

Quaderni di Comunità  
Persone, Educazione e Welfare nella società  
5.0

Community Notebook  
People, Education, and Welfare  
in society 5.0

n. 2/2023

TEACHING ENHANCED LEARNING FOR ENGAGING  
AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING

*Edited by*  
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Iscrizione presso il Registro Stampa del Tribunale di Roma  
al n. 172/2021 del 20 ottobre 2021

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Eurilink University Press Srl  
Via Gregorio VII, 601 - 00165 Roma  
[www.eurilink.it](http://www.eurilink.it) - [ufficiostampa@eurilink.it](mailto:ufficiostampa@eurilink.it)  
ISBN: 979 12 80164 69 8  
ISSN: 2785-7697 (Print)

Prima edizione, novembre 2023  
Progetto grafico di Eurilink

È vietata la riproduzione di questo libro, anche parziale,  
effettuata con qualsiasi mezzo, compresa la fotocopia

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## **2. FEEL SAFE AS A MEANS TO IMPROVE MINORS'S DIGITAL SKILLS AND DISASTER RESILIENCE**

by Cristina Casareale\*, Sharon Gilio\*\*, Francesco Graziani\*\*\*

### *1. Use of technology at school: generations compared*

Students of today (aged 3-24 years) are immersed in a digitalized world, in which digital technology such as smartphones, tablet, the internet and social networks characterize most youngsters' social interactions. Consequently, the use of technology is spreading within school contexts, although with distinct significant differences. For instance, higher education is increasingly moving towards “digital-based teaching and learning practices, operationalized through digital platforms accessible through electronic devices” (Piromalli and Viteritti, 2019). Conversely, the use of technological tools in primary and secondary school is still limited and schools still need to find a way to integrate digital literacy into their curricula and foster a “teaching method that offers links with the present and future life of children and adolescents” (Burnett, 2009), as «they have not known the world without cell phones, computers and internet and could not imagine how things would work without these devices»

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(Vincze, 2015:125). Children and adolescents, indeed, live in a shaded world in which the online and offline worlds merges in an “Onlife” (Floridi, 2015) dimension that shapes their educational and social reality.

Such necessity opens to a generational comparison of what literature refers as “digital natives” (Generation Z and Generation Alpha) and “digital immigrants” (Generation X and Generation Y) to distinguish “different skills and abilities in the use of technologies, also in school contexts” (Prensky, 2001). There is, indeed, a usage gap between students and teachers, leading to the inevitable question of whether teachers can prepare students to their future technological life. In addition to the generational disparity between digital natives and digital immigrants, the “digital divide” – the unequal access to internet – among Generation Z and Generation Alpha, amplified during the COVID-19 pandemics (Sosa Díaz, 2021) should be considered when debating the introduction of technology and digital devices in schools.

### *1.1 Digital skills and tools in educational contexts*

In this context, the role of educational processes becomes a fundamental theme. In addition to the concern about teachers’ ability to guide students during educational activities involving the use of technologies and the possible accessibility gap among students, the debate expands to the possible risks associated with introducing in schools the same technological devices that digital natives use in their daily lives as a teaching tool. In this sense, the use of tablets and smartphones allows a more direct and effective interaction with information that goes beyond the classic face-to-face class and paves the way to the possibility for students to plan and carry out educational experiences for the development of creative processes and shared knowledge. On the other hand, there

is a tangible possibility that digitization will introduce new risks in the school world (such as disinformation and fake news), causing the entire education system to lose effectiveness. In this sense, the project “Safer Internet Centre-*Generazioni Connesse*” addresses the risks of using ICT in schools by offering primary and secondary schools an e-learning training aimed at teachers for the creation of a school e-policy.

Furthermore, the role of technology cannot only be exploited for educational purposes but it can also become an “effective learning tool on broader topics, such as disaster risk reduction, even in non-formal or family contexts” (Seddighi *et al.*, 2021) and in emergency situations (e.g., the necessity to replace school lessons in the classroom with distance teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic), exacerbating the necessity to fill the gap between teachers (and educators in a broader sense) and learners and among learners.

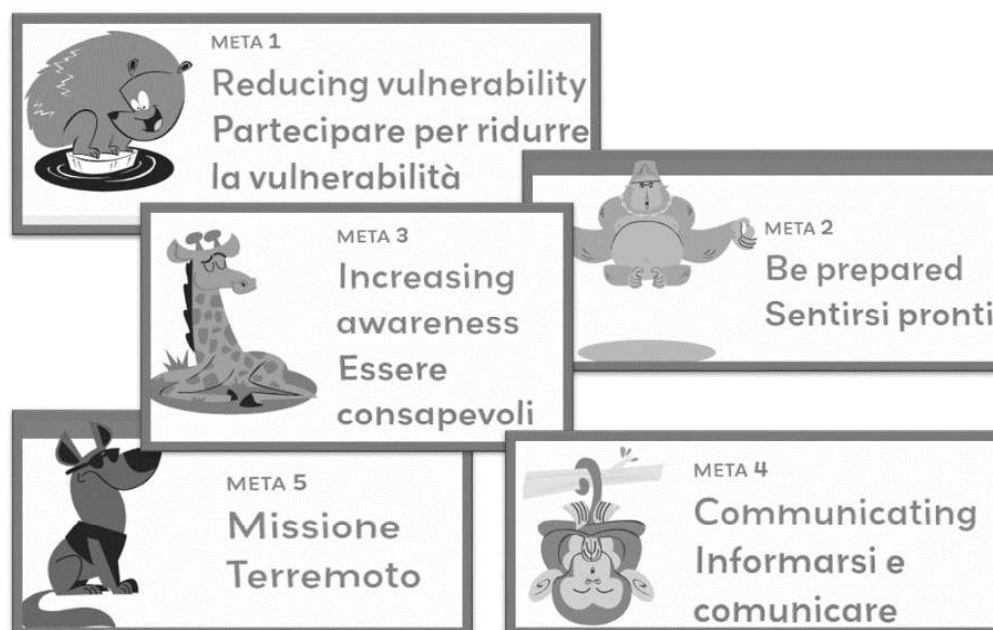
### *1.2 The Feel Safe platform as educational tool to create a resilient community*

The Feel Safe platform developed by Save the Children Italia ETS within the H2020 LINKS project (ID: 883490), is an online educational tool that promotes the use of social media, technologies and digital education and digital literacy as a means to improve the community’s resilience to disasters and promote the multidimensional method of teaching civic education in schools based on the Italian constitution, sustainable development and digital citizenship, as required by the Italian law (Fabbri and Soriani, 2021).

The aim of Feel Safe is to support networks of good practices that encourage a child-centred approach to disaster risk reduction. The main users of Feel Safe are middle school teachers

and educators working with children aged 10-14 years on risk management. From this point of view, Feel Safe contributes to fill the generational gap in the use of technological tools and refers to the digital skills required to educators by the European Union, the DigiCompEdu, to “encourage the involvement, enhancement of students’ potential and the development of their digital skills” (Redecker, 2017). From this perspective, the website is thus organized into 5 thematic areas (Figure 1) focused on vulnerability, awareness, communication, preparedness and natural hazards (e.g., earthquake), aimed at stimulating students’ awareness and learning about prevention and preparedness to the risk of natural and human-made disasters (Digital Resources).

Figure 1: The 5 thematic areas of Feel Safe



Source: authors

With a view to contributing to the promotion of a digital civic education and engaging children and adolescents in building



a resilient society, the platform offers activities and practical exercises focused on present risks and possible scenarios to emphasize the experiential, inclusive and participatory methodology with which Feel Safe is built. Each activity is designed to facilitate teachers in guiding students in the use of technology and support the learning process. Each activity, indeed, includes a brief introduction to the topic followed by individual or group activities. These activities integrate online tools and multimedia supports (Blended learning), concurring to actively stimulating the understanding and interpretation of the natural, social and cultural phenomena that characterize a disaster (Facilitating learners). Furthermore, the activities are based on Save the Children's approach based on the pedagogy of rights and are characterized by a strong participatory and playful approach, thus responding to the need for a language and design that stimulate both creativity and learning. The participation of children is also emphasized by the fact that the activities are developed with a co-design-oriented approach. Teachers and students can, indeed, contribute to the refinement of the proposed activities by testing their teaching efficacy through meetings and workshops in schools. Such process is aimed at emphasizing the central role of the website user, who can provide feedback and suggest improvements to be considered in the design and development of the platform and the proposed activities. In addition to the activities, a 'stories' channel and a 'news' channel will be integrated in the home page. The 'stories' channel will contain experiences, good practices and documents that can be shared and integrated into activities. The 'news' channel will be used to draw users' attention to national or international events (e.g., school safety day) and give users the opportunity to provide feedback and share their stories, to encourage sharing, exchange, and communication. The Feel Safe platform is still being developed;

however, some activities have already been presented in workshops conducted in some of the Save the Children's network of schools with positive feedback from teachers and students. Save the Children will integrate the suggestions received and promote the integration of Feel Safe in schools' curricula.

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