

IGUANA announces launch at ESHA Conference.

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The IGUANA consortium are delighted to announce the launch of the IGUANA Learning Platform at the ESHA conference in Dubrovnik, 27th-29th October 2014. Following on from a successful evaluation of our self-assessment tools at the ESHA General Assembly in Lisbon, October 2013, the consortium will present their findings at a special session at the biennial event. The ESHA network has been very supportive throughout the development of the IGUANA tools and learning platform. The platform is currently being piloted in schools throughout Europe.

IGUANA (Helping schools overcome resistance to change) is a multi-stakeholder collaborative research and development project initiated by CEPCEP, a research centre of the Portuguese Catholic University, and Arcola Research in London. Since 2012, this partnership has brought together the Menon Educational Innovation Network in Brussels, Ellinogermaniki Agogi in Greece, The Institute of Mathematics and Informatics in Vilnius, Trinity College in Dublin, Contour Education Services in Surrey, the European School Heads Association and many school leadership associations across Europe.

The world we live in is constantly changing. Our economies, the way we search for information, the way we communicate. The information technologies we are exposed to are proliferating rapidly. Digital technology is universal and virtually unstoppable. In Education, it is our primary concern to cultivate the skills and abilities that will allow our children to live successfully in this 21st century world.

It is our duty to help children and young people acquire the skills to enable them to gather and assess information, and to process and compose it into knowledge, while making the most of the modern technological tools available to them. Schools must adapt and innovate so they can support the acquisition of these 21st century skills.

IGUANA focuses on modernising the school system; reducing school drop-out rates and ensuring that schools contribute effectively to making the EU 'the most competitive economy in the world'. The key problem is resistance to change – or 'stuckness' – defined as 'a person, a family, or a wider social system enmeshed in a problem in persistent and repetitive ways, despite desire and effort to alter the situation'. The project will help schools to establish an open and creative environment in which students, staff and management feel safe and secure to share their ideas, learn from each other and grow.

The IGUANA project has developed a collaborative learning platform (ILP) to help teachers, managers, governors and students build the capacity and competences to innovate. The platform includes tools and learning material that helps schools and their members to develop their Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Organisational Intelligence (OI) competences. These help schools – both individually and collectively – to review their EI and OI competences, identify areas where they are strong, and areas that could be improved.

The second element of the ILP is the IGUANA Learning Content Repository, which provides learning content for the IGUANA 'Discovery' programme. The Discovery Programme is aimed at schools and their members with little or no experience or competences in EI and OI. It contains learning material that is matched to the EI and OI competences covered in the self-assessment tools, making it easy for schools and individuals to package their learning according to their assessment results. The learning

modules in the Repository are supported by Assignments to help schools apply the learning gained from Repository to their own local practice.

The third element of the programme is the IGUANA Open Learning Space. This provides more advanced learning content to help schools and their members further develop and apply their EI and OI competences. It also provides a space for schools and their members to share their own learning content with other schools. Finally, the IGUANA Open Learning Space provides a Forum for IGUANA members to share ideas, experiences and comments on the project, as well as a Peer Review space for schools to see how other schools are doing.

The IGUANA project recognizes the following engines of innovation:

1. **Key competences for lifelong learning** should become a pillar of school education achievements, and in particular the learning to learn competence should be a main focus of efforts. This first engine is useful to set the basic learning outcomes that will give pupils tools to become active learners and have an active citizenship. The lifelong learning competencies are then involved in the development of other skills that, in turn, reinforce basic competencies.

2. **ICT and Informal learning of digital natives.** The use of ICT to support learning processes and the integration of informal learning of digital natives should become an integral part of school education, considering the specific value of ICT in supporting the acquisition of key competences and learning/working processes.

3. **Creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation attitudes and skills.** Creativity and innovation should be understood as a factor interacting in all areas, required for our personal fulfilment, fundamental in making innovation possible in each area, and essential for a social dimension that allows inter-cultural positive interactions.

4. **Inter-cultural learning skills** Schools have a role to play in the development of an intercultural society equipping pupils with intercultural skills essentials to appreciate the richness of diversity of culture but also to raise their awareness of their own culture. Those who are only familiar with their own culture do not really know it.

The adoption of new educational practices does not occur naturally but results from hard work, trial and error. It is important to recognize this fact and to make an effort to develop information that is concise, readable and to the point and to make sure the information reaches people who can use it. A broad spectrum of skills is needed to lead to effective management of innovation and change.

Education leaders can bring innovation for the user by examining their preconceived notions about the way things should be done. Personnel have to be receptive to change themselves, they have to be able to evaluate new ideas objectively and see students –not as they have been –but as they might be.

Resistance to Change

The adoption of innovations involves altering human behaviour, and the acceptance of change. There is a natural resistance to change for several reasons.

People resist change:

When the reason for the change is unclear. Ambiguity—whether it is about costs, equipment, jobs—can trigger negative reactions among users.

When the proposed users have not been consulted about the change, and it is offered to

them as an accomplished fact. People like to know what's going on, especially if their jobs may be affected. Informed workers tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction than uninformed workers.

When the change threatens to modify established patterns of working relationships between people.

When communication about the change—timetables, personnel, monies, etc.—has not been sufficient.

When the benefits and rewards for making the change are not seen as adequate for the trouble involved.

When the change threatens jobs, power or status in an organization.

Decision makers will be more responsive to change:

If the information presented coincides with their current values, beliefs, and attitudes:

If they perceive that the change will benefit them more than it will cost them:

If the innovation requires marginal rather than major changes in their views or lives:

If they have a demonstrated need for the innovation: and

If the innovation is introduced gradually so that people can adjust to the resulting change.

The IGUANA project addresses these issues and offer guidance and consulting for managing these change programs, we call educational innovation

Members of the IGUANA consortium will be in attendance at the conference and will be happy to answer any questions relating to the learning platform and the EI & OI self-assessment tools. Join the IGUANA network and help prepare Europe's children for the 21st century learning skills that will allow them to live successfully in our rapidly changing Europe. Share your experiences of change and innovation by adding to the Open Learning Space. Communicate with schools all over Europe by participating in the Forum. The platform is now freely available online at: <http://www.iguana-project.eu/> and is currently being piloted in schools throughout Europe.