. For example, is used transcription, and video recording, in the learning process a helper may be involved. Also, tasks can be individual, speed of task implementation can be customized. Digital technologies simplify the process and allow everyone to get involved according to their ability.*

Area 6: Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence

C6.1. Information and media literacy

To incorporate learning activities, assignments and assessments which require learners to articulate information needs; to find information and resources in digital environments; to organise, process, analyse and interpret information; and to compare and critically evaluate the credibility and reliability of information and its sources.

C6.2. Digital communication and collaboration

To incorporate learning activities, assignments and assessments which require learners to effectively and responsibly use digital technologies for communication, collaboration and civic participation.

C6.3. Digital content creation

To incorporate learning activities, assignments and assessments which require learners to express themselves through digital means, and to modify and create digital content in different formats. To teach learners how copyright and licenses apply to digital content, how to reference sources and attribute licenses.

C6.4. Responsible use

To take measures to ensure learners' physical, psychological, and social wellbeing while using digital technologies. To empower learners to manage risks and use digital technologies safely and responsibly.

C6.5. Digital problem solving

To incorporate learning activities, assignments and assessments which require learners to identify and solve technical problems, or to transfer technological knowledge creatively to new situations.



*In Lithuania, at the end of the discussion, the focus group has started to talk about facilitating **learners' digital competence**. First, they have highlighted those digital technologies allow to provide diverse information but it's important to analyze and interpret information and to compare and critically evaluate the credibility and reliability of diverse information and its sources. Also, lecturers should enable learners to know how to communicate and collaborate with others. Therefore, the main rules/instructions should be prepared for them.*

The focus group's participants have highlighted those Lithuanian learners have a lot of possibilities to create content in different formats using various digital technologies. Often learners choose reliable and known programs that they know how to use. Organizations/institutions have various licenses, but not all learners learn how to use them. Participants emphasized that sometimes there are situations in which all the security requirements are not met, and many problems might arise. Most often, the younger generation violates the security requirements.

The focus group noticed that there is a lack of competencies in the responsible use of digital technologies. Indeed, educators also do not always know how learners feel when they are using various digital technologies. Not all learners can solve their problems, but often they do need specialists who can support them. This has happened if digital technologies are used at home. Figure 3 shows the competencies of educators related to media and technologies in teaching, which were identified during the scientific literature analysis and revealed during a focus group.

It should be noted that all the participants revealed that educators' most developed competencies are in: media and equipment, competence in videoconferencing, competence in courses, didactics, and instructional design, as well as competence in Learning Management Systems (LMS) (see Figure 1). There is no doubt this situation was totally different before the lockdown. Educators were forced to learn many new things about digital technologies very quickly. Talking about competence in courses, didactics and instructional design caused a lot of discussion, some participants argue that is important competences and well developed, the other said the opposite opinion.

The empirical findings of the research allow drawing the conclusions that the digital teaching competence of educators who participated in the focus group discussion is quite high level. Educators in Lithuania use informational technologies in the educational process before pandemic. They use internet to publish teaching content (mostly Moodle, website...). Some educators have used open educational recourses for their teaching purposes. Regarding competence in courses, didactics and instructional design, participants have argued that they use interactive boards, crossword, and Kahoot, but they also mentioned, that it takes a lot of time to prepare tasks on it.



Then, the focus group's participants were asked which competencies do the participants view as priorities for digital education development, the discussion reached ambiguity. Many of the focus group participants have argued that it is hard to choose one or two competencies which can be prioritized. All focus group participants agreed that educators have different levels in terms of digital media and technology literacy and other situations might create diverse priorities for competence development.

Focus group participants have agreed that the main competency is personal skills, which might help to find an individual path and choose which competencies should be developed. According to participants, only internal motivation can help to engage educators in digital learning activities, and the most critical personal skills are – (1) their own desire to study, (2) ability not to be afraid to make mistakes, and (3) digital curiosity (see Picture 4)

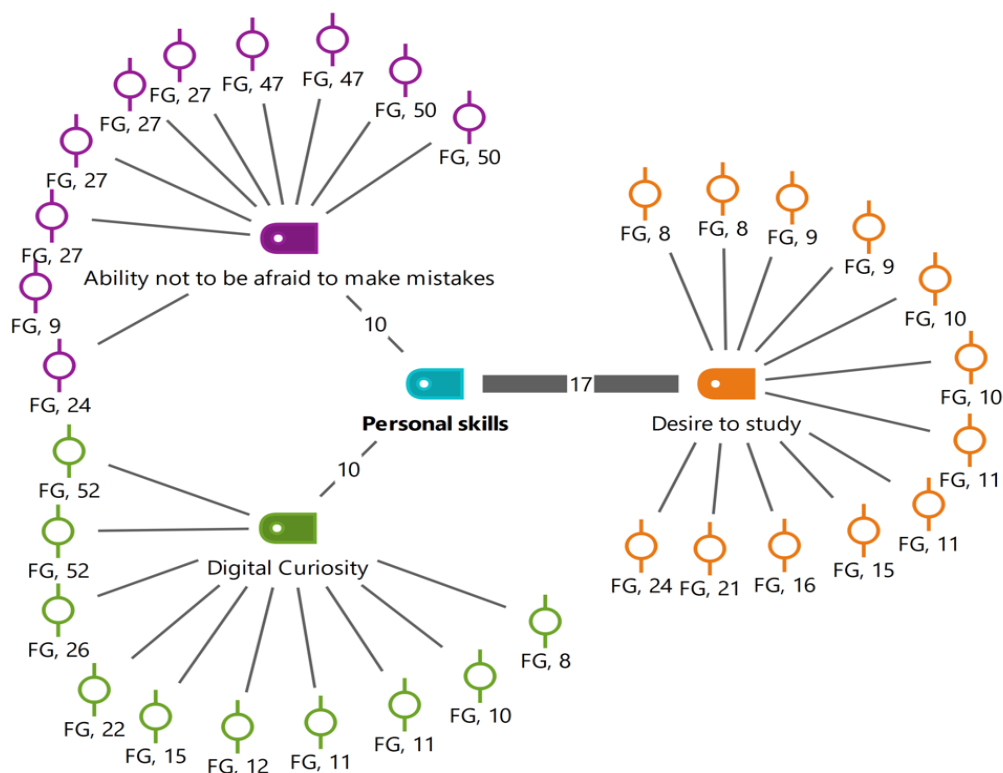


Figure 4. Digital learning personal skills of educators.

Author: Aistė Čapienė, Vytautas Magnus University

Area1-6. The Sumar results for Romania, Greece, Poland and Cyprus

The average of each competence centralised from questionnaires answers from Romania, Greece, Poland and Cyprus can be seen in next table.

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Distance Educator

Area	No C	Dimitrie Cantemir University - ROMÂNIA								KEK TEHNIKES SHOLES EPIMELITIRIOU IRAKLEIOU - GREECE								DANMAR COMPUTERS SP ZOO-POLAND								GRANTXPRT CONSULTING LIMITED- CYPRUS							
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Average	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Average	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Average	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Average			
Professional Engagement	C1.1	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4,33	5	5	4	5	5	4	4,67	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	4	4	5	5	5	4	4,50			
	C1.2	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4,83	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00			
	C1.3	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4,50	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	4	5	5	3	4	4,33			
	C1.4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4,83	4	4	4	5	5	5	4,50	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00			
Digital Resources	C2.1	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4,50	4	4	5	5	5	5	4,67	4	4	5	5	5	5	4,67	4	4	4	4	4	5	4,17			
	C2.2	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	4,50	4	5	5	5	4	4	4,50	4	5	5	5	5	5	4,83	4	4	4	4	4	4	4,00			
	C2.3	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4,67	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	3	5	5	5	5	5	4,67			
Teaching and Learning	C3.1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00			
	C3.2	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4,67	4	5	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00			
	C3.3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00			
Assessment	C4.1	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4,83	4	5	5	5	5	5	4,83	4	4	5	5	5	5	4,67	4	5	5	5	3	5	4,50			
	C4.2	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4,50	4	4	4	5	5	5	4,50	4	4	5	5	5	5	4,67	4	5	5	5	5	5	4,83			
	C4.3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4,83	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00			
Empowering Learners	C5.1	2	2	5	5	5	5	4	4,33	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	4	4	5	5	5	5	4,67	2	4	5	5	4	5	4,17			
	C5.2	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	5	5	5	4	5	4,83	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	4	4	5	5	3	5	4,33			
	C5.3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	3	5	4,67			
Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence	C6.1	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	4,50	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	4	5	5	5	5	4,83	5	4	3	3	3	5	3,83			
	C6.2	2	2	4	1	5	5	4	3,50	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	2	5	5	5	4	5	4,33			
	C6.3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	4,33	4	5	4	5	5	5	4,67	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	3	3	3	3	3	3	3,00			
	C6.4	3	3	4	3	5	5	5	4,17	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	3	3	3	3	4	4	3,33			
	C6.5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4,50	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	4	5	4	5	3	4	4,17			

Table: The average of each competence centralised from questionnaires answers from Romania, Greece, Poland and Cyprus. Author. Bălan S.M.(DCU)

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Conclusions

Summarized by Cyprus.

During the online focus group, a very constructive discussion took place between the experts themselves, the facilitator, and the Project Manager on behalf of GrantXpert. This 2-hour event yielded the following key outcomes:

- 1. The pandemic "forced" all of humanity to transition to a digital world in which everything is done electronically, and no physical presence is required. This transition was planned to happen gradually over the next few years around the world, but with the onset of the pandemic and the countless restrictions that brought about this change, this had to happen sooner than we expected, and through this change, many took actions that they never imagined they would take before, while others refused to make this transition quickly enough, for various reasons. Of course, this also influenced professional adult educators to adopt to the new situation and start using online tools to organize their trainings digitally, which forced them to learn new tools, techniques, and digital methods for the implementation of adult trainings.*
- 2. According to all experts, despite the benefits of online teaching, physical presence is sometimes required to ensure proper interaction between the teacher and the students. However, more and more people nowadays prefer to use online means to deliver their training, as it offers additional advantages to the trainees (they can do the training from the comfort of their house, less traveling is involved, more practical and efficient).*
- 3. When only traditional education was dominant, what the participants noticed was that a large part of the interaction and the whole educational activity was teacher-centered, in the sense that it was purely based on the person and the content was either the notes or it was a workbook or worksheets or whatever they were there to play a role, but nothing particularly important, just something to write their exercises on. Now the content itself is starting to play a role because, noticing how online training are done, we have transferred our physical presence to online platforms. However, online platforms are modern electronic learning which in some way replaces the physical presence, but we leave behind the content itself, which when done correctly, i.e. interactive, can work in the form of a flip classroom and this can give a completely different dimension in blending learning in which it is observed that not too many instructors have seen it in general and simply transferred the lecture or any exercises to the electronic mode and a huge development is observed in the content and in these experiences.*
- 4. Educators cannot become experts in online teaching overnight. Instructional designers must provide appropriate and correct guidance to adult trainers so that they can*

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gradually adapt their training content to the new digital environment. Adult trainers are not the right people to design the training content for online trainings, they need experts to take on this role. Also, the training material needs to be adapted to the educational needs of different trainees.

5. *Those who started working with software clearly saw the technological dimension of the software, i.e. to present software, while it is not the technological dimension, it is the instruction from behind, i.e. how I teach. There are many theories of how I teach and how I utilize technology by integrating it into teaching. Theoretically and legally these texts exist, the issue is how the world is transformed. The tendency of companies anymore is not simply to treat training as if it has to train people who have too many hours and then that's it. Professionals started to focus on learning and development, so the companies themselves started to be more demanding on the knowledge that is really consolidated after every training they invest in, and so there are other additional things that we notice that the companies are developing and this will help and trainers to become more correct in the learning consolidation methodologies and not just do a training program for a few days and then that's it, because companies are now starting to see continuity and what each training they do has really left in knowledge and learning.*

6. *Instructors must bring all of the elements that they should have had in real-life teaching to online teaching. Thus, they need to already have the right training and experience on how you create interesting and engaging training content and use digital means to continue offering this through online teaching.*

7. *Some experts agreed that in distance education, new pedagogical approach techniques will not be discovered, and it is critical that traditional methods be transformed through digitals.*

8. *All of the experts agreed that for our project, we should use a different cooperative model for developing educational programs. They believe that every instructor should not be expected to do everything from A to Z.*



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IO1 The DigiEduAdult curriculum for VET providers
O1.A1. Current status review report

About the project

The project consortium has identified the need for the digital transformation of vocational educational and training and to improve and require new skills, competencies for educators and other adult education staff.

The main aim of the project is to enhance the digital and teaching skills and competencies of the adult learning providers, VET providers, and educators, which are required in the digital age and allow them to face the multiple challenges needed for a Covid affected society.

That's why the project answers the chosen field-specific priorities because the Training Educators of Adults in online distance learning enhances the quality assurance in vocational education and training.

Target groups

- Educators, adult education staff, trainers, teachers, VET educators, and VET providers from Romania, Greece, Cyprus, Poland and Lithuania.
- Stakeholders, VET institutions, providers to education, consultants' companies, mentors.



Distance Educator

Partners



"Dimitrie Cantemir" University From Târgu Mureş (DCU)-Romania

Institute of Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry (THIC)– Greece

Danmar Computers (DANMAR)– Poland

GrantXpert Consulting (GRANTXPRT)– Cyprus

Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) – Lithuania





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DISTANCE EDUCATOR

TRAINING EDUCATORS OF ADULTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Project number: 2021-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000034702

Implementation period: 15.02.2022 – 14.02.2024.

<https://distance-educator.erasmus.site/>

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