

Questionnaire on distance teaching and learning in the period from 16th March 2020 to 2nd April 2020

April 2020

At the Ministry of Science and Education, a short questionnaire was prepared on distance teaching and learning, intended for teachers. The questionnaire was open in virtual classrooms for a week, including 2nd April 2020 (closed one day before the Instructions for evaluation and grading were published).

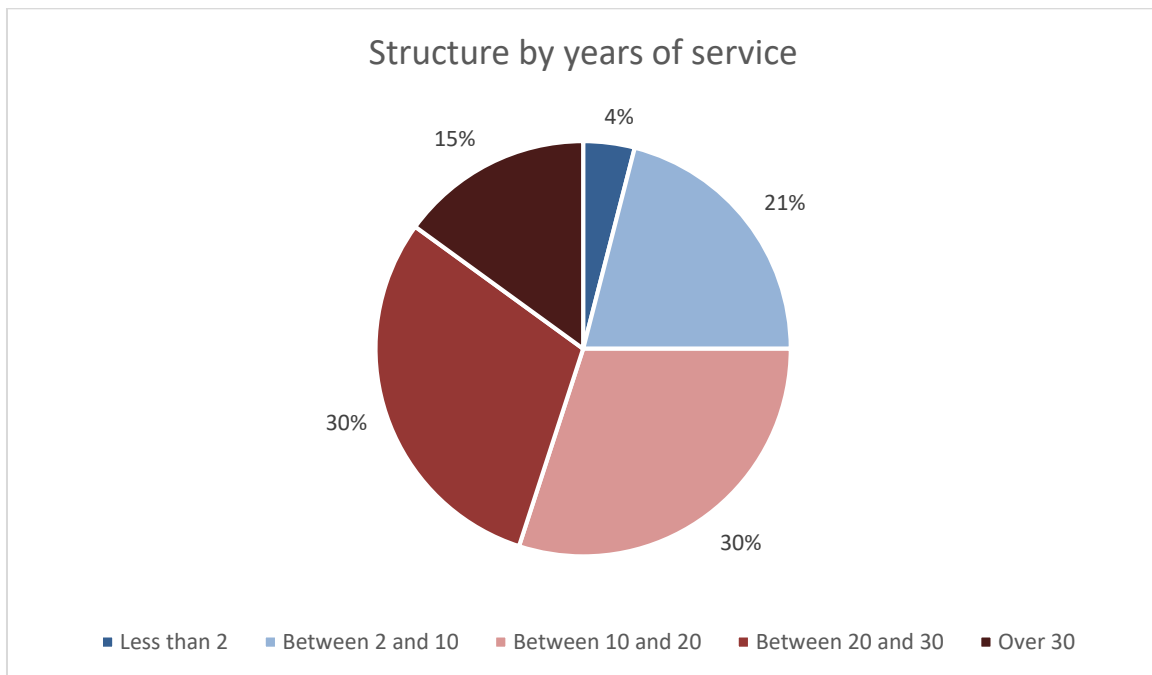
The sample is related to the current situation but it can be useful as a marker for further work and the planning of support for distance teaching. Teachers had access to the questionnaire with their AAI identity, and so access was denied to others, everyone could fill out the questionnaire only once, the data were not linked to a person (they were anonymized).

The questionnaire was accessed by **4139 teachers** in all. From this total number, 601 were men (15%), the rest were women. The distribution by levels and types of schools is shown in the following table.

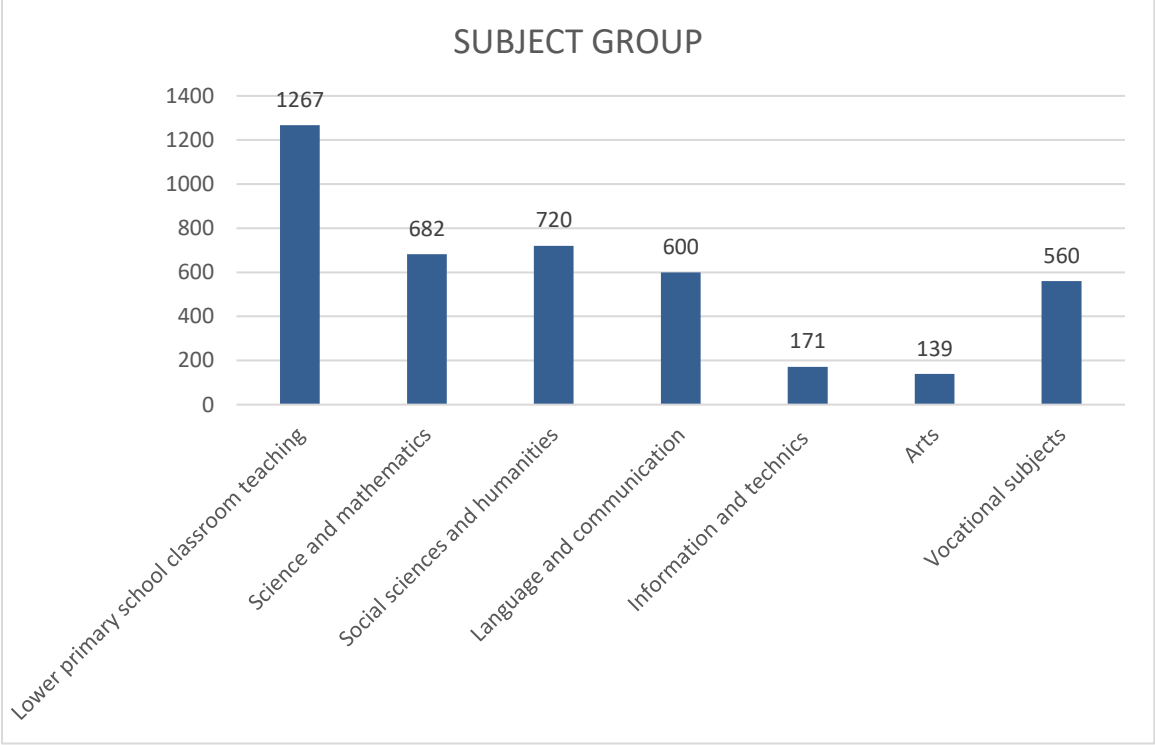
| Type of school and level | Lower primary school (grades 1-4) | Upper primary school (grades 5-8) | Vocational schools | Secondary schools | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Participants | 1403 | 1310 | 997 | 429 | 4139 |

All counties as well as the city of Zagreb were represented.

By the length of service, those who have between 10 and 30 years of professional experience are in the majority (60% in all).



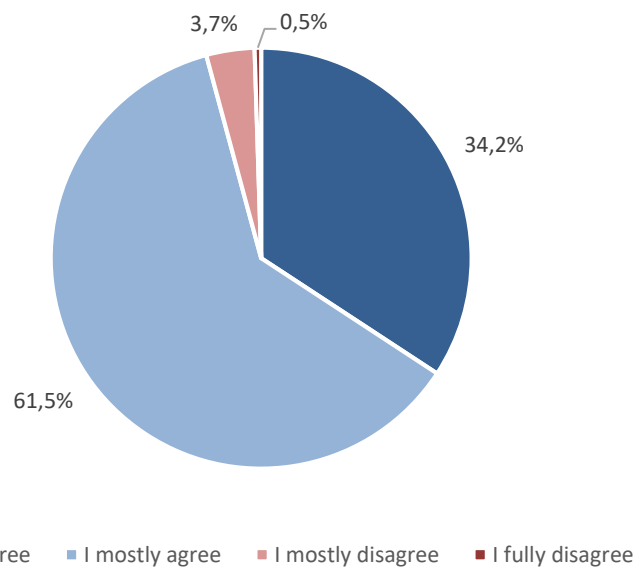
From this total, the largest number of participants are classroom teachers in the lower primary schools, followed by subject teachers in social studies and humanities, in science and mathematics as well as in language and communications, which corresponds to the real distribution of the number of teachers by subjects.



The answers to the questions follow.

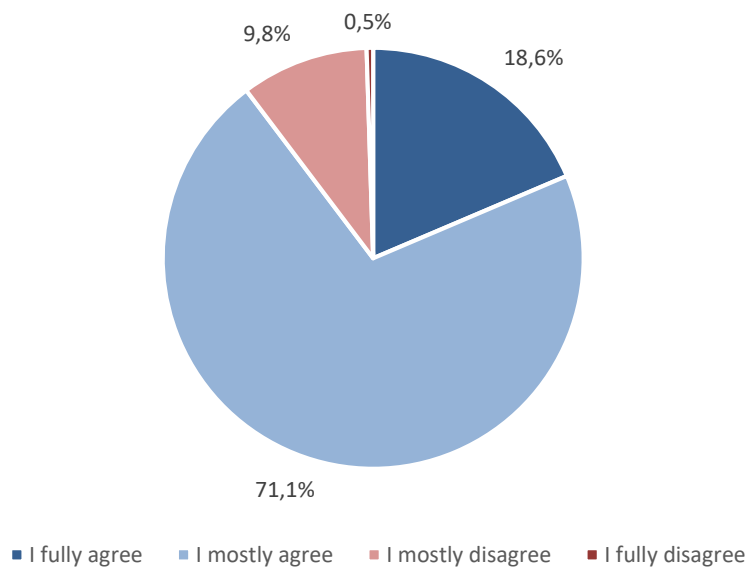
Nearly all teachers (95%) are entirely or mostly satisfied with the way they perform distance teaching.

I am satisfied with my performance of distance teaching.



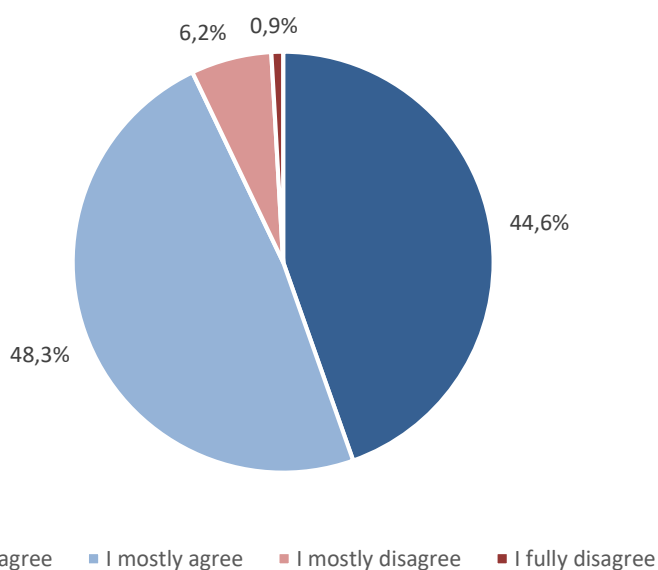
A vast majority (90%) think that their students cope well or mostly well with distance teaching and learning.

The students cope well with distance learning.



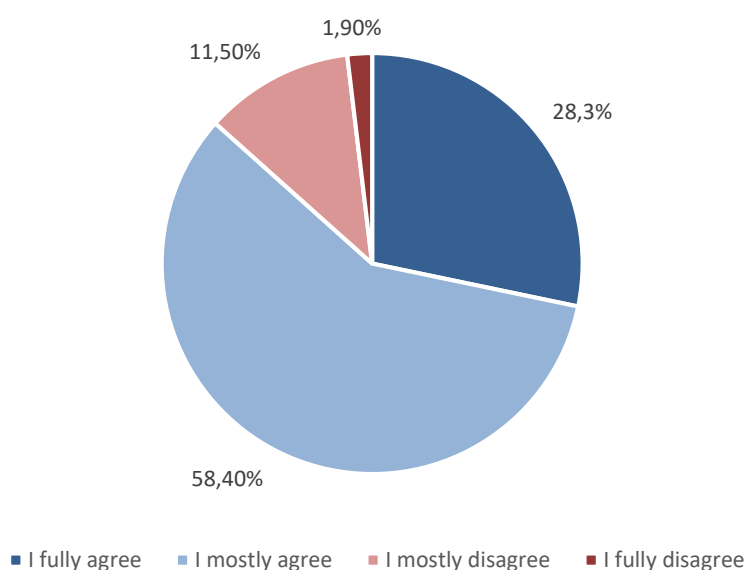
The teachers are mostly satisfied with the equipment they have. Namely, 93% of them are satisfied or mostly satisfied with the equipment at their disposal while performing distance teaching.

The equipment I have for distance teaching is satisfactory.

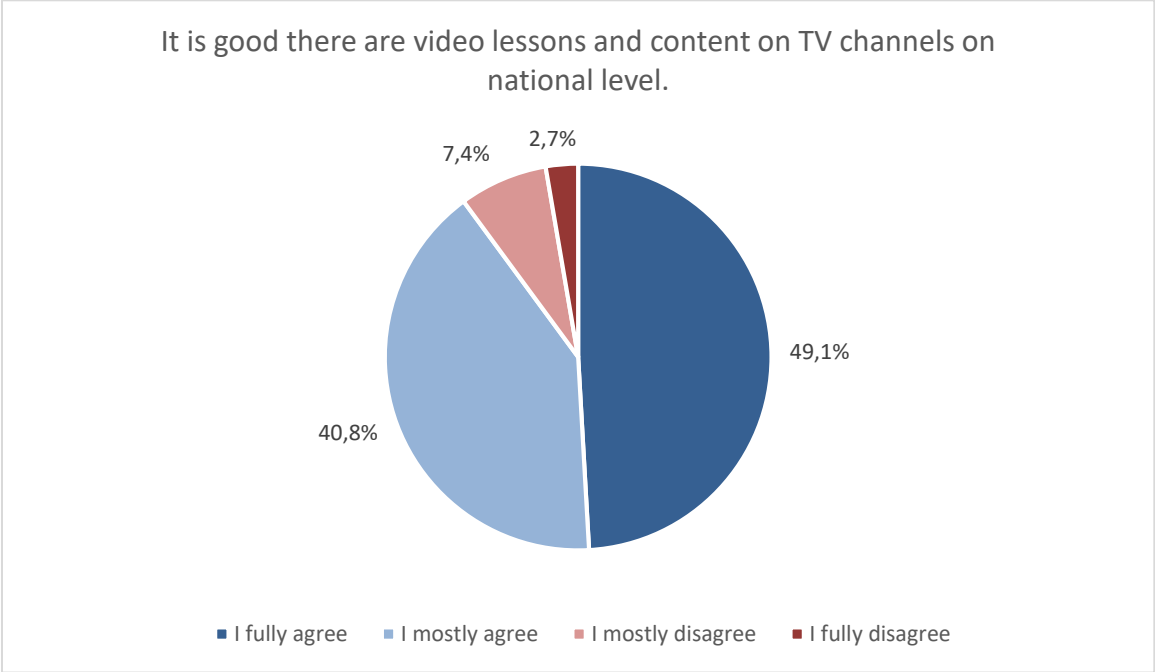


The results are similar in the evaluation of support. Namely, 87% think that the support they get from CARNet and the Ministry is good. However, it has to be taken into account that there are 13% of those who are not satisfied with this support. The insight into comments related to this issue shows that most of them were not satisfied in the first week of distance teaching when there were problems with connections and accessing virtual classrooms or when they needed support with some specific tools for their subjects (e.g. they are not satisfied with free tools and they think that commercial versions should be purchased).

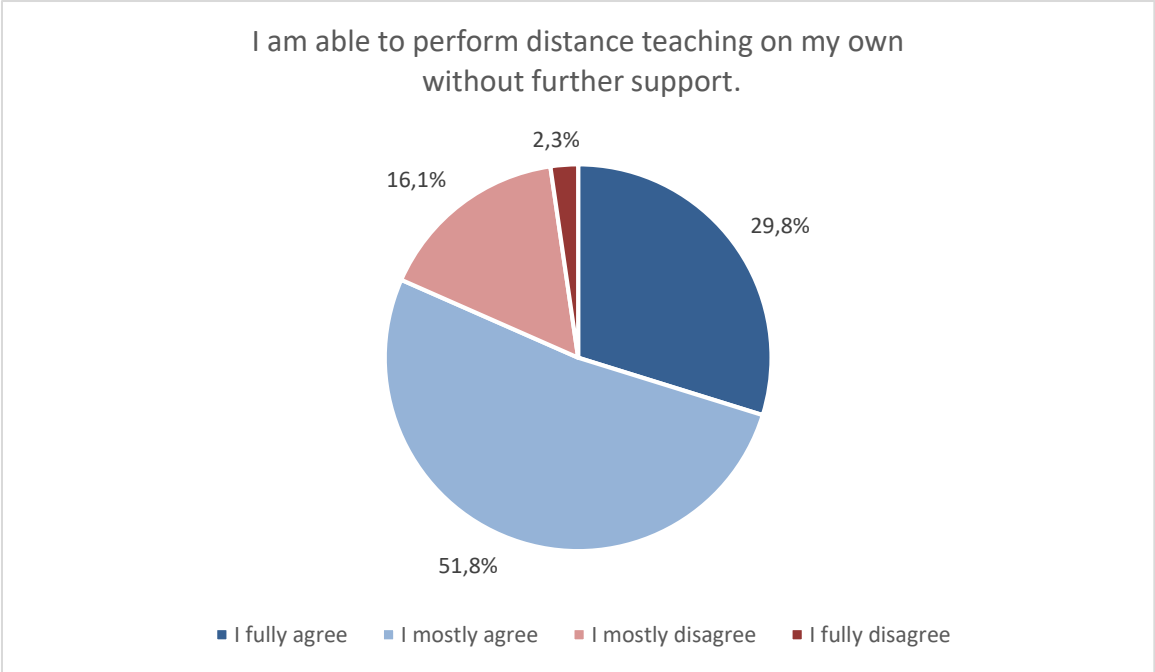
The support I get from the CARNET and the Ministry is good.



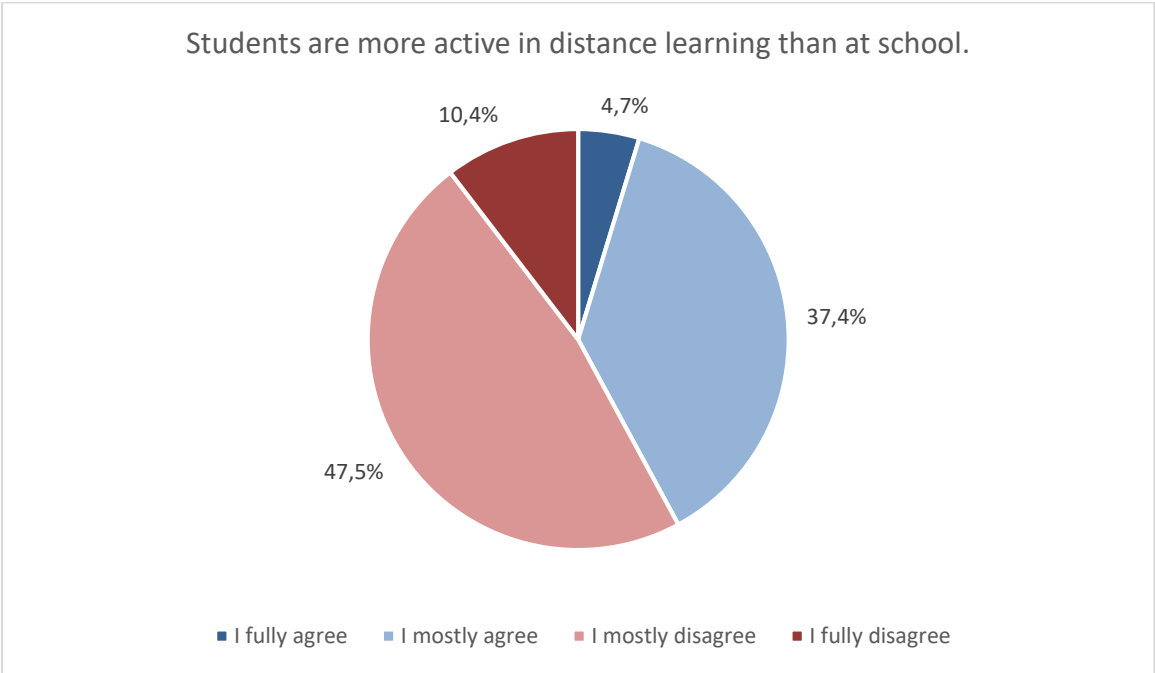
The teachers are very pleased with the fact that there are video lessons and television programmes. 90% of them share this opinion whereas almost half of them are fully satisfied and more than 40% are mostly satisfied.



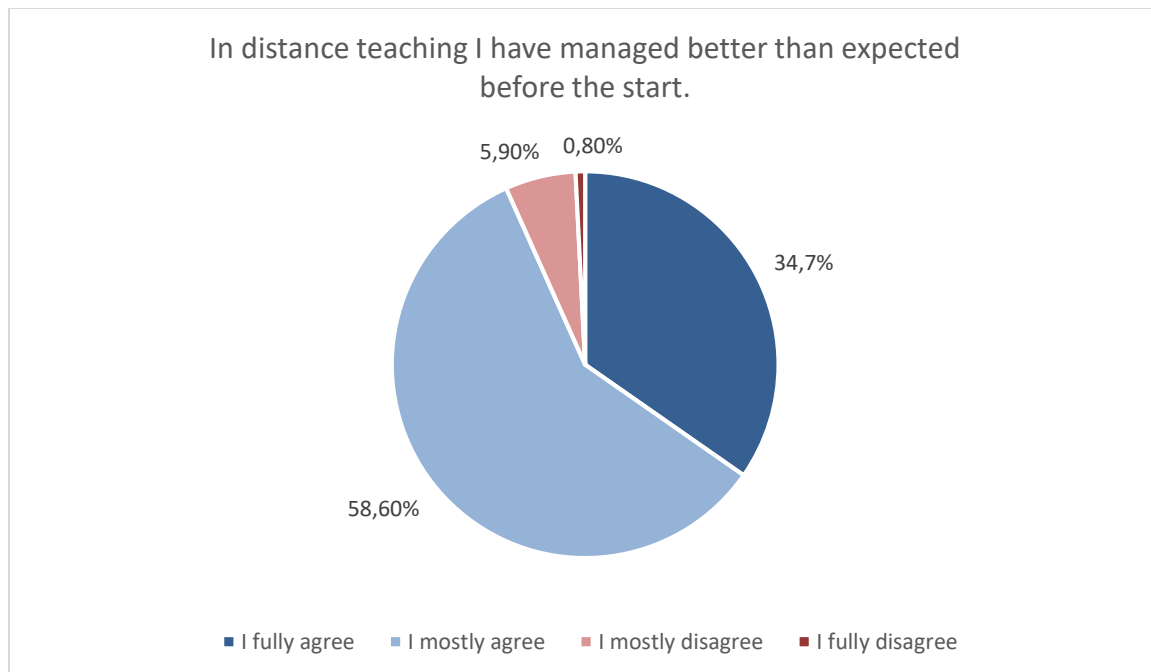
It is very encouraging that teachers think they can perform distance teaching on their own, meaning that in the first three weeks we have succeeded in reaching our goals and empowering the teachers. This of course does not mean that no further support, training or instructions are necessary. Namely, only 30% of them feel fully confident that they can perform distance teaching on their own without further support, 52% of them mostly agree they can manage on their own, and around 18% of them still need significant support.



Also the next criterion on the basis of which we can conclude that we have fully succeeded in distance teaching is related to the preceding question. It is about student activity. Opinions are divided about whether students in distance learning are more active than in school classrooms. Thereby 58% think that students are more active at school and 42% that they are more active in distance learning. This is an important area that needs more engagement and the supply of as many tasks as possible in order to motivate the students. Therefore, **the Ministry has advised for all subjects to give marks in activity and the solving of more complex tasks.**



The adjustment to a new medium and different working methods requires time, good practice exchange, additional training and instructions. Still, the answers show that teachers have adapted even faster and better than they had expected. **As many as 93% of the teachers think that they have managed better than they had expected before the beginning of distance teaching.**



In the end, the participants could choose three (3) supports that they expected in April 2020.

A vast majority of participants who have answered this question, 95% of them, have asked for instructions/training on evaluation methods in distance teaching, which justifies the priority of the Ministry to prepare and publish such instructions. One day after the closing of the questionnaire, on Friday, 3rd April, the Ministry has published the Instructions on evaluation and grading during distance teaching and learning. The Ministry will be available for additional questions and explanations that will be published on the web site.

The following answer by frequency is that teachers, **45% of them, want even more video lessons** so the delivery of video lessons will continue also in the next period. The third place is taken by the support in the form of **specialized programmes for distance learning**, and the first step in this direction is a collection of 25 programmes in Appendix B to the Instructions on evaluation and grading, that are open for usage. In virtual classrooms, additional training on the subject will be held.

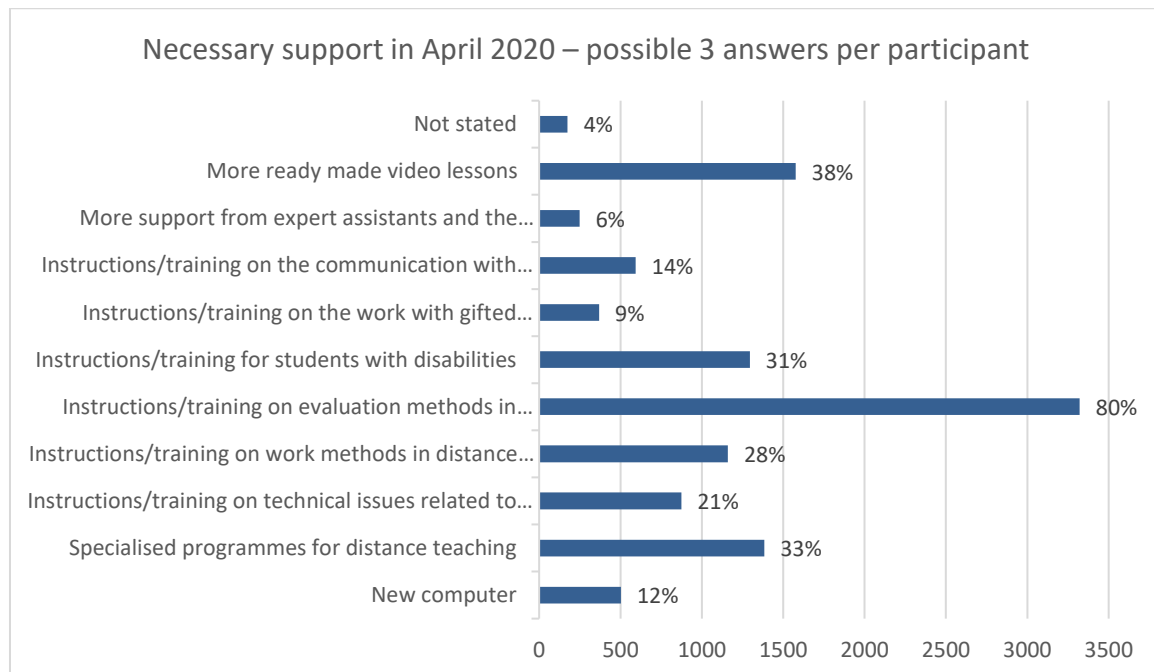
One out of three teachers want more instructions and **training on the work with students with disabilities**, and approximately the same fraction of them also want additional instructions and **training on the working methods in distance teaching**. Although in every school there are expert assistants who can help in the adjustment of work with students with disabilities, additional training on the topic is needed as well as on the topic of working methods in distance teaching. We also point out the cooperation with the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences of the University of Zagreb on the same topic, on which we will report continuously.

These will be the priorities of the Ministry, the agencies and institutions in charge during the next period.

One out of four teachers still look for support in **technical difficulties** so the helpdesk of CARNet (Croatian Academic and Research Network) and SRCE (University Computing Centre) will continuously be open for questions and support. Around 14% of teachers have, among their three priorities, expressed the wish to get a **new computer**. 2700 new laptops for teachers and 95000 new tablets for students are planned to be purchased for the new school year from EU funds.

Some teachers also pointed out that they needed **help in the communication with parents** (17%) as well as in the work with gifted children (10%). In the end, around 7% of the teachers **need more support from expert assistants and principals of their schools**.

Among additional comments of the teachers, we highlight the necessity for instructions how to behave in virtual classrooms. We know that some schools have them, so please share.



Over 1000 comments were inserted on two questions that enabled it. I.e. one out of four teachers who participated in the questionnaire also left some comment. Some of them also enhance and additionally explain already given answers, some of them express their discontent to be in such a situation and their desire to go back to the classroom as soon as possible (*“The living words of a teacher in the classroom can’t be replaced by anything.”*) or they look for more understanding and patience from all those included (*“Understanding of some parents”*).

Some teachers point out that they don’t always have stable internet access at home, some don’t have a computer of good quality and some complain about parents who don’t use e-mail or communication groups so they need to call such parents on the phone or send them messages. For the majority of such situations, we have already given instructions to principals when distance teaching was first introduced or through frequently asked questions. It is pointed out that some students have no

equipment so we repeat that instructions were given to principals how to continue getting funds to purchase equipment for students.

The following citation describes the reality: *“All is well! Every day there are new ideas that I implement in my teaching. Luckily, my students are used to working with ICT but my colleagues had a lot of problems. This form of teaching requires a great deal more time for preparation but it is not so bad since we think less about everything going on around us and now teachers really live in the virtual reality. Online teaching will never be able to replace traditional teaching.”*

“I am satisfied with the combination of the School on the Third, ready made video lessons as well as tasks, presentations, quiz exercises and games that I design myself.”

CONCLUSION

The questionnaire was conducted in virtual classrooms of different subjects and was intended for teachers. The questionnaire was open until Thursday, 2nd April, and **4139 teachers** answered. The sample is related to the current situation, which has certain limitations of interpretation as a consequence. However, the goal was to estimate to what extent the teachers were ready for distance teaching and what to put emphasis on in the support for the next month (during the month of April).

The good news is that nearly all the teachers (95%) are fully or mostly satisfied with how they perform distance teaching and 93% of them are satisfied or mostly satisfied with the equipment at their disposal for distance teaching. **As many as 93% of the teachers think that they have managed better than they had expected before the beginning of distance teaching.**

A vast majority (90%) think that also their students cope well or mostly well with distance teaching and learning. Opinions are divided about whether students in distance learning are more active than they were in school classrooms, so 58% think that students are more active at school and 42% that they are more active in distance learning. This is an important area that needs more engagement and the supply of as many tasks as possible in order to motivate the students. Therefore, **the Ministry has advised for all subjects, beginning with lower primary school up to the final grades of secondary schools, to give marks in activity and the solving of more complex tasks.**

A vast majority, 87% of them think that the support they get from CARNet and the Ministry is good. However, it has to be taken into account that there are 13% of those who are not satisfied with this support, so their comments related to this issue will be processed in detail.

In the end, the participants could choose three (3) supports that they expected in April 2020. A vast majority of participants who have answered this question, **95% of them, have asked for instructions/training on evaluation methods** in distance teaching, which justifies the priority of the Ministry to prepare and publish such instructions. One day after the closing of the questionnaire, on Friday, **3rd April, the Ministry has published the Instructions** on evaluation and grading during distance teaching and learning, and the Ministry will be **available for additional questions and explanations** that will be published on the web site.

Besides, **45% of the teachers want even more video lessons** so the delivery of video lessons will continue also in the next period. The third place is taken by the support in the form of **specialized programmes for distance learning**, and the first step in this direction is a collection of 25 programmes in Appendix B to the Instructions on evaluation and grading, that are open for usage. In virtual classrooms, additional training on the subject will be held.

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In the end, we must take special care of the wellbeing of the teachers themselves, of the expert assistants and principals in schools so as to provide better ways of mutual support and also of assistance on the levels of schools, founders, the Ministry and the agencies in charge.