

Heritage education, society and museum professional development.  
A preliminary study

Educazione al patrimonio, società e sviluppo professionale nei musei.  
Uno studio preliminare

Antonella Poce

Full Professor | Dept. History, Cultural heritage, Education and Society | Tor Vergata University of Rome | antonella.poce@uniroma2.it

OPEN ACCESS

**Siped**  
Società Italiana di Pedagogia

Double blind peer review

**Citation:** Poce, A. (2023). Heritage education, society and museum professional development. A preliminary study. *Pedagogia oggi*, 21(2), 33-44.  
<https://doi.org/10.7346/PO-022023-04>

**Copyright:** © 2023 Author(s). This is an open access, peer-reviewed article published by Pensa MultiMedia and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. *Pedagogia oggi* is the official journal of Società Italiana di Pedagogia ([www.siped.it](http://www.siped.it)).

**Journal Homepage**

<https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/siped>

**Pensa MultiMedia / ISSN 2611-6561**

<https://doi.org/10.7346/PO-022023-04>

**ABSTRACT**

Recent research provides evidence regarding the potential social and economic impact if cultural heritage experience is enhanced. In the pre-pandemic era, various sources had already highlighted how tourism and cultural sectors had revamped Italian economic growth, in particular. The enlargement of the audience highlighted new and more diversified educational needs.

Notwithstanding this evolution, museum staff have increasingly been excluded from consistent pedagogical professional training.

This contribution proposes an analysis of the self-perceptions of a group of participants in two international post-graduate courses in "Museum Education" and "Advanced Studies in Museum Education", promoted jointly by two Italian universities in partnership with various public and private sector bodies. The data collected are analyzed to understand whether a proposal like the one described can respond, albeit partially, to those unmet educational needs, to the lack of investment and innovation and the increase in social exclusion due to low educational levels, which have been worsened by unfortunate recent events, as recommended by the European recovery fund.

Le potenzialità di impatto sociale ed economico della valorizzazione dei beni culturali sono certificate da tempo, in particolare nelle ricerche periodiche effettuate da enti qualificati. L'incremento e la diversificazione dell'utenza non sono coincisi con una disponibilità di competenze adeguate a rispondere alla diversa tipologia di domanda emersa e il personale museale è rimasto sempre più sprovvisto di formazione professionale adeguata.

Il presente contributo propone l'analisi delle percezioni di un gruppo di partecipanti a due corsi internazionali post lauream "Didattica Museale Generale" e "Studi Avanzati di Educazione Museale", promossi da due università italiane in partnership con vari enti pubblici e privati di settore. I dati raccolti vengono analizzati nel tentativo di comprendere se una proposta come quella descritta possa costituire un tentativo di risposta, sebbene parziale, a quei bisogni educativi insoddisfatti, alla mancanza di investimenti e innovazione e all'aumento dell'esclusione sociale dovuto ai bassi livelli educativi, aggravati dagli sfortunati eventi recenti, così come raccomandato dal PNRR.

**Keywords:** heritage education | social value | training | museum professions | higher education

**Parole chiave:** educazione al patrimonio | valorizzazione sociale | formazione; professioni museali | didattica universitaria

Received: August 29, 2023  
Accepted: November 3, 2023  
Published: December 29, 2023

**Corresponding Author:**

Antonella Poce, [antonella.poce@uniroma2.it](mailto:antonella.poce@uniroma2.it)

## 1. Skills for a new interpretation of heritage experience

The museum, as a cultural institution that performs precise functions for the purposes of study, education and pleasure, requires knowledge and the employment of skilled human resources that makes it a place for cultural action at the “service of society and its growth”. Professional development is therefore a pivotal element in a complex entity such as the contemporary museum (ICOM Italia, 2017).

This statement leads us, in general, to reflect and rethink the role of cultural heritage from a contemporary perspective, taking as a reference the same definition of heritage present in the Faro Convention (2005) and which supports the idea that objects, works of art, places are not, in themselves, what is important in cultural heritage, but they assume relevance according to the meanings and the uses that people relate to them and the values they represent. Understood in this sense, heritage becomes a vehicle for developing democratic participation and social responsibility, improving the living environment and quality of life, managing cultural diversity and mutual understanding, and supporting greater social cohesion.

Heritage education should be meant as a service for society that explains, interprets and supports the production of meaning among visitors, a proactive tool that encourages creativity (O’Neil 2022, p. 114) says. To fulfill these functions expert professionals employed in the field of museums and heritage experience are urgently needed.

Museums face the challenge of understanding and adapting to culturally and demographically diverse audiences, their motivations, perceived experiences and barriers, and different interests (Falk & Dierking, 2013). Furthermore, museums need to promote the social participation of users so that subjects involved are not just visitors, but potential social agents to interact with (Brown et al., 2011). In this light, there is a need to increase awareness of the educational responsibility of cultural institutions, of their duty to ensure that the messages conveyed are easily understood and that audiences are enriched by the opportunities provided (Hohenstein & Moussouri, 2017; King & Lord, 2015).

Visitors and users have become increasingly aware of the potential of museums as learning opportunities and are showing high expectations of what they can offer. In parallel with this evolution in educational needs, museum staff have increasingly been almost left without adequate professional training. Professional development should respond to those unmet educational needs, the lack of investment and innovation and the increase in social exclusion due to low educational levels, worsened by the unfortunate recent events, as recommended by the PNRR, Mission 1 (Digitalisation, innovation, competitiveness, culture and tourism), Component 3 (Tourism and Culture 4.0).

## 2. Some steps on the Italian road to professional development in heritage education

The road to the definition and recognition of professions linked to heritage education sees one of the first steps in 2001 with the issue of the Ministerial Decree of May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001 “Guidance act on technical-scientific criteria and functioning and development of museums standards”. The document aims to synthetically outline eleven professional figures (director, curator, communication expert and so on), among which that of the “head of the educational service” is included.

The National Charter of Museum Professions in 2005, issued by the Italian Museum Association, on suggestion of ICOM Italia, foresees twenty professional profiles divided into four areas: 1. Research, care and management of collections; 2. Services and public engagement; 3. Administration, finance, management and external relations; 4. Facilities, displays and safety. Among the roles in the field of “Services and public engagement”, those of “head of educational services” and “museum educator” are foreseen. The Charter takes into consideration all of the activities that take place in a museum and it is a relevant reference for the whole community of museum professionals, but over time, especially when substantial change occurred in the field of cultural heritage and museums, it proved to be some way outdated and too complicated to be effective. It was therefore decided to review and simplify it.

In 2010, an updated professional profiles chart was drawn up by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage as part of the new national employment contract still in force. These professional profiles chart is divided into three functional areas, each of which includes different types of public services provided by the Ministry: Area I - Auxiliary services (1 professional profile); Area II - 1. Administration and management ser-

vices for protection, 2. Services for heritage conservation, 3. Services for the promotion and use of heritage (7 professional profiles that can be related to each of the three services); Area III - Technical-scientific services for the protection, conservation, promotion, heritage experience. The eighteen technical-scientific professional profiles foreseen for area III go back to take up the traditional subject related classification to the collections (art historian, librarian, anthropologist and so on); for each of these figures, among the job duties also educational services is included, cancelling *de facto* the provisions of the previous legislation. Of course, this act marked a stop in the process of valuing educational services in the perspective of responding to present society needs.

In 2014, the Ministry established that lists of qualified art historians, archeologists, librarians, anthropologists, technicians in the heritage field, should be published regularly (law 110/2014). Again, no reference to educators is made. For each profile duties are described in detail including that of educational services as part of the job.

In 2018, Ministerial Decree No. 113 was issued. It included the adoption of a minimum quality standard for public museums and places of culture and the formalization of the National Museum System. The decree is divided into three sections: 1. organization, 2. collections, 3. relations with the territory. The “organization” section includes “staff” and the recognition again of the role of “head of educational services” is stated.

The positive evolution and the attempts to define and recognize professions connected to heritage education were suddenly interrupted by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic which has brought about a setback in the field (UNESCO, 2020) and which has seen, then, pick up the threads of the discussion and rethink the roles in the field of heritage education starting from the challenges imposed by the pandemic.

Moreover, if on a formal level the requirements to be a museum educator seem to be adequately outlined (ICOM Italy, 2017), in practice there is a lack of a specific course of study able to combine museum-specific knowledge with pedagogical competences (Piazza & Rizzari, 2022), able to facilitate the adaption of educational experiences to different kind of visitors (Bevan & Xanthoudakiand, 2008) and to the changed role of the museum on a social level. Indeed, it is not unusual for pedagogical knowledge to be considered “additional” in the context of museum professionals training, so much so that it is normally acquired directly in practice (De Luca, 2019). However, the ongoing debate on the competences of museum educators highlights the need to develop research in the field (Grenier, 2010), in order to identify the professional and soft competences needed to make the museum educational experience an inclusive learning opportunity (Liverani, 2019) and consistent with the new social role of the museum.

### 3. How to face the challenge of training skilled staff

Given the lack of specialized staff sufficiently trained to face contemporary needs, in 2021, still in the pandemic period, the issue of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Ministry of Culture Mission 1 (Digitalization, innovation, competitiveness, culture and tourism), Component 3 (Tourism and Culture 4.0) sets hypotheses for recovery that also concern professions linked to heritage education. The planned interventions, in accordance with the objectives and transversal principles of the Plan, intend to restructure the key assets of the Italian cultural heritage and encourage the creation of new services, also exploiting social participation as a lever for inclusion and regeneration, with the aim of improving attractiveness, accessibility (both physical and digital) and safety, from a general point of view of environmental sustainability. The measures are based on a multilevel governance model and foresee a strong cooperation between public actors, in line with the Faro Convention and the European Action Framework for Cultural Heritage (2019).

Focusing on professional development, related to heritage education, as already somewhat mentioned in the functions of the Museum in light of the Reform of State Museums drawn up by ICOM in 2017, the PNRR highlights the need to undertake actions aimed at innovation services and museum profession re-organisation. To implement this transition towards innovation, the first step to take is to consider the new dimension of heritage-related profiles. How? Providing training with a high level of specialization (especially in the field of digitalization, innovation, competitiveness); defining specific roles and functions;

promoting the creation of interdisciplinary professional networks and promoting integrated systems of cultural production; supporting the connections between public and private institutions in order to pool the available resources; bridging the gap between actual and potential skills. From this point of view, a sufficient possession of pedagogical competences appears pivotal to design and implement educational paths addressed to heterogeneous audiences and to improve the quality of the services provided (Garcia Jurado, 2020), especially if we take into account the new challenges related to museum institutions (Piazza, Rizzari, 2022), including inclusion, sustainability, lifelong learning and social development.

Partnerships between public and private sectors, universities, museums and creative industries can help meeting the training needs in the field if they manage in codesigning courses. The preliminary study presented below regarding two post-graduate courses in museum education is a starting attempt for a change of perspective.

#### 4. The case of the post-grad courses in “Museum Education” and “Advanced Studies in Museum Education”

“Museum Education” and “Advanced Studies in Museum Education” are two second level international post-graduate courses held jointly by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and Roma Tre University in the academic year 2022-23. “Museum Education” post-graduate degree is worth 60 university ECTS and is one-year long; the “Advanced Studies in Museum Education” post-graduate degree, on the other hand, is worth 120 ECTS and develops over a two-year time. Both post-graduate courses foresee the opportunity for trainees to carry out 12-ECTS a year as interns in partner cultural institutions for a minimum of three weeks.

The two courses are characterized by different curricula focused on specific areas, even if some of the lectures are shared to support continuity and deepen the study started in the annual offer. The plan foresees 40 lectures in total, and they cover macro-themes related to 1) Didactics and Museum Education; 2) Experimental research, new technologies and methodologies for museum experience; 3) Accessibility and well-being.

The lectures are taught both in Italian or English and are all made available online, giving the option of attending them in a synchronous or asynchronous mode. The lecturers involved, in a total number of 35, are national or international experts in the field of Museum Studies.

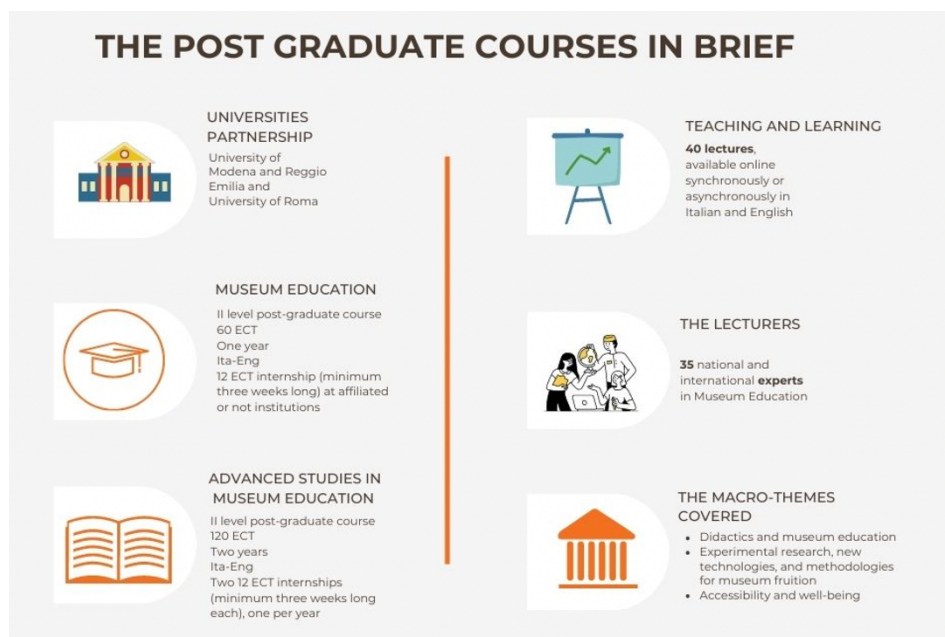


Figure 1: Description of the general structure of the post-grad courses

The biennial course “Advanced Studies in Museum Education”, in particular, is an effort to respond to those unmet educational needs, to the lack of investment and innovation and to the increase in social exclusion due to low educational levels, worsened by the pandemic event. Through not routine innovative education, the course tries to respond to emerging educational needs, involving not only private entities (partner companies for the implementation of workshops) but also public entities (national and international museums) and regional authorities.

The post-graduate course, particularly in the second year of specialization, provides a mixed teaching method. One third of the hours are carried out in live streaming from the classroom or directly online, one third is offered asynchronously and one third is devoted to internship and group work. Part of internship and group work is carried out through real or virtual visits to various national and international museums, based on the teaching and learning objectives defined by the lecturers, according to their specific study interests.

In the museum sector, the training of professionals, with a high level of specialization, should be part of a medium and long-term strategy and the above courses try to fill in, at least partially, this gap.

Relevant objectives pursued by our two-year post-graduate degree are certainly the opportunity to:

- enhance professional networks;
- promote integrated systems of cultural production;
- pool public and private resources;
- overcome the inconsistency between actual and potential skills.

## 5. Analysis and discussion of post-grad students skills self-perception

In the month of July 2023, the students from both the annual “Museum Education” and the biennial “Advanced Studies in Museum Education” post-graduate degrees were asked to participate in a survey to collect data on their satisfaction level as regards lectures and their educational impact in terms of knowledge and transverse skills acquisition, in relation to their professional development. A questionnaire was created and made up of three sections: the first to collect personal data; the second to evaluate the lectures attended; and the third to identify which transverse skills, abilities and attitudes were prompted by the lectures themselves. Questions used in the first section, on personal data, and in the second section, regarding the evaluation of the curriculum, were both multiple-choice and open-ended. The third and final section, addressed to self-assessment of transverse skills developed, proposed a Likert scale with values ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Section	Indicators
1-Personal data	Age Gender Residence Education Work occupation
2- Curriculum overall evaluation	Stimuli received Strengths Weaknesses Educational materials Impact
3- Transverse skills self-assessment	Creativity and innovation Critical thinking and metacognition Digital skills Entrepreneurship

Table 1: Sections and indicators of the questionnaire

From the feedback received from both courses, the modal profile of the student attending the courses is a female, around 37-year-old, with a background in humanities, employed in a cultural institution, living in Italian central regions.

In order to understand which skills were mostly prompted, also in relation to the position held in their job, for both courses, the questionnaire investigated the following main areas: *Creativity and innovation* (Griffin et al., 2012); *Critical thinking and metacognition* (Griffin et al., 2012); *Digital* (Griffin et al., 2012; Carretero et al., 2017) and *Entrepreneurship skills* (Bacigalupo et al., 2016).

As far as the annual post-grad course in *Museum Education* is concerned, among the skills perceived as most stimulated by the contents and activities proposed in the live lecturing, based on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1=not at all; 5=very much), students identified *Creativity and Innovation* first (Average=4.13/5), followed by *Critical Thinking and Metacognition* (Average=4/5), *Entrepreneurship* (Average=3.99/5) and *Digital Skills* (Average=3.87/5) (Figure 2). Based on the answers provided, there appeared to be statistically significant correlations between *Critical Thinking and Metacognition and Entrepreneurship* ( $r=.777$   $p<.001$ ). Correlations between *Creativity and Innovation and Entrepreneurship* ( $r=.769$   $p<.001$ ) and *Critical Thinking and Digital skills* ( $r=.742$   $p<.001$ ) were also positive.

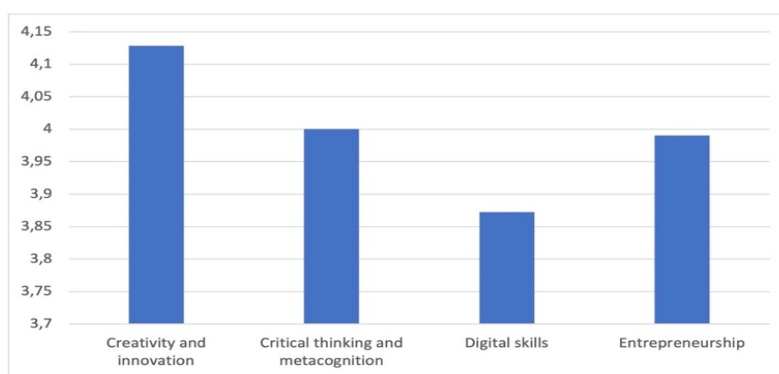


Figure 2: Skills self-perception – Post-grad course “Museum Education”

Moving on to analyze what emerges from the feedback by the students of the two-year post-graduate course *Advanced Studies in Museum Education*, concerning the skills of *Creativity and Innovation*, *Critical Thinking and Metacognition*, *Digital Skills* and *Entrepreneurship*, the second group of skills emerges as the most voted (Average=4.22/5). This is followed by *Entrepreneurship* (Average=4.06/5), *Creativity and Innovation* (Average=4.04/5) and, finally, *Digital skills* (Average=3.72/5), with a similar average score (Figure 3). Correlations seem to be significant between *Critical Thinking and Digital Skills* ( $r=.802$   $p<.001$ ), similar positive correlation is recorded between *Entrepreneurship and Digital Skills* ( $r=.730$   $p<.001$ ) and between *Creativity and Critical Thinking* ( $r=.752$   $p<.001$ ).

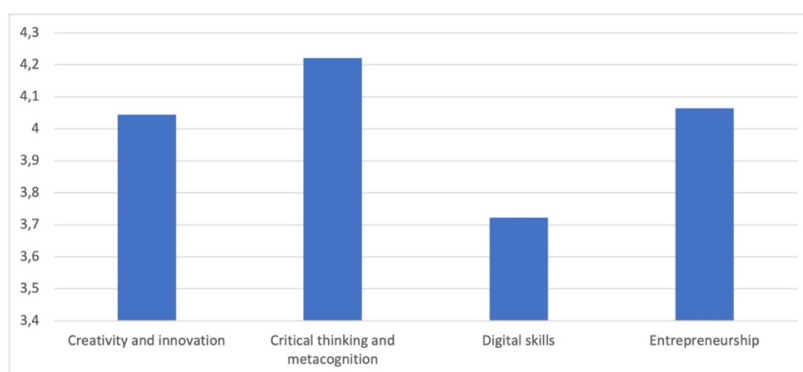


Figure 3: Skills self-perception – Post-grad course “Advanced Studies in Museum Education”

Concerning the competence of *Creativity and Innovation*, the 37 respondents from the annual course “Museum Education” were asked to self-assess such skills based on the prompts received during the course on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at all; 5= very much). The lessons and the related activities were perceived as enhancing certain aspects inherent to creativity, specifically “being open to new and creative solutions” (Average=4.35/5; st.dv.=.823) and to “different perspectives” (Average=4.30/5; st.dv.=.811). Indicators relating to the ability “to process, analyse and evaluate one’s own ideas in order to improve them creatively” (Average=4.27/5; st.dv.=.804), “develop and communicate new ideas and solutions” (Average=4.24/5; st.dv.=.796), “see failures as growth opportunities” (Average=4.03/5; st.dv.=1.040) and “show perseverance in presenting and promoting new ideas” (Average=4.03/5; st.dv.=.985) scored equally positively.

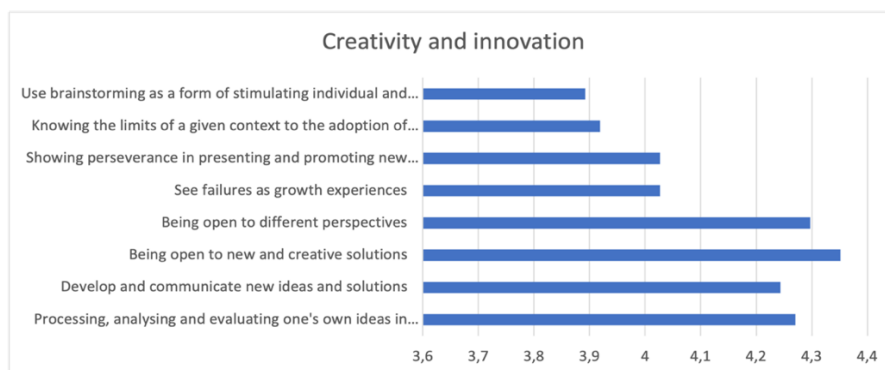


Figure 4: Self-perception of “Creativity and innovation” skills by post-grad students in Museum Education

Feedback from the biennial students do not change substantially, as far as the skills of *Creativity and Innovation* are concerned, in fact, the tendency to be open to different perspectives, with an average score of 4.41 out of 5 (std. dv.=.712) is perceived by the students as being among the most stressed. The abilities to “elaborate, analyse and evaluate one’s own ideas in order to improve them creatively” (Average=4.35/5; std.dv.=.701), to “develop and communicate new ideas and solutions” (Average=4.29/5 std.dv.=.848) and to “be open to new and creative solutions” (Average=4.23/5; std.dv.=.831) were also considered as implemented.



Figure 5: Self-perception of “Creativity and innovation” skills by post-grad students in Advanced Studies in Museum Education

Moving on to analyse the data collected in relation to the perceived enhancement of *Critical thinking and Metacognition* skills, again on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at all; 5= very much), as far as the annual students are concerned, the indicator that obtained the highest average score, compared to the others, was the ability to “be open and flexible in considering the opinions of others” (Average=4.13/5; std.dv.=.751), together with “being willing to reconsider or revise one’s own opinions” (Average=4.10/5; std.dv.=.842).

The enhancement to “interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis” showed an average score of 3.97 (std.dv.=.927), similar to the average obtained by the ability to “be able to incorporate these reflections into decision-making” (Average=3.94/5; std.dv.= .941), “analysing and evaluating the main alternative points of view” (Average=3.91/5; std.dv.=.924).

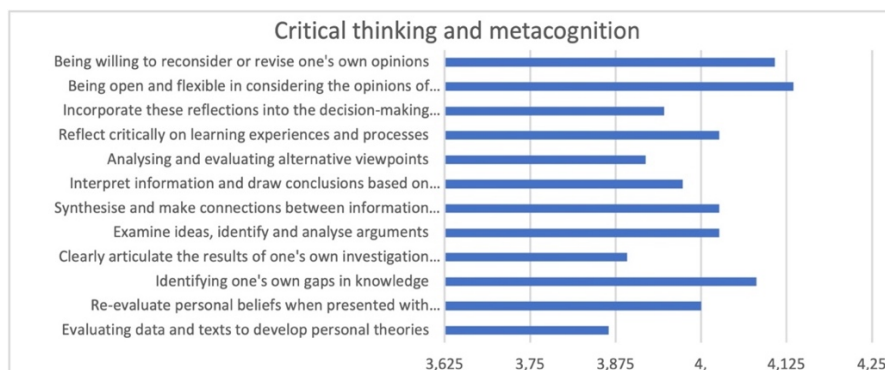


Figure 6: Self-perception of “Critical thinking and metacognition” skills by post-grad students in Museum Education

With regard to *Critical Thinking and Metacognition* skills, for the biennial students, the indicator that obtained the highest average score is that regarding the ability to “examine ideas, identify and analyze arguments” (Average=4.47/5; std.dv.=.943). In addition, teaching activities perceived as favoring the enhancement of *Critical thinking* skills are those related to “synthesising and making connections between information and topics” (Average=4.41/5; std.dv.=.618), to “reflecting critically on learning experiences and processes” (Average=4.29/5; std.dv.=.848), to “identifying one’s own gaps in knowledge” (Average=4.29/5; std.dv.=.848), to “being willing to reconsider or revise one’s opinions” (Average=4.23/5; std.dv.=.752), to “being open and flexible in considering the opinions of others” (Average=4.23/5; std.dv.=.752) and to “analysing and evaluating major alternative points of view” (Average= 4.23/5; std.dv.=.752). The ability to “interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis” scored on average 4.1/5 (std.dv.=.951).

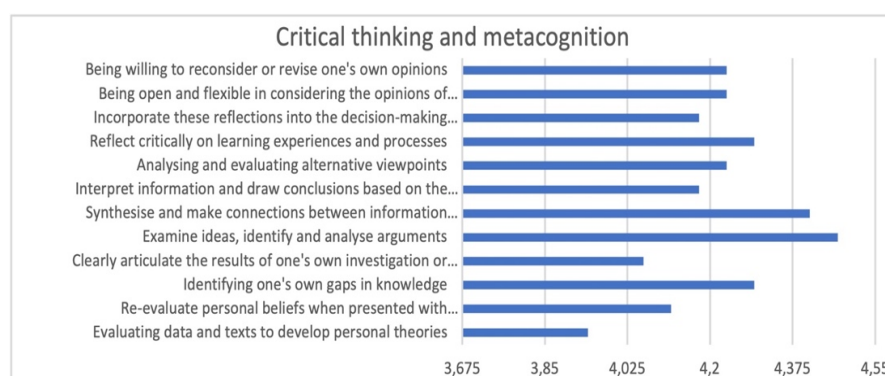


Figure 7: Self-perception of “Critical thinking and metacognition” skills by post-grad students in Advanced Studies in Museum Education

With regard to *Digital skills*, which are basically supported by the online mode through which the courses are provided, the annual students score best the ability to “use technology as a tool to search for information” (Average=4.24/5; std.dv.=.760). Equally relevant was considered the enhancement received regarding “knowing how to use technology as a tool to communicate information” (Average=4.10/5; std.dv.=.875) and to “organise it” (Average=4.00/5; std.dv.=.816).

The ratings assigned to the indicators concerning the ability to “critically and competently evaluate digital information” (Average=3.86/5; std.dv.=.917), the “use of technology as a tool to evaluate information” (Average=3.86/5; std. dv.=.947), to the “use of appropriate digital media to produce, present or un-



derstand complex information” (Average=3.75/5; std.dv.=.925) and to the “use of communication tools and social networks to manage information” (Average=3.67/5; std.dv.=1.17) have been considered fairly good.

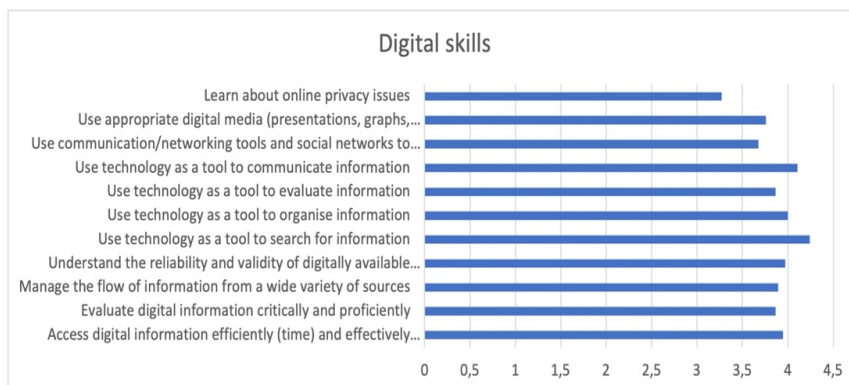


Figure 8: Self-perception of Digital skills by post-grad students in Museum Education

When analysing the indicators related to the improvement of *Digital skills* for biennial students, the one which reported the highest average score is the one concerning the ability to “use technology as a tool to evaluate information” (Average=4.23/5; std.dv.=.903), followed by the “ability to know about online privacy issues” (Average=4.17/5; std.dv.=.882). Students considered online and live lecturing to have fostered the inherent ability to “manage the flow of information from a wide variety of sources” (Average=4.17/5; std.dv.=.951), to “be able to critically and competently evaluate digital information” (Average=4.17/5; std.dv.=1.01) and to “be aware of the use of technology as a tool to communicate information” (Average=4.05/5; std.dv.=.899). Positive average scores were recorded with respect to the ability to “use technology as a tool to search for information” (Average=4.05/5; std.dv.=.899).

As in the case of the annual post-graduate course, the internal reliability of the skills items was also checked by calculating Cronbach’s alpha, which stands at the value of .975.

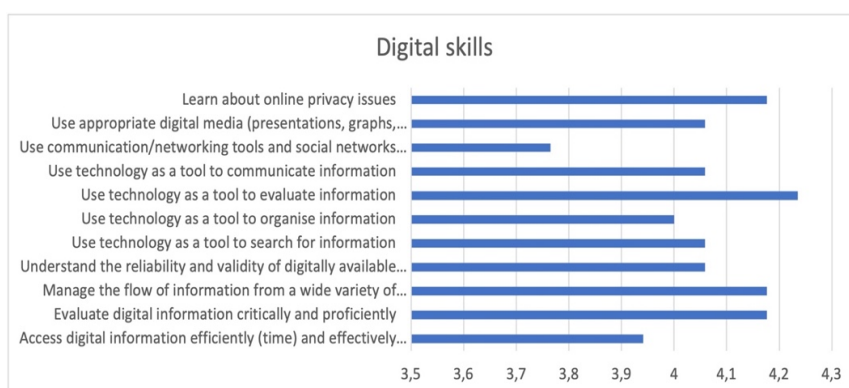


Figure 9: Self-perception of Digital skills by post-grad students in Advanced Studies in Museum Education

The students also commented on the prompts perceived as regards *Entrepreneurship* skills, and the highest average score for annual students was assigned to the indicator concerning the ability to “list priorities, get organised, set long, medium and short-term objectives” (Average=4.21/5; std.dv.=.786). The training activities increased the ability to “be proactive” (Average=4.16/5; std.dv.=.799), to “learn by doing” (Average=4.10/5; std.dv.=.965), to “make the most of opportunities” (Average=4.13/5; std.dv.=.713), to “evaluate the consequences and impact of ideas, opportunities and actions” (Average=4.00/5; std.dv.=.781) and to “focus and not give up” (Average=4.00/5; std.dv.=.1.05).

To validate the internal consistency of the items proposed and referring to the competences described above, Cronbach’s alpha stands at a highly reliable value of .978.



Figure 10: Self-perception of Entrepreneurship skills by post-grad students in Museum Education

Concerning the improvement of *Entrepreneurship* skills perception and the referred indicators, for biennial students, the one showing the most significant average scores was that concerning “being proactive and taking up challenges” (Average=4.23/5; std.dv.=.903). Equal average scores were assigned the ability to “learn by doing” (Average=4.17; std.dv.=.882), to “assess the consequences and impact of ideas, opportunities and actions” (Average=4.17; std.dv.=.951), to “make the most of ideas and opportunities” (Average= 4.17; std.dv.=1.01) and to “focus and not give up” (Average=4.05 std.dv.=.899).

In the opinion of the two-year course students, the activities carried out mainly contributed to “fostering the ability to list priorities”, to “organise oneself, to set long, medium and short-term objectives” (Average=4.05; std.dv.=.899), to “believe in oneself and continue to grow” (Average=4.05; std.dv.=1.02), to “team up, collaborate and stay connected” (Average=4.05; std.dv.=1.08).



Figure 11: Self-perception of Entrepreneurship skills by post-grad students in Advanced Studies in Museum Education

It is evident that the two groups considered were fairly similar as regards intrinsic characteristics and motivations. Data from each group were described separately in order to catch the differences if any in the development of a more intensive path to professional development, as the two-year course. Results suggest the need to reflect further on the findings and design new activities accordingly.

## 6. Final remarks

The preliminary study, carried out on both post-graduate courses taken into consideration, represents a way to focus on the demands coming from the field of heritage, as a context for social growth and development.

The actual evolution of public engagement in heritage experience due to different reasons, from the changes occurred in society over time to unexpected events, like the pandemic and the War, which accel-

erated the above change, shed light on the need to value heritage as a tool to help inclusion and active citizenship.

The rapid transformation of cultural institutions with an ever-greater attention to people, the different approach to cultural heritage and the overcoming of disciplinary barriers, together with the broad expectations placed on museums especially, open up new perspectives to be grasped and elaborated. If we want to hypothesize and define possible ways forward, we should think, first of all, of a redefinition of professional development on the basis of the new training needs of museum staff considering the new awareness of the contemporary world public. As also ICOM states, training for disciplinary areas linked to collections and specific cultural assets must be rethought offering a training clearly linked to functions (e.g.: head of interpretation and educational services, curator, etc.), figuring out which is the most suited role in society of the contemporary museum and heritage in general. Creating a bridging/discussion table between universities, Museum associations or individual institutions and creative industries can help the building of innovative proposals to develop the skills required by professionals, to allow them work in present museums and cultural institutions serving not only their local but also the global communities.

The results of the research experience here presented underline how the rigorous design of postgraduate learning pathways with different kind of learning activities focusing on pedagogical knowledge and skills, digital technology, well-being and social inclusion and international best practices are well appreciated by professionals. In particular, covering as much as possible the areas of investigation related to the new challenges of the museum in contemporary society (such as inclusion, sustainability, digital transition and social and economic development of communities) is an essential condition to train museum educators aware of their social role and skilled in the realisation of really inclusive learning experiences. The results regarding self-assessment of the transverse skills promoted by the post-graduate courses under analysis highlight the link between pedagogical reflection and professional and personal training, as well as the effectiveness of the course in educational terms. The contents and areas of study assessed positively by the students are those most in line with the functions that the museum assumes in contemporary society, underlining the need to deepen these contents in professional training courses.

## References

- Bacigalupo M., Kampylis P., Punie Y., & Van den Brande G. (2016). *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union; EUR 27939 EN; doi:10.2791/593884.
- Bevan B., & Xanthouda M. (2008). Professional Development for Museum Educators: Unpinning the Underpinnings. *The Journal of Museum Education*, 33(2), 107-119.
- Brown A.S., Novak-Leonard J.L., & Gilbride S. (2011). *Getting in on the Act: How Arts Groups are Creating Opportunities for Active Participation*. San Francisco: James Irvine Foundation.
- Carretero S., Vuorikari R., & Punie Y. (2017). *DigComp 2.1: Il quadro di riferimento delle competenze digitali per i cittadini con otto livelli di padronanza ed esempi di utilizzo*. EUR 28558 EN, doi: 10.2760/38842.
- Commissione europea, Direzione generale dell'Istruzione, della gioventù, dello sport e della cultura (2019). *Quadro d'azione europeo sul patrimonio culturale*. In <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/622226> (ultima consultazione: 22/08/2023).
- Council of Europe (2005). *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*. In <https://rm.coe.int/1680083746https://rm.coe.int/1680083746> (ultima consultazione: 22/08/2023).
- De Luca M. (2019). Quali politiche culturali per nuovi pubblici e nuove professionalità. In G. Del Gobbo, G. Galeotti, V. Pica, & V. Zucchi (Eds.), *Museo e società. Sguardi interdisciplinari sul museo* (pp. 182-186). Pisa: Pacini.
- Falk J.H., & Dierking L.D. (2013). *The Museum Experience Revisited* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315417851>
- Garcia Jurado R.R. (2020). Cartografia breve de pedagogias contemporaneas. *ICOM Education*, 29, 51-64.
- Grenier R.S. (2010). "Now This Is What I Call Learning!" A Case Study of Museum-Initiated Professional Development for Teachers. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 60(5), 499-516.
- Griffin P., McGraw B., & Care E. (2012). *Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Hohenstein J., & Moussouri T. (2017). *Museum learning: Theory and research as tools for enhancing practice*. London, New York: Routledge.
- ICOM Italia (2017). *Professionalità e funzioni essenziali del museo alla luce della riforma dei musei statali*, ICOM

- Italia, Novembre 2017, In <https://www.icom-italia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOMItalia.Professiona-lit%C3%A0FunzioniEssenzialiMuseo.2017.pdf> (ultima consultazione 24/10/2023).
- King B., & Lord B. (Eds.) (2015). *The manual of museum learning*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Liverani P. (2019). La formazione universitaria. In G. Del Gobbo, G. Galeotti, V. Pica, & V. Zucchi (Eds.), *Museo e società. Sguardi interdisciplinari sul museo* (pp. 179-182). Pisa: Pacini.
- O'Neill M.C. (2022). *Cultural action in museums in France. From founding intuitions to diffraction in "The foundations of the Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA)"*. In [https://ceca.mini.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/02/ICOM\\_anglais\\_final\\_light.pdf](https://ceca.mini.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/02/ICOM_anglais_final_light.pdf) (ultima consultazione: 22/08/2023).
- Piazza R., & Rizzari S. (2022). The professional profile of the museum educator today: opportunities and challenges. *Pedagogia oggi*, 20(2), 42-49. <https://doi.org/10.7346/PO-022022-05>
- UNESCO (2020). *Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19*. In <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Report-Museums-and-COVID-19.pdf> (ultima consultazione 24/10/2023).