



MenSI

Mentoring for
School Improvement

SELFIE in MenSI

Croatia

MZO, Croatia
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National Context

Description of the national context in self-assessment

Since the introduction of the pilot project [e-Schools: Establishing a system for developing digitally mature schools](#) in 2015, launched and carried out by the Croatian Academic and Research Network (CARNET), school leaders and teachers from Croatian schools have been encouraged to self-evaluate and monitor the development of their digital maturity. All the e-School project activities were based on the Framework for the Digital Maturity of Schools developed within the project. It was important for schools to be aware of their digital maturity. For this purpose, an online questionnaire was developed for schools to obtain feedback on the current status of their digital maturity. Self-evaluation questionnaire consists of several groups of questions:

- Leadership, planning and management
 - ICT in learning and teaching
 - Development of digital competence
 - ICT culture
 - ICT infrastructure
- (Source: CARNET: [Digital maturity of schools](#))

Country plans

All educational institutions are encouraged to use [The Framework for the Digital Maturity of Schools](#) to evaluate their digital maturity. The Framework was developed within the e-Schools pilot project and is aligned with the European DigCompOrg Framework. It provides a common understanding of digital maturity for all stakeholders in the education system, including schools, school founders educational agencies and institutions and the Ministry of Science and Education. It is used as a tool for self-evaluation of schools' digital maturity and for external evaluation of schools' digital maturity.



SELFIE implementation

Organization

At the beginning of the project, all the 20 mentor and mentee schools completed the SELFIE questionnaire. In the majority of schools, the questionnaire was administered for teachers and school leaders, whereas in several schools, students were also included and contributed to the survey.

At the end of the project, 15 schools used SELFIE, among which were 4 mentor and 11 mentee schools.

Highlights of the results

After conducting the two rounds of SELFIE, all participating schools reported noticeable differences between the first and second rounds. Some areas showed significant improvement, while others still require further development. Based on these results, the schools see this as a positive direction for their ongoing development.

Challenges

The challenges the majority of schools faced mainly related to time constraint. Due to their busy schedules, not all teachers were able to participate in the surveys.

Lessons learnt

The coordinators from both the mentor and mentee schools emphasized the importance of sharing the main findings from the SELFIE within the cluster. This enabled the mentor school to adapt their activities to better suit the needs of the teachers from the mentee schools.



Overview of areas:

Leadership

In all schools, whether mentor or mentee, it was evident that the support of leadership was crucial for the development of schools and the successful implementation of innovative teaching methods. It was observed that schools with a higher level of leadership support tended to have better teacher engagement which resulted in more teachers implementing innovative practices in their teaching.

Collaboration and Networking

While the participating schools have prior experience with student collaborative projects through the eTwinning network, there is still potential for enhancing collaboration and networking among colleagues from different schools. Throughout the project, there was a noticeable increase in the teachers and school leaders' collaborative and networking practices, particularly after participating in various events organized by the mentor school. These events were organized in different formats of online, face-to-face, and hybrid professional development meetings and training, such as Teachmeets, expert webinars or classroom observations.

Infrastructure and Equipment

There are noticeable differences in the level of resources available in different schools, ranging from those with state-of-the-art future classrooms to those whose school buildings were severely damaged in the earthquake and were unsafe to use, so that they had to be relocated to other facilities. It is clear that further investments are necessary to ensure that all schools have access to the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning. The schools also emphasized the importance of the availability of technical support.

Continuing Professional development

With the advances in educational technology, all schools reported the need of continuous hands-on practical professional development workshops with activities that can immediately be implemented in the classroom. The majority of teachers expressed the satisfaction with the



possibilities to share and reuse the resources, ideas and materials and then reflect on the advantages and disadvantages, which led to the improvement of their teaching strategies and the implementation of innovative teaching methods.

Pedagogy: Support and resources

As a result of the pandemic, teachers had to rely on online tools and resources for teaching, which made them more acquainted with the online opportunities that they can utilize both in their classroom and for their own professional development.

Pedagogy: Implementation in the Classroom

Teachers have been trying to adapt their teaching strategies and methods to accommodate the differences among students. They apply various teaching methods and techniques in order to boost students' creativity to motivate them to learn and be actively engaged in the learning process.

Assessment Practices

There is a significant need to integrate digital assessment practices into teaching, but this is often hindered by the lack of adequate resources. Several schools reported that they involve students in self and peer-evaluation as a common practice.

Student Digital Competence

The teachers noticed an increase in student digital competence in particular in using educational technology to enhance their learning practices. They reported that students are becoming more proficient in integrating technology in order to enhance their overall academic performance.

Coordinator



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