

The Digital Atelier

a pedagogical approach

**STARTING FROM
ITS DEFINITION**
from the vocabulary

What does digital mean?

From the Latin digitalis, derived from digitus 'finger' • before 1575. imprints; percussion; exploration; numbering

From the English digital, derived from digit (from the Latin digitus 'finger') 'digit (of a numbering system)' • before 1963. In electronics and computing, it refers, in contrast to analogue, to equipment and devices that deal with quantities in numerical form, that is, by converting their values into the numbers of a convenient numbering system (usually binary, or systems derived from it), or are otherwise numeric; it also refers to quantities dealt with by these devices, and their representation.

What does atelier mean?

From old French astelier 'building site' • before 1843. "atëlié" s.m., French. [from old French astelier, derived from astelle "wood chip", which in turn is from the late Latin astella, dim. of astula variant of assula "chip; wooden board"].

Properly, the workplace of artisans; also, study, workshop, above all of artists: that of a painter, of a sculptor; of restoration; and with extensive use, . photographic.

***We can also find some suggestions
from some related words:***

Building site:

the perfect image of a place where things are in progress.

Craftsman:

making art by hand. It is the clever and skillful handiwork. It is contact with material.

Workplace:

in a workplace there are objectives to achieve and real tasks, there are deadlines, **roles and skills.**

Percussion:

a gesture that produces an effect. provokes a strong emotion in someone, a strong disturbance, an intense feeling, of surprise, wonder.

Imprints:

leaving the sign of being there, it is representation of self and abstraction at the same time, in a sign/symbol/code. But it is also knowing how to face the unexpected: impromptu, without being able to prepare, improvising!

Exploration:

observation is fundamental and must be careful and precise the space in which the analytical and the poetic can meet: observing carefully to understand, but also to imagine, to grasp.

Numbering:

the graphic representation of the numeral system
possibility of giving order to what has been discovered and experienced:
in the form of a catalogue, an exhibition, a map

*from the Italian
National Digital School Plan*

“innovative and modular spaces where to develop the meeting point between manual skills, craftsmanship, creativity and technology. In this vision, technologies have an enabling role but not exclusive: as a sort of “digital carpet” in which, however, imagination and doing meet, combining tradition and the future, recovering practices and innovating them. Educational scenarios built around robotics and educational electronics, logic and computational thinking, manual and digital artifacts, serious play and storytelling will find their natural home in these spaces with a view to building transversal learning.”

PNSD - Action#7, pag.50

*From the experience
of 2 great masters*

The Concept

We sought advice from the experience, notes, books and testimonies of two great masters (“maestri”, which in Italian stays either for teachers as well as master/ maestro): Alberto Manzi and Bruno Munari.

Alberto Manzi is remembered above all for his great contribution to the fight against illiteracy with *Non è mai troppo tardi* that aired from 1960 to 1968 on RAI. But it is the master's notes, and not those of the television personality, that have shaped this proposal.



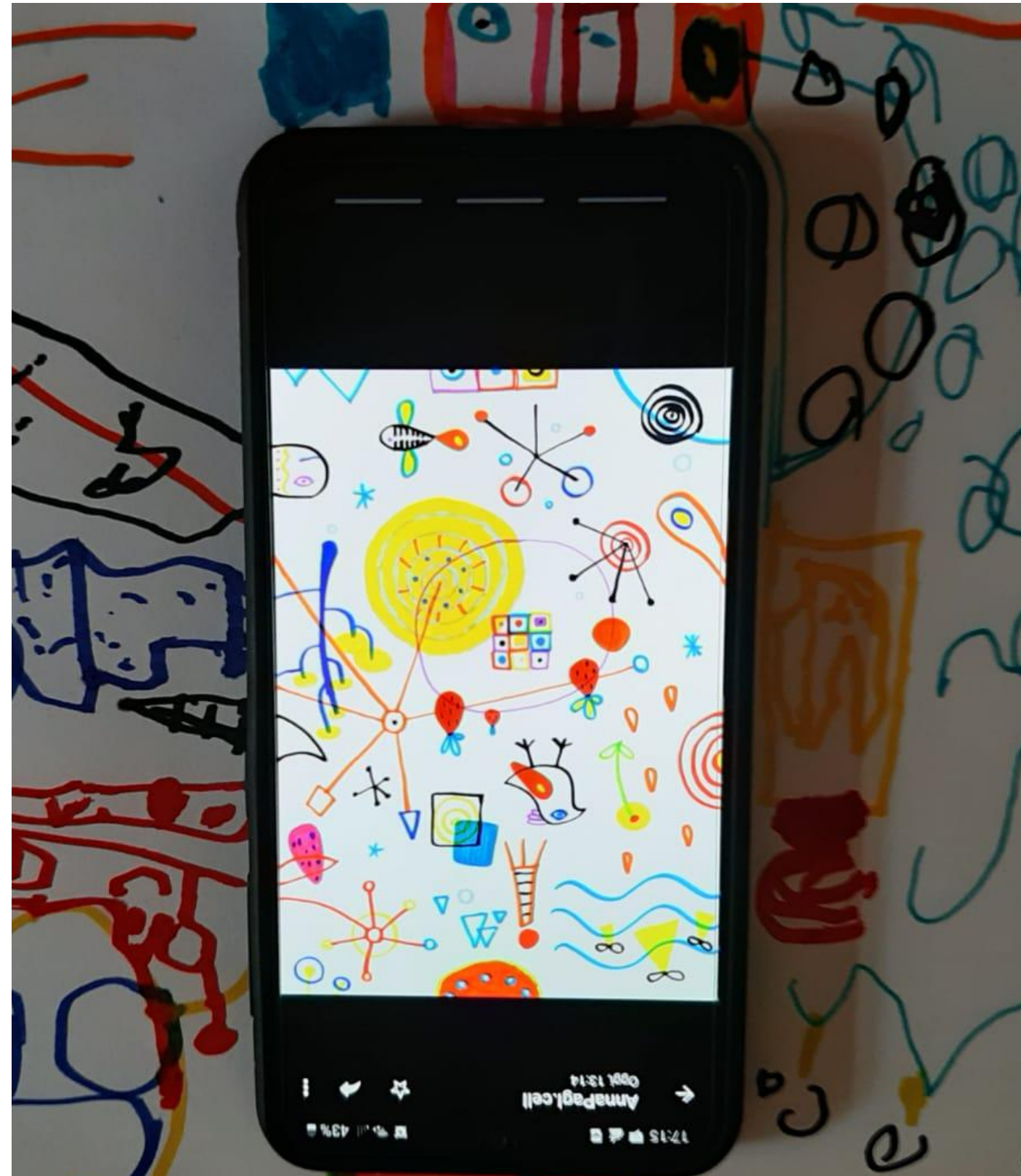
Bruno Munari, artist and designer, experimented with the photocopier, typographic screens, slides, typewriter, films and photography. His artistic journey can stimulate teachers and students in new ways, considering him an excellent example for training a divergent and creative outlook and doing. In 1968 he produced together with the teacher Alberto Manzi an encyclopaedia entitled *Vedere e capire / Seeing and understanding*. He designed his first workshop in 1977 in Brera.



We wanted to see what we could learn about using technology in a ***divergent and creative way***, how to make tools which would **help children explore the world and express themselves, and experience the poetic, the amazing, the wonderful.**

We knew that if we found something along that path then even the teachers would be happy to explore it, ***because school is a great place to discover the world and oneself: technology is directly connected to life.***

We ask teachers **to be curious** about what can be done with technology, to look for interesting inspirations within their passions and to become ***inventors***



How?

Exploring possibilities: always open the door to the many possible ways of doing and thinking so that everyone is led to give the best and the most of themselves; make it possible to discover the many aspects of a thing to avoid simplifying, limiting, knowing only one aspect of it; make it possible and desirable to change one's opinions when one encounters more correct ones;

Bringing in irony and play: playing is a serious matter, it calls on all our senses and attention and directs them towards a destination; self-motivation born of the pleasure of doing something can take students very far; Tackling the problem of creating: "it is not the object that needs to be preserved but the way, the design method, the modifiable experience ready to produce again".(B. Munari, Fantasia, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1977, p.144)

Translating the disorder of reality into order: the school has an obligation to teach boys and girls to be able to look carefully, to cultivate doubt, question habits, break stereotypes, understand - but also overcome - rules.

Technology as an expressive, conceptual tool, also of semantic overturning to experience that knowledge is possible, to "participate in creativity, spread the methods and techniques of message construction, spread the culture made by all for all. Everyone has something to say, stimulate individual creativity for collective growth". (Munari, in Futurismo linea sino a Peruzzi, di Fernando Miglietta, Ed. Il Calabrese, Cosenza, ottobre 1975)

The medium is the same for everyone: the difference will be the creative experience children have had thanks to the school, a place where even technology is not taken as it is but is investigated, opened up, used and 'bent', removed from the usual and ordinary, to open up new expressive and creative possibilities.

In a Digital Atelier there must be a meeting between:

Analogue/digital

The analogue represents a wonderful opportunity to slow down the digital and let the child have a new, meaningful experience which can sink in.

Making/undoing

the necessity of moving the body and hands in order to imagine, ask questions, produce hypotheses and verify them.

Useless/useful

For "useless" we suggest the space where our personal inner "anchors" are possible, those that help us give meaning to things and to ourselves.

Poetic/analytical

The poetic and divergent gaze can allow more in-depth analysis, as well as careful analysis which is open to new and unpredictable views of the world.

Artistic/scientific

These languages and tools, which the child will later discover as disciplines, are in dialogue with each other to provide experiences that lead to discovery and wonder.

Individual/collective

The continuous dialogue between I and we, between taking charge of oneself and collective responsibility.

1. Educate children to think

2. Arouse wonder and curiosity, experience beauty and the poetic

3. Don't impose yourself: get them talking, give them incentives, share passions, set them free

4. Arouse wonder and curiosity, experience beauty and the poetic

5. Embrace error and chance, the uncertain and the ambiguous

6. Master the limit, dare the immense (with a smile)

7. Ask authentic questions

8. Set up space and time

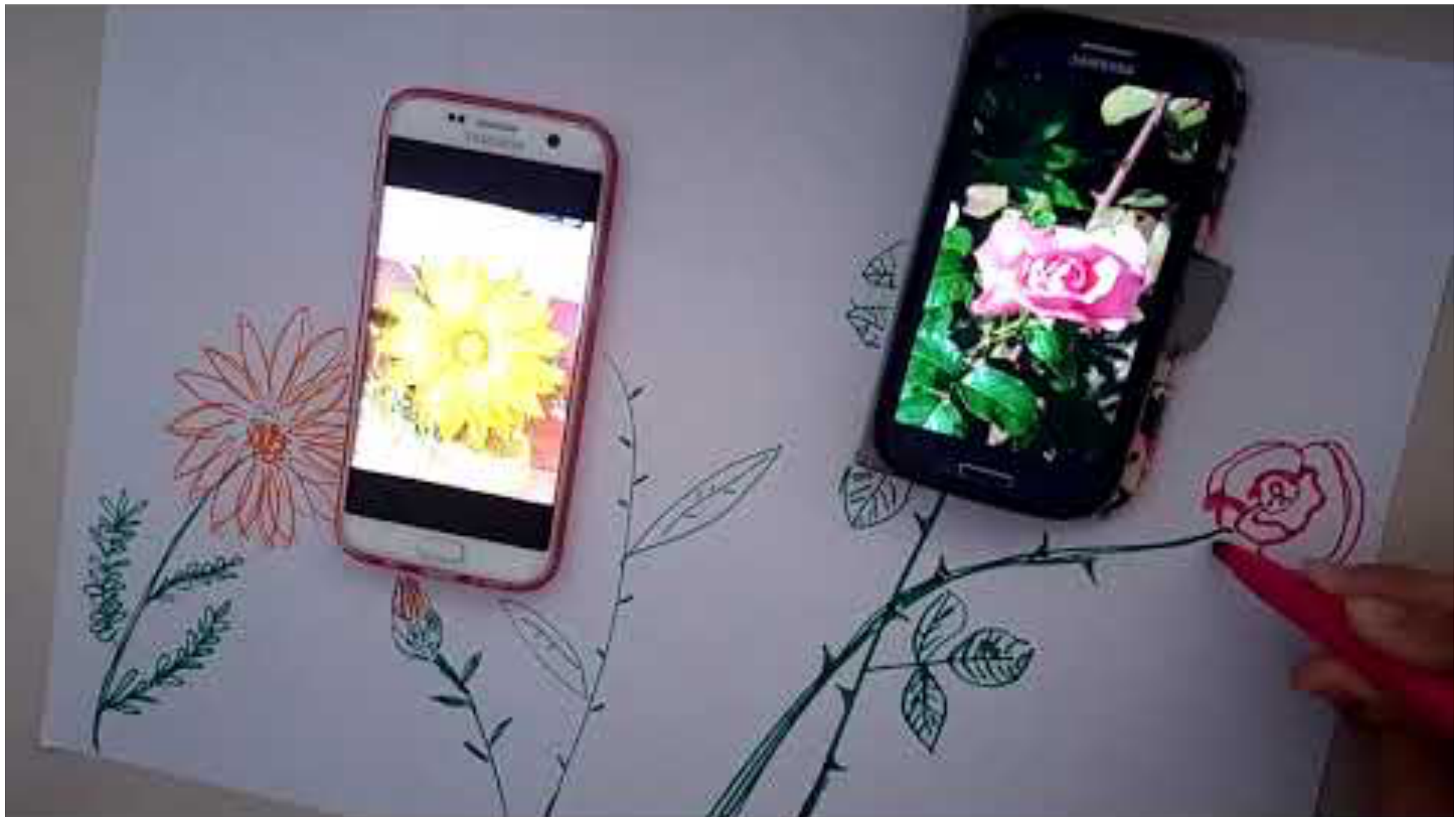
9. Make the gesture intelligent: making and unmaking, with all the senses, with ancient and inventive hands

10. Imagine solutions, discovering new and ancient things

From where we've started from:

A creative approach for media education

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgN1Do7GbIA&feature=youtu.be>



For further study:

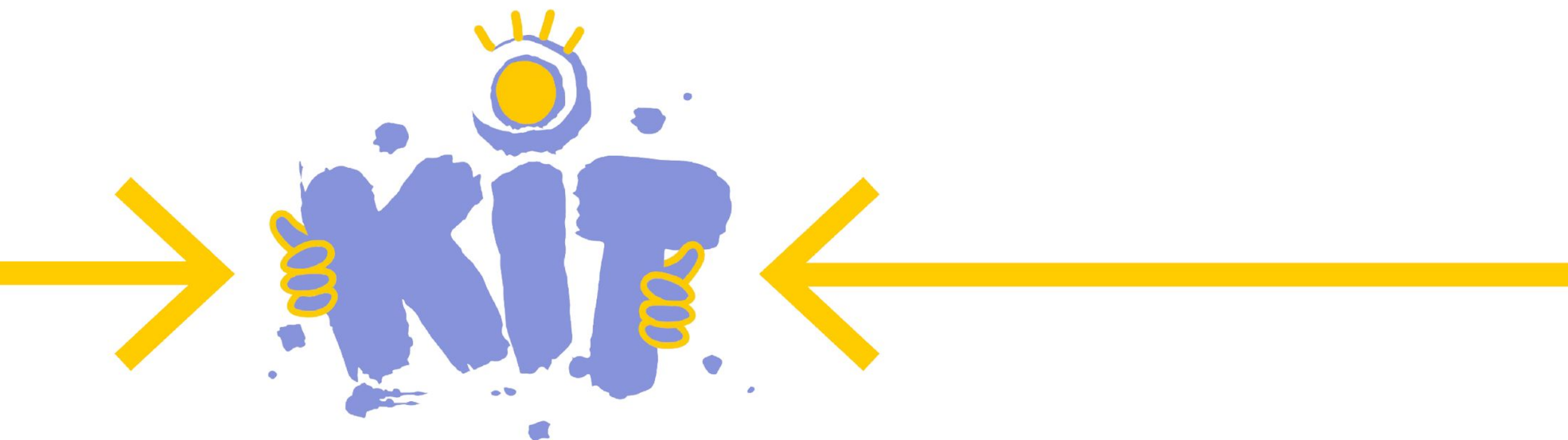


Manual of the European Project **App Your School** where the definition and implementation of the Digital Atelier has started with an experimentation in secondary schools of 7 European countries:

<https://www.appyourschool.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/>

[AppYourSchool-european-manual-1.pdf](#)

(ENG)



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