

THE AVANGUARDIE EDUCATIVE MANIFESTO

Avanguardia educative is a Movement geared to innovation that systematizes the most significant experiences and transforms the organizational and educational models of schools.

The Movement is open to the participation of all those Italian schools who are working daily to transform the Taylor-esque school model that is no longer appropriate to the new generation of digital learners and is equally out of kilter with the knowledge society.

The Movement uses the opportunities offered

by ICT and digital languages to change learning environments and to provide and foster a "Gallery of Ideas" born from schools' direct experience, each of them representing a piece of a mosaic that aims to revolutionize the organization of the teaching, timeframe, and space for education.

The Movement was born from a joint initiative of INDIRE, an institute that has been involved in educational innovation since its foundation in 1925, along with an initial group of schools that have already tried out one or more of the ideas at

the heart of the Movement.

The Movement will offer schools engaged in a radical transformation of the educational model in its various guises the chance to develop the "Gallery of Ideas" and participate in the initiatives envisaged for each of the resulting proposals.

The *Avanguardia educative* Movement intends to link up with all the groups of teachers and existing Italian and international school networks working towards the same end, and has promoted a national innovation initiative every year since 2015.

The seven horizons of *Avanguardia educative*:

- 1 TRANSFORMING THE TRANSMISSION SCHOOL MODEL
- 2 TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY ICT AND DIGITAL LANGUAGES TO SUSTAIN NEW WAYS OF TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT
- 3 CREATING NEW LEARNING SPACES
- 4 REORGANIZING TEACHING TIME
- 5 RECONNECTING THE KNOW-HOW OF SCHOOLS AND THE KNOW-HOW OF THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY
- 6 INVESTING IN "HUMAN CAPITAL" BY RETHINKING RELATIONSHIPS (INTERNAL/EXTERNAL, FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING/PEER-LEARNING, SCHOOLS/COMPANIES, ETC.)
- 7 PROMOTING INNOVATION THAT IS SUSTAINABLE AND TRANSFERABLE

1 TRANSFORMING THE TRANSMISSION SCHOOL MODEL

A model exclusively based on the frontal transmission of knowledge "from the podium" is by now anachronistic: today there are fresh, more engaging ways of teaching.

The teacher can transform the lesson into a non-stop workshop, acting as its director and as a facilitator of cognitive processes, also through the use of ICT; can make room for collaborative and inclusive didactics, for brainstorming, research, and peer-education; can become a benchmark for both the individual and the group, steering students through processes of research and the acquisition of knowledge and skills that involve different timeframes and ways of establishing the teacher/student relationship.

It is through active education – which exploits open and reusable learning materials, simulations, hands-on experiments, educational games, and so on – that learning can occur. Doing and learning from mistakes.

A school that ventures beyond the transmission model and adopts open active educational models allows the students to continuously learn and to reason properly, to self-correct along the way and to present their results to others.

2 TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY ICT AND DIGITAL LANGUAGES TO SUSTAIN NEW WAYS OF TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

Educational practice must take account of the opportunities offered by the new technologies and the changes demanded by the knowledge society.

The judicious use of resources and digital tools enhances, enriches, and integrates the teaching process, "impels" the class, motivates and involves students, stimulates participation and active learning, and contributes to skills development.

For the *Avanguardia educative*, ICT is neither an unwanted guest nor the leading player. It is merely a new means to personalize learning pathways, represent knowledge, broaden horizons and the sources of knowledge, share and communicate, always and everywhere ("M-learning").

ICT allows the birth of new cooperative methodologies of writing, reading and observing phenomena; it allows the representation of concepts using simulated environments, educational games and subject-specific applications and software.

ICT shortens distances by opening new virtual communication spaces – The Cloud, virtual worlds, the Internet of Things – reconnecting places, even when geographically isolated, and stakeholders of the school system: from companies to local authorities, from associations to foundations.

3 CREATING NEW LEARNING SPACES

The fluidity of communication processes generated by ICT clashes with physical environments that can no longer respond to the continuously evolving educational contexts. It imposes a gradual rethinking of spaces and places to include solutions that are flexible, multifunctional, modular, and easily configurable, depending on the activity, and that can satisfy constantly changing contexts.

Spaces conceived in this way encourage the students to get involved and actively explore, to create cooperative bonds, and to simply "enjoy

being at school". These are all essential conditions to promote conscious participation in the educational project and improve students' performance.

Not only is the classroom previously designed for lecture-style face-to-face teaching "redesigned". It also provides diversified spaces to share events and presentations in plenary sessions; places for unstructured activities and individual/informal learning that encourage the sharing of information and stimulate the development of communication skills; environments "to be lived in" and remain in, even after hours, intended for extra-curricular activities such as drama, study groups, training courses for teachers, pupils and parents in agreement with local authorities, businesses, cultural and sports associations, social services, etc.

The classroom remains a space designed for face-to-face interventions, but is also a place where teachers can move around freely and interact in a more explicit and direct way with their students. The various phases of teaching require new settings that are at the heart of a different idea of a school building, which must ensure the integration, complementarity, and interoperability of its spaces.

An avant-garde school is born from a new model of learning and internal operation, in which the pride of place of the classroom recedes.

An avant-garde school makes its environments malleable, with spaces that can always accommodate the school community for teaching activities and any other kind of resource, even of an informal kind; spaces where information is exchanged in an unstructured way, where students can study alone or in small groups, where they can go more deeply into some issues with the teacher, revise, or simply relax.

An avant-garde school opens itself to the outside

world and becomes a barycentre and benchmark for the local community: by increasing the hospitableness of its spaces, it becomes a civic centre geared to citizens' needs, and gives impetus and development to cultural, educational, and social initiatives.

4 REORGANIZING TEACHING TIME

The school model we are familiar with has become the subject of a worldwide rethink. This about-turn involves both the pattern and the management of learning time. The overcoming of rigid barriers, such as the school calendar, lesson times, and the fragmentation of disciplines into minimum time units distributed throughout the school year, can occur while considering: the need to rationalize and optimize resources; a curriculum divided into segments, training units and modules; the establishment of ICT and its applications in the context of education to favour the creation of new educational timeframes and modalities.

5 RECONNECTING THE KNOW-HOW OF SCHOOLS AND THE KNOW-HOW OF THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The expansion of the Internet has made knowledge accessible to everyone, everywhere. Not only is the legacy of facts and notions – once a monopoly of the wise and the expert – now open to the community and to individual citizens, but contemporary society has valorized new skills, difficult to encode in writing and in the sequential structure of the textbook.

Key Competencies, Transversal Competence, Soft Skills, and 21st Century Skills are just some of the attempts made to encode a series of skills required for a profession and assert active citizenship in the knowledge society. These skills are demanded by institutions, companies, and social life, and represent an implicit transversal curriculum that

still appears only marginally in the guidelines for Italian schools.

These are skills that are not linked to a specific discipline, but whose development is linked to a way of learning and working in close connection with the surrounding circumstances.

A school that is open to the evolution of knowledge and methods can understand and accept change, allowing its own community to modernize the school service to meet local demand.

A school that is open can seize the opportunities offered by global innovation. Many projects and initiatives promoted by Europe are opportunities to develop change: European Schoolnet, Erasmus+ and eTwinning are only some of the points of reference in the internationalization of schools!

6 INVESTING IN "HUMAN CAPITAL" BY RETHINKING RELATIONSHIPS (INTERNAL/EXTERNAL, FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING/PEER-LEARNING, SCHOOLS/COMPANIES, ETC.)

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed a "Copernican Revolution" developing on several levels: with the opening of branches of knowledge to the accessibility of Internet, the school, once the only outpost of know-how, has found itself operating in a context that is much more complex, in which other agencies and places of learning have been fostering the development of formal and informal knowledge that can prove advantageous in the world of work.

An avant-garde school can identify occasions – locally, among associations, businesses, and informal situations – to question itself with a view to improving, to enrich its service by means of constant innovation that will guarantee a quality education system. A school that is open to the outside world establishes a road to change based on communication and interchange.

Europe supports lifelong-learning by focussing on individuals and their ability to exploit all possible opportunities to increase their know-how.

Knowledge is the primary asset of our society and is a conquest of that individual who, at school, "learns to learn" and can thus deal with the vagaries of life while coping with the problems and uncertainties that globalization brings with it.

The valorization of human capital (standardization/creativity, uniformity/individualization, inclusion/diversity, face-to-face teaching/peer-learning, closure/openness) makes it possible to transform change from a threat into a resource, and enables teachers to feel increasingly like "directors" of active teaching models that exploit the potential of ICT.

7 PROMOTING INNOVATION THAT IS SUSTAINABLE AND TRANSFERABLE

The goal of avant-garde schools is to identify innovation and make it implementable, sustainable, and replicable in other situations with the necessary prerequisites.

Very often, innovation is the result of the exceptionality of a person or a context that produces a unique and unrepeatable alchemy and which generates a change that is difficult to separate from its original condition. The effort is therefore to make that uniqueness rooted in the territory reproducible, so that it can become scalable.

A simplification is necessary that focuses the key elements to generate the passage from experience to the model, so that it can fit a context that has the appropriate conditions to produce comparable results.

Sustainability is a key characteristic of innovation. Innovation is not nourished by the exceptionality of a situation, it can only put down deep roots where it can take advantage of local resources and exploit the opportunities offered by a school's autonomy.

An innovation is transferable if it can be transplanted to an environment other than the one where it was born. If it finds the proper context is like a plant: it puts down roots, it becomes a tree, and it produces fruits that are nourished by the new terrain.



Genova, 6 November 2014

