

Global Education Competences developed with Dungeons and Dragons™

Aim and purpose

The survey, aimed at identifying whether the Dungeons and Dragons role playing game does or does not develop or improve specific competencies to the Global Education topic, has gathered a total number of 49 responses from Hungary, Romania, Spain and Slovenia between January and July of 2022.

The survey has been developed as an exploratory research using online, self administered, questionnaires.

Even if the number of respondents per country is not identical, the difference is of little statistical relevance for the end purpose of the research, generally.

The survey has been built to verify the competence model proposed by the D&D Global Education project. The competence model was initially drafted following three different competence models:

- **Global Education through D&D** developed by Društvo D20 in preparation of and following the D&D Youth Exchange – covering the global education field –,
- the **Skill UP** taxonomy of employability skills developed by a consortium of 3 universities in Europe in ERASMUS+ KA2 project „SkillUP”
- present and trending competencies for jobs model for 2018 and 2022 as described in **The Future of Jobs Report 2018** developed by the World Economic Forum.

Demographics

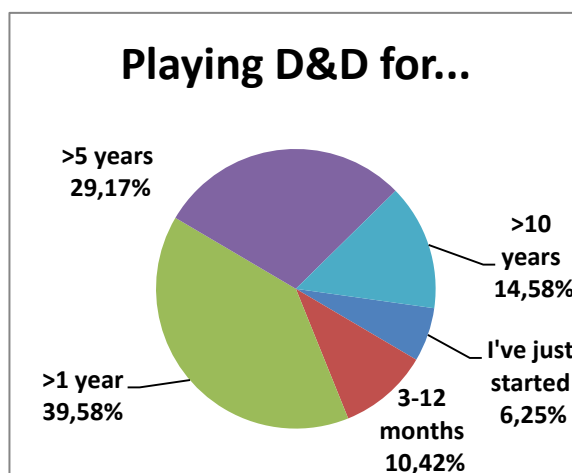
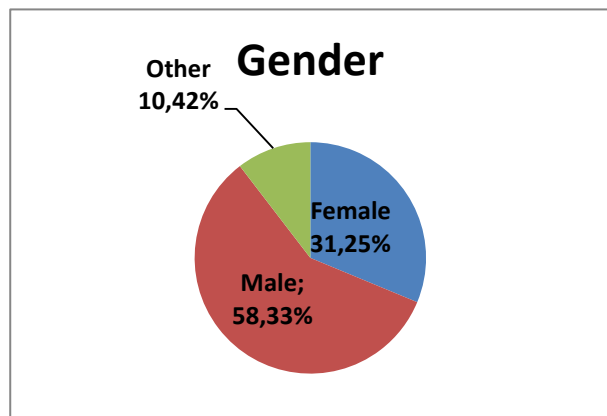
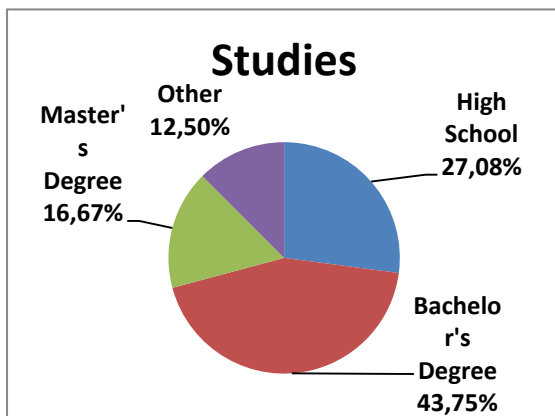
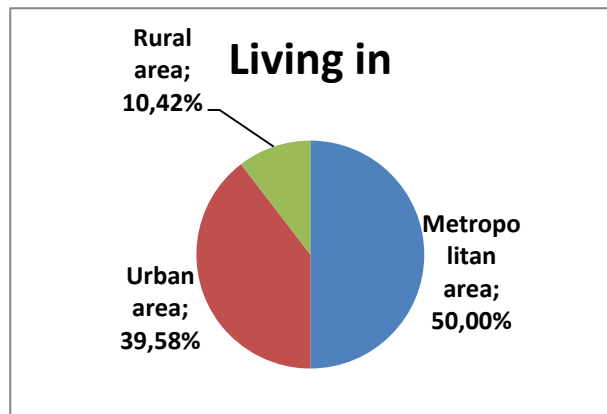
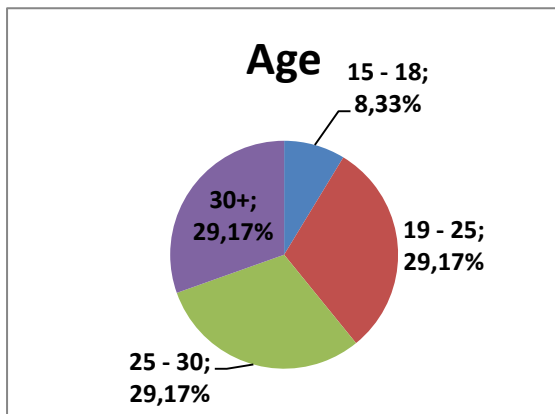
The survey has been filled in by 49 responders in online settings. Due to the very specific Covid-19 pandemic, the initial plan of running the survey during the 2021 ComiCon in Slovenia was turned around.

The respondents have been divided in 4 categories according to age groups. The number of respondents in each category is fairly similar with the exception of the 15 – 18 category- 8.33%.

On the opposite side, the gender distribution is favouring the male respondents while 10% declare belonging to the Others gender group.

The most respondents are playing D&D for a period between 1 year and 10 years. The most common response was within the range of 1-5 years – 40%. Most of the players are playing D&D in face to face settings – 73% rather than online – 27%.

The general living background of the respondents is overwhelmingly urban, with 50% living in Metropolitan areas, 40% in urban areas and only 10% in rural settings. Most of the respondents have an academic background, with 43,75% that have completed a Bachelor's degree and 16.67% have completed a Master's degree.



The competencies

1. Analytical & Creative Thinking

Gathering, analysing and articulating information from different sources and using it to solve problems and make decisions effectively & Thinking outside the box in order to bring new ideas to solve problems or seek solutions to a particular situation

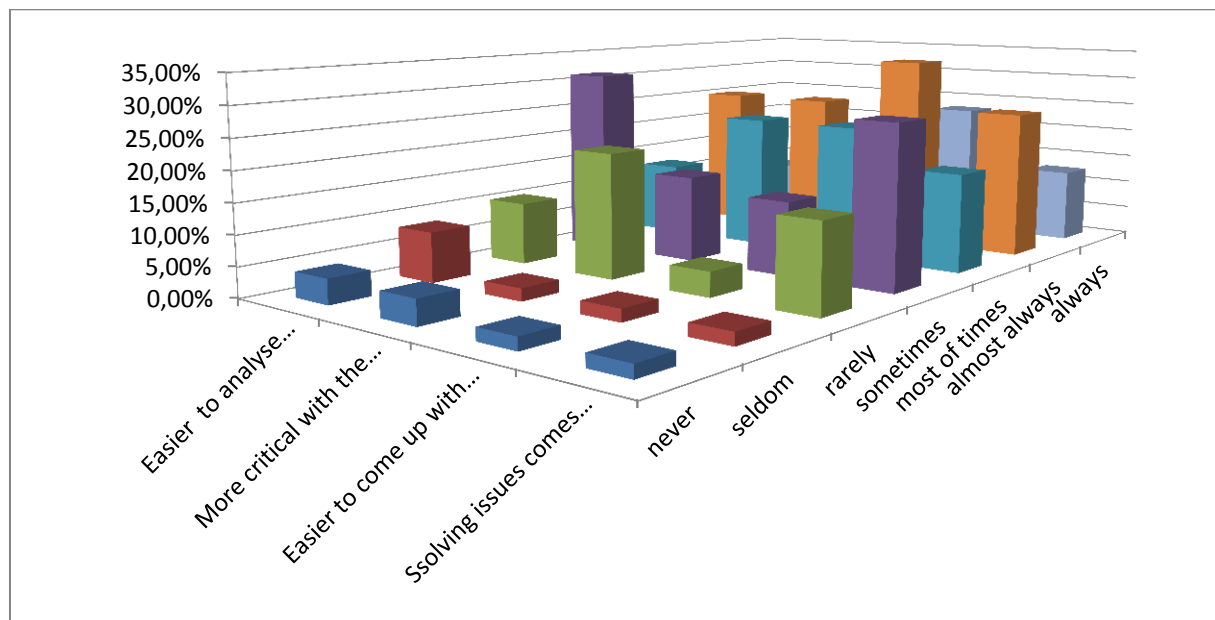
Survey results:

46% of respondents feel that more than just sometimes **it is easier to analyse various information**. We conclude that after playing D&D it comes easier to analyse various information for a significant group of players.

52% of respondents feel that they are **more critical with the information they receive**. We conclude that after playing D&D, the players are more inclined for critical thinking than before.

When it is about **coming up with new ideas**, 80 percent state that most of the time or more it is easier to come up with new ideas when needed. We therefore conclude that D&D is improving or developing creativity and the generation of new ideas.

54% of the respondents state that **solving issues in their daily lives comes easier** in more than most of the times. We therefore conclude that D&D is also developing or improving problem solving skills in the daily lives of players.



2. Active Learning and Learning to learn

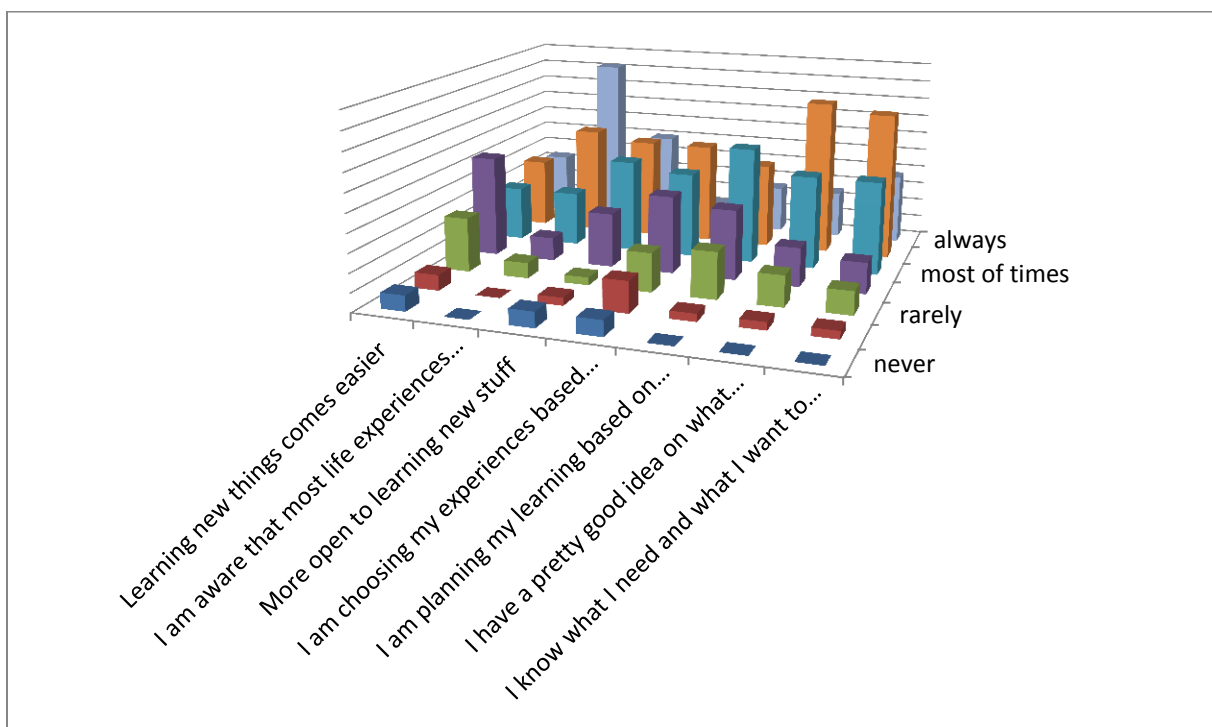
Being aware of the learning process and intentionally submit oneself to an experience with a learning purpose in mind. Effectively managing one's own learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and overcoming obstacles in order to learn successfully.

Survey results:

When it comes to the **openness towards learning**, the respondents have a clear improvement of their values towards learning. 77% of the respondents state that they are now more open to learning new things. As well, **90% of the respondents state that they are now aware that most life experiences are learning contexts.**

The adventurers also state that after playing D&D, learning things comes easier. **50% of the respondents consider that most of the times or more new skills or information is learned easier.** We therefore conclude that D&D is improving the learning to learn skills of a significant percentage of players.

When it comes to programming learning, an impressive number of respondents (**27%**) state that **they are almost always choosing their experiences based on the learning that can be achieved.** 56,25% state that most of the times or more they choose their experiences based on the learning they can achieve. We therefore conclude that D&D does contribute to improving the Learning to Learn competence.



3. Complex Problem-solving and IDEATION

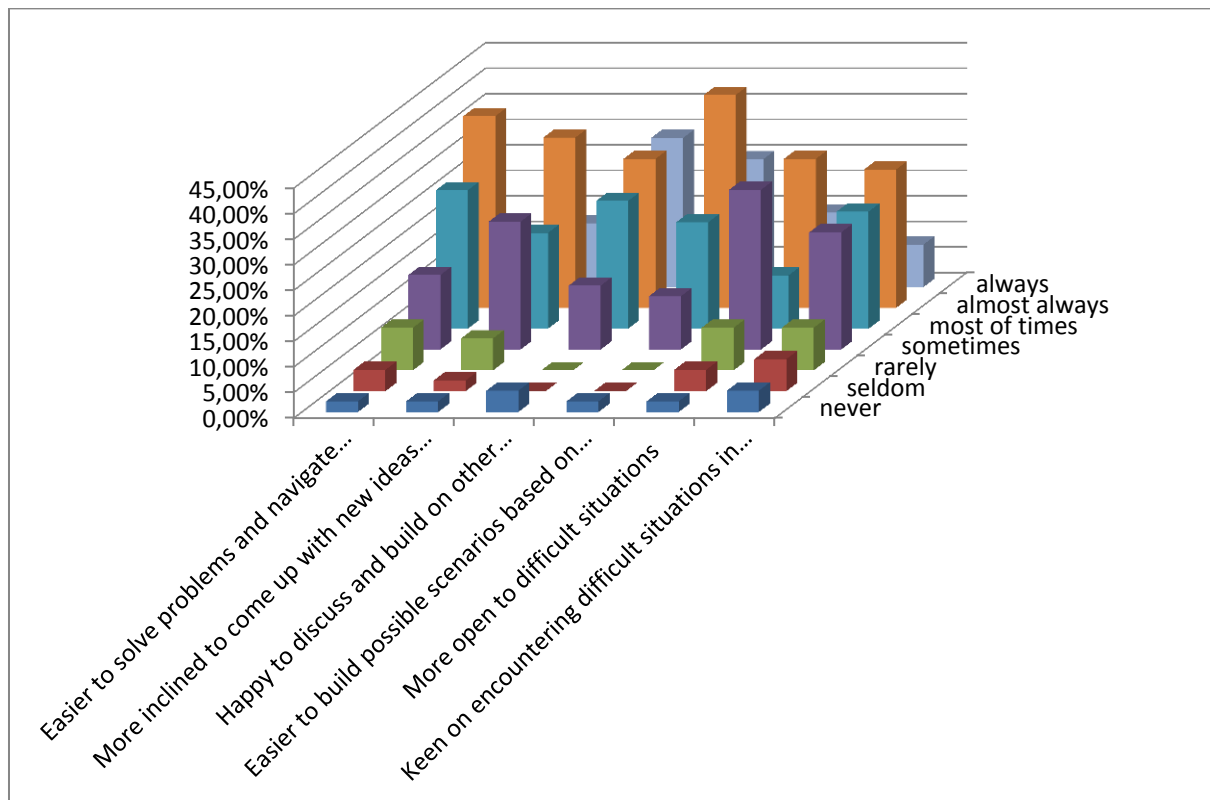
Engaging in the actions or thoughts necessary to find solutions to a difficult or complex question or situation and resolve conceptual problems. Actively engage in generating and entertaining ideas.

70.83% of the respondents declare that in more than most situations it is easier for them to **solve difficult problems or navigate difficult situations**. 83.3% state that in more than most situations they are **happy to discuss and build on other people’s ideas**, in general situations. 87.5% of the respondents state that in more than most situations they **find it easier to build possible scenarios** based on their or other people’s ideas

54% of the respondents state that since playing D&D they are more open to difficult situations in more than most cases and 58.33% state that Since playing D&D they are keen on encountering difficult situations in more than most cases in order to test their skills.

We therefore conclude that most of the players of D&D are clearly improving their general complex problem solving competencies, including positive attitudes towards encountering difficult situations.

Due to the complex process of character building and scenarion creation, IDEATION is one of the competences built by the in-game process. The attitude of the players towards other people’s ideas are clearly improved and their willingness to buid on other people’s ideas is, as well, clearly improved.



4. Emotional Intelligence, Communication and Interpersonal skills

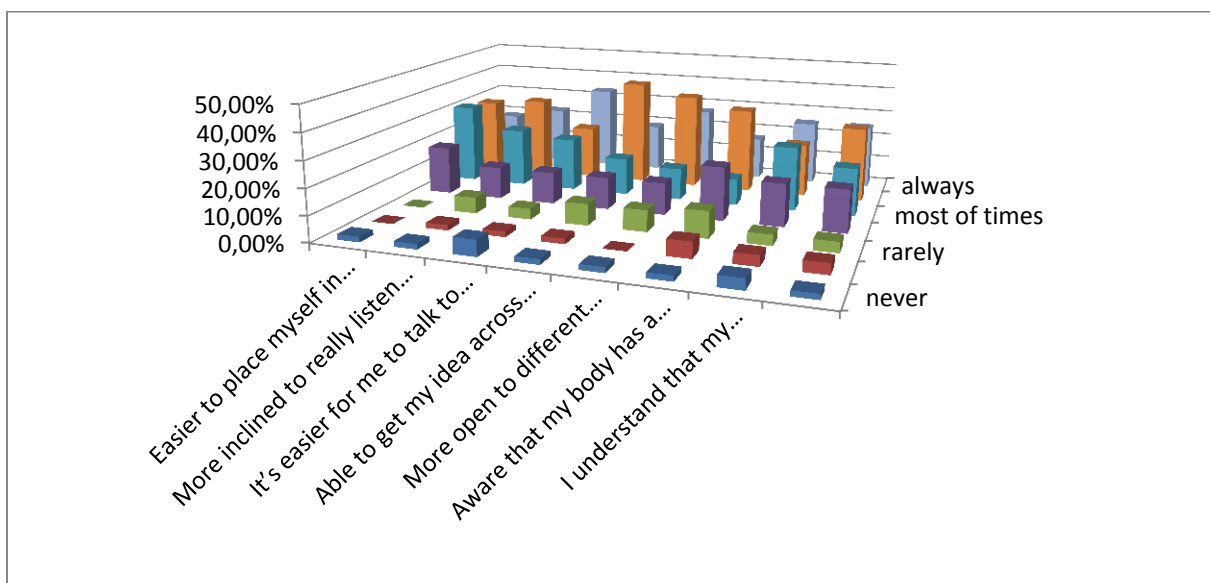
The ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict. Articulating, transmitting and defending effectively arguments, ideas, feelings or information through verbal and non-verbal messages. Also involves listening, understanding and being receptive to the messages sent by others.

When it comes to placing oneself in other people’s shoes it takes time to practice. **79.17% of the D&D players** that responded to the questionnaire stated that in more than most cases since playing D&D **they find it easier to place themselves in other people’s shoes**. Empathizing with the character is definitely one of the attitudes developed by D&D and easily translated in real life situations with the support of a youth worker.

77% of the respondents state that since playing D&D they are more inclined in more than most situations to really listen to other people and what they have to say and 75% of respondents state that since playing D&D they believe it’s easier for them to talk to other people. As well, 75% of respondents state that in more than most situations it’s easier for them to get their ideas heard by other people. 60% state that since playing D&D they are aware that the body has a language of its own and they are using it in order to convey their message.

Therefore we can clearly state that D&D gameplay is significantly improving the communication competencies of the players.

77% of respondents state that since playing D&D, in more than most situations, they are more open to different people and their points of view. Just as well, 77% of the respondents state that since playing D&D they understand that emotions may alter their state of mind. 73% of the respondents state that since playing D&D they are able to, in more than most situations, control / manage their emotions during gameplay and real-life



5. Ability to cope with changes and conflict management

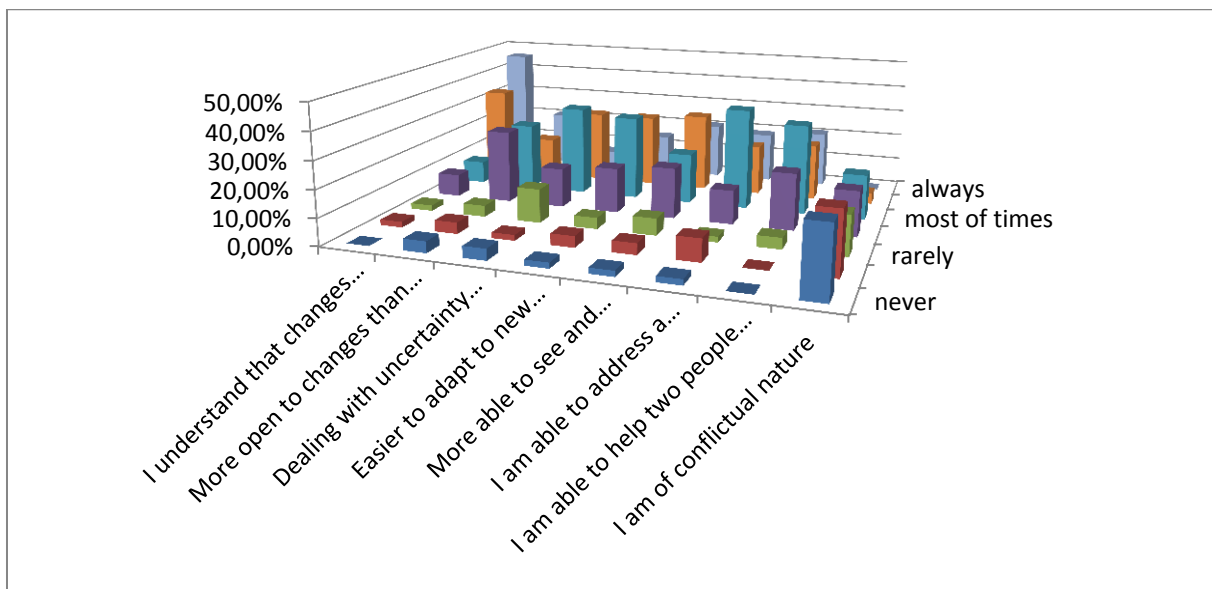
Dealing with changes and uncertainty and adapting to new situations. Taking control of a conflict between two or more parties in an assertive way.

87.5% of the respondents state that they understand that changes may occur at any given time. 60.4% state that since playing D&D they are more open to changes than before. 66.7% state that since playing D&D they are dealing with uncertainty better than before and **73% state that it's easier to adapt to new situations since playing D&D.**

We therefore conclude that D&D is building resilience and positive attitudes towards change and change management and that players are dealing better with uncertainty than before. (NB the answers may have been influenced by the pandemic period and the uncertainty that represented the core of the general context during the lifespan of the survey)

In relation with conflict 69% of the respondents state that since playing D&D they are more able to see and understand conflict, 75% state that they are able to address a conflict better in more than most situations and also 75% state that they are able to help two people in conflict by communicating and keeping an objective point of view.

We can therefore conclude that D&D is significantly improving the conflict management competencies of the participants by improving their communication skills and their understanding of conflict.



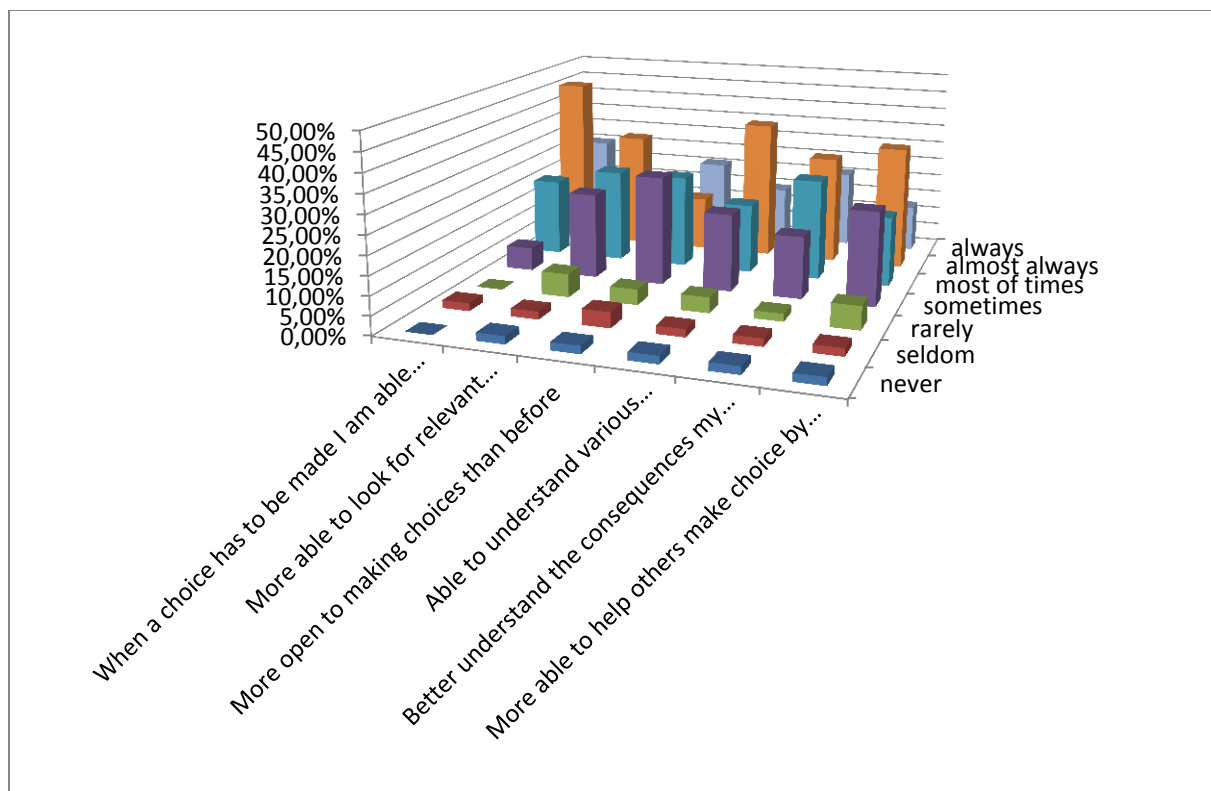
6. Decision Making

Thinking of several choices when an important decision must be made, finding relevant information to make a good choice and predicting the consequences of the decisions taken for others.

In term sof making informed decisions, 67% of the respondents state that since playing D&D they are more able to look for relevant information related to the choices they have to make. 71% state that since playing D&D they, in more than most situations, are able to understand various consequences of the choices they have to make and **77% state that since playing D&D they better understand the consequences their choices have on others.**

64% state that in more than most situations they are more able to help others make choices by explaining the consequences since playing D&D

We can conclude that D&D is consolidating the decision making competencies of the players and, even more than that, it is developing counseling copmetencies in decision making. Looking at D&D from a youthwork perspective, it makes an ideal tool for decision making workshops and trainings, bringign young people closer to real life decision making competencies.



7. Standing up for oneself and others

Having confidence in the authenticity of one or others and their worth and ideas without discrimination or bias. Taking (verbal) action to the support of the weaker voices when social injustice is present.

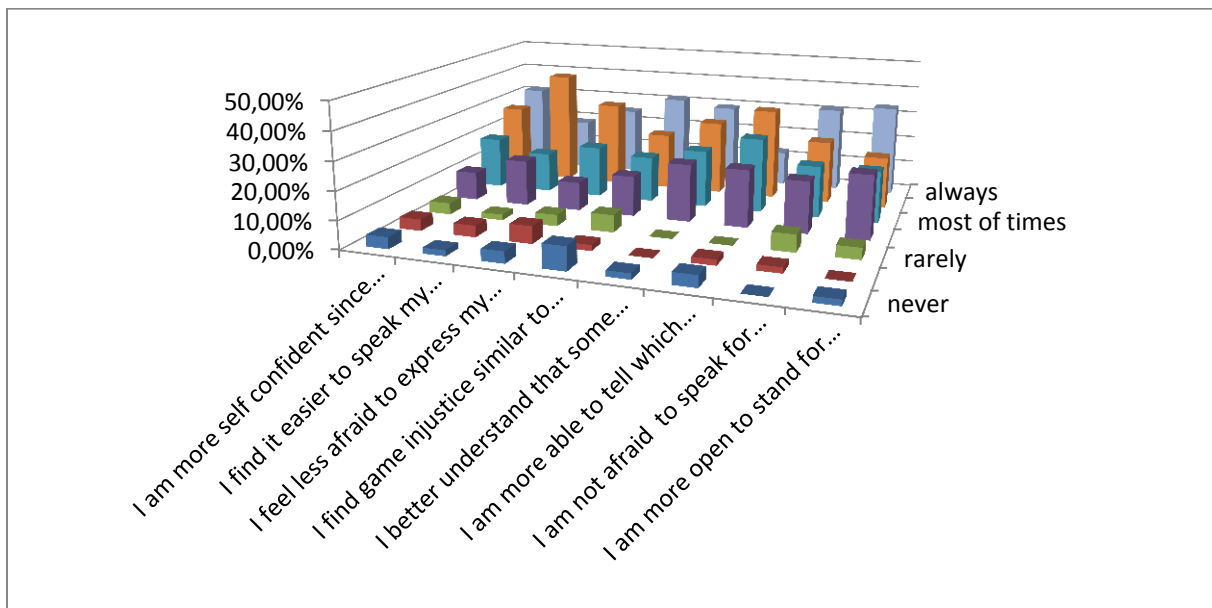
In terms of self confidence D&D is a really good instrument for its development. **77% state that they are more self confident since playing D&D.** 75% state that they find it easier to speak their ideas out since playing D&D and 75% feel less afraid when expressing their point of view.

We can positively conclude that D&D is significantly improving the self confidence of the players. From a youthwork perspective it represents a very useful tool in working with teenagers with less self confidence and not only.

D&D is as well a tool for teaching social justice. Due to the fictional character of the game, scenarios can be produced to simulate real life situations. (NB: the project has developed a series of scenarios based on the Sustainable Development Goals; the scenarios are available on www.d20.si). 69% of the respondents state that in more than most cases they find game injustice similar to real life injustice. 77% of the respondents state that since playing D&D they better understand that some people may have difficulties being heard by others.

73% of the respondents state that in more than most cases they are not afraid to speak for others that have a weaker voice. As well, 71% state that they are more open to stand for the people that have a weaker voice.

We can conclude that D&D is building civic competencies for the players. Through the course of the game, the players are developing social justice attitudes and civic activism behaviours.



Conclusions

Even if not statistically relevant for the young population of the EU, the survey has revealed a close connection between the development of Global Education competencies and tailor crafted D&D scenarios.

In real life contexts D&D may be used as a very efficient tool for developing key competencies for young people as well as specific Sustainable Development Goals competencies.

D&D is an efficient, non-intrusive way of developing social and communication skills for introvert youngsters.

D&D, as most other role playing games, offers a safe and secure environment for youngsters to test initiative, decision making, responsibility taking and speaking out for others. An impressive tool to be used for real life situations with fictional scenarios.

Special thanks

to Oana, Xsenia, Maja, Csilla, Daria, Jure, Kristina.