

Project title: Teachers Training Programme to Support Gifted and Talented Students (GATE)
2021-1-LT01-KA220-SCH-000027713

GATE: Survey Research - Lithuania

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1. Basic Report Information

- 1.1. **Partner Organizations:** Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas and VšĮ "eMundus"
- 1.2. **Period of research:** April-June 2022
- 1.3. **Number of questionnaires collected from teachers:** 47
- 1.4. **Reporting date:** 15.06.2022

2. Survey research methodology

The research has been conducted through the administration of Google Form questionnaires. They were sent via email to schools and teachers, previously contacted to include them in the project activities as associated partners. The selection of schools and teachers considered their previous experiences in the field of gifted education, as well as their motivation or interest in improving their educational offer with the implementation of new teaching practices for Gifted and Talented (Gate) students. In the end, 47 teachers answered the questionnaire, providing us with their opinions and explaining the challenges they meet when teaching Gate students.

3. Survey research results

3.1. Socio-demographics information

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Of the 47 respondents, **41 (87.2%)** are **women** and **6 (12.8%)** are **men**. Concerning their age range: **46.8%** are **over 50 years old** and **44.7%** are **between 36 – 50 years old**. The remaining **6.4%** and **2.1%** are in the range of **26-35 years old** and **18-25 years old**, respectively. This fact suggests that most respondents have a considerable experience in teaching. **68.1%** claimed to have **more than 15 years of teaching experience**, and **14.9%** claimed to have **between 10-15 years of experience**. The same percentage reported having **1-5 years of experience**. The remaining **2.1%** declared having between **6-10 years of experience**. All in all, it can be said that the analyzed sample is mainly composed of middle-aged female teachers with a long experience in their work.

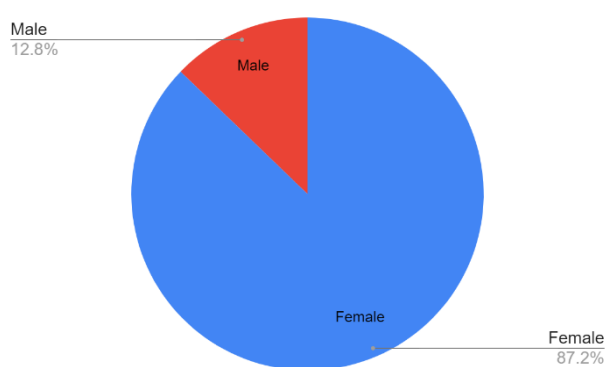


Fig. 1 – Gender

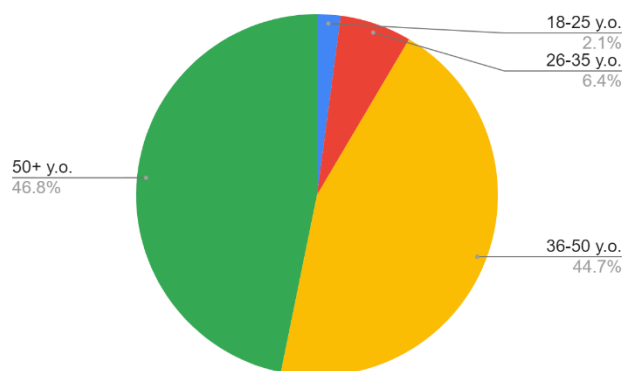


Fig. 2 – Age range

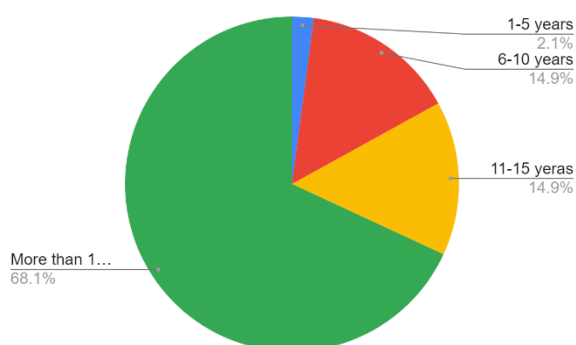


Fig. 3 – Years of experience

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As far as teaching subjects are concerned, a fair variety has emerged, with as many as 8 subjects. The participants teach *music, history, Lithuanian, foreign languages, mathematics, physics, art, and computer science*. **57.4%** of respondents teach in grades from **1 to 12**, while the remaining **42.6%** work only in **primary schools**. The vast majority **78.7%** teach only in schools, but a considerable minority (**21.3%**) work also at **higher education institutions, in non-formal education centers, centers for gate children, and others**. Fig.6 shows the distribution of the percentages, which is the following:

- **31.6% - gifted centres**
- **5.3% - higher education institutions**
- **21.1% - non-formal education institutions**
- **52.6% - Other**

This *Other* includes institutions such as *sports centers, secondary schools (progymnasiums), and remedial classes*.

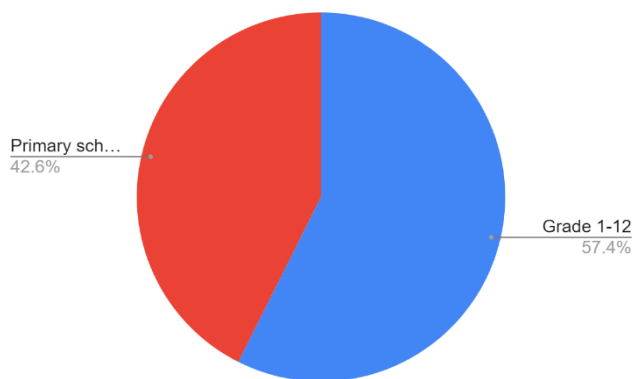


Fig. 4 – Classes

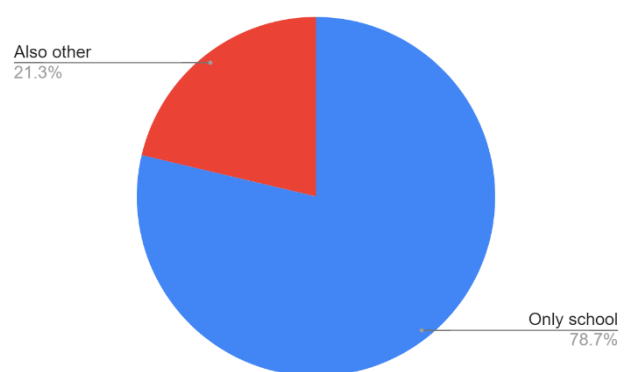


Fig. 5 – Teaching institutions

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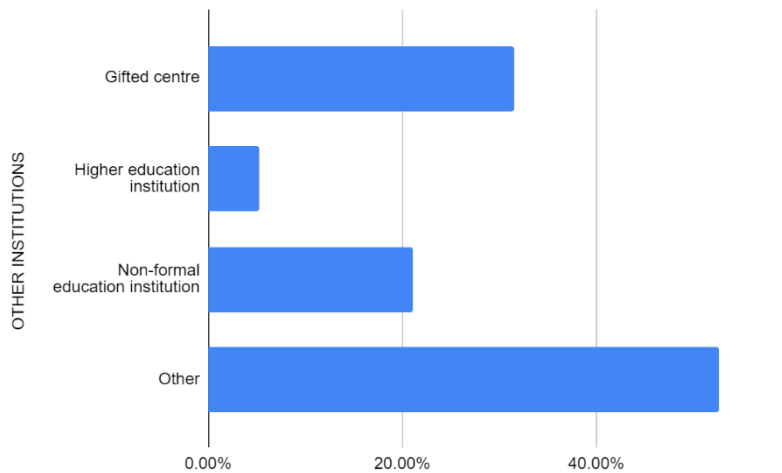


Fig. 6 – Other institutions

3.2. Teachers' views on the education of gate children, STEAM methodology, and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)

In this section of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to share with us their knowledge about **gifted education, STEAM methodology, and Socio-Emotional Learning**. As within the GATE project these three educational practices play a pivotal role in the training methodology that will be devised, the answers received in this section provide the whole partnership a better understanding of what the teachers need to learn to successfully teach Gate students.

The first question concerned teachers' level of knowledge about **gifted education**. The results show that almost all respondents have some knowledge of the concept, but do not feel confident enough to say that they are experts. **80.9%** of respondents claimed to be "*knowledgeable to some extent*", while **17%** declared to have only heard of the concept, while only **2.1%** of teachers claimed to have never heard about it.

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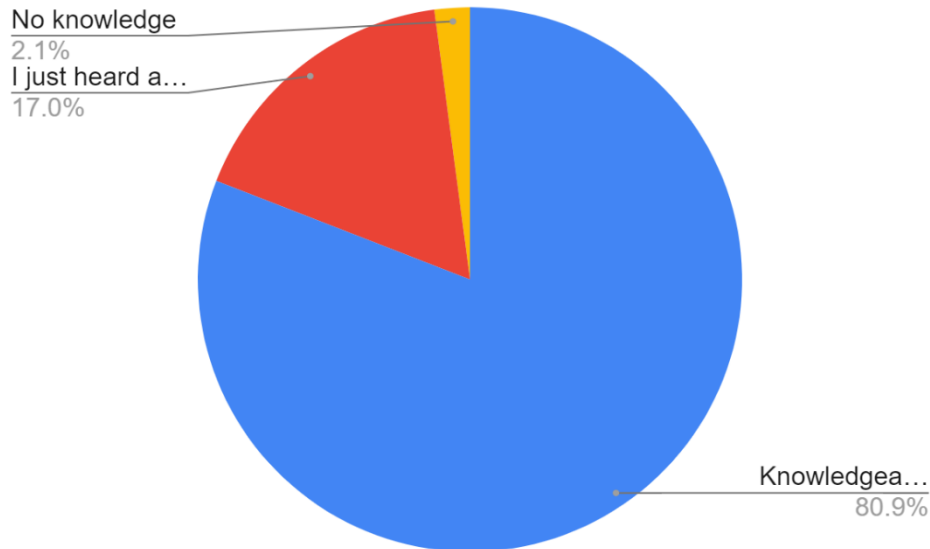


Fig. 7 – Knowledge about gifted education

The following question analyzed teachers' level of knowledge about **STEAM methodology**. In this case, similar percentages emerged with a noticeable difference, i.e., **6.4%** of teachers claimed to be "*very knowledgeable*" about the topic. Probably this difference is because STEAM is quite more common as a teaching practice. Following this, the other results are:

- **74.5% - Knowledgeable to some extent**
- **17.0% - Just heard about the concept**
- **2.1% - No knowledge at all**

Concerning this question, teachers were also asked to grade on a scale from 1 to 10 **how important they consider STEAM Methodology for teaching Gate students**. No responses of less than 7 were recorded (with an overwhelming majority of 10s and 9s [**78.8%**]), demonstrating that teachers consider the adoption of the STEAM methodology very useful (if not essential) for teaching high potential children. *Fig.9* provides a summary of the answers received.

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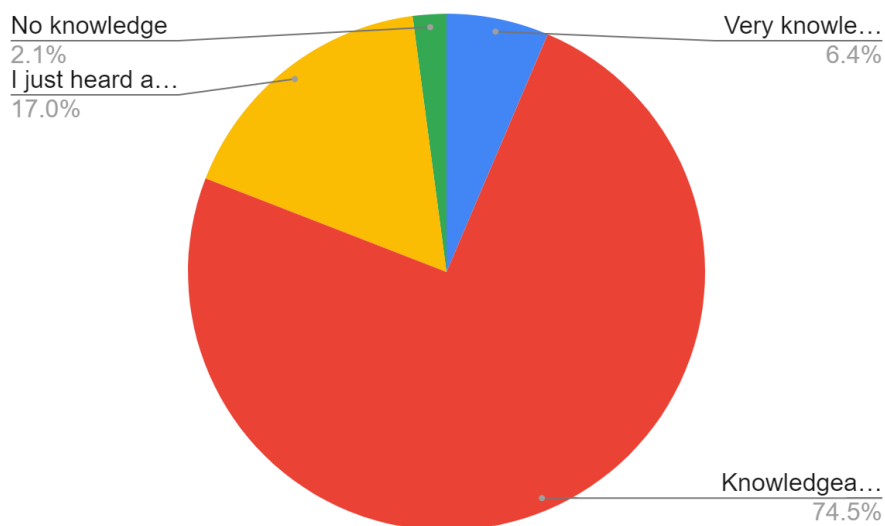


Fig. 8 – Knowledge about STEAM Methodology

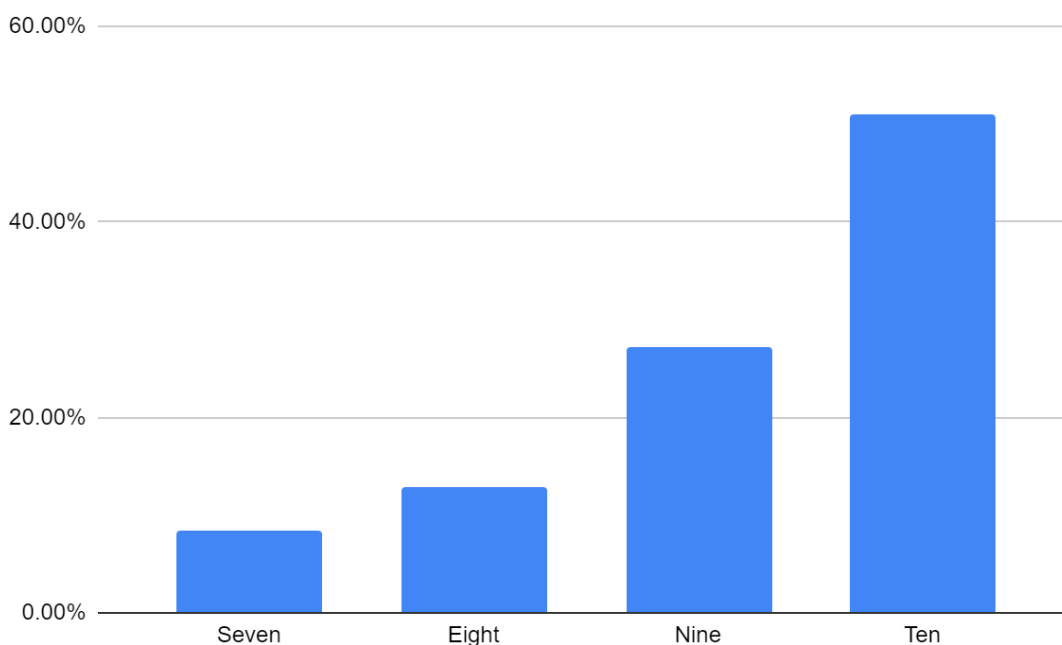


Fig. 9 – The importance of STEAM Methodology when teaching GATE students

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When asked to elaborate further on the importance of STEAM in gifted education, teachers provided very interesting answers, such as:

“STEAM methodology allows gifted children to strengthen their critical thinking and put into practice their knowledge of technical subjects. The STEAM methodology is very important because it also allows for combination subjects and helps children see all of them as a whole, instead of separate chunks of knowledge”

“When working with the STEAM method, see connections between disciplines. It is an opportunity to explain a theory in a much simpler and practical way”

“STEAM methodology helps develop not just students’ logical and critical thinking skills, but also their creativity, as it helps them find different ways to solve problems”

After assessing teachers’ knowledge and opinion on STEAM Methodology, the same was done for **Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)**, which, albeit to a marginal extent, seems to be even better known than the two previous topics.

85.1% of respondents are either “*Very knowledgeable*” or “*Knowledgeable to some extent*” about SEL, **12.8%** of teachers only heard about the concept and just **2.1%** of them declared to have zero knowledge about it. In comparison to STEAM Methodology and Gifted Education,

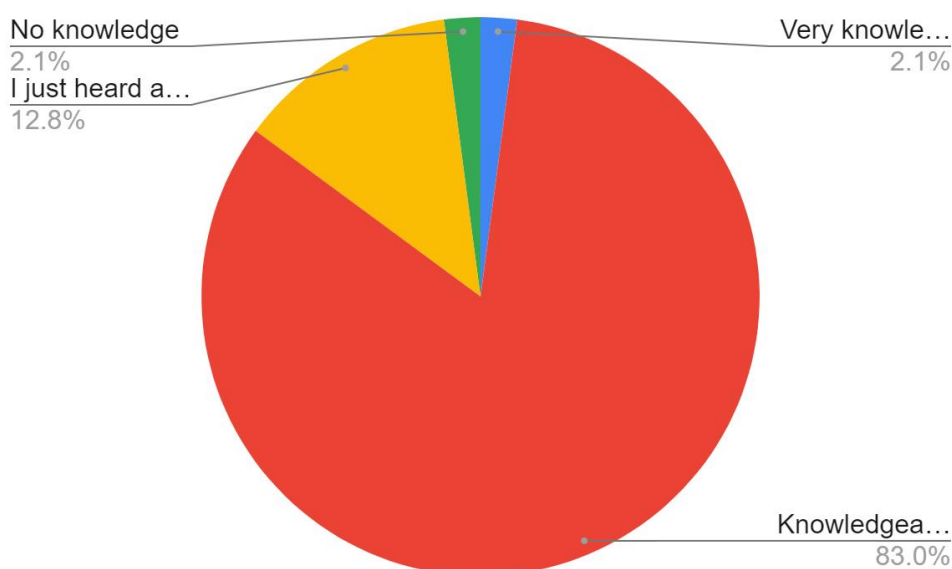


Fig. 10 – Knowledge about SEL

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Concerning the importance of SEL in teaching to Gate students, on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 meaning “not important at all” and 10 being “very important”), teachers assigned values no lower than 6. Over **75%** of respondents assigned a value of **9** or **10**, proving that most teachers consider SEL if not essential very important. Other values assigned are distributed in the following percentages:

- **12.8%** of teachers answered **8**
- **2.1%** answered **6**
- No respondent graded the importance of SEL to be a **7**.

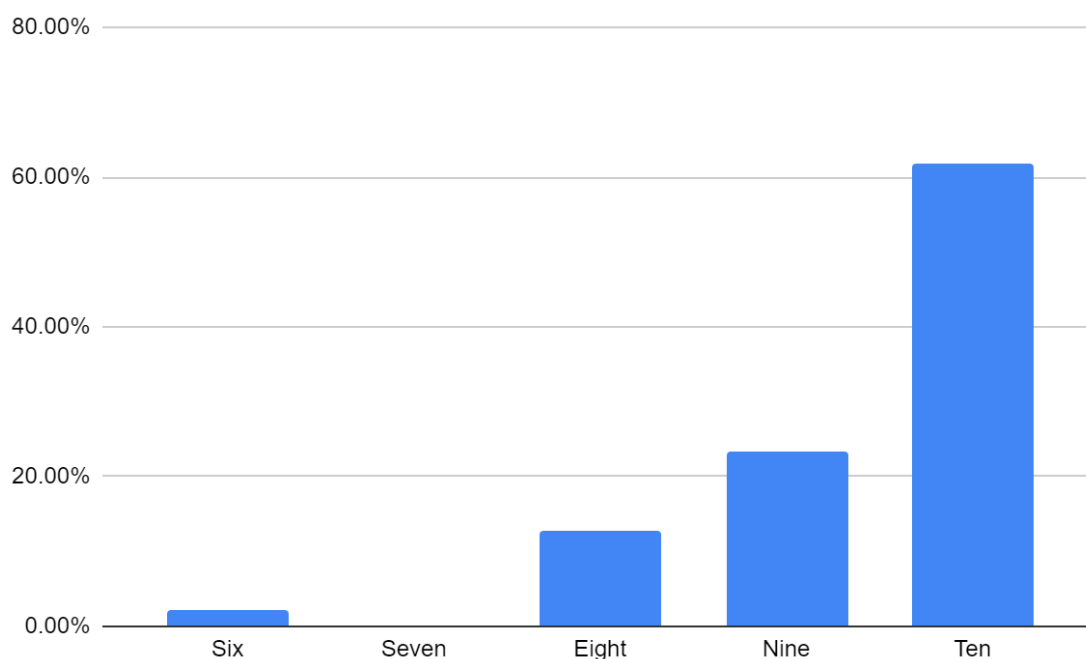


Fig. 11 – The importance of SEL when teaching GATE students

Exploring further the reasons for the grades assigned, teachers provided some of the following answers:

“To achieve higher learning outcomes (and beyond), the child must be emotionally stable, feel safe and balanced. Proper recognition of emotions and management helps to better adapt, understand, and control themselves, positively affecting their lives in all other aspects, including academics”

“When a child feels emotionally safe and able to communicate and collaborate, his or her motivation to learn is markedly higher”

“Learning to know yourself, discovering and seeing your abilities is very important, as well as not being afraid to express your opinion, communicate, and participate in project activities, let

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creativity run freely, and reveal your emotions brings great success. This is especially important when teaching gifted children”

When it comes to the teachers’ experience on the topics at hand, most respondents prove themselves to be quite up to date on educational practices. Almost three-fourths of them (**72.3%**) declared to have some experience with teaching gifted children, using STEAM or SEL.

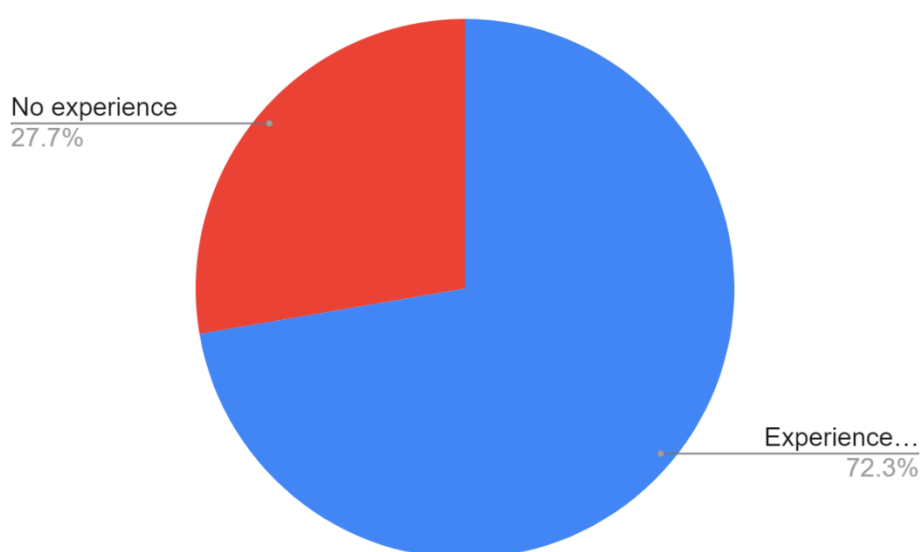


Fig. 12 – Experience with gifted education, STEAM or SEL

Within this percentage, the experience in the specific educational areas is distributed in the following way:

- **37.1%** reported having experience teaching **gate students**
- **62.9%** answered to be experienced in using the **STEAM methodology**
- **57.1%** claimed to use **SEL** in their teaching practices

When asked how they acquired their experience, most teachers claimed to have learned about these topics through **professional courses or seminars**.

3.3. Teachers’ experience with gifted children

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After exploring teachers' knowledge of Gifted education, STEAM and SEL, the questionnaire tried to look more closely at their experience with gifted children. Question 13 asked whether they were aware to have any gate students in their classes. It turns out that almost half of the respondents (**48.9%**) have at least one official recognized gifted children in their classes.

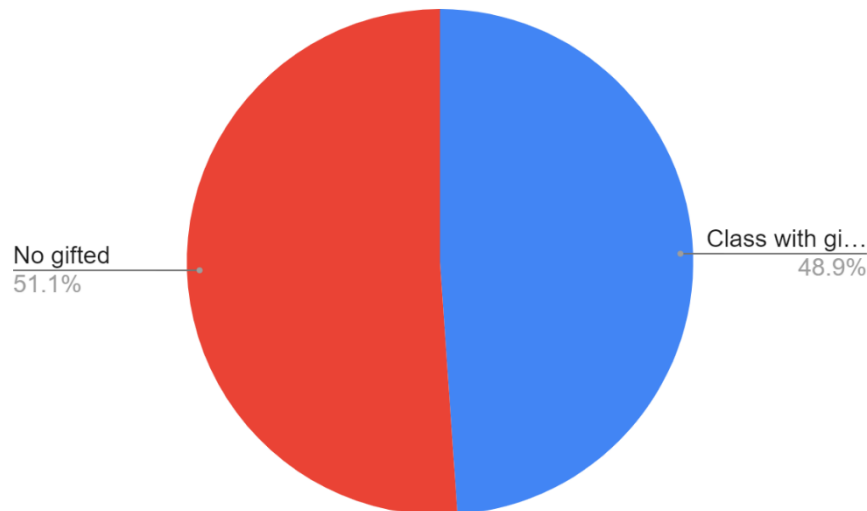


Fig. 12 – Teachers with gifted children in their classes

Following this, teachers who work with gifted children were asked to explain what challenges they face when teaching them. It appears that the most felt issue is the presence in the classroom of students with very different abilities, which makes the task of finding the right balance in daily practice very difficult. This difficulty was highlighted by almost **70%** of the teachers. Others complained about **the lack of resources (26.1%), training (26.1%), support from colleagues (8.7%), and the constraints of the national curricula (8.7%).**

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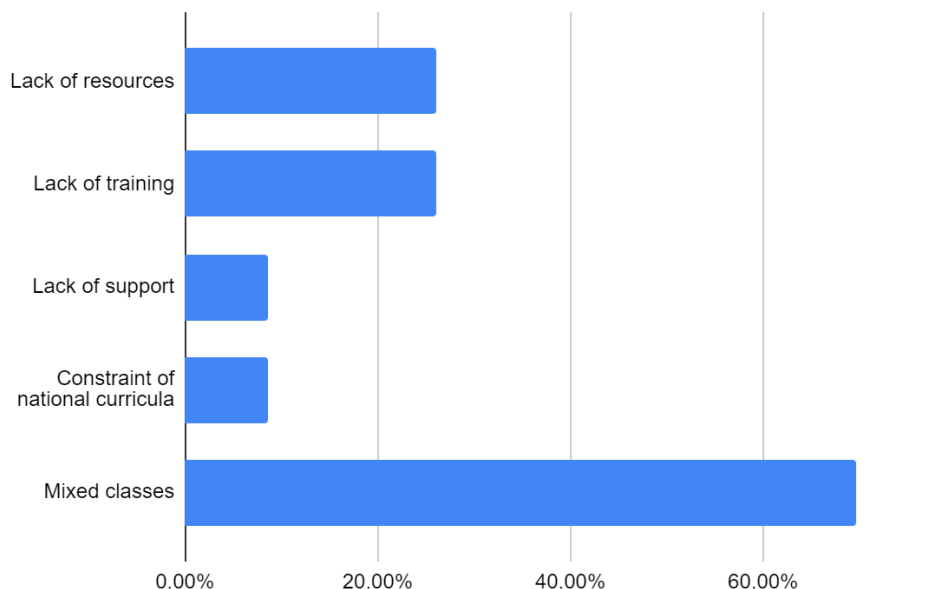


Fig. 13 – Challenges when teaching to gate students

Finally, respondents were asked whether their schools adopt any practices to support gate students or not. More than half of the teachers answered “Yes” (**71.7%**), proving that the issue is particularly felt in Lithuania.

Among the various practices used to support them, most teachers reported adopting “*differentiated learning*” providing more complex tasks to gifted students, or creating specific groups of gifted within the classes.

3.4. Teachers’ views on 21st-century skills

The last section of the questionnaire was dedicated to the analysis of 21st-century skills. Teachers were asked to provide their opinions on:

1. How important they considered each of those skills
2. How capable they rate themselves in holding those skills

Both values have been measured according to a scale from 1 (“*not important at all/not capable at all*”) to 10 (“*very important/very capable*”).

The skills listed in the questionnaire are the following:

- **Creative thinking**
- **Critical thinking and analysis**

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- **Decision making**
- **Digital literacy**
- **Expression of empathy**
- **Exploring the world of work**
- **Setting goals and priorities**
- **Conversation skills**
- **Initiative and innovation**
- **Interpersonal relationships**
- **Leadership**
- **Emotional Intelligence**
- **Coping with stress**
- **Problem-solving**
- **Self-awareness and perception**
- **Self-directed learning**
- **Time and resource management**
- **Teamwork and collaboration**

The results of both questions are summarized in *Fig. 14* and *Fig.15* below.

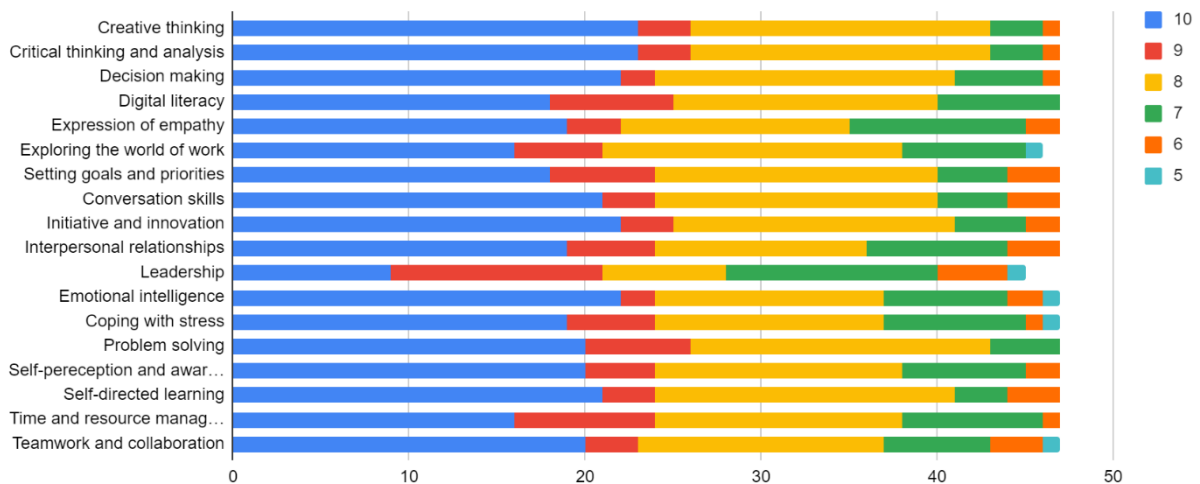


Fig. 14 – 21st Century Skill's importance

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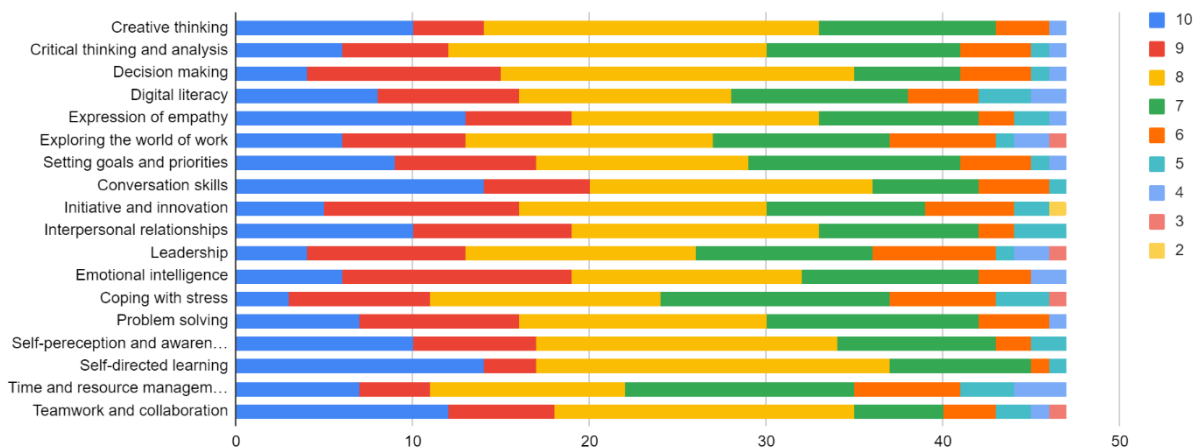


Fig. 14 – Teachers' confidence in 21st Century Skills

As the comparison between these two graphs immediately shows, the importance assigned to each skill is quite different compared to the teachers' self-perceived abilities. In general, it can be stated that teachers deem almost equally important all the skills listed, but they often feel partly lacking in them.

4. Conclusions

This survey report analyzed teachers' knowledge, opinions, perspectives, and abilities concerning the education of gifted children. In particular, the questionnaire also analyzed teachers' knowledge and abilities in the STEAM teaching methodology, SEL, and 21st-century skills, which are all deemed very important for effectively teaching gate students. All in all, the survey has shown that most teachers are certainly familiar with the concept of giftedness and that also many of them have some direct experience in teaching them. About the GATE project and its following activities, this means that the project partners will have to take into consideration the need to train not completely novice teachers, but teachers who are aware of the topics addressed and who in many cases have, if not much, however a not indifferent experience.

In particular, the training course foreseen as the second result of the project will have to aim to make up for the shortcomings highlighted in the questionnaire. First, it is suggested to enhance teachers' skills in adopting inclusive education practices, as it emerged that the presence of students with different skills is seen as a limit instead of a resource by many teachers. In addition, the course will undoubtedly aim at training and enhancing 21st-century skills in teachers, who have appeared to be lacking especially in "digital skills" and "time and resource management".