

Workshop at ISSEP 2008 in Torun

Bebras International Contest on Informatics and Computer Literacy: The Educational Benefit of Solving Short Informatics Tasks

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All mentioned workshop leaders are members of the International Bebras Contest Committee. Bebras is the Lithuanian word for the vivid and intelligent animal beaver that lives in many countries of the world.

The Bebras contest on informatics is organized very similar to the Kangaroo of mathematics competition. The Bebras contest addresses all secondary school pupils of age 10-19. The participating pupils have to solve on PCs 15 to 21 tasks within 45 minutes. All pupils of a school may participate, also those who had no informatics lessons before. There are 3 age groups: Benjamin, age 10-14, Junior, age 15-16, and Senior age 17-19.

The tasks cover the topics: information comprehension, algorithmic thinking, use of computer systems, structures, patterns and arrangements, puzzles, and social issues of ICT.

The first Bebras Contest took place in Lithuania in 2004 and was from the beginning a big success with thousands of participating pupils in all categories [1]. From the very beginning of this contest the Lithuanian organizers had the goal to internationalize this contest. From 2005 also some other countries organized Bebras contests: Poland, The Netherlands, Latvia, Estonia, Germany and Austria.

The main goal of the Bebras Contest is to motivate pupils to be more interested in informatics topics. Solving of interesting tasks that need some thinking skills to solve them may support the interest in informatics.

The Bebras International Contest on informatics and computer literacy covers a wide area of topics: Information comprehension, use of computer systems, algorithmic thinking, structures, patterns, puzzles and ICT and society [2]. The tasks are developed by an international expert team of educators and scientists that ensures a high quality of the presented tasks [3].

Target Groups of the Workshop

- Teachers and educationists that are interested in challenging informatics tasks for pupils.
- Representatives of country-wide organizations that are interested in organizing educational contests for pupils.

Contents of the workshop:

- Presentation and discussion of the goals of the Bebras Contest.
- Presentation of Bebras tasks of various categories, difficulty levels and age groups. Discussion of the presented tasks: educational value, needed skills and knowledge, possible difficulties in solving the tasks.
- Discussion of the educational benefit of task oriented competitions.
- Online demonstration of Bebras test systems.

Necessary Equipment: a PC room, a beamer

Duration: 2-3 hours

Workshop in Polish language: There will be organized another Bebras Workshop for Polish speaking participants.

References

1. International IT contest "Bebras" (2006), Internet WWW-site, <http://www.bebas.lt>
2. Opmanis M., Dagienė V., Truu A. Task Types at "Beaver" Contests Standards. In: V. Dagienė, R. Mittermeir (Eds.), *Proc. of the 2nd Int. Conference „Informatics in Secondary Schools: Evolution and Perspectives“*, Vilnius, 2006, 509–519.
3. Dagiene V., Futschek G.: Bebras International Contest on Informatics and Computer Literacy: Criteria for Good Tasks. To be published in Proceedings of ISSEP 2008