Teach2Learn

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Teachers Training Piloting Report

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Impressum

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About the Teach2Learn Project

Project objectives are focused on equipping teachers, parents and students from minority, migrant or refugee background from Austria, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Luxembourg and Turkey with innovative methodology, interactive resources and pedagogical instruments based on gamification for teaching and learning reading comprehension skills in the official language of the country, thus increasing the quality of learning and the access to affordable and high-quality education.

The project activities include development of assessment tools for teachers 'training needs, training program providing skills for teaching reading comprehension skills to students grade 2th to 4th, and development of interactive platforms with practical and user-friendly resources involving teachers, parents and students. It will also develop and upload a database of videos demonstrating practical use of the project resources. Wide promotion of all the project products will be implemented.

The project will aid teachers to achieve high quality in the teaching process and support their students more effectively in order to overcome their learning disadvantages thus preventing the early school leaving. It will give further opportunities and will build resources that will strengthen expertise of the participating organizations and will be a step further into their experience in working in cooperation with other EU organizations to address common issues.

Objectives

The present report is part of the Work package II and gathers information provided by all partners of our project Teach2Learn on the skills and training needs of 2th to 4th grade teachers, teaching reading comprehension to students whose mother language is different from the official language of each of the partner countries.

The information gathered is summarized in the following report and will be used as a basis for the development of a methodological assessment tool with assessment scale reflecting the competences teachers need, the teachers self - assessment card, training program and the selection of texts and exercises organized in the Storyboard complementing the training program.

Logistics of the Piloting in partner countries

Teachers training piloting was conducted in each partner country throughout the period November 2023 till February 2024. The main objective of the piloting process of the Teachers training programme was the evaluation of the programme through the participation of teachers and pedagogical advisors who teach reading comprehension to students of 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of Primary School. Summarized information for the different logistics of the pilotings were provided in regards to the audience (number, profiles) that was reached, modality of organization (F2F, online, organizational approach) and form of organization (dates, times, sessions, agenda).

In Bulgaria, the Teachers training program and the Assessment tool together were all send out to the selected participants two months in advance so that they all got familiar with their content. Teachers

were encouraged to try some or all of the instruments in class so that meaningful discussions are held on the piloting itself.

The main audience reached by the partnership was primary school teachers with a few exceptions like a person that worked for a textbook publisher and retired teacher who helps primary school children with their homework. Fruitful discussions on the content of the program, its practicality and usefulness were always main part of the agenda and the preferred modality was face to face, althou due to teacher's schedules, some partners had to conduct additional online sessions to reach their targets.

Feedback from the participants

The overall feedback that was received by the teachers in regards to the Teachers training program was really positive. Many discussions were held in each partner's country to see an in-depth implementation opportunities and ensure the high motivation of teachers to use the method in their classroom and ensure they find the program practical. Main point of the collected input is that most of the primary school teachers found the program can address the needs and challenges they face in their everyday work and are willing to use the methodology in their classroom.

A specially made evaluation instrument was composed consisting of questions designed to collect data on each participant's assessment of the Training Programme on different factors: innovation, appropriateness, usefulness, replicability and expected impact.

1. Innovation of the training program

In all partner countries the Teachers training program was rated as highly innovative as it provides a unique combination of tools and methodologies that help discover the gaps in the teacher's knowledge and skills. Some of the important notes received are:

- ,,The program reflects the modes of assessment laid down in the Assessment tool, including both methodologies of teacher's assessment and training, to close the gaps in their knowledge and skills.'' (Portugal)
- ,,Teachers say that the added value of this training program lies in its comprehensive and innovative methodology, which combines the assessment tool modes and methodologies to bridge the gaps in the teacher's knowledge and skills.'' (Portugal)
- ,,The training programme has been perceived as innovative by the participants, who highlighted its practical approach and the incorporation of specific strategies to improve students' reading comprehension. The sequence and design of the modules were positively valued, as they allowed for a logical progression and a better assimilation of the concepts presented.'' (Spain)

Evaluation of Module 1 - Visualization

The feedback received from different teachers for the first module of the program was overall very positive and useful. Althou in some countries, like Austria and Bulgaria, the participants were already familiar with these techniques, all teachers agreed that Vizualization is very important for the students

in regards to their comprehension of the studies material. "When children visualize while reading, they can create mental images of the text, which can enhance their understanding of the material and get a sense of the main ideas, characters, settings, and events." (Turkey) In this regards", the general feedback provided was, that the choice of materials for this Module was diverse and suitable for the students." (Bulgaria) Teachers from the piloting in Spain "commented that the inclusion of writing and drawing techniques as part of the visualization process was especially helpful for students who learn more visually." (Spain) "In short, the innovative aspect of the visualization strategy lies in its simplified, practical, inclusive and participatory, dynamic and interactive side." (Luxembourg)

An important note was made that particularly with the 2nd grade pupils, it might be helpful to prepare the mind maps in advance, including the branches, so that the students only have to add the relevant information. A second improvement recommendation was suggested: "more guidance could be provided on how to teach students to visualize effectively, as well as more examples and visual resources to support the implementation of this strategy in the classroom." (Spain)

Evaluation of Module II - Prediction

The second module of the program was perceived as very innovative and a great alternative to the more traditional methods used in classrooms. It was also rated as stimulating children's creativity, curiosity and team play, which are really needed in todays world. "Overall, this module offers innovative ways to encourage students to make predictions and engage with the text before they start reading, leading to deeper comprehension." (Portugal) "These predictions can help guide students reading and focus their attention on relevant information. Moreover, asking questions helps engage students critical thinking skills and encourages active participation in the reading process in the classroom." (Turkey)

In addition, in parnners countries, teachers shared that using the strategy of prediction and the provided excersises in this module has a huge impact on childrens social behavior development. For example, in Austria the feedback received was: "The opportunity to carry out the prediction exercises as a team was seen as an excellent way of developing the children's social skills."

Input was received as well in regards to the teacher's abilities to use practically Module 2 and the shared feedback was:

- ,,Feedback from participants indicates a heightened confidence in implementing these techniques, which will undoubtedly enrich students' learning experiences." (Bulgaria)
- ,,Depending on the nature of the text (simple text, text with images), the teacher can decide in advance the skills he would like to encourage in his students as well as the elements of the text he would like to highlight and define and he configuration (grouping of students) he would like to have during the activity. In addition, it offers several possibilities for handling the text for the teacher and for student participation." (Luxembourg)
- ,,After experiencing in the more structured way of Module 2, our teachers shared that they feel more empowered to create dynamic and interactive learning environments for their students. Feedback from participants indicates a heightened confidence in implementing these techniques, which will undoubtedly enrich students' learning experiences." (Bulgaria)

An improvement recommendation was received from our Spanish partner: An innovative proposal for the prediction module could be the incorporation of interactive technology, such as mobile applications or online platforms, which would allow learners to practice the prediction strategy in a more dynamic and autonomous way. For example, an application could be developed that presents

students with a series of short texts and guides them through interactive prediction exercises, providing immediate feedback on the accuracy of their predictions and offering personalized recommendations to improve their reading comprehension skills.

Evaluation of Module III - Making connections

The techniques used in this module are rated as innovative and incredibly useful by the participating teachers in partner's countries.

In regards to the positives experiences by the students, some of the feedback was:

- „These techniques allow students to connect their prior knowledge and experiences with the text they are reading, thereby promoting engagement, critical thinking, and deeper understanding." (Portugal)
- „The practical applications in the classroom enabled the pupils to expand their cognitive skills and develop a deeper understanding of the topics covered." (Austria)
- „Students can think about how the themes or messages in the text reflect or comment on broader aspects of society and can pay attention to their emotional responses to the text and how they resonate with your own feelings or experiences. Moreover, we can open space for them to analyze the text critically by questioning the author's intentions, biases, or the validity of their arguments." (Turkey)
- „Participants stressed that these reflective exercises not only deepen students' comprehension but also enhance their metacognitive abilities, potentially leading to greater independence in learning over time." (Bulgaria)
- „The innovation lies in the simplification of the strategy which makes it easier for teachers to understand the implementation process. The strategies are interactive and promote exchange between students and the teacher and especially critical thinking among students. The two techniques described allow the teacher to vary their approaches." (Luxembourg)

The improvement recommendation for this module was in regards to the need of more specific examples of how to apply this strategy in different contexts and with different types of text.

Teachers would find it useful if there is a bank of provided additional resources, such as templates or guides, to help learners structure and express their connections more effectively.

Evaluation of Module 4 - Inferring

Module 4 was regarded as highly important and innovative by the teachers in partners countries. Inferring or so called reading between the lines is considered a crusial skill that is not so easy to teach in the classroom and the provided excersises received a very positive feedback like:

- „In our discussions with teachers they shared that the two techniques of this module are a great tool for enlarging the capacity to make deductions, which is a fundamental aspect of critical thinking and fosters a deeper understanding of the material discussed." (Bulgaria)
- „implementing this strategy in the classroom improves students' ability to comprehend more complex texts and to analyze the content more deeply." (Spain)

- „Overall, the innovative techniques introduced in Module 4 help teachers facilitate, and students develop, deep and meaningful understanding of complex texts." (Portugal)
- „…the use of a checklist was identified as a very effective tool. This checklist enabled the children to make quick notes and then structure them clearly. The clear structure not only supports the learning process but also develops the pupils' ability to draw logical conclusions and organise their thoughts." (Austria)
- „This (excersises) can help you understand complex concepts or infer the author's intended message." (Turkey)
- „It also enables them to visualise the lexicon of a text, and in so doing to learn how to write words. For children from a migrant background who have been or are familiar with their written mother tongue, they can spot elements of similarity, which can help them learn the new language." (Luxembourg)

Important additional positive note was made by some of the teachers in regards to working with partners. The shared feedback that "not only (it) allows children to draw their own conclusions, but also to consider their partner's perspective. The opportunity to add notes to their partner's checklist encourages an active exchange of ideas and strengthens the cooperative learning environment."

Evaluation of Module 5 - Questioning

Module 5 is regarded as crusial for creating better readers and communicators. Althou this is not an innovative technique by itself, most of the teachers shared that the excersises were well received by the students and that they feel confident to teach, using this module as a base.

"The texts were perceived as appropriate for the respective age groups and school levels. The associated tasks were considered appropriate and supported the students in putting their newly acquired interviewing skills into practice. (Austria)

Having experience with the techniques of the strategy of Questioning, teachers highlighted "the positive impact of incorporating this strategy and its two techniques into daily classroom practices. It was underscored that the ability to pose and respond to effective questions is a fundamental skill that enhances students' understanding of texts and contributes to their overall learning progress." (Bulgaria) In addition, "the daily use of this technique in the classroom was positively highlighted by the participants. It was emphasized that the ability to ask and answer effective questions is a fundamental skill that benefits students not only in their understanding of texts, but also in their overall learning development." (Austria) "From the teacher's point of view, this makes it possible to establish the logical framework which is then appropriated by the students who co-construct their knowledge around the key questions asked by the teacher. From the students' point of view, this allows them to play a leadership role, given that there is a sharing of responsibilities (roles) at the level of questioning which should facilitate understanding although the framework is always set by the student." (Luxembourg) "Participants mention that it promotes a more reflective and critical approach to students' reading." (Spain)

The additional positive impact that was shared as feedback was that while using this strategy, teachers are able to create an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions, engaging critically with the text, and exploring challenging ideas. "Ultimately, these innovative techniques support teachers in creating an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions, engaging critically with the text, and exploring challenging ideas." (Portugal)

Evaluation of Module 6 - Summarising

Module 6 and the described strategy and techniques is helping students develop crucial skills and abilities. Teachers are sharing that summarizing information in hard for students but important for their overall improvement. Part of the specific feedback received was:

- ,,Technique 2, the 'unstructured routine', was perceived as particularly positive. Here students learn not only to summarise, but also to argue and justify their summary. This not only promotes the ability to identify the essentials, but also the development of clear argumentation skills. Engaging with the other person also develops students' communication skills'' (Austria)
- ,,In terms of student skills, the strategy challenges students at several levels, namely: own understanding, negotiation/validation and presentation which is a production collection of ideas taken from the text.'' (Luxembourg)
- ,,These innovative techniques can be used to support and engage a broad range of learners and encourage deeper engagement with the texts, promoting critical thinking, and encouraging metacognition and independent learning.'' (Portugal)
- ,,In their observation in class, the techniques aids students in discerning the pertinent aspects of a text while disregarding extraneous details which is a big challenge many students encounter when summarizing.'' (Bulgaria)

In regards to the innovativeness of this module, most teachers shared that this strategy is not new, but all ''highlight the clarity and usefulness of the strategies presented and the importance of teaching learners to identify main ideas and condense information effectively.'' (Spain)

II. Suitability

Based on partner feedback, the training program is deemed highly suitable for addressing the needs and challenges encountered by both primary school teachers and their students when they regards the reading comprehension. It was noted that the program effectively provides practical strategies and pertinent resources to enhance teaching and reading comprehension in classrooms, with a highlighted emphasis on the importance of personalized training to bolster teacher motivation and commitment while cultivating a more enriching work environment.

Participant feedback further underscores the program's responsiveness to a range of needs, including adapting to new teaching methodologies, integrating educational technology, managing classroom diversity, nurturing socio-emotional skills, and enhancing assessment and feedback practices. Moreover, participants stress the importance of addressing students' needs by providing academic and emotional support, accommodating diverse learning styles, promoting inclusion, and facilitating access to educational materials. Specific tools and strategies aimed at enhancing reading comprehension and stimulating students' motivation and interest in reading are deemed essential.

The program, as outlined, addresses six reading comprehension competencies: understanding the main idea of the text, evaluating the text, understanding the subtext, connecting information to prior experience and knowledge, evaluating the text's accuracy and value, and comprehending idioms, sentences, and paragraphs. It targets the bridging of gaps in teachers' knowledge and instructional skills, while simultaneously enhancing students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities through diverse text examples and exercises suitable for primary school levels.

Notably, the program promotes inclusive communication modes and skills, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing, to foster interpersonal communication and appreciation for diverse cultural backgrounds. Its comprehensive and innovative approach respects the values and challenges of diverse learning environments.

Participants express confidence in the program's transferability to other teaching levels, citing its adaptable framework and emphasis on active involvement and creativity as factors contributing to its relevance beyond reading comprehension, with potential to improve teaching practices across various contexts and settings.

III. Usefulness

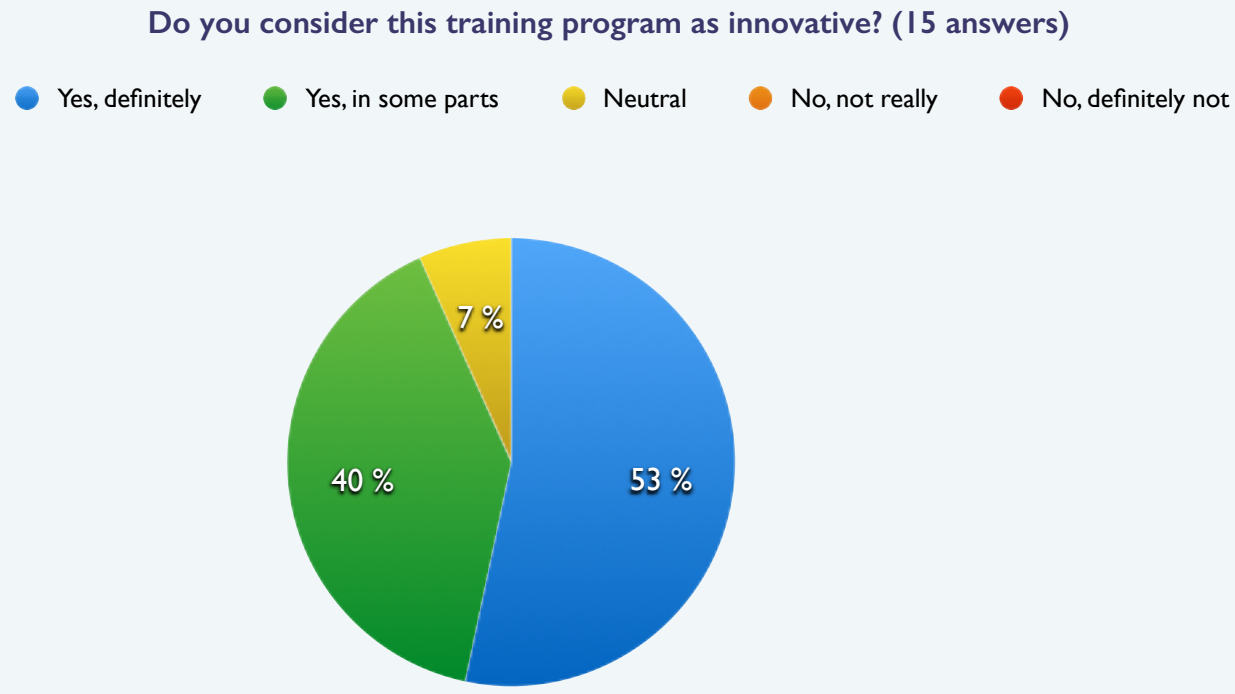
The training program received positive feedback from participants, who found it highly beneficial for enhancing both their teaching abilities and personal growth. The program provided valuable insights and practical strategies that could be directly applied in the classroom, contributing to improved job performance. Participants appreciated the depth and relevance of the content covered, noting its usefulness in expanding their understanding of relevant topics and equipping them with tools to address challenges effectively.

Compared to traditional resources and programs, the training program was praised for its innovative and engaging approach. The structured division between media literacy, fiction, and science, as well as the variety of learning methods, received positive feedback for reaching all children effectively.

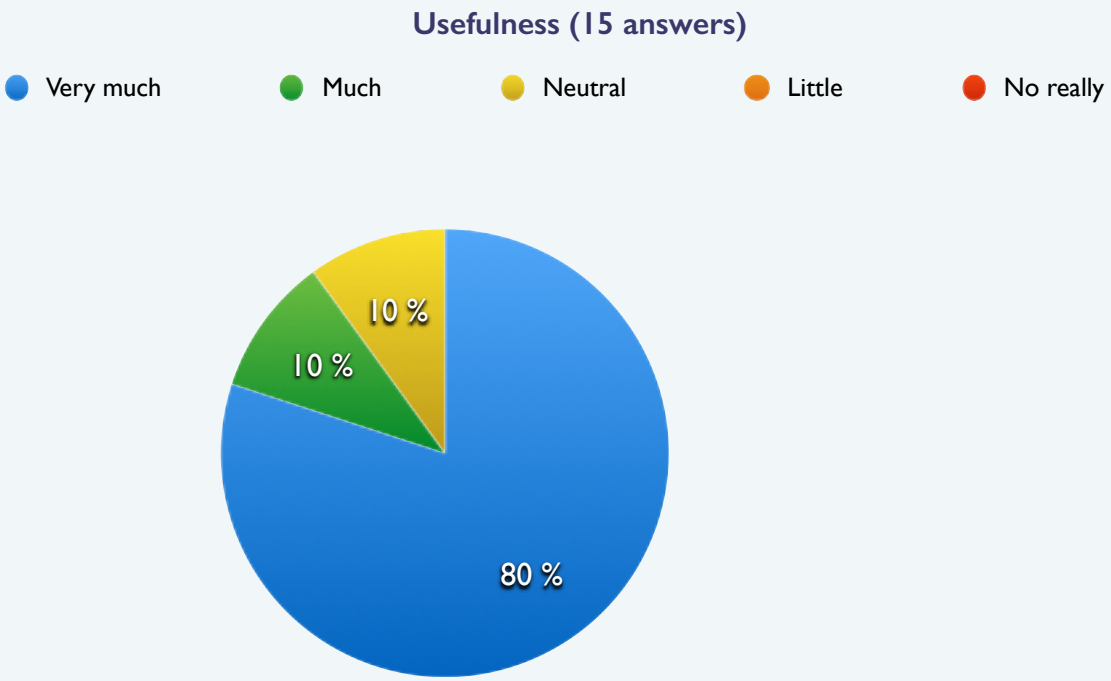
For primary teachers, the program offered concrete benefits such as improved pedagogical skills, adaptability to diverse classrooms, integration of educational technology, development of social-emotional skills in students, and tools for self-assessment and personal development. Additionally, the program emphasized effective time management and strategies to enhance resilience in students, further enhancing the overall teaching and learning experience.

Some of the direct responses are:

Austria:



Turkey:



IV. Acceptability

The acceptability of the teacher's training program was overwhelmingly positive, as evidenced by the survey results and participant feedback. Active participation during training sessions, including group discussions and interactive exercises, fostered a sense of involvement and ownership among participants, enhancing the program's acceptability.

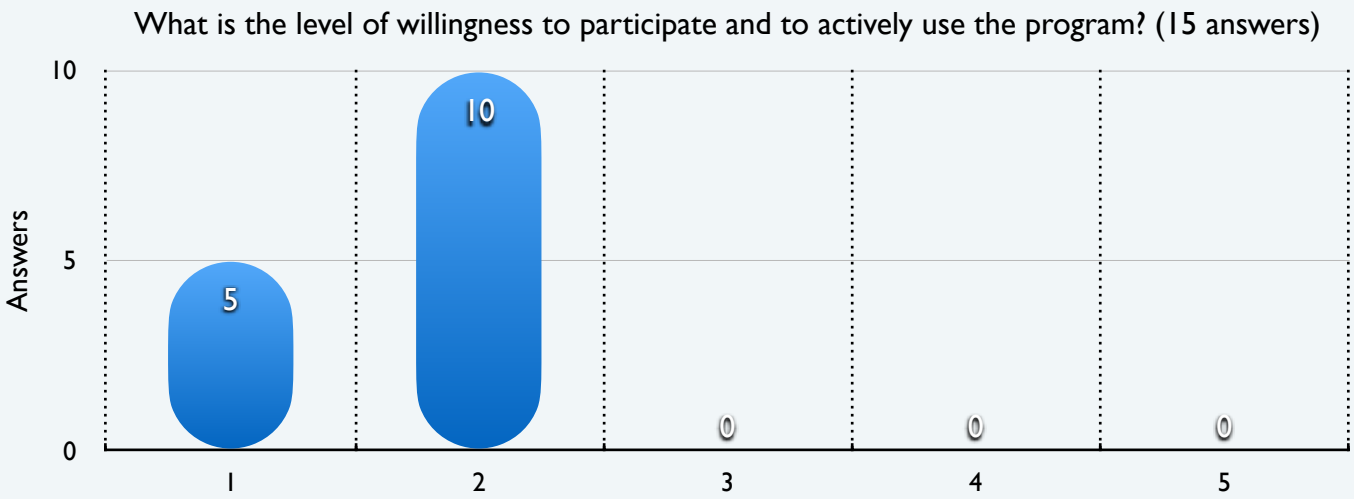
Survey results indicated strong approval from participants, with the majority expressing a high level of acceptance and willingness to utilize the program in their daily educational practices. This uniform endorsement highlights the program's effectiveness and user- friendliness, suggesting that it adequately meets the needs of teachers and facilitates their teaching efforts.

Furthermore, participants expressed confidence in the replicability of the program in other schools, emphasizing its potential to be transferred to different educational settings. While some considerations specific to individual school contexts were noted, overall, there was optimism regarding the program's ability to be replicated and multiplied in various institutions.

The content of the training program, focusing on promoting reading comprehension skills in diverse primary school classes, was particularly lauded. Participants recognized the importance of addressing language barriers faced by pupils from immigrant backgrounds and emphasized the need to disseminate the training to teachers and community centers to support these students effectively.

Here are the results by country:

Austria:

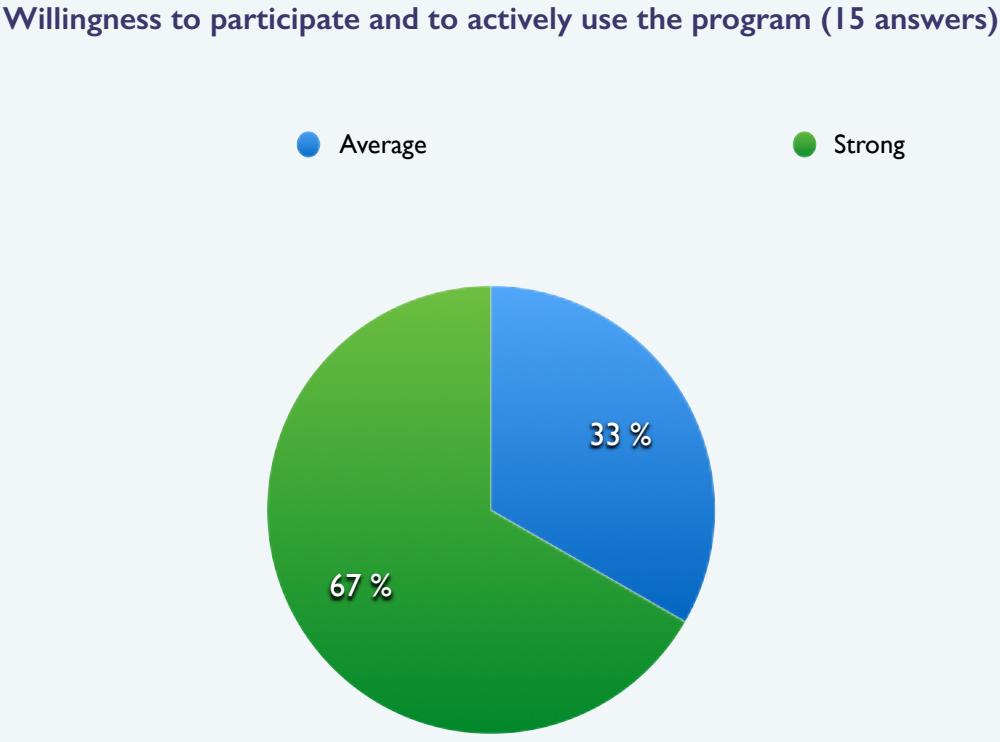


Turkey:

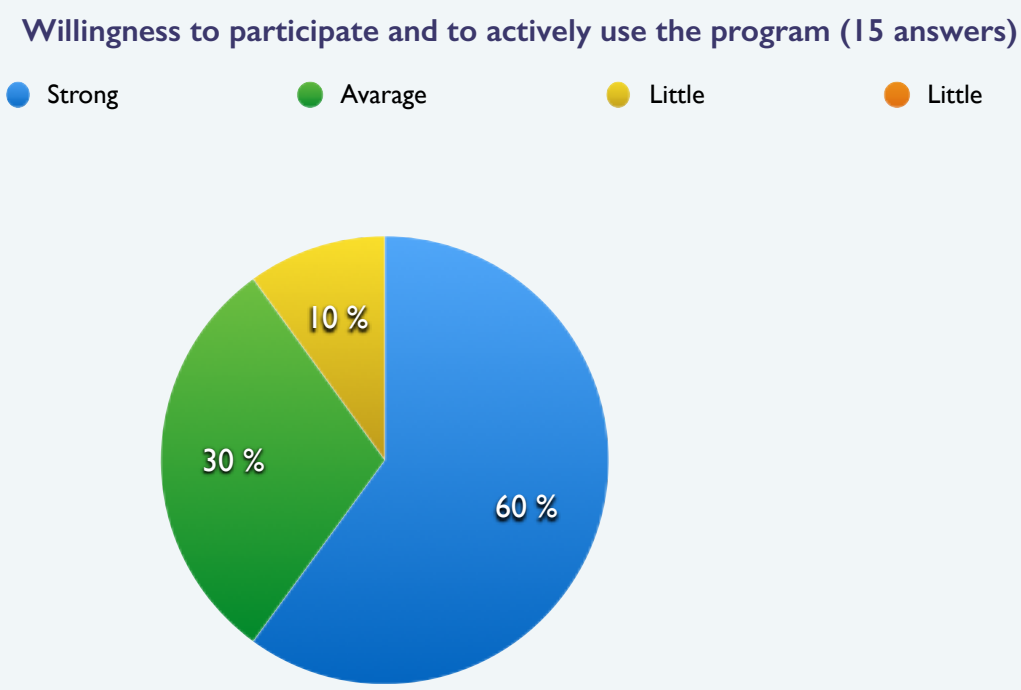
For the teacher's training's acceptability, the results we collected.

- 3 Participants choose " little " option
- 1 participant chose" no comment" option
- 13 participants chose " strong " option
- 1 participant chose "little" option

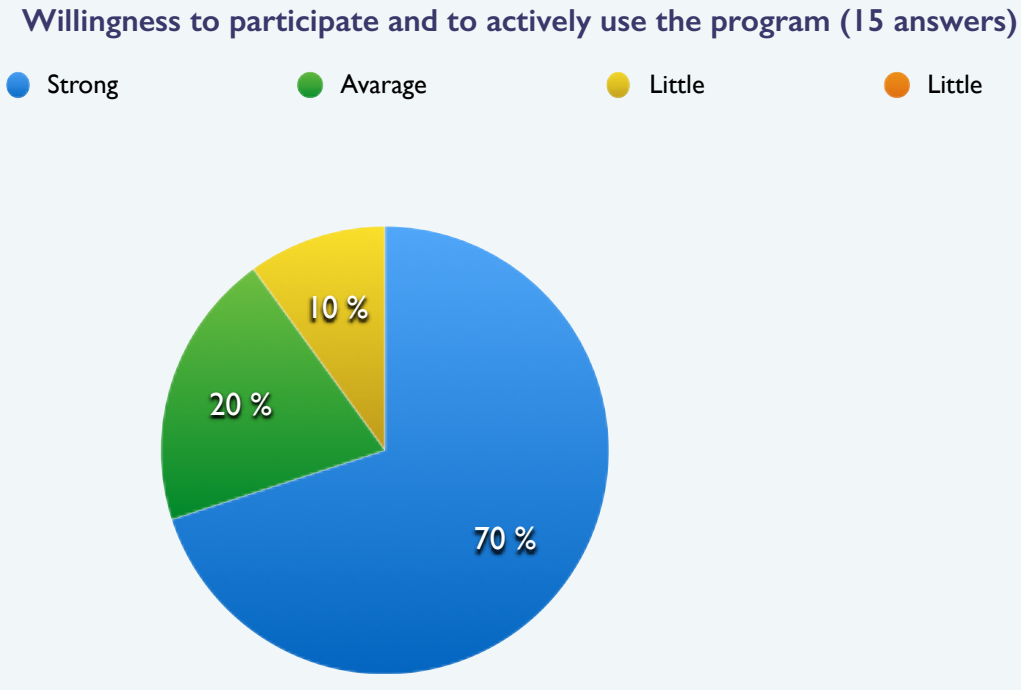
Portugal:



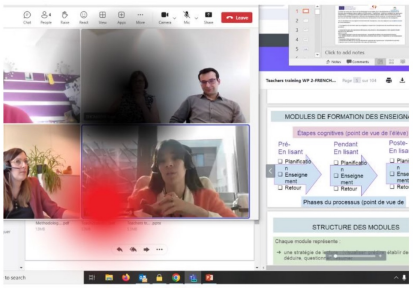
Bulgaria:



Spain:



Pictures from the Pilotings



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