

Informatics Education at School: What Should We Teach?

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Lithuania – LIETUVA





- Territory 65 300 km²
- Population 3 mln.
- Lithuanians 84%
- Vilnius 550 000
- Currency Litas
- Borders: with Latvia,
 Belorussia, Poland, Russia
 and Baltic sea



About Vilnius University

Established 1579



In 1579, King Stephen Bathory's charter transformed the Jesuit college, founded in 1570, into an establishment of higher education, Academia et Universitas Vilnensis Societatis Jesu



About me

- involved in teaching Informatics since 1986
- wrote more than 60 textbooks in Informatics
- published more than 150 research papers and methodical works
- involved in establishing national Informatics and later IT curricula at schools
- heading the group at the Ministry of Education on preparing strategy for Informatics and ICT at schools in 2015-2020
- established international contest Bebras on Informatics and Computer Fluency
- Editor of the international journals INFORMATICS IN EDUCATION and OLYMPIADS IN INFORMATICS



My research areas

- Logo-based programming and constructionism
- Teaching algorithms and programming
- Teacher (Informatics) training
- Technology based learning
- Learning sciences and computing
- Educational information and communication technologies
- Informatics (Computer Science) Didactics
- Education software design and localisation
- Informatics engineering education research methods
- Computational thinking



The Education Structure in the Republic of Lithuania





Informatics (CS) and ICT (IT)

- **Informatics** is defined as the science dealing with design, realization, evaluation, use, and maintenance of information processing systems, including hardware, software, organizational and human aspects
- **Computer science** (CS) is the study of computers and algorithmic processes, including their principles, their hardware and software designs, their applications, and their impact on society (CSTA).
- Information Technology (IT) is defined as the technological applications of informatics in society
- ICT means the combination of IT with other, related technologies





IT and Informatics

- IT and CS are distinct subjects, with different purposes, although they have areas of synergy.
- Informatics or Computer Science or Computing is an academic discipline, in the same way that mathematics and physics are.
- Digital literacy is a core skill for accessing subjects across the curriculum, including CS and IT themselves.



Common classroom activities

Learn outside in my school's grounds Have people from outside to help me learn Have a change of activity to help focus Create pictures or maps to help me remember Teach my classmates about something Have some activities that allow me to move around Learn things that relate to the real world Listen to background music Work on a computer Talk about my work with a teacher Have a drink or water when I need it Spend time thinking quietly on my one Work in small groups to solve a problem Take notes while my teacher talks Have a class discussion Listen to a teacher talking for a long time Copy from a board or a book

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Short glance to Informatics at School





IT and Informatics teachers





Informatics in Lithuanian schools

- The name: Informatics (1986-2002), then Information Technologies, IT (since 2002)
- Compulsory subject for grades 5-10 (lower secondary school)
 - approximately 1 hour per week (35 hours per year)
 for grades 5 and 6; 7 or 8; 9 and 10
- Optional modules for grades 11 and 12 (programming, data base, desktop publishing) for upper secondary school



IT in Lithuanian schools

Starting from 2005 information technology has begun to be taught in grades 5–6 to 10.

The curricula for 5th – 10th grades include a compulsory course in IT. Students are being prepared to the further life as citizens of the information and knowledge society that are able to use modern technologies. They are prepared to adapt themselves in a changing world and are ready to develop their professional skills constantly.



Goals, aims, means, and scope of learning Informatics

The development of students' **information culture** was chosen as the main goal of teaching informatics.

The main concepts included into the information culture were:

- 1. knowledge of the essential systems of informatics and the ability to apply the knowledge in cognition and creation,
- 2. apprehension of informatics terms,
- 3. comprehension of the influence of informatics means on the general culture,
- 4. skills of using ICT,
- 5. ability of logical as well as algorithmic thinking,
- 6. readiness for constant improvement of one's information style of activities.



Computational Thinking

- Logically organizing and analyzing data
- Representing data through abstractions such as models and simulations
- Automating solutions through a series of ordered steps
- Identifying, analyzing, and implementing possible solutions with the goal of achieving the most **efficient** and **effective** combination of steps and resources
- **Generalizing** and transferring this problem solving process to a wide variety of problems
- Formulating problems in a way that enables us to use a computer and other tools to **help solve** them



Distribution themes and time for 5-6 grades

Themes, subthemes	IT hours	Subjects, integration is addressed to	
Introduction to computer application	10		
Principles of computer use	6	SAT	
Drawing with computer	4	Art; 10	
Text and keyboard	14	Mother tongue; 10	
Internet and electronic mail	10	Mother tongue; 4	
16		Foreign language; 10	
Modelling with Logo	24		



1. Introduction to computer

2. Drawing

3. Text processing

4. Internet and emails

5. Modeling (Logo)



Modelling with Logo

- Computer control understanding through Logo
- Control the dynamic object (turtle): by commands, keyboard, mouse
- Repeating
- Drawing, scanning, composition
- Using several objects (turtles)
- Turtles and their shapes
- Basics of animation



Contents of Informatics and IT subjects

Compulsory course, 9-10 grades	Compulsory course, 11-12 grades	Advanced (optional) course, 11-12 grades	
Computer (principles of the work)	Advanced elements of text editing	Data base	
Text processing	Presentation	Multimedia	
Information (basics of information handling)	WWW and electronic mail	Programming	
Algorithms (main concepts and commands)	Social and ethical issues of using IT		
	Spreadsheet		



IT maturity exam in Lithuania

- Based on optional programming module for grades 11-12
- The exam is based on the optional programming module which consists of four parts:
 - basic elements and constructs of programming;
 - data structures;
 - developing algorithms;
 - testing and debugging programs.



Structure of IT maturity exam

The exam consists of two parts:

- 30% computer literacy;
- 70% programming:
 - 20% programming test (examine the level of students' knowledge and understanding the tools required in programming),
 - 50% two practical tasks (students must write Pascal programs using PC; this part examine the students' ability to use programming as a tool for problem solving).



Practical tasks

- A first task is intended to examine the students' abilities
 - to use the procedures or functions,
 - to use the data types,
 - to realize the algorithms for work with data structures,
 - to manage with input and output in text files.
- A second task is intended to examine the students' understanding and abilities to implement data structures. The core of the task is to develop the appropriate structures of records together with arrays. Students are asked:
 - to input data from the text file to arrays containing the elements of record type,
 - to perform operations by implementing algorithms,
 - to present the results in a text file.



Evaluation system

- Both tasks intentionally requires to write batch style programs, as they are more suitable for blackbox testing.
- Semi-automatic evaluation system with blackbox testing is develped for evaluation of programs.
- Exam evaluation system has different requirements than systems used in programming courses or programming contests

Evaluation schema

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First task: evaluation criteria	Points	Comments	
Tests	20	Full points if the program provides correct outputs to all tests.	
Correct reading from file	4	Evaluated only if the program scores no points for the tests.	
The result is outputted correctly	2		
The function, which calculates the number of chess sets that can be collected from the pieces brought by the students is created	5		
Other functions, procedures (if there are ones) and the main program are correct	9		
The data type of one-dimensional array is declared correctly	1		
The function which performs the indicated calculations is crated	1	1	
Meaningful names of the variables. Program parts are commented, spelling is correct.		Always evaluated	
Programming style is consistent, no statements for working with the screen.	2		
Total	25		



Informatics at UK school

- The Royal Society: Shut down or restart? The way forward for computing in UK schools January 2012, report, 122 pages
- This report analyses the current state of Computing education in schools and sets out a way forward for improving on the present situation
- <u>http://royalsociety.org/uploadedFiles/Royal_Society_Content/education/policy/computing-in-schools/2012-01-12-Computing-in-Schools.pdf</u>



Main findings

Shortage of teachers

Informatics knowledge

with sufficient

Less people study rigorous Computer Science

ICT / Informatics

lessons delivered

by non-specialists

Decisions are made based on negative impressions

ICT / Informatics

as digital literacy

curriculum delivered

ICT / Informatics perceived as being

low level skills



Redefine name (recommendation 1)

- The term ICT as a brand should be reviewed and the possibility considered of disaggregating this into clearly defined areas such as digital literacy, IT and CS. There is an analogy here with how English is structured at school, with reading and writing (*basic literacy*), English Language (*how the language works*) and English Literature (*how it is used*).
- The term **'ICT' should no longer be used** as it has attracted too many negative connotations



Informatics should be recognized

- There is a need to improve understanding in schools of the nature and scope of Computing
- In particular there needs to be recognition that Computer Science is a rigorous academic discipline of great importance to the future careers of many pupils
- The status of Computing in schools needs to be recognised and raised by government and senior management in schools



Shortage of Informatics teachers

- there is a shortage of teachers who are able to teach beyond basic digital literacy
- there is a lack of continuing professional development for teachers of computing



Teacher preparation

- The government should set targets for the number of Computer Science and Information Technology specialist teachers, and monitor recruitment against these targets in order to allow all schools to deliver a rigorous curriculum. This should include providing training bursaries to attract suitably qualified graduates into teaching for which industry funding could be sought.
- Education Scotland should ensure that the declared entitlement of all learners to third-level outcomes in Computing Science is implemented in all schools for all learners using appropriately qualified teachers.



Develop qualifications in CS (recommendation 7)

- In order to redress the imbalance between academic and vocational qualifications in this area and to ensure that all qualifications are of value to those who take them the departments for education across the UK should encourage Awarding Organizations to review their current provision and develop Key Stage 4 (KS4) qualifications in Computer Science in consultation with the UK Forum, universities and employers.
- Awarding Organisations across the UK should review and revise the titles and content of all new and existing qualifications in this area to match the disaggregation described above (e.g. Computer Science, Information Technology and digital literacy).



Educational tools

• Suitable technical resources should be available in all schools to support the teaching of Computer Science and Information technology. These could include pupil-friendly programming environments such as Scratch, educational microcontroller kits such as PICAXE and Arduino, and robot kits such as Lego Mindstorms.



Curriculum

- The Department for Education should remedy the current situation, where good schools are dis-incentivised from teaching Computer Science, by reforming and rebranding the current ICT curriculum in England. Schemes of work should be established for ages 5–14 across the range of Computing aspects, e.g. digital literacy (the analogue to being able to read and write), Information Technology, and Computer Science.
- These should be constructed to be implementable in a variety of ways, including a cross-curricular approach for digital literacy at primary and early secondary school. Schools may prefer not to impose a timetable or separately staff these elements at this age, but the existence of separately-defined learning experiences will ensure that each strand is always properly developed unlike at present.





Teaching Informatics: Estonian case

- Informatics not a subject in curriculum
 - ICT considered a cross-cutting concern
 - Skills to be acquired by use in other subjects
 - No centrally provided materials for the above
- Implementation
 - Many schools do offer IT classes
 - Mostly usage for standard office work
 - Very eclectic, due to lack of curriculum





Tiger Leap Foundation wants children as uouna as six to be enrolled in codina classes -














Estonia: Primary school

• Grades 1 to 3, ages 6 to 9

- Interactive storytelling with Kodu <u>http://fuse.microsoft.com/page/kodu</u>
- Moving on to Scratch in grade 3
 <u>http://scratch.mit.edu/</u>
- Implementation
 - Already used in one school
 - Course for pilot teachers this fall
 - Pilot roll-out from January



Estonia: Basic school

- Grades 4 to 9, ages 9 to 15
 - Continuing with Scratch, adding Logo
 - Robotics (LEGO NXT/NXC or a local kit)
 - Web pages and simple web applications
- Implementation
 - Already used in computer clubs
 - Pilot roll-out from next September
 - Some modules will remain extracurricular



Estonia: Secondary school

- Grades 10 to 12, ages 15 to 18
 - Continuing with web development
 - + catch-up for those who missed out in primary
 - Programming in spreadsheets
 - Introduction to informatics
- Implementation
 - Computer club or elective course in school
 - May be compulsory in science-oriented schools

International curriculum development

- ACM K-12 curriculum (1999), revised March 2011
 - CSTA (CS Teacher Association, USA) K-12
 Computer Science Standards
 - Computer Science as a Core Discipline
 - CS is intellectually important
 - Leads to multiple career paths
 - Teaches problem solving
 - Supports links to other sciences
 - Can engage all students
 - Other
 - Information technology fluency
 - Scales: concepts, capabilities, and skills







Strands in the Computer Science Standards

Computational Thinking

Community, Global, and Ethical Impact

Collaboration

Computers and Computational Devices

Computing Practice

CSTA K-12 Computer Science Standards

10 fundamental concepts:

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- Computer organization
- Information systems
- Networks
- Digital representation of information
- Information organization
- Modelling and abstraction
- Algorithmic thinking and programming
- Universality
- Limitations of information technology
- Societal impact of information technology.



International curriculum development

- UNESCO/IFIP (2002)
- The German Society for Informatics GI:
 - grades 5 to 10
 - content area and process area
 - The content part covers 5 basic concepts:
 - information and data
 - algorithms
 - languages and automata
 - informatics systems
 - informatics, man and society



What concepts should Informatics include in secondary schools?

- The answer is problematic due to several reasons:
 - Informatics, information technology is a new and rapidly evolving science.
 - The variety of different practical applications of informatics overruns the core theoretical and scientific concepts.
 - No common framework, what should be introduced in school from the theory of informatics, and whether it should be introduced at all.

Informatics concepts at school



Informatics concepts at school





Key informatics concepts for schools





Few "commonly agreed" concepts of informatics for secondary schools

- Algorithms and programming
 Decomposed into data, variable, cycle, procedure, object, class, etc.
- Structures and patterns
- Information
- Automata and graph theory elements



Process of integration of informatics concepts in general education





How we should teach Informatics?

- Bringing informatics to schools through curriculum in a formal track
- Supporting the informal ways of introducing pupils to informatics
- ... to introduce informatics through contests



Contest on Informatics and Computer Fluency

- Contests are a source of inspiration and innovation
- Contests may be the key to the potential of new knowledge and attractive way to bind up technology and education
- *Bebras* (Beaver) International Contest on Informatics and Computer Fluency
- The main principles of the *Bebras* contest are borrowed from the international mathematical contest *Kangaroo*



International Contest on Informatics and Computer Fluency BEBRAS (Lithuanian word for beaver)

Task oriented contest for school pupils aged 10 to 19

Goals

- to **motivate** pupils to solve problems using informatics methods
- to **stimulate** pupils' interest in informatics and information technology
- to **encourage** pupils to *think* deeper while using computers and information technolgies
- to inseminate concepts of informatics



Concepts of Informatics

are related to "Fundamental Ideas of Computer Science" that are applicable in different areas of computer science may be taught on every intellectual level will be relevant in the long run have meaning in everyday life

Concepts are independent from specific informatics systems Concepts can be applied in new situations in the future Concepts are valuable in the long run

Concepts consist of aspects

- Algorithmic thinking
- Symbolic representation
- Patterns, Structrurs
- Parallelism, Synchronization
- Iteration, Recursion

etc.

Bebras Countries

S - S	Country	Particip. 2010	Particip. 2011	Particip. 2012	First Contest
The Contraction of the second	Austria	8 425	9 171	9877	2007
TSTAS VIV	Belgium	-	-	848	2012
	Bulgaria	-	-	137	2012
24 countries	Canada	-	200	2400	2011
	Cyprus	-	-	?	2012
Trials Israel Sweden	Czech Rep.	14 867	19 280	27650	2008
	Estonia	3 956	4 807	4012	2005
	Finland	1 472	2 045	2197	2010
	France	-	46 346	92000	2011
	Germany	117 950	155 419	186048	2006
New	Hungary	-	1 911	3200	2011
	Italy	1 325	1 597	3885	2009
countries	Japan	-	1 600	3600	2011
Australia	Latvia	1 072	893	1336	2005
Ireland	Lithuania	13 889	19 277	24390	2004
Molovsio	Netherlands	10 231	11 252	12000	2005
Walaysia	Poland	9 962	11 945	15587	2005
Mexico	Russia	-	-	?	2012
UK	Slovakia	22 139	36 382	49798	2008
USA	Slovenia	-	3 454	8120	2011
R. of S. Africa S. Korea	Spain	-	-	?	2011
	Switzerland	3 470	4 475	7086	2010
	Taiwan	-	-	8100	2012
	Ukraine	25 971	42 176	59918	2008



Absolute Participation 2012



Relative Participation 2012



Bebras workshops for creating tasks

- 2005 in Balsiai, Pasvalys, Lithuania
- 2006 in Balsiai, Pasvalys, Lithuania
- 2007 in Balsiai, Pasvalys, Lithuania
- 2008 in Torun, Poland
- 2009 in Balsiai, Pasvalys, Lithuania
- 2010 in Dagstuhl, Germany
- 2011 in Druskininkai, Lithuania
- 2012 in Druskininkai, Lithuania
- 2013 in Torun, Poland, June 27 July 1
 2014 in Vilnius, May 28 June 2

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Influence of Bebras Contest

On teaching informatics (computing)

- Introduces concepts to pupils
- Encourages exploring
- Gives examples of good tasks
- Stimulates learning some topics of Informatics
- On developing curriculum
 - Sets an international standardization
 - Helps to agree on concepts
- On teacher training
 - Challenges teachers to deal with new concepts
 - Improves deeper understanding of informatics

IL-06 Data Transmission (Benjamin easy)

We are in 18th century. Popeye The Sailor Man found a treasure chest on a Caribbean island and wants to send a message to his friends on land. When Popeye eats spinach, he is capable of making different kinds of water waves. His friends know the meaning of the following signs.





hurry

III

Popeye sends his friends the following message by creating water waves:



What does this message mean?

A.I found the treasure. I'm waiting on the island. Hurry.B.Hurry. Hurry. I found the treasure. I'm waiting on the island.C.Hurry. I found the treasure. Hurry. I'm waiting on the island.D. I'm waiting on the island.

D.I'm waiting on the island. Hurry

This is informatics

To transport information we need a represention (code), a transport medium, a sender and a receiver. Digital communication is an important part of all informatics systems.

NL-12 Wrong hat (Cadet medium)

C. Dave

D. Emily

The beavers Anna, Brandon, Dave und Emily have in dressing style two rules:

- All four beavers have the hat with their preferred colour.
- None of the beavers prefer the same hat colour as the colour of the shirt



But at the moment all four beavers have the wrong hat colour:

Logic deduction is the basis of computer science. Exclusion of impossible arrangements can lead to the desired solution.

EE-03 Bookshelf (Junior medium)

The librarian wants to order the volumes of an encyclopaedia with as few steps as possible.

For doing one step he takes a volume out of the shelf, shifts some of the remaining ones to left or right and puts the volume in his hand to the new free space.

The following example sorts 5 volumes using just one step:



Now he wanted to order the tonowing > volume.



What is the smallest number of steps

This is computational thinking

A largest increasing subsequence remains untouched in the optimal solution . To find substructures that remain invariant is a key competence of computational thinking.

CH-09 Beaver's log factory (Senior hard)

The beavers have established a site (A) where they do all their log chopping. They want to transport them through a series of canals to the biggest dam ever built (D). Unfortunately the canals allow the transport only of a certain number of logs per minutes (the number at each arrow).



How many logs can reach the dam (D) per minute?

This is informatics

The "maximal flow" in a network with capacities is a typical optimization problem. It can be solved on a computer even for large networks with help of a systematical algorithm, that can efficiently calculate the exact solution.

NL-08 Black and white images (BENJAMIN)

Images on a computer are divided up into a grid of small dots called pixels.

In a black and white image, each pixel is either black or white. The computer can represent black and white images with numbers, for example:



The first number always gives the number of white pixels, the next number gives the number of black pixels and so on. So the first line consists of 0 white pixels followed by 5 black pixels. The second line consists of 2 white pixels, 1 black pixel and 2 white pixels.

Which letter is represented by the following numbers?

0,1,3,1				
0,1,3,1				
0,5				
0,1,3,1				
0,1,3,1				
A) B	в) U	C) H	d) E	
	A ASIA TANK			



BEBRAS: Stamping

Beaver has five stamps and they are numbered from 1 to 5:





In which order did beaver use the stamps?



Beaver Den

In the Beaver Den there are some tracks. Because Beavers don't go backwards there are some parallel tracks to give way. Look at the figure. In the each cell can be only one beaver. In which situation a total traffic jam is **unavoidable**?



A pavement (Junior-Medium), Lowest Girls/Boys rate (0,83)

Peter took a photo of a pavement in front of his house and then created a graph which describes the paving (see pictures).





A point on the graph represents a tile. A line joining two points represents any two tiles bordering.

Later Peter was walking in the town and was photographing pavements. When he returned home he realized that all pavements (except of one) were suitable to fit his graph. Can you recognize which of them was not?



Friends

- We know that:
- Michael's friends are John, Peter and Tom
- John's friends are Michael and Anne
- Anne's friend is John
- Peter's friends are Michael and Tom
- Tom's friends are Michael and Peter

We represent people as points and we draw a line between two people if we know that they are friends with each other.

Which of the given figures can be obtained this way?





Graph for Waiters

Given is a graph for properly setting a table.

Beaver Bob has a job in a restaurant. He has to set the tables. The given graph defines in what way things may be put on each other.

An arrow $A \rightarrow B$ means that a thing of type B may be put on a thing of type A. A thing of type B must not be put on a thing of type A, if there is no arrow from A to B.

Which of the following tables is set correctly according to this picture? Juniors, medium/hard


Constructive Beaver

e developed a very simple modeling language. It Bea consists only of two kinds of objects and two possible operations



cube

c = turn(b)



d = add(c, cylinder)

a = add(cube, cylinder)



b = add(cylinder, cube)

Which operation sequences would generate this thing?

The operation add(A, B) means: Put A and B side by side and glue B to the right side of A. The operation turn(A) means: turn A clockwise around 90 degrees.



Stack of plates (Benjamin - Medium) - easiest task (68,74%) Least unanswered (1,95%)

In the restaurant of the Beaver school, there are two different kinds of plates: the high green ones beavers, and the flat brown ones for the big beavers.

One day, due to building activities, there is only room for one stack of plates.

The beaver kids are queuing for their lunch, and the kitchen beavers need to put the plates on the stack in the right order to make the stack match the queue. Example:



In one of the following pairs of plate stacks and beaver queues, there is a mismatch between queu stack. In which one?



Twiddling (Junior - Medium) - hardest (28,13%)

Each of these two pieces of tube is made of 8 equal segments. These pieces are placed one above the other (they can be turned) so that they coincide partially.



What is the largest possible number of segments of their common part?





Conclusions

- To separate Digital Literacy, IT and Informatics (Computing, CS)
- To elaborate modern framework of Informatics curriculum
- To elaborate modern Informatics teacher education framework
- Focus on fundamental Informatics concepts using different ways

 one of them can be using Bebras contest
- *Bebras* contest on informatics and computer fluency is established to introduce Informatics concepts to pupils regardless of whether she or he is taught informatics at school or not
- Learning Informatics should develop young people into 'technology designers and creators' rather than merely 'technology users' – a philosophy of creativity and expression rather than mere productivity

Thanks you for your attention!

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