## CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE. THE MUSEUM AS A REALLY EDUCATIONAL AND PARTICIPATED SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY CITIZENSHIP

# L'EDUCAZIONE AL PATRIMONIO CULTURALE IN UNA PROSPETTIVA INTERDISCIPLINARE. IL MUSEO COME SPAZIO REALMENTE EDUCATIVO E PARTECIPATO PER LA CITTADINANZA CONTEMPORANEA

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#### ABSTRACT

This essay intends to dwell on the fundamental synergy between the training agencies present in the territory with a view to analyzing the problems and possible educational planning that exploits and enhances technology and cultural heritage at the same time. Indeed, in the third millennium, in an integrated use of the forms of active teaching, technologies constitute an essential resource in support of educational act where families, schools and public entities face growing complexity.

Il presente saggio intende soffermarsi sulla fondamentale sinergia tra le agenzie formative presenti sul territorio in ottica di analisi delle problematiche e di una possibile progettazione educativa che sfrutti e valorizzi al contempo tecnologia e patrimonio culturale. Nel Terzo Millennio, infatti, in un utilizzo integrato alle forme di didattica attiva le tecnologie costituiscono una risorsa imprescindibile a supporto dell'agire educativo laddove famiglia, scuola ed enti territoriali fronteggiano la complessità crescente.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Inglese: education, cultural heritage, technology, skills, outdoor education

Italiano: educazione, patrimonio culturale, tecnologia, competenze, aula decentrata

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#### Introduction

The museum is a fully cultural and educational space. Crossing spaces, places, discovering connections and actively participating characterizes the museum as a fundamental testimony of history and memory. The museum must be experienced as an essentially didactic space to revitalize the sense of belongingness, of objectivity and of memory to counter the attempt of a process of reverse filiation which provides that instrumentally (G. Lenclud, 2001, p. 131) "they are the children which generate fathers, modeling the past to use the choices of the present". In recent years, an increasingly significant role has been attributed to cultural heritage in the educational field, understood in its broadest sense as the set of tangible and intangible assets that are the expression of a culture in its various manifestations. The Faro Convention of 2005, integrating the previous provisions of the Council of Europe, underlines its value and potential as a resource for human development and quality of life, considering it as a fundamental element of the processes of identity construction and citizenship education. Reflecting for a moment on the educational and training function of the museum, it is noted that according to the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape it is defined as "a permanent structure that acquires, catalogs, conserves, sorts and exhibits goods culture for education and training purposes study" (Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape, p. 22), and which, therefore, fully contributes to supporting the forms of participatory learning and the sharing of knowledge and contents starting from the classroom. In Italy, the Ministerial Decree n. 139/2007 establishes the Four cultural axes, the Languages Axis, the Mathematical Axis, the Scientific-Technological Axis, the Historical-Social Axis, and in line with the reflections that we want to conduct in this essay, it is precisely within the Axis of Languages and the Historical-Social Axis that the fundamental knowledge of the various forms of expression and of the artistic and literary heritage solicit and promote the aptitude for reflective and creative thinking, sensitivity to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage and awareness of their value.

#### 1. Cultural heritage, problems and educational act

The complex society of the contemporary world presents various problems linked on the one hand to the possibility of ethnic, cultural and religious conflicts, which unfortunately are increased by ideologies markedly oriented towards contrast and hatred, and, on the other, by the indifference of young and very young people (and their families) about the public property in general, and cultural heritage in particular, then about civil life and democratic participation. It is considered useful in this reflection to start from what Francesco De Bartolomeis expressed to the author, in 2021, clarifying that "young people behave like adults with public responsibilities; young people are, in the current situation, aligned with adults, but at a different distance" (Annino 2022, p. 33). Therefore, it becomes appropriate to reflect on these critical issues, since the repeated acts of vandalism, the soiling of monuments, buildings, but also of structures such as benches, public gardens and sports areas, as well as the abandonment of waste in the city centers as in green areas and aggressions against peers or other individuals in general are a manifestation of a loss of traditional values, of a strong disorientation which leads them to find themselves in violence, in stereotyped oriented behaviors towards aggression and in the destruction of what is res publica, therefore usable by all, a ritual moment that is also collective, a definitive and absolute experience, often testified by videos then disseminated on social media. Recalling adults, and therefore families, to their essential duties as educators, as well as reaffirming the pedagogical value of the co-responsibility educational pact, allows for attention to be paid to youth problems in the territory, in full and effective collaboration with the out of school world, where the data on early school dropout show an average of 12.7% in Italy with peaks of 17.6% in Puglia, 16.4% in Campania, 14% in Calabria and 21.1% % in Sicily respectively, with a worrying trend of 25.2% in the metropolitan city of Catania (Istat 2023, p. 11). Here the much-awaited synergy between the school, the families and the other training agencies in the territory reaffirms the importance of the educational act in a coherent path between analysis, planning and practice, precisely because the problems make "the question of proper and specific identity of the educational act, the determination of which in the act intends to recall, in addition to the categories mentioned above, the modality of behavior, that is to say its effectiveness in a given specific circumstance" (Dalle Fratte, 1995, p. 17). As later reaffirmed by many authors (Perla-Riva, 2016; Iori, 2018; Agostinetto, 2022; Caldin, 2023) the educational act represents the concrete act of intervention in the solution of the problems in situation, in full

coherence with what planned and accomplished with precise intention to guide knowledge and skills. The educational value of cultural heritage and the opportunity for its promotion by the school institution are reaffirmed in Italy already in the first National Plan for the education of cultural heritage of 2015; in fact, in the document heritage education is defined (p. 3) as "a global education [...] by its interdisciplinary nature and based on active and participatory methodologies and requires a strong synergy between the territory and its educational agencies" as it involves both the operators of the formal training system (school, university) and those who operate in the fields of informal learning. In Italy, the law 92/2019 on civic education too, in point g) speaks of education in the respect and enhancement of cultural heritage and common public goods, for which the use of heritage within the school system is a fundamental objective which necessarily implies integrated governance and continuous exchanges between school and territory, between museum systems, archives, librarians, between intangible heritage and cultural landscape. Pedagogy of cultural heritage, i.e. pedagogy based on cultural heritage, is an extraordinary means of intertwining knowledge and promoting the sense of belongingness to those historical communities present in the various contexts Italian schools are located in. In an important Indire document it is highlighted that "Small schools traditionally consolidate and preserve their distinctive cultural and historical traits by becoming large communities of memory. Their relationship with the natural, social and cultural environment can represent a resource with strong innovative potential when it links learning to reality, enhancing it in respect of territorial vocations" (Indire, 2017, p. 11). From this point of view, on the one hand, become of greater importance the conception and the spread of the obligatory Museum as a promotion of art as a practice of active citizenship and, on the other, the EU Recommendation of 2018 which allows a new synthesis as regards the Knowledge, skills and essential attitudes linked to this competence of citizenship. The Competence in citizenship is based on knowledge of basic concepts and phenomena concerning individuals, groups, work organisations, society, economy and culture. It presupposes an understanding of the common values of Europe, expressed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and in the Bill of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Furthermore, it includes the knowledge of contemporary events as well as the critical interpretation of the main events of national, European and world history. It further embraces knowledge of the goals, values and policies of social and political movements as well as sustainable systems, especially global climate and demographic change and its causes. To be a global citizen today, knowledge of European integration becomes essential, alongside with an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe and in the world. Competency in Cultural Awareness and Expression involves an understanding and respect for how ideas and meanings are creatively expressed and communicated in different cultures and through a variety of arts and other cultural forms; it presupposes the commitment to understand, develop, re-elaborate and express one's own about one's role in society in a series of ways and contexts which involve different forms of mutual interrelation. The concept of open school must therefore become effective into a real frequency of spaces and environments outside the school to be considered and experienced as other places of learning; in this sense, the territory and the museums can no longer remain inert places that are the object only of planned trips with passive visits to the sites or of mere aesthetic enjoyment. In this regard, the 2021 National Plan for Cultural Heritage Education establishes that (PNEPC 2021, p. 12) "Through openness to the active participation of the public, the communities and the school, a predisposition to listening, in value of different perspectives, the places of culture are called to transform themselves into spaces of re-acquisition and reinterpretation of individual and collective identities". With a view to participatory citizenship, they must become an integral part of educational processes, through the planning of educational experiences implemented in synergy by schools and local authorities. In the planning and implementation of outdoor didactics as regards the area of values and the promotion of traditions through good practices, the museum is a great educational space for citizens, not only at the school level, but above all at the level of participation socially projected. The museum, in fact, if it is understood as a fully cultural and educational space, shines for its primary function of fundamental testimony of history and memory. The good practices of citizenship education through the cultural and environmental heritage constitute a valid tool for reading traditions and customs in the correct perspective, in a not ethnocentric and monocultural way, but as objective and complete as possible, especially if there are risks of instrumental and functional interpretations of the past, potential victim of invented traditions. The tension towards critical and cultural deepening in the processes of personal growth therefore assumes fundamental importance, especially in relation to society and to the environment when making life choices, and above all in relation to belongingness to a community perceived in an ethical perspective, linked to the recognition of the otherness, of values and traditions and not in an ontological one, linked to birth or geocultural origins, as exclusive or excluding, with the ultimate tèlos of escaping from the damp caves of prejudice. Beyond any metaphor, there is no doubt that in the light of the daily problems that affect not only the very young and adolescents, but more generally the social context, in educational processes it is more appropriate to commit oneself so that there is also greater recourse to conviviality, to direct and personal commitment, because learning would derive indisputable advantages and would open up an unexpected range of opportunities for cultural and intersubjective exchange for the learners, and in an extended way also for citizens with a view to active, democratic and supportive training, or, in terms more empathetic, to design a space of closeness, proximity.

#### 2. Cultural heritage and the development of citizenship skills

Starting from De Bartolomeis' considerations on the four-dimensional educational space of behavior, within which he identified (De Bartolomeis 1987, p. 54), "the physical space, the social space, the affective space and time" in a diachronic perspective, it can be noted how all these poles are today the references for educational act on and in the territory, since when the pedagogical analysis identifies the problems inherent in educational processes, it immediately offers the starting point for planning interventions that materialize in practice, allowing to pass from a conditioned learning to a problem solving learning, through a direct involvement that really interests the kids and motivates them about the coconstruction of their knowledge and that is transferred in terms of educational output to future generations. In the representations of cultures and ideologies, and, therefore, from the point of view of pedagogical analysis for educational planning, the use of the past and of traditions as a function of is a very concrete gamble, and referring to Hobsbawm, (Hobsbawm, Ranger, 1987, p. 3) "by "invented tradition" we mean a set of practices, generally regulated by openly or tacitly accepted norms, and endowed with a ritual or symbolic nature, which aim to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior repetitive in which continuity with the past is automatically implied". In fact, for an art site to fully become a place of learning, including citizenship education, developing the search for objectivity and a critical spirit, the focal point is to be found in the motivation and involvement of the users, for which (Solima, 2000, p. 23) "A museum cannot entrust its educational function to a fruition based on the pure and simple contemplation of the works, but must be able to develop and transmit data, information and news about its collections to those who enter for various reasons and in different in contact with it". With reference to law 92/2019, it should be remembered that in point g) it therefore focuses on education to respect and enhance the cultural heritage and common public goods as an essential factor for participation and integration, strongly emphasizing how the use of heritage within the school system is a fundamental objective which necessarily implies integrated governance. Education through cultural heritage is

an extraordinary means of intertwining knowledge in an interdisciplinary perspective and promoting a sense of belongingness to that "heritage community" present in the contexts in which Italian schools operate, since they, in urban centers such as even in remote provinces, they traditionally consolidate and preserve their distinctive cultural and historical traits, becoming cultural principals and large communities for the transmission of memory. The school contributes to making the museum a fully experienced space, which therefore becomes a place of memory and study, and we speak of memory because memory itself is (Ferrarotti 1997, p. 29) a "framework of experiences" to better understand future planning, and it is mainly a source of ideas that allow reflections from a diachronic and synchronic perspective. In this sense, memory, according to Demetrio, is our personal archive of time, it is (Demetrio, 2005, p. 26) "a reference to our biographical history, absolutely unique and ours, shared with others, but never to them entirely attributed", and, we would add, memory is fully and absolutely culture, to resume Eco, since (Eco, 2013) "A culture is built with memory and its selection". Daily responsibility in life choices imposes continuous reflections that are as objective and sharp as possible, especially in teaching ethical and moral principles to the younger generations, often accused, as previously stated, in general of superficiality, apathy and lack of interest for the public goods. Therefore, it is appropriate to plan a potentially more engaging form of teaching, to be developed in laboratory activities, especially if we are in times of enormous diffusion of electronic tools for communication and large quantities of content available online. Motivation and emotion are the key elements for educating about the common heritage: emotion, as etymology teaches us, from the Latin emovère, addresses the interiority of people and their vibrations which constitute their truest essence communicative and experiential (Schachter, Singer, 1962). Teaching in the museum and for the museum must try to communicate to as many students as possible the importance of education in the values of citizenship, of associated and communicated life on the one hand, and of the intercultural perspective and exchange on the other, keeping in the background the not so veiled utopia of making a very small contribution to the consolidation of a critical, anti-dogmatic and supportive thought. Of course, it has been stated that in times of complexity, in an era of pervasive media and new media, "distractions and decentralizations", to say it à la Augè, (M. Augè 2001, p. 12) are in perennial temptation, confining to oblivion examples of proposed values and models of behaviour. Already Dewey, with regard to community life, argued that (Dewey, 1916, p. 125) "A democracy is something more than a form of government. It is above all a type of associated life, of continuously communicated experience", and in this aspect is fully realized the

emotion of speaking to students about democracy and common values, about the collective ideal that is renewed in the consciences of the learners, in a unique empathetic and emotional path. In fact, for some time neuroscience has shown how affectivity and empathy are inescapably innate to human nature and to the continuity of our species from the point of view of phylogeny. It can therefore be safely asserted that emotions are the motivational engines that characterize human existence, that shape its choices, and determine its behaviors or behavioral forms that determine intersubjectivity and the comparison between identities. In everyday life all men experience a constant emotional dynamic, individual and interactive, and every man in his existential journey has promptly learned to get excited and to transmit his emotions in close interaction with others. Emotions are also the basis of democratic solidity, in the same way as solidarity and conviviality, categories today placed in oblivion by individualist and hyper-efficientist thought, which makes us lose the essential coordinates of the community, which, as Dewey teaches us, (Dewey, 1949, p. 169) "consists of a certain number of individuals held together by working in the same direction in a common spirit, and by pursuing common aims". In essence, the need emerges for a real, profound new citizenship education which considers not only the economic and productive dimensions, but which also continuously supports and redesigns the approaches to public affairs, to cultural and religious inequalities, to health, for a full participation in civil and political rights.

### 3. The vertical curriculum and educational planning through the use of digital technology

Only In a broad perspective of interdisciplinarity and transversality, it appears of enormous importance for the school to use the vertical curriculum in all its value, a tool that allows an organic and consequential planning with a view to training and acquiring basic citizenship skills. In fact, since Presidential Decree 275/99 and Law 234/2000, attention has been dutifully directed to the curriculum for the formation of the profile of an aware and responsible citizen, through the progressively acquired skills, according to what is subsequently provided for by the Recommendation of the of 2006 and 2018, which underlines that "the importance and relevance of non-formal and informal learning are made evident by the experiences acquired through culture, youth work, volunteering and grassroots sport", (EU Recommendation 2018, p. 3) essentially reaffirming the essential nature of the training platform set up by the school and families together with the agencies and local resources. Talking about citizenship and democracy, also contemplating

the historical and semantic path of the latter, undoubtedly sublimates a participatory emotion, which has one of the maximum goals in the full realization of the community. The problematic nature of education in an age of complexity reminds us that, although the educational emergencies in terms of active and participatory citizenship can differ from territory to territory, it is essential that the interventions be programmed in a general and logical framework of long-term training to legality and protection of the common heritage, strengthening attention to basic skills together with linguistic and digital ones, so in the cultural sphere it is a question of giving life to models of encounter and cooperation between school and family, and between these and businesses and other local entities. Pedagogical reflection, today, must dwell on the complex problems that emerge from the globalization process, to look for educational and training strategies capable of giving concrete answers to the first individual and, subsequently, collective growth needs, always remembering that the true integration always and in any case begins in people's conscience, from the full understanding of shared values. And, undoubtedly, the cultural heritage, with its invaluable load of strong immediacy in sharing and orientation towards empathy and the collective historical path, represents an essential tool in the education of civic spirit, seen as a potential wealth. Undoubtedly art favors a particular emotional state, and allows for a unique emotional sharing, opening up to the involvement of people who interact in a given moment, thanks to a direct language, beyond the purely aesthetic use, without filters and absolutely spontaneous. Museums, and all art sites in general, vigorously move from a traditional static conception to a deeply dynamic one of places of shared culture lived through educational experiences: education in cultural heritage is a way of living art, it is to renew the spirit and the message of the artists, and transmit them to the community as a heavy aesthetic and ethical legacy to be shared. The digital universe in this process of redefining teaching through cultural heritage in an active and participatory sense offers enormous potential, as amply specified by the 2021 National Plan for Cultural Heritage Education, when it indicates digital as a "context within which to frame forms of cultural consumption ( digital storytelling, social gaming, multimedia teaching, digital contests , augmented reality, etc.), analysis tools (big data, social data, behavioral tracking, etc.) and different channels of communication and promotion" (National plan for cultural heritage education 2021, p. 10). Therefore, it becomes fundamental to expand the possibilities of using cultural heritage starting from school, harmoniously combining knowledge and contents, concepts and skills, or, better, "learning and entertainment" (Ippoliti et al., 2011, p. 49). Figure n.1 shows the transition that museums, but more generally archaeological sites, are making

thanks to the digital revolution, to become open systems for sharing knowledge gained through active use, from the object to the context, to demonstrate that "bringing cultural heritage at the center of policies for citizens, placing the users and the relationships they establish with digital objects at the heart of the digital ecosystem, no longer resources, is a process that rewrites the cultural value chain and redefines the organizational models of institutions, affirming the primacy of knowledge and the social relevance of the dissemination of knowledge " (National plan for the digitization of cultural heritage 2022-2023, p. 26). In relation to teaching, it is very important to note that the entry of digital into places of culture allows attention to be focused no longer on the quantity but on the quality of digital objects and above all on the new ways of accessing and using them. Indeed, how within the digital ecosystem it is essential to design services capable of offering citizens processes of knowledge understood as a true and profound experience of cultural growth, in the same way in the school-universe the digital world exponentially increases the possibilities of in-depth study primarily by calling teachers to innovate structures of thought and methodologies, and students to strengthen their curiosity and interest in research.

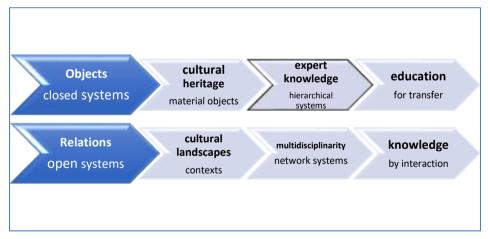


Fig. 1 (Adaptation from the National plan for the digitization of cultural heritage 2022-2023 showing the conceptual transition from self-sufficient closed systems to interdependent open systems)

Of course it is clear that integrating the digital world, and technologies in general, into daily educational activities is not a simple step, however it is necessary to carry it out, to further develop the teachers' skills and effectively influence the teaching-learning processes, especially in a civic education perspective and recognition of

the cultural debt towards other cultures in a country such as Italy, where, according to the 2017 Eurydice Brief Report, the lowest incidence rates were recorded as regards interest in civic education European level. In the context of international studies on the use of technologies for teaching, for some years the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) has been offering a new framework to explore and combine the categories of knowledge and skills necessary for teachers to integrate technology into daily educational practices, and can represent a valid reference in the reformulation of the teaching approach, both in the traditional classroom and in the outdoor activities. Through this didactic model, teachers manage to synthesize the three necessary knowledge areas: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge, an area in which digital competence becomes the essential pivot. In this regard, in fact, a recent one research confirmed that "Recognizing the importance of teachers in transforming designed curricula into real teaching and learning activities, several educational policies throughout the world have explicitly integrated technological requirements in teacher qualification processes and consider technology as a driving force in influencing educational practice" (KHabbache et al, 2023, p. 2). Therefore, teachers must take into account, when combining both technology and pedagogy elements to plan teaching in a specific disciplinary area, the diverse and dynamic intersections of pedagogical technological knowledge (TPK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and knowledge of technological content (TCK), as highlighted in fig.2. The crux of the question relating to the use of digital technology at school therefore sees the axis of reference shift from showing teachers how to use a technological tool to showing them its use in a specific context with adequate pedagogical strategies aimed at improving the learning of contents and skills.

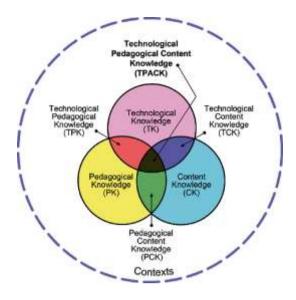


Fig.2: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework. (Reproduced by Medical Science Educator)

Tradition and innovation, historical heritage and a look at experience coexist in the forms of contemporary teaching, but at the same time they must form the tracks for a guide-path towards participation in active citizenship that fully responds to the expectations of complexity, and in this sense, the development of a vertical curriculum for civic education in schools of all levels is very important, which is really capable of applying in a practical dimension what has been planned in response to European and national provisions in terms of skills and learning. The space offered to cultural heritage in the vertical curriculum planning phase can include both classroom and outdoor activities, in order to combine methodologies and resources in a flexible way imagining:

- interdisciplinary civic education projects aimed at linking the knowledge and skills of cultural and landscape heritage;
- outdoor teaching in museum sites and places of worship to develop awareness of belongingness to the local community;
- consolidation of good practices of participatory experiences, active citizenship, workshops and for the development of basic skills;

- growth of innovative proposals related to the themes of creativity,
   language(s) and cultural and artistic expression;
- research activity on the territory to know the historical paths and favor the recognition of the cultural debt and the development of the critical spirit.

In fact, the importance of the vertical curriculum is found in the possibility that it offers to work in parallel on transversal knowledge of a socio-affective-relational type (reasoning ability, curiosity, independent thinking, responsibility and motivation) and on those of a cognitive-disciplinary type (personal experiences, skills, disciplinary knowledge) that contribute to the definition of the cultural horizons of active and truly participatory citizenship, as indicated by the individual Institutes within the Three-Year Plan of the Educational Offer. With this in mind, designing a vertical curriculum in a transversal and interdisciplinary perspective (Annino 2022, p. 133) "allows the school to deal clearly with contemporary issues, especially in terms of multiculturalism, peaceful coexistence and religious pluralism, so the classrooms of Institutes of all levels constitute a space for real and concrete democratic experimentation".

#### Conclusions

The difficulties related to the management of educational complexity in an era of multiculturalism and the pervasiveness of the media bring out the full importance of the need to cultivate citizenship skills, since only with appropriate tools can young people and very young people act in a democratic context to connote it in an active and participatory sense. The focus of the reflection must be placed on the daily commitment of the learners and on their relationships even beyond the school walls; then, undoubtedly, it must be shifted to the constant complexity of the role of teachers, that the encounter with otherness is changing profoundly. Furthermore, the node of democratic and potentially intercultural education that begins with the family must be considered, in an ideal path that can combine citizenship education and concrete and constant personal participation. The modern meaning of citizenship, in fact, should be a fusion of several elements, so that it can express the wide range of education of the individual as a social being: that is, education for peace, conviviality, conflict management, culture. the enhancement of differences and dialogue, of digital, cultural heritage, sustainable development, health, as a purpose and natural consequence of each individual

disciplinary knowledge, the enhancement of differences and dialogue, digital, cultural heritage, sustainable development, health, as a purpose and natural consequence of each individual disciplinary knowledge.

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