



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Resource sheet

The Flipped Classroom :prospect for the future

Section of the training module / D

1/Finding

This fact sheet will focus on what could be one of the most appropriate methodological solutions for dealing with educational problems related to Special Educational Needs (SEN): the Flipped Classroom.

2/ Objectives

This sheet aims at thinking about the urgency of creating a context - a positive and welcoming school - that promotes each student's academic and social success through effective choices in planning, methodology, organization and pedagogy.

In fact, it responds to a more complex need: being able to change the "way of doing school" in order to keep pace with our time and meet the needs of children.

The Flipped Classroom (1) is a system that is overturning, through the use of pedagogical technologies, the traditional teaching / learning scheme and the resulting teacher / student relationship.

Teaching materials are downloaded into the "class group" virtual environment in very differentiated digital forms and languages. In order to deepen a content or a theme, written texts are no longer the only used source but also audio, video, simulations and materials available on the Internet. These materials can be explored by students alone or by groups "outside the classroom", at home, in the library or in other places of informal gathering. While in the classroom with the teacher, the contents "learned" through technology become the object of cooperative activities aimed at putting the acquired knowledge "into motion". The classroom is no longer the place of transmission of notions but the work and discussion space where one learns to use them in the confrontation with peers and with the teacher. Indeed, once the teacher has chosen a theme to be explored and downloaded the relevant material on an e-learning platform, he / she indicates to the students the topics and contents to study or deepen in the days preceding the class activity that is dedicated to this subject. In this way, the traditional setting is "flipped" and one can rightly speak of a flipped classroom.

This teaching methodology originates in the Anglo-Saxon world – which is increasingly attentive teaching in laboratory and "by experience" - and has spread, particularly in the United States, where for years

classes have been digitally infrastructured and e-learning systems are used, based on virtual class systems.

The dynamics of the educational process take place as follows. Teachers prepare in-depth materials within the Virtual Learning Environment adopted by the school. Students explore the proposed theme before the lesson, at home, in order to free up the time of the old transmissive frontal lesson and make it available instead for a series of active learning experiences that usually take place in small groups. This idea of a Flipped Classroom, or "upside down" classroom, is gaining more and more popularity and credibility outside of the United States, even in European educational environments, especially in Northern Europe.

Concretely, it can be said that the classroom is becoming the place where to work according to the cooperative method of problem solving and to find solutions to problems, to discuss, and to realize workshop activities and (real or virtual) "educational experiments" that allow knowledge activation, with the help of the "teacher coach". This is not a radical innovation from a methodological point of view, but an application, enabled by technologies, of learning by doing.

In this way, the new learning styles of students who are now "digital natives" are valued and it becomes much easier to personalize learning by designing, within the virtual learning environment, specific learning pathways for individuals or groups with special needs.

The most interesting aspect of this methodology is the fact that the entire educational framework is reviewed in order to maximize an increasingly scarce resource in the school: teacher time.

In short, there are two ways of "flipping" the educational setting:

- the first one concerns the fact that digital technologies, through the use of collaborative learning web environments, make it possible to move a series of fictitious activities "outside class time", thus freeing up the teacher's time so that he/she can more directly follow student learning problems
- the second one consists in the possibility of generating a new active learning methodology that transforms the classroom into a small "research community", particularly through cooperative work.

The teacher / student interaction is radically transformed from the moment the time of the "frontal lesson" is greatly reduced and the time devoted to cooperative problem solving, monitoring and support for student work increases proportionately, as well as the time dedicated to the "rational examination" of the results of group work, carried out collectively.

Obviously, this transformation of the educational setting is profoundly changing the role of the teacher, but certainly the "increase" does not reduce it at all. The teacher, in reality, will be transformed, as mentioned above, from disciplinary expert and "provider" of contents and evaluations into a figure which integrates a greater number of competences, obviously the disciplinary ones, but also those of a pedagogue expert in digital technologies, such as tutoring, coaching and mentoring (face-to-face and online) of his students. In fact, he is becoming both an educational designer who sets up the educational / technological setting and programs the activities of the students (face-to-face and online), an expert in disciplinary content and, at the same time, he must become a guide, a support for the construction of collaborative knowledge by students. He/she is therefore acting as a stimulus to encourage a personal and collective development of group activities and to promote "meaningful learning".

In other words, the teacher is helping students to develop methodologies and learning practices that enable them to acquire real skills in content management and not mere notions. In this process, of course, the student's role is also changing and becomes much more active. With the adoption of this type of innovative teaching methods, the student becomes more and more a protagonist of the learning process, and above all he becomes more responsible, through collaboration with his peers, of the progress or difficulties encountered during the apprenticeship. This is not a simple "transition", especially for teachers who often do not have sufficient training and therefore sufficient technological and methodological expertise to implement this change.

For students, this is not a novelty: they are "digital natives" (2). For them, digital tools, video game consoles, smartphones and tablets are everyday tools. The problem for the teacher and the whole training institution is to enhance these skills of using digital technologies that they have acquired informally and through socialization with their peers. It is a question of transforming their natural technological fluidity into a tool for conveying "meaningful learning", always keeping in mind that "learning" is not "playing" and that learning fatigue can not be eliminated by using technological devices. The challenge is to break down those technological capabilities and skills that they already hold, putting them at the service of teaching and learning.

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