



S4B Project - Digital Soft Skills for Blended Learning № 2021-1-BG01-KA220-SCH-000032462

NATIONAL FOCUS GROUP REPORT



A. Organisation:

*The national focus group took place on the 11th of February, 2022, **William Shakespeare** High School, Timișoara. There were 15 participants.*

*The purpose of this focus group was to analyse the findings in the questionnaire report, share own attitude, view and prior knowledge on the soft skills used in digital classes, to examine and conclude to a list of 12 most important soft skills in collaboration with **CPIP**, Timișoara.*

B. The topics of discussion-analysys of questionnaire results, a moderator's guided discussion on the challenges and difficulties during remote classes; questions about the soft skills that might meet the needs of digital learning.



Asked questions:

- ***What is your understanding of soft digital skills?***
- ***What are the positive aspects of hybrid classes?***
- ***What are the difficulties and challenges of online teaching?***
- ***To what extent can these soft skills solve the challenging situations in a digital learning process?***
- ***Compared to previous years, how hard was it to maintain interaction with your students?***
- ***What kind of effect is the current learning/teaching model having on your well-being, confidence and productivity as a teacher/educational expert?***
- ***How confident are you that you can provide effective instruction and support in the current learning/teaching model?***

C.Focus group details - The discussion lasted for 1h50min and the resources used were laptops, paper cards , pens, Focus group research report areas to cover and guidelines.

The activity started with the icebreaker ***Can you hear me***, during this stage the participants were invited to listen to online instructions so as to create a pattern(the project's logo) using colors, papers or word documents. Its target was to highlight struggles and challenges in digital activities and understands the need of soft skills to get the message through in remote or hybrid classes. The activity, also, aimed to raise awareness about the insufficiency of a blended approach in digital education.

During the second stage of this focus group, the participants were asked to watch a short video and point out the situations in the video they identify with or have experienced. Furthermore, they used the report list with the previous 20 soft skills to say which might have helped and why.

Being encouraged and supported by the moderator's questions and brief comments-***How difficult or easy is it for you to use the distance learning technology (computer, tablet, video calls, learning applications, etc.)? Do you process? Do you seek ways to improve your digital competences? What about "soft digital skills"?***-the participants performed an active role and said:



A Maths teacher" I guess the most challenging part during online classes was interaction; motivating our students to have their camera on all the time, to prevent them from switching it off or pointing it to the ceiling was a struggle. It was also difficult for most teachers to change all the teaching materials, there wasn't enough time! I consider myself lucky, though. I was able to work with my students on a platform where we have access to lots of materials created by other Maths teachers. I would say that a positive attitude and the management of relationships helped to a certain extent."

Another participant added: "It was difficult, but in a way I've discovered a path to keep them focused, interested and motivated. I teach Geography so, at some point, I asked them to prepare traditional dishes-I linked this task to teaching countries; they really enjoyed the activity and shared the tasty results with their family, so I guess being creative and innovative helped me a lot."

Feeling encouraged and motivated by the participants' contribution, other teachers expressed concern about the reliability of online testing:

"We all know they cheat in tests, parents are not helping either, on the contrary, so I tried to adjust and personalize the tests, make them about their lives. It worked."

A second teacher added: "Perseverance, this is what really worked for me. I rewarded each submitted task with one point. There was an improvement."

The participants mentioned space management as a further struggle to online teaching: "We were four in the house, two kids with their online classes, me and my husband with online jobs; we tried to keep a positive attitude and be creative. I remember at some point, teaching my English class from the kitchen, I dropped everything and switched on to real-time cooking, just to keep my students motivated, it worked."

A third teacher joined the dialogue, saying: „ In my case, there were animals, lots of them and Mine craft, so I've decided to encourage my students to use these in projects."

The moderator continued to ask questions and name other teachers to share their experience and opinion:

What do you see as the biggest challenges and difficulties involved in online teaching? What do you do in order to overcome them?



To this question, a PE teacher added: " In my case, there was the issues whether or not to lose the pyjamas. Seeing them so out of energy and confidence, I've decided to show empathy, to stay positive, to adjust and be creative. So, I allowed them to keep their pyjamas, bring their family and join in physical exercise. They considered this really fun. I think that being on top of a problem and trying to solve it, must lead to something."

As a last stage of this focus group, each participant was invited to join **menti** and add 2 most relevant soft skills needed in a pedagogical digital environment.

Below, there are the results generated in **menti**:



C. 13 teachers joined this focus group, used their prior knowledge, teaching experience to discuss and name 12 most important soft digital skills. They come from a variety of areas of study- Languages, Maths and Science, English, PE, Counselling, holding 5-15, 16—25, over 25 years of work experience.

D. Results: the answers of each participant were recorded by the assistant and they make the subject of this report.

The main challenges and difficulties teachers mentioned were: time spent to prepare online classes, adjusting teaching materials and methods, personalizing tests to prevent cheating. Teachers, also, voiced concerns over parents' interfering during online classes and organizing their teaching space at home.

Therefore, the participants listed **CREATIVITY, ADAPTABILITY, INNOVATION, POSITIVE ATTITUDE, EMPATHY, EFFECTIVE**

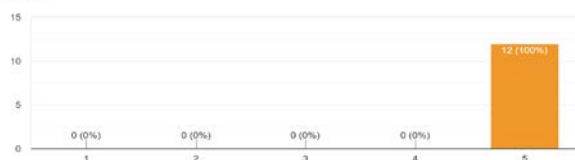


COMMUNICATOR, PERSEVERANCE, ACTIVE LISTENING, MOTIVATING TO DEVELOPMENT, OPENNESS TO DIVERSITY, PASSION AND SELF-MOTIVATION, PROBLEM SOLVING as 12 most important soft skills that might meet the needs of this new and demanding digital learning environment.

Each participant gave feedback on this focus group by submitting an activity questionnaire. The findings reveal the significant relevance of tackling challenges and difficulties of teaching in a digital context; along with the need of a thorough comprehension of these digital soft skill- a need that anticipates the next activity in this project.

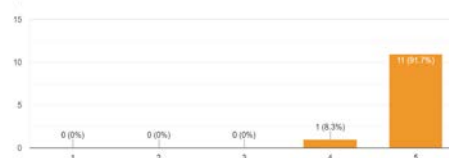
1. Obiectivele activității focus group au fost definite clar. The objectives of the focus group were clearly defined.

12 responses



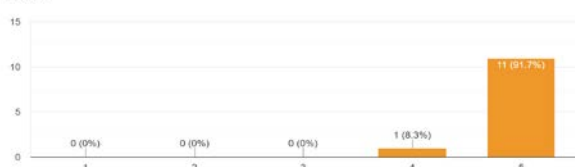
2. Au fost încurajate participarea activă și interacțiunea. Active contribution and interaction were encouraged.

12 responses



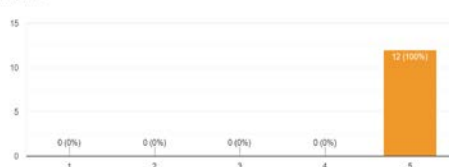
3. Conținutul și activitățile au fost organizate și ușor de urmărit. The content and the activities were well structured and easy to follow.

12 responses



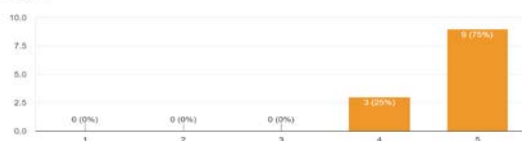
4. Situațiile problematice și provocările din procesul educativ digitalizat discutate sunt relevante activității mele la clasă. The difficulties and challenges discussed today are relevant to my work.

12 responses



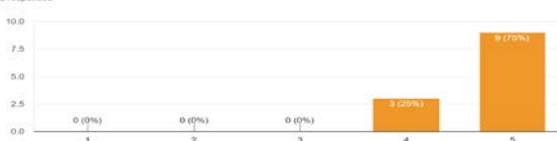
5. Activitatea a facilitat o mai bună înțelegere a competențelor soft din predarea digitalizată. The activity enabled a better understanding of digital soft skills.

12 responses



6. Percepțiile, crezul, experiența și atitudinea participanților, privind rolul competențelor soft, vor avea impact pozitiv asupra experienței mele de predă...skills will have a positive impact on my teaching.

12 responses



C. Conclusion: a list of 12 most important soft skills, needed to develop a good pedagogical work in a virtual environment, was created.

Moderator: Ploesteanu Ioana

Head Teacher

Tache Marian

Project coordinator

Mal Andreea

MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI NAȚIONALE
LICEUL TEORETIC „WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE”



300092, TIMIȘOARA, str. I.L.CARAGIALE, nr. 6
www.williamshakespeare.ro
e-mail: secretariat@williamshakespeare.ro
tel: +40 256 201 247, fax: +40 256 435 188



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S4B-DIGITAL SOFT SKILLS FOR BLENDED LEARNING

REPORT

R1-Discovering the way - Initial analysis of the most important digital soft skills

This report illustrates some teachers' perspectives, beliefs and prior experiences on the 20 most important soft digital skills needed to develop a good pedagogical work in a virtual environment. A specifically designed online survey was administered to a number of 10 teachers in our school and to external teachers, on the 26-28th of January 2022, and a comparative analysis of the responses is going to be conducted, during a **national focus group** in collaboration with CPIP in February 2022, to examine and conclude to a list of 12 such skills.

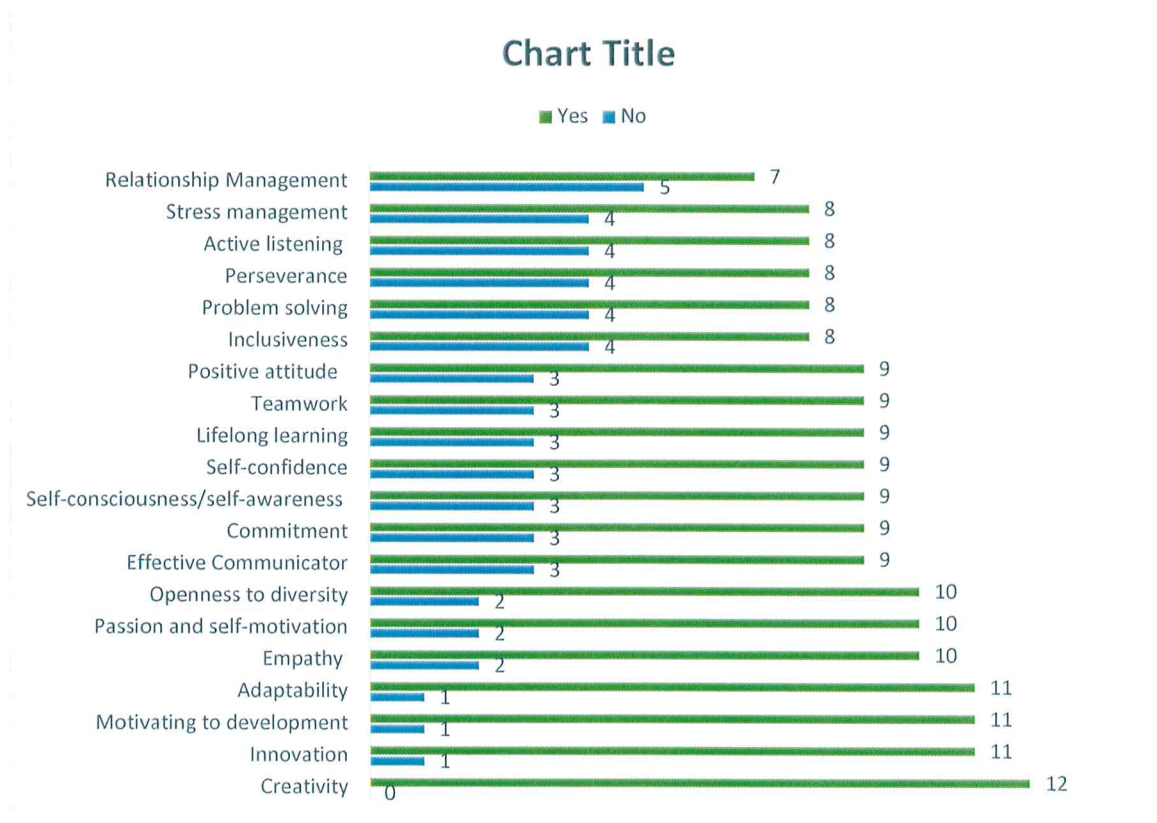
The questionnaire comprises 32 questions of one type of dual choice answers that encompass terminology and definitions in English on the most important soft digital skills required in a pedagogical digital work. In order to meet the language needs of all the teachers taking part in the survey, during an online meet, 4 English teachers from our school's English department, were able to support and translate when needed.

Furthermore, to obtain detail on the most important soft skills applied in digital classes, one can observe the answers indicating a prominent belief that **creativity, innovation, motivating to development and adaptability** are the skills most desired; 11 out of 12 teachers stated this.

Most of the answers deal with a number of 10 to 9 teachers' common choice on **empathy, passion and motivation, openness to diversity, effective communicator, commitment, self-awareness, self-confidence, lifelong learning, teamwork and positive attitude** as further soft skill required in a digitalised educational context.

So as to complete the task of this initial analysis on 20 most important soft skills, a number of 8 to 7 teachers decided upon **inclusiveness, problem solving, perseverance, active listening, stress and relationship management.**

As a final reflection on the digital soft skills used during the educational process, we may observe that **observation, self-leadership, resilience, proactiveness** were not included on the chart below.



Head Teacher,

Tache Marian



Project coordinator

Mal Andreea