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NATIONAL REPORTS - CROATIA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INT	RODUCTION	3
CRC	DATIA	4
	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
	IMPLEMENTATION	6
	RESULTS	11
	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	24
ANI	NEXES	27
	S1. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS (in Croatian)	28
	S2. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS (in Croatian)	30
	S3. STUDENT'S COMMENTS (in Croatian)	31
	T1. TEACHER'S OBSERVATIONS (in Croatian)	32
	T2. TEACHER'S COMMENTS (in Croatian)	33
	E. EXPERT'S COMMENTS (in Croatian)	35



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CROATIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Implementation and validation of the C4G approach in Croatia took place from February to June 2020 as part of teaching of subject Informatics in primary schools. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Croatian schools were at that time closed so the approach was adapted for use in online environment.

Teachers (N_T =8) from eight primary schools in Rijeka and students - future teachers of graduate study programme of Informatics at University of Rijeka (N_{ST} =43) participated in the validation study and organized online game-based activities for building programming skills among students (N_S =773) from 5th to 8th grade of primary school. All implementation activities were based on the selected C4G learning scenarios and instructions for students and assumed independent work of students under the guidance of their teachers in virtual classrooms.

Using developed data collection tools, teachers' and students' attitudes, observations and comments regarding the game-based C4G methodology for building programming skills were collected. In addition, external experts (N_E =3) were included in the validation of the approach.

Results showed that students accepted the game-based C4G methodology. Conducted activities enabled them to develop their programming skills in a fun way. Students were motivated to learn programming using tasks that included solving real-life problems. Teachers, students – future teachers, and experts consider this approach as relevant and effective way of acquiring programming skills that is applicable and appropriate for the students aged 10 to 16 years. They also confirmed effectiveness of support tools used in the instructional process. Based on the performed C4G implementation and validation activities in Croatia, it can be concluded that with the help of the developed materials and guidance from teachers, students can achieve learning objectives also in the online environment. In order for the approach to be applied online, it would be useful to allow students to create programs using Scratch. In this way, the technical problems that students encountered when using Snap! on tablets could be avoided.

4





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IMPLEMENTATION

Introductory workshops

In line with the C4G validation strategy, implementation of the game-based C4G approach in Croatia started with workshops for teachers and experts who agreed to take part in the implementation and validation activities (Figure 1).

Introductory workshops were organized at the University of Rijeka, Department of Informatics (UNIRI) on 21th of February and 2nd of March 2020. During the workshops, project members presented the information about the CODING4GIRLS project and approach for building programming skills. Details regarding the protocol for implementation and the validation of the approach in the Croatian schools have been agreed. The teachers and experts were also provided with all the necessary contents and tools.



Figure 1 - Introductory workshop with teachers and experts at UNIRI

Data collection tools

During the validation of C4G approach, all the data collection tools provided in the C4G validation strategy were used:

- S1 Preliminary questionnaire (for students)
- S2 Follow-up questionnaire (for students)
- S3 Student's comments
- T1 Teacher's observations
- T2 Teacher's comments
- E Expert's comments





The data collection tools were before validation activities translated into the Croatian language.

Questionnaires S1 and S2 were created using Google Forms while data collection tools S3, T1, T2, and E for teachers and experts were prepared as Word documents in which they could write observations and comments.

Materials

During the implementation, learning scenarios and instructions for students that were developed by the project partners were used. Unfortunately, developed 3D game environment was not used since it should be used in computer classroom in schools and the implementation activities were carried out online.

In collaboration with the teachers and experts, the following subset of C4G learning scenarios with mini-projects (serious games) was selected to be used in schools:

- 1. Introduction to Snap! interface
- 2. Time to bring your sprite to life
- 3. Cameleon's summer vacation
- 4. Picking up the trash
- 5. Buying food for a picnic
- 6. Recycling
- 7. Simplified PACMAN game.

This subset covers the basic programming concepts that are in the focus of the C4G approach (loops, conditionals, variables, statements, operators, events, parallelism). Each learning scenario enable students to learn one or multiple programming concepts by creating a game that addresses real-world problem. To further motivate girls to learn programming, the topics of real-world problems are chosen to be attractive to girls. All resourced were translated into the Croatian language prior to implementation.

The implementation approach was adapted for online learning so teachers prepared additional learning materials with instructions and tasks for C4G activities in order to support student's independent work (e.g. <u>Learning programming in Snap!</u>, shown on Figure 2).

7







Figure 2 – Thinglink interactive learning material "Learning programming in Snap!"

Video tutorials were also recorded and published on YouTube (Figure 3) with the aim of making it easier for students to work independently in online environment. For example, sets of videos were prepared to introduce students with the tool (<u>Introduction to Snap!</u>) or to help them with the development of the projects included in the learning scenarios (Picking up the trash, Recycling).



Figure 3 – A set of video tutorials for the learning scenario "Picking up the trash"





Setup model and procedure

Sessions for building programming skills using the C4G approach were organized as a part of regular teaching of subject Informatics in primary school that was at that time carried out in online learning environments due to COVID-19 pandemic. Implementation activities were conducted in 5th and 6th grade where the subject Informatics is compulsory and in 7th and 8th grade of primary where the subject is optional.

Depending on the teacher, implementation activities took place during 6-8 weeks between March and June 2020. Students were expected to dedicate 4 hours of independent work per week. Teachers delivered learning materials to students using virtual classrooms (created with Microsoft Teams, Edmodo or similar tools).

Teachers first organized sessions in order to introduce coding concepts. Students could practice those concepts using exercises and then they were expected to create a serious game using the learnt coding concepts. During the sessions, teachers provided guidance and help to the students with the given tasks. At the end of each session, students could present their games and experiences to peers and participate in de-briefing in the virtual classroom. At the beginning of the implementation in schools, students answered the preliminary questionnaire (S1). After the implementation, in the last session, students answered the follow-up questionnaire (S2) about their perception and views on the C4G learning approach. They were required to write the anonymised code received from the teacher to ensure comparison of results regarding the self-assessment of their programming skill. Teachers collected students' qualitative opinions and comments through a group discussion in virtual classrooms (S3).

Teachers also reported the reaction of students and their progress in building coding skills using the game-based C4G approach (T1) and their own views related to the relevance and effectiveness of the CODING4GIRLS game-based learning approach for building programming skills (T2).

To further improve project outputs and ensure that they meet the needs of learners and teachers, the game-based C4G approach for building programming skills views related to the relevance and effectiveness of the CODING4GIRLS game-based learning approach were collected from external experts (E). Experts were given access to project documentation and results as well as to contents created during the implementation.

9





Participants

The project team at UNIRI includes researchers and teachers (N_{PT} =4) in the field of game-based learning, programming, didactics of informatics, and e-learning. All of them were actively involved in the preparation of the implementation and validation activities, including selection of teachers and experts to participate in the study.

Direct participant of the study were teachers of informatics ($N_T=8$) from 7 primary schools in Rijeka, Croatia together with their students ($N_S=773$). All the selected teachers have years of experience in teaching informatics and they are mentors in informatics for students – future teachers of informatics from UNIRI during the teaching practice in informatics. Students – future teachers of informatics ($N_{ST}=35$) who are in the final year of study and therefore obliged to attend a teaching practice in informatics were also included in the implementation activities. Many of them will start working in schools next school year and will be able to apply the C4G approach with their students. Depending on the number of classes and students, each teacher - mentor was assigned with 3 to 6 students - future teachers who helped to prepare and conduct the C4G activities under mentor's supervision.

The C4G approach for building programming skills was applied in 38 mixed-gender classes and involved a total of 773 students aged from 11 to 15 years (5th to 8th grade of primary school). The subject Informatics is compulsory for 5th and 6th grade students while for 7th and 8th grade students the subject is optional. Table 1 shows number of students – participants of the study by age/grade. The number of students in the classes ranged from 13 to 28 while the average number of students in one class was 20. The most students were from 6th grade (Figure 4).

Years of age	Grade	Classes	Number of students
11-12	5	9	191
12-13	6	14	308
13-14	7	8	146
14-15	8	7	128
	Total	38	773

Table 1 - Number of students by age/grade





Number of students



Figure 4 – Number of students by grade

Three external experts (N_E=3) were chosen for the validation activities based on their expertise. Two of them are university professors and researchers, one in the field of teacher education and the other in the fields of computer science and teaching programming. Third expert is a teacher advisor for informatics who works in a primary school.

RESULTS

Results of questionnaires for students

Two questionnaires for students were used: preliminary questionnaire about the use of digital devices and perceived level of programming and the follow-up questionnaire about satisfaction with programming and coding activities, satisfaction with the organization of the implementation, and perception on the acquired coding skills.

In both questionnaires students were asked to self-assess their current level of programming skill. Based on this question, the difference between students' self-assessed initial and final level of programming skill was calculated (the answers from the questionnaires were paired based on the code that students have entered).

A total of 569 students (73.61% of students who participated in C4G activities) solved preliminary questionnaire. A total of 424 students (54.85%) solved the follow-up questionnaire. Self-assessment results were compared only for students who solved both questionnaires - 347 students (44.89%).





S1 - Preliminary questionnaire

A total of 569 students solved the preliminary questionnaire about the use of digital devices and perceived level of programming. The mean age of students was 12.31 years (SD=1,024). Table 2 shows number of students who solved S1 by gender and grade. The number of girls and boys who responded is approximately equal (Figure 5).

Table 2 - Number of students who solved S1 - Preliminary questionnaire by gender and grade

	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	Total
Boys	68	111	57	47	283
Girls	74	121	52	39	286
Total	142	232	109	86	569
Response rate	74.35%	75.32%	74.66%	67.72%	73.61%





Table 3 shows descriptive statistical analysis of participants' responses to the questions related to the use of digital devices, the internet and video-games. It is worth noting the values of the standard deviation, which for some questions indicates larger deviances from the average values. The comparison of the overall average results by gender (Figure 6) shows that boys and girls have been using digital devices for the same length of time. However, on a weekly basis, boys use digital devices and the Internet more and spend significantly more time playing games.





Table 3 - The use of digital devices	, the internet and video-gan	ies by gender
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Qu	estion		Ν	Min	Max	Mean	SD
1	For how long have you been using computers, tablets or	Boys	283	1	12	6.237	2.055
1.	For now long nave you been using computers, tablets or	Girls	286	0	14	5.767	1.882
	other digital devices (in years)?	Total	569	0	14	6.001	1.982
2	2. How many hours per week do you use a computer, tablet or	Boys	283	1	168	19.834	19.637
Ζ.		Girls	281	0	168	16.196	19.419
	other digital device?			0	168	18.021	19.596
		Boys	282	1	140	21.603	21.315
3.	How many hours per week do you use the Internet?	Girls	277	0	168	17.643	19.502
		Total	559	0	168	19.611	20.517
		Boys	282	0	62	11.261	10.803
4.	How many hours per week do you play video games?	Girls	284	0	35	2.905	4.922
		Total	565	0	62	7.075	9.367





Figure 6 - The use of digital devices, the internet and video-games – comparison by gender

The average values show that students spend a little more time on the Internet than using digital devices. It can be assumed that such numbers are results of misconceptions. For example, some students may think that using their smartphone to access the Internet does not count.

By comparing the data by grade (Table 4) it can be noticed that 5^{th} and 6^{th} grade students use digital devices and the Internet less than 7^{th} and 8^{th} grade students. Analysis of individual responses shows that some 7^{th} and 8^{th} grade students reported very high values (e.g., 100 hours per week for the use of Internet) which affected these average results.





Qu	estion		5 th grade	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
1.	For how long have you been using	Boys	5.279	6.000	7.000	7.255
	computers, tablets or other digital devices	Girls	4.804	5.876	6.192	6.692
	(in years)?	Total	5.032	5.935	6.615	7.000
2	 How many hours per week do you use a computer, tablet or other digital device? 		18.426	15.324	24.035	27.426
Ζ.			12.528	14.819	18.250	24.333
			15.414	15.063	21.275	26.023
2	How many hours nor work do you use the	Boys	18.537	18.261	26.105	28.404
3.	now many nours per week do you use the	Girls	12.522	15.534	22.510	26.487
internet?		Total	15.485	16.798	24.390	27.535
4	How many hours not wook do you play	Boys	10.828	8.833	12.412	16.213
4.	now many nours per week do you play	Girls	2.603	3.213	2.981	2.410
		Total	6.586	5.914	7.913	9.953

Table 4 - The use of digital devices, the internet and video-games by grade and gender

The participants (N=569, 283 boys, 286 girls) self-assessed the level of their programming skills on the scale from 0 - I have never coded or programmed before to 4 - I can design a solution of a problem in the form of a program. Results are shown in the Table 5. Most of the students stated for themselves that they are at level 1 - novice programmers (33.39%) or on level 2 - can code simple programs (32.51%). If we compare these results by gender (Figure 7), it can be seen that the boys prevail among the students that self-assess their level of programming with the levels 3 and 4.

Table 5 - Self-assessment of programming skills by gender

Level of programming skills	Boys	Girls	Total
0 - I have never coded or programmed before	9.54%	7.34%	8.44%
1 - I am a novice programmer (just have basic ideas)	31.45%	35.31%	33.39%
2 - I can code simple programs	29.68%	35.31%	32.51%
3 - I am fluent in programming (can create a full program)	23.32%	17.48%	20.39%
4 - I can design a solution of a problem in the form of a program	6.01%	4.56%	5.27%



Self-assessment of programming skills

Figure 7 - Self-assessment of programming skills – comparison by gender





The analysis by grades (Table 6) shows that the largest number of students who have never coded (level 0) is from the 5^{th} grade, as expected. In 6^{th} , 7^{th} and 8^{th} grade most of the students stated that they can code simple programs (level 2).

Level of programming skills		5 th grade	6 ^m grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
0 Librus never coded or	Boys	19.12%	6.31%	10.53%	2.13%
programmed before	Girls	20.27%	2.48%	3.85%	2.56%
programmed before	Total	19.72%	4.31%	7.34%	2.33%
1 Lama povico programmor	Boys	41.18%	26.13%	26.32%	36.17%
(just have basis ideas)	Girls	45.95%	32.23%	30.77%	30.77%
(Just have basic ideas)	Total	43.66%	29.31%	28.44%	33.72%
	Boys	23.53%	32.43%	35.09%	25.53%
2 - I can code simple programs	Girls	20.27%	38.02%	44.23%	43.59%
	Total	21.83%	35.34%	39.45%	33.72%
2 Low fluent in programming	Boys	13.24%	25.23%	24.56%	31.91%
(can croate a full program)	Girls	9.46%	23.14%	15.38%	17.95%
(can create a fun program)	Total	11.27%	24.14%	20.18%	25.58%
4 Lean design a solution of a	Boys	2.94%	9.91%	3.51%	4.26%
4 - I call design a solution of a	Girls	4.05%	4.13%	5.77%	5.13%
	Total	3.52%	6.90%	4.59%	4.65%

Table 6 - Self-assessment of programming skills by grade and gender

In the preliminary questionnaire the participants also stated which programming concepts are they familiar with. The results (Table 7) show that students are mostly familiar with the *statements* (72.23%) and *loops* (61.51%) while they are the least familiar with the *operators* (12.48%) and *parallelism* (2.28%). According to the results, there is no major difference in familiarity of programming concepts between the genders (Figure 8). The largest difference in percentages can be observed for the concept *operators*.

Table 7 - Familiarity with the programming concepts

Concept	Boys	Girls	Total
Loops	60.78%	62.24%	61.51%
Conditionals	47.70%	46.50%	47.10%
Variables	51.24%	46.85%	49.03%
Statements (sounds, movement, looks, drawing)	71.38%	73.08%	72.23%
Operators	15.55%	9.44%	12.48%
Events	38.52%	36.01%	37.26%
Parallelism	1.77%	2.80%	2.28%





Familiarity with the programming concepts



Figure 8 - Familiarity with the programming concepts – comparison by gender

Comparison of the results by grade and gender (Table 8) shows that 5th graders are at least familiar with all the concepts.

					,
Table 8 - Familiarit	y with the	programming	concepts by	/ grade and	gender

Concept		5 th grade	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
	Boys	39.71%	64.86%	68.42%	72.34%
Loops	Girls	39.19%	71.07%	71.15%	66.67%
	Total	39.44%	68.10%	69.72%	69.77%
	Boys	26.47%	45.95%	61.40%	65.96%
Conditionals	Girls	25.68%	47.93%	63.46%	58.97%
	Total	26.06%	46.98%	62.39%	62.79%
	Boys	16.18%	49.55%	73.68%	78.72%
Variables	Girls	13.51%	45.45%	78.85%	71.79%
	Total	14.79%	47.41%	76.15%	75.58%
	Boys	63.24%	73.87%	70.18%	78.72%
Statements (sounds,	Girls	62.16%	75.21%	82.69%	74.36%
movement, iooks, drawing)	Total	62.68%	74.57%	76.15%	76.74%
	Boys	11.76%	11.71%	17.54%	27.66%
Operators	Girls	9.46%	7.44%	9.62%	15.38%
	Total	10.56%	9.48%	13.76%	22.09%
	Boys	26.47%	45.05%	45.61%	31.91%
Events	Girls	22.97%	40.50%	48.08%	30.77%
	Total	24.65%	42.67%	46.79%	31.40%
	Boys	0.00%	1.80%	0.00%	6.38%
Parallelism	Girls	2.70%	2.48%	0.00%	7.69%
	Total	1.41%	2.16%	0.00%	6.98%





For some of the concepts (*loops, statements*), the results for 6th, 7th and 8th grade students do not differ, while for some (more advanced) concepts (*conditionals, variables, operators*) there is an increase in the level of familiarity. As in the case of overall results, there are no major gender differences in the familiarity with the programming concepts except of concept *operators*.

Table 9 shows students' responses about what motivates them to learn to program (students could choose one or more responses). The most of the students are motivated by a success in the programming class (60.63%). Comparison by gender (Figure 9) shows that this factor motivates girls (70.98%) to a greater extent than boys (50.18%). Also, remarkably more boys want to follow career in programming.

Table 9 - Motivation for learning programming

Response	Boys	Girls	Total
I'm not motivated	17.31%	15.38%	16.34%
I want to succeed in the programming class	50.18%	70.98%	60.63%
I want to show other students I can program	10.95%	8.04%	9.49%
I want to follow a career in programming	22.97%	5.24%	14.06%
I enjoy solving logic problems and puzzles	24.38%	19.58%	21.97%

Motivation for learning programming



Figure 9 - Motivation for learning programming – Comparison by gender

Comparison by grade (Table 10) show that 6th graders are the most motivated, especially by wanting to succeed in the programming class. They also enjoy solving logic problems and puzzles more than students from other grades (particularly boys).





Statement		5 th grade	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
	Boys	17.65%	13.51%	24.56%	17.02%
I'm not motivated	Girls	17.57%	8.26%	19.23%	28.21%
	ated $Girls$ 1 Total 1 eed in the class Girls 6 Total 5 v other students I can 6 Girls 9 Boys 4 Girls 6 Total 5 Boys 9 Girls 9 Girls 9	17.61%	10.78%	22.02%	22.09%
	Boys	42.65%	53.15%	49.12%	55.32%
I want to succeed in the	Girls	62.16%	80.99%	67.31%	61.54%
	Total	52.82%	67.67%	57.80%	58.14%
	Boys	8.82%	11.71%	10.53%	12.77%
I want to snow other students I can	Girls	9.46%	9.09%	7.69%	2.56%
program	Total	9.15%	10.34%	9.17%	8.14%
	Boys	29.41%	20.72%	22.81%	19.15%
I want to follow a career in	Girls	4.05%	7.44%	1.92%	5.13%
programming	Total	16.20%	13.79%	12.84%	12.79%
	Boys	23.53%	30.63%	15.79%	21.28%
i erijoy solving logic problems and	Girls	20.27%	22.31%	19.23%	10.26%
puzzies	Total	21.83%	26.29%	17.43%	16.28%

Table 10 - Motivation for learning programming by grade and gender

Besides choosing among the offered responses, students had the opportunity to write everything else that motivates them to learn to program. Among the answers, they stated: "It's fun", "I'm interested in making programs or games", "I want to learn how to make my own game", "I want to learn something new", "I want to acquire new skills", and "I'm motivated by my uncle who also programs".

S2 – Follow-up questionnaire

A total of 424 students solved the follow-up questionnaire about satisfaction with programming and coding activities, satisfaction with the organization of the implementation, and perception on the acquired coding skills. The mean age of students was 12.25 years (SD=1,047). Table 11 shows number of students who solved S2 by gender and grades. The number of girls and boys who responded is approximately equal in all grades except in the 8th grade (Figure 10).

Table 11 - Number of students who solved S2 - Follow-up questionnaire by gender and grades

	5 th grade	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade	Total
Boys	72	78	31	35	225
Girls	67	79	30	23	199
Total	139	166	61	58	442
Response rate	72.77%	53.9%	41.78%	45.31%	54.85%







Figure 10 - Distribution of students who solved S2 - Follow-up questionnaire by gender and grades

In the follow-up questionnaire, students expressed their attitudes regarding the C4G learning methodology and the implementation of activities using the 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree). According to the results (Table 12), both boys and girls felt engaged with this way of learning and think that conducted activities were relevant for learning programming. They understood presented concepts and had fun during conducted activities. Boys enjoyed programming to a slightly greater extent and think that things they have learned will be relevant for their future.

Sta	atement		1	2	3	4	5	AVG	SD
1.	I found programming	Boys	9.78%	25.33%	31.12%	24.44%	9.33%	2.982	1.126
	challenging.	Girls	4.02%	23.12%	33.16%	31.16%	8.54%	3.171	1.011
		Total	7.08%	24.29%	32.08%	27.59%	8.96%	3.071	1.076
2.	I found programming	Boys	2.67%	9.78%	18.22%	46.67%	22.66%	3.769	.995
	motivating.	Girls	6.03%	13.57%	21.61%	41.2%	17.59%	3.508	1.114
		Total	2.24%	11.56%	19.81%	44.11%	20.28%	3.646	1.06
3.	I found programming	Boys	12.44%	28.44%	29.78%	20.44%	8.9%	2.849	1.151
	easy.	Girls	14.07%	30.65%	32.67%	18.59%	4.02%	2.678	1.057
		Total	13.21%	29.48%	31.13%	19.58%	6.6%	2.769	1.11
4.	I enjoyed programming.	Boys	3.55%	7.56%	19.56%	28.89%	40.44%	3.951	1.107
		Girls	6.02%	11.06%	21.61%	33.67%	27.64%	3.658	1.169
		Total	4.72%	9.2%	20.52%	31.13%	34.43%	3.814	1.145
5.	I understood most of	Boys	3.11%	7.56%	13.78%	48.88%	26.67%	3.884	.989
	programming concepts.	Girls	4.53%	8.04%	20.6%	38.19%	28.64%	3.784	1.086
		Total	3.77%	7.78%	16.98%	43.88%	27.59%	3.837	1.036
6.	Learning this way is fun.	Boys	4%	8.89%	15.11%	38.67%	33.33%	3.884	1.092
		Girls	4.02%	9.05%	21.61%	29.65%	35.68%	3.839	1.13
		Total	4%	8.96%	18.16%	34.42%	34.42%	3.863	1.109

Table 12 –	Satisfaction	with C4G	learning	methodology





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7.	I felt engaged with this	Boys	1.33%	6.67%	7.56%	35.11%	49.33%	4.244	.949
	way of learning.	Girls	2.51%	5.02%	9.55%	29.15%	53.77%	4.266	.997
		Total	1.88%	5.9%	8.49%	32.31%	51.42%	4.255	.971
8.	The activities were	Boys	1.33%	4.89%	7.56%	40.89%	45.33%	4.24	.889
	relevant to learn.	Girls	3.01%	3.52%	13.57%	36.68%	43.22%	4.136	.983
		Total	2.12%	4.25%	10.37%	38.92%	44.34%	4.191	.935
9.	At any time, it was clear	Boys	3.56%	11.56%	19.56%	35.11%	30.22%	3.769	1.11
	what I had to do.	Girls	5.03%	16.58%	29.14%	28.14%	21.11%	3.437	1.144
		Total	4.25%	13.92%	24.06%	31.84%	25.94%	3.613	1.137
10.	What I learned will be	Boys	3.11%	4.89%	16.89%	36%	39.11%	4.031	1.019
	relevant for my future.	Girls	5.03%	7.03%	22.11%	37.69%	28.14%	3.769	1.09
		Total	4%	5.9%	19.34%	36.79%	33.96%	3.908	1.06

The participants again self-assessed the level of their programming skills on the scale from 0 - I have never coded or programmed before to 4 - I can design a solution of a problem in the form of a program. A total of 347 students (179 boys, 168 girls) solved the preliminary and the follow-up questionnaire so their self-assessment results were compared. Table 13 shows data on the difference between the self-assessed initial level and the self-assessed final level of programming skill. Over 40% of students stated that they have progressed, the most of them for 1 level (29.39%). Almost 5% of students self-assessed their programming skill level higher before participating in C4G activities. The analysis showed that most of them were students who initially self-assessed their skill with level 3 or 4. It can be assumed that these students were not able to self-assess their programming skill realistically before the C4G activities. Comparison by gender shows that slightly fewer girls remained at the same level of programming skill than boys (difference is 0). Also, slightly more girls progressed by one level than boys (difference is 1). For other values (differences), the results are approximately the same.

	Difference						
	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Boys	0.56%	3.91%	55.31%	25.70%	11.73%	2.23%	0.56%
Girls	0.60%	4.76%	48.81%	33.33%	9.52%	2.98%	0%
Total	0.58%	4.32%	52.16%	29.39%	10.66%	2.59%	0.29%

Tahle 13 - 1	The difference	hetween the	e self-assessed	levels of	nroarammina	skill
	ine unjjerence	between the	c selj ussesseu i		programming	38.111

A Wilcoxon's signed rank test for paired samples showed that students self-assessed their programming skill significantly higher after the C4G activities compared to self-





assessment before the C4G activities (Table 14). The results of rank-biserial correlation (rB), which are considered as an effect size, show large effect size, overall and by gender.

			Desc	riptive s	tatistics		Wilcoxor	n's signed ra	nk test results
		Ν	MIN	MAX	MEAN	SD	W	р	Effect size (rB)
Boys	S1	181	0	4	1.878	1.068	3112 5	< 001	<u>820</u>
	S2	181	1	4	2.403	.982	5112.5	< .001	.829
Girls	S1	166	0	5	1.825	1.015	2169	< 001	010
	S2	166	1	4	2.380	.938	2109	< .001	810.
Total	S1	347	0	4	1.850	1.034	12702	< 001	022
	S2	347	1	4	2.392	.960	12/02	100. >	.035

Table 14 - Comparison of self-assessment of programming skill

Students' comments

In their comments after the implementation activities, the students stated that they are very happy with this way of learning, think that they have learned a lot, and feel like real developers because they created their games. During the implementation of C4G approach, they could hardly wait for every new task and new project. They were very satisfied with the received materials. This way of learning was very fun and they can't wait for more tasks like these.

Students who are familiar with the programming language Scratch stated that they would like to use it instead of the Snap!. Students prefer Scratch because it has more features and works very well on tablets while with Snap! students who used tablets had technical difficulties.

Teachers' observations and comments

After the implementation activities, teachers and students – future teachers were asked to express their qualitative opinions about the C4G methodology and the implementation process using the forms T1 and T2.

Teachers' observations

Using the form T1, teachers (N_T =8) and students – future teachers (N_{ST} =35) reported on students' participation and engagement as well as learning difficulties and problems.

All of them stated that the students were interested and actively participated in the activities. Most of the student successfully completed all the tasks with the help of prepared materials. Video tutorials were especially useful to them. The students' projects selected by the teachers were published in the collection <u>C4G Croatia</u> in Snap! cloud (Figure 11).







Figure 11 – Snap! collection "C4G Croatia"

Students collaborated in virtual classroom and were happy to answer each other's questions about the problems they encountered. However, teachers think that due to the specifics of online learning students were not able to collaborate to the extent that collaboration would be achieved in regular classes.

Due to technical limitations, some students were slower in completing assignments. Students working on tablets had problems with the Snap! since the tool did not work right and fast enough. Students had problems with adding costumes to sprites and with occasional freezing of its interface. The students who were creating projects on desktop computers or laptops had no problems. The teachers suggested programming language Scratch as a replacement since there is a mobile application that works well on tablets.

Teachers' comments

Using the form T2, teachers (N_T =8) and students – future teachers (N_{ST} =35) reported on accomplishment of learning objectives, relevance, effectiveness and acceptance of the proposed methodology by the students, and the overall organization of the implementation.

The opinion of the teachers is that game-based learning is fun for students. They are motivated to solve tasks (problems) which makes this way of learning effective for learning programming. All teachers stated that the learning objectives were fully achieved by the students during the C4G activities.

According to teachers, the students fully accepted the C4G methodology. The topics of the projects were very interesting to them and most of students enjoyed using newly acquired programming knowledge to create games. C4G projects had a positive effect on





their desire and motivation to eliminate all mistakes. Students persisted until they reached the set goal - a game they could play.

Since the C4G activities were conducted online, the insight regarding achieved fun by the students could not be complete, but teachers stated that it is evident from the communication with the students that the students had fun and were looking forward to gaining new knowledge using the C4G methodology.

Regarding the overall organization of the implementation, teachers reported that it was fully aligned to the teaching needs (achievement of the outcomes related to programming). Created materials for implementation of C4G activities are comprehensive and clear. During the implementation, logistical support from project team members was efficient and available at any time.

Teachers also agree that the C4G game-based, design thinking educational framework is applicable in future work. Learning scenarios with projects that need to be developed in Snap! are appropriate to the age of students. Teachers who participated in the implementation activities plan to use them in their future work. Teachers also believe that a design thinking approach in combination with game-based learning can be used not only for development of programming skills but also to enhance students' creative potential which can result in some new ideas and solutions.

Experts' comments

External validators - experts (N_E =3) were also asked to give their qualitative opinions regarding the accomplishment of learning objectives by the students, relevance, effectiveness and acceptance of the proposed methodology by the students, and the overall organization of the implementation.

All three experts agreed that for developing basic programming skills in among students from 10-16 years, the C4G methodology is very suitable. Snap! programming interface allow students to create interactive stories and games which is fun and stimulating for them. The advantage of coding using blocks is that students of that age do not need to learn the programming syntax because this negatively affects students' motivation to learn programming (they usually forget the syntax very quickly).

23





They stressed out that the C4G approach assumes solving real-life problems which is interesting to students, especially girls. In programming classes, mathematical tasks are very common (e.g. calculating the range, area of a square, rectangle or currency conversion and the like), which further demotivates students for learning programming. According to the experts, projects in C4G learning scenarios are well designed and enable accomplishment of learning objectives. The projects stimulate students to be creative and enable them to learn in a fun way by creating games. Topics included in the projects are interesting to the girls and motivate them to solve the given problem using newly acquired programming knowledge. At the same time, topics are interesting to boys as well.

According to experts' opinion, C4G design thinking educational framework is effective and applicable for teaching programming to girls as well as boys. Due to observed technical problems with Snap!, experts suggest that its further development include also possibility of learning programming using Scratch.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the preliminary questionnaire (S1) showed that students of both genders use the Internet and digital devices, on average a couple of hours a day, and have 5 to 6 years of experience in their use. This shows that the students had the appropriate digital skills necessary for the implementation of the C4G approach. The large number of hours that some students spend per week using digital devices and the Internet is partly conditioned by the online teaching that was conducted during this study because students were expected to study teaching materials, create assignments, and communicate with teachers in virtual classrooms. Results also showed that students play video games and that boys spend significantly more time playing them than girls. This indicates that game-based activities, such as those designed within the C4G approach, should be tailored to interests of the girls to keep the girls motivated.

Results of the preliminary questionnaire also indicated that younger students, especially 6th graders, are more motivated for learning programming than 7th and 8th grade students, even though for 7th and 8th grade students the subject Informatics is not compulsory, but optional. In general, students are mostly motivated by success in the programming class (girls to a greater extent that boys). Students (especially 6th graders) are

24





motivated by the fact that they enjoy solving problems and puzzles and because creating their own games is fun for them. This confirms that the C4G methodology which includes creating games for solving real-life problems is appropriate for the target group of students. According to the results, boys (especially 5th graders) are further motivated by the desire to become programmers while girls are very little motivated by this factor. This shows that girls are less interested to follow a career in programming so they need to be motivated by approaches like C4G.

In the initial self-assessment of their programming skills, the most of the students stated that they are novice programmer s (level 1) or that they can code simple programs (level 2). This is confirmed by the results regarding the familiarity with programming concepts which showed that most students are familiar only with basic concepts such as statements and loops. Some students attend the subject Informatics for several years but do not consider that they have developed programming skills. The reason for this may be that they find programming difficult and are not interested in learning.

After the implementation activities, teachers and student teachers reported that conducted activities enable students to achieve learning outcomes and at the same time had fun. Teachers think that creating games is a very effective way for students to learn programing concepts and they plan to apply the C4G methodology in the future as well. They observed that C4G approach encouraged creativity and problem solving and students were motivated to complete the project (their own game) to the end. The external experts who participated in the validation activities agreed with these observations and support the application of game-based learning approach using visual programming tools for learning programming. They emphasized the good choice of topics of the projects included in the learning scenarios which are interesting to girls and encouraged them to apply their programming knowledge.

Results of the comparison of self-assessment confirmed the effectiveness of implemented activities for learning programming. Students self-assessed their programming skill significantly higher after the C4G activities compared to self-assessment before the C4G activities (large effect size is present for overall results and results grouped by gender).

Students' attitudes regarding the C4G methodology, expressed in the follow-up questionnaire, shown that they consider the approach relevant for learning programming





and that they had fun and enjoyed programming which also supports the validation of the C4G approach. Student qualitative feedback was also very positive. They expressed their satisfaction with the approach and acquired skills but many of them stated that they would prefer to use Scratch over Snap!. This is not surprising since Scratch is the widely used tool for visual programming in Croatian schools so many students are used to it. In addition, students who used tablets experienced technical problems.

In conclusion, the C4G methodology is appropriate for students who are 10 - 16 years old and enable the achievement of learning outcomes in an effective and fun way. Additionally, the approach has proven applicable in an online environment. Regarding the possible improvements, the main problem were technical difficulties encountered by students who used Snap! on tablets, so the next version of the C4G methodology should include the possibility of using Scratch instead of Snap!.



ANNEXES



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union





S1. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS (in Croatian)

S1. UVODNI UPITNIK ZA UČENIKE

Ovo je preliminarni upitnik o korištenju digitalnih uređaja i iskustva s programiranjem koji se provodi u okviru projekta CODING4GIRLS. Cilj projekta je poticanje razvoja vještina programiranja korištenjem obrazovnih igara.

Tvoji odgovori će biti **anonimni** i korišteni samo u svrhu istraživanja. Hvala na suradnji! Za početak, **upiši kôd** koji si dobio/dobila od učitelja/učiteljice.

KOD I OSNOVNE INFORMACIJE

Kô	d:	Škola:	
Go	odine:	Razred:	
Sp	ol: M Ž		
КС	RIŠTENJE DIGITALNIH UREĐA	JA, INTERNETA I VIDEO IGA	ARA
1.	Koliko godina koristiš računal uređaje?	a, tablete i ostale digitalne	godina
2.	Koliko sati tjedno koristiš rači digitalni uređaj?	unalo, tablet ili neki drugi	sati
3.	Koliko sati tjedno koristiš Inte	ernet?	sati
4.	Koliko sati tjedno igraš video	igre?	sati
ISł	(USTVO S PROGRAMIRANJEM	l	
5.	Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i>	íi jedan odgovor.
5.	Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta a) Nisam nikad programirao	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> ɔ/programirala	íi jedan odgovor.
5.	Koliko si trenutno vješt/vještaa) Nisam nikad programiradb) Početnik/početnica sam	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> ɔ/programirala (imam samo osnovna znanj	íi jedan odgovor. ja)
5.	 Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta a) Nisam nikad programirad b) Početnik/početnica sam c) Mogu izraditi samo jedno 	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> ɔ/programirala (imam samo osnovna znanj ɔstavne programe	íi jedan odgovor. ja)
5.	 Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta a) Nisam nikad programirad b) Početnik/početnica sam c) Mogu izraditi samo jedno d) Mogu izraditi i nešto slož 	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> o/programirala (imam samo osnovna znanj ostavne programe ženije programe	íi jedan odgovor. ja)
5.	 Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta a) Nisam nikad programirad b) Početnik/početnica sam c) Mogu izraditi samo jedno d) Mogu izraditi i nešto slož e) Mogu izraditi program ko 	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> o/programirala (imam samo osnovna znanj ostavne programe ćenije programe ojim će se riješiti zadani pro	íi jedan odgovor. ja) oblem
5.	 Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta a) Nisam nikad programirad b) Početnik/početnica sam c) Mogu izraditi samo jedno d) Mogu izraditi i nešto slož e) Mogu izraditi program ko 	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> o/programirala (imam samo osnovna znanj ostavne programe ćenije programe ojim će se riješiti zadani pro ʿamiranjem, koji su ti od nav	ii jedan odgovor. ja) oblem vedenih koncepata poznati?
5.	 Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta a) Nisam nikad programirad b) Početnik/početnica sam c) Mogu izraditi samo jedno d) Mogu izraditi i nešto slož e) Mogu izraditi program ko 	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> o/programirala (imam samo osnovna znanj ostavne programe ćenije programe ojim će se riješiti zadani pro ^r amiranjem, koji su ti od nav odgovora.	ii jedan odgovor. ja) oblem vedenih koncepata poznati?
5.	 Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta a) Nisam nikad programirad b) Početnik/početnica sam c) Mogu izraditi samo jedno d) Mogu izraditi i nešto slož e) Mogu izraditi program ko 	a u programiranju? <i>Zaokruž</i> o/programirala (imam samo osnovna znanj ostavne programe ćenije programe ojim će se riješiti zadani pro ^r amiranjem, koji su ti od nav odgovora.	ii jedan odgovor. ja) oblem vedenih koncepata poznati?

□ Naredbe za kretanje i izgled likova, crtanje, zvukove





- 7. Što te motivira na učenje programiranja? Označi kvačicom jedan ili više odgovora.
 - □ Nisam motiviran/motivirana
 - Zelim uspješno savladati nastavno gradivo vezano za programiranje
 - □ Želim pokazati drugim učenicima da znam programirati
 - U budućnosti želim raditi kao programer/programerka
 - Uživam rješavati logičke zadatke
 - Nešto drugo: _





S2. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS (in Croatian)

S2. ZAVRŠNI UPITNIK ZA UČENIKE

Ovo je upitnik o zadovoljstvu s učenjem prema projektu CODING4GIRLS i aktivnostima koje su provedene za razvoj vještina programiranja. Tvoji odgovori će biti **anonimni** i korišteni samo u svrhu istraživanja. Hvala na suradnji!

Za početak, **upiši kôd** koji si dobio/dobila od učitelja/učiteljice (to je isti kôd kao i za uvodni upitnik).

ко	D I OSNOVNE INFORMACIJE					
Kô	d:	Škola:				
Go	dine:	Razred:				
Spo	ol: M Ž					
C40	G METODOLOGIJA					
8.	Izrazi mišljenje o sljedećim tvrdnjama:	Uopće se ne slažem	Ne slažem se	Niti se slažem, niti se ne slažem	Slažem se	U potpunosti se slažem
a)	Smatram da je programiranje zahtjevno.	1	2	3	4	5
b)) Smatram da je programiranje motivirajuće.	1	2	3	4	5
c)	Smatram da je programiranje jednostavno.	1	2	3	4	5
d)) Uživao/uživala sam u programiranju.	1	2	3	4	5
e)	Razumijem većinu prezentiranih koncepata iz programiranja.	1	2	3	4	5
f)	Smatram da je učenje na ovaj način zabavno.	1	2	3	4	5
g)	Aktivno sam sudjelovao/sudjelovala tijekom ovakvog načina učenja.	1	2	3	4	5
h)) Aktivnosti u kojima sam sudjelovao/sudjelovala su bile prikladne za učenje programiranja.	1	2	3	4	5
i)	Uvijek mi je bilo jasno što trebam raditi.	1	2	3	4	5
j)	Naučeno će mi koristiti u budućnosti.	1	2	3	4	5
ISK	USTVO S PROGRAMIRANJEM					
9.	Koliko si trenutno vješt/vješta u programiranju?	? Zaokruži je	edan odgov	or.		
	a) Nisam nikad programirao/programirala					
	b) Početnik/početnica sam (imam samo osnov	vna znanja)				
	c) Mogu izraditi samo jednostavne programe					
	d) Mogu izraditi i nešto složenije programe					

e) Mogu izraditi program kojim će se riješiti zadani problem





S3. STUDENT'S COMMENTS (in Croatian)

S3. KOMENTARI UČENIKA

Nakon primjene C4G pristupa za stjecanje vještina programiranja koji se zasniva na igrama, učitelj prikuplja kvalitativna mišljenja i komentare učenika u grupnom intervjuu.

Molimo da grupirate sve učenike razrednog odjela te da kroz razgovor prikupite njihova kvalitativna mišljenja i komentare. Pitajte učenike o aspektima navedenim u nastavku i zabilježite njihove komentare pomoću ovog obrasca.

Hvala Vam na Vašem vremenu i suradnji!

OSNOVNE INFORMACIJE

Nastavnik:

Razred:

Škola:

Datum:

CJELOKUPNA ORGANIZACIJA I ISKUSTVA UČENIKA

Možete pitati učenike o cjelokupnoj organizaciji učenja programiranja putem C4G pristupa, o njihovoj percepciji o stečenom znanju, o relevantnosti i učinkovitosti korištenog pristupa učenju programiranja koje se temelji na igrama te da li im je ovakav način učenja bio zabavan.

POTEŠKOĆE PRILIKOM UČENJA I PROBLEMI S TEHNOLOGIJOM

Možete pitati učenika o poteškoćama u učenju ili problemima s kojima su se suočavali te što su radili kad su naišli na te probleme.

STAVOVI UČENIKA O TOME KAKO POBOLJŠATI C4G METODOLOGIJU, ALATE I SADRŽAJE

BILO ŠTO DRUGO ŠTO SMATRATE RELEVANTNIM





T1. TEACHER'S OBSERVATIONS (in Croatian)

T1. ZAPAŽANJA UČITELJA

Tijekom implementacije, učitelj promatra i vodi bilješke o reakcijama učenika i njihovom napretku u usvajanju vještina programiranja pomoću C4G pristupa koji se zasniva na igrama.

Molimo da koristeći ovaj obrazac navedete Vaša zapažanja o aspektima navedenim u nastavku.

Hvala Vam na Vašem vremenu i suradnji!

OSNOVNE	INFORMACUE
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Nastavni	k٠
INASLAVIII	к.

Razred:

Škola:

Datumi (od-do):

SUDJELOVANJE I AKTIVNOST UČENIKA

Jesu li učenici aktivni? Surađuju li međusobno? Zabavljaju li se? itd.

POTEŠKOĆE PRILIKOM UČENJA I PROBLEMI S TEHNOLOGIJOM

Da li učenici imaju problema sa sadržajem i/ili tehnologijom? Traže li pomoć? itd.

BILO ŠTO DRUGO ŠTO SMATRATE RELEVANTNIM





T2. TEACHER'S COMMENTS (in Croatian)

T2. KOMENTARI UČITELJA

Nakon primjene C4G pristupa za stjecanje vještina programiranja koji se zasniva na igrama, prikupljaju se kvalitativna mišljenja i komentari učitelja.

Molimo da koristeći ovaj obrazac navedete Vaše stručno mišljenje o aspektima navedenim u nastavku.

Hvala Vam na Vašem vremenu i suradnji!

OSNOVNE INFORMACIJE

Nastavnik:

Razred:

Škola:

Datum:

OSTVARENOST ISHODA UČENJA KOD UČENIKA

VAŽNOST I UČINKOVITOST UČENJA TEMELJENOG NA IGRI ZA STJECANJE VJEŠTINA PROGRAMIRANJA – OPĆENITO TE SPECIFIČNO ZA C4G PRISTUP

PRIHVAĆANJE PREDLOŽENE C4G METODOLOGIJE OD UČENIKA





U KOJOJ MJERI SU SE UČENICI ZABAVLJALI?

VAŠE MIŠLJENJE O CJELOKUPNOJ ORGANIZACIJI IMPLEMENTACIJE C4G PRISTUPA

PRIMJENJIVOST I PRIHVATLJIVOST C4G OBRAZOVNOG OKVIRA ZASNOVANOG NA IGRAMA I *DIZAJN THINKING* PRISTUPU U BUDUĆAM RADU

BILO ŠTO DRUGO ŠTO SMATRATE RELEVANTNIM





E. EXPERT'S COMMENTS (in Croatian)

E. KOMENTARI STRUČNJAKA

Nakon primjene C4G pristupa za stjecanje vještina programiranja koji se zasniva na igrama, kvalitativna mišljenja i komentari stručnjaka se prikupljaju u strukturiranom intervjuu.

Upotrijebite ovaj obrazac i navedite stručno mišljenje o aspektima navedenim u nastavku.

OSNOVNE INFORMACIJE

Ime stručnjaka: _____

Institucija:

Radno mjesto: Datum:

OSTVARENOST ISHODA UČENJA KOD UČENIKA

VAŽNOST I UČINKOVITOST UČENJA TEMELJENOG NA IGRI ZA STJECANJE VJEŠTINA PROGRAMIRANJA – OPĆENITO TE SPECIFIČNO ZA C4G PRISTUP

PRIHVAĆANJE PREDLOŽENE C4G METODOLOGIJE OD UČENIKA – OPĆENITO I OD STRANE POSEBNO DJEVOJČICA





U KOJOJ MJERI SU SE UČENICI ZABAVLJALI?

VAŠE MIŠLJENJE O CJELOKUPNOJ ORGANIZACIJI IMPLEMENTACIJE C4G PRISTUPA

PRIMJENJIVOST I PRIHVATLJIVOST C4G OBRAZOVNOG OKVIRA ZASNOVANOG NA IGRAMA I DIZAJN THINKING PRISTUPU ZA UČENJE PROGRAMIRANJA, ZA DJEVOJČICE I OPĆENITO

BILO ŠTO DRUGO ŠTO SMATRATE RELEVANTNIM