



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Museo dell'educazione 
(Museum of Education)

DEPARTMENT of Philosophy, Sociology,
Pedagogy and Applied Psychology (FISPPA)

CAM - University Museum Network



THE «TIME ROOM» IN THE MUSEUM OF EDUCATION OF PADUA UNIVERSITY

Dr. Mara Orlando

Curator of the Museum of Education
University of Padua - Italy

Museum of Education

- founded by prof. Patrizia Zamperlin
- officially established in 1993
- follows Padua's secular academic tradition of historical educational studies to protect, to study, to exhibit materials useful in documenting the history of education.

Education as a complex phenomenon that is achieved in:

- school
- other institutions (family, gym, church, associations) that develop the individual from birth to adult life.





Its patrimony, mostly made up of materials relating to the period 1870-1970, is:

- School furniture and Teaching aids
- Textbooks and fiction
- Exercise-books
- School reports and diplomas
- Stationery material
- Audiovisual material
- Toys and clothes
- Photographs
- Archives deposited by teachers, families or educational institutions



The *Museum* is involved in scientific research and in didactic activity intended for university students

because the objects preserved are considered *historical sources*

that's why a laboratory is annexed to the museum space where it's possible to consult and study the collections





The *Museum* is a place designated

- for the production of culture
- for its dissemination

Therefore it organizes:

- guided visits and workshops for:
 - *schools*
 - groups with *special educational needs*
 - associations of *adults and the elderly*
- theme exhibitions and events, also outside its walls, so as to use larger and historical facilities



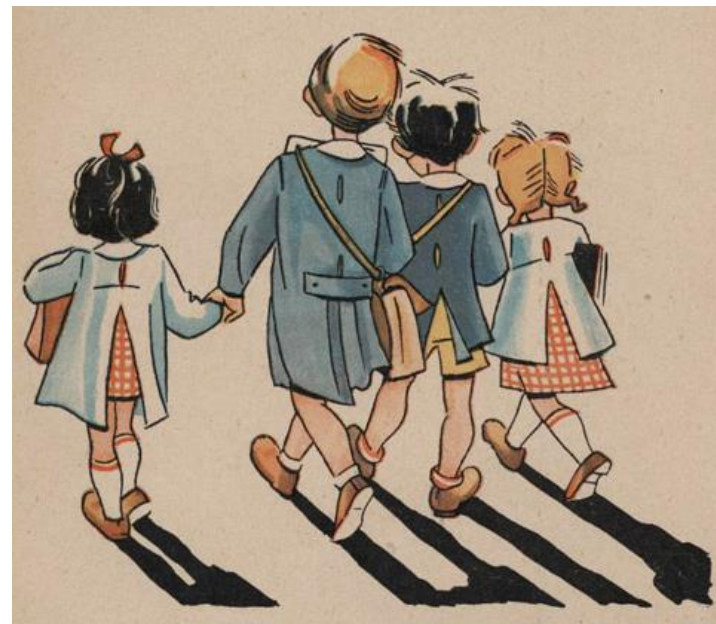
The *Museum* has always given particular attention to the primary school and the role expected of it for the teaching of history. For this reason it uses interactive and workshop activities which take place in the “historical classroom”



According to the “National indication for the curriculum” (2012):

“the school is called upon to explore, enrich and consolidate a knowledge and sense of history” also with *“laboratory activities – inside the classroom and outside the classroom”*

For this reason primary school teachers accompany their children on visits to the *Museum* in every year of primary school, because generally they begin to teach pupils the history of grandparents and great-grandparents already in the second year, but the comparison between their present and the recent past continues throughout the whole period of primary school.



The visit to the *Museum of Education* of the primary school classes has always provided for a traditional first part and a second workshop one. The first part is subdivided into two different parts: one that takes place in the teaching aids room and the other in the toy room.

In the teaching aids room the children are confronted with objects that were once used in the Italian Elementary school at the beginning of the Twentieth Century.





The children start to come into contact with the world of their great-grandparents, a world which is made up of things which today they are often unable to recognize, as happened with the typewriter or the “magic lantern”.

In the second room of their itinerary, the children discover the world of old toys. Here the comparison with these and their own “modern” toys becomes a moment of interaction, conducted by the guide, between the world of their playthings and the one previous to the use of materials like plastic.





Before going on to the workshop phase, the children are prepared for a surprise. They are taken into an antechamber of the “time room” where it is explained to them that from that door they will enter a different world and it is necessary for them to behave like their great-grandparents did when they were at school.

The preparation requires the children to line up two by two, according to their height, to hold their hands behind their backs and above all to remain in silence. At this point an identification is added to part of their clothing: each child puts on a white collar with a bow, red or pink for the girls and blue for the boys.



The children find themselves in front of a reconstruction of an Italian classroom, made of original materials, that recaptures the typical style of primary school classrooms as they were in Italy from 1861 up to the beginning of the 1960s.

The impact of the “historical classroom” on the children is very strong emotionally and in addition to their astonishment the room there is also the presence of an entertainer-guide dressed as a teacher in early twentieth century costume.



For the children maintaining a very static form of behavior, in a room which dates back to a time when the school was full of strict rules, is an experience which prompts a comparison between their present and the past of their great-grandparents, a past very different in the things, methods and even the subjects taught and all this arouses their curiosity which constitutes the first spark for knowledge





The workshop consists in teaching the children a discipline which was learnt at the time of their great-grandparents: *Calligraphy*, that consists in "beautiful handwriting" and in the Italian elementary school it was an important subject.



Classificazioni conseguite dall'alunna *Carosio Maria* nell'anno scolastico 1912-13

TITOLI DI VOTAZIONE	MEDIE BIMESTRALI PER MATERIA				MEDIE Annuali per materia	ESITO DELL'ESAME				ANNOTAZIONI
	1.° BIMESTRE	2.° BIMESTRE	3.° BIMESTRE	4.° BIMESTRE		1.ª SESSIONE		2.ª SESSIONE		
						Prove scritte e grafiche	Prove orali	Prove scritte e grafiche	Prove orali	
Condotta	<i>nove</i>	<i>dieci</i>	<i>dieci</i>	<i>dieci</i>	<i>dieci</i>					
Detatura	<i>sette</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>nove</i>	<i>nove</i>	<i>9</i>					
Compenimento italiano. Aritmetica - Geometria - Conta- bilità pratica. (scritto)										
Calligrafia	<i>sette</i>	<i>sette</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>nove</i>	<i>8</i>					
Lettera	<i>otto</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>nove</i>	<i>nove</i>	<i>9</i>					
Spiegazione del passo letto										
Notioni di grammatica										
Notioni di Arit., Geom., Contab. prat., Economia dom. (orale)	<i>sette</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>8</i>					
Notioni di Storia civile italiana Notioni di Istituzioni civili dello Stato e di Morale civile										
Noz. di Geogr. generale econom. ed in particolare d'Italia										
Noz. di Scienze fisiche e naturali e di Igiene										
Disegno										
Lavori donneschi	<i>otto</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>otto</i>	<i>sette</i>	<i>8</i>					
Ginnastica		<i>nove</i>	<i>nove</i>	<i>nove</i>						
Materie facultative										
Assenze	<i>5.1 n.g.</i>	<i>5.1 n.g.</i>	<i>5.1 n.g.</i>	<i>5.6 n.g.</i>						
Come appare dal prospetto che precede					avendo conseguito (*)					
<i>nulle medie annue</i>					per questa idoneità fu					
<i>(*) dichiarata promossa</i>					per questa idoneità fu					
					LA DIRETTRICE					
Genova, 16 Luglio					Genova, 1913					

Media annuale compless. del profitto
Studio: *32/50* Studio e
Lavori donneschi: *42/50*
Riduzione in decimi
Studio: *otto, 50* Studio e
Lavori donneschi: *otto, 40*
La Maestra della Classe
P. Arzuffi-Cecchi
LA DIRETTRICE

For the children visiting the *Museum* it is a surprise to discover a way of writing so different from theirs: calligraphic cursive. It is not easy for children (and not only for them!) to learn to hold in their hands the pen with the nib in the right way so that it can write and also learn to dip the nib into the inkwell without getting ink on themselves





Even after precise instructions given by the teacher, it is not easy for pupils to write; it is an exercise not only of patience, but also of willpower that the children of today experiment only occasionally but which was a permanent feature in schools years ago.

Another feature of calligraphy is that it enables children to write clearly and legibly, a form of respect for teachers who had to read the written work of their pupils, which now in the Italian school has been lost and that so many teachers visiting the *Museum* today regret.



The role of "children of old" for the children has become an enjoyable means of play, they get to know many things that their great-grandparents were used to seeing in school.



The teacher shows them also the old books and exercise-books of a century ago, so different in size and color to those of today.



When the visit ends, the teacher rings the bell. The children all stand up together and greet the teacher using the old form of greeting: “Buongiorno Signora Maestra” (Good morning Mrs. Teacher), because that’s what their great-grandparents did when the teacher entered the classroom every morning.



During the visits destined for adults, on the occasion of particular events, in some cases the *Museum* has arranged evocative moments with the presence of professional actors in vintage clothes.

The role of the actor in this case was to surprise the public and create a stimulating experience thanks to the curiosity of the texts recited in a much more exciting way.





In other cases it was a reader-entertainer who represented a character in costume to create a greater interest in the public regarding the material of the museum to which the character was attached.

In the photo you can see the entertainer “impersonating” *Stefania Omboni* reading a letter from her husband.

(Benefactor of the city whose original documents and furnishings are preserved in the museum)



Why this method?

Why has the *Museum of Education* decided to use the techniques of *role playing* in visits for primary school pupils?

Because this technique, already widely used in the reenactments of historical events and in the theatrical performances, enables knowledge to be better memorized, inasmuch as the message involves the emotions, causes amazement, arouses emotions evoked by identification, becomes a means of play and through it is transformed into personal experience.





In Italy only recently has the technique of *role playing* started to be used also with the new generations in schools and educational institutions, among which the role of museums is fundamental.

In museums *role playing* makes its own a series of techniques belonging to the theatre. Basically, the interpretation of roles is central to both, they differ above all in the features of the text to be followed.

In Italy few museums, especially scientific ones, use acting as a form of communication and they do it because the advantages that it gives are due to the fact that in addition to touching the emotions, it also reawakens our imaginations, allowing the public to understand the subject treated “concretely” by means of an experience which is closer to it.



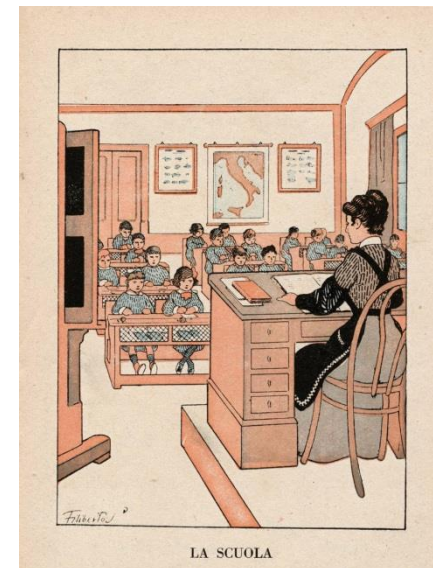
Museum of the History of Physics
University of Padua

Research into the meaning of “learning” has brought to light that the contemporary involvement of a practical action and other senses enables people to remember more information. (E. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museum and their Visitors*, 1994)

In *role playing* comparative learning must be added, since the children seem to remember and be interested in the objects that in some way connect with their own experiences, habits, interests. And we often notice this during our visits.



The *role playing* carried out in museums or other places of culture is intended to get the visitor to identify with a specific historical period or event, and it is easier to involve children because it highlights their urge to be at the centre of attention.



Identification is an excellent means for conveying information since, in the fiction generated by play, the child personally experiences history by making it become his/her own experience.

In Italy this field of research is only at the beginning and only very little research has been published on drama techniques in museums, in particular up to now no organic analyses have been carried out to register public opinion and understand if, in addition to being fun, these experiences are really educational.

L. Cataldo, *Dal Museum Theatre al Digital Storytelling*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2011;

D. De Fazio, *Il museo va in scena. Tecniche teatrali al servizio dei visitatori*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2012.



We are convinced that the use of *role playing* in guided primary school visits produces an undeniable advantage. The learning index increases, because listening together with action improve the effectiveness of what has been learned and its future retention.



It is also a method which creates an empathetic relationship between the child and what the museum conveys and in this way the teaching effect lasts for a long time.



Bruno Munari - famous twentieth century Italian artist, designer and writer - often used to repeat to children an old Chinese saying:

***“If I hear I forget, if I see I remember,
if I do I understand”***

on the basis of our experience we could add

***“if I am involved I am moved and
if I am moved I learn”***



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www.museo.educazione.unipd.it

museo.educazione@unipd.it

