INVOLVING PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE DESIGN OF TECHNOLOGY: CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

Sveva Valguarnera and Monica Landoni

Università della Svizzera Italiana

INTRODUCTION

- Involving kindergarten teachers in the design of technology for early literacy can have a **positive effect on learning outcomes** [1].

- Primary school teachers have also been involved in the co-design of technology for learning, and this results in them taking **ownership** and **agency** both in design and in the **dissemination** of the innovation [2].

- However there are **challenges**!

[1] Amina Cviko, Susan McKenney, and Joke Voogt. 2015. Teachers as co-designers of technology-rich learning activities for early literacy. Technology, Pedagogy and Education 24, 4 (2015), 443–459.

[2] William R Penuel, Jeremy Roschelle, and Nicole Shechtman. 2007. Designing formative assessment software with teachers: An analysis of the co-design process. Research and practice in technology enhanced learning 2, 01 (2007), 51–74.

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

- Public schools in Ticino have to closely follow the curriculum set by the cantonal authority.

- Private schools have more leeway as they are usually open until late afternoon (after «official» school hours).

- Private schools also employ a mix of Italian and Swiss teachers: this gives us a significant diversity, as Swiss and Italian pedagogic approach and teaching method is different.

- However private schools are expensive, so there is less diversity among students.

NOT ENOUGH TIME

- Teachers are busy! We offered them meetings at lunch-time, written interviews and online interviews after school hours.

- Teachers with a personal interest on the topic are more likely to want to work with us, and they are proactive and engaged.

- However we would really benefit to also work with more skeptical teachers…

DEALING WITH SKEPTICISM

- Technology is not widely used in preschool, especially in Ticino.

- While schools have the budget for supplies such as interactive whiteboards, they do not use them often and teachers are not trained.

- Technology is regarded as something to be reserved for special occasions, leading to a noticeable «**novelty effect**».

- Parents are also skeptical of technology, and prefer other activities – although the pandemic might have changed things up a bit.

BENEFITS FOR THE USERS

- How do teachers benefit from our research?
- We make sure to support activities that they would conduct anyway – such as reading aloud.
- We provide materials in digital and paper form.
- We help them get familiar with technology they already have – such as interactive whiteboards.

THANK YOU!