

IO1. DESIGN OF A CO-CREATED CURRICULUM AND LEARNING MODULES

JOINT CO-VALIDATION SESSIONS RESULTS

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Introduction

This deliverable is framed in the Intellectual Output (IO) 1 of the project “IPA2, Inclusion of People with Autism in Europe. Improving scholar transitions from primary to secondary school”, which title is “Design of a co-created curriculum and learning Modules”. The aim of this IO is to develop:

- Co-created curriculum based on the expertise of teachers working with people with ASD as well as pupils with ASD and their families
- Learning modules based on the co-created curriculum.

In particular, this document presents the results of the co-validation session carried out in Portugal, Spain and Serbia with the aim to have the final index of the learning modules to be developed in the next steps of the project. Due to the Covid-19 situation, an online survey was developed as a tool to validate the results obtained in the co-creation sessions.

To this end, 183 respondents have participated in the co-validation session in the three countries with the following profile: Teachers from secondary school with ASD students:

- Teachers from primary school with ASD students
- Teachers from secondary school not having ASD students
- Teachers from primary school not having ASD students
- SEN teachers
- Other teachers or professionals

Therefore, the main purpose of this document is to present the joint results in the three countries. This report is structured as follow: in the first section shows the joint results in the three countries; in section two the conclusion of the joint results is shown together with the final index of the learning modules.

1. Joint co-validation results in Serbia, Portugal and Spain

This section presents the joint results of the survey created for the co-validations sessions. It is summarized the results obtained in the three countries participating in the sessions.

A total of 183 respondents have participated in the session in the three countries with the following profile:

SPAIN	
Teacher primary/secondary + experience	47
Teacher primary/secondary - experience	22
Counsellor + experience	18
Counsellor - experience	3
SEN	9
ASD specialized	1
TOTAL	100

SERBIA	
Primary school teachers	3
Secondary school teachers	40
Psychologists	3
TOTAL	46

PORTUGAL	
primary school + experience	20
primary school - experience	6
secondary school + experience	8
secondary school - experience	3
TOTAL	37

1. How important do you consider a training program focused on improving the transition of ASD students from primary to secondary school is?

As shown in Figure 1 most of the respondent (79%) in the three countries said that a training program focused on improving the transition of ASD students from primary to secondary school was very important to them. On the whole, 92% of respondents considered important the training.

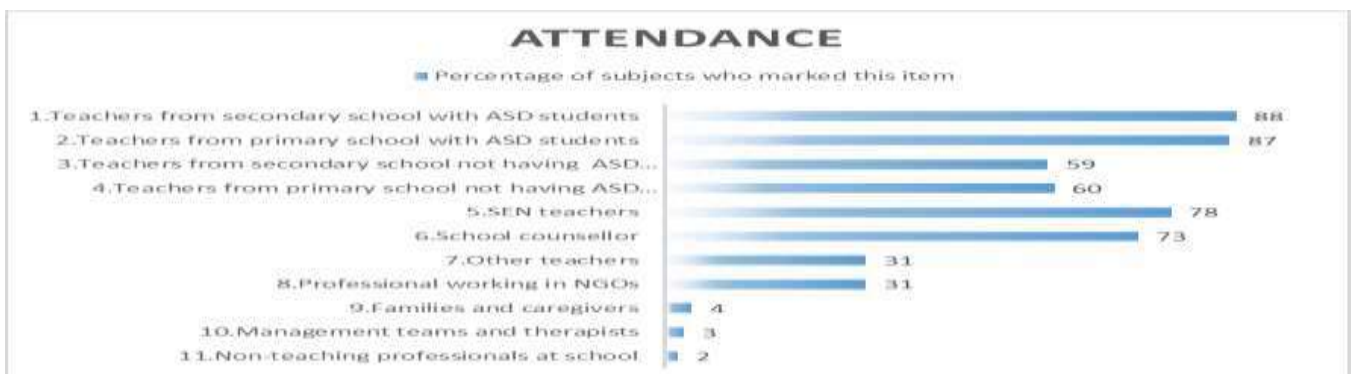
Figure 1: Importance of the training program



2. Who do you think should attend this training?

The joint results have shown that, first of all, teachers from Secondary (88%) and Primary (87%) school working with ASD students should attend the training. Secondly, the training should be attended by SEN teachers (78%) and School counsellors (73%) and, thirdly, teachers from secondary (59%) and primary school (60%) not having students with ASD

Figure 2: Training attendees

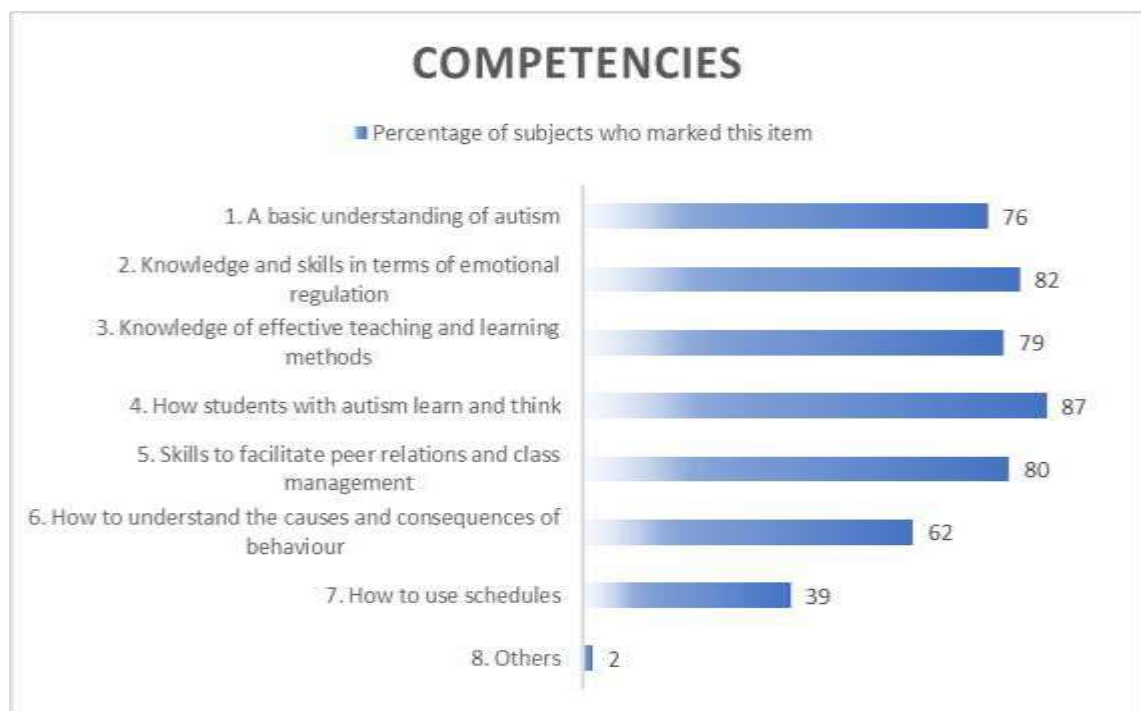


3. What kind of competencies or skills should develop a training program focused on improving the transition of ASD students from primary to secondary school? Please, select as many answers as you consider appropriate

According to the results, the most important competences that attendees should acquire are the following ones: 1) How students with autisms learn and think (87%); 2) knowledge and skills in terms of emotional regulation (82%); 3) Skills to facilitate peers' relations and class management 4) Knowledge of effective teaching and learning methods (79%) and 5) basic understanding of autism.

Apart from the competences shown in the following graph, the following ones were also indicated: 1) How to use schedules; 2) Advanced understanding of autism; 3) the importance of a true and effective articulation between the primary and secondary school; 4) A basic understanding of comorbidities of autism; 5) how to handle and articulate with the families of these students.

Figure 3: Competences to be acquired





4. Please rate from 1 to 5, how important do you think that a training program focused on the following topics would be to improve the transition of ASD students from primary to secondary school?

On the whole, the results have shown that all the topics and subtopics were well rated. The only topics that were less rated were those related to sexual behavior and coordination strategies to other associations and professionals, although they were well rated.

	Mean	SD
Topic I – Basic knowledge on autism		
1.1. Heterogeneity in Autism spectrum disorder	4,11	0,89
1.2 Social communication	4,63	0,67
1.3 Repetitive and stereotyped behaviours	4,18	0,86
1.4 Co-occurring conditions	4,03	0,90
1.5 Developmental changes through adolescence	4,26	0,87
Topic II – ASD students' needs/problems		
2.1. Academic skills	X	X
2.2. Social needs (misunderstanding, loneliness and social isolation, violent behaviour, bullying, electronic violence and cyberbullying)	4,55	1,52
2.3. Sensorial needs	4,17	0,89
2.4. Emotional regulation	4,52	0,69
2.5. Sexual behaviour	3,98	0,92
Topic III – Intervention strategies/skills needed		
3.1. Educational area (Effective teaching methods, Technology-based interventions to teach academic skills, Peer tutoring, Intervention models to promote school attendance)	X	X

3.2. Social area (social skills interventions, anti-bullying strategies)	4,54	0,74
3.3. Sensory processing interventions for pupils with ASD	X	X
3.4. Strategies to improve emotional regulation of pupils with ASD	4,49	0,76
3.5. Informal and formal sexual education	3,79	0,97
Topic IV – Coordination strategies		
4.1. School community	X	X
4.2. Parents (family-centred transition process)	4,45	0,83
4.3. Other associations and professionals	3,95	1,01

5. Would you add another subject or sub-subjects not mentioned in the previous question?¹

Generally speaking, these results of these question in the three countries suggests that the selection of the topics shown in question 4 is wide enough to cover the complex variety of areas relevant for helping ASD students. Although in Spain, Portugal and Serbia, the following topics were added:

Table 1: Topics added to the training course

SPAIN	Differences between ASD students according to their sex (boys / girls) Training for the peers Leisure and free time Adaptations needed for this students Support strategies for families and teachers The need for sport as a means of social and educational integration. Behavioural
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¹ Questions 5 and 6 give information about the extent to which topics proposed in question 4 are useful and sufficient for the purpose of our intervention program. We need to note that these questions were asked slightly different in each country. However, since answers all refer to the same topics, some conclusions can still be drawn from the data.

development and flexibility.

The help of classmates in recess and in the day to day (classes, cafeteria, exits and entrances, etc.)

PORTUGAL What autistic adults have to say on the subject;

Coordination with specialized technicians (Physician, psychologists, therapists);

How to use the strengths of students with autism to teach content and social skills / communication. The contents / skills would be taught in a practical way;

Understanding the need of the student with autism to remain alone for a certain time;

Student and family expectations, support.

Involve / listen to the student in decision making (if he has a functionality profile that allows him to participate in them)

SERBIA The topic of inclusion, in general.

Attitudes toward inclusive education of pupils with ASD.

Facilitating abilities, talents, skills, and interests that student could and should develop through extracurricular activities.

Raising awareness about importance of the employment of people with ASD

Professional orientation and postsecondary options.

6. Do you think that a training program that addresses the topics of question 4 could improve the transition of ASD students from primary to secondary school?²

In Spain, 100% of the respondents stated that the topics suggested in question 4 would improve transition of ASD students. In Serbia, the proportion of respondents who stated so is 94% while in Portugal is 93%, which represents still a significant majority of the participants.

Therefore, results from item 5 and item 6 suggests that a program covering topics included in question 4 might improve transition of ASD students.

7. Given the situation generated by the covid-19, the training program is planned to be online by using an e-learning platform. Rate from 1 to 5 how important it is that the e-learning platform has the following features³

² The same as the question before is applied to this question.

Data obtained from Spain and Portugal, we can observe that “Access to the Moodle platform by using laptops, tablets or mobile phones” and “Lessons” were among the highest rated items in both countries.

Items “Glossary” and “Uses will enrol themselves into a course through an enrolment key” were also well valued for participants in both countries.

8. Taking into account that the methodology of the course would be online, rate from 1 to 5 the level of adequacy of the following teaching materials

According to the results obtained in the three countries, the most rated methodology for the course was the following one:

- Mentoring and consultative work with an autism expert
- Testimonials from students with ASD and family members
- Testimonials from experienced teachers
- Mentoring and advisory work videos from experienced teachers
- Solved practical cases
- Teachers’ Videos
- Good practice manuals

Although there were also well rated, methodology obtaining the worse rating were the traditional ones such as power point presentation, Articles, texts and literature and webinars.

Table 2: Materials to be used during the training

Material	Mean	SD
Power point presentations	3,873	2,044
Power point presentations with voice	4,030	2,129
Teachers’ Videos	4,267	1,834
Mentoring and consultative work with an autism expert	4,520	1,504

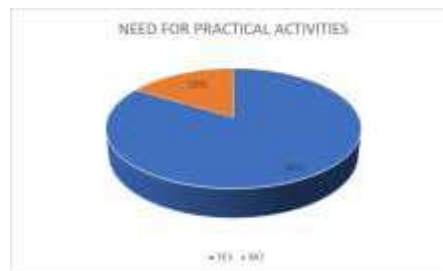
³ In this question, only results from Portugal and Spain are compared since Serbia did not include that item.

Articles, texts an literature	3,820	1,897
Solved practical cases	4,463	1,497
Videos related to the topics addressed ⁴	X	X
Webinars	3,923	2,055
Testimonials from students with ASD and family members	4,417	1,701
Testimonials from experienced teachers	4,467	1,554
Mentoring and advisory work videos from experienced teachers	4,410	1,717
Good practice manuals	4,160	1,883

9. Do you think that practical activities are necessary in each training module?

According to the results 84% of respondents stated that practical activities were needed.

Figure 4: Need for practical activities



10. If so, how would you rate the following activities?

AS the following table shows the most important type of activities for respondents were practical cases, surveys, assignments and, in the last case, quizzes.

⁴ Unfortunately, there is no joint results for item 7.

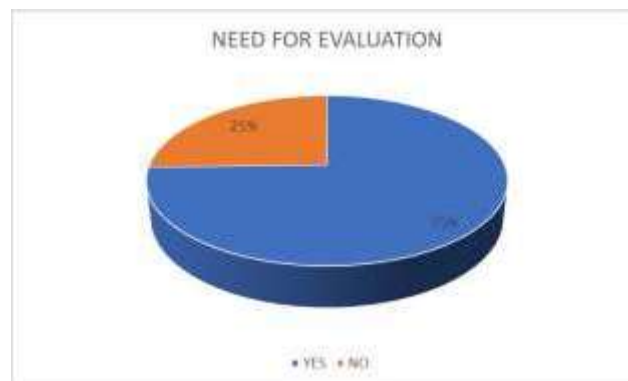
Table 3: Adequacy of the practical activities

Adequacy of the practical activities	M	SD
Assignments	3,84	0,941
Quiz	3,64	0,992
Survey	3,88	0,952
Solving practical cases	4,53	0,751

11. Do you think evaluation activities are necessary?

Also the majority of the respondents in the three countries thought that an evaluation of the activities was needed (75%).

Figure 5: Need for evaluation activities



12. If so, how would you rate the following evaluation methods?

In particular respondents stated that they would prefer qualitative and quantitative feedback on their exercises such as comments apart from a rate.

Table 4: Evaluation methods

	M	SD
Qualitative feedback such as comments	3,93	0,98
Quantitative feedback	3,84	1,80
Both qualitative and quantitative feedback	4,04	0,91
Course reports	3,70	1,04

13. Taking into account that the course will be online, what weekly duration do you consider the most appropriate? Please, indicate the number of hours per week

Each country asked about the weekly duration of the course differently. However, in Spain and Portugal, 2 hours was the most voted answer with 39% and 30% of the votes, respectively. In Serbia, results differ significantly since the mean duration that the participants chose was around 7 hours per week (M=6.36; SD=5.415).

14. Additional comments and questions

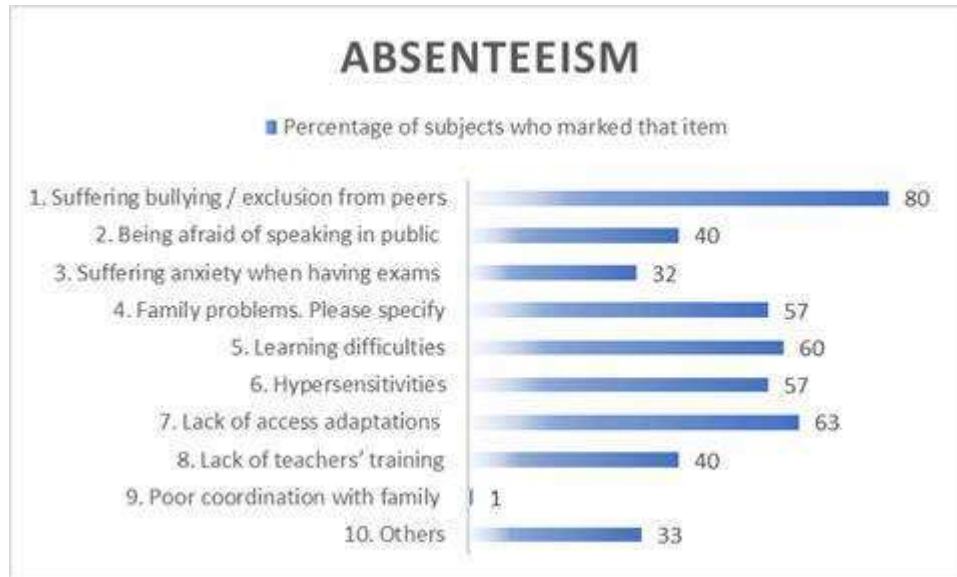
Also some partners asked some questions related to some others important topics such as the a) Absenteeism; b) School failure

a) Aspects influencing absenteeism⁵

The joint results have shown that the main factor affecting absenteeism in ASD students is suffering bullying or exclusion from peers. Also, the lack of adaptations and learning difficulties seems to be important together with family problems.

⁵ Portugal included an additional question on absenteeism and school failure.

Figure 6: Factors affecting absenteeism in ASD students



In addition, respondents specified other factors such as:

- Lack of support and adequate monitoring
- Sleep problems
- Comply with and respect the schedules,
- Adaptation difficulties in the transition between cycles to the new context
- The own specificity of the structure of the secondary school...

b) School failure

Regarding the issue of school failure in ASD students, respondents stated that the main factor affecting was suffering bullying and peers' exclusion together with learning difficulties and the lack teachers' training.



Figure 7: Factors affecting school failure



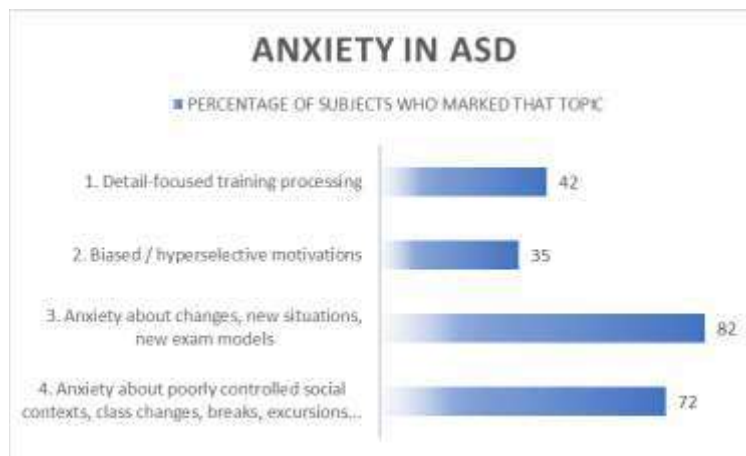
Moreover, respondents stated the additional following factors:

- Sense of incomprehension by the school and family
- Adaptation difficulties in the transition between cycles to the new context
- The own specificity of the structure of the secondary school...

c) Anxiety in ASD students

The results have clearly shown that the main factor causing anxiety in ASD students according to respondents is changes, new situations and new models of exams and anxiety produced by poorly control on social context, class changes, breaks, or excursions.

Figure 8: Anxiety in ASD students



d) Type of training needed to prevent school failure or absenteeism in ASD students

The majority of the participants (78%) considered that both functional analysis behaviour training and teaching training are important for the teachers to prevent school failure and absenteeism.

2. Draft of the potential index of the learning modules according to the results obtained

Topic I – Basic and <i>Advanced*</i> knowledge on autism and ASD student’s needs/problems*
1.1. Social communication 1.1.1. Social needs (misunderstanding, loneliness and social isolations, violent behavior, electronic violence and cyberbullying)*
1.2. Developmental changes through adolescence
1.3. Repetitive and stereotyped behaviors
1.4. Heterogeneity in Autism spectrum disorder
1.5. Co-occurring conditions (basic understanding of comorbidities*)
Topic II – ASD students’ needs/problems
2.1. Emotional regulation



2.2. Sensorial needs
2.3. Sexual behavior
Topic III – Intervention strategies/skills needed
3.1. Social area (social skills interventions, anti- bullying strategies)
3.2. Strategies to improve emotional regulation of pupils with ASD
3.3. Informal and formal sexual education
3.4 How to use the strengths of students with autism to teach content and social skills*
3.5. Self-determination and self-advocate (Involve / listen to the student in decision making)*
Topic IV. Absenteeism*
4.1. Main reasons*
4.2. Strategies and techniques for: * <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.2.1. Bullying / Exclusion from peers 4.2.2. Anxiety 4.2.3. Learning difficulties 4.2.4. Hypersensitivities 4.2.5. Access adaptations
Topic V – Coordination strategies
5.1. Parents (family-centered transition process) (Student and family expectations and support)*
5.2. Other associations and professionals (Coordination with specialized technicians)*
5.3. Articulation between the primary and secondary school*

* Topic and subtopics suggested by the join results

3. Joint conclusions

According to the results obtained in the three countries with a sample of 183 respondents, some conclusions can be drafted.

In the view of them, a training program focused on improving the transition of ASD students from primary to secondary school was considered crucial. In particular, this course should be attended by professionals working with ASD students in their day to day, such as teachers from primary and secondary school who have ASD students, SEN teachers and School counsellors. In addition, it was underlined the importance that teachers from secondary and primary school not having students with ASD could attend the course in order to increase their knowledge and skills in case they have ASD students in class.

In addition, the training course to be developed should be addressed to acquire five main competences: 1) How students with autisms learn and think; 2) knowledge and skills in terms of emotional regulation; 3) Skills to facilitate peers' relations and class management; 4) Knowledge of effective teaching and learning methods and 5) basic understanding of autism.

The topics and subtopics previously identified seems to cover the needs of the potential attendees to the training course and, therefore, they should be part of the course curriculum, although other topics can be added considering the results obtained the three partners countries. Also the topics are regarded as good enough to improve the transition the students with ASD from primary to secondary school.

Moodle platform features seem to be needed for attendees.

As for the methodology and training materials the best rated were those related to mentoring from experts or other teachers with experience as well as testimonials from students with ASD and family members. Moreover, solved cases were well evaluated.

Moreover, the training course should include practical and evaluation activities such as practical cases, surveys, assignments and, in the last case, quizzes though which attendees could obtain qualitative and not only quantitative feedback.

The biggest gap in countries was related to the duration of the training course per week which varies from 7 to 2 hours.

In additional questions related to issues such as absenteeism, school failure and anxiety in ASD students, suffering bullying and peers' exclusion has been regarded as the main factor affecting absenteeism and school failure together with the lack of adaptations and learning difficulties. With respect to anxiety in ASD students, respondents referred to changes and new situations, such as new models of exams, or poorly control on social context, class changes, breaks, or excursions.