Supporting digital education in pandemic – SRCE perspective

Dr. Sandra Kučina Softić, Assistant director, M.Sc. in Digital Education
University Computing Centre SRCE, assistant director
University Computing Centre SRCE

• is computing centre and the architect of the e-infrastructure of the entire system of science and higher education of the Republic of Croatia

• competence centre for information and communication technologies as well as the centre for education and support in the area of ICT application

• in 2021 – 50th anniversary
SRCE – National Centre for E-learning in Higher Education

• E-learning Centre@SRCE

• established in 2007
• to support institutions, teachers and students in the use of e-learning technologies and tools
• provides infrastructure, usage support and user education
• a key stakeholder in the process of digital transformation of the higher education system

• Basic objectives:
  • to support higher education teachers, students, e-learning teams and institutions
  • to provide and maintain reliable and generally accessible university platform for e-learning
  • to support the university network of people involved or interested in e-learning
  • to promote and foster implementation of e-learning

www.srce.hr/enc
E-learning Centre@SRCE

E-learning platform for HE
- state-of-the-art e-learning system tailored to user needs

Academic e-portfolio
- for personal use, for presentation or as a learning activity

Webinars
- For online lectures, presentations, seminars, consultations
- Adobe Connect, Edumeeet

E-course Catalogue of HEI in Croatia
- a central place to find basic information about all e-courses

Promoting Open Access and OER
- all educational materials developed in SRCE in Open Access
- SRCE Open education portal

Antiplagiarism software
- for checking students' work, theses and doctoral dissertations by students and teachers

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Virtual Learning Environment – Merlin

http://merlin.srce.hr

1 Moodle installation
94 institutions on Merlin

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Merlin – numbers…

E-courses
- 2018/2019: 13038
- 2019/2020: 23536
- 2020/2021: 27166
- 2021/2022: 30458
- 2022/2023: 39%

Teachers
- 2018/2019: 5726
- 2019/2020: 9447
- 2020/2021: 10861
- 2021/2022: 10867
- 2022/2023: 65%

Students
- 2018/2019: 27059
- 2019/2020: 30458
- 2020/2021: 9903
- 2021/2022: 81%
- 2022/2023: 39%

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High quality, easily accessible and sustainable support

To HEI
- In the systematic implementation of e-learning and the process of digital transformation

To teachers
- In the use of digital technologies; in implementation of digital technologies in teaching and learning

To students
- In navigating the online environment and using digital technologies

Courses (classroom and online)
- Manuals
- FAQ
- Quick help
- Animations
- Guides, additional materials

Helpdesk
- Consultations
- Tailor made support to teachers in implementation of e-learning into educational process

Template for an e-course creation
- E-course self-assessment application
- Digital badges for completed courses
- Interactive guide for grading in Moodle
Teachers training... designed for their needs

- **Courses and workshops**
- How to work in Moodle
- E-course development
- Learning Outcomes in Moodle
- Student’s Assessment and Grading
- E-portfolio
- Teachers digital competences
- ABC workshop on learning design
- Interactive educational materials with H5P
- Multimedia in e-courses
- Educational materials as OER
- How to prepare and online lecture with Adobe Connect
- **Individual consultations**
- Engaging events- building communities of practices and enhancing networking

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Number of inquiries by users answered by the E-learning Centre SRCE team

User support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2019.-30.9.2019.</td>
<td>2934</td>
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<td>4415</td>
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Rising Awareness and Dissemination about E-learning

Open Education Week

MoodleMoot Croatia - June

E-learning Day – December

Training courses, workshops

E-learning Centre Week – end of September

ELC web pages...

Articles is SRCE newsletter.

mailing lists....
How we successfully supported HEI when pandemic started... (and earthquake)

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10,000 e-courses opened in two months (81% more courses than in previous academic year)

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18,000 successfully answered user inquiries in 2020 255% growth

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Reliable and well designed infrastructure ensured continuity and proper functioning

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65% more teachers started using Merlin and e-learning in relation to previous academic year

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Live communication as the preferred way by users for communication and support

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Easy accessible and systematic support helped users to focus on teaching and learning

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Higher education in Croatia till March 2020

• Still dominantly oriented to classical (f2f) teaching and learning
• Digital technologies mostly as addition to enhance the quality of teaching and learning
• Few accredited online studies (only for part-time students)
• Strategy of Science, Education and Technology (Ministry of Science and Education, 2014) – Action plan with defined activities - low level of realisation
• Left upon HEI and teachers to decide on implementation of digital technologies and e-learning into their study programs and courses
• Research dominant in relation to teaching, especially in the rules for the advancement
• Teaching efforts not recognized nor awarded
Teaching and learning after lockdown

• Those teachers who have used e-learning before, easier and faster moved their teaching online
• Those teachers who did not use any digital tools in their teaching had more difficulties to find out how to organize their teaching in online environment
• High increase on the video conferencing systems in order to organize classroom lectures in online environment - Adobe Connect, Zoom, Microsoft teams, BBB, Google Suite, edumeet….
• Move to online environment with courses prepared for the classroom teaching- emergency remote teaching
• Technical issues- some institutions did not have adequate infrastructure, teachers and students did not have broadband or adequate laptops
• Lack of teachers’ digital skills resulted in low use of possibilities of digital technologies, high workload and stress
• Lack of students’ digital skills resulted in confusion and high stress
• Online oral and written exams – additional stress for students (did not meet technical requirements, first time experience, lack of enough information and testing how to participate in online exams)

• Goal to ensure the continuation of teaching and learning and finish of academic year
Research results on

**Higher education teachers and pandemic: academic and psychological challenges**

March 2022
Summary

- 72% teachers consider they have good and very good digital competencies
- 87% teachers consider they have good and very good in e-learning technologies application
- 79% teachers consider they are digitally competent for e-learning application in higher education
- 64% teachers consider they are sure and quite sure in choosing e-learning tools and technologies in educational process
- 46% teachers is not sure about advantages of ICT and e-learning in education, they are using them just because of pandemic, they do not know how they could contribute to education or they think ICT and e-learning are not relevant for their teaching
- ICT and e-learning are used dominantly in education for
  - learning material and dissemination
  - information about course
  - online lectures
  - communication
Teachers need support

2017
• In use of ICT (84.8%)
• In use of e-learning technologies (82.1%)
• In preparation and development of e-courses (73.6%)
• In pedagogy and teaching methods (56%)

2021
• In use of ICT (86 %)
• In use of e-learning technologies (87 %)
• In preparation and development of e-courses (78 %)
• In pedagogy and teaching methods (76%)
According to the Open Access Policy, Srce ensures that all research data made by Srce is accessible and free to use by the general public, especially educational and professional information and content derived from the actions and work of Srce.

www.srce.unizg.hr/oa-and-oer

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moto of the E-learning Centre: be humble, listen and collaborate both internally and externally