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Book of Abstracts
The Futurist Mindset: How to Navigate Uncertainty with Purpose

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We are facing an increasingly VUCA environment – volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous – full of exponential change. How do you navigate such a world? How do you prepare for a future that seems to be changing too rapidly to grasp?

These complex and uncertain times require a new mindset. Traditional linear approaches to planning for the future are far less effective today than ever before. Organizations and individuals must demonstrate more agility, and adopt innovative approaches to actively engage with uncertainty, and, ultimately, thrive in it.

The "must have" skillset is Strategic Foresight. It’s how you can effectively manage, leverage, and harness the constant change that surrounds us. Strategic Foresight provides the tools to transform our existing processes and mindsets to become adaptive and resilient. Simply put, it provides us the ability to navigate an uncertain future with purpose.

Join this interactive session to discover how Strategic Foresight will empower you to make sense of the emerging landscape of change, develop aspirational future visions, and create road maps to achieve them.

When Providing ICT in Schools Is not All that It Takes: e-Schools Learning Scenarios as a Support to Innovative Teaching with ICT

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In today’s society individuals face many challenges that require them to contemplate and act so as to familiarise themselves with their abilities and goals, as well as their personal growth and development needs. Continuous personal development can contribute in order for individuals to achieve and maintain their integrity, to compete in the labour market and to develop innovative methods, models and approaches required by society.
It is best achieved by the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, and by reflecting on the development of attitudes in accordance with the emerging needs of society. It is therefore preferable to step away from current economic and social needs and reflect on training practices aimed at employees, both those of today and of the future, taking into account jobs that may become a priority in the time to come. It is also crucial for individuals to develop competencies that will help them to upgrade their skills through lifelong learning (Mudrinić Ribić, Bilić Meštrić, 2017). According to the European Reference Framework (2006), lifelong learning is inevitable and represents the eight key competencies that are considered necessary for one’s personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. One of these eight key competencies is digital competency, which represents the knowledge, skills and attitudes that individuals should master to best respond to the needs and challenges of new, information society technologies (ISTs), which have become ubiquitous and indispensable in all segments of life, work and education.

Combining online and face to face educational activities for raising teacher’s competence is a solid support to fostering human capital in Croatian schools. Human capital is a set of skills and physical characteristics. It includes knowledge and skills (both formally and informally acquired), intelligence, family upbringing, ambition, persistence, work diligence, health, values such as honesty, punctuality etc. Human capital therefore is incorporated in a person (Becker, 1993; Bell, 1999; Lebruć et al., 2009). Social capital is fostered by the creation of teacher’s communities. An example of such community with an online segment is at a social website Yammer. Yammer network is available to all Croatian school staff and pupils. Additional Yammer network is available to school staff involved in the e-Schools project and currently has more than 2,800 members. Webinars, teachmeets and study visits are organised for combining online and face to face activities and enabling good practice exchange in this community. Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) emphasize that increasing social capital generates increase of human capital. They emphasize the concept of professional capital as capital combined of human, social and decisional capital.

Educational institutions, primary and secondary schools, have a social responsibility to enable children and young people to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will enable them to compete in the labour market in the future.

As important as it is to emphasize education directed towards economic growth, or science and technology, it is at least equally important to emphasize education directed at human, cultural and social development. (Razum, 2008: 872)

In this context, the role of the school as an educational institution is to educate children and young people about their responsibilities and their current and future roles in society, as well as to help them develop their attitudes in accordance with moral and ethical principles.

Within the e-Schools pilot project implemented in Croatia[1], this kind of education is a key concept of the development of digitally mature schools[2], where ICT integration into educational and business processes is exceptionally high. Among other factors, the key to the development of digitally mature schools lies in strengthening the digital competencies of teachers.
Additionally, there is a need to provide support to teachers for implementation of digital technology in their teaching. As an answer e-Schools Learning Scenarios for teachers were developed.

e-Schools Learning Scenarios are descriptions of teaching activities intended for teachers containing innovative and creative ideas on how to use contemporary pedagogical methods and ICT. This concept is developed by the Croatian Academic and Research Network – CARNet and Faculty of Organisation and Informatics, University of Zagreb. The concept of e-Schools Learning Scenarios consist of:

- creative title,
- learning outcomes,
- level of performance complexity regarding ICT usage,
- short and simple description of teaching activities,
- activities to support Special Education Needs (SEN) students,
- activity for students who want to know more.

Composed of three to five teaching activities that, in the most cases are completely independent, only linked by the theme, teacher can choose which and how many teaching activities to apply and adapt to his teaching context using the benefits of e-Schools Learning Scenarios modularity.

This concept is based on the idea of active learning where students are engaged in the process of learning through activities like exploring, problem solving, critical thinking, placing the student in the center of learning process and the teacher in the role of a mentor and a supporter as opposed to traditional lecturing (Freeman, 2014).

Jurčić (2014) emphasizes the role of teacher in modern school gains new meaning. In addition to the educational and functional didactic tasks, in accordance with the subject curriculum, the development of student competencies is expected, which is the completeness of the learning outcomes.

Customized for three different level of performance complexity regarding the level of teacher’s digital competence e-Schools Learning Scenarios are enabling equal opportunities for teachers regardless of the level of knowledge of digital technology.

Basic principles of e-Schools Learning Scenarios:

- Students are cooperating and collaborating through various forms of group work, face to face and online.
- Teacher and students are using digital tools and digital content with a purpose, primarily with the aim of achieving learning outcomes.
- Learning content is linked to everyday life situations.
- Upbringing component is included through topics such as sustainable development, ecology, civic education, interpersonal relationships, health and the like.
• Teachers are using contemporary and innovative pedagogy.
• Inclusion of all students in learning activities. All students regardless of differences should exploit their potential and stimulus from learning process to achieve learning outcomes.

e-Schools Learning Scenarios are available at official web site [3].

Due to the fact that e-Schools Learning Scenarios are new to Croatian school education and support staff, a research was started in the fall of 2017 to clarify whether they provided a response to some challenges discussed at the beginning of this paper. This research aims to determine perception of school education and support staff in Croatia on the role and usefulness of e-Schools Learning Scenarios in supporting contemporary teaching, as descriptions of teaching activities that include contemporary pedagogical methods and ICT.

Qualitative methodology fits such aim. Research method is focus group, participated by school education and support staff, more specific teachers, principals, librarians, psychologist, pedagogue, educational-rehabilitation expert. Research time frame is 2017/2018 school year. Approximately six focus groups shall be conducted depending on reaching theoretical saturation and field opportunities (Silverman, 2014). In order to control the level of understanding by the participants on the concept of e-Schools Learning Scenarios, a workshop was conducted prior to the focus group. Participation was opened to all interested school education and support staff.

U}l November 2017, two focus groups were held. These two focus groups had a total of 17 participants and were held in schools in central Croatia. Participants were primary teachers, subject teachers of elementary and secondary schools, principals and other school support staff. Preliminary descriptive research results demonstrate that participants are acquainted with various examples of digital tools usage in the classroom and often perceive e-Schools Learning Scenarios as a useful edition in this context. They do discuss obstacles in using ICT in school, such as poor condition of ICT in the school, but some do mention that this is much better in recent years. Often they mention that usage of ICT in schools is a matter of choice so only those that are motivated use it. Considering this to be unfair an impression of their unrewarded efforts may be outlined as well as almost a consensus that using ICT has numerous advantages. Some mention aspects of responsibility of motivating and engaging student in a way that is suitable to the world they live in and mention almost a necessity to provide them with 21st century teaching. In discussing usability of e-Schools Learning Scenarios, they are mostly certain that they contribute to contemporary teaching. These statements are yet to be further researched. A certain outset of conclusions can be identified in research data but further focus groups data shall ensure reaching theoretical saturation, clarify research dilemmas and enable us to make firm conclusions.

In conclusion, schooling in line with expectations of contributing to the development of information society, in times of frequent technological innovation, is faced with severe challenges and the constant imperative to change. In Croatia imperatives of school change and/or reform have in recent years became an often topic in the public discourse. The level of contribution e-Schools Learning Scenarios might have in supporting adaptation of schools to technological change is yet to be determined, but this just might be a small step forward.
Notes:

[1] Project "e-Schools: Establishing a System for Developing Digitally Mature Schools (pilot project)" is among the largest educational projects in Croatia and coordinated by Croatian Academic and Research Network – CARNet. It includes 151 schools with an approximate 40 million EUR budget, funded from the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund. It is part of a wider e-Schools programme aimed to digitalize school system in the 2015-2022 period in all Croatian schools.

[2] The e-Schools project included development of the Framework for the Digital Maturity of Schools. This is a document that defines the areas and levels of the digital maturity of schools and is coordinated with the European Framework for Digitally Competent Educational Organisations.


References


