



Ministarstvo
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZING A STUDENT'S WORKDAY IN DISTANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING



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GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING DISTANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Implementing distance learning is a challenge to both the teacher and the student, but also for the entire family because the process of learning and teaching is taking place in the home where it is necessary to ensure certain conditions for studying. We also have to somehow determine or even quantify how much studying is needed.

Regarding conditions for studying (learning), they imply equipment for distance teaching and learning (instructions on equipment have been provided for schools) and necessary textbooks. Students also need a quiet space without distractions for studying at home. Furthermore, it is good to try to establish a regular workday structure for students. It is especially important that parents try to provide structure when it comes to younger children in so-called class teaching. It is good for older students to adhere to certain recommendations as well. In this way we are taking care of physical and mental health of children and young people.

Parents, but also teachers, often ask how much students need to study daily and how they can help them organize their work. On the other hand, pupils/students emphasize that their studying works best when they enjoy what they are studying and how they study, so time goes by quickly. The opposite situation is when they have to do something for which they cannot recognize a meaningful purpose, or they do not know how to start working, so the whole process of learning becomes a tedious task which is done without the appropriate motivation.

The expected time spent learning (student workload) is in part derived from the legislation. It is not easy to estimate the time necessary for learning, and the legislation uses the term „average student "or „average time“, which means that in reality this time can be somewhat longer or shorter than planned. For example, The Croatian Qualification Framework Law states that students should spend a certain amount of time studying in accordance with the so-called HROO credits (HROO – The Croatian Credit System for General Education), which need to be realized within the framework of a particular qualification.

Time spent learning (student workload) implies the time spent being taught (in school, or through the system of distance teaching), but also the time for individual studying or for collaborative studying. This total amount of time depends on the age of a child and it varies between 5 and 8 hours a day for five days a week. However, no matter the amount of time, it is limited and presents a challenge for teachers to adjust the tasks an „average student“ can complete in the predetermined time frame. Teachers need to take into consideration the students' workload. This implies that they need to achieve the planned learning outcomes of the educational process. However, teachers should also try to distinguish between contents which are essential and those that are secondary or non-essential. Here the teachers play a key role because they need to supplement the material available on one of the central platforms with their own material and instructions, they need to monitor the students and adjust the educational process so that it is confined in reasonable and acceptable time frames and adjusted to the students' cognitive abilities.



The following text pertains to the recommendations regarding the organization of the students' work day in the course of the working week. Therefore, the described rhythm would imply free weekends for all students. Other ways of establishing the rhythm of the working week are possible, and the following suggestions can be helpful when making your own plans.

CLASS TEACHING (1ST-4TH GRADE; AGE 6 TO 10)

Students in so-called class teaching should spend 5 hours per day learning (this includes studying and being taught). It might seem that 5 hours a day is demanding, but we should not forget that until the implementation of distance learning students spent at least 4 hours a day in a real classroom, and later they would study at home or in after school care, and they also had some type of school responsibilities during the weekend. When it comes to distance learning, all of these activities are now done at home, so they are now very immediate and salient to parents.

In order to enable acquiring appropriate work habits, it is recommended that students have the same organization of time every work day. Therefore, following TV School on Channel 3 is a strong recommendation, but it is not necessary to watch the programme in the morning hours, because there is a rerun in the afternoon, and the video is also available on YouTube and on websites. Teachers send additional tasks connected to planned topics to the parents, but while doing so they need to take into consideration the students' workload and the purpose of the assignments, as well as technical conditions in the home. For example, it is not acceptable to ask of each parent to print out notes when students can write their homework in their notebooks. It is not necessary that the entire homework of each student be sent to the teacher every day, but rather, the teacher can make a schedule for students who will send them their homework. In this way we are enabling individualization of activities, adaptation to individual students and learning outcomes.

An example of a schedule for students of so-called class teaching during the working week (Monday – Friday):

Time	Suggestions for student activity	Suggestions for parents
CROATIAN RADIOTELEVISION CHANNEL 3 8:00 - 11:00	Students „attend" School on Channel 3 They read, express themselves in written and verbal form They calculate, solve mathematical problems, do modelling Physical exercise (physical education) Music and art education They take a break every 45 or 60 minutes	Provide a quiet space without distractions, equipment and a television set
11:00 - 13:00	Lunch and relax Interaction with household members Play	Making lunch Talking to children



<p>13:00 – 15:00</p>	<p>Students do tasks sent by the teacher</p> <p>They make something with their hands</p> <p>They speak about the topic with parents, peers</p> <p>They repeat watching parts of School on Channel 3 on TV or on YouTube channel</p> <p>They take a break every 45 minutes or more often if necessary</p>	<p>Cooperate and help children if necessary</p> <p>Cooperate with the teacher and, if needed, with expert associates</p>

SUBJECT TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL (5TH-8TH GRADE; AGE 11 TO 14)

A similar pattern can be applied to students of subject teaching in primary school, **who should study around 6 hours per day (including being taught)**. The abovementioned does not include studying over the weekends; if students study over the weekends, the number of hours during the working week decreases. In such case students do not have to watch the TV programme according to schedule if it is not synchronized with their schedule, but teachers should direct children towards appropriate video lectures; they should find appropriate lectures if they have not made their own. School on television is not as crucial as are video lectures available on the School for Life website, which can be viewed and used in the sequence students and teachers find appropriate. However, if the teacher decides not to use the material, they have to make their own because it is not enough to instruct the student to learn something from the textbook because such an approach does not result in sufficient mastering of the educational material. For example, most students cannot learn fractions by themselves by just using the textbook. It is important to create a balance between subjects and this is where the coordination between the teachers in the virtual teachers' room and virtual classroom is crucial.

We would like to note that there are subjects which are not covered by the central schedule which is posted by the Ministry of Science and Education (MZO), and that teachers themselves should prepare material and instructions for those subjects.

An example of a schedule during the working week (Monday – Friday) for students of so-called subject teaching in primary school:

Time	Suggestions for student activity	Suggestions for parents
<p>SPORTS TELEVISION CHANNEL</p> <p>9:00 - 12:00</p>	<p>Students participate in virtual classroom work or study video lectures on the Sports channel or the School for Life website</p> <p>They cooperate, research, ask, help, etc.</p> <p>They read, express themselves in written and verbal form</p>	<p>Provide a quiet space without distractions, equipment and a television set</p>

	<p>They calculate, solve mathematical problems, do modelling</p> <p>Physical exercise (physical education)</p> <p>Music and art education</p> <p>They take a break every 45 minutes</p>	
12:00 – 14:00	<p>Lunch and relax</p> <p>Interaction with household members</p> <p>Play</p>	<p>Making lunch (or giving instructions to the student on how to make lunch)</p> <p>Talking to children</p>
14:00 – 17:00	<p>Students do tasks sent by the teacher</p> <p>They make something with their hands (an experiment, a model, plant something, etc.)</p> <p>They speak about the topic with parents, peers</p> <p>Do research on the topic on the internet, in textbooks or other books</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>They take a break every 45 minutes</p>	<p>Cooperate and help children if necessary</p> <p>Cooperate with the teacher and, if needed, with expert associates</p>

SECONDARY SCHOOL (AGE 15 TO 18)

In secondary school, **students of first, second or third grade should study around 7 hours a day on average (including being taught)**. The abovementioned does not include studying over the weekends; if students study over the weekends, the number of hours during the working week decreases. Teachers should coordinate amongst themselves regarding a balanced workload of students during the working week. Similar to subject teaching in primary school, it is not necessary that all video lectures be followed on television or that they become the only way of learning and support to students. However, in case teachers decide not to use the lectures provided through the central platforms as a resource, they need to prepare similar material by themselves and provide clear instructions to students on all sources that are being used. We would like to note that distance learning only by means of video conferencing or audio conferencing in real time with the participation of all students is not recommended because of possible online system capacity overload. There are better ways of organizing distance learning.

We would like to note that there are subjects which are not covered by the central schedule which is posted by the Ministry of Science and Education (MZO), and that teachers themselves should prepare material and instructions for those subjects. Over 250 secondary schools with vocational education programmes are instructed to consult the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education website.

An example of a schedule during the working week (Monday – Friday) for students of the first, second, or third grade of secondary school:

Time	Suggestions for student activity	Suggestions for parents
8:00 - 12:00	Students follow the programme on RTL 2 They prepare to work in the virtual classroom They take a break every 45 or 60 minutes They exercise, read, do maths, research, etc.	Provide a quiet space without distractions, equipment Cooperate with the class master and expert associates
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch and relax Interaction with household members	Making lunch (or giving instructions to students on how to make lunch) Talking to students
13:00 - 16:00	Students work in virtual classrooms They speak about the topic with teachers, peers They solve problems individually or in teams They make something with their hands They take a break every 45 to 60 minutes	Cooperate and help students if necessary

STUDENTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS

Students of secondary school graduating class should study about 8 hours a day for five days a week. For students of secondary school graduating class, and other secondary school students, a **flipped classroom** model is recommended. In this model students read about a certain topic, watch the video material or explore the topic on their own in some other way, after which they ask questions in the virtual classroom, discuss and solve problems or substantiate their opinions through argumentation.

For all students, and secondary school students especially, the development of self-reliance and responsibility is required. For students of secondary school graduating class the mentioned competencies should ensure that they prepare for learning and achieve all previously determined learning outcomes without any special support from parents. On Saturdays, RTL 2 will broadcast the regular programme of preparation for graduation exams for students of secondary school graduating class.

An example of a schedule during the working week (Monday – Friday) for students of secondary school graduating class:

Time	Suggestions for student activity	Suggestions for parents
8:00 - 12:00	Students follow the programme on RTL 2 They prepare to work in the virtual classroom	Provide a quiet space without distractions, equipment



	They take a break every 60 minutes They exercise	
12:00 –13:00	Lunch and relax Interaction with household members and friends	Making lunch (or giving instructions to students on how to make lunch)
13:00 – 17:00	Students work in virtual classrooms They speak about the topic with teachers, peers They solve problems individually or in teams They make something with their hands They take a break every 60 minutes	Cooperate and help students if necessary

In conclusion, the abovementioned schedules **are just examples of possible schedules** made for students of different age; schedules that are compatible with the current distance learning model. All these schedules imply a five-day working week and rest during the weekend. Additionally, for Saturday morning we are organizing preparations for graduation exams in the duration of 2 hours which are meant to help students with revision and systematization of knowledge and skills necessary for successful completion of graduation exams.

ORGANIZING LESSONS

Distance learning is a new experience for most teachers, as well as students. There are different models of organizing distance learning, but also there are different models of its realization in smaller teaching units and lessons. Here we are describing one of the possible scenarios of organizing one school lesson of distance learning. The emphasis is on encouraging students' activity as much as possible, as well as providing all necessary support in the educational process and providing basic material for learning. This material should not be reduced to one source, or reading from the textbook. It is important to provide clear instructions on how to explore a topic and how to reach other credible sources, especially on the internet.

A lesson which lasts 60 minutes can be structured in the following way:

A video lecture of about 15 minutes

Student talks or writes with video – 15 minutes

Individual student work (repetition, exploring, reading, writing, discussion or watching a discussion) lasting 30 minutes

When it comes to subjects for which there has to be some previous preparation in the form of practice or understanding of content, teachers should make a video of about 15 minutes or instruct students to follow a certain lesson with the help of video lectures provided by the Ministry of Science and Education for distance learning. Distance learning does not imply students only reading a textbook and working on tasks under the direction of teachers. In other words, it is not reduced to students learning completely on their own without the teacher there to explain the context in the form which would be most similar to a lecture. In all these activities the role of the teacher is crucial in balancing the quantity of the content of learning. Therefore, the teacher must not just direct students to video lectures without additional instructions, monitoring and support, and it is not good to burden a student with too much material or to indirectly transfer the teaching process to parents, which is one of the reasons we are giving these recommendations.

On average, a student should put in an equal amount of time in studying the prepared material as in individual work. The goal is to make the students more self-reliant and more responsible for their own learning process over the course of time.

REFERENCES

Flipped classroom

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Directions for making video lectures

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Online lessons:

<https://skolazivot.hr/video-lekcije/>

prof. dr. sc. Blaženka Divjak, Minister of Science and Education



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