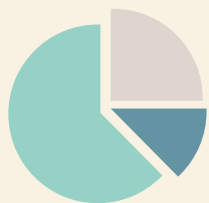


# Soft Skills Training

## Analysis of target groups



APRIL, 2024.

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**Skill me 4 Job! – SOS4JOB**

**Analysis of target groups in soft skills training**

Project 2022-1-HR01-KA210-ADU-000082786

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## 1. INTRODUCTORY

Soft skills are personal habits and qualities that are not acquired through formal education, but with their use, better results are achieved in any area of personal and professional development. They are also called "people skills" because they are applied in the business environment and interaction with other people. They are specific to a person's personality and show how a person performs certain tasks, how well they can work or communicate with other colleagues, create trust and reliability, and successfully lead teams and react positively to sudden changes. Most interactions with other people require some level of soft skills. Soft skills are used every day in the work environment without even thinking about it or discussing it. However, developing these skills will help each person get better business opportunities and speed up their career path. In other words, soft skills are key to business and personal success. On the other hand, the lack of soft skills can limit a person's potential and limit their further progress through life. Some of the most needed soft skills include communication, reliability, teamwork, creativity, self-awareness, problem solving, critical thinking, adaptability, organization, willingness to learn, empathy, etc.

Today's increasingly digital business environment, in which fast-growing changes are taking place under the influence of advanced technologies and digital solutions, creates more and more complex workplaces that require quality human resources with a wide range of knowledge and skills. In addition to "hard skills", i.e. skills of specialized knowledge, training and concrete experience, soft skills such as effective communication in a team, reliability, adaptability, and resistance to change, ability to recognize emotions and act in accordance with the situation, ability to moral reasoning, etc. In other words, employers look for soft skills in their potential employees, and having these skills often makes the difference between who can do the job and who gets the job.

Based on research on the importance of soft skills in Croatia, which Ambitio College conducted as part of the ASPIRE Erasmus+ project during the months of September and October 2022, Croatian employers see the value of applying soft skills in the work environment. 91% of them from 7 economic sectors stated that they assess the degree of acquired soft skills during employment and that they greatly contribute to the productivity of each organization. In employers' opinion they also stated the TOP 5 qualities of best employee are the ability to solve problems (91%), well-developed social (91%) and communication skills (86%), the ability to learn new things (77%) and the ability taking the initiative (73 %).<sup>1</sup>

Ambitio College within the Erasmus+ project "Skill me 4 Job!" - SOS4JOB implemented free online soft skills training for three target groups: unemployed and employed people in career change, Ambitio College students and teachers in adult education. The training included the 10 most needed soft skills on the labour market, which were presented through text, video and audio content and numerous tasks on two e-learning platforms. The training was conducted in two groups of participants. One group of 25 participants participated in online training - Essential Skills Program (ESP) through the Canvas e-learning platform in English and through digital workbooks in the Croatian language at the Ambitio College's Moodle e-learning platform. Another group of 56 participants participated in training using digital workbooks on the Croatian at Moodle platform. The beginning of each group's training was marked by an introductory online lecture to introduce participants to the topic of soft skills, clarify their importance for personal and professional development, and explain the steps in going through the content and tasks on both platforms. The soft skills covered in the training are self-awareness, empathy, resilience, effective communication, problem solving, cultural awareness, digital literacy, innovation, collaboration, and adaptability. Within these skills, contents/tasks related to green skills have also been added. A total of 81 participants were educated by Ambitio College. With this training, the target groups strengthened themselves in soft skills for new personal and work challenges and improved their digital skills and knowledge of the English language.

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<sup>1</sup> [ASPIRE - Soft Skill report in Croatia](#)



Nine foreign adult learners from Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, and Belgium - European collaborative organizations with which Ambitio College is currently participating in the implementation of other Erasmus+ projects also participated in the soft skills training - in English and Dutch, thanks to the availability of digital workbooks on three languages on the Moodle platform. In this way, the Ambitio College not only achieved visibility of the project and project activities in the European framework, but also influenced the improvement of the soft skills of those participants and received feedback on the quality and usefulness of the training. This way the training will be available to European participants after the completion of the project as well. At the same time, this resulted in an even greater number of participants compared to the total number of educated Croatian participants. The interest in this type of training exceeded all expectations, as did the satisfaction with the training itself.

## 2. ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

**The goal of the analysis** was to investigate the quality and usefulness of the training for the future promotion and use of the program within the educational offer of the Ambitio College, and the involvement of new participants in that training after the completion of the project. In accordance with the above, it was necessary to investigate the degree of satisfaction of the target groups with the training, the advantages and disadvantages, the degree of progress and improvement of skills after the training compared to the state before the training, etc. The analysis contains a quantitative and qualitative review of the conducted training from which it can be concluded how much the participants have developed and/or improved a particular soft skill. The analysis provided enough data so that, upon completion of the project, possible improvements and/or additions to certain parts of the training for future participants will be upgraded.

**The quantitative part of the analysis** contains numerical information about the participants (age, gender, status, profession, occupation, etc.), how satisfied they are with the program, the teacher, the platform, and the workbooks.

**The qualitative part of the analysis** contains information collected through evaluation questionnaires (in textual/descriptive form) according to certain criteria that the participants fulfilled before and after the training, and this information contains information about the satisfaction and quality of online e-learning platforms, workbooks, teacher quality, content and similar.

**The target group of the analysis** is unemployed and employed people in career change, adult learners of Ambitio College and teachers in adult education.

The research was conducted online using the following questionnaires/forms:

1. Training application form
2. Self-assessment questionnaire before training
3. Self-assessment questionnaire after training
4. Additional questionnaire about education, profession, and satisfaction with the online introductory lecture
5. Essential Skills Program (ESP) satisfaction evaluation questionnaire
6. Evaluation questionnaire on satisfaction with digital workbooks.

Training application form included basic information about the participant, such as age, gender, address, contact, e-mail, belonging to the target group, etc. The goal of the form was to guide the usual procedure for enrolling participants into an informal education program and to obtain information about the age, gender, and geographical structure of the participants.



The self-assessment questionnaires before and after the training included 40 soft skill terms for which the participants had to assess their level of understanding on a scale from 1 to 5 (the meaning of the numbers is as follows: 1 - I do not understand at all, 2 - I mostly do not understand, 3 - I partially understand, 4 – I mostly understand, 5 – I fully understand). The goal of the questionnaire was to find out the level of their initial understanding of certain terms covered by the training and the level of understanding after the training to evaluate the quality of the content and the relevance of the training for the development and/or improvement of soft skills for these target groups.

An additional questionnaire about education, profession and satisfaction with the online introductory lecture included information related to education and profession and the degree of satisfaction with the introductory online lecture using a scale from 1 to 5 (the meaning of the numbers is as follows: 1 - I do not understand at all, 2 - I mostly do not understand, 3 –I partly understand, 4 - I mostly understand, 5 – I fully understand). The goal of the questionnaire was to obtain data on the educational and economic structure of the participants and data on satisfaction with the introductory online lecture.

Evaluation questionnaires on satisfaction with Essential Skills Program and digital workbooks included: evaluation of general and technical aspects of the interface of the Canvas e-learning platform on which the Essential Skills Program took place, i.e. the Moodle e-learning platform on which the digital workbooks were read; an assessment of the value of the Essential Skills Program and digital workbooks and an assessment of the general value of soft skills training. A scale from 1 to 5 was used to evaluate individual training segments (the meaning of the numbers is as follows: 1 - I do not agree at all; 2 - I don't agree; 3 - I don't know, I can't estimate; 4 - I agree; 5 - I completely agree). In addition to using a rating scale, open-ended questions were also used to obtain information on the quality assessment, shortcomings, and suggestions for improving the training. The analysis was conducted for 81 Croatian and 9 European participants, 90 in total.

### 3. TARGET GROUPS

The target groups of soft skills training were:

- a) unemployed and employed persons in career change
- b) Ambitio College students in the process of adult education and
- c) teachers in adult education.

Ambitio College tried to include as many unemployed people as possible in the training of soft skills, for whom this training will develop and/or upgrade soft skills and strengthen competitiveness on the labour market for finding a job, both for preparatory actions in the job search (job interview) and at the time of employment. On the other hand, with the inclusion of employed persons, efforts were made to strengthen their personal competences, supplement existing skills so that they would be better trained and better prepared for a new workplace.

Ambitio College students in ongoing adult education should have been empowered for their future work, which includes the application of soft skills. In this way, they were introduced with a new innovative program with a topic relevant to general functioning in everyday life and relationships with people, and not necessarily only on at work and in the business environment, especially in today's environment of expansive digitization.

Teachers in adult education are the target group that wanted to strengthen their soft skills for personal development and advancement in their primary job, as well as for a more innovative approach to the teaching process in adult education that develops and encourages the application of soft skills such as motivation, creativity, coping with stress situations or failure, critical thinking, adaptability and in such a way that they introduce elements of soft skills into their teaching process through problem situations.



European participants from the target groups "a) employed persons" and "c) teachers in adult education" were additionally included in the training to give these participants the opportunity to test the training in English and strengthen their soft skills.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF TARGET GROUPS

### 4.1. Croatian participants in training

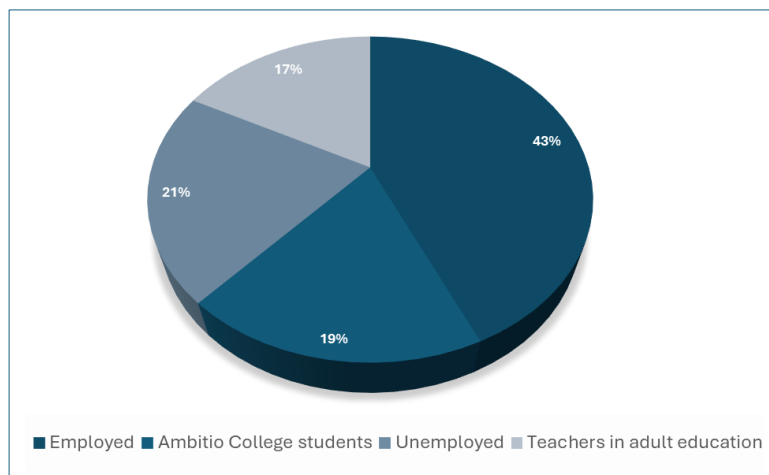


Figure 1. Share of target groups in training

A total of 81 participants participated in the soft skills training, i.e. 35 employed (43%) and 17 (21%) unemployed persons, 15 (19%) adult learners of Ambitio College and 14 (17%) teachers in adult education, which resulted in a much larger number training participants compared to value defined in the project itself.

### Gender structure of participants

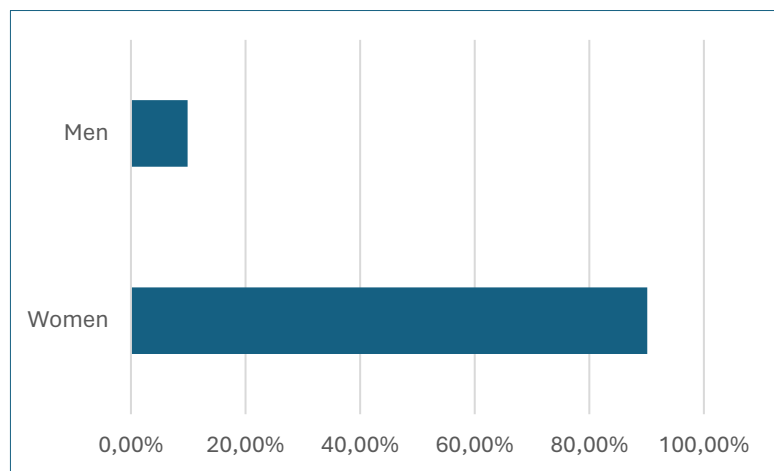


Figure 2. Share of men and women in training

Of the total number of participants, the largest share of participants in the training were women, 73 of them, or 90.12%, while there were only 8, or 9.88% of men.

### Age structure of participants

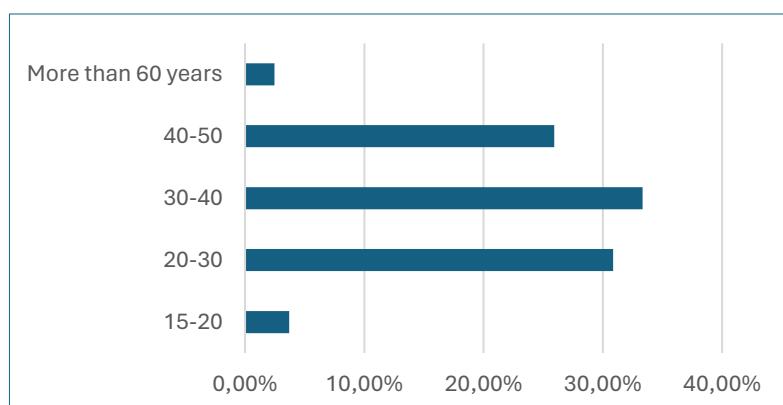


Figure 3. Share of age of participants in training

Participants of all defined age groups took part in the training. The largest number of participants was in the age group of 30 to 40 years (33.33%), 20 to 30 years (30.86%) and 40 to 50 years (25.93%). A smaller percentage of participants was in the age group of 15 to 20 participants (3.70%) and in the group over 60 years old (2.47%). From the above data, it can



be concluded that soft skills training is recognized in all age groups as essential for personal and professional development.

### Geographical structure of participants

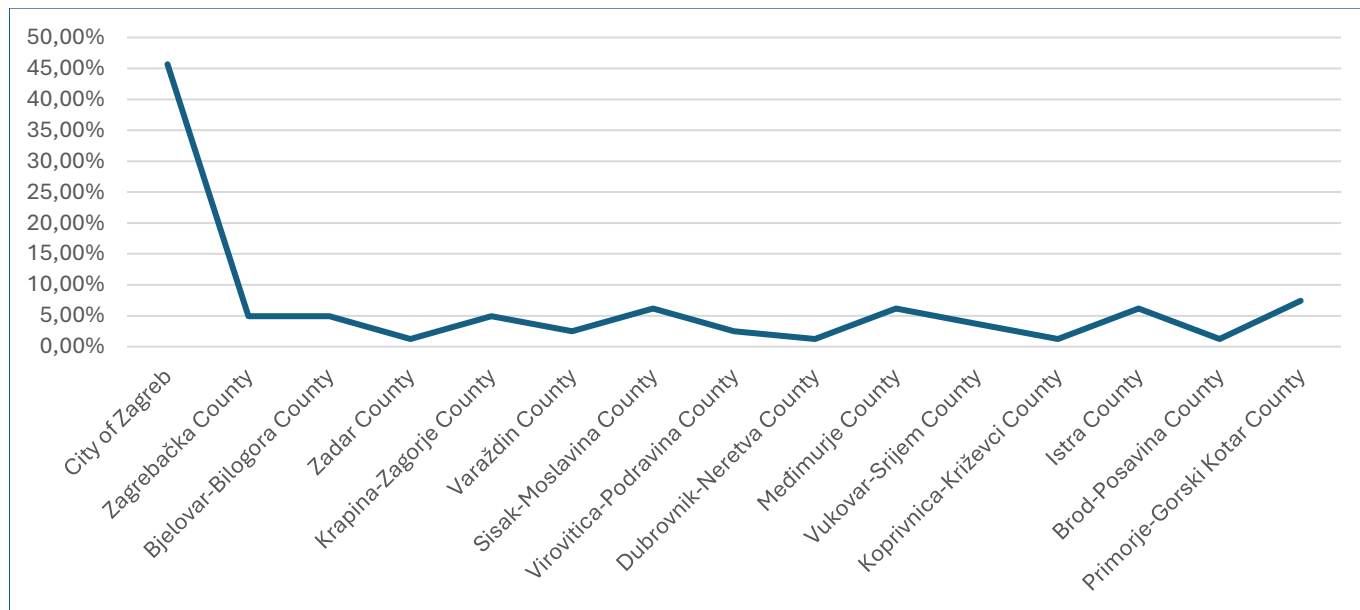


Figure 4. Share of participants by county

The geographical structure of participants in Figure 4 proves the participation of persons from 15 counties. The largest share of participants comes from the City of Zagreb County, while the remaining share between 1 and 7% is divided among the remaining 14 counties. The largest percentage of participants from these counties come from Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (7.41%), Međimurje County (6.17%) and Sisak-Moslavina County (6.17%). From the above data, it can be concluded that soft skills training had a significant impact on the development of skills necessary for work, employment, and personal growth within the framework of the large geographical area of the Republic of Croatia.

### Educational structure of participants

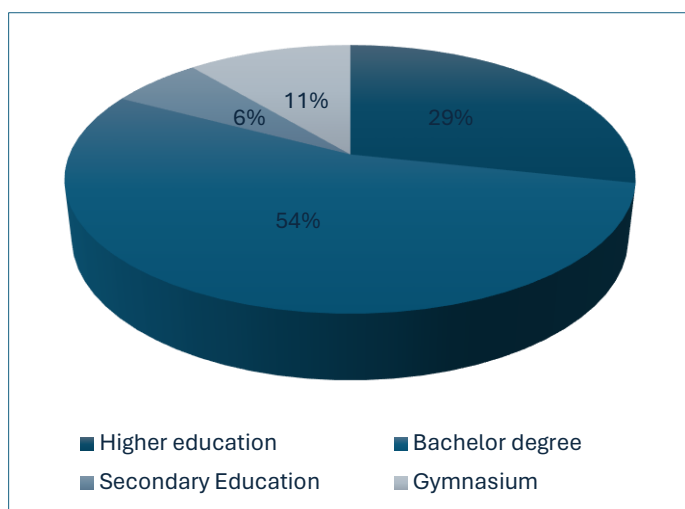


Figure 5. Share of participants according to professional qualification

The educational structure of the participants shows that the largest share of participants (54%) has completed higher education, and the smallest share (6%) has completed high school education. About 29% of students have bachelor's degrees.





### Economic structure of participants

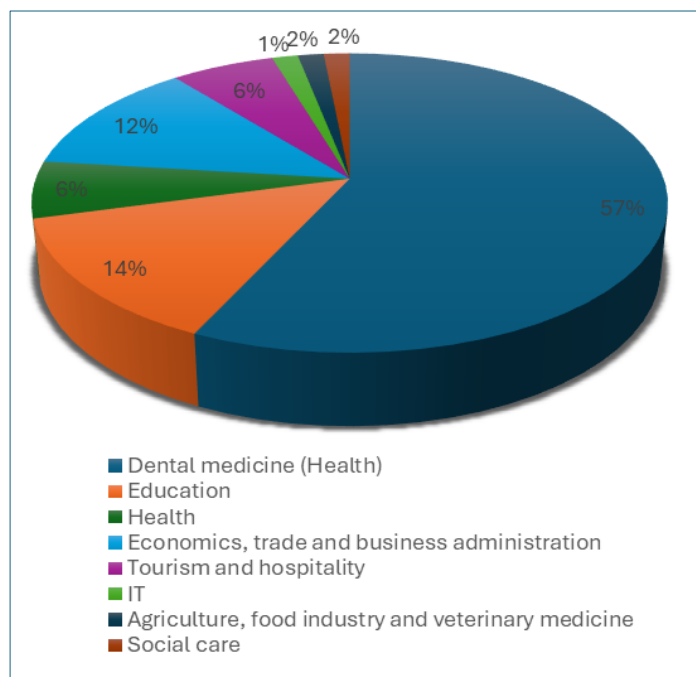


Figure 6. Share of participants by economic sector

The economic structure of the participants shows that the largest share of participants (57%) comes from the health sector, namely dental medicine, while 6% of them are from other health professions. Participants from the educational (14%) and economic sectors (12%) also participated in the training. The smallest share of participants comes from the fields of social welfare (2%), IT (1%) and agriculture, the food industry and veterinary medicine (2%)

### Duration and method of training

The training took place in two groups. The first group of 25 participants participated in the Essential Skills Program (ESP) online training on the Canvas platform in English from November 23, 2023, to February 25, 2024, and digital workbooks as additional customized learning material on the Moodle platform of the Ambitio College in Croatian language. The second group of 56 participants went through customized digital workbooks on the Moodle platform in the Croatian language from January 3 to February 25, 2024. The beginning of each group's training was marked by an introductory online lecture to introduce participants to the topic of soft skills, clarify their importance for personal and professional development, and explain the steps in going through the content and tasks on both platforms. The soft skills covered in the training are self-awareness, empathy, resilience, effective communication, problem solving, cultural awareness, digital literacy, innovation, collaboration, and adaptability. Within these skills, contents/tasks related to green skills have also been added.

#### 4.1.1. Employed and unemployed persons in career change

Target group – employed and unemployed people who are changing careers face numerous challenges when looking for a job or in work environments. In today's workplace, success is not just about technical skills and qualifications. Soft skills are increasingly important for employed people at all levels, while unemployed individuals can use soft skills to significantly improve their chances of finding a job.

For employees to be successful in the workplace, it is crucial that they can express themselves clearly, actively listen and give constructive feedback. It is also essential that they have strong teamwork skills that include working effectively with others, constructively resolving conflicts and sharing credit for successes, the ability to analyse situations, identify problems and develop solutions. They need to have critical thinking that allows them to evaluate information, make the right decisions and adapt to changing circumstances. Juggling multiple tasks and deadlines requires strong organizational skills. It is essential that employees effectively set priorities, manage their time well



and respect deadlines. A strong work ethic demonstrates commitment and professionalism. Leadership skills enable them to motivate others, delegate tasks effectively and encourage cooperation. By developing these soft skills, employees can position themselves for success, career advancement, and greater job satisfaction. Thus, unemployed individuals with strong soft skills can stand out from other candidates by demonstrating their ability to thrive in the work environment. In this sense, for them, key soft skills are important already when writing a resume and a motivational letter, which is used to make a first impression on a potential employer. In addition, strong verbal communication is essential during an interview to confidently express your skills and experience. By actively developing and promoting their soft skills, unemployed individuals can become stronger candidates and increase their chances of finding a job. In this context, participation in online soft skills training was an opportunity to empower this target group for new business opportunities, career change or finding employment. A total of 52 participants took part in this target group, of which 17 were unemployed and 35 were employed, divided into two groups. There were 10 participants in the first group of participants (ESP/Moodle) who participated in training on two e-learning platforms, and 42 participants participated in the second group (Moodle) who participated in training on one platform.

*Self-assessment questionnaire before the training - knowledge of soft skill terms*

The level of knowledge/understanding of certain 40 terms before the training, which was assessed by this target group, is shown in the following figures (7a., 7b., 7c. and 7d.). From all the pictures, it can be concluded that the level of initial knowledge of individual concepts is very different and complex for that target group.

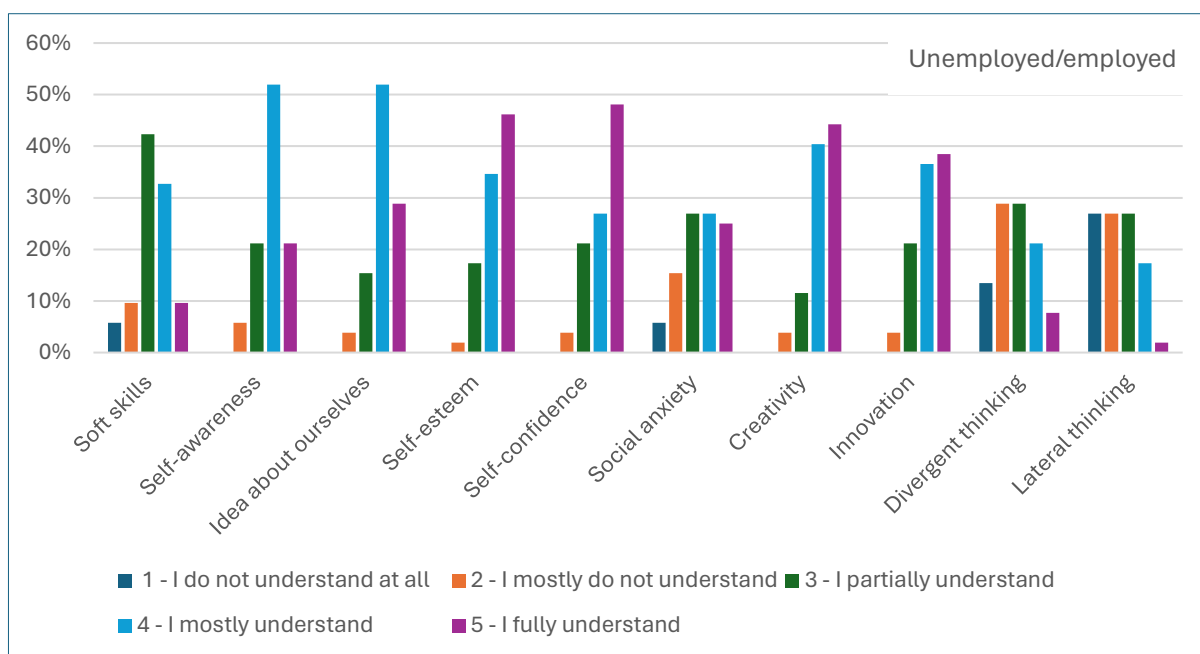


Figure 7a. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

From Figure 7a. it is evident that the percentage of understanding of all concepts is not higher than 52%. The terms "self-awareness, self-concept, self-esteem, self-confidence, creativity and innovation" were mostly or completely understood by the participants before the training, however in a smaller percentage up to 52%. They rated the terms "divergent and lateral thinking" as partially understood or mostly not understood (grade 2 and 3). At the same time, a wide range of evaluations can be observed with these terms, as with the term "social anxiety". With a grade of 3, i.e. partial understanding, the participants rated the term "soft skills" the most, and even 42%.

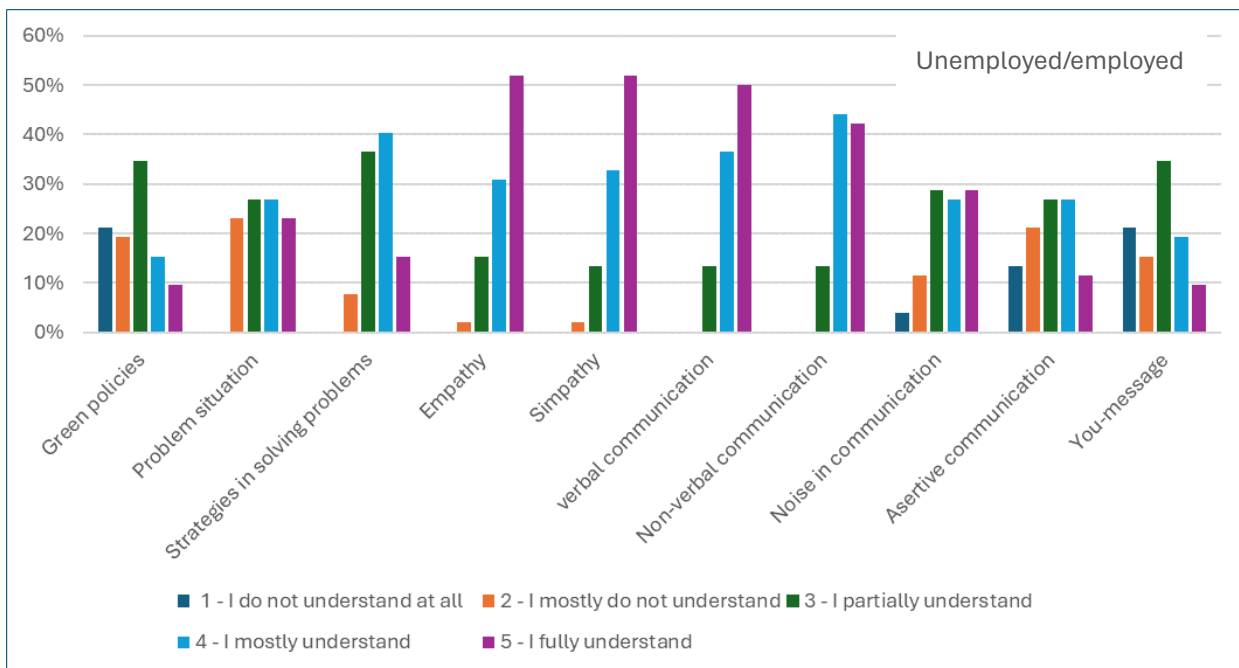


Figure 7b. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

From Figure 7b. it is evident that "empathy, sympathy, verbal and non-verbal communication" are terms that the participants mostly or completely understood before the training. The highest percentage of this understanding is between 50 and 52 %. A wide range of grading is visible for the terms "green policies, problem situation, strategies for solving problems, noise in communication, assertive communication and You-message" and does not exceed more than 30%. Although 40% of people mostly understand the term "strategies in problem solving", 37% of them partially understand it. The terms "green policy and You-message" also have the highest percentage of partial understanding.

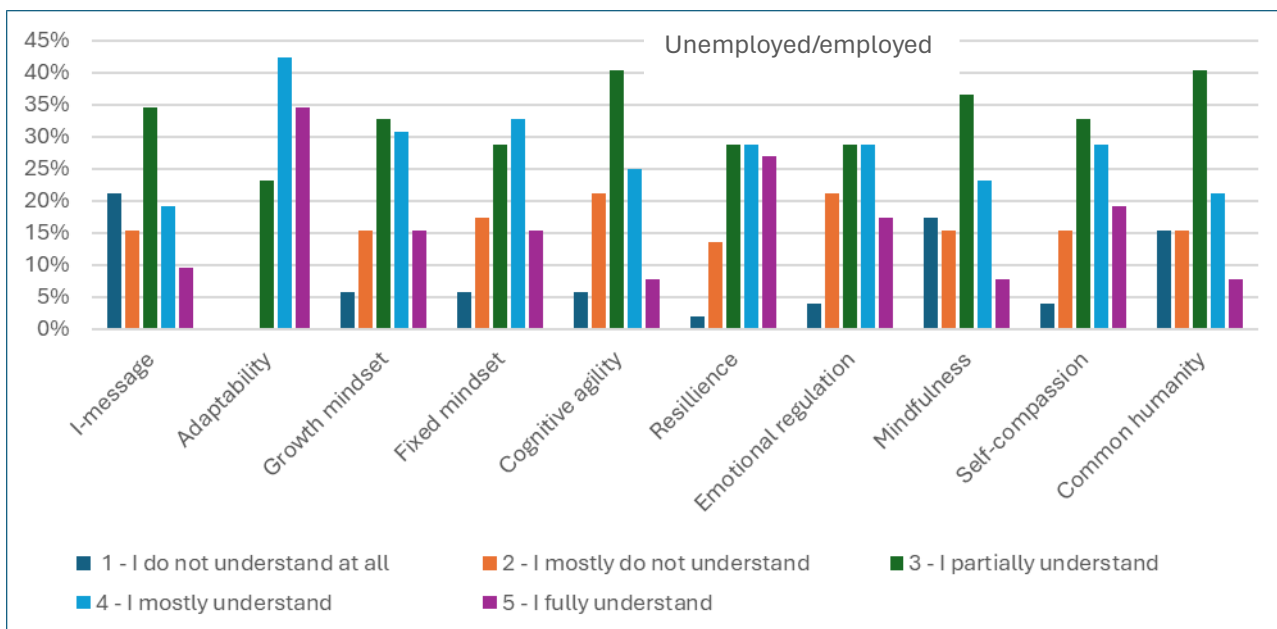


Figure 7c. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

From Figure 7c. it is evident that most of the terms were evaluated by the participants as terms that they partially understand, except for the terms "adaptability and fixed mindset", which they mostly understand (grade



4). With the terms "resilience and emotional regulation", divided opinions between partial and mostly understanding are visible (grade 3 and 4). From all the above data, it can be concluded that the initial understanding of the terms of that target group was less than 50%, which proves that there was a visible need to improve soft skills knowledge.

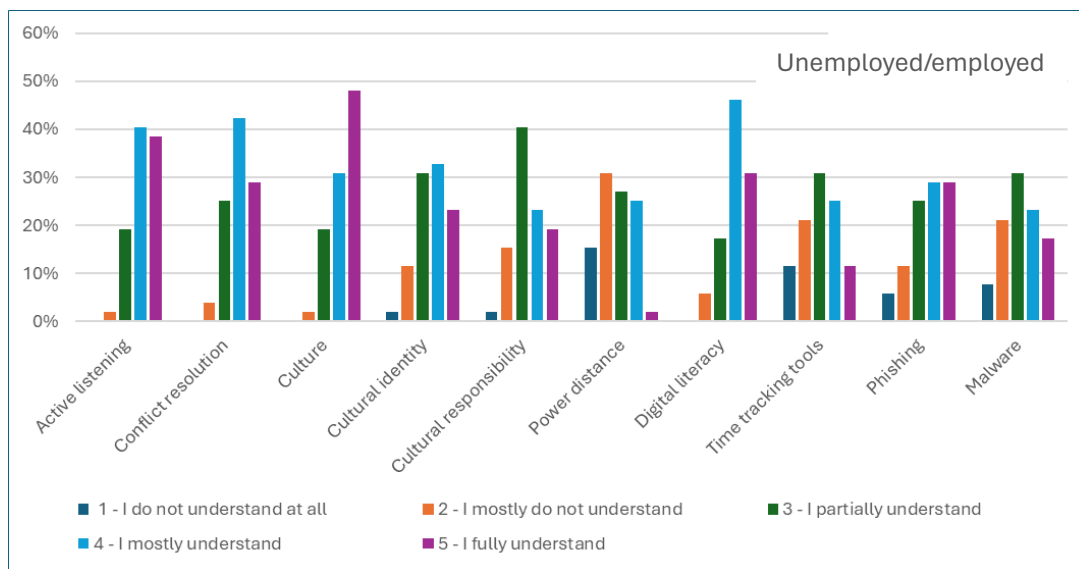


Figure 7d. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

From Figure 7d. it is evident that "culture" is the only term that the participants fully understood before the training, but in a percentage of less than 50%. The terms "conflict resolution, active listening, cultural identity and digital literacy" were rated 4. A wide range of ratings is evident for the terms "power distance, time tracking tools, phishing, malware".

#### Satisfaction with the introductory online lecture

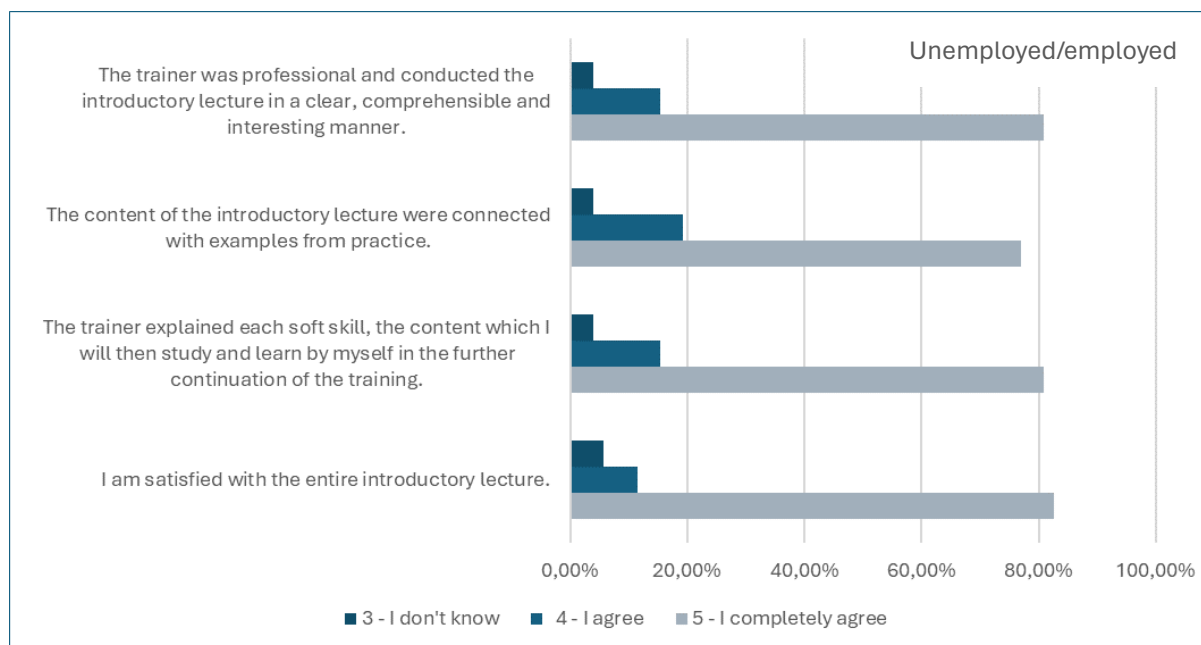


Figure 8. Participant satisfaction with the introductory online lecture

From Figure 8, it is evident that around 81% of the participants completely agree (rating 5) that the trainer was an expert in the field of soft skills and conducted the introductory online lecture in a clear, comprehensible, and



interesting manner. Around 77% of the participants fully agree that she connected the content of the introductory online lecture with examples from practice, and around 81% of them believe that they explained every soft skill whose content they will be able to study and learn in the further continuation of the training. In the end, more than 82% of the participants were completely satisfied with the entire introductory online lecture, based on which it can be concluded that the entire structure of the lecture was well thought out and presented and had a positive effect on the motivation of the participants for self-study in the continuation of the training.

### Essential Skills Program (ESP) satisfaction evaluation questionnaire

In Figures 9a. and 9b. the results of the quality assessment of individual ESP segments that took place on the Canvas e-learning platform are presented.

From Figure 9a. it is evident that 100% of participants agree or fully agree that registration and access to the Canvas platform is understandable, simple, and fast. Around 90% of participants agree or completely agree that the Canvas e-learning platform is easy and understandable to use, while 10% of them cannot assess this. Around 80% of participants agree or completely agree that they are satisfied with the design and colours of the interface and the overall organization of icons for navigating the platform. In a slightly smaller percentage, 70% agree or completely agree that they are satisfied with the visual way in which the training modules are arranged. Around 100% of the participants stated that they agree or completely agree that the English language on the platform is sufficiently understandable, and that the overall experience using the e-learning platform is positive for 80% of them (grade 4 and 5), while 20% of them do not can estimate.

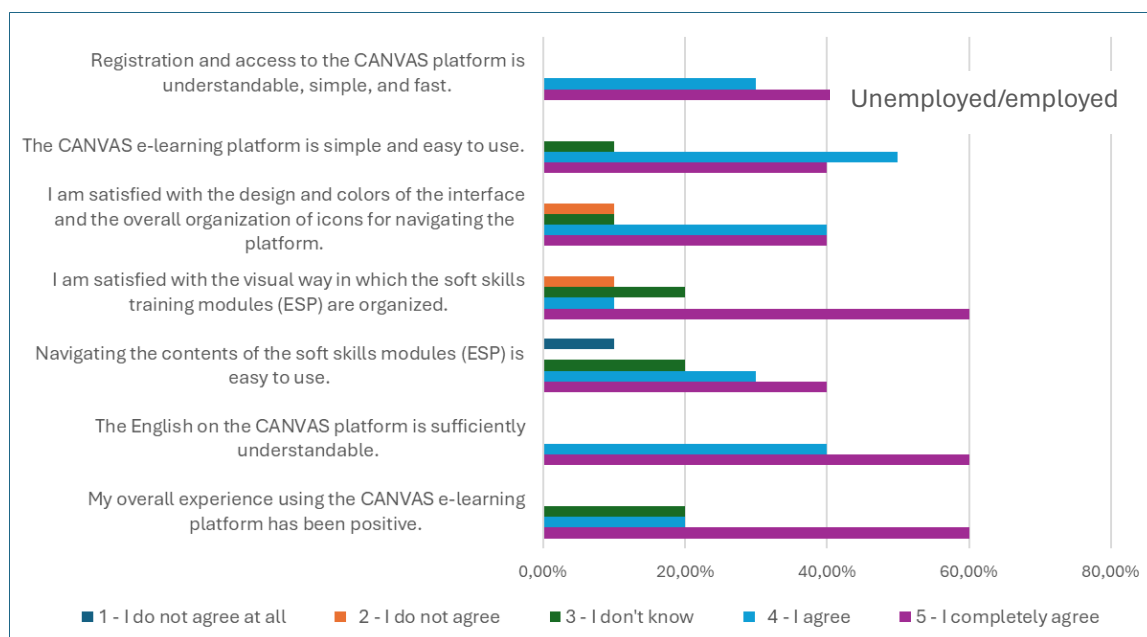


Figure 9a. Assessment of general and technical aspects of the Canvas platform interface



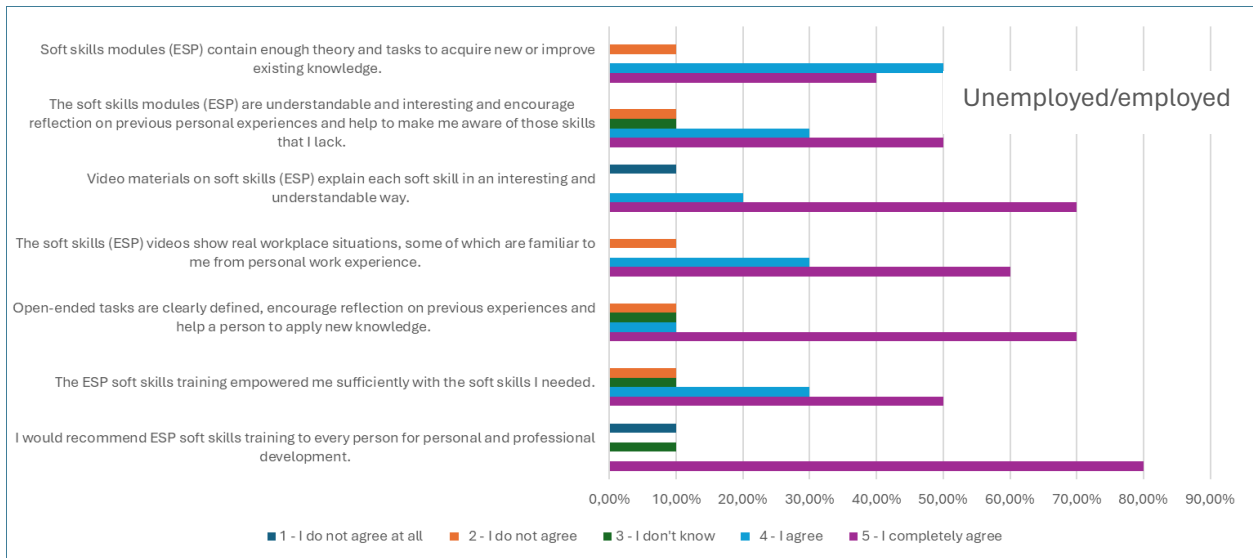


Figure 9b. Estimating ESP value

Figure 9b. shows the results related to the evaluation of the value of participation in ESP. It is evident from the picture that a total of 90% of participants agree or completely agree that ESP modules contain enough theory and tasks for acquiring new or improving existing knowledge. A total of 80% of the participants stated that they agree or completely agree that the modules are understandable and interesting and encourage reflection on previous personal experiences and help to make them aware of the skills they lack. A total of 90% of participants stated that they agree or completely that the video materials explain a particular soft skill in an interesting and comprehensible way. In the same percentage, they agree or completely agree that the video materials show real situations at the workplace, some of which are familiar to them from personal work experience. When it comes to open-ended tasks, which were an integral part of the training, a total of 80% of the participants stated that they agree or completely that they are clearly defined, encourage thinking about previous experiences and help the person to apply new knowledge. The same number of participants stated that they agree or strongly agree that the ESP training empowered them sufficiently with the soft skills that they needed. Although there are 10% of those who do not agree at all and those who cannot assess whether they would recommend ESP training to every person for personal and professional development, still 80% of them fully agree that they would recommend it. From the above data, it can be concluded that, although there is a visible percentage of those participants who evaluated ESP with grades from 1 to 3, most participants were satisfied in all segments of the training and evaluated ESP as an education that allows them to develop and/or improve soft skills and apply them in personal and working life.

**To the question "What do you consider to be the greatest quality of ESP soft skills training?"**

the participants stated that they see the greatest quality in the fact that ESP was an opportunity to learn in an interesting, comprehensible, and simple way, that they became aware of the meaning of the concept of soft skills and became aware of themselves and their values. They also stated that ESP encouraged them to think about how they act and opened their perspectives on ways to improve and work on themselves, expand their knowledge and comfort zone. Video materials with good examples and clear explanations, clear and comprehensible topics and well-explained soft skills are also considered of the highest quality. In the end, ESP was very useful for their personal and professional development because it allowed them to get to know themselves better and understand in which areas they need to work on themselves.

**When asked "What did you like most about the ESP soft skills training and why?"**, the participants stated that they liked the real situations from real life the most, that is, the scenarios



in the form of video material because they very clearly showed the application of individual soft skills and how to develop them. They also liked the written part of the text that explains what each skill is and the tests with the opportunity to think freely. At the same time, they stated that in general the modules are easy for them with quick passing through the topics and that they are an opportunity to see which soft skill is their area for learning and development.

**To the question "What do you consider a shortcoming of ESP soft skills training?"** the participants stated that the shortcoming is an excessive number of self-reflective questions that are repeated and similar within one module and, accordingly, too much time to solve one module. At the same time, they emphasized that it is necessary for each module to offer more tasks.

**To the question "What would you suggest improving the quality of ESP soft skills training?"** the participants stated that it is necessary to change the video materials so that they are not the same in terms of structure, add more different tasks with examples and tests and less self-reflective questions, add tiles on video materials in other languages. At the same time, they proposed at least five more open or closed tasks per module, and at the end of the entire ESP, a final test that would include all ten skills. In the case of testing and seeing the real situation with soft skills, the person could be offered an enhanced program of some of the missing skills and a short transition through the skills they think are good at.

From the obtained results, we can conclude that the ESP and Canvas e-learning platform is a positive and interesting experience of independent learning in an online environment. Considering that the participants encountered this LMS platform for the first time, it can be concluded that it is a reliable and high-quality digital learning space that has room for improving the user experience and that needs to be worked on. In terms of improvement and with the aim of expanding the educational market into Croatian and European frameworks, it is necessary to enrich it with more tasks and tests, reduce the number of open-ended questions and enable ESP in the Croatian language.

### Self-assessment questionnaire after training

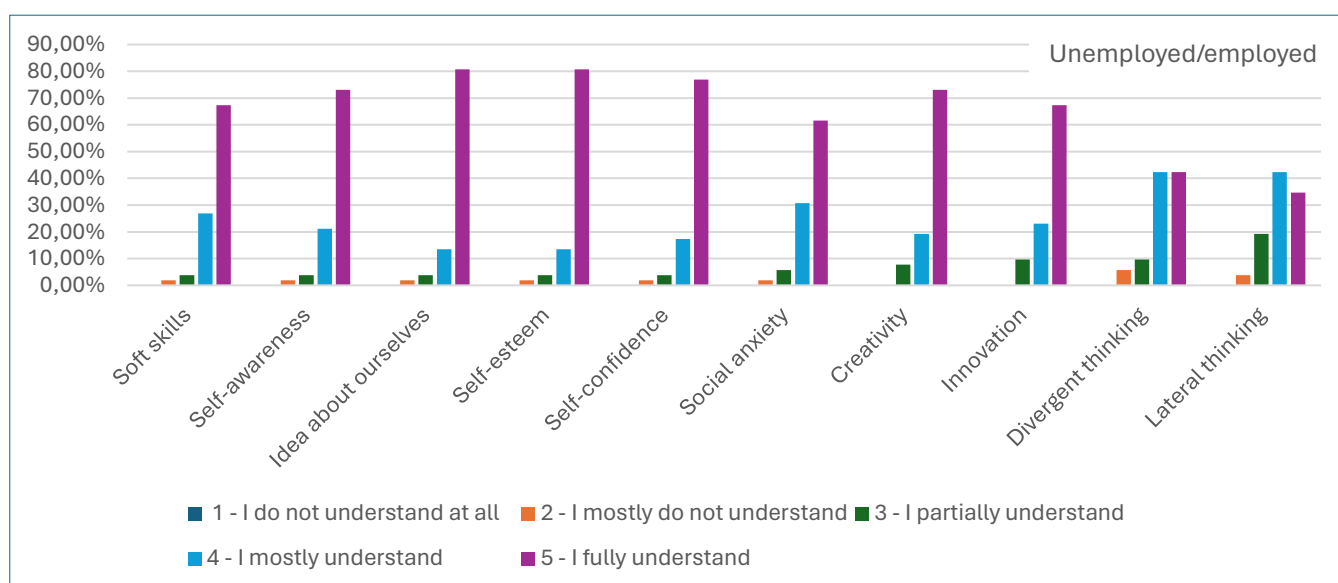


Figure 10a. The share of understanding of terms after training



At the end of the training, the participants filled out a self-assessment questionnaire that contained the same terms as before the training to assess whether the training was ultimately successful in terms of knowledge acquisition, and the results are shown in the following figures (10a., 10b., 10c. and 10d.).

From Figure 10a. a big improvement in the understanding of terms after the training compared to the condition before the training is visible. Between 60 and 80% a complete understanding of almost all terms is visible, except for the terms "divergent and lateral thinking" which share an equal or almost equal percentage of grades 4 and 5 and between 5 and 20% of those who mostly do not understand or partially understand and need to be revised content and even better bring these terms closer to the participants for easier understanding.

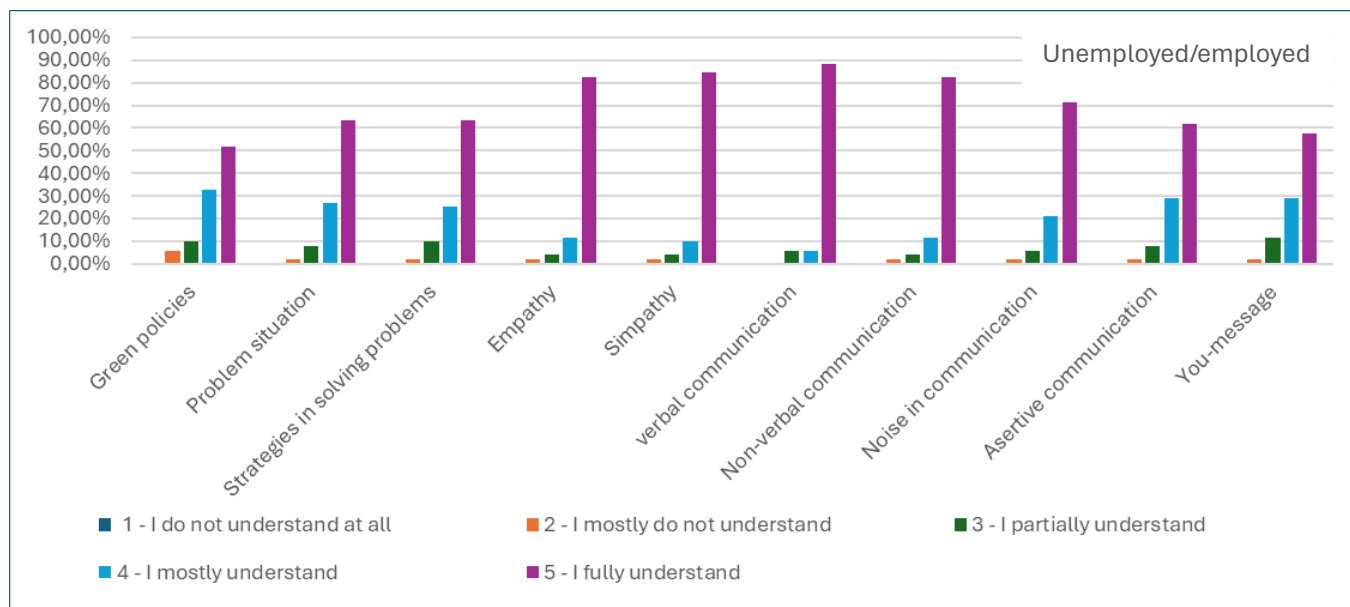


Figure 10b. The share of understanding of terms after training

From Figure 10b. it is visible that there is a very small percentage of those participants who mostly do not understand the concepts, i.e. a higher percentage of those who fully understand all the concepts compared to the initial state of understanding. It is necessary to clarify the terms "green policies, problem situation, problem-solving strategies and Ti-messages" a little more to achieve even better results of understanding the mentioned terms.

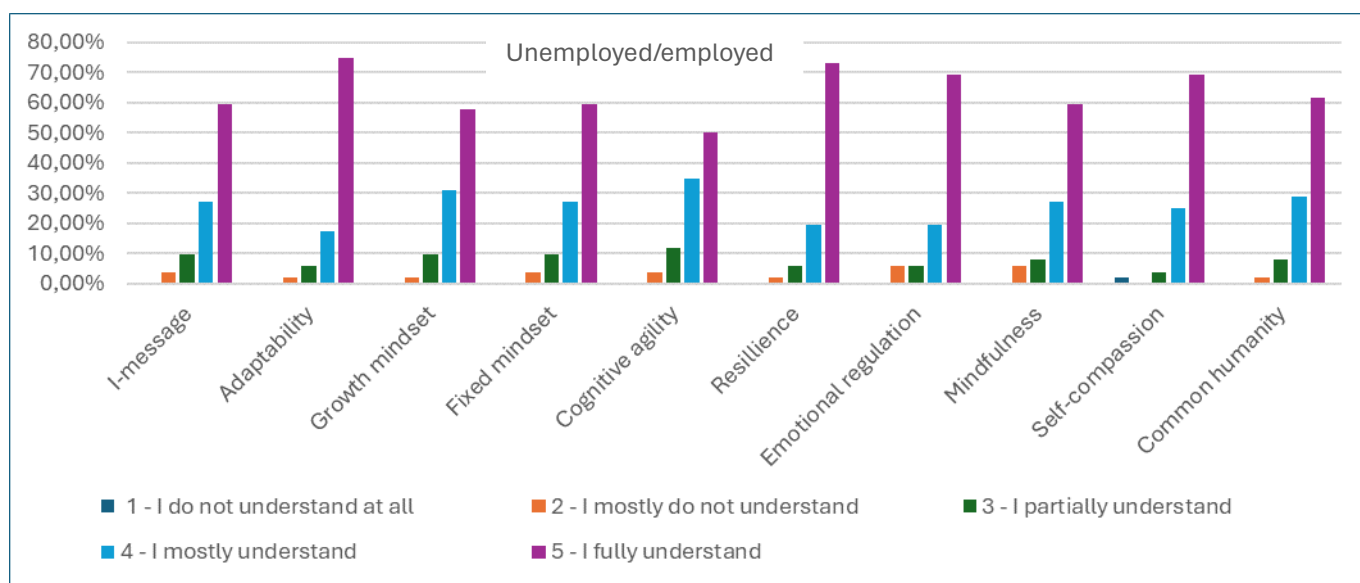


Figure 10c. The share of understanding of terms after training





From Figure 10c. it is evident that the participants understand or fully understand all terms. For a better acquisition of knowledge, it is necessary to further clarify the terms "cognitive adaptability, self-message, changing mindset and fixed mindset".

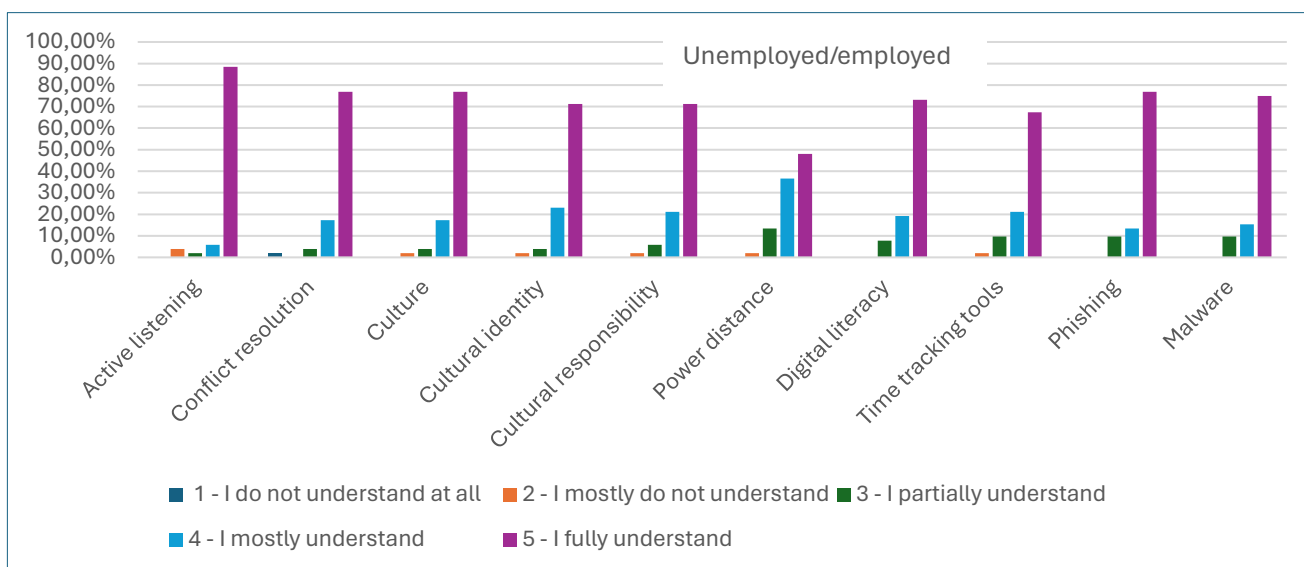


Figure 10d. The share of understanding of terms after training

From Figure 10d. a high level of understanding of all terms is visible. For better knowledge acquisition, it is necessary to further clarify the term "power distance, time tracking tools and malware".

From all the above pictures, a great progress is visible, i.e. the percentage in the understanding of terms after the training compared to the results before the training, from which it can be concluded that the structure and contents of the training were well thought out and the target group successfully adopted and/or additionally strengthened your soft skills. For certain concepts, it is necessary to revise the content and tasks to make them even better clarified and adopted with better quality, and this will be worked on after the completion of the project.

### Evaluation questionnaire on the satisfaction of digital workbooks

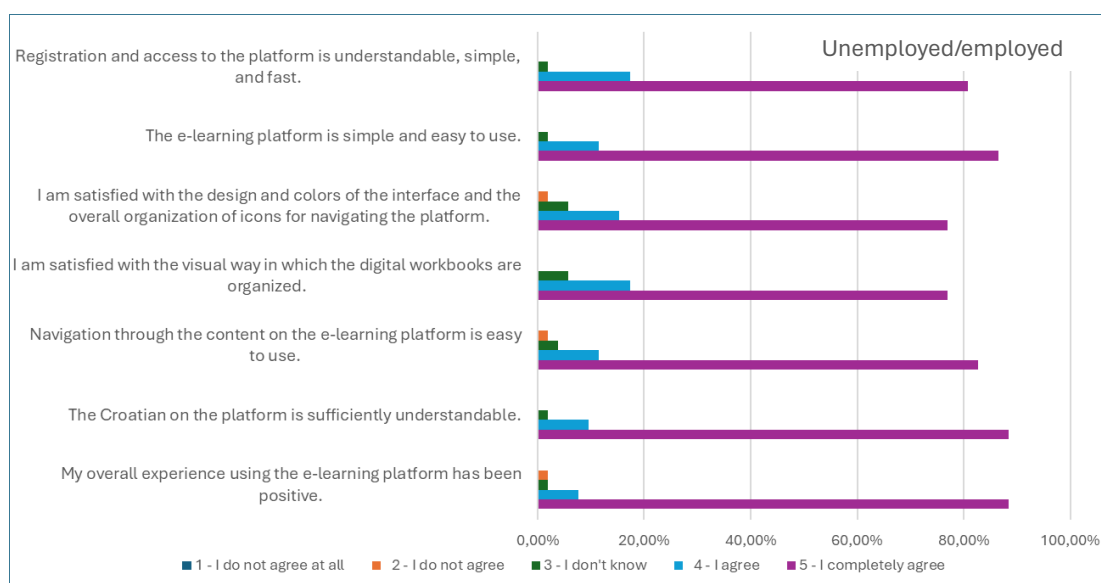


Figure 11a. Assessment of general and technical aspects of the Moodle platform interface

In Figures 11a. and 11b. the results of the quality assessment of digital workbooks and individual segments of the Moodle platform with digital workbooks are presented. From Figure 11a. it is evident that more than 80% of

participants fully agree that registration and access to the Moodle platform is understandable, simple, and fast. More than 86% of participants agree that the platform is easy and understandable to use. In a total percentage of more than 91%, participants agree or completely agree that they are satisfied with the design and colours of the interface and the overall organization of icons for navigating the platform. The same percentage agree or completely agree that they are satisfied with the visual way in which the training modules are arranged, while more than 94% of participants agree or completely agree that the Croatian language on the platform is sufficiently understandable and that their overall experience using the platform is positive.

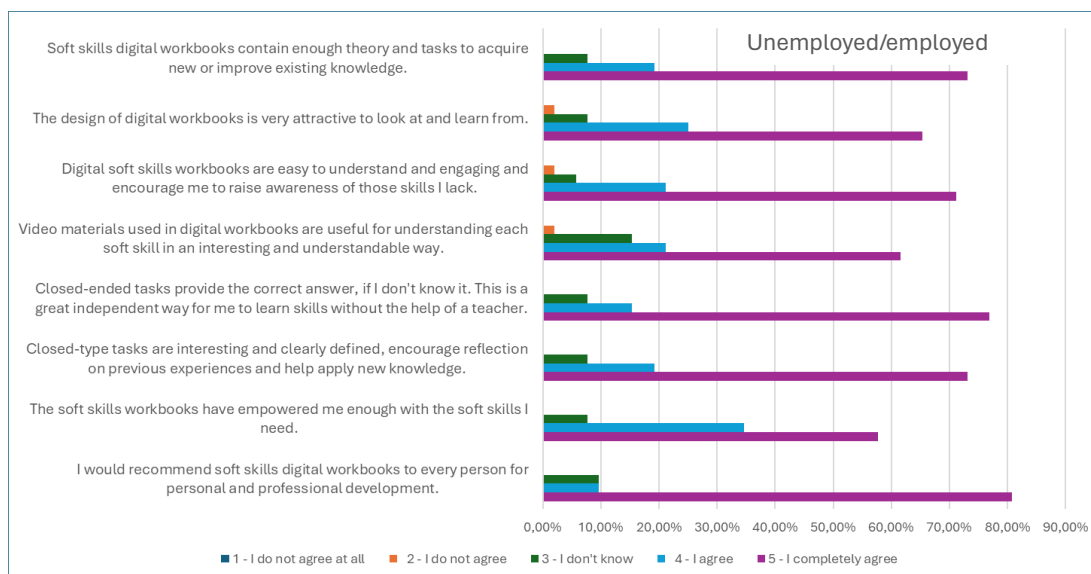


Figure 11b. Assessing the value of digital workbooks

Figure 11b. shows the results related to the assessment of the quality of the digital workbooks on the Moodle e-learning platform. It is evident from the picture that more than 92% of participants agree or completely agree that the digital workbooks contain enough theory and tasks for acquiring new or improving existing knowledge. Around 90% of the participants stated that they agree or completely agree that the workbooks are understandable and interesting and encourage reflection on previous personal experiences and help to make them aware of the skills they lack. Around 82% of the participants stated that they agree or completely that the video materials in the workbooks explain a particular soft skill in an interesting and comprehensible way. When it comes to closed-ended tasks, around 91% of participants stated that they agree or completely that they are clearly defined, encourage thinking about previous experiences and help the person to apply new knowledge. The same percentage of them stated that they agree or completely agree that the workbooks sufficiently empowered them with the soft skills that I needed, while about 89% of the participants completely agree that they would recommend them to any person for personal and professional development. From the above data, it can be concluded that the participants evaluated the workbooks as very useful for acquiring or improving soft skills and that they represent a sufficient scope of content for independent learning and can be offered as a separate online education in the future.

When asked "**What do you consider to be the highest quality of soft skills digital workbooks?**", that target group stated that they consider the highest quality of workbooks were: a good selection of the most needed soft skills on the labour market; excellent organization and content of workbooks; sufficient amount of information, interactivity, ease of use and efficiency of mastering new and/or improving existing soft skills - primarily getting to know oneself, insight into personality and skills, and thus gaining new knowledge and working on oneself; clarity and ease of understanding of content and easy-to-remember concepts and video materials with



translation into Croatian; interactive tasks with the possibility of correcting and showing and explaining incorrect solutions; showing real situations that are vividly described, and a person can easily identify with these situations and recognize personal shortcomings for everyday life; independence in learning and access to workbooks in their free time when it suits them; level of expertise and very 'user friendly'; and the design and way of presenting content that enables personal and digital development.

When asked "**What did you like most about the digital workbooks and why?**", the participants pointed out: interesting, high-quality and reviewed content, easy to use; a very detailed description and presentation of soft skills and a well-designed structure of workbooks; interactive tasks with concrete examples from business or private life with the possibility of correcting, showing and explaining incorrect solutions and questions for thinking; simple and understandable navigation and visual design; ease of learning and with focus; independence in learning and access to workbooks in their free time when it suits them and at their own pace; links for additional knowledge - represent content expansion and added value; video materials that are attractive, provoke action and allow better understanding, which complement textual content to present and better explain the whole picture; the fact that through thinking about the answers, the level of self-awareness and way of thinking is also checked, and thus one gets an insight into what needs to be worked on; drawing attention to the basics of the digital world and how to use them correctly, and a chapter on conflict resolution, green policies and tests to assess the level of a person for a particular skill; and a video about the Harvard study on happiness because it shows how important good interpersonal relationships are.

To the question "**What do you consider to be a shortcoming of digital workbooks?**" the participants pointed out: the technical problem of data storage / completed tasks and units per module on the Moodle platform; additional sources of knowledge, i.e. video materials that are only in English and their long duration, and lack of scientific sources of knowledge in that area; more examples and tasks for practice and avoiding repetitive questions that lead to an answer.

To the question "**What would you suggest to improve the quality of digital workbooks?**" the participants stated that it is necessary to provide video materials in the Croatian language with the possibility of asking questions on certain parts, to better technically solve the problem of opening, saving and closing workbooks in the browser, some videos the materials need to be shortened in time, the platform should be better adapted to use on mobile devices and computers, audio elements, visual content and more tasks to stimulate thinking should be added, and online debates should be set up.





Figure 12. Comparison of training quality results at the level of both groups

Figure 12 shows the comparison of training quality results for both groups. On the left side, the graph shows the quality results of the first group of participants who passed ESP and digital workbooks, while on the right side there are results of the group of participants who passed only digital workbooks. From the above picture, it can be concluded that the training was very useful for both groups. Each group achieved almost the same level of knowledge and skills acquisition, from which it can be concluded that the digital workbooks, which were created as additional material to ESP, are content- and visually high-quality learning material that can be used independently of ESP and can be offer in the future as a separate education, taking into account the recommendations for improvements that the participants stated, which are important to implement. Given that the digital workbooks are made in three languages, it can be concluded that they are well-suited material for the European market as well.

In the end, it can be concluded that the training helped that target group develop and/or upgrade soft skills and empower them to find a job, while in the case of employed persons, it strengthened their personal competencies, supplemented existing skills for new work environments that are becoming more and more complex every day in the world of digitization.

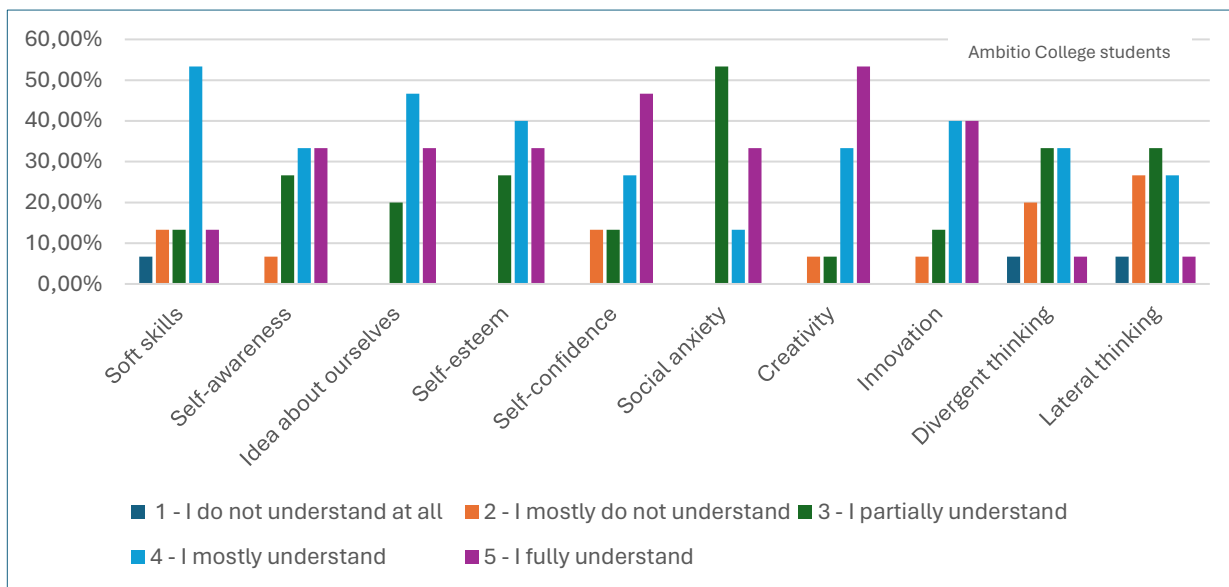
#### 4.1.2. Ambitio College students

Target group - Ambitio College students who came to education for a change of occupation, career advancement or personal growth face a unique situation. They often bring a wealth of experience but they lack the soft skills that are increasingly important in today's workplace. Soft skills enable them to have a greater chance of finding a job after completing their education and greater confidence in their abilities. At the same time, they allow them the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and identify areas in which they can improve, thus increasing their chances of success in education and career. In this sense, a total of 15 Ambitio College students participated in this target group, who are in the process of reskilling and upskilling for dental assistants, divided into two groups. There were 10 students in the first group of participants (ESP/Moodle) who underwent training on two e-learning platforms, and 5 students participated in the second group (Moodle) who underwent training on one platform.

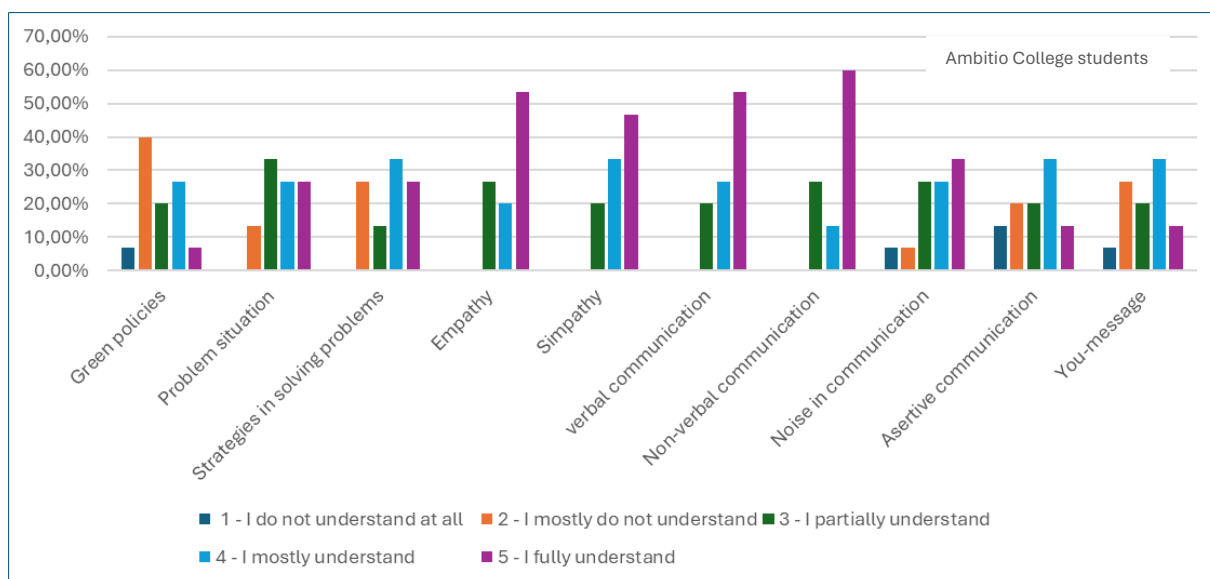


*Self-assessment questionnaire before the training - knowledge of soft skill terms*

From Figure 13a. it is evident that "soft skills, self-concept, self-esteem, self-confidence, creativity and innovation" are concepts that the participants mostly or completely understood before the training, but not in a higher percentage than 55%. More than 50% of the participants partially understood the concept of social anxiety, while the participants evaluated the terms "lateral and divergent thinking" with grades 2 to 4, i.e. from mostly misunderstanding to mostly understanding.



*Figure 13a. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training*



*Figure 13b. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training*

From Figure 13b. it is evident that "empathy, sympathy and verbal communication" are concepts that the participants fully understood before the training, as well as the target group of "employed and unemployed people in career change". The highest percentage of this understanding is between 53 and 60%, and they rated these terms with the highest score of 5. The term "green policy" is mostly a term of high misunderstanding, at 40%, while the percentages of understanding of the other terms are very different, and all grades from 1 to 5 in a percentage not exceeding 35%.



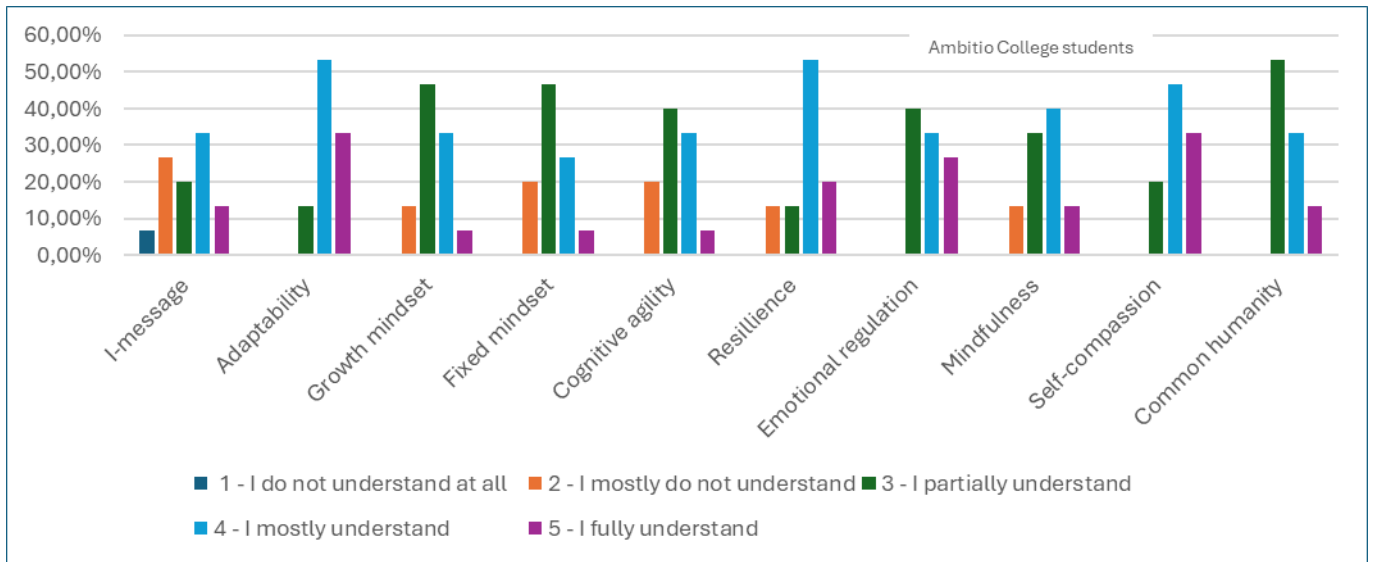


Figure 13c. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

From Figure 13c. a higher proportion of partial understanding of concepts and mostly understanding is visible compared to complete understanding, i.e. grade 5. Concepts that are mostly understood, but not in a higher percentage than 53%, are "adaptability and resilience", while the highest percentage of partial understanding of concepts is "variable mind-set, fixed mind-set, cognitive adaptability, emotional regulation and common humanity".

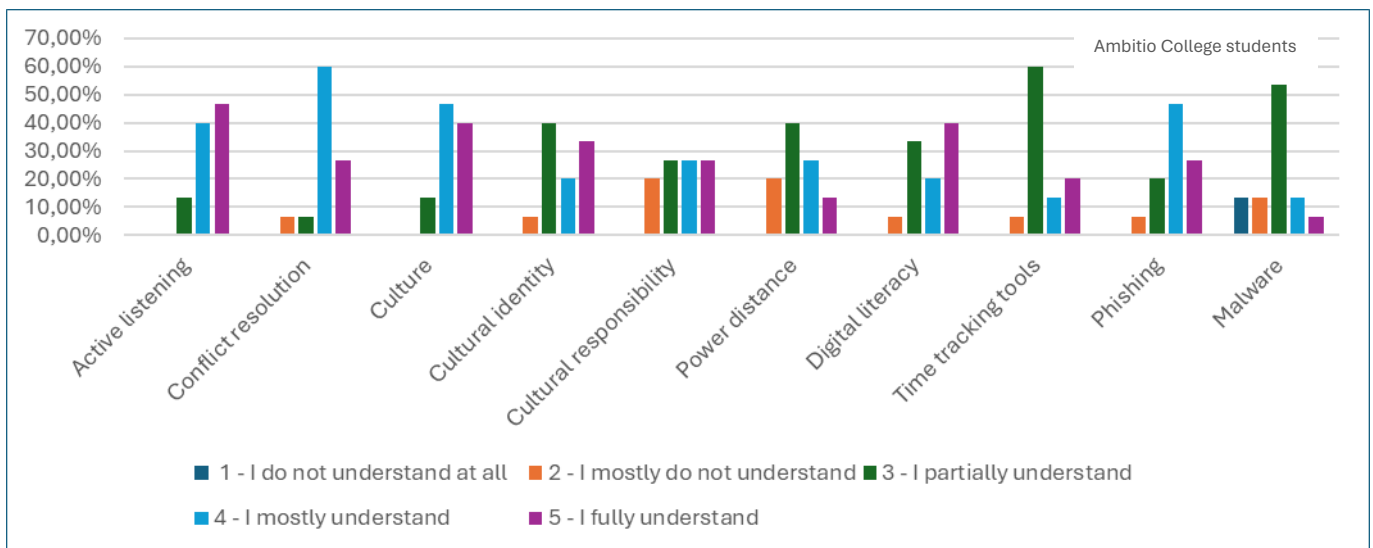


Figure 13d. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

From Figure 13d. a high degree of partial understanding of the term "time tracking tools, phishing, cultural identity and power distance" is visible, while the terms "conflict resolution, culture and identity theft" were mostly understood by the participants before the training. The term "cultural responsibility" shows divided opinions between grades 3 and 5, but also a percentage of 20% who mostly do not understand this term.

From all the pictures, it can be concluded that the level of initial knowledge of individual concepts is very different and complex for that target group. The initial average understanding for most concepts was mostly in a low percentage, which proves that the need to improve soft skill knowledge was necessary.



### Satisfaction with the introductory online lecture

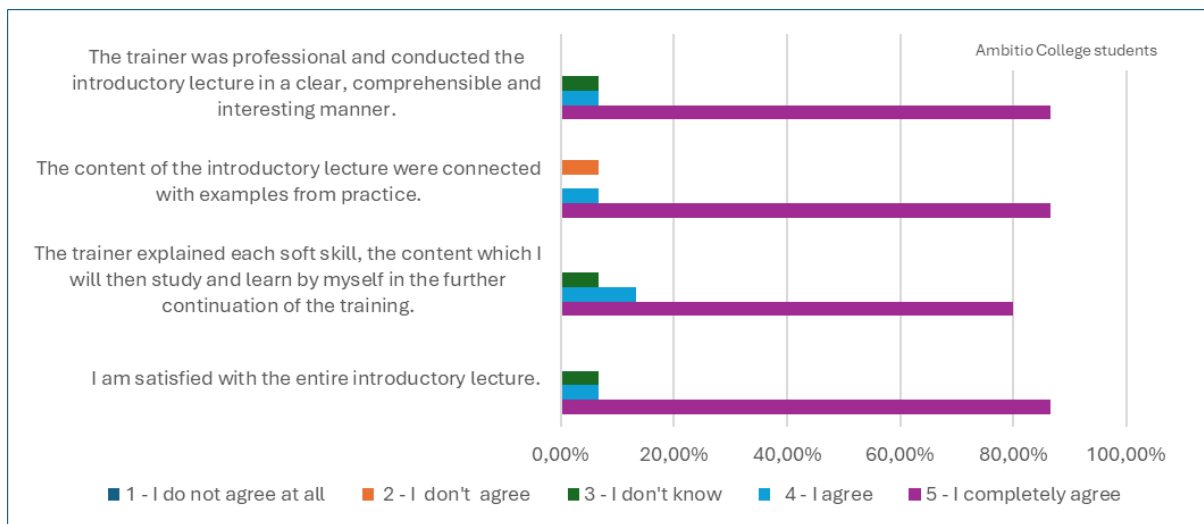


Figure 14. Participant satisfaction with the introductory online lecture

Figure 14 shows that about 87% of participants fully agree that the trainer was professional and conducted the introductory lecture in a clear, comprehensible, and interesting manner. The same percentage fully agree that they connected the content of the introductory lecture with examples from practice, and around 80% of them believe that the trainer explained every soft skill whose content they will be able to study and learn in the further continuation of the training. In the end, about 87% of the participants are satisfied with the entire introductory online lecture and it can be concluded that the entire structure of the lecture was well thought out and presented and had a positive effect on the motivation of both this target group for self-study as well as the previous target group.

### Essential Skills Program (ESP) satisfaction evaluation questionnaire

In pictures 15a. and 15b. the results of the quality assessment of individual ESP training segments on the Canvas e-learning platform are presented.

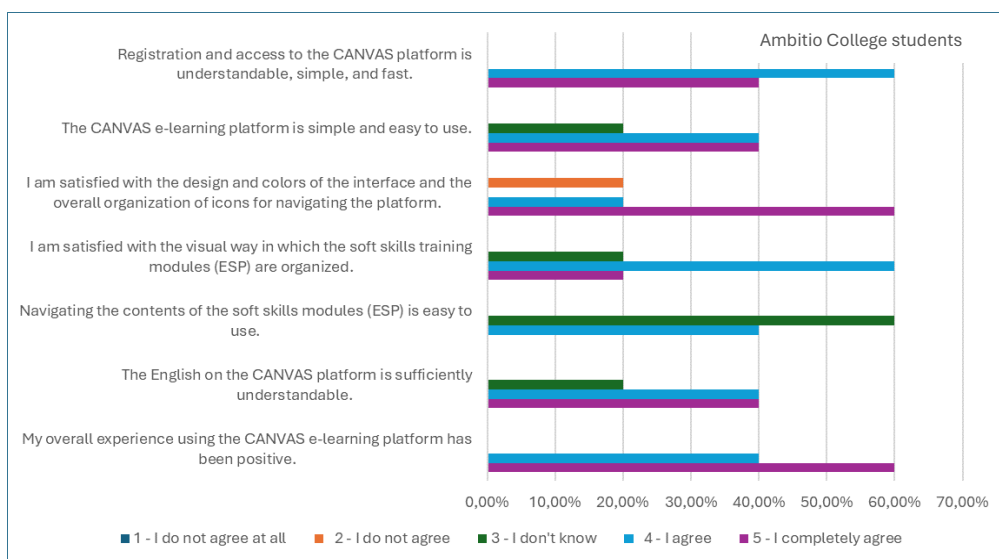


Figure 15a. Assessment of general and technical aspects of the Canvas platform interface

From Figure 15a. it is evident that 100% of participants agree or completely agree that registration and access to the Canvas platform is understandable, simple, and fast. About 80% of participants agree or completely agree



that the platform is easy and understandable to use, while 20% of them cannot assess it. About 80% of participants agree or completely agree that they are satisfied with the design and colours of the interface and the overall organization of icons for navigating the platform, while 20% of them disagree. About 60% agree that they are satisfied with the visual way in which the training modules are arranged, while 20% of them cannot assess it. About 80% of participants stated that they agree or completely agree that the English language on the platform is sufficiently understandable, and that the overall experience using the e-learning platform is positive for 100% of them (grade 4 or 5).

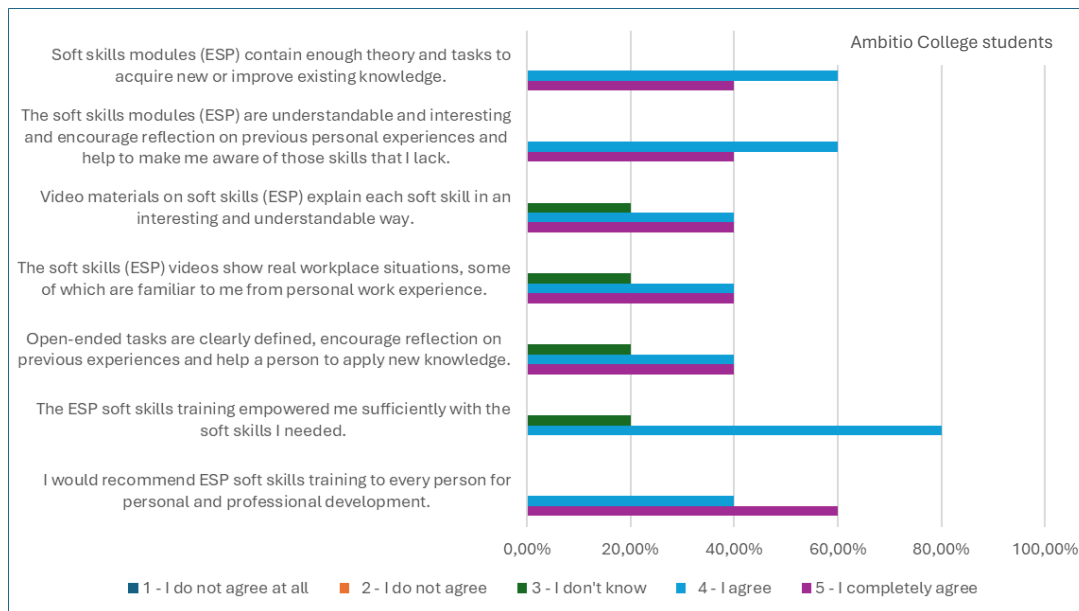


Figure 15b. Estimating the ESP value

Figure 15b. shows the results related to the assessment of the quality of ESP for that target group. It is evident from the picture that a total of 100% of participants agree or completely agree that ESP modules contain enough theory and tasks for acquiring new or improving existing knowledge. In the same percentage, they agree or completely agree that the ESP modules are understandable and interesting and encourage reflection on previous personal experiences and help to make them aware of the skills they lack. A total of 80% of the participants stated that they agree or fully agree that the ESP video materials explain a particular soft skill in an interesting and comprehensible way, while 20% of them cannot assess this. In the same percentage, they agree or fully agree that the video materials show real situations at the workplace, some of which are familiar to them from personal work experience, while 20% of them cannot assess this. Also, a total of 80% of participants stated that they agree or completely agree that the open-ended tasks are clearly defined, encourage thinking about previous experiences and help the person to apply new knowledge. The same percentage of participants stated that they agree or fully agree that the ESP training empowered them to a sufficient extent with the soft skills that I needed, while 100% of the participants fully agree that they would recommend the ESP training to any person for personal and professional development. From the above data, it can be concluded that this target group was as satisfied in all segments of the training as the original target group "employed/unemployed persons" and they also believe that ESP is a quality education that they can use to develop and/or improve soft skills and apply them in personal and working life.

To the question **"What do you consider to be the greatest quality of ESP soft skills training?"** Ambition students stated that the greatest quality is that the contents and topics are comprehensible and extensive, they can learn new skills or improve them in an online environment in their free time, and the evaluation of the learned contents is conceived through simple questions.





When asked **"What did you like most about the ESP soft skills training and why?"**, Ambitio students said that they liked the interesting topics the most because they are applicable in everyday situations as well as the tasks and tests for verification.

To the question **"What do you consider to be a shortcoming of ESP soft skills training?"**, most of Ambitio students believe that ESP has no major shortcomings except for feedback on the answers offered, i.e. perhaps it would be more convenient to discuss/discuss some topics in a larger online group workshop.

When asked, **"What would you suggest improving the quality of ESP soft skills training?"**, most of Ambitio students had no comments on that question except for one, which is to organize several online workshops in the group.

From the obtained results, we can conclude that the ESP and Canvas e-learning platform had a positive effect on the independent acquisition of knowledge and skills in the online environment for that target group, even though they have been familiarized with this platform for the first time. In terms of improvement, it is necessary to enrich ESP with an online space for discussion. Given that the training itself had its own predetermined specific structure based on the assessment of the soft skills trainer, it is necessary to open the option of group discussions in certain parts of the ESP module in the future planning of the training.

#### Self-assessment questionnaire after training

In figures 16a., 16b., 16c. and 16d. the shares of understanding of terms after the training compared to the initial state before the training is shown, from which it can be seen how successful the training was for that target group in terms of acquiring and applying knowledge.

From Figure 16a. a high level of understanding of all concepts is visible. About 80% of the terms the participants evaluated their understanding with a grade of 5. The term "divergent thinking" shares a grade of 4 and 5 in an equal percentage, i.e. 40%, while another 20% of the participants partially understand the term. In this sense, it is necessary to revise the content and additionally clarify with examples. The term "lateral thinking" was evaluated by a larger percentage of participants with a grade of 4, and a smaller percentage with a grade of 5, while another 13% of participants partially understood the term, from which it can be concluded that the term was still not sufficiently clarified in the training.

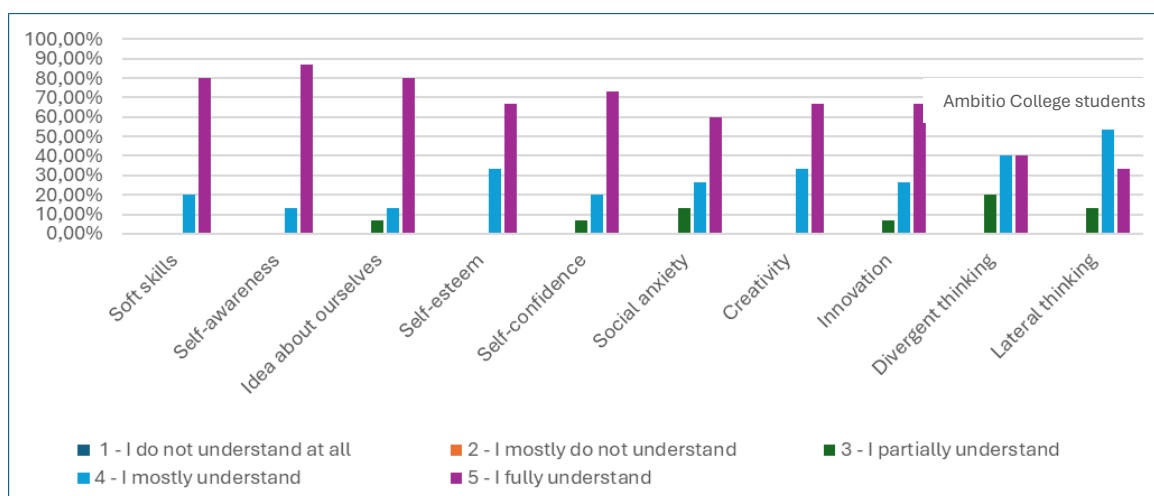


Figure 16a. The share of understanding of terms after training



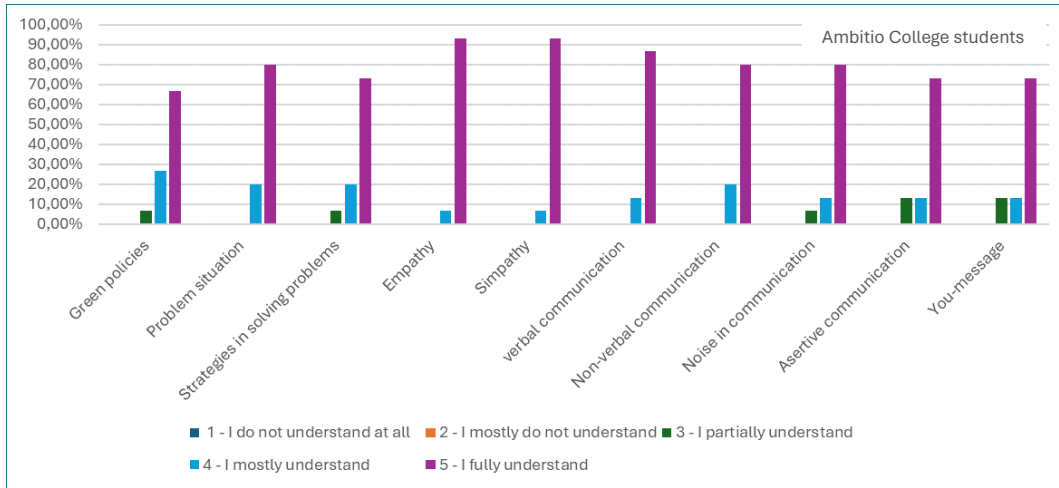


Figure 16b. The share of understanding of terms after training

From Figure 16b. a high level of understanding and adoption of all concepts is visible. The share of adopted understanding is 66 to 93%, and there is a very small percentage of partial understanding (5-10%) of the terms "assertive communication, You-message, noise in communication, green policies and strategies in solving problems".

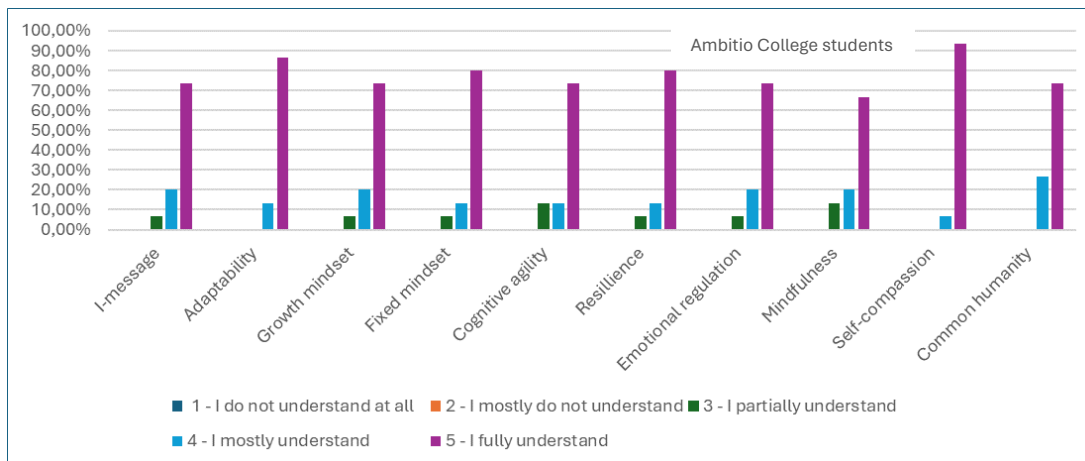


Figure 16c. The share of understanding of terms after training

From Figure 16c. it is evident that the participants fully understand all concepts, and this percentage varies from 73 to 93 %. There is a small percentage of those participants (6-13%) who partially understand all terms, except for the terms "self-compassion and common humanity".

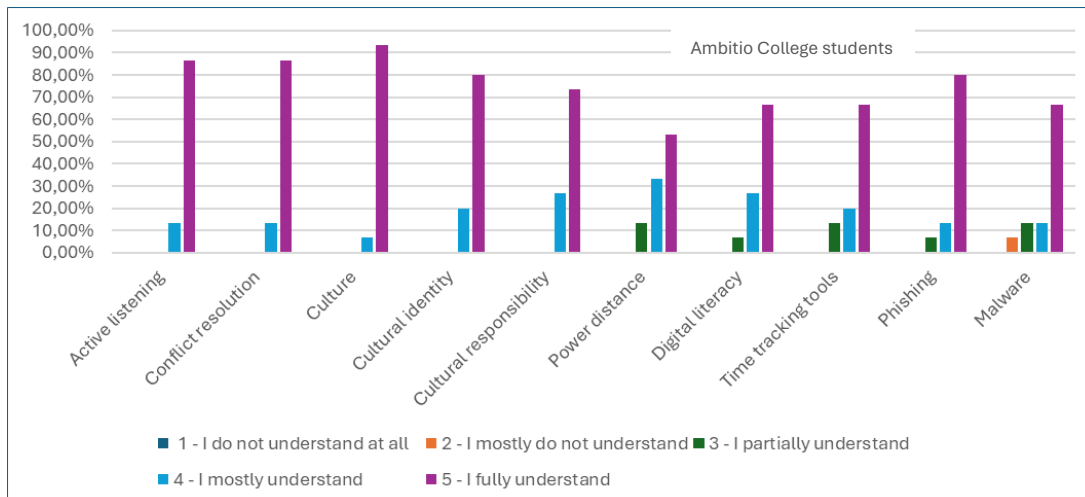


Figure 16d. The share of understanding of terms after training

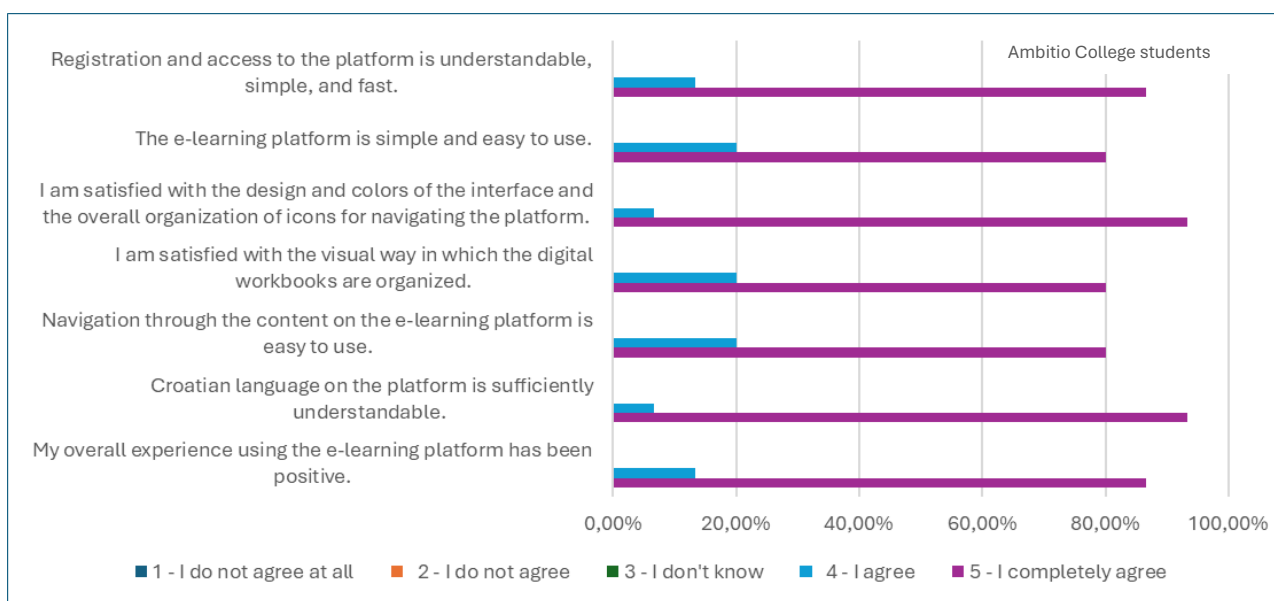


From Figure 16d. it is evident that the participants fully understand all concepts, and this percentage varies from 53 to 93 %. There is a small percentage of those students (6-13%) who mostly do not understand or partially understand some terms. The terms "power distance and malware" show a much higher level of understanding compared to the initial state of understanding.

From all the above images, as with the first target group, a great progress is visible, i.e. the percentage in the understanding of terms after the training compared to the results before the training, from which it can be concluded, as in the original target group, that the structure and contents of the training were designed for quality and comprehensible way and on the basis of which that target group successfully adopted and/or additionally strengthened their soft skills. For certain terms, there is room for improving the content and tasks, as well as additional clarification, which will be worked on after the completion of the project.

*Evaluation questionnaire on the satisfaction of digital workbooks*

In Figures 17a. and 17b. the results of the quality assessment of digital workbooks and individual segments of the Moodle platform and digital workbooks are presented. From Figure 17a. it is evident that in all segments of the evaluation of the general and technical aspects of the platform interface, 100% of participants agree or fully agree that registration and access to the Moodle platform is understandable, simple, and fast; that the platform is simple and understandable to use and that they are satisfied with the design and colours of the interface and the overall organization of icons for navigating the platform; that the visual way in which the training modules are arranged is satisfactory; the Croatian language on the platform is sufficiently understandable and that their overall experience using the e-learning platform is positive.



17a. Assessment of general and technical aspects of the Moodle platform interface



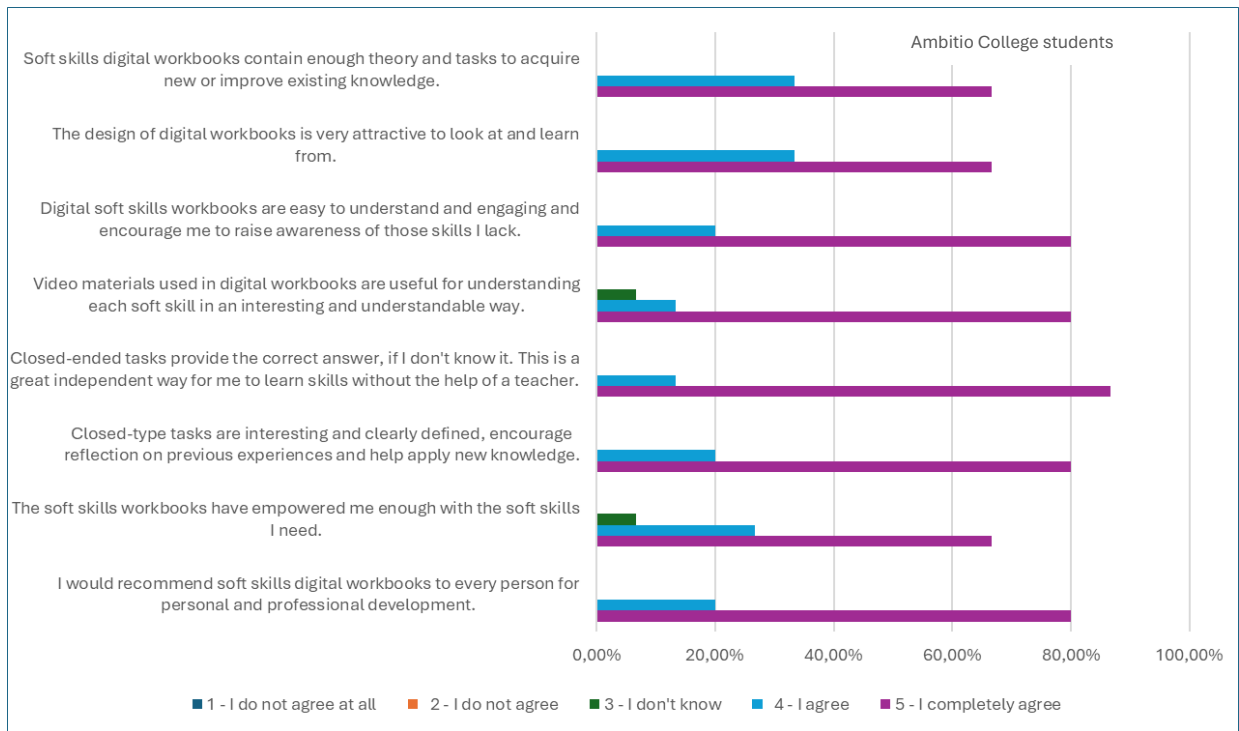


Figure 17b. Assessing the value of digital workbooks

Figure 17b. shows the results related to the assessment of the quality of the digital workbooks on the Moodle e-learning platform. It is evident from the picture that 100% of participants agree or fully agree that digital workbooks contain enough theory and tasks for acquiring new or improving existing knowledge; the design of the workbooks is very attractive for viewing and learning; workbooks are comprehensible and interesting and encourage reflection on previous personal experiences and help to make them aware of the skills they lack. The closed-type tasks for 100% of the participants are clearly defined (grade 4 and 5), encourage thinking about previous experiences and help the person to apply new knowledge. About 93% of participants stated that they agree or fully agree that the video materials in the workbooks explain a particular soft skill in an interesting and comprehensible way, while a smaller percentage of 7% cannot evaluate this statement. More than 90% of participants stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the workbooks sufficiently empowered them with the soft skills I needed, while 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend them to anyone for personal and professional development. From the above data, it can be concluded that the participants evaluated the workbooks as very useful for acquiring or improving soft skills and that they represent a sufficient scope of content for independent learning.

To the question **"What do you consider to be the highest quality of soft skills digital workbooks?"** the participants stated that they consider the highest quality to be the selection of soft skills that are most needed in the labour market, the scope and detail of topics that are well explained and interesting and encourage creative thinking, the possibility of accessing the workbooks at a time that suits them, the adoption of new terms and a clear explanation of each of them, given examples from everyday life that can be implemented in everyday life and encourage activation in life, tasks that offer solutions to understand what is wrong in their assessment and help to raise awareness what they lack.



When asked **"What did you like most about the digital workbooks and why?"**, the participants said that they liked the examples and illustrations, the video materials, the tasks that help them understand what they need to be change about themselves, the dynamism itself that creates fun, the comprehensiveness and clarification of each term, contributions from the YouTube channel where experts talk about a topic and their experiences. At the same time, they liked the knowledge check after each module, where they can check with certainty whether they have understood the topic in its entirety, as well as the additional content that graphically shows a certain skill, the dynamics of the workbooks because they are very rich in content and attract the person while solving tasks in which I need a little think through, interesting content and way of presenting the content, ease of access, speed and ease of use because everything can be solved independently and without difficulty.

When asked **"What do you consider to be a shortcoming of digital workbooks?"**, most of the participants stated that there was no shortcoming except for the video materials that described and explained the skill through a scene from real life, repetitive questions in some parts and the absence of audio monitoring of the content.

When asked **"What would you suggest improving the quality of digital workbooks?"**, this target group suggested more quizzes and questions, more workbooks, video materials that describe and explain the skill through a real-life scene, and refer participants to links, pages, or literature with similar content for those who want to know more.

Given that the participants expressed a desire for additional workbooks, it is necessary to investigate in the future what skills are needed on the labour market, in addition to digital and green skills, in order to approach the creation of new content.

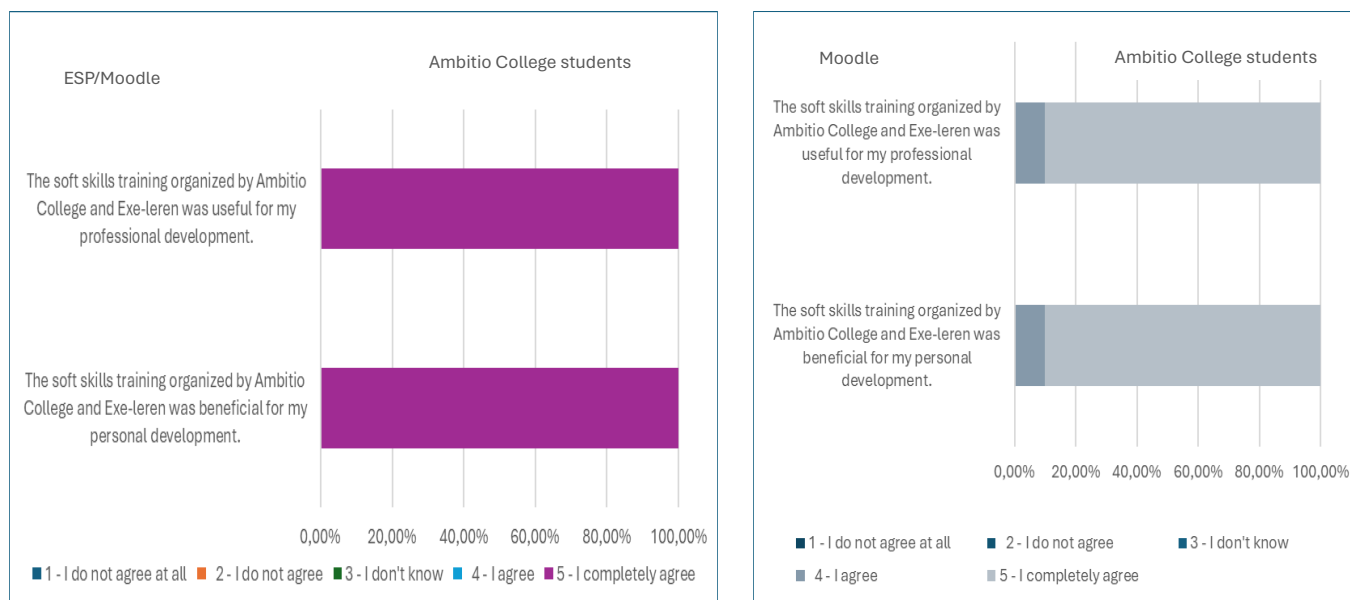


Figure 18. Comparison of training quality results at the level of both groups

Figure 18 on the left shows the results of the quality of training for the first group of participants who went through ESP and digital workbooks, while on the right are the results of the group of participants who went through only digital workbooks. From the above picture, it can be concluded that the training was very useful for both groups. Each group achieved almost the same level of knowledge and skills acquisition, from which it can be



concluded that the digital workbooks, which were created as additional material to ESP, are quality learning material that can be used independently of ESP and can be offered in the future as a separate education, considering the recommendations for improvements given by the participants. In the end, it can be concluded that the participants of Ambitio College in the process of adult education have strengthened themselves for future work that includes the application of soft skills.

#### 4.1.3. Teachers in adult education

Hard skills, i.e. the specialized knowledge skills of adult education teachers are only the foundation, however even those with the most knowledge will not be effective if they cannot communicate clearly, build efficient relationship with students, or effectively manage a classroom. This is precisely why soft skills help teachers create a positive learning environment where students feel comfortable participating, asking questions and taking risks. Adult learners come into the classroom with different needs and experiences, so soft skills enable these differences to be accommodated and build trust. The key soft skills for adult education teachers are certainly communication, which is essential for clearly teaching and explaining concepts, giving instructions, and facilitating discussions. Active listening is also key to understanding the needs of the trainees. Empathy and emotional intelligence, i.e. the ability to understand and respond to the emotions of students, is crucial, and with this, teachers can create a safe space for learning and build strong relationships with students. Patience and resilience enable teachers to remain calm and provide support to all students. The ability to organize and manage time ensure the smooth flow of classes and efficient use of class time. Teachers must lead and motivate students, set clear expectations, and manage classroom behaviour, so inspirational leadership fosters a sense of purpose and learning in the classroom. The ability to adapt teaching methods, handle unexpected situations, and accommodate different learning styles is critical to success.

By effectively developing and using these soft skills, teachers can become not only instructors, but facilitators who empower students to learn and grow. In this context, participation in online soft skills training was an opportunity for this target group - teachers, to strengthen their relationship with participants in adult education, but also for work and relationship with colleagues in their primary workplaces in the profession. A total of 14 adult education teachers participated in this target group, divided into two groups. There were 10 participants in the first group of participants (ESP/Moodle) who participated in training on two platforms, and 4 teachers participated in the second group (Moodle) who participated in training on one platform.

#### *Self-assessment questionnaire before the training - knowledge of soft skill terms*

From Figure 19b. it is evident that "self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, creativity, innovation" are concepts that the participants understood or fully understood before the training, but in a percentage not exceeding 50%. Teachers partially understand or mostly do not understand the terms "lateral thinking, divergent thinking and self-concept" and this is between 28 and 43%. The term "soft skills" is understood by only about 40%, and nearly 36% of them partially understand it.



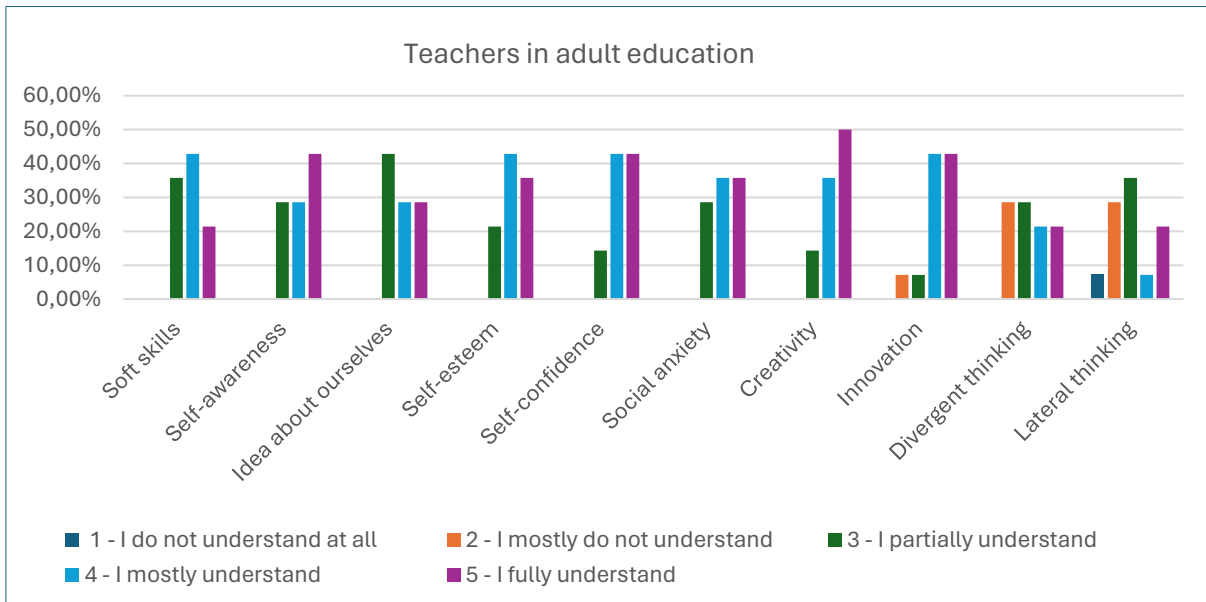


Figure 19a. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

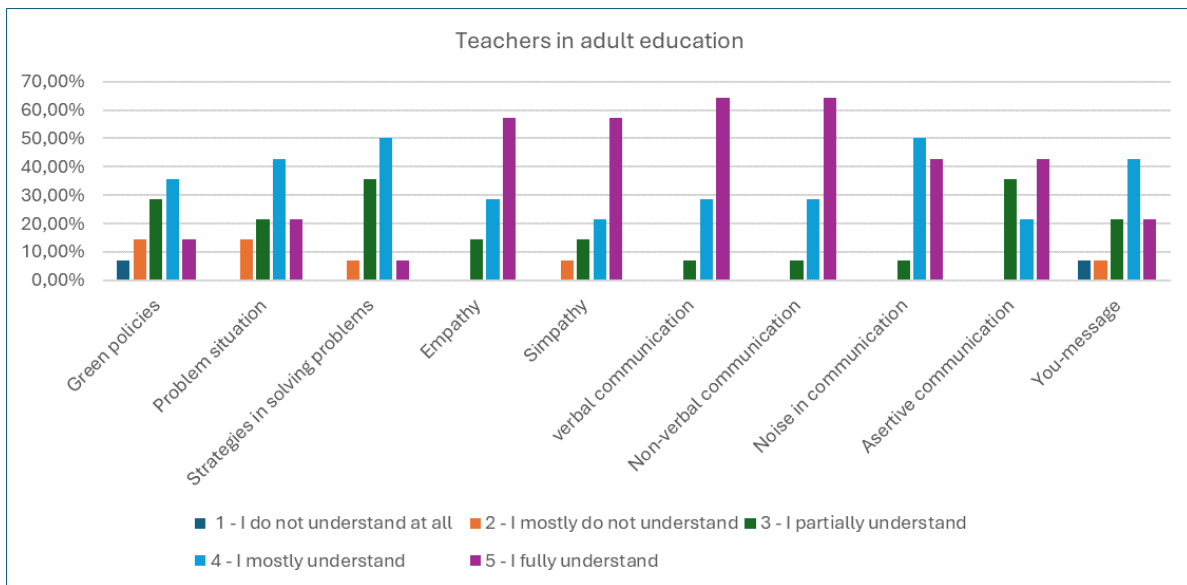


Figure 19b. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

From Figure 19b. it is evident that the teachers rated all terms with a grade of 4 or 5, that is, they mostly understand or completely understand the terms. Although there is a high level of understanding of all terms, there is still a partial understanding of between 20 and 30% for some terms such as "assertive communication, problem solving strategies, problem situation and green policies".

In Figure 19c. one can see a very different degree of understanding or not understanding all concepts. Visible high degree (between 42-50 %) of partial understanding of the concepts "fixed mindset, cognitive adaptability and common humanity". The degree of understanding of the term "mindfulness" is low, and opinions are divided in the evaluation of the term "I-message" between partial and complete understanding (3-5). 50% of teachers fully understand the term "self-compassion".



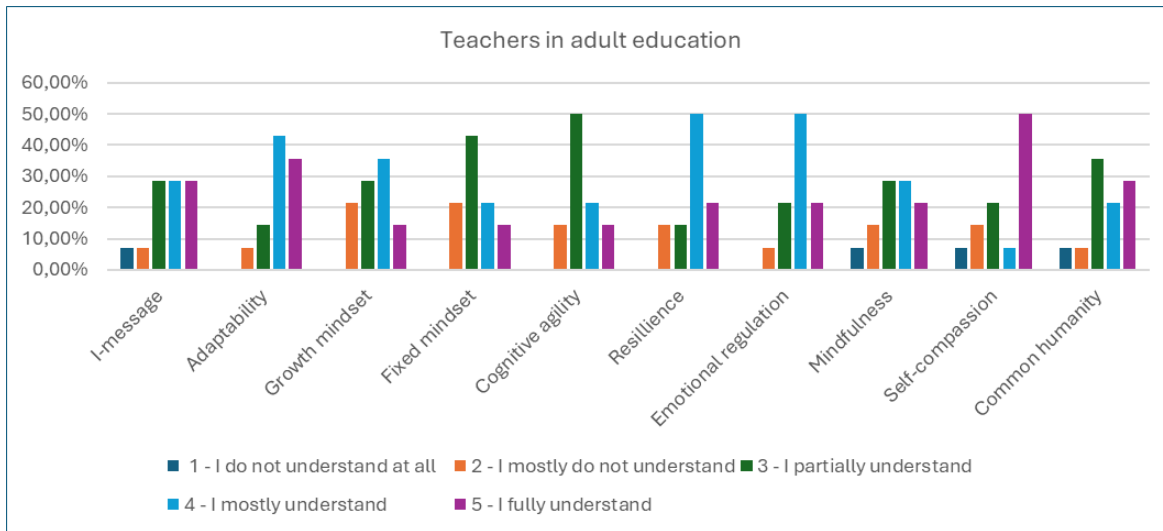


Figure 19c. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

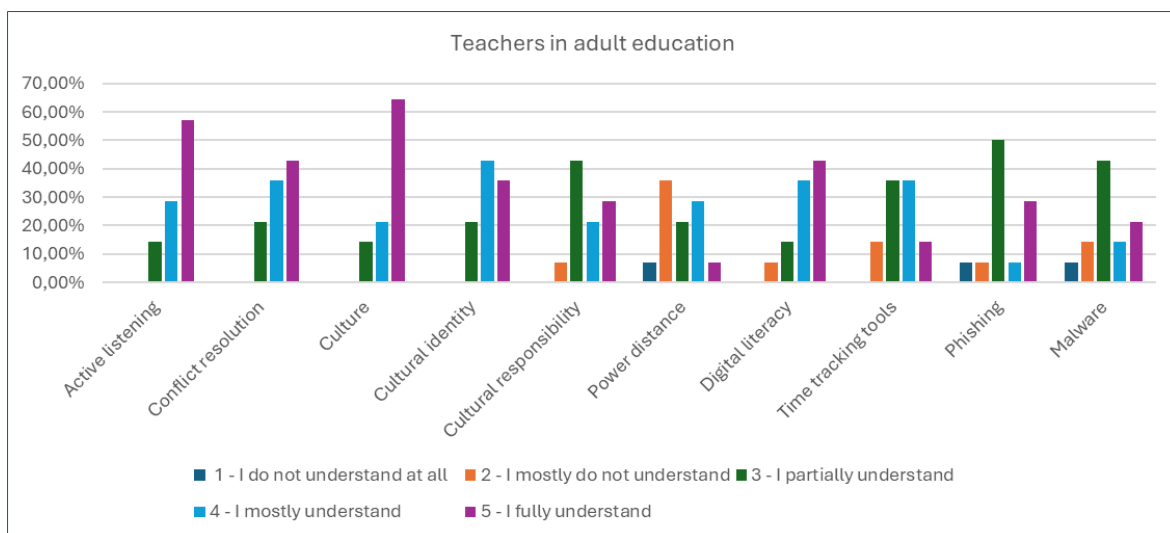


Figure 19d. The share of initial understanding of terms in soft skills training

In Figure 19d. a high degree (between 78 and 85 %) of mostly or completely understanding of the terms "active listening, conflict resolution, culture and digital literacy" is visible, while the term "power distance" is mostly not understood by around 36 % of them. They consider the terms "phishing and malware" to be partially understood (between 43 and 50%).

#### Satisfaction with the introductory online lecture

It is evident from Figure 20 that 100% of teachers are satisfied with all the statements of satisfaction with the introductory online lecture. The teachers agree or fully agree that the trainer was professional and conducted the introductory lecture in a clear, comprehensible, and interesting manner. Trainer related the content of the introductory lecture with examples from practice and explained each soft skill, the content of which they will be able to study and learn in the further continuation of the training. From the attached data, this target group is very satisfied with the structure and content of the introductory online lecture.





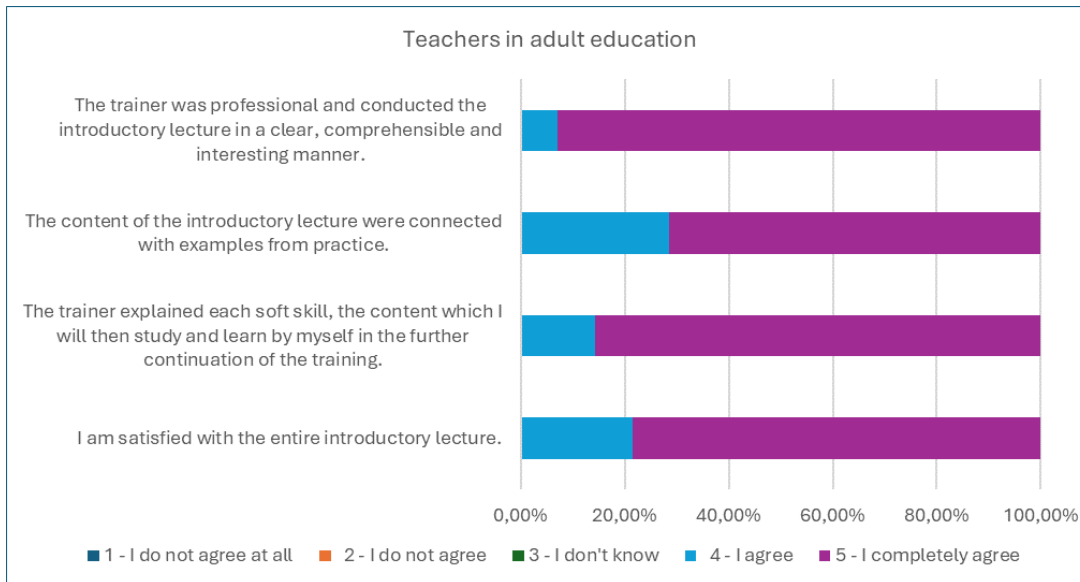


Figure 20. Participant satisfaction with the introductory online lecture

### Essential Skills Program (ESP) satisfaction evaluation questionnaire

Figure 21a. shows the results of the evaluation of the general and technical aspects of the Canvas interface. It is evident from the above picture that 80% of participants agree or completely agree that registration and access to the platform is understandable, simple, and fast. An equal percentage of participants agree or completely agree that the platform is easy and understandable to use, while 20% of them cannot assess this.

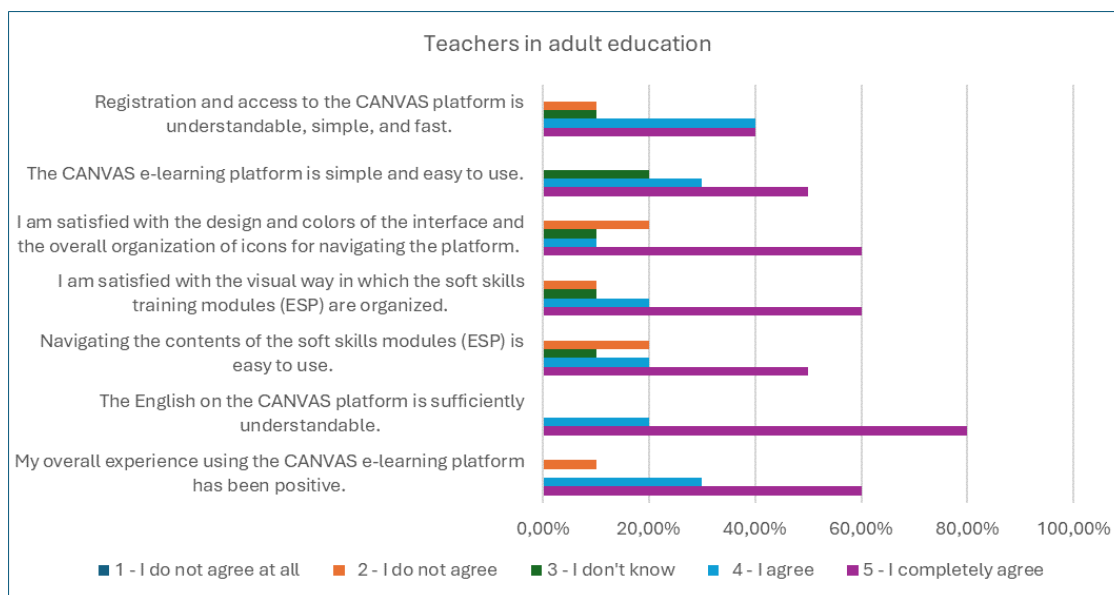


Figure 21a. Assessment of general and technical aspects of the Canvas platform interface

Also, 80% of participants agree or fully agree that they are satisfied with the design and colours of the interface and the overall organization of icons for navigating the platform, while 20% of them disagree. An equal percentage agree that they are satisfied with the visual way in which the training modules are arranged, while 20% of them disagree or cannot assess. Navigation through the contents of the module is easy to use for about 70% of them, while 20% of them disagree. 100% of participants stated that they agree or fully agree that the English language on the platform is sufficiently understandable, and that the overall experience using the e-learning platform is positive for 90% of them, who gave a score of 4 or 5, and 10% of them does not agree.

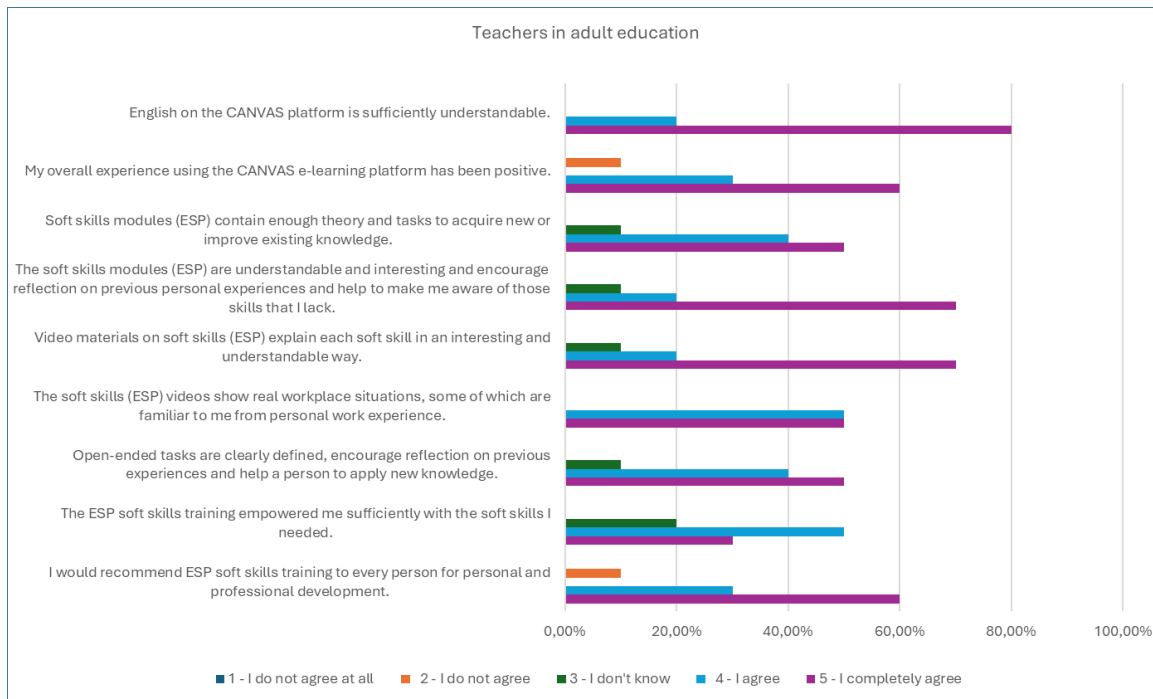


Figure 21b.  
Estimating the  
ESP value

Figure 21b. shows the results related to the assessment of the very quality of ESP training for that target group. It is evident from the picture that 80% of participants agree or completely agree that ESP training modules contain enough theory and tasks for acquiring new or improving existing knowledge. 90% of the participants stated that they agree or fully agree that the ESP modules are understandable and interesting and encourage reflection on previous personal experiences and help to make them aware of the skills they lack. The same percentage of participants stated that they agree or completely agree that ESP video materials explain a particular soft skill in an interesting and comprehensible way, while 10% of them cannot assess this. 100% of them agree or fully agree that the video materials show real workplace situations, some of which are familiar to them from personal work experience, and that the open-ended tasks are clearly defined, encourage reflection on previous experiences and help the person to apply new knowledge. A total of 80% of the participants stated that they agree or strongly agree that the ESP training empowered them to a sufficient extent with the soft skills that I needed, while 90% of the participants fully agree that they would recommend the ESP training to any person for personal and professional development. From the above data, it can be concluded that this target group was as satisfied in all segments of the training as the original two target groups, from which it can be concluded that ESP is a quality education that can develop and/or improve soft skills and apply them in personal and working life. Certain lower percentages of dissatisfaction indicate that it is necessary to provide an even better user learning experience.

To the question **"What do you consider to be the greatest quality of ESP soft skills training?"** teachers stated that the greatest quality was that the training enabled a wider range of covered skills, well-designed and interesting video materials, i.e. realistic scenarios in the work environment providing concrete answers to current problems, setting questions, and encouraging reflection on examples of situations. At the same time, their training is well designed, accessible, and understandable to all ages, enables personal and professional development, useful self-reflective questions, and the fact that it is in an online environment.

When asked **"What did you like most about the ESP soft skills training and why?"**, teachers stated that they liked the short and concise video materials with practical examples, i.e. excellently processed situations through which each skill is presented for itself, reflection on



different situations, reflexive questions that allow you to focus on your own experience within each module, putting yourself in the same or remembering, thinking about yourself from a different perspective, the transparency of the platform itself, and the organization and accessibility of the College through which the training is organized.

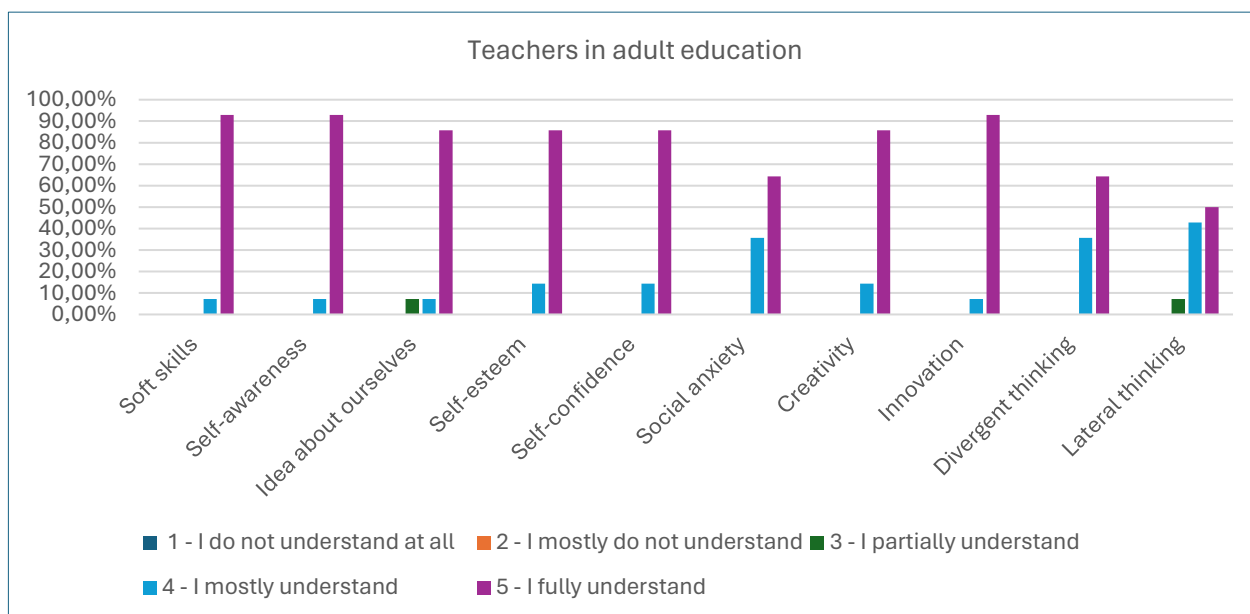
To the question **"What do you consider to be a shortcoming of the ESP soft skills training?"** teachers emphasized the template way of presenting skills and too many repetitive questions and the same teaching method throughout all modules.

To the question **"What would you suggest improving the quality of ESP soft skills training?"** teachers suggested more short tests and tasks with multiple choices, less presentation of their own experience and presentation of each skill in a different way, rather than using a same template, and to facilitate monitoring of modules and solved tasks in terms of technical improvement of the Canvas platform.

From the obtained results, we can conclude that the platform was a positive experience for teachers that they encountered for the first time and that they would recommend to anyone for personal and professional development, but with quality improvements in terms of avoiding the same template structure of each module, more tasks with multiple choices, and less reflexive open-ended questions.

#### Self-assessment questionnaire after training

Self-assessment questionnaire after the training showed a high level of understanding of all concepts (Figure 22).



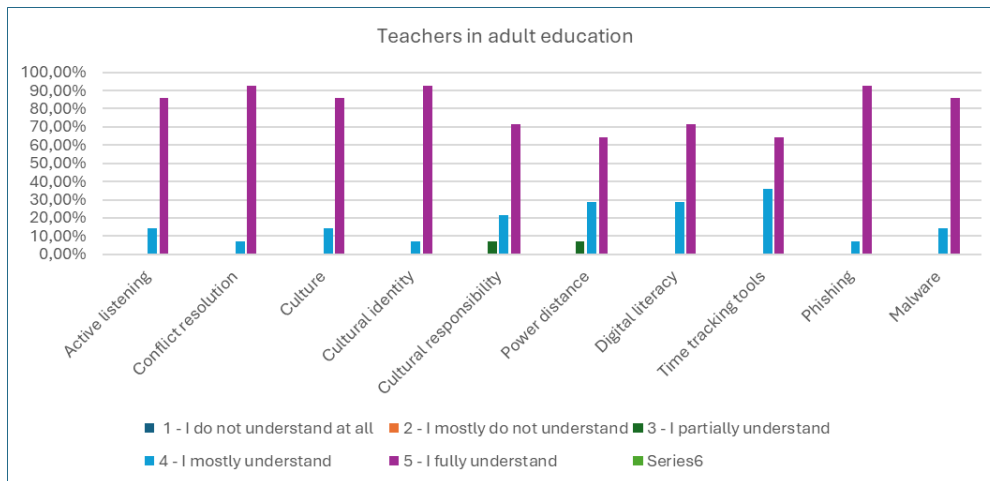
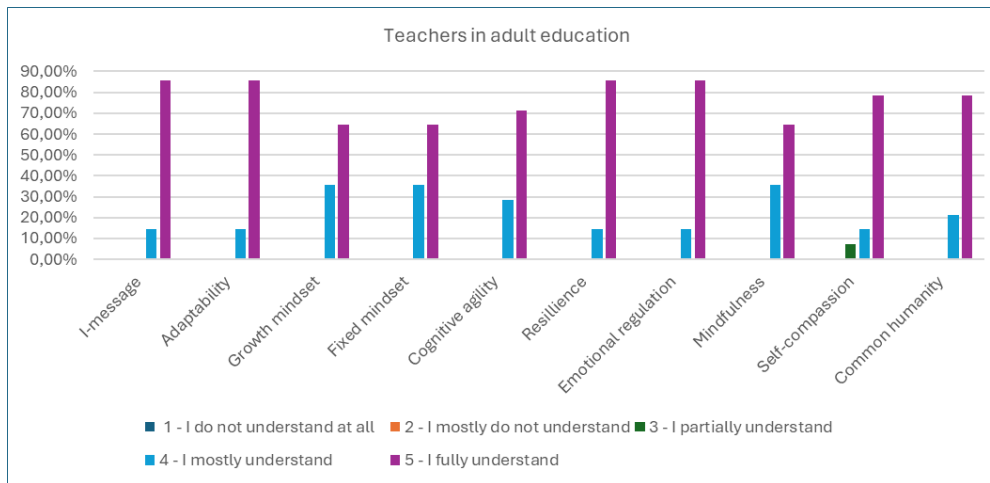
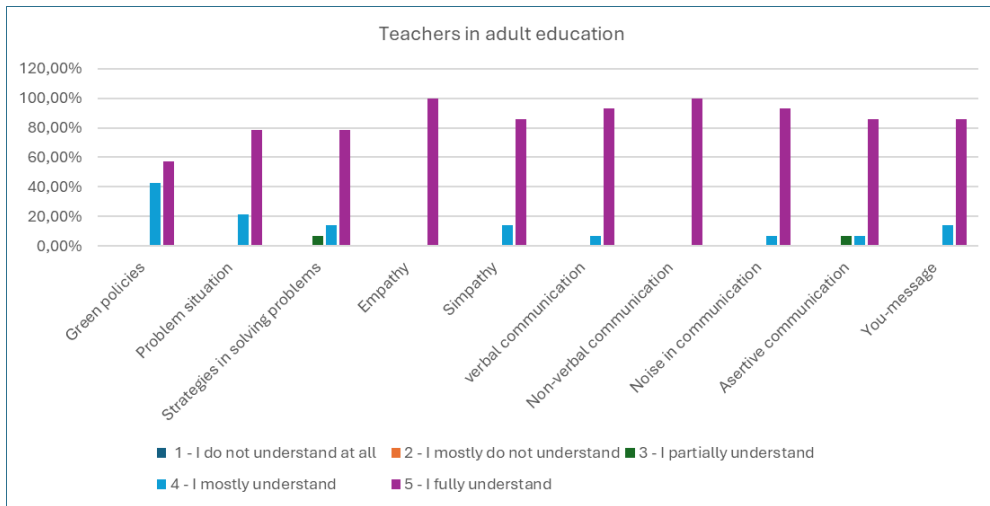


Figure 22. The share of understanding of terms after training

It is evident from Figure 22 that teachers understand or fully understand all terms after the training compared to the initial state before the training. This percentage ranges from 57 to 100%, based on which it can be concluded that the training was successful for teachers and that they achieved the greatest success in developing and/or improving soft skills compared to other target groups.



## Evaluation questionnaire on the satisfaction of the Moodle platform

In pictures 23a. and 23b. the results of the quality assessment of individual segments of the Moodle platform, which contains digital workbooks, are presented.

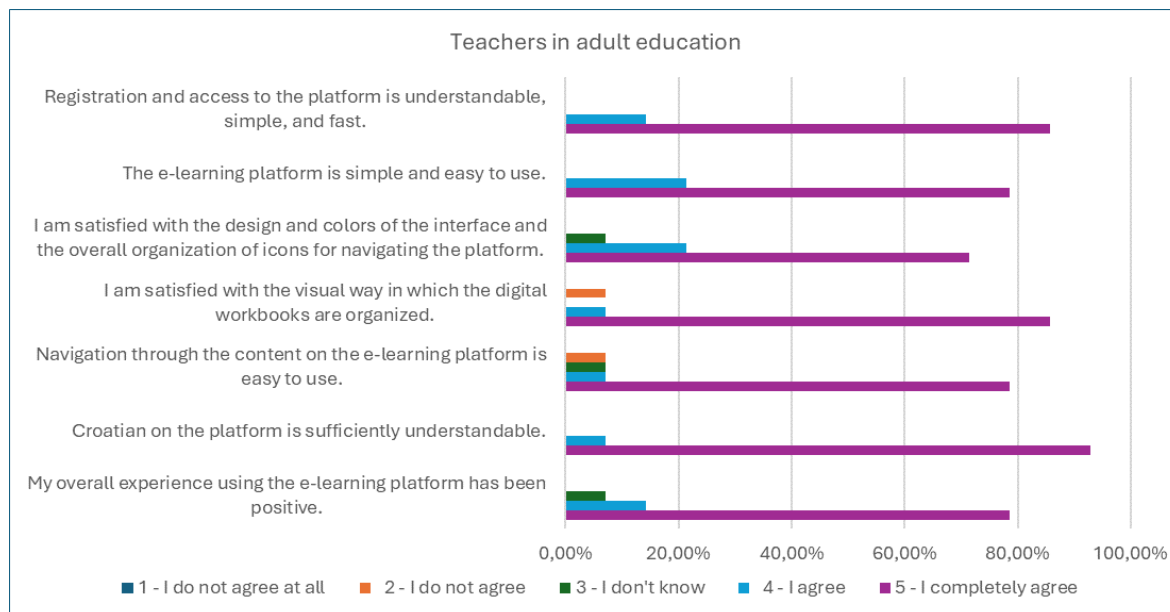


Figure 23a. Assessment of general and technical aspects of the Moodle platform interface

Figure 23a. shows the results of the evaluation of the general and technical aspects of the Moodle interface. It is evident from the above picture that 100% of teachers agree or fully agree that registration and access to the Moodle platform is understandable, simple, and fast, and that it is easy and understandable to use. About 93% of teachers agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the design and colours of the interface and the overall organization of icons for platform navigation. About 92% of them agree or completely agree that they are satisfied with the visual way in which the workbooks are arranged, and the same percentage agree or completely agree that the visual way in which the digital workbooks are arranged is satisfactory. Navigation through the content on the e-learning platform is easy to use for 78% of them, while 22% of them disagree or cannot assess it. 100% of them agree or completely agree that the Croatian language on the platform is sufficiently comprehensible and that around 92% agree or completely agree that their overall experience using the e-learning platform is positive.

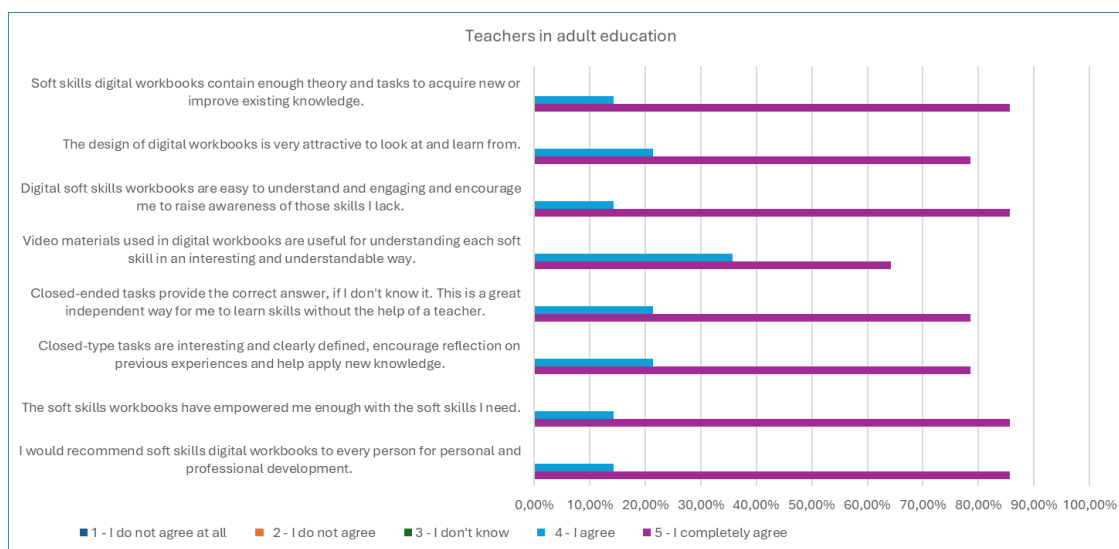


Figure 23b. Assessing the value of digital workbooks



Figure 23b. shows the results related to the evaluation of the value of digital workbooks on the Moodle e-learning platform. It can be seen from the picture that 100% of teachers agree or completely agree that digital workbooks contain enough theory and tasks for acquiring new or improving existing knowledge, that they are understandable and interesting and encourage reflection on previous personal experiences and help to raise awareness of those skills that they lack, the video materials in the workbooks explain a particular soft skill in an interesting and comprehensible way, the closed-type tasks are clearly defined, they encourage thinking about previous experiences and help the person to apply new knowledge, the workbooks sufficiently empowered them with soft skills that we needed and would recommend them to every person for personal and professional development. From the above data, it can be concluded that the participants evaluated the workbooks as very useful for acquiring or improving soft skills and that they represent a sufficient scope of content for independent learning.

When asked ***"What do you consider to be the greatest quality of soft skills digital workbooks?"***, teachers stated that digital workbooks are interesting and creatively designed and contain enough theory and tasks to acquire new and upgrade existing knowledge. They also consider ease of use, independence of learning at a time that suits them, tasks that offer an exact solution, concrete examples from everyday life that enable the practical application of knowledge, clear explanations, the option of access via a digital platform that allows maximum flexibility and enough time to reflect on with each module and task, diverse content accompanied by examples with which we can check whether they have adopted the theory, the possibility of going through certain topics more than once, returning to tasks and lessons.

When asked ***"What did you like most about the digital workbooks and why?"***, the teachers liked the applicable and useful examples from practice and the exercises associated with them, clear and concrete explanations of new concepts, video materials, tasks and how to solve them, and the possibility corrections of wrong answers, simply asked questions that nevertheless call for deeper reflection on them, awareness of the importance of good management of emotions and their impact on our mental health and interpersonal relationships, design of digital workbooks, possibility of additional learning.

To the question ***"What do you consider to be a shortcoming of digital workbooks?"***, the teachers emphasized the problem of data storage when completing individual units and the way to mark those units where a person stopped at that moment.

To the question ***"What would you suggest improving the quality of digital workbooks?"*** they suggested introducing open-ended tasks, dividing training into basic or advanced levels, more closed-ended tasks with provided answers, better memorization of previous results, use of different content presentation methods and knowledge acquisition tests, the possibility of adding comments to the material being learned.



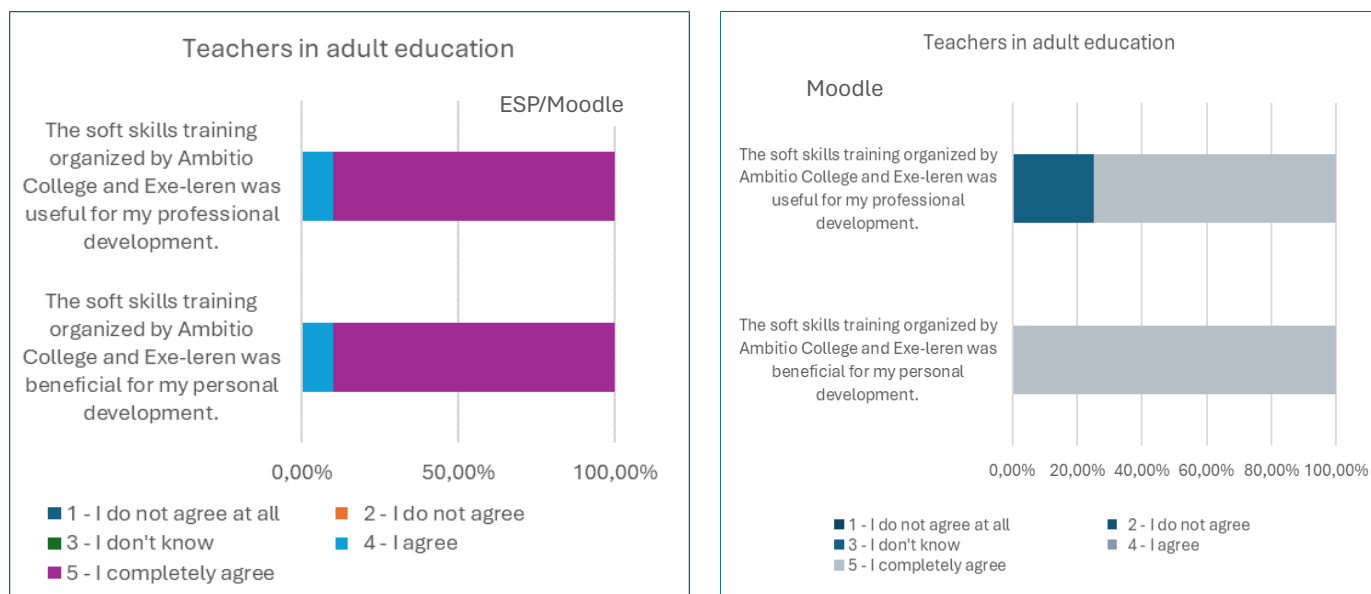


Figure 24. Comparison of training quality results at the level of both groups

Figure 24 on the left shows the results of the quality of training for the first group of teachers who went through ESP and digital workbooks, while on the right are results of the group of teachers who went through only digital workbooks. From the above picture, it can be concluded that both groups agree or completely agree that training is useful for personal and professional development, from which it can be concluded, as in the other target groups, that digital workbooks are quality learning material that can be used independently of ESP and can be offered in the future as a separate education. The percentage of 25% from the second group who cannot assess whether it is completely useful for professional development needs to be further analysed after the project is completed.

In the end, we can conclude that by participating in this training, adult education teachers became aware of and strengthened their soft skills for personal development and advancement in their primary job, as well as for a better, more qualitative, and innovative approach to adult education participants that encourages motivation, creativity, successful problem solving, successfully dealing with stressful situations, critical thinking, adaptability, etc.

#### 4.2. European participants in training

The soft skills training was attended by individuals from partner European organizations with which Ambitio College is currently implementing Erasmus+ projects. The goal of their participation was primarily the acquisition / improvement of knowledge in the field of soft skills as well as the testing of digital workbooks in English to analyse the quality of the training from their point of view after the training and to disseminate the results of the project in the European framework. In this way, the training created a European learning environment, and their contribution and thoughts will contribute to the improvement and effectiveness of training in English for future participants in Europe. A total of 9 participants from Spain (4), Greece (2), Belgium (1) and Bulgaria (2) participated in the training.



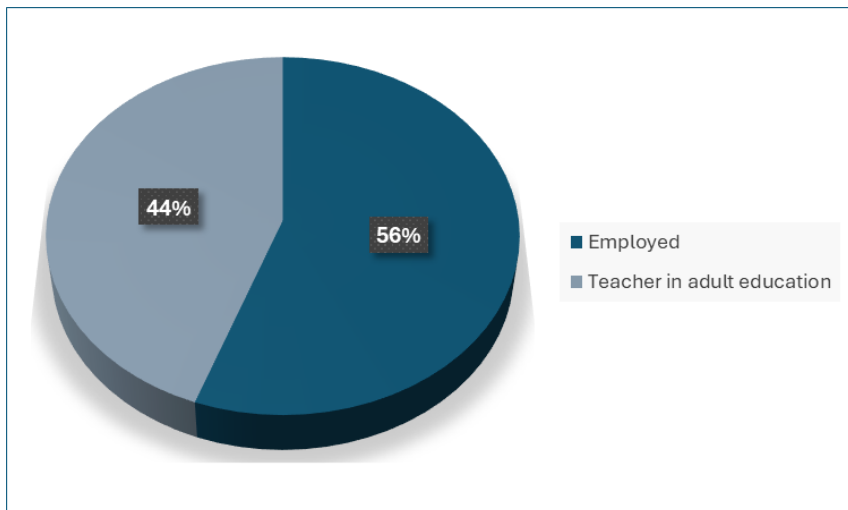


Figure 24. Share of target groups in training

56% of employed persons and 44% of European adult education teachers participated in the training.

### Age structure of European students

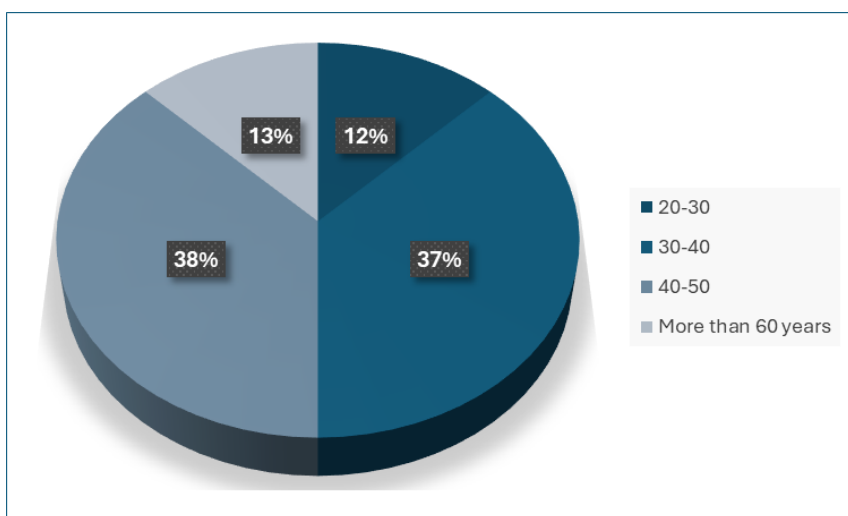


Figure 26. Share of age of participants in training

Participants in four age groups took part in the training. The largest number of participants was in the age group of 30 to 40 years (37%) and 40 to 50 years (38%). A smaller percentage of participants were in the age group of 20 to 23 participants (12%) and in the group over 60 years old (13%).

### Gender, education and work structure of European participants

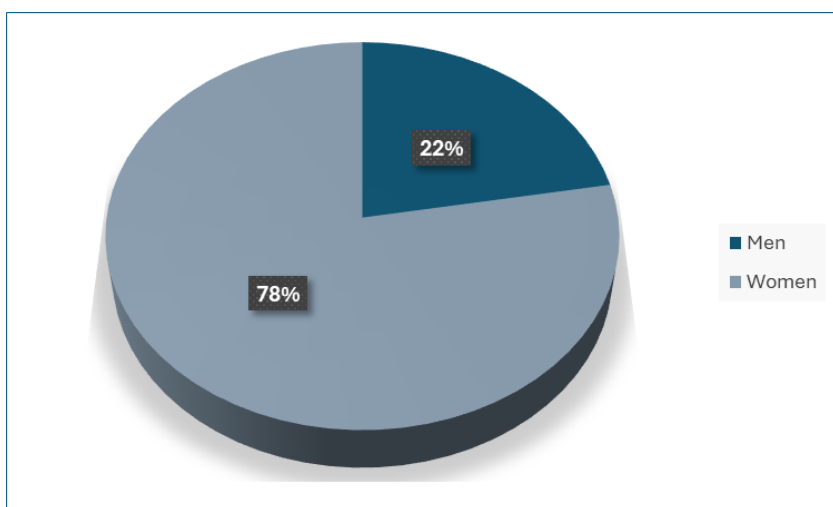


Figure 25. Share of men and women in training

Of the total number of participants, the largest share of participants in the training were women, 78 of them, or 78%, while there were only 22, or 22% of men.

100% of foreign participants have completed higher education in the field of digital marketing, education, religious studies, IT, tourism, agriculture, and political science. Some participants work as trainers in adult education,





some work in coordination and administration of project activities, while one participant worked as a scientist in the centre for innovation and lifelong education.

### Self-assessment questionnaire before the training - knowledge of soft skill terms

Before the start of the training, the European participants filled out a self-assessment questionnaire on the understanding of concepts in the field of soft skills, and from Figure 28 it is evident that the initial understanding of all concepts is at a higher level and in terms of percentages compared to all three Croatian target groups of the project. The reason for this could be attributed to professional experiences at the workplace and personal experiences in private life, education in the field of soft skills, a different approach to regular education, self-learning in terms of personal development, etc. compared to Croatian students. The understanding of all 40 terms was rated with the highest grades of 4 and 5, and in a smaller percentage, half of the terms were rated with a grade of 3, up to a maximum of 22%. There is a very small percentage of those people who rated some concepts with a rating of 2, that is, they mostly did not understand their meaning.

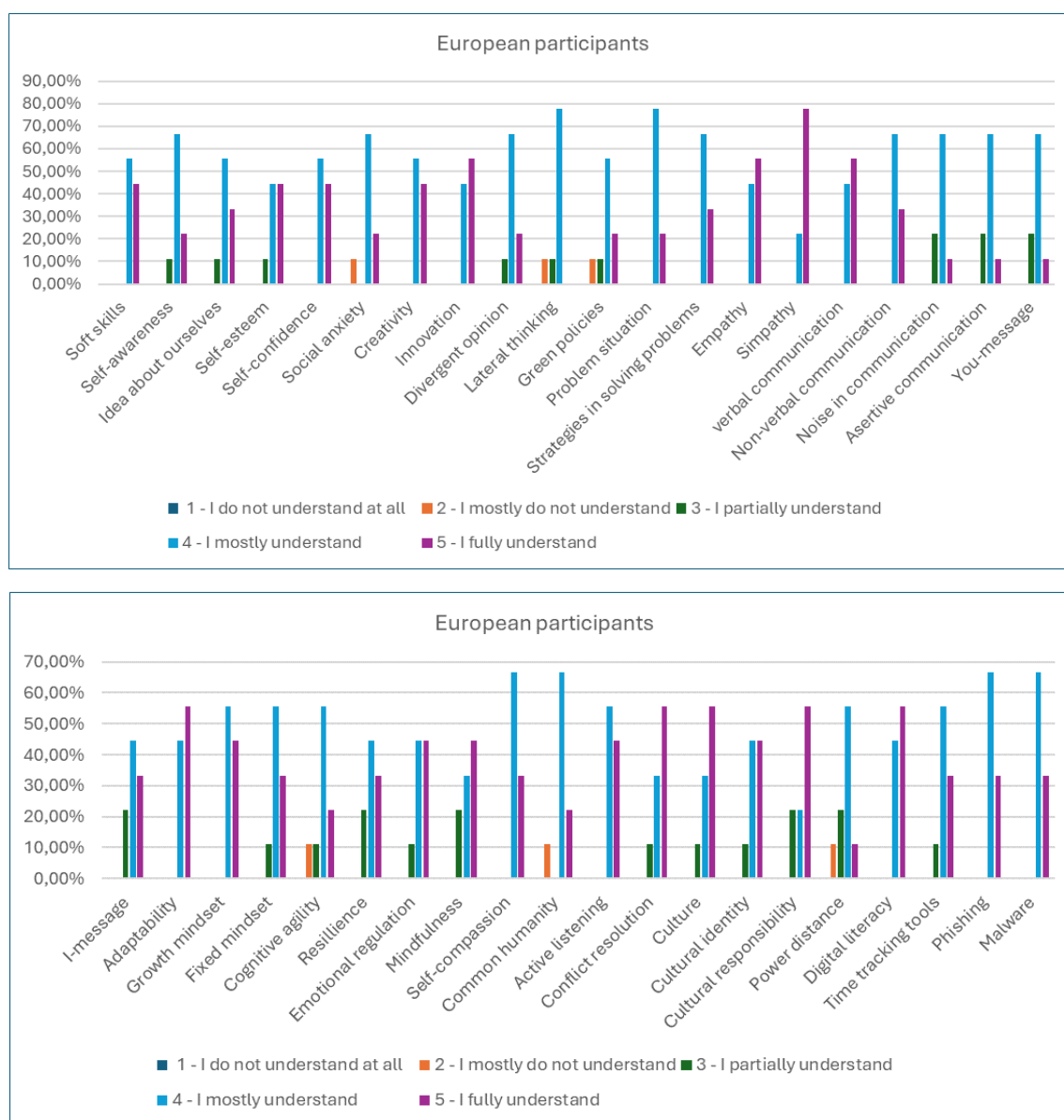


Figure 26. Share of initial understanding of concepts in soft skills training



Evaluation questionnaire on the satisfaction of digital workbooks

In pictures 27a. and 27b. the results of the quality assessment of digital workbooks and individual segments of the Moodle platform where the digital workbooks are located are presented. From figure 29a. it is evident that in all segments of the assessment of the general and technical aspects of the platform interface, all European participants agree or fully agree that registration and access to the platform is understandable, simple and fast; that the platform is simple and understandable to use and that they are satisfied with the design and colours of the interface and the overall organization of icons for navigating the platform; that the visual way in which the training modules are arranged is satisfactory; the English language on the platform is sufficiently understandable and that their overall experience using the e-learning platform is positive.

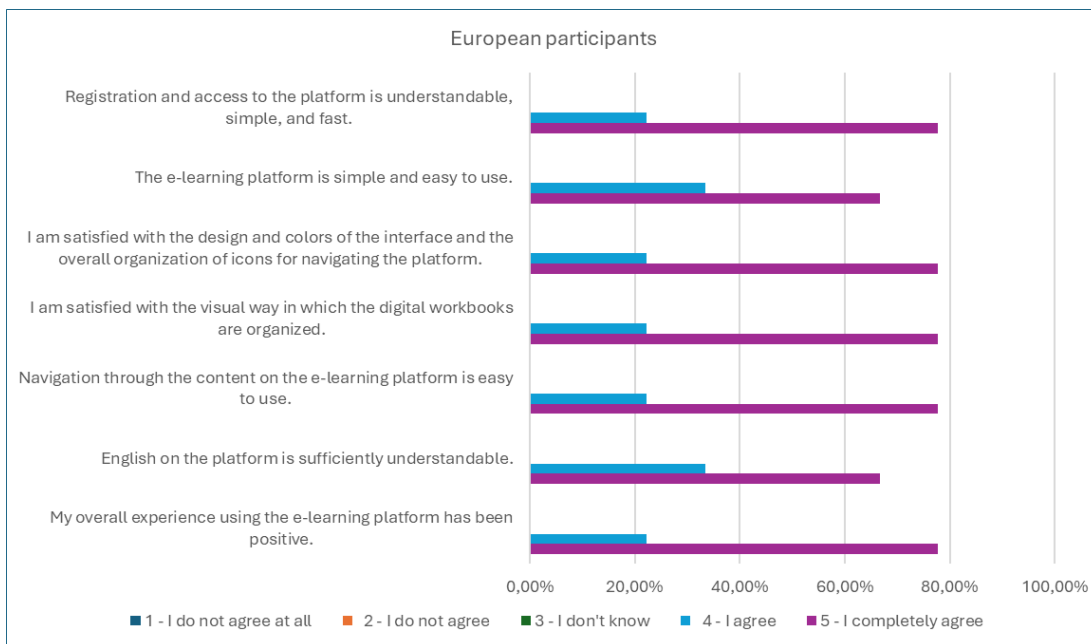


Figure 27a. Assessment of general and technical aspects of the Moodle platform interface

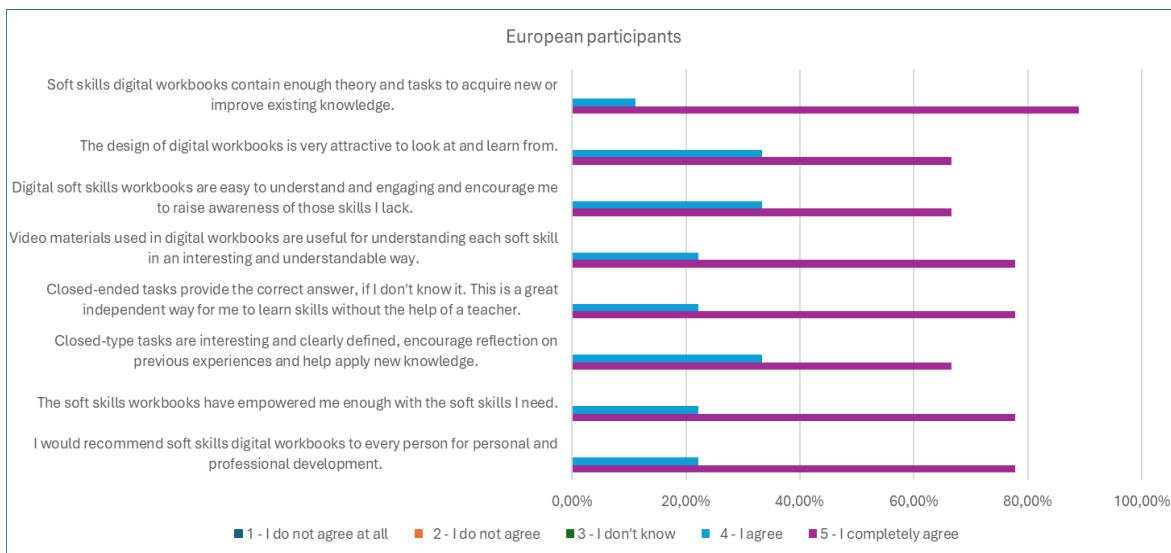


Figure 27b. Assessing the value of digital workbooks

From Figure 27b. it is evident that all European participants agree or fully agree that digital workbooks contain enough theory and tasks for acquiring new or improving existing knowledge; the design of the workbooks is very attractive for viewing and learning; the workbooks are comprehensible and interesting and encourage reflection on previous personal experiences and help raise awareness of the skills they lack, closed-type tasks are clearly defined, encourage reflection on previous experiences and help the person to apply new knowledge; video materials in the

workbooks explain a particular soft skill in an interesting and comprehensible way; the workbooks sufficiently empowered them with the soft skills I needed; and to recommend them to every person for personal and professional development. From the above data, it can be concluded that the European participants confirmed the quality of the structure of the workbooks and consider them to be very useful for acquiring or improving soft skills, and they represent a sufficient scope of content for self-study.

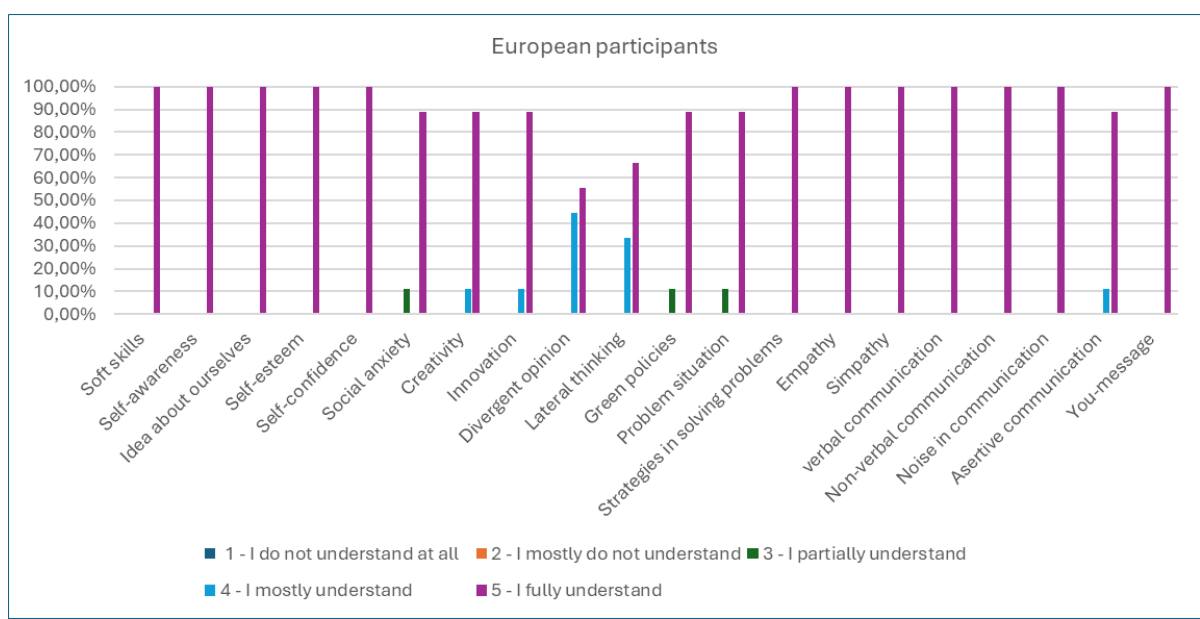
To the question **"What do you consider to be the highest quality of soft skills digital workbooks?"** the European participants stated that they consider the platform, the entire training, the theoretical part based on scientific information and many tasks and examples from real cases to be the highest quality.

When asked **"What did you like most about digital workbooks and why?"**, the European participants said that they liked the interactive activities between the theoretical slides and the variety of theory and practical cases the most, while when asked **"What do you consider a shortcoming of digital workbooks?"** they believe that the platform is not adapted enough for mobile devices and that the modules are structured in the same way.

To the last question, **"What would you suggest improving the quality of digital workbooks?"**, they emphasized improving access to training on a mobile device, adding different interactive activities, paying attention to how to change a person's behaviour in the modules, and adding more audiovisual content.

From the obtained results, it can be concluded that the first European participants reacted positively to the training and evaluated it as a quality education. The results and suggestions for improving the user experience will be used for further content additions and technical adjustments so that the training can be placed on the European market of educational services.

### Self-assessment questionnaire after training



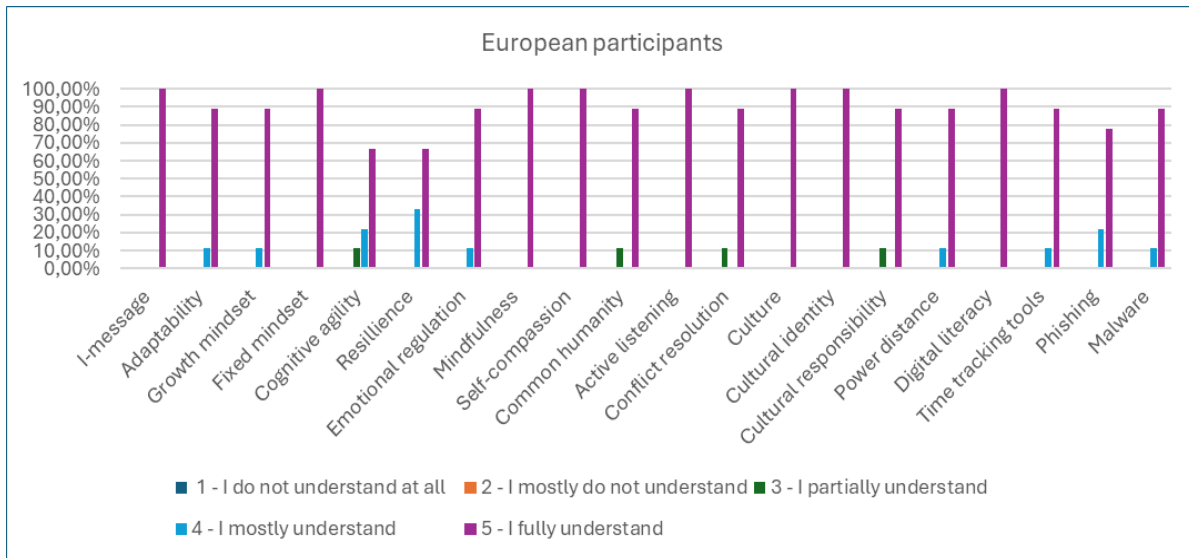


Figure 28. *The share of understanding of terms after training*

It is evident from Figure 28. that the European participants understand or fully understand all terms after the training compared to the initial state before the training. Very small percentages are visible in the partial understanding of some terms, for example "social anxiety, green policies, cognitive adaptability, common humanity and conflict resolution", etc. Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that the training was successful for European participants in development and/ or improving soft skills.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING TRAINING

Recommendations for improving soft skills training are essential for attracting future Croatian and European participants so that the learning experience can be more effective using various learning methods in an online environment, video material and other sources of knowledge, and various tasks from real life that encourage personal reflection and change personal behaviours and actions.

Based on the conducted training and analysis of the target groups, it is necessary, upon completion of the project, to analyse the shortcomings and recommendations of all target groups to improve the quality of the Essential Skills Program (ESP) and digital workbooks so that the training could be included in the educational offer of the Ambitio College. This will involve an associate partner from the USA, who owns ESP and with whom this information will be shared to analyse and improve the user experience, and Ambitio College will review all shortcomings and recommendations about digital workbooks for a better experience learning for future students.



## Essential Skills Program - Canvas platform

Disadvantages	Description
Content related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• too many patterned self-reflective questions that are repeated and similar within one module</li> <li>• the same teaching method throughout all modules.</li> </ul>
Recommendations for improvement	Description
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make it easier to monitor the modules and solved tasks in terms of technical improvement of platform.</li> </ul>
Content related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presenting each skill in a different way</li> <li>• structurally modify the video materials to be different</li> <li>• add more different open and closed-type tasks with examples, and less self-reflective questions</li> <li>• add subtitles to video materials in other languages</li> <li>• add a final test at the end of the entire ESP that would cover all ten skills</li> <li>• add online workshops in the group.</li> </ul>

## Digital workbooks - Moodle platform

Disadvantages	Description
Content related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• additional sources of knowledge contain video materials that are only in English, and last too long, and there is a lack of scientific sources of knowledge</li> <li>• more examples and exercises</li> <li>• repetitive questions in some sections and the absence of audio monitoring of the content.</li> </ul>
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the problem of data storage, i.e. completed tasks and units in the workbook and the way of marking those units where the person stopped at that moment</li> <li>• browsing workbooks on a mobile device</li> </ul>
Recommendations for improvement	Description
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better solve the problem of opening, saving and closing workbooks in the browser and marking those units where the person stopped at that moment</li> <li>• adapt the platform better for use on a mobile device</li> <li>• add audio elements.</li> </ul>
Content related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• division of training into basic or advanced level</li> <li>• the use of different methods of content presentation and examination of knowledge acquisition</li> <li>• add video materials that describe and explain the skill through a scene from real life</li> <li>• add open-ended tasks, visual content and more thought-provoking tasks and set up online debates, the possibility of adding comments to the material being studied</li> <li>• in additional sources of knowledge, translate the video materials into Croatian, shorten them in time with the possibility of asking questions on certain parts</li> <li>• add links on similar content for those who want to know more</li> <li>• more workbooks.</li> </ul>



## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on all the collected feedback from the target groups of the project as well as the feedback from European participants whose participation in the training not only enabled the acquisition/improvement of their soft skills, but also provided European added value to the project, we can conclude that the free online soft skills training was a great success in all segments of the implementation quality assessment. Thanks to the fact that the training was held in an online format, it attracted many participants from all over Croatia who recognized the value of this training for their personal and professional development. In this way, a learning experience is made possible regardless of geographical barriers and time constraints due to work or personal life circumstances, as well as an opportunity to strengthen digital skills and knowledge of the English language. Learning in an online environment allowed participants flexibility in the sense of "anytime and anywhere", learning at their own pace and with their existing commitments. At the same time, it allowed them to go through the content at a pace that suits them and to study/review the content multiple times, thus enabling them to apply multiple learning styles. The training also enabled them to better focus on learning in an environment that is not a traditional classroom, and digital platforms provided an interactive learning experience.

The participants praised the quality of the well-designed content on both platforms, which is comprehensible, interesting, and interactive, and encourages reflection on one's own behaviour and actions, and enables getting to know oneself better and understanding which parts need to be worked on. There was positive feedback on both the general and technical characteristics of the interface of both e-learning platforms in terms of access, design, and user experience, as well as the assessment of the value of their use. Thanks to the creation of digital workbooks in three languages, the Ambitio College additionally motivated a small group of European colleagues from partner organizations with which it participates in the implementation of Erasmus+ projects to participate in strengthening their soft skills and provide feedback on the learning experience. Although the number of those participants is much smaller than the Croatian ones, it is still a commendable and relevant indicator of the value and quality of the created and implemented project results and the initial step into the European area of online training. Although the workbooks served as additional material to the ESP, their well-designed structure, scope and content can be offered to a sufficient extent as independent online training of soft skills in the future, both in Croatian and European contexts.

In addition to positive experiences, it is necessary to consider all shortcomings and recommendations for improving training for future participants. Recommendations for improvement are an integral part of improving the learning experience to achieve maximum impact and application of acquired knowledge and skills. In this context, it is necessary to analyse individual shortcomings and propose possible solutions for both e-learning platforms after the project implementation period.

Ultimately, we can conclude that the free online soft skills training has achieved its goals. By offering high-quality content in an online environment adapted to the target groups, we witnessed a great improvement in soft skills after the completion of the training, such as communication, empathy, team collaboration, problem solving, resilience, digital literacy, etc. Its implementation success serves as proof of the continuing importance of developing soft skills in all personal and professional environments in today's society of innovation and increasing digitization.

Ambitio College will continue to improve training on these foundations and empower individuals in this area to successfully navigate complex professional and personal interactions, build relationships with others, encourage collaboration, and create positive results in all areas of life.





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