RE-EDUCO

REthinking EDUcation COmpetencies. Expertise, best practices and teaching in Digital Era

IO2 - Excellence in teaching, learning and skills development

A6.3 – Training course for teachers – Implementation and evaluation

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Date: 3/12/2021

HELLENIC OPEN UNIVERSITY

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RE-EDUCO - REthinking EDUcation COmpetencies. Expertise, best practices and teaching in Digital Era
2020-1-IT02-KA201-079433 | Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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Acknowledgements

Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

The RE-EDUCO project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

How to cite this report:

IO2 - Excellence in teaching, learning and skills development, A6.3 – Training course for teachers – Implementation and evaluation, RE-EDUCO Consortium. Rome, DITES Research Centre, Link Campus University.

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1. Introduction

Digitalization of educational practices stands high on policy agendas at European and national levels. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the largest disruption of education in history having an impact on learners and trainers in all levels and types of education. This conjuncture greatly accelerated the digital transformation of all educational institutes requiring a transition to online learning models and tools. However, the educational staff and particularly those that teach more theoretical topics do not necessarily have the appropriate ICT knowledge and skills to successfully support online training. Successful online training is not only accomplished by using online educational methods and tools such as interactive platforms, videos, web conferencing tools, online creation of assignments and quizzes or the selection of high quality online educational resources. It is the appropriate online delivery pedagogy that engages students through online learning.

In this context, the RE-EDUCO project encourages the production, experimentation and sharing of new approaches and training methods in the field of digital culture. It enhances the role of digital culture improving the possibilities for growth and exchange, widening the choices for young people in private and professional life.

Being part of a comprehensive work plan, the RE-EDUCO online training course for teachers aimed to address potential digital skills shortages and improve the capacities of the educational staff in effectively incorporating innovative online training approaches and tools.

2. RE-EDUCO training course for teachers

The RE-EDUCO training course for teachers was delivered online in four (4) two-hour online sessions from 18/10/2021 to 8/11/2021. It included 6 training modules:

- Module 1 – Student Centred Learning Techniques
- Module 2 – Peer Assisted Learning Strategies
- Module 3 – Technology Enhanced Assessment
- Module 4 – Technology Enhanced Learning Tools
- Module 5 – Module Design – Carpe Diem Workshops
- Module 6 – Managing RPL Assessments and Portfolios

We have also developed an assignment which should be implemented in groups and was mandatory for receiving the certificate for successfully completing the RE-EDUCO training course for teachers. The required study time for the assignments is estimated to be 4 hours.

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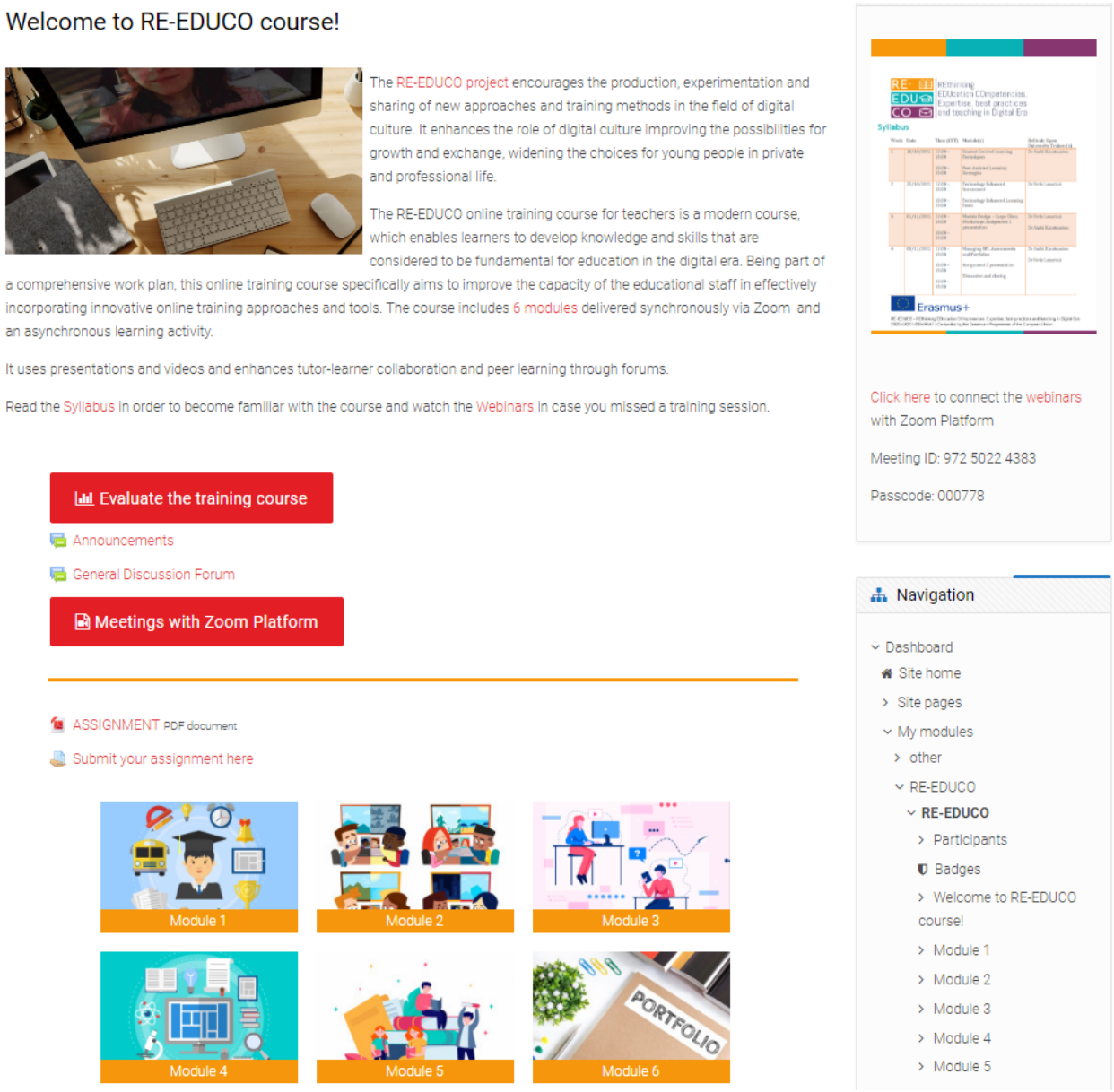
The training course was realized via a fully online learning model in English without having an enrollments cap. There were no prerequisites and was free of charge. Digital learning material was developed for the training modules, which was made available through the RE-EDUCO e-learning platform[1]. Figure 1 depicts the home page of the RE-EDUCO training course. Participants were able to navigate to the training modules, in order to read their descriptions and learning objectives and study the learning material (see Figure 2 for training module 1).

Figure 1: RE-EDUCO training course for teachers home page



[1] https://elearning.daissy.eu/course/index.php?categoryid=1

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Figure 2: Training module 1 information

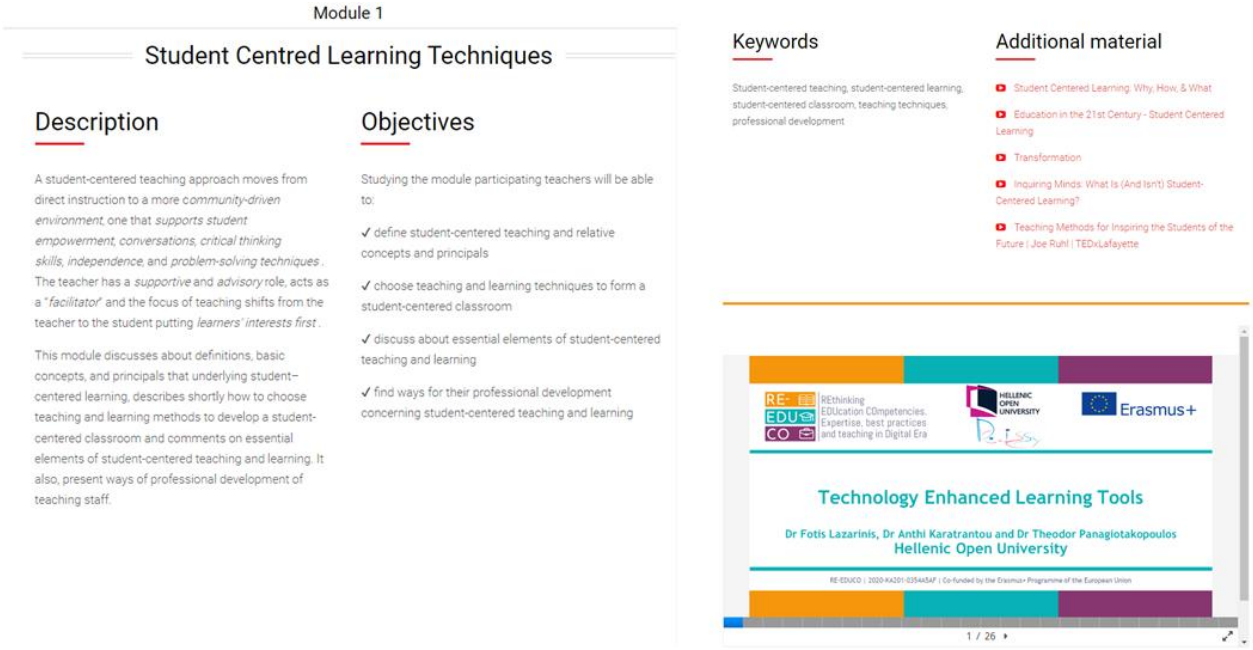

Table 1 shows the syllabus of the training course.

Table 1. Syllabus of the RE-EDUCO training course for teachers

Week	Date	Time (CET)	Module(s)	Hellenic Open University Trainer(s)
1	18/10/2021	17:00 – 18:00 18:00 – 19:00	Student Centred Learning Techniques Peer Assisted Learning Strategies	Dr Anthi Karatrantou
2	25/10/2021	17:00 – 18:00 18:00 – 19:00	Technology Enhanced Assessment Technology Enhanced Learning Tools	Dr Fotis Lazarinis
3	01/11/2021	17:00 – 18:00 18:00 – 19:00	Module Design – Carpe Diem Workshops Managing RPL Assessments and Portfolios Description of the Assignment	Dr Anthi Karatrantou Dr Fotis Lazarinis
4	08/11/2021	17:00 – 19:00 19:00 – 19:30	Assignments presentation Discussion and closing	Dr Anthi Karatrantou Dr Fotis Lazarinis

The course addressed professionals in the field of education including teachers, educators, facilitators and tutors in secondary and higher education, as well as vocational education and

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training. Interested candidates should fill a registration form[2] by 14 October 2021, 23:59 CET. Table 2 shows the final list of applicants per partner-country.

Table 2. RE-EDUCO training course registrations

Country	Registrations	Total
Greece	539	**653 registrations**
Italy	40	
Cyprus	45	
Spain	23	
Finland	6	

Table 3 shows the number of people who succesfully completed the RE-EDUCO training course, along with the number of teams that were created to realize the assignment per partner country.

Table 3. RE-EDUCO training course successful completions

Country	No of people	No of teams	Total
Greece	188	64	**214 people**
Italy	14	5	
Cyprus	9	3	
Spain	3	1	
Finland	-	-	

3. Evaluation methodology

To evaluate the course and its basic dimensions such as, e-learning platform, learning contentcourse structuring and learning experience of the participants, as well as acheivement learning outcomes, two approaches were used:

a. Assignments for evaluation of the learners

b. An anonymized online questionnaire for evaluation of the course and the platform.

[2] https://forms.gle/dEn6NXUXSaoXqy3i8

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3.1 Learners evaluation

Assignments were employed to evaluate whether learners achieved the course's learning outcomes and to what extent. Participants were invited to create groups of 3 or 4 persons and to work collaboratively for the assignment. The assignment description is given below:

RE-EDUCO project - Assignment

Description:

The aim of this assignment is to design a lesson plan for one of the subjects you teach. Within this lesson plan you should describe one teaching activity using techniques and tools you became familiar with during the seminar.

The assignment should have two parts:

In the first part you should define the title, the subject(s), the objectives, the duration, the age of the students, the techniques that you will use, describe the stages/phases of the teaching activity and design one or more assessment activities. You should describe what will happen in each stage/phase of the lesson and to include one or more tools.

In the second part you have to use one of the tools that you mention in the first part of the assignment and develop a short learning or assessment activity.

Deliverables

The deliverable should be a PDF which will include your lesson plan as well as the names and the mails of the team members.

For the second part you can include screens of the learning/assessment activity or simply a link if the activity is online.

During the last meeting participants were invited to present their work and to discuss with their peers.

3.2 Course and platform evaluation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the online course we designed an anonymized electronic questionnaire[3] (see Table 4) which researched the opinions of the participants who complete the course. The questionnaire contained questions about the demographics (sex, occupation, ict skills), the platform, the content and organization and the learning experience. Most of the questions were in a 5-Likert scale. Below we provide the questions of the questionnaire.

[3] https://forms.gle/AnTBsq8EWYdDnbsi6

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Table 4. Survey structure

No	Description	Type
Platform		
Q1	The course platform was easy to use	5-Likert
Q2	The organization of the course in the platform was clear	5-Likert
Q3	The platform options were consistent	5-Likert
Course content and organization		
Q4	The overall objectives of the course were clearly stated	5-Likert
Q5	The content was presented in a clear and comprehensible manner	5-Likert
Q6	The learning materials were interesting	5-Likert
Q7	The course covered contemporary topics	5-Likert
Q9	The assessments activities helped me to gain a clearer understanding of the learning materials	5-Likert
Q10	The topics were relevant to my work	5-Likert
Q11	The workload was in line with my expectations	5-Likert
Overall learning experience		
Q12	The course was engaging	5-Likert
Q13	I enjoyed the course	5-Likert
Q14	Overall, I feel like I achieved my personal goals for this course	5-Likert
Q15	Additional comments	Open

4. Evaluation results

4.1 Comments on Teachers'(Learners') Assignments

Seventy-three (73) working groups were created and seventy-three (73) lesson plans were uploaded on the course platform.

Most of the lesson plans were interdisciplinary as the team members had different specialties. They utilized educational methods, approaches and techniques included in modules 1, 2, 5, and 6 as well as tools included in modules 3 and 4.

The most common Student-Centered Learning Techniques they used were *Buzz groups (short discussion in twos), Snowballing (turning buzz groups into larger groups), Cross-overs (mixing students into groups), Quizzes, Writing reflections on learning (duration of 3-4 minutes), Student*

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presentations, Poster presentations, Students producing mind-maps, Group discussion, Team work, Debates, Writing media articles.

They also used Peer Assisted Learning Strategies such as *Peer Assisted Learning, Peer Assisted Teaching, Reciprocal Peer Assisted learning, Collaborative learning*.

The most common assessment tools they used were *Quizzes, tests, Concept Maps, Knowledge Surveys, Portfolios, Oral or Poster Presentations, Rubrics and Peer Review.*

The most common technology enhanced tools they used were *Hot Potatoes, Quizzes with Google Forms, Kahoot, Online Quiz Creator, H5P, MindMup.*

They also used tools such as *Webex, Edmodo, Animoto, Kahoot, Padlet, Quizlet, Quizizz, Gimkit, Scratch* to organize learning activities for their students.

During the voluntary presentation of assignments, substantive discussions between the participants with strong interaction took place.

The quality of the assignments as well as the discussions between the participants showed the interest of the participants for the course content and their willing to learn new methods, techniques, and tools.

4.2 Course evaluation results

Although the course evaluation questionnaire was not compulsory so as not to cause any additional workload to the participants, the participants were strongly advised to complete the course. 169 of the 214 participants who completed the course filled voluntarily the questionnaire and expressed their opinions. The high participation shows an increased interest of the participants.

Figures 3 and 4, show that the majority of the respondents were in-service teachers, within the age group of 35-50 and females. This distribution of results shows that in-service teachers who most probably serve for several years in schools, are in need of seminars on contemporary ICT topics.

Figure 3: Occupations of respondents

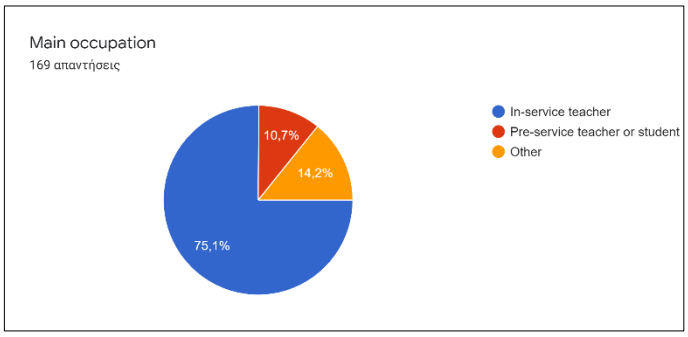
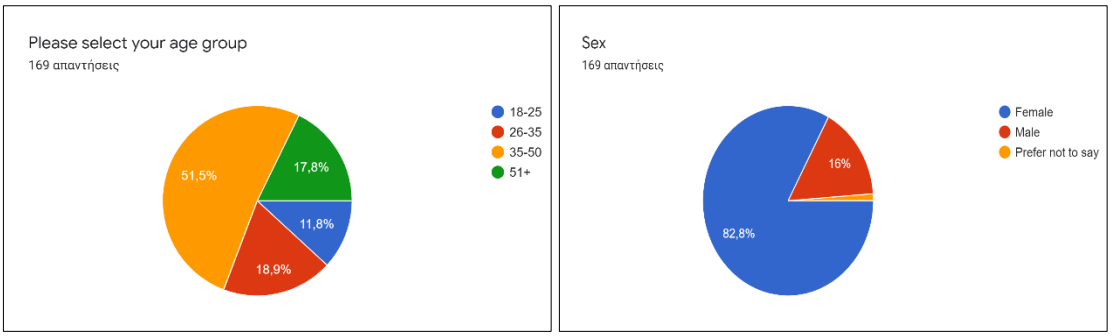


Figure 4: Age distribution and sex of respondents



As we see in Figure 5, most of the respondents had a high initial ICT usage expertise. Based on our experience, the teachers who serve in the schools or yearn to became teachers, have attended many educational activities related to ICT either in the University or in other adult training actions. Therefore, it can be argued that they need more contemporary and advanced ICT topics to enhance their teaching activities.

Figure 5: Initial ICT skills of the respondents

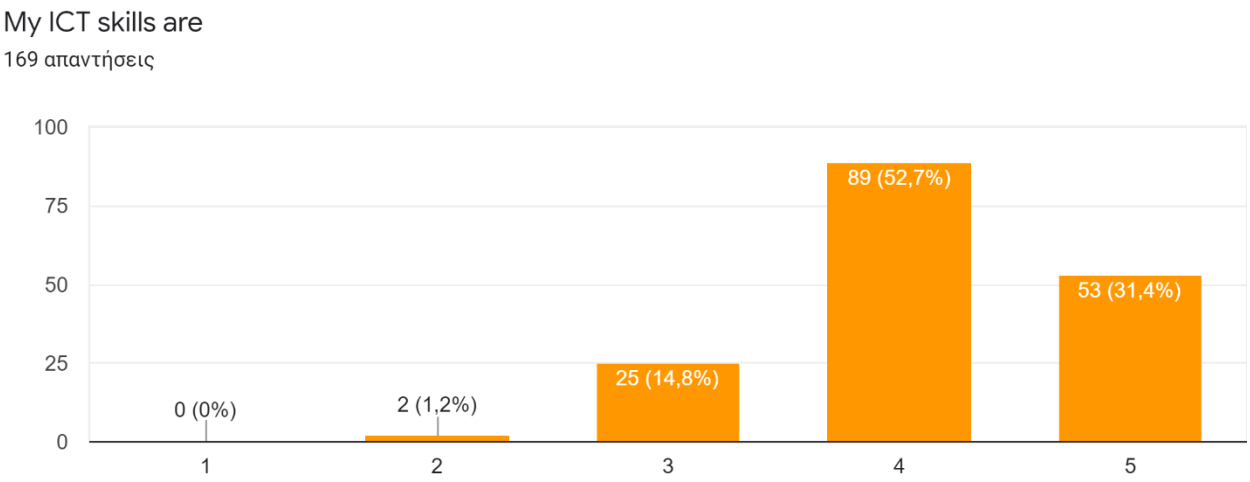


Figure 6 portrays the results to the questions which concern the platform:

Q1. The course platform was easy to use

Q2. The organization of the course in the platform was clear

Q3. The platform options were consistent

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Figure 6: Evaluation results for the platform

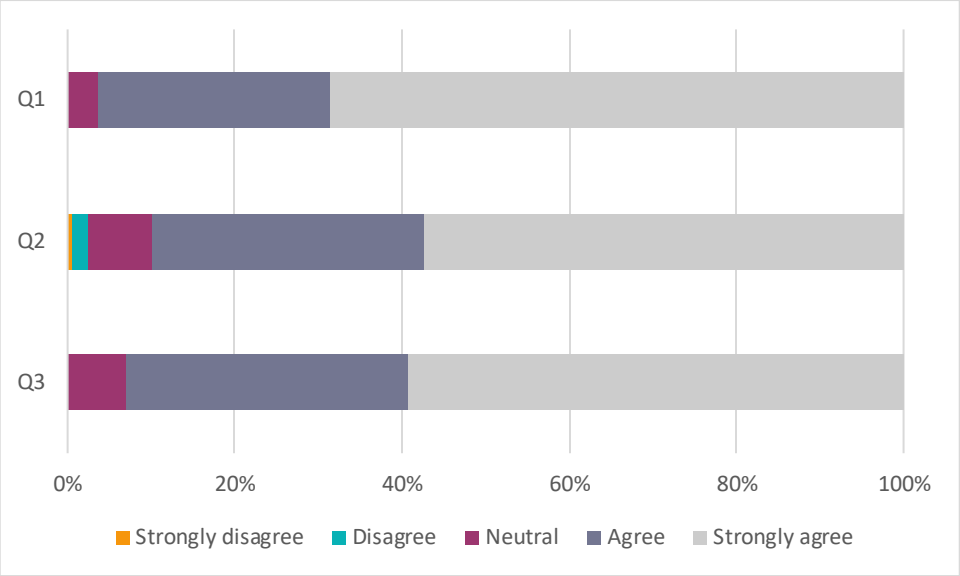

Figure 7 shows the results to the following questions which concern the organization of the course, the learning materials and the role of the trainers.

Q4. The overall objectives of the course were clearly stated

Q5. The content was presented in a clear and comprehensible manner

Q6. The learning materials were interesting

Q7. The course covered contemporary topics

Q8. The assessments activities helped me to gain a clearer understanding of the learning materials

Q9. The topics were relevant to my work

Q10. The workload was in line with my expectations

Q11. The trainer supported the learning process efficient

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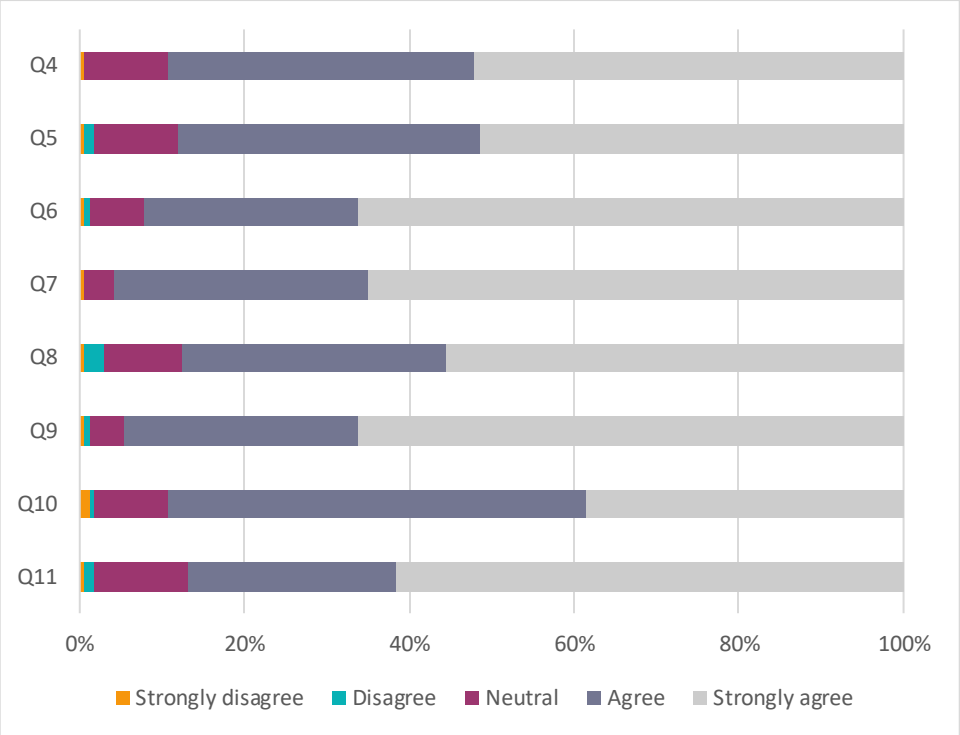
Figure 7: Evaluation results for the content and the organization of the course



Looking at Figures 6 and 7, it is clear that the respondents were satisfied with the platform of the course and almost all agree/strongly agree (approx. 86% to 96%) that the course covered contemporary topics which presented in a comprehensible manner, they were relevant to their work duties and the role of the trainer was quite supportive.

The last three closed-end questions were:

Q12. The course was engaging

Q13. I enjoyed the course

Q14. Overall, I feel like I achieved my personal goals for this course

Again, the responses were positive (agree/strongly agree) towards these statements with percentages exceeding 85%.

There was a last free text question where the participants could express provide additional comments. We had 33 answers and they contained mainly positive comments for the course, and some suggestions about future learning actions. We quote some of them, as an indication of the responses filled in the questionnaire.

"Great work. I would be happy to attend more courses by you in the future!"

"Ευχαριστούμε, αναμένουμε το επόμενο!"

"Corso esaustivo ed eccellente"

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5. Concluding remarks

The RE-EDUCO training course included various contemporary topics with regards to digital technologies in education attracting a very high number of registrations. In fact, course enrollments reached to 653 exceeded the project's goal (n=100) by far. The big amount of participants led us to change our initial training plan, in which we had foreseen two group assignments. In order to provide adequate feedback to all learners and be able to present selected assignments, we reduced the assignments to one. Thus, we managed to devote sufficient time to highlight good practices and give the floor to learners to share their thoughts and experiences during the final online session.

The results of the course evaluation were quite positive and encouraging. The course covered contemporary topics relevant to the teaching duties of the teachers. This is very important, because as it was stated by the participants, they already had adequate ICT skills prior to the course. Teachers believed that the course was well organized and the assessment activities helped them gain a better understanding of the learning materials. In the final free text comments, some asked for more interactive activities and more interaction with the other trainees. This was partly facilitated through the collaborative final project assignments, but with a more manageable number of participants more collaborative activities could be completed during the training sessions.

It is worth to notice that most of the lesson plans included in the assignments were interdisciplinary and teachers utilized educational methods, approaches and techniques included in the course modules. The quality of the lesson plans and the discussions between the participants showed the interest of the participants for the course content and their willing to learn new methods, techniques, and tools.

During the last session, several of the participants expressed their interest to present their assignments to the class. This is very important and should be enabled in every teacher training activity, as it helps students to evolve professionally, to discuss their work with other teachers and in general to become skillful in their work. In our course, a small number of presentations was finally possible, due to time restrictions. But teachers were asked, should they want, to share their works in the forum of the course. That way a pool of ready-to-use lesson plans will be developed and an informal community of practice will be initiated. Through the feedback and the discussions with colleagues, these teaching resources can be improved, and the communication and technical skills of the teachers will be further developed.

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