Digital adult educators' competencies development

PROGRAM

2021-2022

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone today needs to have at least basic digital skills in order to study or work, communicate, access a growing number of online public services, and find trustworthy information. The Digital Economy and Society Index shows that four out of ten adults in the EU lack basic digital skills. In order to respond to this priority, the project aims implementing innovative methods and tools for teaching, training, and learning in the field of adult education, developing and improving the digital competencies of adult educators.

All European countries are currently engaged in revising their policies to fit with the Upskilling Pathways initiative. Ensuring that the whole of the national adult education sector is digitally competent is an essential element in a well-balanced and integrated national policy. The DigComp framework is a fundamental tool that has been developed by the European Union (EU) to tackle the challenge of digital transformation investing in our lives and workplaces. DigComp offers a description of the competencies that are necessary today to use digital technologies in a confident, critical, collaborative, and creative way for carrying out activities and achieving goals related to work, learning, leisure, inclusion, and participation in our digital society. Based on DigiComp framework we have created a program for adult educators' digital competencies development.

The program concentrated on developing new and functional competencies for adult educators while taking advantage of digitalization and its tools. In order to tackle the new obstacles brought up by the recent pandemic crisis and enable adult educators practitioners to take advantage of new and innovative methods to reach out to their target groups and successfully engage them in their activities. Empowerment of adult educators with digital tools using an andragogical approach to reach each adult learner and make the digital learning process more attractive and engaged. The latest survey done during this project shows that after one year of working digitally, adult educators still have support needs. On a practical level, adult educators emphasize that for them it is very actual how effectively and based on andragogy principles should be organized online activities.

Adult educators already learned a lot about how to use digital platforms, how to share screens, and prepare PowerPoint presentations but still, they are missing such skills - how to use and combine digital tools and andragogy theory. How to involve adult learners more in the digital learning process, and how to make digital online learning be more attractive and concentrated on an andragogical approach?

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THE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

The created program promotes an innovative approach that includes several methods of learning design. The program focuses on interactive online activities, assessment, tools. The program **content** is based on the five areas of digital skills and the 21 competencies as defined in DigCom2.0 *(Annex 2)* and **Synthesis of the digcompedu framework** *(Annex 1).*

The target group (adult educators) **needs** are determined by gathering information from informal discussions among professionals in the network, conducting surveys, observing, and interviewing. During January – February 2022 we conducted a survey to analyze the needs of adult educators' digital competencies development research *(questionnaire Annex 3)*. The main questionnaire results are provided in *Annex 4.*

The principles of the program are based on an andragogical approach and ICT competencies using accessible technological tools and approaches. The program encourages collaborative learning by including teamwork activities, digital skills acquired working with adults and adult educators and learning through innovative tools and methods.

Program **goals** are based on adult educators' empowerment with knowledge and practical suggestion, in order to fit the latest digital media innovations and requirements. Design the concept and curricula focused on adult educators' digital literacy development.

The program aims to:
- improve the digital skills of adult educators
- increase motivation for digital learning through innovative tools and methods
- connect andragogy practice with digital skills
- sustain and develop adult educators' digital capabilities in meaningful contexts
- relevance of digital skills to adult educators' needs and interests
- increase confidence in the use of digital technology

Approach to the program:

- principles of andragogy

- problem-centric

- relevancy of the content to professional interest and to prior experience.

This program focuses on **three impacts** at different levels on adult educators – as well as improving their digital skills, introducing formal, non-formal, and informal digital learning possibilities, and empowering adult learners to use an andragogical approach during digital learning.

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## DIGITAL ADULT EDUCATORS COMPETENCIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PROGRAM CREATION STEPS AND STRUCTURE

Digital adult educators program focused how practically help adult educators to implement online/digital learning/teaching activities based on andragogy theory. Importance to support experienced adult educators with upskilling digital skills and encourage/empower them to combine digital tools and andragogy theory working online.

Andragogical digital approach to curriculum planning, content creation, implementation, and assessment/evaluation will allow being prepared to facilitate online learning. The program defines **competencies area, competencies, learning online rules, methods, and tools** (see below table 1) and creates a solid background for digital adult educators' competencies development program structure in two directions:

- andragogical digital approach to the content
- adult educators' digital competencies

Picture 1 (below) it's a simplified explanation of the main four steps of the program (planning, content creation, implementation, and assessment/evaluation).
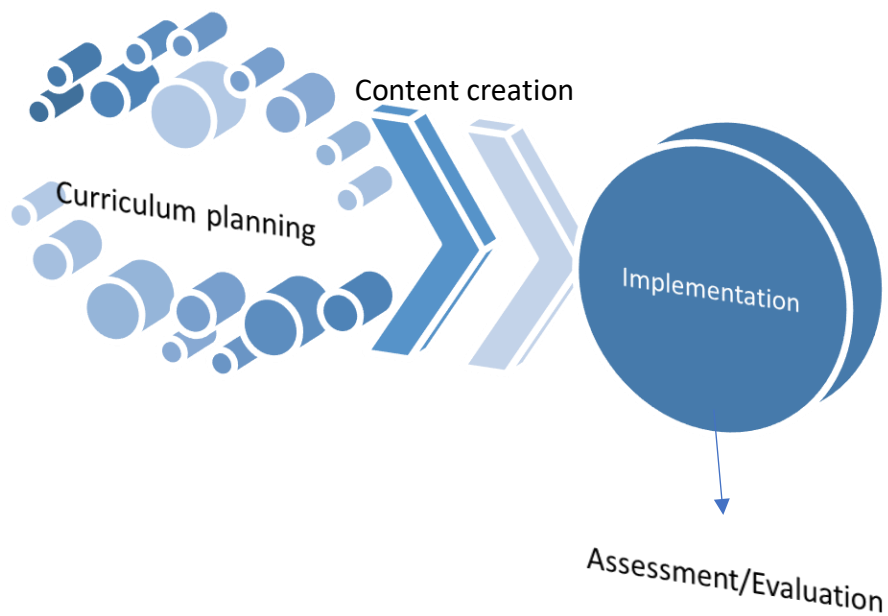

1 pic. Program creation four steps

The andragogical digital approach to the content consists of four main groups:

- ✓ Andragogical digital curriculum planning - exploration needs of target group; identify and use connect andragogy practice with digital skills.
- ✓ Andragogical digital content creation - integrate andragogy concept and methods; empower learners; support vulnerable adults using digital learning
- ✓ Andragogical digital content implementation - ability to choose and use digital tools; facilitating online learning
- ✓ Assessment/ evaluation, feedback and reflection.

This program defines **competencies area, competencies, learning online rules, methods, and tools** (see below pic.2 and table 1) and creates a solid background for digital adult educators' competencies development program structure.
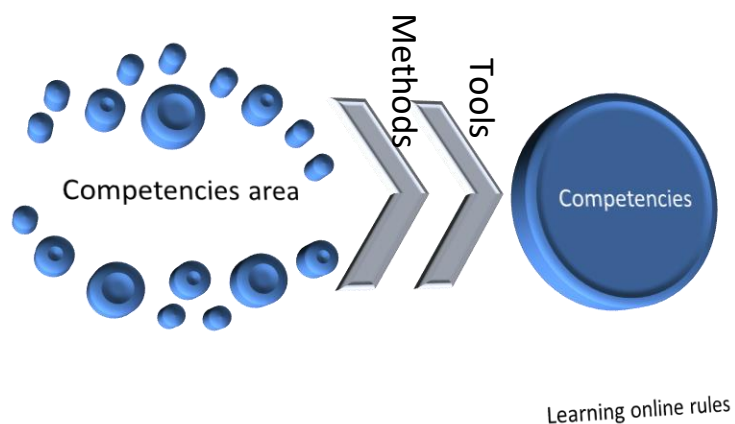
2 pic. Program description sections

Curriculum planning (table 1) – based on adult learners needs adult educator prepare course and plan needed environment. It can be different online environments (Zoom, MS teams, Google meet, or other meeting platforms) depending on the group that can be chosen open webinar, live stream session or closed course. It is important to emphasize that adult educators should encourage vulnerable people to try, join, and learn how to be not isolated if their digital skills or economic situation do not allow them to participate in the courses. The description of the curriculum is important to finalize what kind of content and implementation requirements should be.

Competencies area	Competencies	Learning online rules	Methods	Tools
Andragogical digital approach to the content				
Andragogical digital curriculum planning	- Exploration needs of a target group - Identify and use connect andragogy practice with digital skills	Adult educators/ learners etiquette and communication rules	Learning approach Learning content Main messages	Presentations Agreements Involvement of learners Test
Andragogical digital content creation	-Integrate andragogy concept and methods -Empower learners -Supporting vulnerable adults using digital learning		Visualization Interactive tools Digital Marketing	Digital platforms, MOOC
Andragogical digital content implementation	-Ability to choose and use digital tools -Facilitating online learning		Principles working with different age adults	Interaction using digital tools
Assessment/ Evaluation	Assessment/ Evaluation		Feedback	Reflection
Adult educator's digital competencies				
Advanced level of adult educators' digital competencies	-Increase adult educators' confidence in the use of digital technology -Support "Digital immigrants" - Increase motivation to use digital tools	Supportive learning environment	Interact and engage through innovative methods	Digital information management tools
Assessment/ Evaluation	Assessment/ Evaluation	Evaluation	Feedback	Reflection

Table 1 Structure of adult educators' digital competencies development, dr.Živilė Navikienė, 2022

Content (program) creation– most difficult task is to create inclusive content for learners. Based on the learner's needs or adult educators' suggested topic content creation should be prepared with material (visual, audio, readable, touchable, playable) that responds to the adult learners. The most effective content should be interactive and engaging that respond to learners' expectations.

Implementation – is the most visible stage of training and most important to reach planned goals, to pass knowledge or experience, that the way of implementation will bring meaningful insights, time to think and reflect learning experience, and time to discover. During the implementation stage should be given attention to learners' reflections using digital tools, if the group of learners is quite big then adult educators should evaluate the best option to give a common reflection and share it on screen or still give the possibility of their own reflection. An adult educator should not forget all andragogical approaches to learning things and give time "to print or stamp" learning experience. Adult Educators need to be empowered through andragogical digital skills and tools in order to be able to reach out, be interesting for adult learners and transfer their skills and competencies to improve their digital readiness. Equipped with the andragogical digital competencies adult educators can combine andragogy theories and digital tools.

Assessment/Evaluation – assessment of developed competencies is important for learners as for adult educators. To improve the next time implemented learning – training activity evaluation should be part of learning. Adult educators could use online tools to do a quick, anonymous evaluation and at the same time share with participants. Giving feedback after learning directly online could encourage both participants (learners and educators) to improve future courses and express future wishes and reflect self-awareness about digital skills and competencies ensuring openness to a new learning experience.

Learning online rules – should be focused on a supportive learning environment and agreed on adult educators/learners etiquette and communication rules during the online course. Improving adult educators' digital skills will empower them to play an active role in adult education.

Adult educators' digital competencies should be advanced level and should be an encouragement to increase adult educators' confidence in the use of digital technology, support "Digital immigrants", and increase motivation to use digital tools.

Andragogy concept and methods. Adult education policy planning documents on digital learning, learning approach, principles working with different ages adults, learning content, main learning messages importance, and visualization should build an interactive and engaging environment through innovative methods and tools. Digital tools will only be effective if they are used within the right frames and combined with andragogy theory. We should for instance understand that employing digital tools does not mean we need to constantly use them working with adults. The adult educator has to have digital competencies to use when it's needed to enrich learning activities.

Supportive learning environment. Digital platforms have also opened up enormous possibilities for collaborative learning. Both in formal and informal learning areas, we are seeing how learners communicate and learn from each other, with or without a discussion moderator. And fortunately, we are also seeing this happening among adult educators who are sharing in online communities of practice their experiences with the use of digital tools. We encourage this type of practice, create networks of networks, and identify the success criteria in the best examples.

Adult educators' team who are working in the area of digital competence focuses on adults at risk of social exclusion, particularly people on the margins, and older people who need to develop digital skills to keep their social relations and train their cognitive skills in a digital world. Adult educators working with vulnerable groups still lack digital tools which will help in involving more adults in the learning process. For adult educators are very important to use correct communication tools to reach adult learners' audience (basic principles of communication, effective communication tools, communication channels for reaching adult audiences in the regions) are important to build trust and encourage them to participate in digital learning activities.

SUMMARY

The program (Adult educators digital competencies development) has been designed to provide a common description of structure and understanding of digital online teaching and training in a variety of contexts for adult educators importance through andragogical approach. It provides the knowledge and understanding required to develop digital content and implementation of adult learning. Adult educators digital competencies should be at an advanced level to ensure inclusive, attractive, interactive adult learners' learning experience. Adult educator professional and digital skills competencies importance correlate with adult learners' engagement and motivation to follow online courses.

ANNEX 1
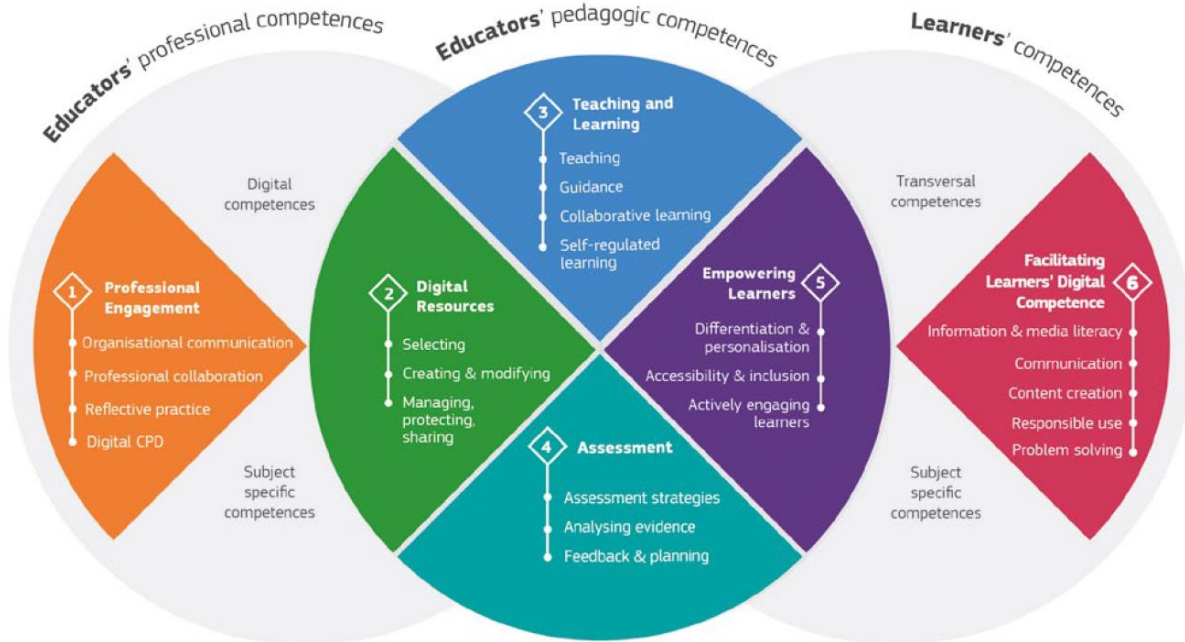
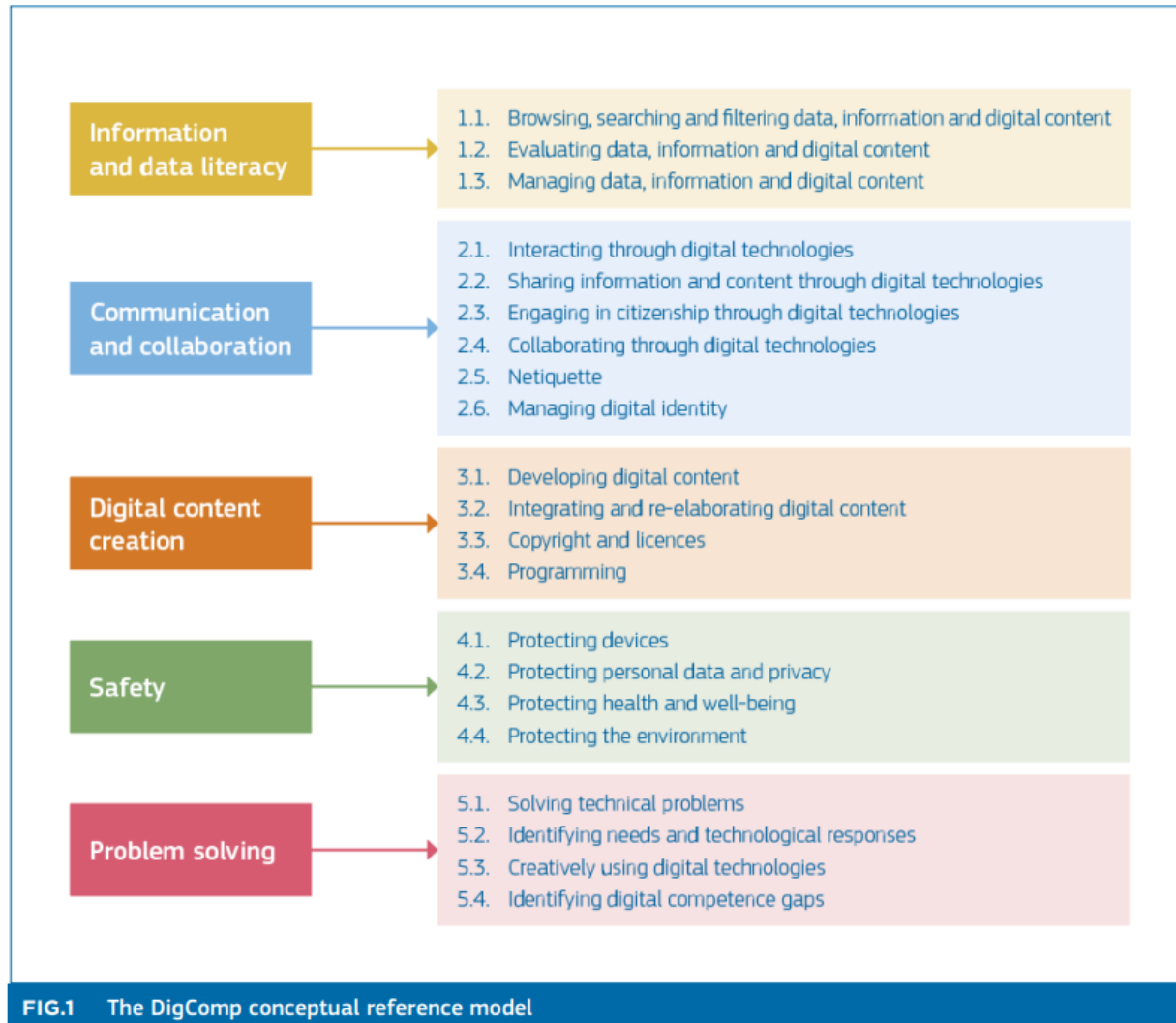**Synthesis of the digcompedu framework** created by Redecker, C. European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators: DigCompEdu. Punie, Y. (ed). EUR 28775 EN. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, ISBN 978-92-79-73494-6, doi:10.2760/159770, JRC107466

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ANNEX 2

Information and data literacy	1.1. Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content 1.2. Evaluating data, information and digital content 1.3. Managing data, information and digital content
Communication and collaboration	2.1. Interacting through digital technologies 2.2. Sharing information and content through digital technologies 2.3. Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies 2.4. Collaborating through digital technologies 2.5. Netiquette 2.6. Managing digital identity
Digital content creation	3.1. Developing digital content 3.2. Integrating and re-elaborating digital content 3.3. Copyright and licences 3.4. Programming
Safety	4.1. Protecting devices 4.2. Protecting personal data and privacy 4.3. Protecting health and well-being 4.4. Protecting the environment
Problem solving	5.1. Solving technical problems 5.2. Identifying needs and technological responses 5.3. Creatively using digital technologies 5.4. Identifying digital competence gaps

FIG.1   The DigComp conceptual reference model

Vuorikari, R., Kluzer, S. and Punie, Y., DigComp 2.2: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens - With new examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes, EUR 31006 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-48882-8 (online),978-92-76-48883-5 (print), doi:10.2760/115376 (online),10.2760/490274 (print), JRC128415

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ANNEX 3

Questionnaire - developing digital competences for adult educators

Adult education organizations from Lithuania and the Netherlands are implementing an international small partnership project aimed at helping adult educators to develop their digital competencies by combining them with andragogical principles. We kindly ask you to fill in the following questionnaire to find out about the learning needs and the level of digital competencies of adult educators. This questionnaire is anonymous and will be used to construct the training program.

The questionnaire will take approximately 3 minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance for your sincere answers.

Age**

18-29

30-55

56-62

63-75

75-85

85+

Gender*

Man

Woman

Other

Profile*

Adult educator

Learner

Which virtual tools do you use when working remotely?*

Your answer

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Are you missing practical tips on how to use digital tools when working with adults?*

Yes

No

Sometimes

Other

Do you use interactive digital tools in line with andragogical principles?*

Yes

No

Sometimes

I don't know

I didn't try

Which digital platform do you use most often?*

BlackBoard Collaborate

Canvas

Google Classroom

Google Meet

Skype

Zoom

MsTeams

Moodle

Social media („Youtube", „Facebook", „Instagram")

No one

Other...

Which digital platform do you use most often to supplement your training?*

Kahoot!

Mentimeter

Padlet

Socrative

Quizlet

Nearpod

No one

Other...

How much time per week do you spend using digital platforms?*

Less than 1 hour

1-2 hours

3-4 hours

5-7 hours

7-10 hours

+10

Rate the following statements from 0 to 4 (0 = "totally agree" ir 4 = "totally disagree").*

Use digital platforms in your daily work

It's easy to register or access digital platforms for training activities.

Use of digital platforms may cause problems due to connection failure or internet capacity issues, e.g. platform crash

Improvement of the teaching process through the use of virtual learning tools

The tendency to be distracted is reduced by online learning

Virtual education is more cost-effective and convenient than classroom teaching

Virtual education offers more time flexibility and personalization

Interacting and engaging with learners in digital sessions is as easy as in the classroom

Home learning is less stressful than classroom learning

Virtual education is more effective than on-site teaching

You use digital platforms in your daily work

It's easy to register or access digital platforms for teaching activities.

Using digital platforms can cause problems due to connection failure or internet capacity, e.g. platform crash

Improvement of the teaching process through the use of virtual learning tools

The tendency to be distracted is reduced by online learning

Virtual education is more cost-effective and convenient than classroom teaching

Virtual education offers more time flexibility and personalization

Interacting and engaging with learners in digital sessions is as easy as in the classroom

Home learning is less stressful than classroom learning

Virtual education is more effective than on-site teaching

How would you rate your digital skills?*

Beginner user

Advanced user

Advanced user

What do you think are the characteristics of effective virtual education?*

ANNEX 4

During January – February 2022 we conducted a survey to analyze the needs of adult educators' digital competencies development research. Improving digital competences of adult educators statistical study main results. Participated 156 respondents from Lithuania and the Netherlands.
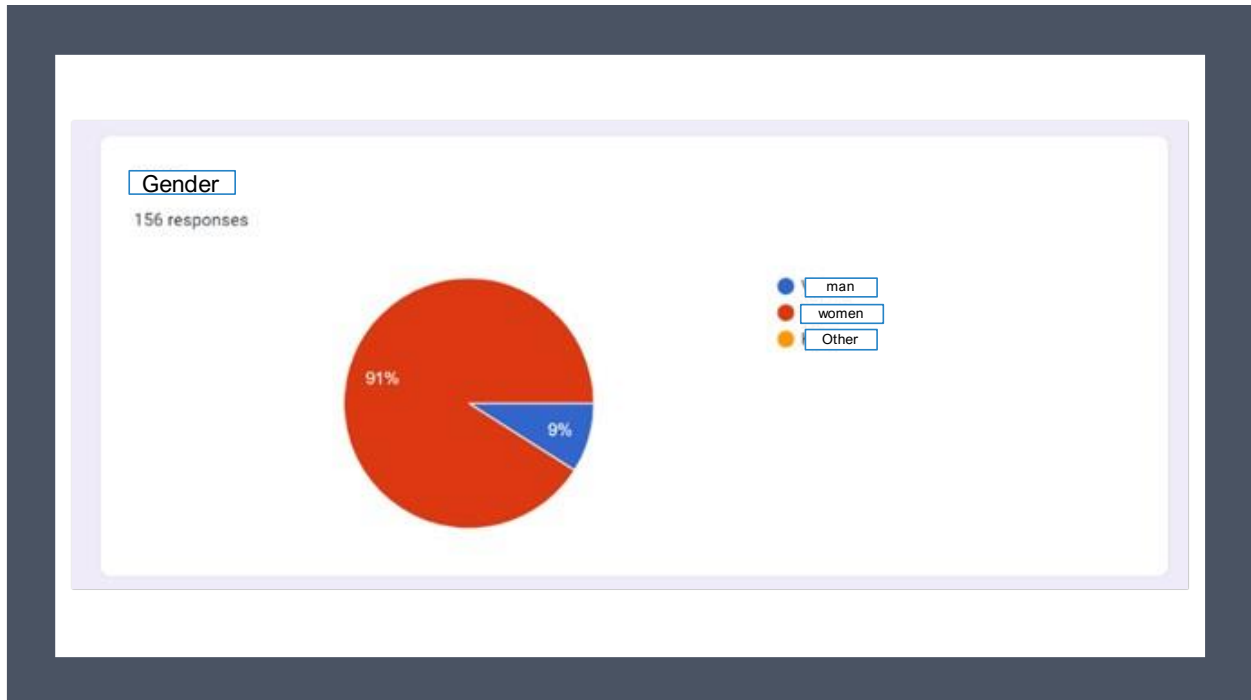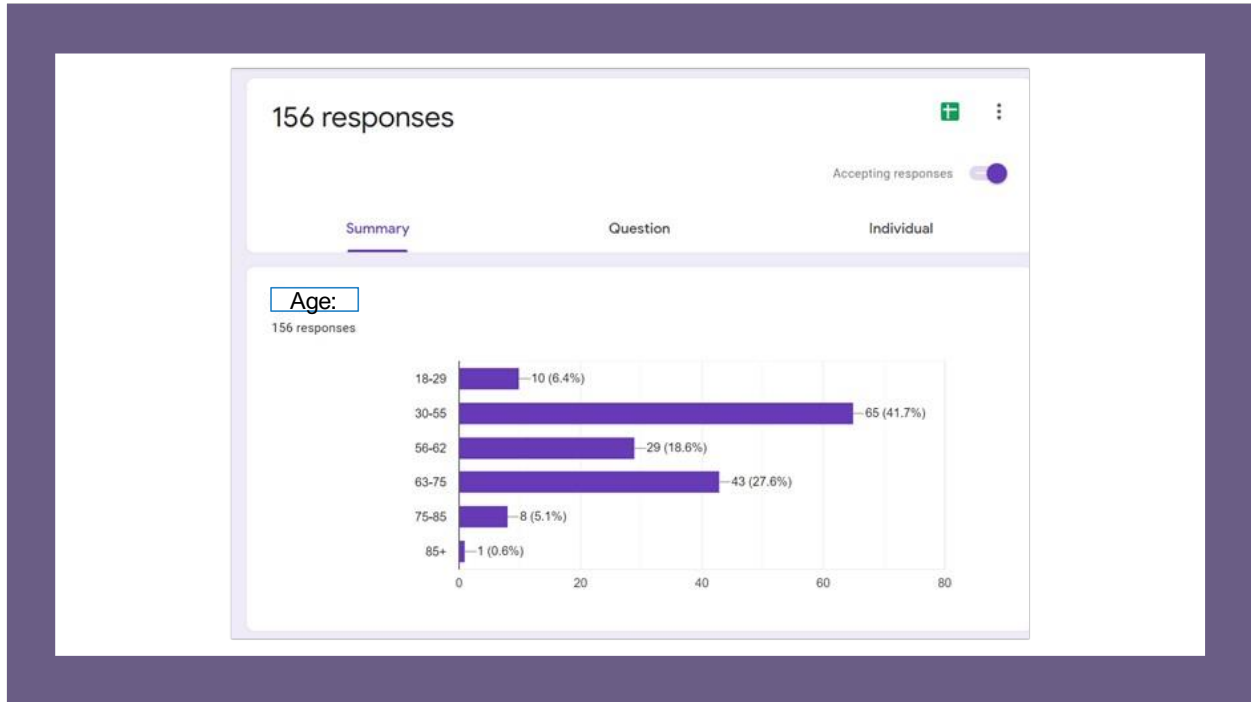
Summary of research

01
Majority (53%) lack practical advice on how to use digital tools when working with adults
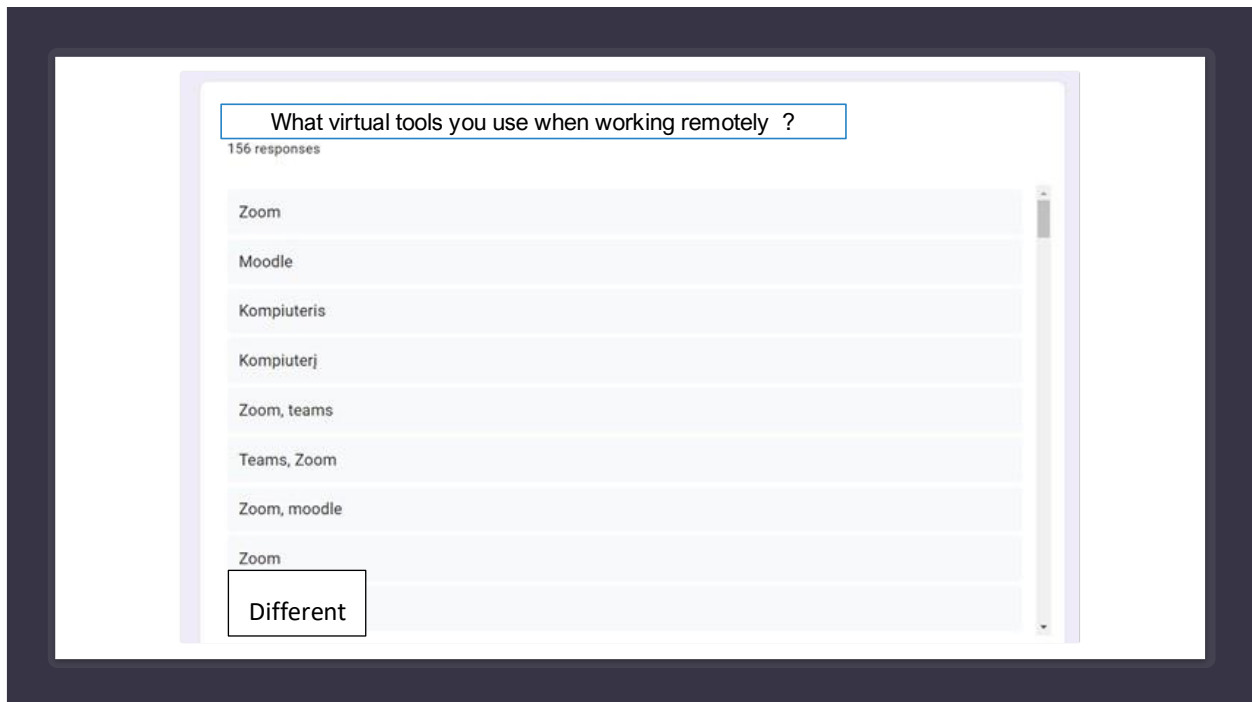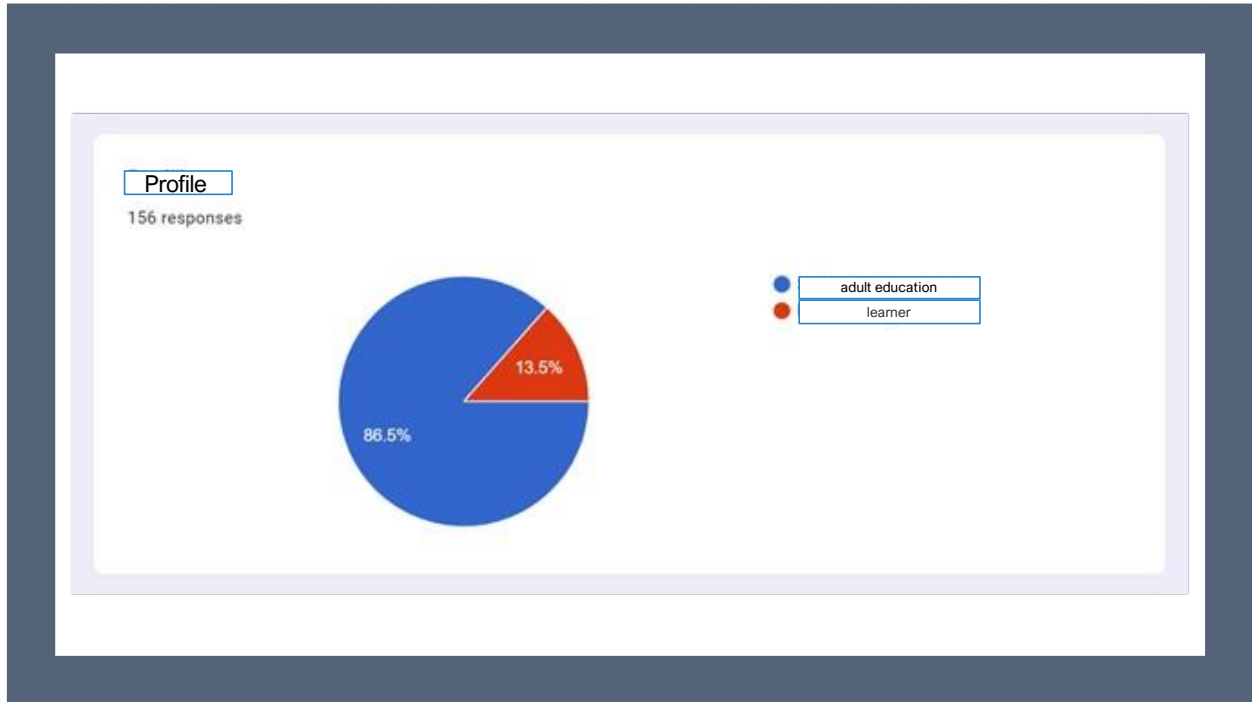
02
The majority (39%) use interactive digital tools based on andragogical principles

03
(55%) of respondents said they do not use any of the digital tools mentioned above

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156 responses

Summary   Question   Individual

Accepting responses

Age:

156 responses

Gender

156 responses

- man
- women
- Other

91%
9%

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Profile

156 responses

- adult education
- learner

13.5%

86.5%

What virtual tools you use when working remotely ?

156 responses

Zoom

Moodle

Kompiuteris

Kompiuterj

Zoom, teams

Teams, Zoom

Zoom, moodle

Zoom

Different

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Do you need practical advice on how to use digital tools when working with adults?

156 responses

- Yes
- no
- Not really
- another

30.8%
14.7%
53.8%
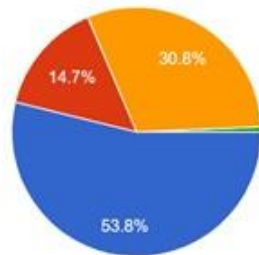
Are you using interactive digital tools guided by andragogic principles ?

156 responses

- yes
- no
- sometimes
- Dont know
- didn't try

30.1%
12.8%
10.9%
39.7%

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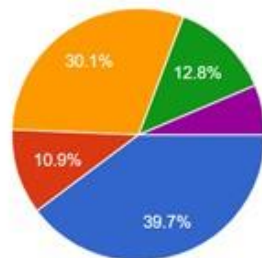
Which digital platform do you use most often?

156 responses

- BlackBoard Collaborate
- Canvas
- Google Classroom
- Google Meet
- Skype
- Zoom
- MsTeams
- Moodle

△ 1/2 ▼

25%

14.1%

10.9%

40.4%
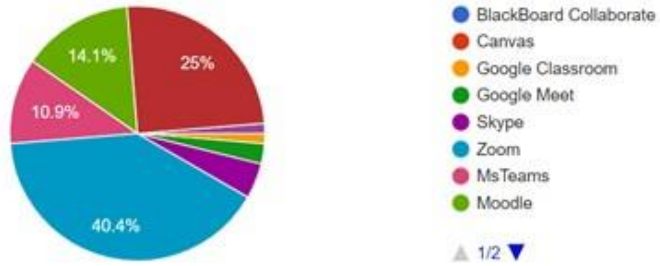
Which digital platform do you most often use as a supplement during training ?

155 responses

- Kahoot!
- Mentimeter
- Padlet
- Socrative
- Quizlet
- Nearpod
- Né vienas iš paminétų
- Kita

55.5%

12.9%

13.5%

10.3%

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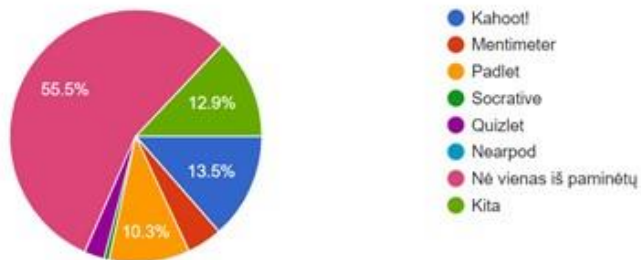
How much time per week do you spend using digital platforms ?

155 responses

Legend:
- Less then 1h
- 1-2h
- 3-4h
- 5-7h
- 7-10h
- 10+

15.5%
27.1%
35.5%
7.7%
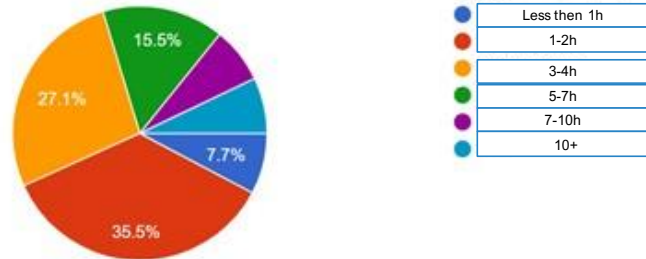
How would you rate your digital skills?

155 responses

Legend:
- Beginner user
- advanced user
- skilled user

65.8%
15.5%
18.7%

what are the characteristics of effective virtual education in your opinion ?

155 responses

- Dont know
- Dont know
- flexibility
- availability
- comfort
- -
- -
- good IT knowledge
- attractively presented learning material

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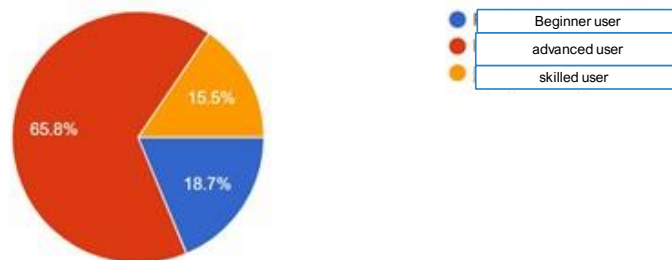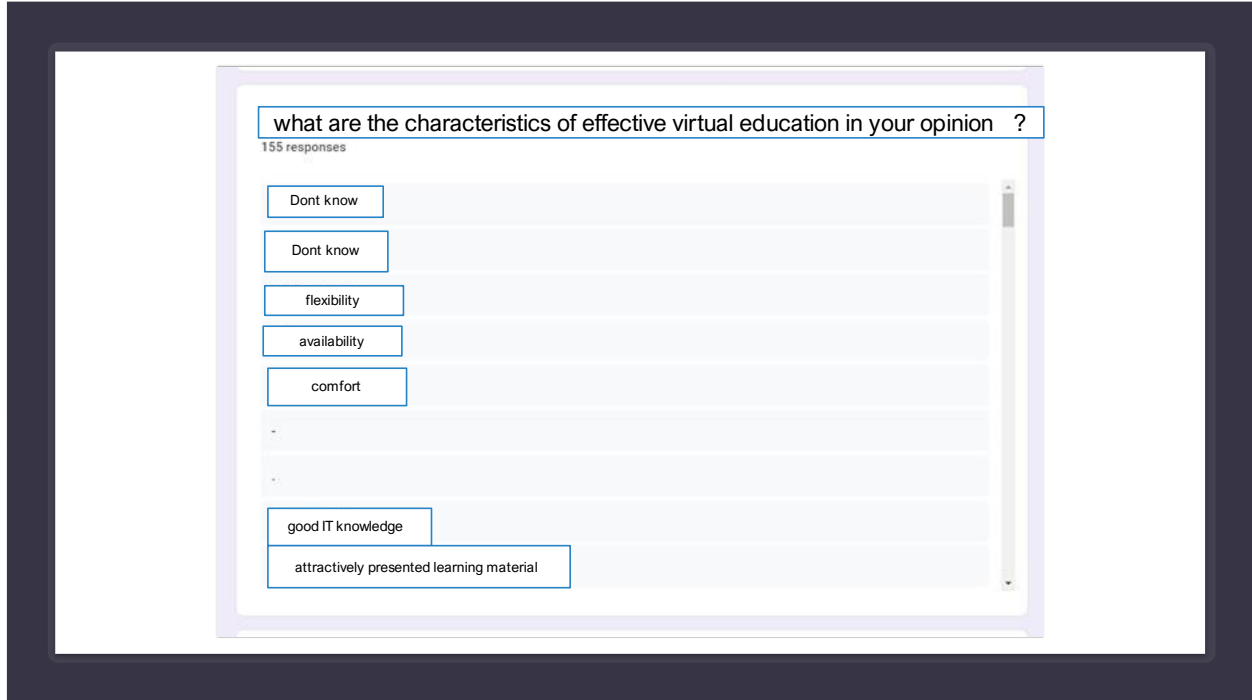
CONTACTS

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https://mmlsc.lt/

S.A.F.E.Projects

The Netherlands

https://safeprojects.eu/en/home-2/