

USE OF ICT IN THE PROCESS OF COOPERATION WITH PARENTS THROUGH STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract The use of ICT cannot improve cooperation itself, if it is not well thought-out, coordinated with the educational goals and focused towards increasing the quality of cooperation. General competences of educational workers also include the use of ICT, because they are expected to know how to make the best of the options of modern ICT with the purpose of improving cooperation. The process of developing digital competences in relation to a reasonable and focused use of ICT in education already begins during formal training of teachers. Using the qualitative SWOT analysis, we examined components and opportunities of cooperation with parents with the use of ICT, which were presented by students of the Faculty of Education of the University of Primorska (N = 40). The aim of the research was for students of the Faculty of Education to determine the understanding of cooperation with parents by means of ICT and search for new solutions.

Keywords:

cooperation with parents, use of ICT, digital competences, cooperation components, partnership with parents.

Partnership with parents is a relatively modern phenomenon, which defines the relationship between an educational institution and parents of an individual child. Cooperation with kindergartens or schools is of course as old as modern methods of organized schooling and education, and certainly each period in history, consistent with the values of the environment, technical knowledge and also unwritten rules, brought its own understanding of cooperation. Changes towards closer integration of family and educational institutions started in the second half of the 20th century, with the transformation of the understanding of family as the primary socialization factor. Parents slowly started entering the process of schooling and education, gradually strengthening their position within educational institutions (Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2012). Despite the theoretical definition of cooperation and partnership between an educational institution and parents, the implementation of ideal models always depends on numerous other factors. One of them is the use of ICT resources in the process of cooperation and partnership, so in addition to a historical overview, the paper will also focus on integration of technology in the process of cooperation and partnership between educational institutions and parents.

Importance of parental involvement

Parental involvement can be defined as “parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children” (Jeynes, 2005). Many studies suggest that there are strong links between academic achievements, social outcomes for children and parental involvement (Epstein, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Hornby, 2011). Parental involvement is not only about parent-teacher meetings, but also about home-based parental involvement (listening to children while reading, homework supervision). In the last 40 years, this field has been recognized as important (Hornby, 2011), although as early as the first decade after Slovenia’s independence, a linear diagram was in use, showing parents simply as those who drop their children off before and pick them up after the end of an organized educational process. This way children pass from one educational institution to another, until they ultimately find employment and become members of a community. The contemporary diagram suggests mutual integration of three parts, which constantly cooperate in ideal conditions: parents – kindergarten/school – environment/community (Epstein, 2001).

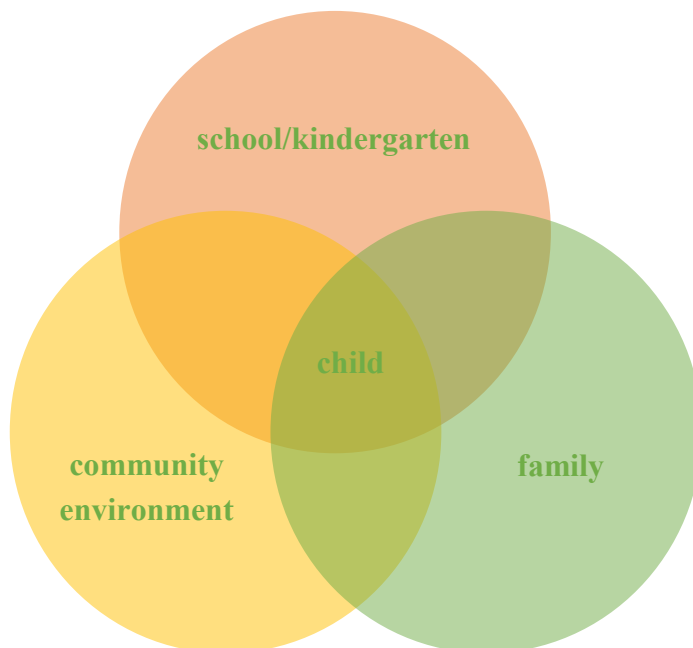


Figure 1: Integration of different contexts of a child's learning
(Epstein, 2001)

In accordance with the model, Epstein (2018) defined 6 different types of parent–school cooperation (also integration or involvement), in order to point out the diversity of involvement of parents in education of their children: communication, voluntary work, family learning (inclusion in a child's learning process; see also Passey, 2011), making decisions about relevant matters, cooperation with community. This model can also be connected to the ecological theory model, which was applied by Bronfenbrenner (1994) to explain various influences, which shape a child and impact growth, development and character building. When talking about cooperation and partnership with parents, we must bear in mind both Epstein's model and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, because we must always focus on the child, who is in the centre and is influenced by the integration of various factors.

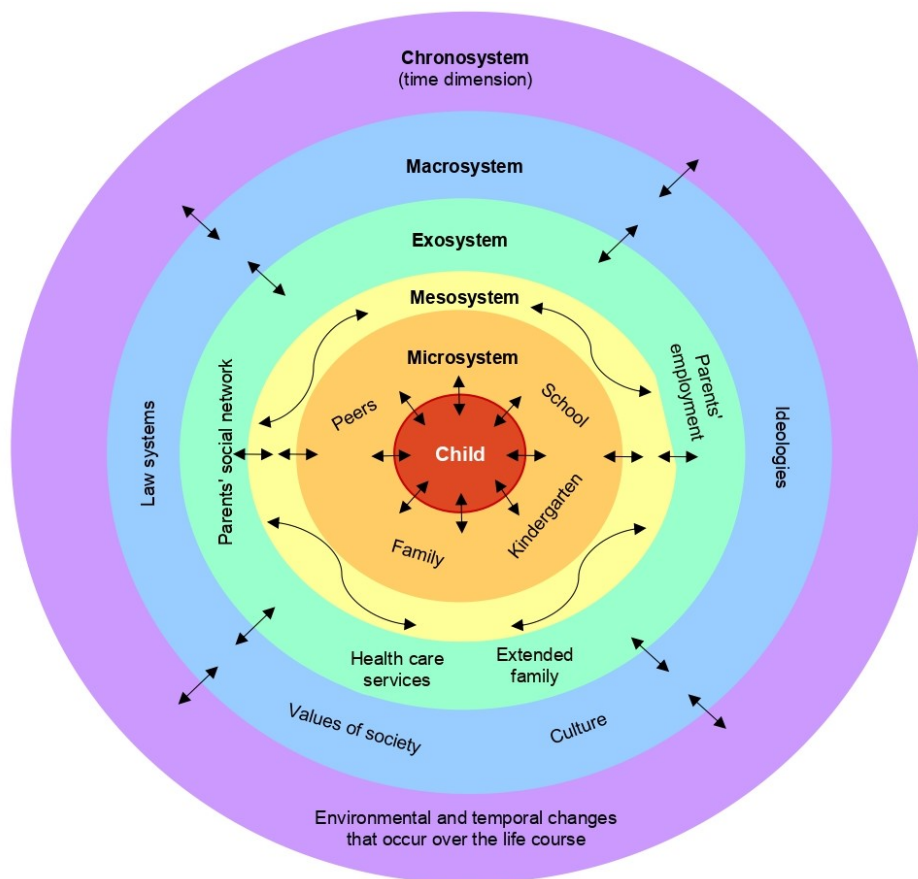


Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory
(Marjanovič Umek & Zupančič, 2009; Rhodes, 2013)

Epstein's model also coincides with the understanding of the process and development model, according to Kroflič (2001), which can also be transferred to the school as one of more fundamental guidelines of a contemporary kindergarten. This very connection of the model with the cultural and transmission model defines modern upbringing as "a relatively planned system of factors that support the development of children's personal traits and potentials" (Kroflič, 2001, p. 13). Therefore, at the turn of the century, we talk about changes at the level of understanding, criss-crossing and importance of mutual relations, and communication between educational workers, parents and children.

ICT and digital competences

In the 1990s, the changes in the society and industry were also followed by curricular changes, which suggested partnership as an equal relationship between the educational staff and parents towards the exchange of information, objectives, obligations and everything related to educational work. This further results in the strengthening of the active role and responsibilities of everyone included in the promotion of children's development. But even before educational workers faced up to the challenge and became qualified for development of partnerships between them and parents, or before this concept fully came alive within schooling and education throughout the vertical, information communication technologies stepped in – also with the purpose of improving communication and facilitating cooperation. Inclusion of technology in education started already in 1980s (Somekh, 2007), but this didn't have any relative impact on cooperation with parents. Within the last two decades, especially in recent years, technology -especially ICT -that can be used in schooling and education and that also enables the inclusion of parents in education of their children, started developing extremely fast. Learning, adaptation, changed practices and also inclusion of ICT in cooperation and partnership with parents is a long-term process, which requires flexibility of everyone included and possession of specific key competences (Anastasiades & Zaranis, 2017).

Educational workers need to have digital competence to use ICT in education (Brečko, 2016), which is also accurate in the process of cooperation with parents. Of course, we have to separate digital competences from digital literacy. Martin and Grudziecki (2006) emphasized that digital literacy consists of three levels: the first level contains digital competences (skills, concepts, approaches, etc.), the second level covers digital use (professional use) and the third level transformation (creativity and innovation).

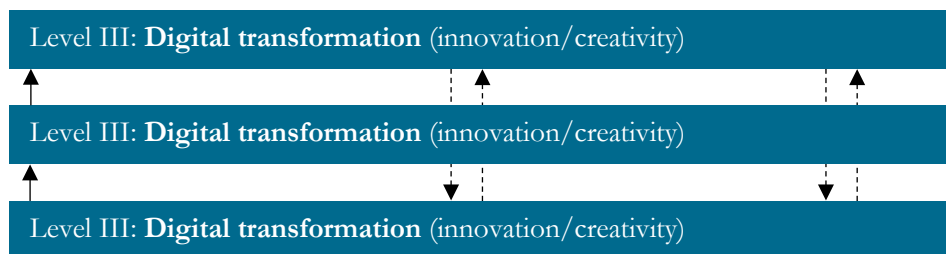


Figure 3: Levels of digital literacy
Source: Martin and Grudziecki (2006)

Digital competence is only a basic level, but it involves a wide range of skills - from the simplest to the most complex, containing critical, evaluative and conceptual approaches. As Martin and Grudziecki (2006) highlighted, professionals have to be careful when using one term or another. When we talk about digital literacy, we need to be aware of all three levels. Besides, digital literacy involves the successful use of digital competences in various life situations. According to this definition, educators, teachers, and other educators should have completed second and third levels in addition to the first level. In the following, we can not only talk about digital competences but, above all, about the digital literacy of all educators. On the other hand, for a successful two-way process, parents should have at least the first level (i.e. digital competences) developed.

Involving ICT in the process of parents' involvement

General competences of educational workers also include the use of ICT, but this does not mean only a technical application of an ICT resource, but also critical assessment at the level of content (Gavriloski et al., 2018), particularly the relevance of its use with regard to fundamental guidelines and achievement of goals in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents. The application thereof, of course, may also be influenced by attitude towards technology, which may significantly hinder the use of ICT resources in the educational process (Vitoulis, 2017), which can also be transferred to partnership with parents. The use of ICT resources certainly cannot improve cooperation, if it does not include a well thought-out and coordinated activity of all players with the purpose of increasing the quality of cooperation and partnership. The effect of greater inclusion, active cooperation and proactive and supportive approach of parents to the education of children can

also reflect in the child's improved academic achievements and is related to their emotional stability, safety, acceptance and improved self-esteem (Passey, 2011). Greater inclusion in this context does not mean inclusion in schooling, but inclusion in the learning process towards ensuring support and activation of the proactive role of parents (Harris & Goodall, 2007).

The key component of partnership is gaining trust, which is the foundation of any form of cooperation (Lamovec, 1993; Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2012; Vec, 2002). Of course, inclusion of ICT in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents does not mean substituting personal contact, but should in this context suggest merely an upgrade, which becomes possible only after the establishment of partnership, and this is, of course, related to trust and requires time and motivational input of everyone included. In the period of quick flow of information and lack of time, it is crucial to understand and apply ICT as a resource that may facilitate some aspects of cooperation and partnership with parents. Dečman Dobrnjič and Černetič (2009) list the following as the reasons for the use of ICT in cooperation with parents: (1) being busy and not having enough time for parent-teacher conferences, so ICT reduces the time needed for communication; (2) speed, accessibility, reliability of information; (3) fast contact, timely action, assistance in decision-making and consultation with parents; (4) traceability of conversation; (5) lower costs for parents; (6) possibilities of greater integration; and (7) exchange of information among parents. Certainly, it is also required to list the reasons against the introduction of ICT, which mainly refer to the lack of personal contact, but also to the probability of misuse of information, insufficient qualification and lack of knowledge of those included, lack of equipment for ICT, and lack of non-verbal communication (Dobrnjič & Černetič, 2009).

The reasons for the introduction of ICT in the cooperation and partnership process with parents can be further complemented, considering that (1) ICT enables parents to be involved in their children's education faster, more reasonably and actively; (2) ICT supports more flexible working arrangements, which also impacts the process cooperation and partnership with parents; (3) ICT enables more flexible matching of information. In accordance with these findings, we propose the following diagram which suggests activation of the use of ICT in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents, if the following conditions are met: (1) trust, which is the fundamental building block of partnership, has been established between a school

and parents; (2) a dialogue based on trust, respect and responsibility has been established between parents and the child; (3) school teaches the child in accordance with contemporary professional and scientific findings, thereby following modern educational principles, curricula and the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia. Use of ICT in cooperation and partnership will be reasonable, reliable, and manageable only upon mutual functioning and integration of all three parts and will quickly and timely match the challenges of cooperation between a school and parents. Of course, along with the inclusion of ICT in the cooperation and partnership process, educational workers and parents alike must possess digital competences and have positive attitude towards technology (Lepičnik Vodopivec & Gavriloski, 2002).

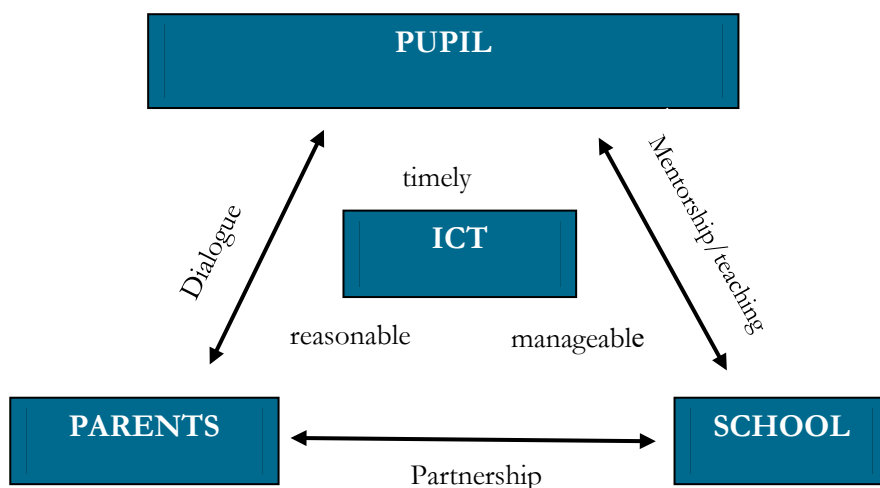


Figure 4: Diagram of cooperation between a school and parents
(Lepičnik Vodopivec & Gavriloski, 2002)

Definition of the research problem

Considering that digital competences and attitude of future educational workers towards ICT are also important in the use of ICT in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents, we wanted to know what possibilities of cooperation with parents with the use of ICT are proposed by students of the second year of the first-cycle university study programme Pedagogy.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research was to identify and evaluate students' suggestions about possibilities of cooperation with parents by means of ICT in order to gain a better understanding of their attitude towards the use of ICT in the process of cooperation with parents and gain a direct insight into research participants' knowledge of ICT resources.

Aims of the research

We wish to:

- Determine how students understand cooperation with parents;
- determine what possibilities of cooperation with parents by means of ICT are suggested by students;
- determine what attitude to the use of ICT in cooperation with parents is shown in the suggestions of students;
- determine which ICT resources (and applications) students know.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach and a descriptive method. We included 40 students from the second year of the university study program Pedagogy. In the first semester of the second year of the academic year 2018/2019, the research participants designed 11 posters within the subject Partnership with Parents and the Environment and presented the possibilities of cooperation with parents with the use of ICT. Students were familiar with the topic. The time frame for poster production was 1 month (December 2018). The instructions that guided the students were general and allowed them to choose the educational institution (kindergarten or elementary school) as well as content design. To gather as much information as possible in one place about the possibilities of engaging with parents with the use of ICT, the students were given simple instructions for creating posters. It was the free choice of content and educational institution that encouraged the students in finding options and solutions, as they did not simply follow closed instructions. Such an approach could, of course, remain solely on the strengths-weaknesses axis if the content had not been analysed with a SWOT analysis and the content had not been

divided into internal (strengths, weaknesses) and external elements (opportunities, threats). The advantage of this kind of analysis is that it provides us with a deeper insight into the problem to make planning easier and better. In our case, it is a matter of planning to integrate ICT in the processes of cooperation with parents. The classic SWOT analysis used within the business sciences defines internal elements as those that are influenced by the individual (or business), while they do not influence external elements, although they may be influenced. The same is accurate in our case since educators influence the internal elements, and mostly respond to the external ones.

The posters mostly showed a tendency to understand the use of ICT in the process of cooperation with parents on the axis of strengths-weaknesses, so we placed the results under different components of strengths (information, time, spatial, relational) and weaknesses (information, technological, human, relational). However, such a division alone does not capture the complexity of ICT use and miss the opportunities we must seize and the dangers that need to be heeded. Therefore, the answers below were also analysed using a SWOT analysis. The individual components were content-specific and not predefined.

Results and discussion

The obtained content was initially divided between the arguments, which are inclined to the use of ICT in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents, and the arguments, which are not inclined to the use thereof. After that we determined the resulting components within individual sets. In the first set (arguments for the use of ICT), we identified information, time, space and relationship components. Despite the implied critical relationship towards the use of ICT, the need for its use in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents was clearly shown, because ICT is nowadays an urgency. In the second set (arguments against the use of ICT), considering the answers, we have defined information, technological, human and relationship components. The common thread in this set was mainly related to personal contact and lack of trust in a relationship.

The analysis of results did not stop only in bare comparison of arguments for and against, but further on, using a qualitative SWOT analysis, various components were put up against one another, allowing us to better capture and understand the presented possibilities and solutions for better integration of ICT in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents.

The following are examples of two posters out of eleven. While poster 1 uses an approach through strengths-weaknesses in using ICT in collaboration with parents, in poster 2, the use of ICT in collaboration with parents is presented through various options. Analysing the first poster is easier since students have already made sense of the content, although it later turns out that opportunities and dangers have been designated only to internal elements (weaknesses). The students wrote down an example of this as a disadvantage: "ITC cannot determine the importance of information." SWOT analysis showed that this example should be allocated as danger and an external element. We inserted the contents of the posters into Table 1 for easy review: We got an overview of the proposed type of ICT, the proposed programs or application, other services, and added the explanation. Of course, this is only a matter of technical data, which can help answer the second goal.

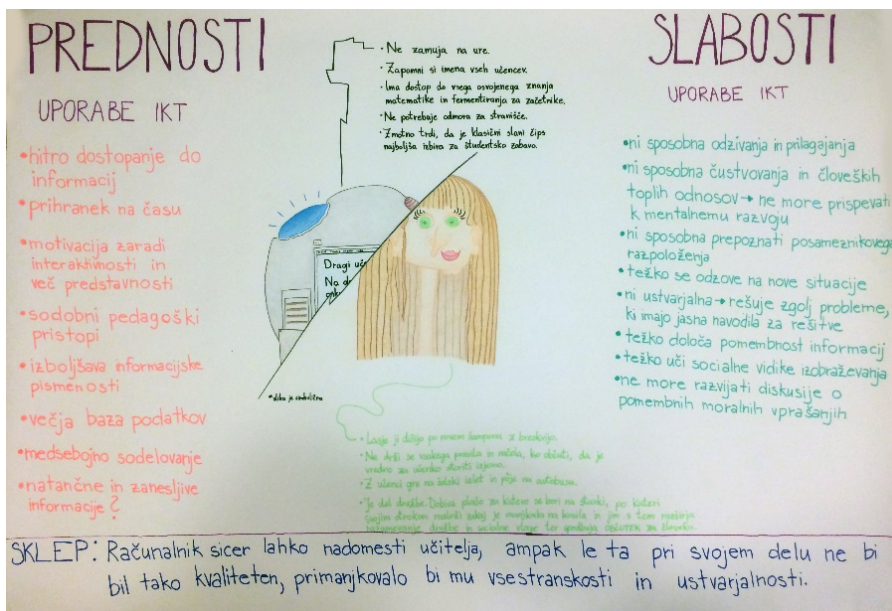


Figure 5: Poster 1 -Advantages and disadvantages of using ICT in collaboration with parents

Source: Own.

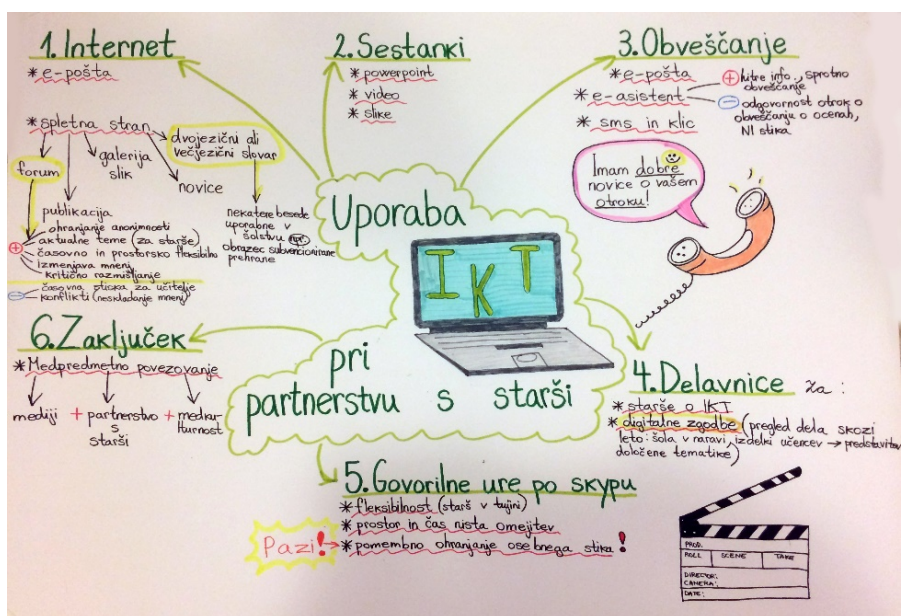


Figure 6: Poster 2 -Using ICT in partnership with parents

Source: Own.

Table 1: Suggestions for using ICT in collaboration with parents with an explanation

Type of ICT	Program / Application / Service / Other	Explanations
Computer/ tablet	email (6x) service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Notifications. – A shared email address for parents. – Weekend message (last week event renewal).
	School website (6x) A platform that provides information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parents can enter an e-calendar through the application. – Login with username and password. – Emergency notifications about the cancellation of a sports day. (2x) – Access to various documents (e-materials, the schedule, menu, publication). (3x) – Access to some useful forms (e.g. subsidized food form).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Photo gallery. (3x) - Notice of absence (first and last name, class, reason for absence, contact number). - FAQ. - Bilingual or multilingual dictionary. - Notification. - Websites of good books, parenting magazines. - Regular updating of the school website.
	Skype (6x) program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lecture via Skype. (2x) - Introducing your child to kindergarten. - Parent teacher meetings (3x): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility (e.g. when one parent is abroad). - Space and time are no limit. - Maintain personal contact.
	eAsistent (5x), Lo.Polis, EviWeb service, web portals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notifications. - Computer courses for parents to use an e-assistant. - E-look (parents' insight into children's grades).
	Ppt (5x) Computer program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of PowerPoints at parent-teacher meetings, lectures and workshops for parents. (2x) - Computer courses for parents to use ppt.
	Forums, chat rooms (4x)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange of views, discussions between parents and teachers. - Participation of experts.
	Movie, video (2x)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent-teacher meetings. - To present cultures.
	Digital stories (2x)	<p>Review of work throughout the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School in nature. - Student Products - Presentation of a specific topic.
	World Wide Web "Friendly Internet"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google (browser). - Online (anonymous) surveys. - Facebook (social network). - Parental blog.

		– Security.
	Interactive whiteboard	
	Electronic course material	
	Computer Games (2x)	– Suggestions for parents about appropriate and instructive computer games for children.
	Workshops	– Informing parents about the use of ICT.
Telephone	Call (3x)	– Parents could call teachers on a mobile phone within the agreed hours.
	SMS (2x)	– Notifications.
	Survey	– For parents.
	School smartphone app	–
TV / DVD player	Movie (2x)	– Parent-teacher meetings. (2x)
	TV Screen	– In the lobby with school announcements and updates (2x).
Radio		– Connection to local radio.
Web camera		– If one of the parents cannot attend the parenting meetings for any reason, we offer them a videoconference.
		– Recordings of children during school activities. We provide the recordings to parents.
		– Recording lessons.

Table 1 lists the types of ICT proposed by students, the second column mentions programs and applications, and the third provides the explanation. Some answers have repeatedly appeared on various posters, which is shown by the numerical frequency in the brackets. Table 1 shows that students do not propose different ways of interacting with their parents through ICT than those already existed. We can conclude that they derive from their own experience, although they focused solely on the Slovenian territory and did not focus on good practices abroad. The most common platform in collaboration with parents is using a website, to which they have added the broadest explanation. Based on the contents of Table 1, we cannot conclude what attitude towards the use of ICT in cooperation with parents is reflected in the proposals of students, as one might mistakenly think that students are only in favour of using ICT in cooperation with parents, which is not true. Only a more detailed SWOT analysis of the poster results gives us a more complex view.

Table 1 lists only technical resources, programs, applications, and as explanations of individual content.

Table 2: First set components (arguments for the use of ICT)

Information	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quickly and easily accessible information (4x). – Exchange of information among parents. – Exchange of information literacy. – Several parents can be informed at a time. – Precise and reliable information. – Bigger and more transparent database. – Guaranteed anonymity on forums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Saves time (3s). – Time flexibility. – Regular updating.
Spatial	Relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Space is not restriction. – Spatial flexibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Facilitates mutual cooperation (parents–teacher). – Motivation of pupils to learn due to cooperation of parents with school. – Greater motivation of parents due to interactivity and multimedia.

As can be seen from Table 2, the majority of the arguments for the use of ICT in cooperation and partnership with parents can be found within the information component, where speed and accessibility of information appear most often. The advantages also relate to the integration among parents with easier and simultaneous provision of information, precision, reliability and creation of a transparent database and information literacy of everyone included. As for other components, three arguments are given in the time and relationship components and two arguments appear in the space component. Saved time is for students one of the key arguments for the use of ICT, which could also be connected to time flexibility. The spatial component is related to this as well, because space does not represent any restriction, and this correlates with saved time. In the opinion of students, ICT can additionally increase the motivation of parents because of interactivity and multimedia, and strengthened mutual cooperation may have a positive impact on the motivation of pupils to learn. This is exactly what Passey (2011) and Harris and Goodall (2007) pointed out in their research. The reasons listed by students do not differ from the ones already presented by Dečman Dobrnjič and Černetič (2009) in their research.

Table 3: Second set components (arguments against the use of ICT)

Information	Technological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Difficulties in determining the relevance of information. – Lack of appropriate material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Insufficient equipment of schools. – Computer literacy competences are not clearly and formally defined. – Not everyone has a smart phone/computer. – Possibility of network or machine defects. – Not creative -resolves only those problems, which have clear instructions for solutions.
Human (competence component)	Relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does not properly teach the social aspects of education. – Cannot develop the discussion on more relevant moral issues. – Insufficient qualification for use. – Some individuals do not regularly open their e-mails. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No direct personal contact. – Not capable of having emotions and warm human relations -cannot contribute to mental development. – Not capable of reacting and adjusting. – Responsibility of children to inform parents about grades, no contact. – Not capable of recognizing an individual's mood. – Does not easily respond to new situations.

Considering the answers provided, two components stand out in Table 3 and they were already shown in the first set (information and relationship), while two new ones appear (technological and human, or competence). The arguments against the use of ICT in cooperation and partnership with parents appear to the highest degree in the relationship component, which can be defined as one of the key reasons which do not support the use of ICT alone in the process of cooperation. Insufficient personal contact, absence of emotions, responsiveness and adaptation also appear as reasons against the use of ICT in the research by Dečman Dobrnjič and Černetič (2009). At first sight, the relationship component is related to the human component, but it refers to competences of participants. This means that the person involved must possess certain skills, if they want to develop partnership on the one side and apply ICT as a resource in cooperation and partnership on the other. The fact that institutions and also homes are not sufficiently equipped with ICT may be the next reason, which falls into the technological component. Of course, despite the general focus in schooling and education towards improving the computer,

technological and digital literacy, not everyone has appropriate ICT or related applications, and this represents an obstacle in the flow of information. ICT is subject to various defects and must have constant technological support, because technology itself cannot assess the importance of information and still needs a human operator.

By confronting the reasons for and against, the students mainly displayed criticism in the use of ICT in cooperation and partnership with parents, which is mainly shown in the emphases on the relationship component and human factor or direct human contact, which must, in the future, also represent the foundation from which trust as the foundation of every relationship grows. The answers, despite being in favour of the use of ICT in the process of cooperation and partnership with parents, suggest that ICT cannot substitute mutual and direct contact; it merely represents an instrument that must be properly utilized by everyone involved. Accordingly, we can refer to Figure 1, which defines that use of ICT in cooperation between a school and home is reasonable, reliable and manageable only upon simultaneous functioning of all three parts between students, parents and a school. These arguments were analysed with the SWOT analysis, including some aspects of the use of individual web options for communication shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: SWOT analysis of components

	ADVANTAGES	WEAKNESSES
INTERNAL ELEMENTS	<p>Information component (+):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quickly and easily accessible information. - Exchange of information among parents. - Accurate and reliable information. - Guaranteed anonymity on forums. 	<p>Human component – competences (-):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not creative -resolves only problems which have clear instructions for solutions. - It does not teach social aspects of education. - Cannot develop the discussion on more relevant moral issues. - Insufficient qualification for use. - Some do not regularly open their e-mails.
	<p>Time component (+):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saves time. - Time flexibility. 	<p>Technological component (-):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient equipment in schools. - Computer literacy competences are not clearly and formally defined. - Not everyone has a smart phone/ computer. - Possibility of network or machine defects.
	<p>Spatial component (+):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Space is not a restriction. - Spatial flexibility. 	<p>Relationship component (-):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No direct personal contact. - Not capable of having emotions and warm human relations, cannot contribute to mental development. - Not capable of reacting and adjusting. - Not capable of recognizing an individual’s mood. - Does not easily respond to new situations. -

	Relationship component (+): – Increase mutual cooperation (parents–teacher).	Information component (-): – Lack of appropriate material.
	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
EXTERNAL ELEMENTS	Information component (+): – Improvement of information literacy. – Bigger and more transparent database. – Presentation of current topics for parents within a forum. – Exchange of opinions within a forum. – Encouraging critical thinking.	Relationship component (-): – Responsibility of children to inform parents about grades, no contact. – Conflicts (contradictory opinions) within a forum.
	Time component (+): – Regular updating.	Information component (-): – Difficulties in determining the relevance of information.
	Relationship component (+): – Motivation of pupils to learn due to cooperation of parents with school. – Greater motivation of parents due to interactivity and multimedia.	

If we analyse the arguments from Tables 2 and 3 using the SWOT analysis, we get a completely different image of the understanding of the use of ICT in cooperation and partnership with parents. Of course, the reasons for the use of ICT are still understood as positive, but we have divided them into advantages and opportunities, while the arguments (also within the same components) against the use of ICT were classified as either weaknesses or threats. This way we can see when ICT can be understood as an opportunity and when as a threat; it is worth noting that the above table was based only on answers of students, and it would be much more accurate following a more extensive and in-depth analysis.

While the advantages and weaknesses were defined and mentioned in interpretations of Tables 2 and 3, the content in Table 4 also provides an insight into opportunities and threats. Three components from set 1 (arguments for the use of ICT) can be defined as opportunities, with arguments from the information component again accounting for the most numerous ones. Some of the most significant opportunities

provided by ICT in cooperation and partnership are information literacy, clear database and increased motivation of pupils to learn due to cooperation of parents with school. The last argument is also mentioned by Epstein (2001), Harris and Goodall (2007), and Passey (2011), because the activation of the inclusion of parents in an educational institution is one of the foundations for a partnership with school and is also greatly linked to pupils' achievements.

The threat column is of course connected to the diagram of cooperation between a school and parents (Figure 4), which suggests that all participants must cooperate with one another, otherwise the use of ICT in the process of cooperation and partnership does not make any sense. Students specifically pointed out the responsibility of children to inform parents on any relevant information, which is related to the dialogue and relationship between parents and a child.

Conclusion

The aim of the research was to establish how students understand cooperation with parents, what possibilities of cooperation with parents by means of the use of ICT they suggest, what attitude towards the use of ICT in cooperation with parents is shown in suggestions, and what ICT resources and applications they know. Throughout the research, there has actually been a critical attitude towards the use of ICT, although the students stated a relatively equal number of arguments for as well as against the use of ICT in cooperation and partnership with parents. The students see cooperation with parents through conventional forms of cooperation, listing the following ICT resources for the process of cooperation and partnership: the computer/tablet, smartphone, webcam, TV, radio, and also any program, application or other service provided by each type. In this context, they mentioned communication by e-mail, through websites, Skype, eAsistent, forums and chat rooms, the Lo.Polis and EviWeb school portals. Most often they mentioned the fact that parents are timely informed on and have facilitated access to certain documents and other important information, (such as, schedules, e-calendars, menus, publications, galleries, photos, e-grade books). As can be seen from the presentation, students are familiarized with the methods of cooperation as well as ICT resources, but it still makes us wonder whether given suggestions are connected to the actual situation. Nevertheless, they suggested the following solutions -some already existing, some new: (1) greater provision of (free) computer courses for parents to

improve their digital literacy; (2) activation of the triadic digital form of cooperation: pupils -parents -teachers; (3) translation of all digital contents related to the institution into various foreign languages; (4) introduction of a child to a kindergarten via Skype; (5) parent-teacher conferences via Skype; (6) introduction of the electronic signature; (7) setting up applications for scanning tests for parents, enrolling/removing a child into/from activities, reporting absence, child's choice.

A significant emphasis of the given research mainly lies in the identification of various components, which are combined in the information, time, spatial and relationship component in the first set (arguments for the use of ICT), and in the information, technological, human (competence) and relationship component in the second set (arguments against the use of ICT). The SWOT analysis has shown that such an overview is important, otherwise opportunities and threats can be confused with advantages and weaknesses.

Even though the analysis due to a limited number of persons included in the research cannot offer an in-depth insight, it still suffices for further discussion. However, this opens up questions regarding the actual situation, which is connected to computer literacy of parents and educational workers. Certainly, a clear distinction between various types of literacy (information, digital and media) would not hurt either. The key factors may also be the cultural and economic capital of the family and material inequality with regard to the access to ICT.

Even though a critical approach in the use of ICT was implied, we should not forget the co-dependence and mutual activity of individual players (Figure 4), which puts the child at the centre, both in Epstein's diagram (Figure 1) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Figure 2). Only then can we justify the relevance of the use of ICT in cooperation and partnership with parents.

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