

PROJECT: “THE MUSEUM TELLS ITS TALE”

An experience of alternating school and work

*Classes IV A and IV B of the Scientific Lyceum (specialization in Applied Sciences)
“A. Berenini” High School in Fidenza, school years 2016-17 and 2017-18*

THE DIDACTIC PROJECT

SCHOOL AND WORK

The aim of this project is to build a multimedia communication for the Cathedral and the Diocesan Museum of Fidenza, including a website, a set of multimedia narratives, a museum guide, and social channels that may be used by different kinds of audiences: experts, non-experts, and foreigners. This website and its contents are the result of an experience of alternating school and work (a requirement for students of all Italian high schools) involving the students of Lyceum of Applied Sciences “A. Berenini” High School and their teachers Nicoletta Fanzini, Monica Maramotti and Beatrice Rebecchi, internal tutors, in collaboration with the director of the Diocesan Museum of Fidenza and of some professors from the Polytechnic of Milan. The goal of this work is to experiment with multimedia technologies applied to the production of texts and narratives (storytelling) relevant to the school’s specialization in Applied Sciences, in collaboration with the Department of Electronics and Information of the Polytechnic of Milan and with the Diocesan Museum of Fidenza. The operative phases of the project saw the students working in groups, with their tutor-teachers helping them understand in depth the contents and technological aspects of the material they worked on.

DIDACTIC ORGANIZATION

Organization

This formative experience was divided in three stages: *introductory*, *operative* and *reflective or revision*:

INTRODUCTIVE STAGE: in order to prepare the students and introduce them to the work and its theme, three preparatory plenary sessions were designed. The first, led by the director of the Museum, introduced the topic of the research and provided methodological elements of bibliographic research; the second, led by the Polytechnic of

Milan, was an introduction to storytelling and its technical aspects; the third moment saw the students visiting the Cathedral and its Museum.

OPERATIVE STAGE: the operative phase lasted four weeks, over two consecutive school years (first step in February 2017, second step in February 2018), during which regular curricular activity at school was suspended and the students worked the equivalent of eight hours a day. The working environment was set up at school, since the customers could not provide adequate spaces where all the 48 students involved could work together. Three adjacent rooms were dedicated to this activity, in order to facilitate collaboration and interactions among all work groups.

“Technicians” were split into five subgroups with specific functional tasks: website, editing of images, texts and video. In general, the first week was dedicated to the precise task of learning how the software applications worked, while the second week was spent building the architecture of the museum website and inserting the texts produced by the “Humanists”.

“Humanists”, divided in six subgroups, were assigned a very complex task; in addition to investigating and studying the various museum items, they learned about the historical context, interviewed experts and non-experts, prepared an editorial plan and produced texts for the museum website.

REVISION STAGE. The revision involved two moments during the first year of work: the Polytechnic led the first one as the expert and met with each individual group to examine their work in detail; the second was a public meeting in which the results of the work were presented to the citizens. During the second year, the results of the entire work were subjected to a comprehensive evaluation, with fine-tuning and refining of details.

The chosen methodology was collaborative and cooperative work, with a hierarchic structure: each group was assigned a leader responsible for the organization and verification of the work; group leaders reported to a sector manager. Every day, in the morning and late in the afternoon, all group leaders and sector managers met with the teachers to receive their daily tasks and to check the work done. These moments have always proved essential, because they were an occasion to understand the morale of the students, their expectations, fears, enthusiasms, anxieties and even tensions.