

MAKING INNOVATION VISIBLE

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ABSTRACT

Audiovisual and mobile technologies seem to be full of promises for teacher training and professional development. Within the INDIRE project "Making Innovation Visible" we have therefore designed an "online video showcase" drawing on the heritage of innovative educational practices and knowledge gathered by the Avanguardie Educative project (www.avanguardieeducative.indire.it). We prototyped this video showcase in order to build a flexible tool that can guide the progression towards 21st century learning environments. Working with teachers confirmed that instructional and educational video content through a tutorial format, used on mobile devices, could support them on a double direction: while they are trained and when they are working with their own classroom students. The use of video showcase through mobile devices supports the building up of teachers' competence.

KEYWORDS

Lifelong Learning, Professional Development, Coaching, Video Education, Innovation, Documentation

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professional development is an issue of great interest both to the national as to the international policies, since it is considered a strategic element in the modernization of the educational systems. According to research evidences (Gaudin et al., 2012), audiovisual language appears to be a particularly effective tool in knowledge transfer, especially in relation to the quality of teaching interactions, as they are linked to direct observation of processes and practices. Starting from these premises, the first step of the INDIRE project "Rendere visibile l'innovazione" (Making innovation visible) was the implementation of the Youtube channel with the same name (www.youtube.com/c/Renderevisibilelinnovazione¹). The channel hosts videocontents related to innovative teaching practices: good practices are selected among those existing in the community of the Avanguardie Educative project (<http://avanguardieeducative.indire.it>). Specific features of the channel are:

1. Video-modeling, disintermediation and peer learning, with the explanation through visualization of an activity carried out by an "expert" peer who assumes the role of *model* - In modeling (Bandura, 1977) this model is usually represented by the most important people in a given context, in this case senior teachers of the Avanguardie educative project;
2. Modular structure ("Minilesson") - Content format has a modular structure: the whole "practice" is divided into small highly focused elements, lasting from one to three minutes. The single minilesson focuses on a small part of the practice, highlighting from time to time only one phase, or making a lunge on a particular skill or on the use of a specific technology. The minilesson is also the idea of a short content, which can be enjoyed on the move, during a break or in a waiting room, to simplify and enrich the professional life of the teachers;
3. Use of standards - The choice to start the service through the YouTube platform has been suggested by the need to make the delivery of content as simple as possible. This choice guarantees high standards of interaction and dissemination - as in social or protected environments - but it is also a guarantee of interoperability and easy reuse within different platforms (and therefore in different contexts and educational ecosystems).

¹ See content in English at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p59mH4Y7S3g&list=PLctxbT0kZm0Fpn4_s5_LKqSpArbEhipbU

2. HOW THE VIDEOS WERE RECEIVED

From January to March 2018 videos from the Youtube channel were used in a professional development course involving fifty-four teachers from a primary and lower secondary school in Foligno - Perugia, Italy. During the first lesson one of the video was showed, asking teachers to implement the same methodology in their classroom within one month. During that month video documentations of teachers' generated practices were shared on the elearning platform Edmodo then discussed during the second lesson. Some issues emerged in the discussion related to the use of the video example that could be considered interesting insights for future researches. The main elements are as follows:

1. Teachers agree that video format have been very helpful while working with the classroom, not only to generally get a better understanding of the methodology;
2. Teachers agree that is very helpful to be able to watch the video any time they needed, in order to implement the methodology with their students, as showed in the example;
3. More than half the teachers agree that the video example was actually more useful as a tutorial for classroom work than as a general source of inspiration;
4. More than half the teachers watched the video from a desktop computer, the others from mobile devices;
5. A vast majority of teachers watched the video alone when at home, the others at school with their colleagues; in most interesting cases they used to watch the video during the implementation of the new methodology in the classroom activity either with their colleagues or with students;
6. Teachers used the video example to make their students understand what they were going to implement in the classroom activity.

3. CONCLUSION

Audiovisual and mobile technologies seem to be full of promises for teacher training and professional development. We prototyped the "Rendere visibile l'innovazione" channel in order to build a flexible tool that can guide the progression towards 21st century learning environments. Working with teachers confirmed that instructional and educational video content through a tutorial format, used on mobile devices, could support them on a double direction: while they are trained and when they are working with their own classroom students. Video content on mobile devices allow teachers to bring, share and study new educational methodologies directly into the classroom, together with their students and colleagues. Students could better understand proposals and help teacher in implementing innovation. Lifelong learning services can take great advantage from the audiovisual and mobile adventure, in order to improve and innovate the education system.

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