

Italy (Tuscany)

Scuola Città Pestalozzi

Scuola-Città Pestalozzi is a resource centre for teacher training and an experimental public elementary and first grade secondary school in Florence, Italy, which caters for students from eight class levels (age 6 to 14) in four two-year groups. The school develops new concepts for the organisation of learning in terms of school time, group organisation, teaching methods, vertical curricula centred on cross-subject competencies, emphasis on cooperative and experiential learning, social inclusion, and new technology. The schedule has been changed with the introduction of personal work plans, allowing time for individual learning and personal training as well as for “open learning” in groups composed of students from different grades. The school has laboratories dedicated to specific activities, such as a theatre, a woodwork room, and a wide garden with a vegetables area; computers and interactive whiteboards are located both in classrooms and in special areas. All teachers have a role in the project in addition to teaching, being involved in collaborative preparation of activities, classroom visits to observe each other’s practice, theoretical inputs, and shared planning, evaluation and documentation both in weekly meetings and online. Practice is monitored and evaluated regularly with different assessment tools and questionnaires. National evaluation surveys showed above-average performance on mathematics but not Italian (native language) competencies.

General Information

Name of the ILE: Scuola Città Pestalozzi

Location/Address: Via delle Casine 2 Firenze (Italy)

Website (if available): <http://ospitiweb.indire.it/~fimm0011/english/index.html>

ILE submitted by: Valentina Giovannini, PhD researcher from the University of Bologna, facilitator of this case.

Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

Scuola Città Pestalozzi is a primary and first grade secondary school in Florence, the student’s range in age from six to fourteen years.

This school is engaged in a project aimed to modify the organization of primary and secondary school traditional in Italy, facing the need to offer learning opportunities and motivation to all children according to their abilities, so that they can learn actively and independently, assess their own work and learn to cooperate.

The school is different from the other Italian schools as:

-It is catering for eight class levels, subdivided into four two-year groups, with close links to the infant school and second grade secondary school. Every year, all year long, pupils of a class work with the lower or upper level ones for three days a week, in groups smaller than classes. They carry on the open learning activities together and share teachers and materials. They also participate to the same annual school trip and to several annual or particular activities.

-In the third of the two-year groups, pupils and teachers of the last class of primary school and those of the first class of 1st grade secondary school work together, with input from both teachers in the areas of project work and discipline

It is experimenting a set of innovations very uncommon in Italian schools: a new time and space organization, fostering autonomy and personalization.

The organization in terms of school time, group organization, class activities, teaching methods and tools takes inspiration from the history of the school (see below), from authors, experiences and researches of the past, strongly oriented to an active conception of learning and teaching, from recent researches about the nature of learning, individual differences, emotional and civic education, collaborative learning, adult and peer tutoring.

All teachers are involved in planning, organizing, reflecting and documenting their projects both in weekly meetings and discussions on a digital platform forum. Teachers observe each other's practices (inter-visit) and attend each other's lessons in order to develop evaluation instruments collectively. The school provides teacher-training programmes in collaboration with the University of Florence and it is an experimental school open to visiting scholars and students.

In the period 2010/2012 the school will carry out an experimental project focusing on the following topics:

- organisation of learning environments (school time, group organization, class activities, teaching methods and tools) that best suit the characteristics and learning styles of students, promoting their autonomy;
- use of technologies for designing new original ways of learning;
- knowledge production as an effective mean for promoting active learning through problem-solving approaches;

In summary, the actions to be taken during the new plan regard:

The learning community

- Community of practice
- Activities which fit the characteristics and needs of individual students and the new tasks that the school is called to fulfil in society (forming broad competences such as learning to learn, problem solving, working together, learning skills, self-analysis, self-evaluation and self-control), with a particular focus on the use of cooperative learning strategies.

- Metacognitive approaches

Curriculum, learning environments

- Procedures for the adaptation of vertical curricula, simplification of the contents.
- Strategies for social inclusion, creation and strengthening of intercultural skills-oriented development
- Sharing and exchange of experiences at the local, regional and national level

- Reduction of traditional teaching methods and development of methods promoting experiential learning
- Overcoming the rigid association between class time and traditional class grouping

Technologies

- Digital literacy of students, critical and creative use of technologies
- Digital learning environments.
- Communication through the use of technology,
- Differentiated teaching materials
- Experiences of distance training programs with integrated pathways in blended learning

Network

- Sharing of expertise in education and teaching by expanding the network of communication among teachers, between teachers and pupils, pupils and pupils.
- Documenting the process of educational experimentation through an on-line platform
- Disseminating expertise and experiences through publication of relevant pedagogical documents and didactic materials,
- Participation in training courses / conferences
- Communication with digital tools, in and outside the classroom, with students and parents

Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

The core learning aims of the school can be summarized as follows:

- To develop learning environments that use thinking, making things, moving, imagining and emotional involvement to best suit characteristics of students, in which meaning making processes originated by sharing significant experiences play a crucial role
- To create an articulated didactic itinerary of activities and events that serves to educate the students in the importance of assuming responsibility and achieving personal independence
- To develop a community school in which the values of democracy are central
- To guide the students to undertake an active approach to knowledge, including the use of multimedia languages and technologies

The school adopts a curriculum defined by the adaptation of the national guidelines. (See for example the maths curriculum <http://curricolomatematica.wetpaint.com/> and the drama curriculum <http://sites.google.com/site/teatroscuolacitta/Home-page>).

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

The school is open to any student from the local district including those with disabilities. There are 20 students in every class; special needs students are included in integrated classes . There are 180 pupils catering for eight class levels, subdivided into four two-year groups.

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

The staff includes the headmaster, 24 full-time teachers and three support teachers catering for children with disabilities. Teachers are qualified at tertiary level (bachelor degree in education or pedagogical sciences).

There is an effective collaboration between the primary School teachers and first grade secondary school teachers that occurs in various forms depending on the age of the children, the programmes and the specific needs of each two-year group. In the third of the two-year groups, special emphasis is placed on the passage between the Fifth Class of Elementary School and First Class of 1st grade secondary School with input from both teachers in the areas of project work and discipline.

A fundamental principle is that every member of the staff is responsible for the successful functioning of the school. The school staff regularly (on Wednesday afternoon at least, often on other days too) holds meetings where it discusses the educational situation.

The teachers involved in the innovative experiences are recruited to teach at Scuola Città Pestalozzi after an interview and the approval of the whole staff of the school. They elaborated the main project shared with other three schools in Italy (Scuola Rinascita, Milano and Scuola Colombo, Genova) as a wiki product. All the teachers have a role in the project in addition to the teaching work. The headmaster is responsible for the project, assisted by a co-ordinator and a study group of teachers, the other teachers coordinate or participate in planning, developing, documenting or evaluating boards.

These boards involve theoretical inputs, team preparation of teaching activities, classroom visits by observers, formative meetings, and shared moments of reflection and discussion on the experiences carried out. It is important to note that particular attention is paid to the social, communicative and interdisciplinary competences that help students face their learning challenges successfully. All teachers are connected on a digital platform, Moodle, to share materials, discussions and plans.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?

The school has always been working full time: school time is 40 hours a week for primary school children (from 8:30 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday) and 36 hours a week for secondary students. Lunch is provided by the city administration and paid by families. The school staff, families and the administration have agreed to provide fruit at break-time in the morning.

This year project focuses on a new time and space organization, autonomy and personalization. The new model, identified by timing, space setting, grouping and learning activities, is characterized by a balance between individual and collaborative, cognitive and social, operational and digital, motion and reflection activities. The main goals are to improve the motivation of learners and their learning success through a set of innovations, which are very uncommon in Italian schools.

➤ the typical learning week has been changed with the introduction of:

- a consistent amount of time for the development of the curriculum, in which teachers aims the achievement of strategic skills and a basic knowledge level. Teachers develop a curriculum in which essential goals are common for ALL students and adopt different strategies to match individual characteristics and learning steps. Each student has also a personal work-plan for the individual learning time (individualization) . Progresses are monitored both by class teachers through a continuous feedback, formative evaluation and assessment, and periodically by the tutor, updating the personal booklet.

-an “open learning” time for 4/6 hours a week, when learners are involved in optional activities in groups different from the class, responding to different aims: needs, interests, competencies, insights. Sometimes the choice of the activities and the composition of the groups are oriented by teachers and sometimes they are selected by pupils (personalization)

Activities are designed by teachers with the participation of pupils through different criteria, such as learning outcomes, interests, social issues, and are conducted by teacher with specific skills; some of these activities are conducted together by more than one teacher.

-time for personal training and individual study is designed approximately in an hour a day

- the learning development of each learner is monitored by a teacher-tutor through periodic interviews and the compilation of a personal booklet. The booklet has been carefully organized and its effectiveness is ongoing under the attention of the school staff.

The school is also engaged in carrying on some fundamental issues stated in the previous years of work:

-definition of a “core-curriculum” centred on cross-curricular competencies (six annual monitoring meetings are planned);

-use of formative assessment and evaluation of abilities in real situations (a specific project involves teacher in planning, monitoring by a “ship’s log” and observations, evaluating and documenting a “real learning environment” ;

-development of a “curriculum for emotional education” (The emotion of democracy);

-practice of a board of the students in partnership with the local City-council.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

The most important resources are personal, communicative, problem-solving and collaboration capacities. The physical learning environment is characterized by the presence of laboratories dedicated to specific activities (theatre, music room, woodwork room, library, art and crafts room) by classrooms, open spaces and a wide garden with a vegetables garden area.

ICT (PC, interactive whiteboards) are located both in the classrooms and in special areas; their use is strongly integrated in the daily activities. Pupils have a dedicated server, a digital magazine, a blog of book reviews.

In the current year the school is planning an important investment in digital resources and ICT. The project called “School 2.0” aims to create first and foremost a didactic renewal, experimenting with new learning environments a reorganization of space and time of learning, a renewal of didactical instrumentation, a re-design of learning through intelligent use of technology.

Scuola Città Pestalozzi is located in the centre of Florence, an area characterized by a population of both prosperous and needy families. There are several opportunities for learners out of the school: sport, language and music courses, public libraries, museums. The school has an important relationship with local authorities and associations and the curriculum includes many activities in collaboration with them.

The participation of families to the life of the school has a long and important tradition at Scuola Città Pestalozzi: parents are organized in a committee and linked in a social network. They support school activities and organize initiatives i.e. annual meetings, movie visions, school facilities purchasing.

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

The school was founded by Ernesto Codignola in 1945 with clear objectives to provide:

- a social service to needy families (school daily time was, and still is, eight hours and was including lunch break),
- formation of democratic citizens, in a context to be rebuilt not only materially but also morally and democratically after fascism. Over the same period, these very same purposes stood at the basis of the internationally-renew experience of Municipal early childhood education and care institution in Northern and Central Italy. These goals were realized in practice in a co-management of the school (*gestione sociale*), both adults and pupils, as if it were a city, complete with a mayor, councillors, a school magazine etc ... This organization gave the name to the school.
- Operative and manual tasks were strongly valued, such as printing, carpentry, vegetable gardening and also two important structures for the education of children: the magazine and the library (Codignola, 1954).

More than fifty years after its founding, Scuola Città Pestalozzi is now a public experimental school strongly committed to implement organization and teaching methodology that seek to get everyone to participate effectively in the preparation and implementation of educational projects. At the same time, the school seeks to renew the community lifestyle by placing at its core the importance of personal relationships with its various components, students, teachers, parents, personnel. It acts in a dual capacity as an experimental school and resource centre for teacher training, and collaborates with the university through conventions, through tutoring, and through laboratories for students in training as primary school teachers.

In 2004 Scuola-Città joined up with two new networks, both of which were promoted and established by SCP itself. On a local level, this is the network of Florence area schools and a network called “Schools and Cities” on the base of some shared principles (inclusiveness, formative success of students, development of professional skills). On a national level it is the Network of Experimental Public Schools (Rinascita of Milan and Don Milani of Genoa).

The new project for the years 2011-2013 “From the laboratory to the wiki school” was shared with Rinascita and Colombo schools as a wiki product.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

Financing human resources is a part of the experimental project authorized by the Ministry of Education therefore Scuola Città Pestalozzi can employ some additional teachers compared to others public schools. In the year 2011 the school participated to the call for projects “Scuola 2.0” of the Ministry of Education which aims the massive introduction of ICT in the school environment. In the year 2012 the school has received a special financial support for implementing school facilities providing learners facilities and teachers training.

Other funds are raised participating to tenders of local and national institutions (i.e. the school won in the last three years the annual award of the National Agency for the best documentations on didactical

projects), with activities organized by the committee of parents and with the annual quota of ministerial funds and family funds for students.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

The school is involved in the national program of evaluation of learning. Pupils are also assessed twice a year on learning achievement in school subjects. In the current year a periodical (every 15 days) monitoring activity is shared by each pupil and her/his tutor.

As the national evaluation INVALSI survey shows for the years 2010 and 2011, the learning achievement in Maths is upper the national average from second to eighth level. The lack of achievement in Italian is under the attention of teachers, even they are aware that processes related to the achievement of complex, deep, transverse skills, as the school aims, require long-lasting time and ongoing discussions. At the term of fifth and eighth level pupils receive a feed-back on cross-curricular competencies. Currently the school is monitoring pupils engagement through the questionnaire WIHIC (Fraser, 2010) (data will be available at the end of the school year). Teachers meet parents in general class meetings twice a year and personal talks. An important indicator of parents satisfaction is the presence, every year, of a “waiting list” to enrol at the school.

INVALSI Learning achievement survey							
		2 nd level 2010	2 nd level 2011	5 th level 2010	5 th level 2011	6 th level 2010	6 th level 2011
Scuola Città Pestalozzi	Italian	73,5	69,5	62,1	73,2	64,7	61,0
Italy	Italian	83,2	69,1	66,6	73,0	60,8	62,3
Scuola Città Pestalozzi	Maths	49,7	64,7	66,8	74,9	51,3	59,0
Italy	Maths	56,6	60,3	61,2	68,4	50,9	46,6

Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE

Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)

<http://ospitiweb.indire.it/~fimm0011/english/index.html> (English)

<http://ospitiweb.indire.it/~fimm0011/index.html> (Italian)

<http://www.genitoripestalozzi.it/nuovo/Sito/Home.html> (student's parents website)

The insights of the whole documentation (retrospective assessments of the experience by the coordinator, annual global reports; working reports written by the teachers involved, working materials, class materials, presentations) are contained in a Moodle digital platform <http://pestalozzi.wikischool.it/> (reserved area only, info stefania.cotoneschi@tin.it, co-ordinator of the project)

A film on the life of school is forthcoming.

References to recent published materials:

Orefice-Del Gobbo-Dogliani, *Competenze trasversali a scuola. Trasferibilità della sperimentazione di scuola-città Pestalozzi*, ETS, 2011 ISBN 978-884673059

[http://www.lafeltrinelli.it/products/9788846730596/Competenze trasversali a scuola Trasferibilita della sperimentazione di scuola-citta Pestalozzi/Paolo Orefice.html](http://www.lafeltrinelli.it/products/9788846730596/Competenze%20trasversali%20a%20scuola%20Trasferibilita%20della%20sperimentazione%20di%20scuola-citta%20Pestalozzi/Paolo%20Orefice.html)

http://firenze.repubblica.it/cronaca/2012/02/25/news/alla_pestalozzi_tablet_per_tutti_la_prima_scuola_per_nativi_digitali-30462310/

Seminar on innovation in the school organized by Regione Toscana:

http://www.regione.toscana.it/regione/multimedia/RT/documents/2011/02/11/30c4d60f8b45971501c74a49fba9f222_programmaa4arezzonuovo2.pdf

Seminar on quality of the school

http://www.toscana.istruzione.it/novita/allegati/2011/maggio/programma_convegnoSCP13_14giugno2011.pdf

Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE

Codignola, E. (1954) *Un esperimento di scuola attiva: la scuola-città Pestalozzi*. Firenze, Nuova Italia