

**Today's students have grown up with digital technology: digital devices are part of their everyday lives outside school,** but are also starting to enter the classroom to help build bridges towards a future world of work.

**A Digital Education Plan, unveiled by France's President in May 2015 after a nationwide consultation on the subject,** aims to help teachers and students reap all the opportunities that digital technology can offer.



## BETTER PREPARING STUDENTS TO TAKE THEIR PLACE IN TOMORROW'S WORLD INVOLVES:

- **DEVELOPING** innovative learning methods to promote academic success and foster independence.
- **TRAINING** responsible, independent citizens in the digital era.
- **PREPARING** students for tomorrow's digital jobs.

## FRANCE IS A MAGNET FOR TALENT FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

### AT SCHOOL...

— **Educational institutions in France are now opening up to European and international programs with full support from the Ministries for Education and Higher Education.** Over 61% of French schools (55% of junior highs and 64% of high schools) currently have a partnership with at least one foreign institution. By the end of 2017, more than 50% of elementary/primary schools will be taking part in a project, either at European or international level.

- **The Voltaire program** enables young French and German students aged 16 and 17 to take part in a six-month trip to their partner countries. The exchange gives students the chance to live together, first in Germany and then in France.
- A joint scholarship program between France and the United Kingdom has been launched to promote and support existing educational partnerships. **Charles de Gaulle scholarships** offer £5,000 for each partner school to develop the abilities and employability of 17- to 19-year-olds through a variety of trips and activities.
- Launched in 2005, **eTwinning** is an online platform, financed by the European Commission as part of the Erasmus+ program, used in 36 countries and available in 28 languages. It enables European educational institutions to organize joint projects nationally and internationally, along with collaborative spaces and professional development opportunities for teachers.

### AT UNIVERSITY...

— **French campuses abroad are growing fast; there are now 133 French higher education sites in foreign countries, including branch campuses**

– identical reproductions of existing French institutions – such as Centrale Beijing and La Sorbonne Abu Dhabi. According to the Centre for Global Higher Education, France is the fourth most prolific country for establishing international campuses. The 38 “multi-site” campuses offer degrees that are geared towards their host country's demands and expectations, either by offering a unique study abroad experience for French students, or by addressing the country's training needs by recruiting mostly local students. France's Skema Business School, for example, has campuses in the United States, China and Brazil. The third type of set-up involves institutions founded through a bilateral agreement, either directly between universities or between governments. The sixty or so sites in this category include the French University of Egypt and Insa Euro-Mediterranean in Morocco.

**133**  
FRENCH  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
SITES

— **France is the third largest host country of international students in the world.** Around 300,000 international students have chosen to pursue their studies in France, accounting for 7% of foreign students studying abroad globally. Only the US and the UK are home to more foreign students. International students amount to 12.1% of all students in France, and 41.4% of all PhD students.

## INSTITUTIONS WORKING ON EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

### THE GRANDE ÉCOLE DU NUMÉRIQUE

**The “Grande École Numérique” is an initiative launched by the French President in 2015, bringing together more than 400 training programs open to all throughout the country.** Its goal is to meet

the growing needs of the labor market in digital skills and to promote social and professional integration among those for whom access to employment and training is difficult. Training courses leading to certification are aimed primarily at young people without qualifications or diplomas and women, with a particular focus on communities in priority areas as identified by municipal policies. The Public Interest Group (GIP) is the driving force behind the “Grande École du Numérique”, bringing together digital champions, stakeholders involved in digital transition in France's various regions, regional representatives and employment and training experts. The goal is to have 10,000 students trained through the “Grande École du Numérique” by 2018. A total of 50,000 jobs are currently unfilled in the digital sector, and more than 190,000 jobs will be available by 2022.

**400**  
TRAINING  
PROGRAMS  
OPEN TO  
EVERYONE

## INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS FOR ALL

### SIMPLON

— **Simplon.co is a network of “factories” (schools) and is part of the social economy,** which encompasses the non-profit sector and co-operative and mutual organizations. It offers free training courses in website and mobile app development, web design, digital skills, data analytics, building an online business, and many other types of training in digital skills geared towards employment in digital fields, and specifically in areas currently experiencing skills shortages.

— **The purpose of the training is to enable participants to find employment quickly or to set up their own businesses.** The training courses, which lead to qualification or certification, are aimed primarily at people for whom access to employment is difficult (young people under 25 with few or no qualifications, people from disadvantaged and rural areas, long-term jobseekers, people with disabilities, refugees). Admission is based on social criteria, with the objective of gender parity, and prior technical knowledge is not a requirement. Simplon has provided training for 779 people to date, 65% of whom found a job within six months of completing their training course.

### ZUPDECO

— **ZUPdeCO works to maximize academic success among children and young people from all backgrounds.** The association has been working on the ground for the past seven years, providing encouragement to thousands of middle schoolers from disadvantaged families. The goal is to enable students to obtain the “Brevet des Collèges”, the first diploma of their school career.

— **Given that homework reinforces inequality (47% of parents say they do not feel capable to helping their children with all school subjects due to lack of financial resources, availability or capability),** ZUPdeCO works to help students do the best they can at school and to alleviate the feelings of helplessness that parents may feel. To this end, it has developed a school support network led by young members of the French National Volunteer Service, or volunteer students who commit to giving their time to lead a tutoring support network during the school year.

### ÉCOLE 42

— **42 is offering the first computer training courses to be made available entirely free of charge, open to all between the ages of 18 and 30.** The school's approach to teaching is based on peer-to-peer learning, and it has an inclusive ethos that allows students to fully express their creativity through project-based learning. When the school was founded by Florian Bucher, Xavier Niel, Nicolas Sadirac and Kwame Yamgnane in 2013, the digital industry in France was experiencing an acute shortage of IT developers.

— **To train the top talent of tomorrow, the school offers state-of-the-art facilities in a unique and modern setting.** Having noted that the French system was caught between university on the one hand (free and accessible to large numbers of people, but offering training that is not always adapted to companies' needs) and private schools on the other (offering high-quality education, but excluding potential talent in large numbers), 42 offers a different type of tuition that not only develops students, but responds to economic realities. In 2016, 42 opened a campus in Fremont, California, exporting its free, high-quality IT training program to Silicon Valley.

**2013**  
YEAR OF  
CREATION  
IN PARIS

## FRANCE: LEADER IN THE MOOC BUSINESS

**A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is an open type of distance learning that can accommodate a large number of participants.** Course participants, teachers and students are geographically dispersed and communicate only through the internet. Web 2.0 tools are used for sharing, exchange and interaction. MOOC uses a mix of social media tools to involve the participant in teaching activities.

### OPENCCLASSROOMS

— **A MOOC leader in France, OpenClassrooms is an online school in which every visitor can be both a reader and writer.** Courses can be taught by members, by the site's team, or even by professors and lecturers from the university or partner schools. Initially oriented towards computer programming, the platform has covered broader themes such as marketing, entrepreneurship and science since 2013. In 2015, the site reported that 1 million accounts had been created since its launch, along with traffic volumes of 2.5 million unique visitors per month. In the same year, premium subscriptions were offered free of charge to all jobseekers in France, in partnership with the government and Pôle emploi (French employment services).

### HOLBERTON SCHOOL

— **Named after Betty Holberton, one of the six programmers of the ENIAC (the first computer built by the US Army in 1943), the Holberton School is developing a new kind of education.** Using project-based and peer learning, the school's mission is to train the best software engineers of this generation. The two-year higher education program was designed by three French engineers in San Francisco in 2015. It aims to train highly skilled software and operations engineers, whose skills are highly coveted in Silicon Valley and other tech companies.

— **The school has no official “teachers”; instead, it has mentors who are themselves industry leaders and who offer support rather than “education” in the usual sense of the word.** They design exercises and projects which the students work on together, fostering a positive learning culture. In 2017, Holberton School raised US\$2.3 million to increase class sizes from around 30 in 2017 to 100 in 2018.