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Factories, Workers and Entrepreneurs: Teaching the History of Industrialization in School

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Abstract: This article aims to propose ideas on how to disseminate industrial labor and business history outside the academic community. In particular, it focuses on how to teach these disciplines at school (from 5th grades to high school). The primary purpose was not to write a theoretical essay, but to describe a concrete case study and its theoretical implications. In academic terms this article has been imagined as an example of an empirical essay that focuses on a paradigmatic experience. The focus is on teaching and educational strategies based on collaborations between schools, the heritage sector and labor and business historians. Moreover, it was a teaching experience which critically engaged with the complexity of industrial heritage with an interdisciplinary approach.

The educational experience described in this article was also aimed at aggregating a new collaborative public, in particular young students, around the historical industrial patrimony in order to promote

economic knowledge and civic education through public history and history education in schools to create an active and aware citizenship.

Keywords: historical industrial patrimony, history education, citizenship

Between 2015 and 2018, I led the Didactic Department at the ISEC Foundation (Institute for the History of the Contemporary Age) in Italy: this department has many tasks, but in particular, it is devoted to supervising and training schoolteachers, implementing interactive workshops for students (from elementary schools to high schools), and planning new high-quality curriculums and innovative teaching methods in history education.

This article focuses on an activity planned, organized and proposed for the Italian schools in that period. It was an experience of workshops, lectures, laboratories and

courses on industrial labor and business history planned with modular paths and structured according to a blended learning perspective. It was a path which involved two kinds of parallel proposals: laboratories/workshops for students on one side and schoolteachers' training experiences on the other.

This article aims to propose ideas on how to disseminate industrial labor and business history outside the academic community. In particular, it focuses on how to teach these disciplines at school. The primary purpose was not to write a theoretical essay, but to describe a concrete case study and its theoretical implications. In academic terms this article has been imagined as an example of an empirical essay that focuses on a paradigmatic experience. In this perspective, this article has also been conceived with the aim of providing a concrete tool for schoolteachers. The idea was to make available ideas that can be used in the classrooms. In this perspective, the second part of the essay is a sort of report which presents an in-depth description of the workshops, laboratories and courses concretely developed with students and teachers.

The focus is on teaching and educational strategies based on collaborations between schools, the heritage sector and labor and business historians. These strategies at ISEC Foundation have taken the form of practice-based teaching and 'hands-on' learning experiences (on 'hands-on' learning see: Allen, Taylor and Turner, 2005; Borghi, 2018; Brusa, 1991; Girardet, 2004; Kaltman, 2010; Yin, 2013; Zecca, 2016). They are coherent with the

idea that a successful teaching and educational approach should provide students with three skill types: theoretical and critical knowledge within a specific field (e.g. critical knowledge of historical content, facts, and developments), practical experiences within the field, and transferable skills relevant in various *work/not work*-life situations. Moreover, it was a teaching experience which critically engaged with the complexity of industrial heritage with an interdisciplinary approach.

The educational experience described in this article was also aimed at aggregating a new collaborative public, in particular young students, around the historical industrial patrimony in order to promote economic knowledge and civic education through public history and history education in schools to create an active and aware citizenship. It is meant to overcome a conservative vision of industrial heritage in favor of a dynamic, open-culture vision that is a vision of historical culture and historical heritage as well as economic knowledge as a public good. The aim is the transformation of industrial heritage into a 'community' in order to build a space for social aggregation, in particular for younger generations that are growing up in times and spaces of post-industrialization.

The Context: Italian Industrialization, Sesto San Giovanni and the ISEC

In order to fully understand this experience, the didactic experiments described in this article have to be contextualized territorially and must consider the specificity of the institution

(the ISEC Foundation) that developed it.

Brief Notes on the History of Italian Industrialization

Italian industry is unquestionably a model of success. Italy is a global leader in international trade and exports. "Made in Italy" is a globally successful brand, and Italy remains the eighth-largest national economy by nominal GDP in the world.

The first "Italian Industrial Revolution" occurred in northern Italy between the 1880s and World War I, but Italy did not become an industrial power until the so-called "Italian Economic Miracle" of the 1950s and 1960s (on the history of Italian industrialization: Amatori, and Colli, 1999; Amatori, 2011; Clough, 1964; Cohen, and Federico. 2001; Della Valentina, and Licini., 2018; Federico, 1994; Toniolo, 2013; Zamagni, 1993).

There were three pillars that supported the Italian economic miracle:

- A mixed economy in which large State-owned enterprises play a key role
- The role of labor unions and workers' movements in establishing a universal welfare state and redistributing the fruits of the Economic Miracle
- The role of visionary private entrepreneurs and managers of State-owned firms in huge corporations

Despite the widespread recognition of these achievements, the Italian economy is nevertheless characterized by a number of idiosyncrasies that are sometimes cited as symptoms of structural problems. For instance, the North/South territorial

duality, widespread precariousness and undocumented employment on the labor market, and the impact of corruption and tax evasion are crucial components of the Italian model.

The structural weakness of certain important industrial sectors and the predominance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and so-called industrial districts in the Italian economy of the twenty-first century have risen to prominence in both the public discourse and academic study.

This predicament is mostly the result of the deindustrialization process that has afflicted Italy since the 1980s, including the disappearance/downsizing of many of the significant enterprises that contributed to the Italian Economic Miracle. This process was a result of factors such as market saturation, worldwide competition, the migration of production to countries with lower wages and labor costs, and the introduction of new technologies such as automation, robotization, etc. These phenomena are global, but among the G7 nations, Italy was least able to develop an industrial policy that might combat these deindustrialization trends.

Although the downsizing of Italian industries is not always viewed as a problem in and of itself (it can also mean greater flexibility, greater responsiveness to market stimuli, and fewer organizational inefficiencies, etc.), and the network economy of industrial districts is also a successful model, the structural absence of a large industrial system is recognized as a peculiar limitation for a founding member of the G7.

This article focuses on an experience of how the history of Italian industry was taught. In particular, it examines the teaching of industrial history in a region such as Sesto San Giovanni, which underwent a massive deindustrialization.

Sesto San Giovanni: From an Industrial Hub to a Deindustrialized/Post-Industrial Site

ISEC Foundation is based in Sesto San Giovanni, a city that played a paradigmatic role in the history of Italian industrialization (Petrillo, 1981; Parma, 1992; Greco, 2002). It is a middle-sized city located in Northern Italy which is in a strategic position within the metropolitan area of Milan, just on the north.

Proximity to Milan and cheap property together explain why several industrial concerns moved to Sesto San Giovanni at the beginning of the 1900's and opened up their factories and mills: Breda (1903) for railway engine manufacturing; Campari (1904) for industrial beverages; Ercole Marelli (1905) for power generating engines; Falck (1906) for steelmaking; and Magneti Marelli (1919) for magnetos and equipment for the automotive industry. Since then, Sesto's has developed an industrial and political history in its own right: on the wave of the second industrial revolution, Sesto San Giovanni grew not as a company town or a single-industry city but as an industrial hub, and during the economic boom after the Second World War, it became the fifth industrial center in Italy.

The trajectory of Sesto's large factories and political identity unfolds and is

concluded within the century. The deindustrialization process is particularly quick: between the '80s and the '90s, all of the big businesses that had created the industrial history in Sesto shut down. There is only a ten-year divide between 1984 when Ercole Marelli went bankrupt and the closing of the last Falck steel mills in 1994. From the '70s to present days, Sesto has lost 20% of its population.

ISEC Foundation: An Archive, a Library and Much More

ISEC Foundation was born in 1973, and one of its main tasks from the beginning has been to be a place where Sesto San Giovanni's paradigmatic history of industrialization and deindustrialization can be elaborated in order to safeguard the memory of factories and industrial society and to collect the documentation that has been stratified.

In the following decades, ISEC Foundation has become a national reference point for whomever is interested in happenings concerning the political, economic and social history of contemporary Italy. Throughout the years, at the early corpus of documents, many archives have been added. Today, ISEC conserves an impressive archival and book heritage: more than 2,000 metres of documents, 170,000 photographs, 100,000 technical drawings, 1,500 political manifestos, 500 hours of interviews, 100,000 books and 4,000 newspapers. ISEC was acknowledged by Mibact (Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism) as an economic and territorial archive. ISEC makes its archival, bibliographic, photographic and audio-

visual heritage available to the scientific community, to schools and to citizens.

In particular, Fondazione ISEC is an institution specialized in the protection and dissemination of a vast archival heritage coming from many important Italian companies (such as Breda, Falk, Ercole Marelli, etc.) and it is devoted to the valorization of the local industrial heritage. There is also a Didactic Department at the ISEC Foundation, which I had the opportunity to lead between 2015 and 2018. As I already wrote in the introduction, this department is devoted, above of all, to supervising and training schoolteachers, implementing interactive workshops for students (from elementary schools to high schools), and planning new high-quality curriculums and innovative teaching methods in history education. The workshops, lectures and laboratories on industrial labor and business history that we proposed beginning in September 2015 are among the most significant activities developed by this Department.

Between September 2015 and June 2018, dozens of activities were held on this issue in Italian schools (from primary schools to high schools) located in the area of Milan in which thousands of students participated. In the same period, training courses and seminars recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education, University

and Research (MIUR) were held at the ISEC Foundation for hundreds of schoolteachers on the topic of educational strategies for teaching labor and business history.[1]

At the time I started to work as head of the Didactic Department, I identified as one of my main purposes the creation of a relationship between the activities for schools and the archive, with particular attention to company archival funds and, more generally, to the archival documents related to local and national industrial history. I was lucky enough to find the availability and competence of the archive managers, Dr. Alberto de Cristofaro and Dr. Primo Ferrari, to start this project. We shared the same idea of an open and participatory archive, a place not only for conservation or for the support of scholars' research but also for active training of citizens and, in particular, as an educational space for school students.

Our idea was not new, but we consciously inserted ourselves into the perspective already indicated in 1986 by UNESCO in the study '*Archives and Education: a RAMP Study with Guidelines*', which was reiterated in the following years in many documents and declarations by various institutional actors in the field of conservation and enhancement of archives. [2]

[1] Here you can find the Annual Report (in Italian) on the activities of the Didactic Department of the ISEC Foundation since 2015 when I became head of the department itself:

<https://www.fondazioneisec.it/en/didattica/relazioni-finali-sezione-didattca-isec-per-la-scuola>

[2] See, for example: 'Universal Declaration on Archives' adopted by the 36th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO on 10 November 2011. Available on line: <https://www.ica.org/en/universal-declaration-archives> and 'Recommendation no. R (98) 5 of The Committee of Ministers to Member States concerning heritage education', adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 March 1998 at the 623rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. Available on line: <https://rm.coe.int/16804f1ca1>

Other departments of the Foundation also agreed on this idea of enhancing the archival heritage and trying to attract not only traditional visitors. In particular, the head of communication of the ISEC Foundation, Dr. Sara Zanisi, actively supported us with her strategic skills from the perspective of a participatory and communicative archive. The scientific director of the Foundation, Prof. Giorgio Bigatti, also played a fundamental role by identifying the strategy adopted by the Didactic Department for the enhancement of industrial heritage as one of the strategic axes for the entire organization. [3]

A similar support came from the administrative staff led by Anna Lonati, by the library managers Alessandra Rapetti and Claudia Zonca, as well as by the president Gianni Cervetti and the entire management board, in particular the vice-president, Alessandro Pollio Salimbeni. Our idea was that the entire organization, and not just the Didactic Department, was placed in the perspective of an open and participatory archive, and this fact could represent an interesting and paradigmatic example for all the actors operating in the same field of industrial heritage preservation.

Thanks to this shared vision by the whole organization of an open and participatory

archive and, in particular, of the archive as a place to develop experiences of labor and business history teaching in schools, the experiences described in this article have continued after I left as director of the Didactic Department of the ISEC Foundation in September 2018. In fact, in the following school years (2018–2019 and 2019–2020), under the guidance of the new head of the department, Prof. Monica di Barbora, thousands of students and hundreds of teachers have had the opportunity to participate in the ISEC workshops, seminars and courses on labor and business history.[4]

Theoretical and Methodological Challenges

Teaching Industrial Labor and Business History in Times and Places of Deindustrialization

In contemporary society, demand increases for storytelling, public history and cultural dissemination, as well as for open access and open source and, in general, for historical and cultural disclosure (Glassberg, 1996; Kelley, 1978; Merlo, 2019; Wojdon, 2018; Zannini, 2017). A paradigmatic topic is represented by the impact of the deindustrialization processes which have been a major issue in Europe since the second half of the twentieth century. Italy is a meaningful example of

[3] In this perspective, the activities of my department were included in a broader general three-years project for the enhancement of ISEC's archival heritage called "AggiungiPromemoria" [AddPromemoria] supported by Cariplo Bank Foundation since 2017.

[4] Here you can find the Report (in Italian) on the activities of the Didactic Department of ISEC Foundation in the school year 2018-2019, under the direction of Prof. Monica di Barbora: <https://fondazioneisec.it/media/pages/didattica/relazioni-finali-sezione-didattica-isec-per-la-scuola/3226189253-1565173827/attivita-isec-per-la-scuola-anno-scolastico-2018-2019.pdf>

their impacts which create the demand for new and innovative approaches to economic and social history. At the same time, the industrial heritage continues to often be perceived as a specialist asset, reserved for a few, and distant, not very accessible and not verifiable. Deindustrialization deeply affected a great range of places and groups (Berger and Wicke, 2017), but the history of industrial labour as well as business history still often remain fields of interest for academic scholars and for small groups of enthusiasts or militants.

Despite the difficulties in making industrial heritage available and accessible, there is a general awareness that in the second half of the twentieth century, deindustrialization processes deeply affected a great range of places and groups, especially in the industrialized West. The need to understand the industrial past becomes a fundamental necessity in order to understand a present of deindustrialization or post-industrialization. At the same time, we know how differently the industrial past and its decline has been represented in deindustrialized spaces (Berger and Wicke, 2017). It is also true that industrial heritage's potential for valorization and its legitimacy has not been globally recognized.

Some communities consider their industrial heritage as a fundamental feature of their identity, whereas others aim to erase their industrial past. Moreover, when moving towards comparative approaches to industrial heritage, it is important to look at the process of deindustrialization not as an homogeneous development but rather as

different local/ regional/ national/ transnational experiences with different identities and very particular circumstances.

From this perspective, a community's industrial heritage is a paradigmatic example of how the past may play a strategic role in the processes of production of meaning and can be used to create a collective feeling about both history and our own identity

In such a problematic context, the experience described within this article was an experimental process to put the history of industrial labor and business history to work. In particular, it was aimed to understand how it is possible to valorize the knowledge achieved by the community of business and labor historians on industrial heritage from a perspective of public history and history education in school. It was also an experimental project of 'participatory industrial heritage' in which the objectives were to aggregate a new public around the memory of industrialization and industrial heritage, to promote civic education through history education in school and to overcome a conservative vision of industrial heritage in favor of an open-culture perspective of historical heritage as a 'public good' (see Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, 2018).

It is important to be aware of all the implications. In particular, we know that if public history and history education are always influenced by the dominant political and cultural hegemony, this is especially true when they have to deal with controversial issues such as industrial

heritage in communities that experienced important processes of deindustrialization.

The point is that *Industrialism* can be described in opposite ways (Birkeland, 2008). For example, it can be labelled as a social disease that entails pathological relationships with nature and the environment, since industrialization implied dominance over nature and use of natural resources that represented means of production. At the same time, industrialization can be described as part of an experience of welfare, economic growth and value systems for generations. It is also true that these factories and machines provided a system of cultural and symbolic values, but, at the same time, industrialization produced *placelessness* (Relph, 1976).

The personal relation with the industrial past can also be described by former protagonists as a positive experience of participation in a workers' community or as an arena to develop one's entrepreneurship skills and competences as well as an experience of strong exploitation and suffering.

It is also a challenge to describe to students the reality of a local process of deindustrialization from a global perspective. The recent emergence of the non-Eurocentric strands of so-called global history as new dominant historiographic paradigms has also provided an incentive for approaches that go beyond mere national or local narratives in history education and teaching.[5] It means

resizing and localizing traditional chronologies on industrialization and deindustrialization processes. In describing labor and business history in the workshop, it must be specified that deindustrialization processes in Europe are the result of complex mechanisms, including delocalization to other areas of the globe. The pre-Tayloristic/Fordist and Tayloristic/Fordist industry (with a concentrated production system, the use of production processes based on traditional assembly lines, etc.) is still a significant reality with hundreds of millions of workers in the world. For the students we worked with in our workshops, the secrecy of this was shown by the provenance of the majority of the goods they use on a daily basis, almost all produced in delocalized factories out of the so-called deindustrialized West. Furthermore, this meant the proposal of critical analyses of the traditional chronologies of industrial revolutions that went beyond purely Eurocentric readings.

Another question to be addressed concerned the non-linearity of labour and business history (De Vito, 2013, Hofmeester and van der Linden, 2018). Even in the European reality, different ways of producing and working coexist. Forms of slave, artisanal, Fordist and post-Fordist labour also characterise the contemporary production reality in Europe and particularly in Italy as well as in the area of Milano itself (Agnoletto, 2016; De Vito, 2017; Gibelli, 2016; Van der Linden, 2008). The complexity of the labor market

[5] See in particular the debate animated by California School historians such as Robert C. Allen (2011), Kenneth Pomeranz (2000) and Jack Goldstone (2000 and 2008).

and its non-linear historical evolution is an important reading key to be provided to students in order to understand the reality that surrounds them.

An interesting point is to correlate in the classroom industrial work and entrepreneurship with post-industrial work and entrepreneurship. This will help students and teachers to understand continuity and discontinuity, also through basic literacy on the new concepts used to describe the contemporary labor market in deindustrialized areas. From this perspective, it is useful to make students and teachers aware of concepts such as gig-economy, IoT (Internet of Things), smart factory and industry 4.0. We realized in fact that also many teachers are unfamiliar with these terms. A good idea is to help students and teachers to historicize these concepts by, on the one hand, identifying their novelty elements and, on the other hand, the references to phenomena already present in the past and perhaps labelled with other names or concepts.

A Participatory Open Archive and History Education

In order to show this complexity, one important challenge of planning laboratories and workshops on industrial labor and business history was to think of industrial heritage, and ISEC's archive on local industrial heritage, in particular, as 'participatory open archives' able to aggregate, activate and involve students and teachers. (Benoit and Eveleigh, 2019; Theimer, 2014).

We were aware that a good definition for

"participatory archive" does not exist (on the concept of "participatory archive": Alaoui, 2020; Benoit & Eveleigh, 2019; Evans, 2007, Eveleigh, 2012, Eveleigh, Flinn, & Shepherd, 2015; Huvila, 2008 and 2011; Mackay, 2019; Shirky, 2010). We agreed that, in general, it entails shifting from a "passive model of information consumption towards the active engagement of the public in creating new knowledge" (Shirky, 2010). We are also aware that many commentators make a connection between "participatory archives" and the development of online technologies during the first two decades of the 21st century, "an attempt, perhaps, to assert archives' continuing relevance for a social media generation" (Benoit and Eveleigh, 2019) but our goals were different: we wanted to make a traditional archive an open and participatory space, especially for younger generations.

The idea was to reach an audience progressively more numerous, diversified, active and collaborative. Experiences such as the 'Relational Museum' projects represented interesting examples for us and inspired us in the projection of our laboratories. In particular, we agreed with Mike Jones' perspective on what is meant by "relational museum", that is something that goes beyond the interactive use of digital technologies (Jones, 2021):

"Technology has a role to play, including museum and archival standards, linked data, and named entity recognition; but our approach must also look beyond technology to broader priorities and ways of working that contribute to stronger community connections and a shared understanding of the world".

In general, the delay in heritage sectors, as well as schools and academic institutions, in updating their languages has more urgently positioned the need to experiment with new ways of innovation and involvement of the wider public. It is in this context that this experience for the ‘participatory industrial heritage’ open to schools was placed (on the concept of ‘participatory industrial heritage’ see: Alfrey & Putnam, 1992; Oeverman & Mieg, 2015; Toscano, 2019).

This strategy—the model of the ‘participatory industrial heritage’—is not just appropriate but necessary for facing the urgency and the need to bridge the gap between scientific culture and popular culture, as well as between academic research in labor/business history and day-to-day history education at school. At Fondazione ISEC, we thought that only a multidirectional dialogue involving the academic environment, industrial heritage actors (such as ISEC itself) and the school system, along with an inclusive, democratic, transparent and interdisciplinary approach and scientific rigor and specialized expertise in the conservation and enhancement of industrial heritage, could trigger a new and virtuous process of innovative and collaborative cultural participation in the historical context.

The ambitions and efforts of this project were aimed to promote scientific dissemination of historical issues addressed to a broad and non-specialist public represented by school students, the development of widespread historical knowledge, the promotion of open access and open source and the encouragement of

he construction DOMINANT ‘pop’ paths of historical knowledge and civic education. In particular, this project represented an opportunity to link the experience of academic scholars and schoolteachers with the long-term professional experience of experts specialized in the protection and dissemination of a vast archival heritage related to the industrial past of local and national communities.

What is Meant by Industrial Labor and Business History Teaching in School?

Planning workshops, lectures and laboratories for school students and teachers which deal with issues related to industrial labor and business history meant dealing with more general theoretical and methodological challenges.

A general aspect is that any given approach to history education is not “neutral” but is drawn on both a philosophy of history as well as learning theories which should be made explicit (Yilmaz, 2008–2009, p. 37). This was also true for this experience, which was designed in the context of a consolidated vision of history teaching that characterized the activity of the Didactics Department at the ISEC Foundation in those years. Our basic idea was that we were not ‘training future historians’ (at least this was not our first purpose), although a positive outcome of learning labor and business history would be the acquisition of the skills required to study it. The point is that we aimed to teach labor and business history in order to prepare students to be citizens, and the acquisition of the historical method was

thus an important step because it trains students in critical thinking in a ‘conscious’ approach to sources. Our elaborations were developed in the context of a wider debate. As Arie Wilschut (2019, 131) has recently highlighted, in the documents describing standards for history teaching in Western countries, connecting the past to the present and the future is frequently regarded as a means to prepare students for their future role as citizens in society.

Our turning point was to define the ‘relevance of history’ as a tool for preparing ‘future citizens’. A good definition was provided by Wilschut, van Straaten and van Riessen (2013, p. 36), who maintained that history allows students to recognize and experience what history has to do with themselves, with today’s society and with their general understanding of human existence. An important and difficult issue that remained was how to connect in an activity for school students the historical method with citizenship. In this regard, we followed Carley Dalvarez’s suggestions (2001) that in order to achieve a critical outlook, students need the skills of questioning, interpreting, reflecting and forming conclusions, which are the key skills of historical enquiry.

In planning our projects on industrial labor and business history, we tried to propose a teaching style similar to the one well-described by Nichol and Cooper (2017) when they maintained that history education empowers students by pushing them to ask historical questions; to interact with sources that they interrogate; to evaluate and extract evidence from

historical ‘facts’, arguments, narratives and claims in their sources as well as to test the validity of their sources. The same authors also underline that history education should teach students to organize, collate and colligate their evidential data to find answers to their questions, to use their findings to create and test hypotheses and finally to construct and report their own interpretations.

By following these approaches to history teaching, our workshops, laboratories and courses aimed to historicize labor and business history and, at the same time, enable students to understand its complexity. They aimed to offer a reading of the reality to help students understand how labor, distinguishing the whole history of humanity, characterizes contemporary society and, therefore, their world both inside and outside of school.

We were also conscious that ‘students do not enter the classroom as blank slates or as empty hands’ (Drake, 2008, p. 77). In fact, if history education is always influenced by the dominant political and cultural hegemony, this is especially true when teaching has to deal with controversial issues such as labor and business history. We were aware that industrial heritage also means helping students to be able to recognize that industrial labor and business history are also an history of conflicts as well as an history of conflictual memories. The point was to teach labor and business history as a complex story, full of contradictory aspects and often simplified with superficial narratives that bear a very partial vision of reality and are distorted by stereotypes and generalizations.

For example, when we teach the memory of industrialization, we have to deal with what Steven Highs called the middle-class voyeurism of post-industrial aesthetics (Highs, 2013), that means an aesthetic, non-conflictual, often mythologizing approach. We have to remember his suggestion to look ‘beyond the ruins’ of industrial decline in order to also bring forward the memory of the working class. Recent oral history projects are following this call to give real people a voice in the construction of historical analyses about the industrial past as well as about deindustrialization (Stranglema, 2017). For example, in 2015, the ISEC Foundation, in collaboration with AVoce and the University of Milano, produced an interesting oral history documentary: Pollen and Rust (Apuzzo, Garruccio, Roncaglia and Zanisi, 2015). This documentary was the result of an ethnographic research project on deindustrialization in Sesto San Giovanni. In particular, the case study of the closure of the factories of the Falk steel industry was analyzed. The study contained interviews with Falk workers, employees and executives. Moreover, it combined oral history through the use of original videos and photographs of Falk's history deposited in the ISEC archive with photos and videos relating to industrial archaeology sites as they appear today.

At the Department Didactic of Fondazione ISEC, we thought of these laboratories and workshops on industrial labor and business history, we had to think about what kind of ‘look’ we wanted to offer about the industrial past. In particular, the activities proposed by Fondazione ISEC did not aim to propose an aseptic description of

industrialization, nor to hide the processes and conflicts that have pervaded the history of industrialization. Social and class conflicts, as well as environmental or gender-related conflicts are a fundamental part of the memory of industrialization with which students have to deal.

At the same time, places (cities and regions) as well as communities and people have a certain degree of freedom to choose their historical legacies (Egberts, 2017). This is particularly true in communities, such as Sesto San Giovanni, and in the Milano area, which experienced a very important history of deindustrialization. As Linde Egberts has highlighted, deindustrialization processes involve different reactions and they can be seen as threats to collective identities or as opening opportunities. As a consequence, deindustrialized communities can follow opposite ways: for example, memory enhancement and heritagization on the one side or not to recognize and represent the industrial past on the other (Berger and Wicke, 2017).

In this context, we know that we face different narratives when we speak to students and teachers about the industrial past. It also depends on what kind of deindustrialization process happened in a community. In places where deindustrialization processes were accompanied by massive struggles of working-class people, the narratives tend to be highly polarized, while in places where these processes were negotiated relatively peacefully between different social and political actors, the narrative of the past tend to become thoroughly romanticized.

A Larger and More Holistic View of Industrial History

In general, our laboratories were planned in the context of a debate that featured an apparent paradox: while in regions of heavy industry such as Sesto San Giovanni a strong working-class culture developed, much of the culture of industrial heritage can now also be described as a middle-class project. Our laboratories worked also from the perspective of connecting these two aspects through the valorization of working-class culture and a characterization of the industrial heritage movement as an alliance among former industrial workers, entrepreneurs, scholars, archivists, actors in the enhancement of industrial heritage and heritage activists. In general, ISEC Foundation represents a concrete paradigmatic example of this: an archive managed by archivists who are experts in the conservation of industrial heritage in collaboration with scholars and former workers who actively participate in saving and recovering company archives.

At the same time, we were aware of the ambiguities which are related to the memories of the industrial past. The stories told by the former industrial workers during our meetings were a combination of pride and regret as well as a description of unpleasant memories. But these stories were coherent with the representation we wanted to give, far from both the myth and the demonization of the industrial past.

Moreover, in using the memory of the witnesses (mainly workers but also entrepreneurs) during our workshops, we were aware of the methodological

implications that this created. I refer to the debate on 'Memory and History' that has characterized historiography for some decades, especially since the 'cultural turn' of the 1970s and the crisis of positivist approaches. As Joan Tumblety (2013) highlighted, 'memory is now as familiar a category for historians as politics, war or empire'.

Our point was that although this was not an 'oral history' project, we used a teaching methodology that included sources based on oral stories drawn from living memory. I want to highlight that from my point of view, oral sources do not just supplement the written historical record or fill in the gaps of the archive, but they are primary sources among other primary sources to be afforded the same 'dignity' (Agnolotto, 2014, pp. 12–13). I do not believe in 'oral history' as a separate field; rather, I think that oral sources are as fundamental as written ones for historians who study modern history, and we have to analyze them with the same caution and critical approach. During his/her speech to the students during a workshop, a former industrial worker as well as an entrepreneur can say something about facts or processes that we cannot find in the archive, but at the same time he/she does not tell 'the truth' but a partial representation of it, the same as a written document found in the archive. In managing this project of labor and business history education, I have tried to follow a methodological approach that rejects both the deification of oral sources and the primacy of the written word. The point was to also present to the students the 'oral sources' that were 'live' in front of them as sources to be criticized,

analyzed and confronted.

Finally, this project also contained another challenge: to offer students didactic experiences that combined labor and business history approaches. As we all know, these two disciplines are usually characterized by very different traditions, methodologies and cultures. Already in 1986, in an article published on 'Business and Economic History', Steven J. Ross and Edwin J. Perkins called for 'integrating' labor and business history 'as labor and business history deal with so many similar issues and concerns' and they were both convinced that 'business and labor historians can enhance the quality of their teaching and research from a regular and steady interchange with each other' (Ross and Perkins, 1986, p. 51).

There were some very interesting attempts to combine labor and business history. An emblematic example is represented by Duccio Bigazzi, and his researches carried out in the Eighties and the Nineties with a focus on large Italian companies, such as Alfa Romeo (Bigatti, 1988). His idea was to write stories capable of including the many components that interact within the companies themselves such as owners, managers, technicians, employees, workers and their organizations and so on.

Except for distinguished exceptions such as Bigazzi, the appeal to combine labor and business history generally went unheeded: in the following decades the two disciplines actually maintained their differences and separations. As Lane Windham recently wrote, we have 'business history, which puts companies and markets at its center, and labor history,

which centers workers, their communities, and their organizations' (Windham, 2018, p. 97).

With our proposals, we wanted to offer a larger and more holistic view of industrial history, one that looks at all the moving parts and crosses methodological boundaries between labor and business history. For example, we tried to show students sources that are typically used by labor historians as well as those used by business historians. The students thus worked both with union leaflets and with accounting documents. We have generally tried to show a complete story, with its conflicts and with an approach that looked inside and outside the factories.

The Workshops with Students

There were five kinds of projects related to industrial labor and business history that the ISEC Foundation proposed to the teachers for their classes in the school years 2015–2016/2016–2017/2017–2018 (September 2015–June 2018):

- One-day workshops at ISEC's archive
- Lectures at the applicant schools
- Two-day projects at ISEC Foundation
- One-week projects at ISEC Foundation
- One-year project

All of these didactic proposals were described on the ISEC Foundation website and through a mailing to a list of teachers managed by the Didactic Department. The proposals were all free of charge for Italian schools in Lombardy.

The One-Day Workshop with Students at ISEC's archive

The first pattern of proposals consisted of one day-workshops which lasted between four- and six-hours (plus breaks) and were held at ISEC Foundation headquarters.

These workshops were proposed to schools from primary (since class 5th) to high-school level (up to students 18–19 years old). The organization of the activities was rebalanced based on the age level of the class. For pupils attending elementary or junior high schools, the focus was more about exemplary life stories of people, while more attention was paid to macro-history for high school students. In addition, the number of students/classes attending the workshops was different and this issue was also taken into account: when it was a one class-experience (20–25 students), the interactive approach was dominant, while in the case of three classes together (up to 60 students), some of the steps (step 1, in particular) had more of a ‘one-person conference’ characteristic.

The path was usually organized in four different steps;

- Step 1: An interactive introductory lesson/conference (about 2 hours);
- Step 2: Guided ‘work in team’ (in small groups) on archival sources (about 1 hour);
- Break (15–30 minutes);
- Step 3: Sharing of ‘work in team’ results in plenary assembly (about 2 hours);
- Break (15–30 minutes); and
- Step 4: Open final discussion and feedback (about 1 hour).

The first step began with the story of a real

man or woman who was not famous but was the protagonist of a meaningful life. I usually told the story and presented it as a kind of fairy tale at the beginning. At the end of the story, I told the students it was a real-life story and asked a question: How do we get to know his or her life? At this point, I was posing more as a historian, researcher and teacher. The answer we brought to them was through the documents deposited in the ISEC Foundation archive. I showed pictures of the documents on a big screen.

From here began the explanation of what an archive is, in particular, an archive of labor and business history, what an archivist does and what his/her work is for. This part were managed by ISEC’s archivists. Students were encouraged to think about what a source is, how it can be kept, the advantages and disadvantages of digitization, etc.

Furthermore, the ISEC Foundation archive was described with a focus on some industrial business and labor history funds related to the industrial world of the 20th century and Sesto San Giovanni’s industrial sites in particular. I supported the archivists in contextualizing the funds deposited at ISEC with the local industrial memory, pointing out to the students the twentieth-century history of Sesto San Giovanni and Milan as cities of factories.

The students were also physically shown some original documents (for example, flyers or accounting documents of companies, photographs of factory interiors or workers’ demonstrations, videos, etc.) and also some objects deposited in the archives (for example,

samples of company products, shoes and helmets of metallurgical workers, etc.). Students were also asked if they wanted to physically touch the archival sources, using gloves and precautions 'like real archivists do'. Sometimes a brief intervention was also proposed by a former worker from one of the factories included in the sources who had helped the archivists to collect the material.

During this step, the aim was to create links between the daily experiences of the students and their life stories with the story told by the sources deposited in the archive. We asked them questions like: did any of your relatives work in the factories these sources came from? Do you have sources like these at home (family memories related to your grandparents' jobs, for example)? The idea was to connect local labor and business history to their lives and help students understand the concreteness of these disciplines.

Step 2 of the workshop was a guided 'work in a team' (in small groups) on the sources. We gave students a paper copy of 4/5 sources available at Fondazione ISEC's archive that were linked to industrial labor and business history. Usually a varied group of sources was proposed (such as copies of handwritten sources, printed sources, photographs, posters, etc.) related to the history of local industrialization.

Each group of students (4/5 people) was asked to address a sort of basic 'source criticism' path, starting with answering, as a group, some questions related to each source available to them (each group received the same sources). The questions

obviously differed according to the age of the students, but the basic scheme was as follows:

- What kind of source is it (photograph, letter, poster, etc.)?
- In what year or historical period was it produced?
- Who produced it (person or institution)?
- For what purpose was it conceived?
- Who is it for?
- What strategy does it use to reach and convince those who read it (irony, emotion, identification...)?
- Identify at least four keywords that describe the content of the source.
- What do you discover or learn from the source that you did not know before?
- Is its content consistent with other sources that you know or information you have?
- If you answer 'no' to the previous question, which source/information seems more convincing and why?

Step 3 of the workshop consisted of sharing the answers to the questions in a sort of plenary assembly. Each source was shown on a big screen, and in front of the others, each group proposed its answers. The presentation of the responses of the various groups was animated and the idea was to 'celebrate' together the discovery of the sources: after the spokesperson of each group had spoken, everyone applauded and his/her group supported his/her answers. When each group had told its answers on a specific source, then an archivist explained the 'right' answers and analyzed the source itself, after which a brief discussion followed.

Through the collective analysis of the sources, the concepts and knowledge of labor and business history were introduced. For example, original photographs of assembly lines, metallurgical workers in front of a blast furnace, engineers in front of railway wagons of the late nineteenth century, women in factories during the First World War or workers during a demonstration were an opportunity to introduce concepts such as industrial take-off, Taylorism, social conflict, entrepreneurship and so on. Through the discussion of the proposed sources, a sort of debate developed on industrial labor and business history. The students could explain their doubts, their questions and their opinions. The last part (step 4) was dedicated to a critical and open discussion with respect to the workshop, during which the students were asked to provide feedback on the path that had been taken together.

Lectures with Students at the Applicant Schools

There were also lectures held at the schools that requested them. The teachers contacted ISEC Foundation and could ask that the lecture deal with one of the following topics:

- European labor and business history since the first Industrial Revolution to the end of the 20th century;
- Global approaches to labor and business history;

- Deindustrialization: concepts and categories; and
- The case study of Sesto San Giovanni: industrialization and deindustrialization [6]

With some schools, it was agreed to organize a sort of course of two, three or four lectures for the same classes by choosing more than one topic among those proposed. In some cases, the single lecture or group of lectures was linked to the laboratory at the ISEC Foundation's archive described in section 4.1.

These lectures were based on an interactive and bidirectional management of communication. The continuous reference to original sources and the use of videos, photos and audio characterized the meetings that could last between two to four hours. As previously stated, these lectures were also based on an idea of history education as a tool to empower students by pushing them to ask historical questions; to interact with sources that they interrogate; and to evaluate and extract evidence from, as well as to test the validity of, historical 'facts', arguments, narratives and claims in their sources. An important point always opened the lectures: do not trust what the teacher explains to you today but check, search for new sources, ask questions and propose different interpretations.

The lectures were presented to different age-groups, from junior high school (since

[6] This topic was usually managed by Prof. Giorgio De Vecchi, a renowned scholar, collaborator of the Didactic Department and expert in local industrial history of Sesto San Giovanni.

class 6th) to the high-school level (up to students 18–19 years old). The lectures were rebalanced based on the age level of the class, both in terms of content and methodologies. The number of students/classes attending the lectures was different and this issue was also taken into account: when it was a one class-experience (20–25 students), the interactive approach was dominant, while in the case of four/five classes together (up to 100 students), it had more of a ‘one-person conference’ characteristic.

The Two-Day Projects with Students at ISEC Foundation

This project was structured over two full days (morning and afternoon) and consisted of many different didactic activities: lectures, workshops in the archive, guided visits to local industrial heritage centers and meetings with witnesses. This proposal had a more specific target than the didactic proposals presented in the previous sections: it was aimed at a class of students in their last year of high school[1] (18–19 years old) and it was a proposal for one class at a time (20–25 students).

It started with an introductory lecture on *What is ISEC Foundation? Where are you?*. The activities and aims of the ISEC Foundation were explained to the students. In particular, the three functions performed by ISEC were underlined: research, dissemination and conservation. The

building where ISEC is located was also described since it is itself a very interesting building. Indeed, Villa Mylius, the seat of the Foundation where workshops and lessons are held, is a historic neoclassical patrician villa, built in the eighteenth century by a noble family. An interesting element highlighted during the meetings is that the building combines the classic characteristics of a holiday and rest villa for the noble family, that it was a place dedicated to the breeding of silkworms (strategic factor for the development of the textile industry at the origins of Italian industrialization) and that there was experimentation with the cultivation of different plants inside the greenhouse and park. This was another interesting link to local industrial history.

The introductory lecture was followed by:

- Interactive lectures on the issues described in Section 4.2.
- Laboratory at the ISEC archive structured according to the same steps described in Section 4.1.
- Vision and discussion with the authors of the video ‘Pollen and rust’ (see Section 3.3).
- Meetings with: [7]
 - former workers of Sesto San Giovanni factories,
 - entrepreneurs,
 - academic scholars, photographers, journalists and
 - trade unionists or representatives of business associations.

[7] These meetings could take the form of a guest’s report followed by questions or could be an interview. They were held at the ISEC Foundation lecture hall.

The program also included *Guided visits to local sites of industrial heritage* (e.g., walks in the sites of industrial archeology in the areas of the former Falk and Breda factories). Students had the opportunity to visit both abandoned industrial areas and areas converted to new non-productive uses.

Moreover, the two-days project also proposed a visit to the *Campari company museum*. This is a corporate museum: the students came into contact with a further way of preserving and communicating the industrial past, different from both the archive and the disused industrial sites. The museum is the representation of its industrial history from the point of view of the company itself.

convivial welcoming and break intervals were also part of the program:

- The coffee welcome (8:45–9:15 a.m) at the ISEC Foundation lecture hall
- Two coffee breaks (one in the morning and one in the afternoon) at the ISEC Foundation lecture hall
- Lunch all together (students, teachers and ISEC staff) at a restaurant

The idea was that in these moments, students could engage in discussions with each other and with some of the teachers and ISEC staff relative to the topics covered. Compared to the proposals described in sections 4.1 and 4.2, this path consisted of a much more evident blended-learning perspective approach.

One-Week Project with Students at ISEC Foundation

This project was structured over four days (Monday–Thursday mornings until 3 p.m.) and consisted of many different didactic activities held at the ISEC Foundation lecture hall. The didactic path was built in collaboration with the teachers of the participating classes, starting from the resources and skills present at the ISEC Foundation. This is an example of the program:

Day 1

- Introductory lecture: ·What is ISEC Foundation? Where are you? (See Section 4.3);
- Lectures on industrial labor and business history in the 20th century: local, European and global approaches (see Section 4.2).

Day 2

- Deindustrialization and the labor market today: concepts and categories;
- Vision and discussion with the authors of the video ‘Pollen and rust’ (see Section 3.3);
- Meeting with protagonist/s of the local industrial history (former workers and/or entrepreneurs).

Day 3

- Workshop at ISEC’s archive (see Section 4.1).[8]

[8] The idea was to place work and business in the Italian historical and legal context. Starting from an analysis of how work and business are present in the articles of the Italian Constitution, reasoning was proposed on issues such as rights and duties of workers and entrepreneurs, the role of the trade unions, the impact of new forms of work, etc.

Day 4

- Lecture and workshop on labor and business in the Italian Constitution.
- Meeting with trade unions representatives and entrepreneurs;
- Open debate with the students.

The One-Year Project with Students of the Liceo Brera in Milano

In the 2016–2017 academic year, I started a collaboration between the Didactic Department of the ISEC Foundation and the Liceo Brera in Milan. The Liceo Brera is an important and old high school in Milan specializing in arts, architecture, fashion and design. We signed an agreement between the school and the ISEC Foundation about a one-year project with two classes, and the program would repeat itself for three consecutive years. Every year, two classes of students were to develop a labor and business history project working on the local industrial heritage, that is both the documents stored in the ISEC archive as well as the industrial archaeological sites of Sesto San Giovanni.

Each year, two different projects would be developed, linked to the specialisations of the participating classes (arts, architecture, fashion or design). At the end of each school year, the classes would set up an exhibit in the premises of Villa Milyus, the headquarters of the ISEC Foundation, that presented the results of their work.

This is the basic scheme of the annual project path:

- *Introductory week on method and contents* [9] The contents were the same as proposed for the ‘one-week project’ (see Section 4.4).
- *Each class then chose a topic to develop.* Between January and May, the students worked on this topic both at the ISEC Foundation with us and at school with their teachers, on archival material and/or with inspections on industrial archaeology sites.
- *In June, the final exhibition was set up* (designed by students under the supervision of us and their teachers) at the ISEC Foundation.
- *The path ended with the inauguration of the exhibition* to which both the citizens of Sesto San Giovanni and the students' families were invited. On this occasion, there was also a meeting with scholars dedicated to the topics of the exhibition [10]

The Training Courses on Labor and Business History for Schoolteachers

Training courses for schoolteachers on labor and business history were also organized. They concerned both didactic methodologies and disciplinary contents. In particular, we activated:

- Short courses at participating schools
- Short courses at the ISEC Foundation
- One or two "semester courses" per year

[9] Held at the lecture hall of the ISEC Foundation.

[10] Example exhibition topics include *"Search, tell, plan. Exhibition on the future of industrial areas starting from the historical roots stores in ISEC"* and *"Researching, designing, describing the ETR 300 electric train."*

- One "two-year course"

All courses were free for teachers and they were officially recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR).

Short Courses

These were lectures held at ISEC Foundation or at the schools that requested them. A list of course topics was indicated on the Foundation's website and teachers could enrol themselves or schools could request that one of the courses be done at the school itself with a minimum number of 15 participants. The meeting structure usually consisted of a frontal lecture with the support of videos, photos and documents, followed by an open discussion.

This is a list of the topics proposed:

- Teaching European labor and business history: work and factories in the 19th and 20th centuries
- Global approaches to economic history education
- Teaching about deindustrialization: concepts and categories
- Teaching local history and the case study of Sesto San Giovanni: industrialization and deindustrialization
- Labor and business history teaching: archives and industrial heritage
- History teaching and Internet/on line sources
- History teaching and global approaches

Semester Courses

Among the training proposals for teachers every academic year, we also proposed one or two courses structured in several meetings (from a minimum of three to a maximum of ten) which took place in the autumn semester prior to Christmas or between January and May. These courses combined different didactic modalities, such as lectures, workshops in the archive, interviews with protagonists, movies, or visits to factories or to industrial archaeological sites.

For example, in the academic year 2015–2016 we proposed the following course: *‘Raccontare la fabbrica, raccontare il lavoro’* [‘Talking about the factory, talking about work’]. It was a course attended by 110 teachers. It was organized by ISEC under my scientific direction and in collaboration with two other actors: the Pirelli Foundation (a company foundation) and the Italian Film Archive Foundation (Fondazione Cineteca Italiana). The course was structured as follows:

- three lessons (history of industrial revolutions; industrial work and cinema; industry and literature)
- two workshops in the archive
- a guided tour at the Pirelli factory in Settimo Torinese
- viewing of three films followed by debates

The Three-Year Course

Beginning in January 2017, we also

activated a three-year teacher training project entitled 'Education in archival-documentary heritage' in collaboration with INSMLI under my scientific direction together with Professor Andrea Saba from INSMLI. The project was part of a larger project of the Lombardy Regional School Office (Italian Ministry of Education, Research and Universities) on the construction of vertical school curricula in history. Our project consisted in supporting ten middle and high school teachers both with training moments and laboratories to be developed in the classrooms with students. In the end, each teacher had to present a report on his or her own project to use the archives in teaching and with an evaluation on how it worked when experienced with the students. This project was completed by Prof. Monica Di Barborà, who in September 2018 replaced me as head of the Didactic Department of the ISEC Foundation.

Conclusions

The teaching of industrial labor and business history in Italian schools suffers from two elements of weakness: the later structuring of business archives and the scarce, to say the least, presence of labor and business history in the curriculum.

The experience, described in this paper, developed by the didactic department of the ISEC Foundation between 2015 and 2018 represents an attempt to overcome these two weaknesses. However, we had to face many critical issues and difficulties.

It was difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposals in the

medium or long term because we worked with the classes for generally short times: How much knowledge and skills were actually acquired? In addition, our workshops were not always integrated into a complex didactic path that included work in the classroom after our meetings with the students.

Another problem is that Italian teachers often have a very limited knowledge of the reality of archives and historiographical work on documents because, among other things, they very rarely have a degree in history. Even more rarely do teachers have specific knowledge in the field of labor and business history. In this context, the idea of combining projects with students and teacher training was also aimed at leaving a more lasting legacy that could be reused in the classrooms.

A further criticality to be faced in the construction of educational paths on industrial heritage is that they require the involvement of very different professional figures, often not specifically dedicated and competent in carrying out educational activities. The advantage of the projects presented in this article is that they were created within an institution such as the ISEC Foundation where these various professional figures coexist, such as scholars, archivists, teachers, communicators, etc. In leading the Didactic Department, I paid close attention to sharing our projects with the other sections of the Foundation. In particular, the co-design of planning together with the archive proved very fruitful. The advantage is that I have found colleagues who interpret the figure of the archivist not only as an actor in the preservation of

memory but also in its dissemination.

Dissemination is meant both in terms of increasing historical knowledge and in terms of methodological competences. In fact, our project set itself some educational objectives that went beyond the specific topic. From the methodological point of view, the proposed activities were also thought of as a moment of training in the historiographical method, in the criticism of primary sources and in the recognition of the differences between the types of sources considered. The aim was also to encourage the practice of an analytical and critical approach to sources.

A central point is to understand whether these educational aims have been achieved. From this perspective, the most important question concerns the actual results of our projects in terms of increasing competency, skills, awareness, curiosity and knowledge among students and teachers. In other words, it would be interesting to evaluate the effectiveness of this experience.

In this regard, a central point concerns feedback and the formal evaluation of the projects (Lumpkin and Multon, 2013, pp. 292–293). We made an explicit choice by not introducing a formal quantitative test or evaluation: thus was a methodological decision that I made. We discussed this, and I made the decision not to use a formal evaluation for the process because I thought it was not congruous with a project which aimed to train students in the historical method. I thought that open discussion or brainstorming were more suitable for interacting with the students, although it made the experience formally

less assessable.

The point is that an evaluation is a valuable formative tool to the extent that it is congruous with the structure, methods and objectives of the project in which it is employed (Ardizzone and Pippolo, 2003, p. 48). In my opinion, a contradiction would have emerged in this case between a ‘closed’ and merely quantitative evaluation and a path based on interaction and the continuous questioning of the sources and the role of the teacher. A formalized and excessively quantitative evaluation method would seem to me to be inconsistent.

On the other hand, there is some ‘data’ that can help us to provide information and sources for a sort of assessment. For example, an interesting indicator is that during the three years in which I led the projects, requests to the ISEC Foundation to carry out new workshops on labour and business history continued to arrive. Often, it is students who ask their teachers to go back to work with the ISEC Foundation.

It is interesting to note that the projects have still been proposed by the ISEC Foundation in the years after I quit as head of the Didactic Department. Even for the school years 2018–2019 and 2019–2020, under the direction of the new head of the Department Professor Monica Di Barbora, many schools have requested it and hundreds of students and teachers still attend our workshops and courses.

If these indicators seem to tell us that we were successful in increasing curiosity among our partners, what remains more difficult to assess are the actual results of our projects in terms of increasing

competency and knowledge among students and teachers. The point is the effectiveness.

Recently, Gideon Boada (2015) proposed this synthesis on how to achieve effectiveness in history teaching: the core of effective teaching of history is the possession of a firm knowledge base in history and the skill to convey this knowledge in ways that are meaningful to students. I think that our pattern of projects fits within the view indicated by Boada as well as by Lumpkin and Multon (2013). At the same time, I am aware that the positive feedback from students and teachers we have usually received at the end of the activities with them is not enough to evaluate the impact of this experience in the middle and long term.

In conclusion, I am fully aware of the obvious approximation and volatility of these kinds of tools of assessment. I believe they were successful projects, but a weak point was the lability of the assessment procedure concerning their effectiveness. In my opinion, it is in general somewhat complicated to identify the judgement parameters and detection methods suitable for the evaluation of history education projects attended by students of different ages (from primary school to high school) without theoretically forcing towards a black-and-white evaluation that is not compatible with the historical method.

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