



Digital Tutors: facing the new generation and challenges

General analysis surveys and questionnaires



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Introduction:

The objectives of the project Digital Tutors is to define the role of a Digital Tutor, to improve the teaching-learning process of online and blended training courses, to upskill online teachers and trainers as “digital tutor” and to create a resource repository to support digital tutors in their daily work.

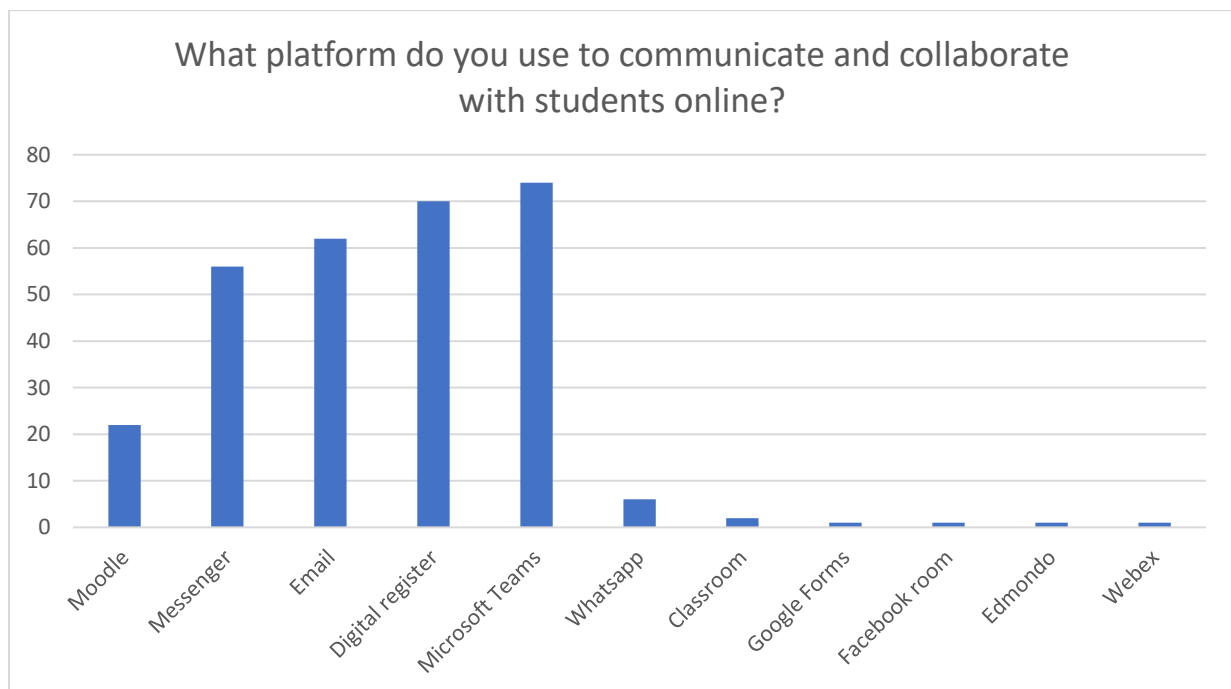
The project’s objectives are divided into 4 Intellectual Outputs (IOs). The first IO is “DIGITAL TUTOR role definition and competences map”. One of the steps contributing to finalizing this IO is to conduct interviews with some experts and VET Centres at the partner’s locations. Partners also sent out the survey to the VET teachers and employees at their organization to gather information about the desired competences a Digital Tutor should have.

1 Main information about respondents

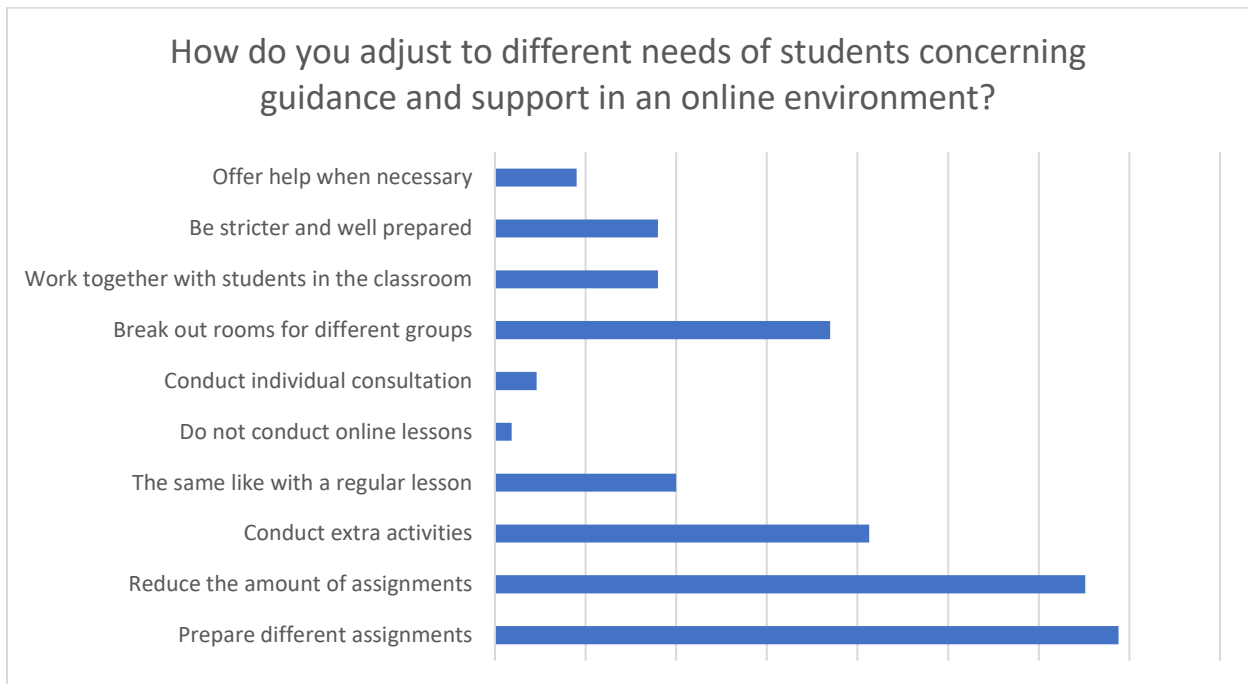
127 teachers and administrative staff from 23 schools participated in the surveys and interviews concerning the Digital Tutor research conducted by the partners. The prevailing type of schools that the respondents represent are secondary schools and VET centres. Other types of schools were: primary school, art gymnasium and gymnasium.

2 Tools and methods used by respondents in teaching online

When asked how teachers keep in contact and collaborate with their students online it is clear that most schools and teachers use Microsoft Teams as their main communication and assignments tool. Microsoft Teams is a communication platform developed by Microsoft, as part of the Microsoft 365 family of products. Microsoft Teams offering instant chat and videoconferencing, file storage, assignments and application integration and it developed very much from the beginning of massive usage during first wave of quarantine (added extra functionality and increased it's quality for video conferencing). From the survey results there can be seen that it is the most popular platform now which covers more aspects for distance teaching. Microsoft Teams is used by almost 66% of respondents.

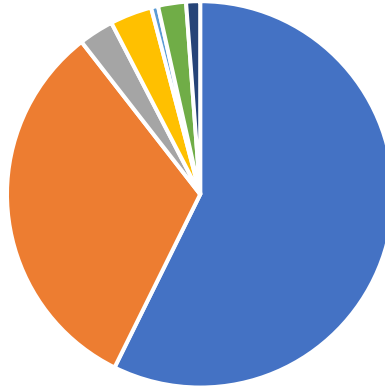


In order to adjust to different needs of students, teachers prepare different assignments, reduce amount of assignments, conduct extra activities, use break-out rooms, work together with students and offer help when necessary. This shows that teachers have a lot of different ways in which they can differentiate the materials for students in order to offer the right guidance and support in an online environment. Almost all of the teachers offer their students adapted tasks giving them the opportunity to work on their own pace.



Reflection is one of the most useful parts of the learning process both for teachers as well as the students. Reflective practise according to DigiCompEdu is one of the professional engagement competencies. From survey results it seems that teachers are focussed on teaching and reflection and reflective methods are not given a lot of targeted attention. Just asking target questions and monitoring facial expressions are most used by respondents. And just 6 respondents are conducting an active form of reflection with their students. The 3 most common ways to monitor are: asking the students questions at random moments during the lesson, give students homework to do in the BOR so they have to finish and submit it in the end of the activity, pay attention to the students (like in regular live education).

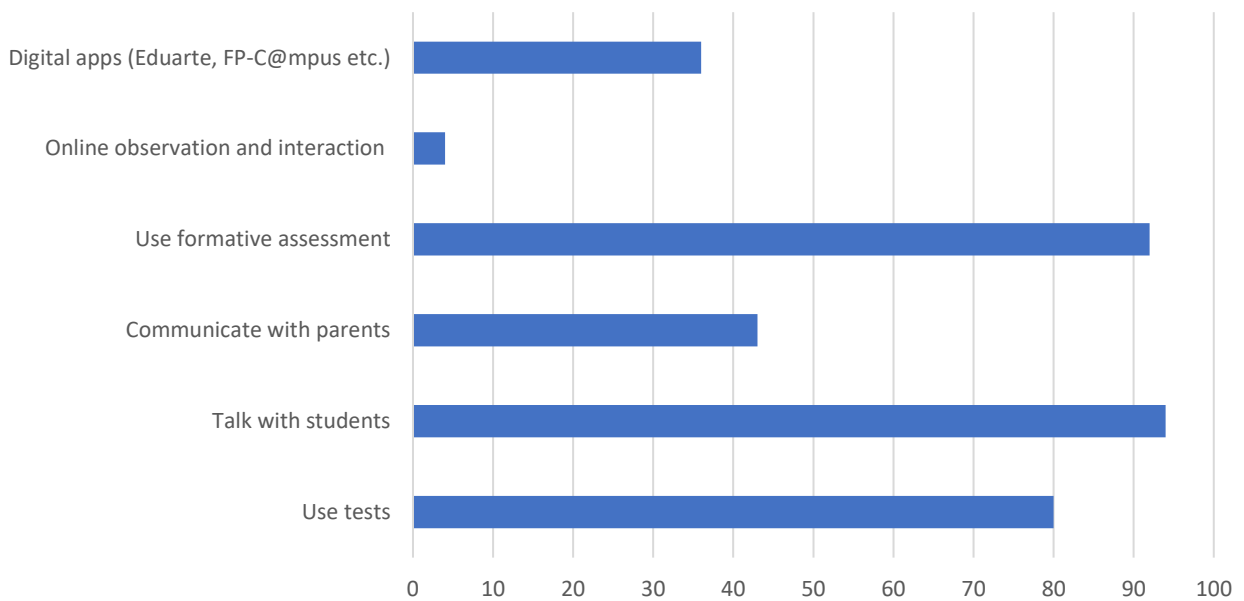
How do you monitor students' behaviour/mood/understanding during the online lessons?



- Asking target questions
- Monitoring facial expressions
- Do not monitor
- Conduct reflection
- Talk to students
- Monitor according to completed assignments
- By individual talks

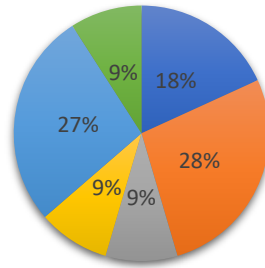
The next aspect is about monitoring the student progress in the digital learning environment. Again, we asked whether the teachers needed additional tools or knowledge for this.

How do you monitor students' progress remotely?



Keeping track of student's results via their assignments and tests and having a weekly, personal talks with them were used quite often. The least used way is to ask them questions and work in smaller groups for easier control.

How to determine if an intervention is needed and which tools can help?



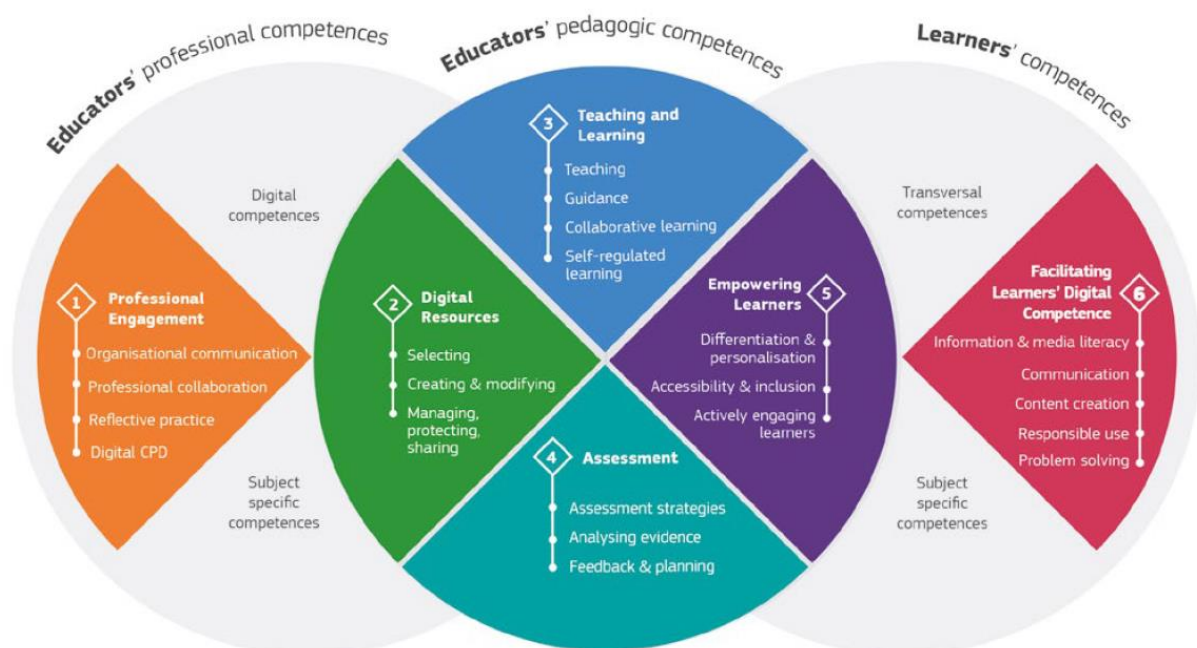
- Hardly ever see a student
- The student's results are not good
- Check assignments & keep track of students who need special attention
- Find it difficult to know
- Same as face-to-face
- Via working with students in the class

From the above figure, the most used way to know when an intervention is needed is when the student's results are not good/ not improved and when a teacher rarely sees the student(s). Furthermore, other ways can be checking the student's assignment to know about their progress to pay closer attention to the ones that are vulnerable or via working with students in the class (online or offline).

However, some teachers did find this aspect difficult to recognize in the digital environment. But, the answers said that they are willing to learn how from other teachers. On the contrary, there were teachers who find it the same like in the normal, regular time.

3 Competence map

We want the Digital Tutor to be a teacher who is part of a VET training process and who is able to assume tutoring functions through the use of information and communication technologies. They can play the role of facilitator, coordinator, developer of the competences of their students and is able to adapt themselves to the situation with the goal to enable students to develop and learn online in an effective, engaging and inclusive way. To be able to train teachers to be good Digital Tutors we will need to develop a competence map specifically tailored to this role. Part of this competence map will come from the DigCompEdu framework, part from the DigComp framework and the rest of the competences will be derived from the surveys and interviews and the results of those. This will give a comprehensive overview of the competences a teacher needs in order to be an effective Digital Tutor.



4 Digital Tutor definition and it's perception by respondents

Digital Tutor definition:

A Digital Tutor is a teacher who teaches and tutors in an online environment with the goal to enable students to develop and learn online in an effective, engaging and inclusive way. The Digital Tutor has all the competences that a 'live' tutor or teacher has, plus the additional competences required to tutor online.*

** all competences mentioned in the input of the partners, including the competences in the DigiCompEdu framework**

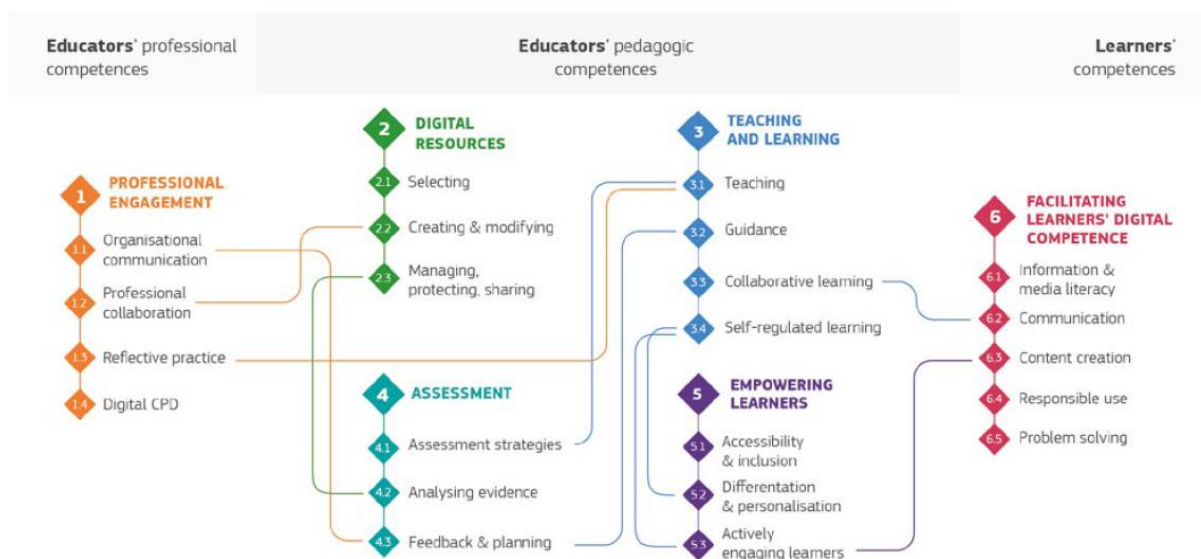
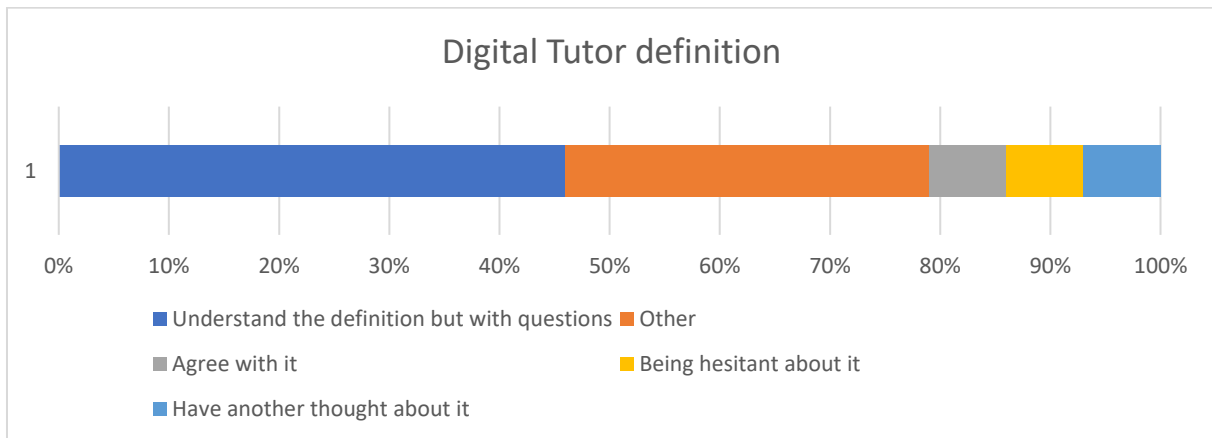


Figure 1: DigiCompEdu framework

The research shows that 46% of the participants understood the definition, but still had some questions remaining. These questions, or comments are “Why is the definition necessary?” “What is the difference between a digital tutor and a teacher?” Or “I have never heard of this before”. It is also interesting to point out that 20% of the attendants like the project’s logo a lot, 13% prefer to have the definition in their own language for a better understanding and the rest of the opinions are divided into 3 points: Agree with the definition, doubting it (these responses said things like that the definition is overly complicated) and the last one, ‘Has another thought about it’ (these participants thought that the managing and securing digital assets is more a task for specialists, not for a teacher/ tutor).



5 Definition and competence map

Digital Tutors definition:

The Digital Tutor definition we presented teachers with was as follows:

A Digital Tutor is a teacher who teaches and tutors in an online environment with the goal to enable students to develop and learn online in an effective, engaging and inclusive way. The Digital Tutor has all the competences that a 'live' tutor or teacher has, plus the additional competences required to tutor online.*

** all competences mentioned in the input of the partners, including the competences in the DigiCompEdu framework**

Most teachers understood the definition but had questions about the differences between a teacher and a digital tutor. There was also need to further elaborate on the digital aspect of the digital tutor definition. This leads to a new definition:

A Digital Tutor is a teacher who is able to assume tutoring functions in an online environment through the use of information and communication technologies with the goal to enable students to develop and learn online in an effective, engaging and inclusive way. The Digital Tutor has all the competences that a 'live' tutor has, plus the additional competences required to tutor digitally.

Competence map:

To be able to train teachers to be good Digital Tutors we will need to develop a competence map specifically tailored to this role. When analysing the surveys and interviews we can conclude that using only the DigCompEdu to enhance the skills of the digital tutor will not be enough. A lot of the teachers also worried about their basic digital skills and abilities. Seeing as you need to have a basic skill-level as a digital competent citizen before you can be a competent digital teacher and/or tutor it makes sense to include the skills from the DigComp framework in our competence map. Besides these competences we will also include the relevant competences from the DigCompEdu, focusing on the competences relating to digital tutoring and we will complete the competence map by including some basic skills a teacher needs to have (outside of the digital world). This will give a comprehensive overview of the competences a teacher needs in order to be an effective Digital Tutor.

The competence map is included on the next page.

