

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
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Honors theses

Think'n change: environmental sustainability for children

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Our thesis arises from the recent environmental emergency and the necessity of educating the citizens of tomorrow, children, to sustainability.

Actually, a lot of initiatives have taken this direction, but unfortunately they are characterized by the fragmentation and lack of coordination between topics; and the absence of active participation from children.

The project development started with an in-depth analysis of three key arguments: "sustainability", "children", and "communication".

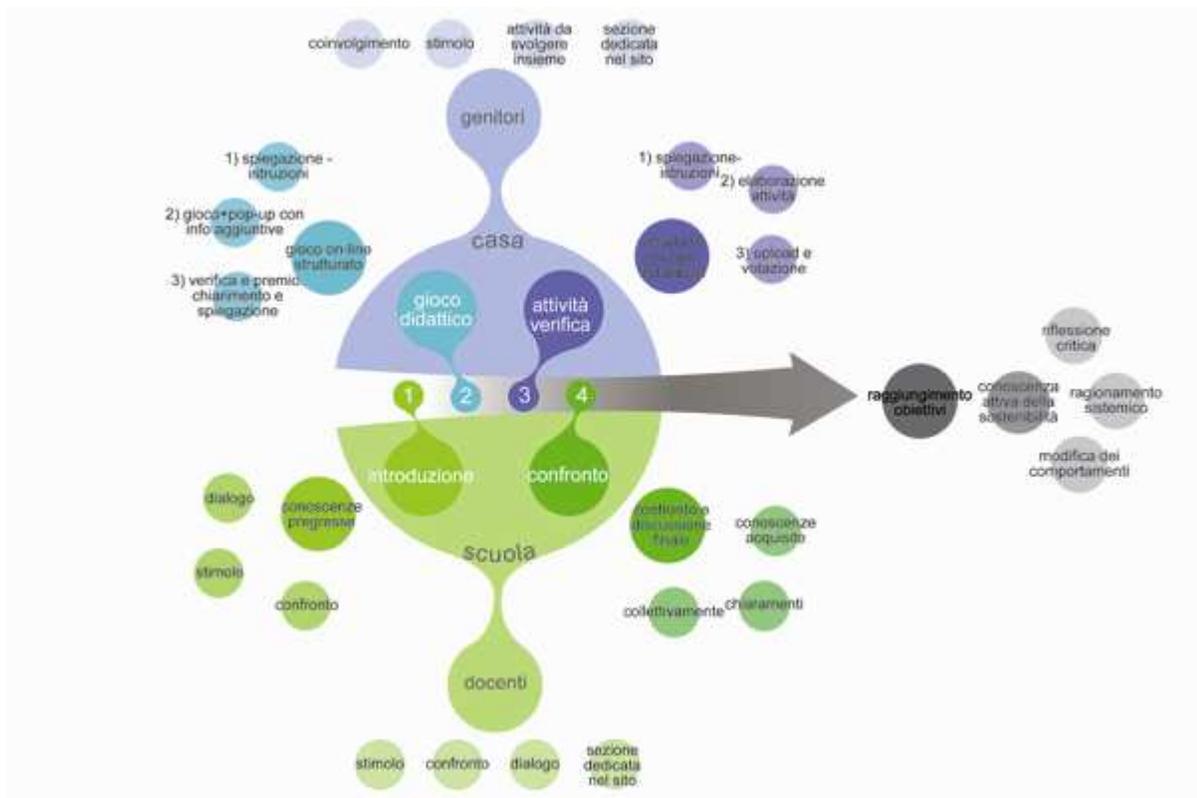
First, "sustainability": we identified its fundamental branches and generated connections between them in order to obtain a complete panoramic of the argument.

Second, "target analysis": we studied pedagogical concepts with the objective of understanding in detail our little users.

At last, we analyzed what has been done to communicate sustainability to children until now, which methodologies have been used and which kind of results have been obtained. At the same time, we studied digital instruments and new media because of their enhanced interest showed by educators and their incremented usage by kids. We particularly focused on individuating each one's pros, cons and potentialities.

Our project consists in a school program designed for primary schools. It is addressed mainly to children, even if it also involves parents, teachers and environmental dedicated authorities and associations.

Throughout this course, children will carry out sequel missions that will take them to discover "sustainable living". In other words, they will execute ordinary actions through which they will learn environmental friendly concepts in a simple and clear way. Their active participation throughout the course is intended to improve in their usual habits, thanks to their identification with the game experience.



Struttura modulo didattico e attori

The program is formed by school interventions, home activities and a website. The course is planned in 4 years, from the 2nd to the 5th year of primary school. This because in the second school year children have acquired the cognitive capacities required to start. Every year is composed by 10 modules, each one of 3 weeks; making a total of 30 weeks of instruction.



Struttura programma didattico

Every module, which is dedicated to a particular subject, has 4 steps: in the 1st step the teacher introduces the subject by stimulating dialogue and group discussion; in the 2nd step, the didactic game takes place and the kid is asked to connect to the website and play until he/she completes the requested missions; the 3rd step consists on verifying activities done at home in order to involve parents; in the 4th step students will be able to see the work done by their classmates and by a twin-class (that changes each module) with the purpose of making them realize how the same subject can generate different results.

The course concretizes effectively in the website. It supports children, parents and teachers throughout all the school program thanks to the dedicated sections. The site is simple, compact and has a structure that is made explicit by the graphic layout of its elements. It uses vivid and bright different colours used for identifying each section and can be subdivided in 3 areas: superior, central and inferior. In the first one it can be found, on the left corner, a position indicator and, on the right corner, the browser. The central part is characterized by a rectangular section in which the main actions of the didactic program occur: “games”, “files” and “verifying activities” which are pointed out by a folder structure. On the top right appears “ANTonio”, the on-line chat guide. And, on the middle right part there is a post-it that links the user to the “news&events” section. The logotype is located on the upper left corner. On the inferior part a timeline indicates the kids program status, and going down the screen there are the connected sections “think’n wiki”, “blog amici” and “myplace”.



Home

At the end of the course of study, children should understand how their daily actions can affect the Earth's health and should modify them with others more virtuous. They will learn the systemic-approach to sustainability and will have learnt to make connections and cause-effect relations. They will get used to collaborate with others and to consider knowledge as a social good, intended as something to share and spread by exploiting the new media's potentialities in a creative and participative way.

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