

## USING VIDEO JOURNALS IN ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING

### VIDEO DNEVNICI U AKADEMSKOM DRUŠTVENO KORISNOM UČENJU

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#### Abstract

This paper chronicles experience of one of its authors (Nives Mikelić Preradović) with video journals in the service-learning course with year-5 students of Information Sciences at the University in Zagreb (Croatia) specialized in the following fields: Archival Science, Library Science, Museology, and Informatics Teacher Education. The first part of the paper introduces academic service-learning and outlines previous experiences with video journals in service-learning. The second part of the paper describes service-learning at the University of Zagreb, and briefly introduces research methodology. The third part of the paper presents two case studies of using video journals in academic service-learning: TiM: Ti i Muzej (Team: You and Museum) and Readers' Club Knjigotron. The last, fourth part of the paper, analyses case studies and describes advantages and obstacles to introduce video journaling in service-learning. The paper confirms earlier research in conclusion that the main obstacles to such implementation are technical skills related to video production. However, it also shows that widely available equipment, such as phones and computers, satisfies the needs of service-learning. Therefore, in contrast to earlier research, it seems that equipment has ceased to be an obstacle. In spite of differences in technical proficiency and quality of final videos, students in both groups have met learning outcomes and acquired appropriate critical skills. Instead of speaking of video proficiency, therefore, the paper suggests that future research should turn into the direction of video literacy.

**Keywords:** service-learning, video journal, case study, video production, video literacy

#### Sažetak

Rad opisuje iskustva jedne od autorica (Nives Mikelić Preradović) sa video dnevnicima u kolegiju na temu društveno korisnog učenja sa studentima pete godine studija informacijskih znanosti na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu koji se specijaliziraju u sljedećim smjerovima: arhivistika, bibliotekarstvo, muzeologija, i nastava informatike. Prvi dio rada uvodi akademsko društveno korisno učenje i opisuje ranija iskustva s video dnevnicima u društveno korisnom učenju. Drugi dio rada opisuje društveno korisno učenje na Sveučilištu u Zagrebu i kratko opisuje istraživačku metodologiju. Treći dio rada prezentira dvije studije slučaja: TiM: Ti i Muzej i Čitateljski klub Knjigotron. Zadnji, četvrti dio rada analizira studije slučajeva te opisuje prednosti i mane uvođenja video dnevnika u društveno korisnom učenju. Rad potvrđuje rezultate ranijih istraživanja u zaključku da se glavne prepreke nalaze u području tehničkih vještina povezanih s video produkcijom. Međutim, on također prikazuje da široko dostupna oprema, poput telefona i računala, zadovoljava zahtjeve društveno korisnog učenja. Dakle, u suprotnosti sa ranijim istraživanjima, rad zaključuje da je oprema prestala biti preprekom za uspješno društveno korisno učenje. Usprkos razlikama u tehničkim vještinama i kvaliteti završnih video radova, studenti u obje grupe postigli su ishode učenja i stekli odgovarajuće kritičke vještine. Umjesto daljih istraživanja u području tehničke spremnosti, dakle, rad sugerira da buduća istraživanja treba usmjeriti ka video pismenosti.

**Gljučne riječi:** društveno korisno učenje, video dnevnik, studija slučaja, video produkcija video pismenost

## 1. Introduction

### 1. Uvod

Service-learning is widely defined as a form of experiential education that integrates meaningful community service into the curriculum [1]. Academic service-learning connects the goals of higher education with the needs of society through student active participation in structured cooperative activities that address community needs [2]. Students are encouraged to utilize classroom knowledge for improvement of local communities. During the process, they develop critical thinking, interpersonal, and professional skills [3]. Service-learning consists of two main elements: (1) engagement within the community (service), and (2) critical reflection on that engagement (learning). According to Bringle and Hatcher, these elements should be balanced by engaging students to “participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs”, and “reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” [2: 112]. Critical reflection takes place before, during and after the service, and allows students to perceive influence of their service on the community and on own learning.

This paper explores opportunities for development of critical reflection in service-learning using video journals. It introduces critical reflection and describes a service-learning course in information and communication sciences tutored by one of the co-authors. Using the methodology of case study, it analyses two video journals produced during the course in collaboration with different partner institutions: a museum and a public library. Based on previous experiences [4], it conducts the analysis from the position of four main stakeholders: students, teachers, community partners, and the local community. Outcomes are measured in relation to five generally accepted criteria in the field of service-learning: video completion, community partner satisfaction, teacher satisfaction, student satisfaction and skill development [5] [6]. Video completion is defined as student ability to complete the video journal; community partner

satisfaction is assessed through verbal feedback; teacher satisfaction is perceived as student achievement in regards to critical thinking; student satisfaction is assessed through the online course evaluation at the end of the semester; skill development is carried out by a teacher who evaluates video journals and decides whether it enabled students to develop new skills.

## 2. Critical Reflection and Journaling in Service-Learning

### 2. *Kritička refleksija i dnevnicu u društveno korisnom učenju*

Critical reflection in service-learning is commonly fostered by reflective journaling and discussion [7: 26]. Reflective journaling enables students to provide some structure to often unpredictable and unstructured service-learning experiences [8] [9]. Student journals facilitate the process of reflection as “a medium through which students can record their actions and observations, as well their emotional and intellectual reactions to community experiences” [10: 44]. Reflection journals are also found to enhance critical thinking [11] and facilitate learning [12]. Additionally, reflective journals provide students with the opportunity to articulate their learning process and develop fresh perspectives.

There are many different techniques for reflective journaling. Usually, students are requested to write journals where they identify a social issue, research the identified issue on-site and in literature, analyze their on-site experiences, and write recommendations for future projects. Stevens and Cooper [9] list a number of ideas for journal-writing activities, many of which might be transformed to video journaling. For example, students might write or record imaginary dialogues with community partners in order to understand their perspectives. Or, they might create concept maps, list key elements in their project, cluster related elements, and building relationships between them. Teachers may provide students with a list of guiding questions, or key terms. The resulting journal may contain different types of entries: daily logs, summary logs, reflections, and milestones. It can also be developed as a list of words that describe student feelings, actions, thoughts and contradictions.

Depending on learning context and learning outcomes, teachers can employ any of these techniques or combinations thereof.

During the past decades, cameras, video editing software, and hosting space have become more and more available. Consequently, an increasing number of service-learning courses foster critical reflection through weblogs and online journals [13] [14]. The positive effects of video media on student achievement and attitudes were already documented almost two decades ago [15]. Video is a powerful tool for learning, teaching and presentation, and provides many advantages over traditional writing-based classroom activities such as richer learning content, and visual documentation of student psychological, social and emotional intellectual development.

However, video blogging and video journals still have not been used much [16] [17]. A single search for “service-learning (video) journal” on YouTube results in 32 videos in English, 28 of which are individual short student video blogs, while the rest are service-learning orientation videos. A slightly modified search with the phrase “service-learning reflection” on YouTube results in 333 videos in English, most of which are (again) individual student video blogs of about 2-3 minutes. These videos typically indicate the lack of appropriate equipment and basic video editing skills (e.g., a loud background noise, poor quality of the footage, low-quality microphone, etc.). A single search for “service-learning (video) journal” on Vimeo returns no results, but a search for “service-learning video” retrieves 22 videos in English, most of which are group video journals of elementary and secondary school children. In comparison to individual video journals, group video journals are of much better quality. These results relate to early findings of Malvey, Hamby and Fottler [18], who report the lack of hardware/software reliability as the basic limitation for online video journaling in service-learning.

In order to deliver an effective video, students need to write a storyboard and prepare an engaging script. Then, they need to engage in various processes related to video production: use a camera, compose clear and aesthetically pleasing shots, streamline the video, do basic video editing, cut the video that

looks professional, and provide broad technical compatibility for the final product (i.e. desktop computers, smart phones, tablets, etc.). In this study, students of information and communication sciences have obviously arrived with a lot of previous knowledge. Looking at a general population, however, it is perhaps too much to expect that students will come with a working knowledge of multimedia learning theories, media psychology, and technical production.

### **3. Service-learning graduate course in University of Zagreb**

#### ***3. Predmet na temu društveno korisnog učenja na Sveučilištu u Zagrebu***

Service-learning was introduced to the University of Zagreb in 2006-2007 through the series of workshops and seminars aimed at its faculty. In 2009-2010, the Department of Information and Communication Sciences offered the first stand-alone elective course on service learning in Croatia which soon received remarkable student enrolment. This researched course is aimed at exposing graduate students to the theory and practice of service-learning, to encourage civic engagement, and to meet the demands of global and diverse educational marketplace. Participants in this study are year-5 students of information sciences specialized in the following fields: Archival Science, Library Science, Museology, and Informatics Teacher Education. During the course, students are expected to complete a minimum of 45 hours of community service (3 hours per week during 15 weeks) and academic requirements of the course. Community service is conducted in conjunction with weekly class meetings.

Participating in different critical reflection course activities, students need to demonstrate what they have learned during their service experience. Therefore, they are offered both individual and collaborative assessment tools. Individual assessment consists of student journals, which can be presented in a written or video format. Journals need to bring about personal experience, knowledge and skills acquired during the semester, relevant literature resources used in the project, specific contributions to the community, and clear connections between

students' service-learning experience and their future qualification. Learning outcomes for this reflection activity are: (1) Student needs to understand and analyze literature about different types of service-learning activities. (2) Student needs to understand the difference between service-learning volunteering and student practicum (3) Student needs to critically think about own project, forming arguments and counter-arguments. (4) Student needs to participate in group projects aimed at developing information technology solutions that follow the thematic content of the study. (5) Student needs to acquire transversal competencies: critical thinking and active citizenship.

The collaborative assessment tools are: project application, final project report, in-class oral presentation of the project application and the final report, critical project e-portfolio on Mahara, and showcase e-portfolio on Google site, Prezi or YouTube. Assessment of project application includes evaluation of the project goals according to SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic/relevant, time-oriented) and the selection of the community partner. Assessment of the final project report includes evaluation of completed project goals (SMART criteria), team members' skills, explanation of the community need, project structure and backup plan, project activities, outputs, milestones and deliverables, Gantt chart, etc. Learning outcomes of these two activities are: (1) Students need to learn how to write a group project applications, project plans, evaluation forms and final project reports. (2) Students need to understand project management procedures. Within in-class oral presentations, assessment includes evaluation of presentation skills, time frames of the presentation, and contact with the audience. Learning outcomes of these activities are: Students need to develop presentation skills (verbal: voice, vocal variety), non-verbal skills (gestures, facial expressions, pauses) and their transversal competencies (inter-personal skills and intra-personal skills).

The next collaborative assessment tool is an e-portfolio that needs to be developed on Mahara ePortfolio system. This tool enables formative assessment of learning, since each

group portfolio needs to represent the critical reflection of the project team and other teams in the service-learning course. In the e-portfolio, students are expected to use multimedia (video, pictures, attachments) that represent their learning curve over the course of semester. Also, they are expected to post comments on other projects in the Mahara system. The last assessment tool is a showcase e-portfolio on Google site, Prezi or YouTube. This tool enables summative assessment of learning, which includes evaluation of presentation structure, use of keywords, different media and content. The created video or website need to be informative, relevant, aesthetically pleasing, engaging and well-designed. Learning outcomes of this activity are: (1) Students learn to use the appropriate tools to create the showcase e-portfolio. (2) Students need to develop presentations (the ability to make effective, high-level presentations that are needed for effective communication of complex ideas). Students need to develop transversal competencies: multi-literacy, inter-personal skills, ICT skills and intra-personal skills.

#### **4. Case Study I: TiM project**

##### **4. *Studija slučaja I: TiM projekt***

#### **4.1 Community Need**

##### **4.1 *Potrebe zajednice***

In the contemporary society, roles and functions of museums have significantly changed. Contemporary museums turn visitors from mere observers into active participants. However, there is still a fundamental lack of awareness of the importance of a museum among the elementary school students - 1st to 8th grade. Many students find museum visits uninteresting, tiresome and even useless. Also, Croatian elementary school curriculum does not include student visits to institutions of cultural heritage [19]. On the other hand, if students receive high quality educational guidance in museums during their formative years, they are given a chance to fully understand the importance of cultural inheritance and social context of museum exhibits. Therefore, the aim of the project, titled TiM: Ti i Muzej (Team: You

and Museum) is to highlight the importance of systematically organized age- appropriate school visits to museums.

## 4.2 Student - Community Partnership

### 4.2 *Partnerstvo između studenata i zajednice*

The project was established through a collaboration between students of Information and Communication Sciences from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (who needed to obtain the field experience), the elementary school Cvjetno Naselje (which needed to expand its involvement with the local community), and the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb (which needed to increase the number of elementary school students visiting museum and recognizing museum educational activities).

## 4.3 Project Design

### 4.3 *Dizajn projekta*

Elementary school students (seventh and eighth graders) have visited Museum of Arts and Crafts with their school teachers under the professional guidance of the museum pedagogue. After the tour of the permanent exhibition, they took part in creative workshops prepared according to their age. Students of Information and Communication Sciences have documented all the activities in a video journal. They created a website with the information about the Museum, which contains a gallery of pictures showing the recent visit to the Museum, and an interactive quiz about the Museum of Arts and Crafts and its artifacts.

## 4.4 Video Journal

### 4.4 *Video dnevnik*

In the 18 minutes long video journal, university students managed to document the most interesting parts of their project. They introduced themselves, explained the background of their service-learning project, and presented project-related observations of the Head of the Educational Department of the Museum of Arts and Crafts. The video also documents the visit

of elementary school students to the permanent exhibition of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, and their participation in the workshops. Finally, the video contains recorded interview responses of boys and girls visiting the museum.

In the journal, girls from the 7th grade expressed their appreciation of the contemporary artist Boris Badurina. They also found it interesting to see all the artistic periods in one place, and to be able to notice the differences in styles from furniture to clothing styles. At the end of the interview, female pupils have concluded that they never expected to acquire so much knowledge in the museum. Boys admitted that they (and their peers) rarely or never visit museums. For some of these thirteen year old boys, this was their first visit to the museum in their lives.

Eighth-grade pupils emphasized that this visit enabled them to connect the lessons learned in school with real museum artifacts. During school classes, they do not have an opportunity to link historical facts to material artifacts, so they lack actual perception of life in a specific historical period. They abandoned the prejudice of museums as places with dusty antiquities, boring remains and scraps.

## 4.5 Outcomes

### 4.5 *Ishodi*

Measure 1: Video realization

In spite of compressed time format, lack of appropriate equipment, and lack of advanced video editing skills, university students managed to create the video, insert background music and summarize the whole project experience in 18 minutes of the video journal. This provided them with an experience of making video journals for a service-learning course, as well as with better understanding of the benefits and issues associated with such projects, including time constraints and effectiveness.

Measure 2: Community partner satisfaction

After watching the video, the Head of the Educational Department of the Museum of Arts and Crafts expressed very positive comments on the student project and the video, and students found these comments encouraging. Also, the

Head expressed satisfaction with the collaboration with university students and the high level of their technical preparedness, as well as with their willingness to understand the needs and demands of the Museum.

#### Measure 3: Teacher satisfaction

The group video journal was used by university students to document their service-learning project experience, and by their teachers as a tool for evaluation. During the semester, university students were introduced to critical reflection activities (journals and portfolios) that were assessed at the end of the course. Students could have used either e-learning tools available through Moodle and Mahara (ePortfolio system), or they could have created group video journals that represent their learning curve over the course of semester. Teacher's analysis of this video journal confirmed that students' service-learning project enabled meaningful teaching and learning experiences.

#### Measure 4: Student satisfaction

All four participating university students stated that they gained a valuable teaching experience through designing the interview questions for elementary school pupils and explaining them the concepts related to the museum (such as "curator" or "depot"). Working in a group setting allowed students to exchange ideas with their peers and to learn from each other. This was especially important because students had different backgrounds in information technology and video editing. All students have recognized the emerging role of information technologies in shaping their participation in the community, and have discovered ways in which video journals can be used to address challenges of developing and facilitating service-learning experiences.

#### Measure 5: Skill development

In the group video journal, university students have documented the actual project that was implemented in a real world setting. Apart from the development of their leadership, communication and teamwork skills, they have also contributed to the quality of the Museum's educational program in an informal learning environment. Students were able to apply their

classroom learning in the video editing process, organize raw footage from the video shoot, cut, paste and retime the material. Students applied color correction and other editing effects, and aligned the video to the earlier developed storyboard. They made the graphic and text overlay (inserting names and roles of participants in the video during their interview) and added the background music. Moreover, they rendered their video journal in order to publish it in one of the popular streaming video websites and, finally, uploaded it to YouTube channel.

#### Limitations and Challenges

The first video journal performed well on all five measures of feasibility, suggesting that group video journals are feasible in service-learning courses. Students conducted their interviews with own equipment (built-in mobile phone cameras), so poor quality of the footage represents the main limitation of their video journal. The recorded content was at some points very difficult to listen to, view and examine for the evaluation purposes. However, students have put forth enough effort to acquire necessary video editing skills and to extract the material that represents the most valuable reflections of elementary school students and their community partners. In spite of poor quality of the raw footage, students were able to develop critical thinking about their project, which resulted in careful decision making in the selection of the video material to be used in the journal.

## 5. Case study II: Readers' Club Knjigotron

### 5. *Studija slučaja II: Čitateljski klub Knjigotron*

#### 5.1 Community Need

##### 5.1 *Potrebe zajednice*

Children learn about the world and other cultures through the social messages found in stories. Stories help children understand how society perceives their culture as well as the cultures of their classmates, teachers, caregivers, and others, thereby influencing their social and identity development..... One place that children can interact with stories on a regular basis is the library. [20: 2]

In the library, children spend time looking for a new and interesting content, and they are surrounded with children with similar interests. Unfortunately, interviewing school children from the local neighborhood, students of Information and Communication Sciences from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb found out that elementary school children rarely visit the local public library. Guided by parents and teachers, children of a younger age (7 to 10 years old) like to visit the local library. But, as they grow older, they cease to perceive the library as a place to play, learn and make friends. Some children never pay a visit to the library, and expect their parents to borrow the required readings for them. The project named "Readers' club for children Knjigotron" was conceived as a meeting point for children, university students and professional librarians. The aim was to offer creative workshops for children of 11 to 13 years old, which is a critical age at which worldwide children stop coming to the library (EU Directorate General Education and Culture, 2013).

## 5.2 Student - Community Partnership

### 5.2 *Partnerstvo između studenata i zajednice*

The project was established through a collaboration between students of Information and Communication Sciences from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (who needed to obtain the field experience), Children's Library "Marin Držić" in Zagreb (which needed to increase the number of elementary school students visiting library and recognizing it as a place for informal learning) and the elementary school Rapska (which needed to expand its involvement with the local community and increase the awareness about the importance of reading among children).

## 5.3 Project Design

### 5.3 *Dizajn projekta*

In "Readers' club for children Knjigotron", children aged 11 to 13 were encouraged to express themselves in writing, drawing and acting. University students aimed to provide children who love books with quality content. They also aimed to gather children who were not fans of books to

encourage them to socialize, play and participate in informal learning within the library setting. University students held several workshops in Children's Library "Marin Držić", designed a poster and a video journal, conducted surveys about reading habits of school children, and conducted evaluation of workshops. The spin-off of this project is Bibliocycling (Bibliocikliranje), a new project where the idea of the Reader's club was connected to bicycles, which involved the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, Reader's Club of the Children's Library "Marin Držić", 7 other libraries between Zagreb and Split, and Maestral orphanage in Split.

## 5.4 Video Journal

### 5.4 *Video dnevnik*

In the 10 minutes long video journal, university students have documented the idea of the Readers' club, the workflow for the project, and children's experiences with the project. The video gives the summary of children's creative expression, participation in motivational games, design of creative posters, and interviews between project team members and children. In the footage, children bring evidence of their reaction to issues encountered in everyday life and in the literature through their creative expressions, talk and play.

Readers' club for children Knjigotron was primarily designed for elementary school children aged 11 to 13, but today it is opened to all children who want to come and participate in the workshops. The video aimed to develop the positive children's attitude towards the library and to arouse their desire to spend their free time in the library. The video connects with the audience on an emotional level, inspiring a call to action from the viewer. It shows that by taking part in the Readers' club, children can socialize, play and learn.

## 5.5 Outcomes

### 5.5 *Ishodi*

Measure 1: Video realization

In spite of lack of advanced video editing skills, university students managed to create a video that will contribute to attracting children to join the Readers' club Knjigotron. At the outset of the project, student attention was focused on learning

a new set of skills over a short period of time. They have clearly defined the aim of their video journal and their target group. In the phase of recording, students aimed to document all they have done in the workshops. They wanted for their video journal to be interesting and child friendly, and also to include interviews with children. Having carefully reviewed an hour and a half of material, they selected the best frames, eliminated bad or useless frames, found suitable background music, came up with the alternation of scenes that follows the rhythm of the music, and made a brief 10 minute video journal which represents a meaningful contribution to their service-learning project.

#### Measure 2: Community partner satisfaction

After watching the video, the librarian from the Children's Library "Marin Držić", who closely collaborated with university students in all project activities, said the following:

This video clearly shows that the establishment of the Reader's club was a wonderful experience. I enjoyed the collaboration with such a responsible and enthusiastic project team. I was pleasantly surprised every time that students did more than they were required to (as is the case with this video). In creating the video, they harnessed all their knowledge and different skills, and this is what made it richer and better. The video is an evidence that, along with reading, workshops were also filled with a lot of entertainment and laughter. I am glad that the children who love to read had a chance to share their experiences in the video, to feel supported and to enjoy the company of their own kind. For all of us who participated in the workshops, meeting in the library was a multidimensional experience: it had a social and educational component (reading, learning and creative expression). The video managed to capture both of them. Reader's Club proved to be a good addition to the program in the Children's Library Marin Držić, which means that, as such, is necessary in the community. Workshops are continuing, and we become volunteers.

#### Measure 3: Teacher satisfaction

According to the teacher, this video journal is

an excellent indicator of students' creativity and ability to engage intellectually, emotionally and socially. The video was used during evaluation of the project. Furthermore, it also served as a promotional video of service-learning activities in Croatia in the Europe Engage KA2 project entitled "Developing a culture of civic engagement through service-learning within higher education in Europe" [21]. The video was subtitled in English and rated Excellent by project partners from 12 European countries who work on service-learning promotion and networking. Their analysis of this video journal confirmed that students' service-learning project enabled meaningful teaching and learning experiences.

#### Measure 4: Student satisfaction

All six members of the project team were students of librarianship. In addition, four students had teaching competences, and one student had video editing skills. Working in a group setting, at the end of the semester, all six students gained important skills in video creation, stating that the experience of creating a video journal was more educational than a traditional written journal. They agreed that this experience enriched the knowledge gained in the study and the ability to work in teams. It also increased their self-confidence and skills such as communication, problem solving and persistence and provided them the insight to deal with their personal weaknesses and abilities. After watching the video, students claimed that the video increased their feelings of personal achievement, fostered their desire to help others, and developed a sense of social responsibility. In the process of writing the storyboard and prepare the script for the video, they learned about the purpose of their study and the needs in their local community. This whole process helped them to understand how they can involve in community activities. These experiences served as background for the aforementioned spin-off project Bibliocycling.

#### Measure 5: Skill development

In the beginning of the project, students aimed to take advantage of the knowledge they acquired during their studies and the specific skills of each individual member. But, as the project went on,

they realized that they will need to gain more skills to complete the project, such as journalistic skills and video creation and editing skills. One team member who had experience in video creation taught the other members the basics in working with Canopus Edius 5 software. He also taught them how to record the workshop, directed and mounted the video journal that was recorded by the other members of the team. The quality of the sound captured by the camera was not as good as the quality of the sound recorded by the audio recorder, so team members had to learn how to separate the sound captured by the camera and instead use the sound recorded by the audio recorder. Although it sounded as a simple work, it was not an easy task for five beginners. However, they have very quickly mastered it, although it took them a while to place the sound in multiple frames of the video. Additionally, they learned the basic actions in the Canopus Edius 5 program, such as cutting, deleting, bonding and separation of sound and images. Finally, all students consider the most important aspects of this activity to be: teamwork, interaction with the clients (elementary school students and librarians), references for their CV, communication skills, knowledge application and being able to give of themselves.

#### Limitations and Challenges

This video journal performed excellent on all five measures of feasibility, suggesting once more that group video journals are feasible in service-learning courses. In order to make a high-quality video journal, however, university students had to find the professional equipment, since the built-in mobile phone cameras did not serve the purpose. Preparation of recording equipment (camera stand, cassette and camera), was a challenge because every Friday students had to borrow the expensive equipment and return it to its owner on Sunday evening. Therefore, one of the team members had to skip lectures on Fridays, four times in a row. They failed to provide a sound recorder and a microphone for the first workshop and therefore did not record interviews with children in that workshop. Also, although the scenario was created just before the first workshop, they could not follow it because they realized that they cannot expect the same

children to be present at all workshops and could not assume how children will react to their workshops. Since the five of them were total beginners in working with video, the transfer of footage to a computer represented a challenge for them, as well as browsing through the material, storage of the material, the design of the whole scenario and providing the sound recorder for the interviews.

At the end, all students were able to develop necessary video creation and editing skills, which resulted in an excellent video journal that was internationally recognized. The additional reward for students is that project Knjigotron has been recognized by the Zagreb City Libraries (ZGL) as the first Readers' club (within the ZGL) which was carried out exclusively for children [22: 15] and which became a regular activity of the Marin Držić library.

## 6. Discussion

### 6. *Diskusija*

Using qualitative research methodology based on first-hand tutoring experience by one of its authors, this paper analyses usage of video journals service-learning at the University of Zagreb, Department of Information and Communication Sciences, with year-5 students of Information Sciences specialized in the following fields: Archival Science, Library Science, Museology, and Informatics Teacher Education. Video journals created by these students have achieved remarkable results on various measures of feasibility, thus suggesting that video journals are not just feasible but actually desirable for service-learning courses at their study level. However, students of information sciences arrive with above-average previous digital skills. And, even amongst these students, warnings voiced by earlier research still achieve a lot of resonance. As Malvey, Hamby and Fottler [18] indicated almost a decade ago, the main obstacles to smooth implementation of video journals in service-learning are of technical character: availability of equipment, (lack of) specific digital skills such as video editing... These pertinent challenges cannot be attributed to mere lack of appropriate training – more importantly, they also indicate the lack of a wider video literacy.

The presented case studies provide two different student responses on video journals in service-learning. Students in Case study II: Readers' Club Knjigotron have managed to achieve high levels of proficiency in the field of video production, which was awarded by wider recognition of their project nationally and internationally. Remarkably, the majority of these students arrived to the course without previous expertise in video production. This indicates that service-learning, in smaller groups, can help students create a small community that can foster significant development of digital skills. At the same time, students engaged in the Readers' Club Knjigotron have also achieved high levels of achievement in terms of course learning outcomes. This example is somewhat extraordinary, as such levels of success cannot be expected to repeat in every team or even in every generation of students. However, Case study II: Readers' Club Knjigotron indicates that video journals, in an appropriate setting and with an appropriate student population, can be an excellent pedagogical vehicle for service-learning.

Case Study I: Team: You and Museum, is probably much more indicative for creating reasonable future expectations from video journals in service-learning. Students struggled with video production and editing, and the produced video cannot be used outside of classroom setting. Yet, within these limitations, students have nevertheless met learning outcomes for their course and developed appropriate critical skills. This indicates that high levels of technical proficiency are not necessary for successful use of video journals in service learning, i.e. that content is much more important than form. In future research, it would be interesting to explore the threshold of video proficiency for successful service learning, and determine a minimum level of technical skills that allows successful use of video journals in service learning.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7. *Zaključak*

Service-learning takes place in a contested space between learning and community service. Using video journals provides service-learning

with an additional layer of complexity, visibility, and learning for all participants. Nowadays, just like a decade ago [18], the main obstacles to implementation of video journals in service-learning are technical skills related to video production. In the age of ubiquitous computing, however, equipment is no longer an obstacle. Even widely available equipment, such as phones and standard computers, provides enough computing power for creating video journals adequate for service-learning. In the age of video cultures [23] [24], therefore, the notion of technical proficiency and availability of equipment has converged into a wider notion of video literacy.

This case study is conducted with a somewhat untypical population of year-5 students of Information Sciences. It is to be expected that students in other fields, as well as younger students, will face more obstacles to making video journals. However, video production seems to be a very useful vehicle for student learning. In spite of differences in technical skills and quality of final videos, students in both groups have successfully met learning outcomes and developed critical skills. After crossing a certain threshold (i.e. being able to produce a video), it seems that meeting learning outcomes and development of critical skills does not depend much on the level of video proficiency. Therefore, video literacy is inevitably a mesh-up of technical and conceptual skills related to video production, analysis and interpretation. Year-5 students of Information Sciences inevitably arrive with a lot of baggage, so in this research it is impossible to explore this mesh-up further.

With its background in critical theory and community service, service-learning is an excellent starting point for inquiry into issues pertaining to video and learning. Unsurprisingly, however, these questions quickly grow beyond the context of service-learning, and transform into more general questions characteristic of the role of video in modernity. In future research, therefore, it would be interesting to look more closely into the question: What makes a video literate person? It is from this position, then, that we might return to service-learning and develop appropriate pedagogies for learners in the age of the digital video.

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