
The Concepts of Heritage and Education for Active Citizenship in the Representations of Future Teachers: A Survey

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ABSTRACT: *In the context of school education, the notion of active citizenship is configured as an educational methodology that is transversal and integrated with knowledge. It is combined with the teaching of Citizenship and Constitution, pertaining to the historical, geographical and social areas of the study paths, which is carried out in a perspective of interactive dialogue between the various curricular disciplines in order to activate participatory learning of cultural processes and the formation of the individual. In relation to the European key competences and the cultural axes of the Italian national system, the acquisition of the principles of active citizenship is achieved through an educational path inherent in the three dimensions of person, citizen and worker and it is established as a theoretical-practical value profile oriented towards preparing young people for civic responsibility and social participation. At the same time, scientific research in the field of didactics of history has long underlined that historical knowledge allows citizens to be educated to understand the present; values, the development of strategies to deal with the uncertainty of the future; the ability to deal with relevant social problems and to deepen a democratic citizenship; to the enhancement, enjoyment, defense and conservation of cultural heritage and the development of a global awareness. In this context, the principles of active citizenship are strongly relevant and complementary to the cognitive path of historical and transversal issues such as the protection, safeguarding and accessibility of cultural heritage. Working on these issues at school allows, in fact, to develop objectives such as the concepts of identity and otherness, of relationship and participation. In order, therefore, to evaluate how historical and heritage education are involved in formal education, a questionnaire on the theme of heritage and on the teaching, methodologies linked to it was administered to 167 future teachers, university students belonging to the Single-cycle Master's Degree course in Primary Education of the University of Bologna in the academic year 2019/2020. Therefore, through survey-based exploratory research, it was possible to identify bivalent opinions: on the one hand, the interviewees recognize a significant educational impact on the heritage, aimed at developing the skills of active citizenship; on the other hand, during the years of compulsory schooling and during secondary school, they had to deal with a teaching that left very little room for an adequate treatment of the heritage in the classroom.*

KEYWORDS: *Heritage, Didactics of History, Teacher Training, Active Citizenship, Quantitative Survey*

Introduction

Despite the widespread validity of traditional teaching, which often links heritage education only to artistic assets and, therefore, to a form of passive and contemplative citizenship; heritage - understood as «the heterogeneous and multiform set of legacies and resources, in which the characters, assets, values and environmental, historical-artistic and scientific ideals are collected and shared by human communities in their different territorial areas» (Dondarini, 2008) - in recent years has increasingly had a special role in the academic field, within the school curricula of all levels (Estepa Giménez, 2013; Fontal, 2013, 2016) and in the European and international legislation (Ávila Ruiz *et al.*, 2009). In fact, the ability to read the current heritage as the partial result of matrices, footprints and evolutions unfolded in history, means focusing on life of the generations who have lived there, of those who live there and those who will live there, in a special synthesis between past, present and future.

The term 'patrimony' derives from the Latin term *patrimonium* (from *pater*, father and *munire*, protect, make accessible) and means «inheritance of the father». From the twelfth century to today, the meaning attributed to it has changed significantly, from the idea of good that is passed on to children to the concept of material and immaterial good connected to the generations that preceded us and that we must dutifully pass on to future generations.

In this context, with heritage education it is possible to offer an alternative to exclusive teaching methodologies, pursuing a high didactic and scientific qualification that aims to enrich training, integrating it with the indispensable contributions of various human and technological sciences. The training sectors, such as anthropology, art, law, philosophy, literature, music, sciences, geography and history, in fact, gravitate around some coordinated thematic fulcrums, whose knowledge appears to be fundamental awareness of the present and planning for the future (Dondarini, 2000, 2007). The use of the resources that the territory and the disciplines offer are, therefore, essential for addressing an active methodology and supporting historical contents; and learning can make use of the contribution of specific realities such as: local museums; local associations dealing with history; municipal, provincial, parish and school archives; national history deputations; local libraries; departments of history and archaeology.

Education, therefore, through the launch of paths and activities related to heritage education has the possibility of educating the younger generations to responsibility, political commitment, sensitivity and values, assuming that active role that has always been revealed the best way to stimulate, not only the learning of contents, but also the adoption of critical research methodologies and tools and thus promoting solidarity and cooperation among citizens, for the conservation of what belongs to all (world heritage) and the

enhancement of what belongs to each community (local or regional heritage).

The educational visits to the patrimonial spaces (museums, protected areas, botanical gardens, archaeological sites and so on) propose an educational sequence that implies the recognition of patrimonial assets in order to be able to understand, starting from them, other ways of life, soliciting new interests and, above all, respect for what is preserved. The enhancement and study of cultural heritage thus contribute to the permanent training of pupils, helping them to increase knowledge about the society in which they live, stimulating a critical and participatory approach.

It is a strategy to relaunch the fullness of the person, putting in place all the cultural and scientific heritages that allow to promote and pursue a formation with broad horizons and unlimited developments; to arouse the ability to recognize, understand and manage the different components of cultural heritage in its variety and scientific entirety.

In this way, heritage education become, therefore, the means by which to educate to an active, critical, democratic and conscious citizenship.

In fact, despite the consolidation of localisms, regionalisms, nationalisms, heritage turns out to be inclusive, since the past belongs to everyone and that we are history, and its knowledge and enhancement is essential to stimulate openness and a common base towards the curiosity of other stories, other cultures, other identities. It finds its dimension in participation in the common good, which becomes a common home, and every act of participation and reconsideration of the good is an enrichment of meanings, openness to curiosity and an alliance and a bridge with other cultures; in addition to the fact, certainly no less important, of the effects that heritage has on us for achieving the full development of the human person: an improvement in well-being and in the quality of life.

In this context, the principles of active citizenship are strongly relevant and complementary to the cognitive path of historical and transversal issues such as the protection, safeguarding and accessibility of cultural heritage. Working on these issues at school allows, in fact, to develop objectives such as the concepts of identity and otherness, of relationship and participation.

Therefore, for these reasons, in the context of citizenship education it is essential to know the conception that teachers in service and in training have towards heritage. In fact, knowing these elements allows to have a research perspective aimed at changing teaching practices and strategies.

In order, therefore, to evaluate how historical and heritage education are involved in formal education, a questionnaire on the theme of heritage and on the teaching methodologies linked to it was administered to 167 future teachers, university students belonging to

the Single-cycle Master's Degree course in Primary Education of the University of Bologna in the academic year 2019/2020.

1. Methodology: population, sample, research project, information collection and data processing tool

The total participants were 167, of which 156 (93.4%) were female and 11 (6.6%) were male. Most of the students (80.7%), during the compilation of the questionnaire, declared to be between twenty and twenty-four years old (which means that their date of birth was between 1995 and 1999); therefore, it is assumed that they attended secondary school between 2009 and 2018.

The design involved the implementation of an exploratory quantitative survey-based research. This type of survey was chosen because it is the most suitable for identifying trends in the attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics of a large group of people (McMillan, Schumacher, 2005). This approach is very common in the educational field, it allows to collect a lot of information on different variables; moreover, it is a research method capable of responding to problems both in descriptive terms and in relation to the variables when information is systematically collected, guaranteeing the rigor of the data obtained (Buendía *et al.*, 1998; Creswell, 2012).

In order to collect the information, a tool in the form of a questionnaire was applied. The first part of the tool is dedicated to the detection of some identifying variables of the interviewee, namely gender and age. The second section wants to investigate the students' epistemological conceptions of history; a part is dedicated to the methodologies and strategies that students consider most appropriate for teaching history. The third and fourth sections are aimed at researching the type of teaching and methods of verifying historical learning that trainees received during secondary school.

The items in the questionnaire, except for the first two (sex and age), are characterized by the application of a Likert scale of five values ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree.

The origin of the questionnaire stems from another ongoing survey concerning the training of teachers in service and conducted by the International Center for Didactics of History and Heritage (DiPaSt) of the University of Bologna. The part of the questionnaire dedicated to the experience of teaching history gained by the survey participants during high school, takes inspiration from a research conducted recently in the context of the *Grado en Educación Primaria* of the University of Murcia (Spain) by Cosme J. Gómez Carrasco, Raimundo A. Rodríguez Pérez and Ana Belén Mirete Ruiz (2018).

After configuring a first version of the questionnaire, the content was validated through the judgment of experts, thanks to the participation of three specialists in history teaching from two different universities. This process was made possible thanks to the use of a scale consisting of

four values, capable of collecting information on the validity and relevance of each of the items. At the end of the evaluation process, which also required a qualitative judgment from the experts, the suggestions received were considered and adopted, such as to compose the final questionnaire.

As regards the validity of the construct, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy test index and Bartlett's sphericity test confirm the adequacy of the correlation matrix. While the reliability index through Cronbach's alpha describes a good internal consistency and validity of the construct ($\alpha = .883$).

The information and data obtained were processed through the statistical software SPSS v.24.0. For the analysis and interpretation of the results, basic descriptive statistics were created, such as frequencies, means and percentages.

Items 12, 18, 22, 24, 29, 35, 39 and 40 are taken into consideration in order to know the opinions of future teachers about the function of history and its meaning in terms of education for active citizenship; items 58, 59 and 60 were analyzed in order to investigate how heritage was dealt with during their schooling (Table 1).

TAB. 1. *Items concerning education for active citizenship through heritage*

Item number	Question
12	History's function is to educate in social and civic values
18	Use key themes of current interest (socially useful topics) to connect past and present
22	Study of concrete historical cases, where pupils must do research and exhibit the results of the research
24	Importance of heritage
29	Importance of museums
35	Importance of festivals and local traditions
39	Field work (gathering information, carrying out exercises) during or following a visit to a museum or other center of historical interest
40	Research of local history
58	During high school the professor used the nearby historical heritage
59	During high school the teacher used legends, music, customs and other cultural elements
60	During high school the professor has made visits to places of historical or cultural interest

Source: Personal elaboration

2. Results

As regards the conception of students in training on the goal of history, the answers demonstrate a good degree of awareness of the importance of the subject in the process of civic and social construction of the pupils (Table 2).

TAB. 2. *Statistical analysis of the items 12, 18, 22, 24, 29, 35, 39 and 40.*

		12	18	22	24	29	35	39	40
N	Valid	166	166	166	166	166	165	166	166
	Lost	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Mean		4,53	4,60	4,38	4,29	4,48	3,90	4,36	4,21
Median		5,00	5,00	5,00	4,00	5,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
Mode		5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4
Standard deviation		,719	,582	,767	,739	,639	,973	,722	,729
Range		4	2	3	3	3	4	3	3
Minimum		1	3	2	2	2	1	2	2
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Percentiles	25	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	3,00	4,00	4,00
	50	5,00	5,00	5,00	4,00	5,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
	75	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00

Source: Personal elaboration

History is adequate to educate in civic and social values (mean = 4.53; median = 5; mode = 5). At the same time, the analysis of the variability (defined by the standard deviation, the range and the difference between the first and third percentiles) tells of a limited dispersion of the responses, which means that the scores are significantly close to the mean. History serves to educate in social and civic values in 92.8% of cases (Table 3).

TAB. 3. *Descriptive analysis of the item 12 'History's function is to educate in social and civic values'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Totally disagree	1	,6	,6	,6
	Partially disagree	3	1,8	1,8	2,4
	Neither agree nor disagree	7	4,2	4,2	6,6
	Partially agree	51	30,5	30,7	37,3
	Totally agree	104	62,3	62,7	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
	Total	167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

As regards the most suitable methodologies in teaching history, the interviewees considered that almost all the strategies presented in the questionnaire were suitable for application in the classroom, except for the traditional explanations of the teacher and the use of the textbook or manual.

The approach using current keys of interest to connect past and present (mean = 4.60; median = 5; mode = 5; standard deviation = .582) and the use of case studies where students have to do their own research on heritage topics (mean = 4.38; median = 5; mode = 5; standard deviation = .767) are instead considered as suitable methodologies for teaching history. In fact, the two strategies collect respectively 94.6 and 83.2% of the consensus among the interviewees,

contracting only one opinion in disagreement, since it has repercussions in the limited dispersion of the answers (Tables 4 and 5).

TAB. 4. *Descriptive analysis of the item 18 'Use key themes of current interest (socially useful topics) to connect past and present'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Neither agree nor disagree	8	4,8	4,8	4,8
	Partially agree	51	30,5	30,7	35,5
	Totally agree	107	64,1	64,5	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

TAB. 5. *Descriptive analysis of the item 22 'Study of concrete historical cases, where pupils must do research and exhibit the results of the research'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
	Partially disagree	1	,6	,6	,6
Valid	Neither agree nor disagree	26	15,6	15,7	16,3
	Partially agree	48	28,7	28,9	45,2
	Totally agree	91	54,5	54,8	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

As regards the most appropriate tools and activities in teaching practice, visits to museums are the most valued indicators. In fact, educational trips to cultural sites (mean = 4.48; median = 5; mode = 5; standard deviation = .639) are considered the most suitable activities for teaching history in 92.8% of cases (Table 6). Recourse to heritage (mean = 4.29; median = 4; mode = 5; standard deviation = .739) is considered suitable in 83.8% of cases (Table 7). The use of the study of festivals and local traditions (mean = 3.90; median = 4; fashion = 4; standard deviation = .973) in 68.2% (Table 8).

TAB. 6. *Descriptive analysis of the item 29 'Importance of museums'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Partially disagree	1	,6	,6	,6
	Neither agree nor disagree	10	6,0	6,0	6,6
	Partially agree	64	38,3	38,6	45,2
	Totally agree	91	54,5	54,8	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

TAB. 7. *Descriptive analysis of the item 24 'Importance of heritage'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Partially disagree	1	,6	,6	,6
	Neither agree nor disagree	25	15,0	15,1	15,7
	Partially agree	65	38,9	39,2	54,8
	Totally agree	75	44,9	45,2	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

TAB. 8. *Descriptive analysis of the item 35 'Importance of festivals and local traditions'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Totally disagree	2	1,2	1,2	1,2
	Partially disagree	13	7,8	7,9	9,1
	Neither agree nor disagree	36	21,6	21,8	30,9
	Partially agree	63	37,7	38,2	69,1
	Totally agree	51	30,5	30,9	100,0
	Total	165	98,8	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		1	,6		

Source: Personal elaboration

As regards the most suitable tools for verifying pupils' learning, university students believe that fieldwork, such as gathering information or carrying out exercises, during or following a visit to a museum or other center of historical interest (mean = 4.36; median = 4; mode = 5; standard deviation = .722) and local history searches (mean = 4.21; median = 4; mode = 4; standard deviation = .729) are the most appropriate, as confirmed by the results of indicators 39 and 40 which testify an appreciation of the aforementioned verification tools of over 80% (Tables 9 and 10).

TAB. 9. *Descriptive analysis of the item 39 'Fieldwork (gathering information, carrying out exercises) during or following a visit to a museum or other center of historical interest'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Partially disagree	1	,6	,6	,6
	Neither agree nor disagree	21	12,6	12,7	13,3
	Partially agree	62	37,1	37,3	50,6
	Totally agree	82	49,1	49,4	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

TAB. 10. *Descriptive analysis of the item 40 'Research of local history'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Partially disagree	3	1,8	1,8	1,8
	Neither agree nor disagree	21	12,6	12,7	14,5
	Partially agree	80	47,9	48,2	62,7
	Totally agree	62	37,1	37,3	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

As regards the type of teaching that university students received during the secondary school period, the data collected by the questionnaire describe a fairly compact but varied picture. Even with this premise, the picture that emerges is that of a traditional teaching and anchored to the frontal explanation (Table 11).

TAB. 11. *Statistical analysis of the items 58, 59 and 60.*

		58	59	60
N	Valid	166	166	166
	Lost	1	1	1
Mean		2,39	1,98	2,37
Median		2,00	2,00	2,00
Mode		1	1	1
Standard deviation		1,302	1,233	1,322
Range		4	4	4
Minimum		1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5
Percentiles	25	1,00	1,00	1,00
	50	2,00	2,00	2,00
	75	3,00	3,00	3,00

Source: Personal elaboration

TAB. 12. *Descriptive analysis of the item 58 'During high school the professor used the nearby historical heritage'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Totally disagree	54	32,3	32,5	32,5
	Partially disagree	42	25,1	25,3	57,8
	Neither agree nor disagree	38	22,8	22,9	80,7
	Partially agree	15	9,0	9,0	89,8
	Totally agree	17	10,2	10,2	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

Low relevance is associated with the value of heritage, both the monumental one (mean = 2.39; median = 2; mode = 1; standard deviation = 1.302), and the intangible one, such as festivals, local

traditions or legends (mean = 1.98; median = 2; mode = 1; standard deviation = 1.233), and visits to places of historical and cultural interest were limited (mean = 2.37; median = 2; mode = 1; standard deviation = 1.322). These tools and activities were used by the teacher in a percentage ranging from 13.8% to 19.2% (Tables 12, 13 and 14).

TAB. 13. *Descriptive analysis of the item 59 'During high school the teacher used legends, music, customs and other cultural elements'.*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Totally disagree	80	47,9	48,2	48,2
	Partially disagree	44	26,3	26,5	74,7
	Neither agree nor disagree	19	11,4	11,4	86,1
	Partially agree	11	6,6	6,6	92,8
	Totally agree	12	7,2	7,2	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

TAB. 14. *Descriptive analysis of the item 60 «During high school the professor has made visits to places of historical or cultural interest».*

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulated percentage
Valid	Totally disagree	58	34,7	34,9	34,9
	Partially disagree	38	22,8	22,9	57,8
	Neither agree nor disagree	39	23,4	23,5	81,3
	Partially agree	13	7,8	7,8	89,2
	Totally agree	18	10,8	10,8	100,0
	Total	166	99,4	100,0	
Lost		1	,6		
Total		167	100,0		

Source: Personal elaboration

Conclusion

Within the usual teaching practice, the teaching of history, as Miralles Martínez (2009) points out, often continues to respond to the traditional teaching model in which the presentation of historical events is memorized by students without a critical sense. However, as Estepa Giménez (2017) comments, the entry of society into the new millennium and the development of new means of communication through the internet push teachers to change their teaching practice.

For this reason, the introduction of heritage education within the teaching of history is a vital condition for keeping teaching linked to society, in the past, present and future. In fact, heritage teaching presupposes the acquisition of historical and social skills by students in an interdisciplinary space (Prats Cuevas, 2001).

Nonetheless, scholars such as Estepa Giménez (2001) admit that heritage teaching continues to appear as anecdotal both in curricular treatment and in teaching practice; and that this approach is also induced by insufficient university training for future teachers (Cuenca López, 2003). For Estepa Giménez (2001), among the limitations that hinder good teaching practice based on heritage education, there is, first, the narrow conception that teachers have of heritage. Often, in fact, only the monumental elements – palaces, cathedrals, churches, castles, museums or statues – are considered heritages, but other aspects are left aside, such as intangible heritage – traditional customs, language, songs, cultural events -. Sometimes, even natural or landscape heritage – although it is often made up of physical elements created by man – usually does not come under the concept of teachers' heritage.

In the context just outlined, the memories of the students of the single-cycle master's degree in primary education at the University of Bologna – considered not only as mere statistical data, but also a necessary element to analyze teaching methodologies and their impact on the training of future teachers – offer a double view of the teaching of history.

The results obtained from the analysis of the answers to the Questionnaire reveal a series of ambivalent reflections.

On the one hand, most of the interviewees showed that they have a good degree of theoretical and epistemological knowledge on the subject. As regards the purpose of teaching history, future teachers have expressed a strong awareness of the importance of history. In fact, according to their perception, it is of fundamental importance specially to understand the present, to educate in social and civic values and to know the methods of construction and explanation of historical facts.

Among the teaching methodologies, according to the conception of the interviewees, using key themes of current and socially interest to connect past and present and the use of educational heritage represent the strategies that should be put into practice during the teaching of history.

As regards the tools to be adopted in teaching practice, elements of the heritage, including museums are evaluated very positively. Partially appropriate is the study of intangible heritage, such as local festivals and traditions.

In the general context of activation and participation in the formation of critical thinking, university students of primary education argue that the most appropriate methods for verifying the learning objectives of history are strategies that involve causal reasoning, research work, also of local history, according to the principles of the historical method.

In this context, the perception that students have of history, its teaching and methods of verification therefore seem to support the vision of a history anchored to sources, heritage and their interpretation, the purpose of which is to understand the present and

educate to active citizenship. Even if with some epistemological uncertainty, in the vision of future teachers, history will have to be taught through active methodologies, which involve and make the pupils protagonists in the construction of their knowledge through heritage. In this sense, even the methods of verification desired turn out to be those that favour critical thinking and causal reasoning by adopting the historical method also in local history research.

However, despite the ambitions and perceptions inherent in the importance of history, primary education students mostly had to deal with a teaching model that was profoundly different from that conceived and desired during secondary school.

During secondary school, little or no space is left for debate, comparison, interpretation of sources and the discovery of heritage; and the verification test is generally passed by memorizing the contents uncritically.

In conclusion, therefore, these results, which reflect the perception that university students in primary education have of the concept of history and its teaching, allow for some reflection, also highlighting limits and possibilities for future research. Although future teachers have known traditional teaching in their previous experiences, they generally consider history to be of fundamental importance during active teaching practice in order to educate active and aware citizens. This reflection, perhaps arising precisely from the type of teaching that was given in the secondary school, suggests that, on the one hand, there is probably a certain gap between the theory and practice of teaching, between the desire to treat class history in a participatory manner and the various kinds of difficulties that teachers have to face daily in the school context, such as the request to complete the curriculum or the complexities of carrying out integrated teaching with colleagues; on the other hand, the high dispersion of responses inherent to the memories of the school experience suggests that there are very varied situations, ranging from the most classic frontal lesson to the history laboratory. Perhaps, this data could announce a slow awareness of teachers towards less positivist positions and more linked to dialogue, comparison, debate and interpretation of sources and heritage in a participatory and active key.

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