

Giorgia Masoni*, Anouk Darne-Xu**, Emmanuelle Vollenweider***, Alice Spreafico****

How to Set Up a Digital Public History of Education? A Methodological Reflection Based on Research on the History of Literature Teaching in Switzerland*****

ABSTRACT: As part of a study on the history of the teaching of literature in Switzerland our research team has gathered a corpus that include all sources relating to the teaching of literature in French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino over the last two centuries. This paper presents the methodological thinking behind our data collection and the resulting system for classifying sources from a scientific research perspective. Then, based on an overview of research in the fields of public history and public history of education and its deployment in the Swiss context, this paper outlines the essential elements for establishing a digital public history of education project.

KEYWORDS: Digital Public History of Education, Data management system, History of Literature Teaching, Swiss School system

* Giorgia Masoni is a professor and member of the AGIRS teaching and research unit. Research topics: cultural transfers, history of school knowledge, history of teaching methods and their relationship with the creation of national identities. ORCID: 0000-0001-9129-5200. HEP Vaud, giorgia.masoni@hepl.ch.

** Anouk Darne-Xu is a PhD in Education. Research topics: data management, history of French teaching, language didactics. University of Geneva, anouk.darne@unige.ch.

*** Emmanuelle Vollenweider is a PhD student. Research topics: history of teaching reading, history of children's literature. University of Geneva, emmanuelle.vollenweider@unige.ch.

**** Alice Spreafico is a researcher. Research topics: the history of literature teaching from a comparative perspective. HEP Vaud, alice.spreafico@hepl.ch.

***** G. Masoni wrote paragraphs 1, 4 (introduction, 4.1 and 4.2) and 5, A. Darne-Xu wrote paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, E. Vollenweider wrote paragraphs 4 (introduction and 4.1) and 5, while A. Spreafico wrote paragraph 2.

1. Introduction

As part of a large-scale study on the history of the teaching of literature in Switzerland¹, our research team has gathered a substantial corpus of approximately 1,100 documents. Given the Swiss school context and the comparative nature of our research, this corpus brings together sources of various kinds (legislative and prescriptive texts, textbooks, etc.) from different cultural and linguistic contexts, notably French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino. Therefore, it was necessary to carry out a methodological study to establish classification and management system that consider the specific characteristics of the cantons while adopting criteria and descriptors to enable a comparative analysis approach². The sources collected are to be analysed mainly through a historical-didactic approach³ to determine the place and function of the object of *literature* in the French and Italian school subjects according to cantonal and linguistic specificities or the levels of teaching in compulsory schooling.

The corpus, by virtue of the breadth and diversity of its composition, seems to be of potential interest to a non-specialist audience. In fact, this corpus, and the research results derived from it, could be used as part of teacher training or even disseminated to a more general audience interested in the history of education, following the examples of projects such as *notreHistoire.ch*, *History of Education Switzerland*, *Swiss Sports History* or *150° – Passato, presente e future della formazione docenti in Ticino* in Switzerland. From there, we have the question of how to promote the corpus and research results beyond the academic sphere.

The potential use of the sources and results at different levels requires us to consider how they can be shared with heterogeneous audiences who will be required to interact with the data in various ways and for different purposes. The public history of education can provide us with ideas on how to make this corpus available to the public and, subsequently, use it beyond the initial research project.

This paper seeks to respond to this twofold challenge in two parts. First,

¹ This project, entitled 'Histoire de l'enseignement de la littérature en 'Français' et en 'Italien' (Suisse romande et Tessin, mi-XIXe-XXe siècles) [History of the teaching of literature in 'French' and 'Italian' (French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino, mid-19th-20th centuries)], co-directed by A. Monnier (University of Geneva) and S. Tinembart (HEP Vaud), is supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (grant no. 100019_197600/1).

² For an overview of the implementation of this approach in our research, see, for example, A. Monnier-Silva, S. Tinembart, A. Darme-Xu, G. Masoni, A. Spreafico, *Le processus de didactisation du texte littéraire dans l'enseignement primaire en Suisse (Suisse romande et Tessin, 1890-1980)*, «Didactiques & Disciplines», 1, 1, 2023, pp. 29-48.

³ M.-F. Bishop, *Une question de méthode: l'approche historico-didactique en français*, in A. Dias-Chiaruttini, C. Cohen-Azria (eds.), *Théories-didactiques de la lecture et de l'écriture: fondements d'un champ de recherche en cheminant avec Yves Reuter*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2017.

it presents the methodological thinking behind our project and the resulting system for classifying sources from a scientific research perspective. Second, based on an overview of research in the fields of public history and public history of education and its deployment in the Swiss context, this paper outlines the essential elements for establishing a digital public history of education project. This epistemological contextualisation is essential to grasp the framework within which our approach might be appropriate.

2. *A Project to Historicise the Teaching of Literature*

Before presenting our methodology for processing sources, we begin by outlining our research project. The aim is to trace the development and transformation of the subject of literature in primary and lower secondary education from the mid-19th century to the 1980s in two linguistic regions of Switzerland: French-speaking Switzerland⁴ and Ticino, the only entirely Italian-speaking canton in Switzerland. There are two research axes. The first is to investigate the definition of literature that has emerged over time in terms of the selected texts, objectives pursued, and teaching methods used and depending on school levels and pupil populations. The second axis focuses on the similarities and differences between the two linguistic regions and the contrasting cultural contexts as the cantons differ in religious belief, level of industrialisation, and urban and rural topography. The period selected for research allows us to observe the transformation of the object of literature over time and, thus, to consider significant contextual, structural and disciplinary changes.

The 19th century in the West was marked by the construction of school systems under public control. The deployment of public education systems led to a reconfiguration of the school form, characterised by, among other things, the legal attachment of the institution to public authorities, implying school legislation, compulsory and free education for all, the organisation of a system progressively linking different levels of education, the organisation of knowledge into school subjects, and the professionalisation of teachers⁵.

In Switzerland, this process gave rise to a “federation of teacher states”, with public education falling within the remit of the cantons:

⁴ The cantons studied are Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel, Valais, and Vaud. Some cantons are bilingual (Berne, Fribourg and Valais); however, our research focuses only on the French-speaking part of these cantons.

⁵ R. Hofstetter, B. Schneuwly, *Forme scolaire, un concept trop séduisant?*, in A. Dias-Chiaruttini, C. Cohen-Azria (eds.), *Théories didactiques de la lecture et de l'écriture : Fondements d'un champ de recherche – en cheminant avec Yves Reuter*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2017, pp. 153-167.

Aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles, c'est sur chacune des multiples scènes cantonales que s'institue, *de facto*, l'État enseignant. Un processus qui ne s'accomplit certes pas en vase clos, la dynamique intercantonale et les pressions confédérales et internationales l'influençant à des titres divers [In the 19th and 20th centuries, it was on each of the many cantonal stages that the teaching state was *de facto* established. This process certainly did not take place in a vacuum, with inter-cantonal dynamics and federal and international pressures influencing it in various ways]⁶.

The development of cantonal school systems was characterised by the introduction of free and compulsory primary education, which was extended to lower secondary education from the 1960s as part of the process of democratising education⁷. Until this period, secondary education in each canton was composed of several specific establishments depending on the audience and their gender, socio-cultural background and place of residence.

Attempts at intercantonal standardisation began in the mid-19th century. For example, the first intercantonal commission was set up in 1854 with a view to adopting a common textbook for all French-speaking cantons. Although this project did not come to fruition at the time, it led to the development of two common textbooks for several French-speaking cantons within the following two decades⁸. On the political front, the *Conférence Intercantonale de l'Instruction Publique de la Suisse Romande* [Intercantonal Conference for Public Education in French-speaking Switzerland] was founded in 1874. Ticino joined in 1908. However, it was not until the 1970s that the curricula and teaching materials were truly harmonised across the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In addition to the harmonisation, pedagogical ideas circulated through pedagogical societies and journals, among others⁹.

In the abovementioned process of school form reconfiguration, school subjects are at the centre, and textbooks, inextricably linked to the development of subjects, become the key instruments¹⁰. Textbooks became widespread in the French-speaking cantons and Ticino during the 19th century, and systems for validating, formalising and prescribing them were established by the various departments of public education¹¹.

⁶ R. Hofstetter, *La Suisse et l'enseignement aux XIXe-XXe siècles. Le prototype d'une «fédération d'États enseignants»?*, «Histoire de l'éducation», 134, 2012, p. 60.

⁷ R. Hofstetter, A. Monnier-Silva, *Construction de l'instruction publique et démocratisation contrastées*, in G. Durand, R. Hofstetter, G. Pasquier, *Les bâtisseurs de l'école romande*, Chêne-Bourg, Georg, 2015, pp. 135-177.

⁸ S. Tinembart, *Le manuel scolaire de français, entre production locale et fabrique de savoirs. Le cas des manuels et de leurs concepteurs dans le canton de Vaud au 19e siècle*, PhD thesis, University of Geneva, 2015.

⁹ A. Fontaine, G. Masoni, *Circolazioni transnazionali di letture morali nell'Europa del secolo lungo. Una storia di transfert culturali*, «Annali di storia dell'educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche», 23, 2016, pp. 20-37.

¹⁰ A. Choppin, *Les manuels scolaires: histoires et actualité*, Paris, Hachette, 1992.

¹¹ G. Masoni, S. Tinembart, *Les acteurs de l'édition scolaire, chevilles ouvrières de la forme*

In Switzerland, the mother tongue became a subject in the 19th century. At primary level, separate components such as reading, grammar and spelling were combined, gradually giving rise to the mother tongue as a subject, the focus of which became writing¹². In secondary school, the mother tongue as a subject gradually came to replace the rhetoric course¹³. Until at least the 1970s, the status of literature as a component of the school subject mother tongue differed considerably between the primary and secondary levels of schooling¹⁴. The aims of teaching literature at the two levels are reflected in the materials produced to teach it. At primary level, literature was used more to teach reading through textbooks, while at secondary level, it contributed to the acquisition of a literary culture through literary anthologies.

3. *Implications for Research into the History of Education in the Digital Age*

Today, the growing importance of the digital humanities requires us to think and practise the profession of historian differently¹⁵. As Noiret theorises, we are at a «digital turning point» that is having a significant impact on methods as well as on the instruments used to study, construct, disseminate and share history¹⁶. In this context, and because of the very changes arising in terms of how history is made, the quantity of accessible information and the tools available to process it make this issue both more urgent and more treatable, as pointed out by Grandi and Ruiz¹⁷.

As historians, we are therefore called upon to consider how to process these volumes of data before making them accessible to an audience that potentially lies beyond academic boundaries. The transmission of history, as suggested

scolaire, in S. Wagnon (ed.), *Normes, disciplines et manuels scolaires*, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2022, pp. 119-140.

¹² B. Schneuwly, T. Lindauer, A. Darne, J. Furger, A. Monnier, R. Nänny, S. Tinembart, *Enseignement de la langue première «Deutsch» – «Français». Remarques sur l'histoire de la discipline en Suisse (~ 1840 à~ 1990) dans une perspective comparative*, «Forumlecture», 2, 2016, pp. 1-20; G. Masoni, *Rapsodia del sapere scolastico: storia del manuale e dei suoi attori nel Canton Ticino (1830-1914)*, PhD thesis, University of Lausanne, 2019.

¹³ A. Monnier-Silva, *Le Temps de dissertations. Chronique de l'accès des jeunes filles aux études supérieures (Genève, XIXe-XXe)*, Genève, Droz, 2018.

¹⁴ B. Daunay, *État des recherches en didactique de la littérature*, «Revue française de pédagogie», 159, 2007, pp. 139-189.

¹⁵ A. Pons, *The Historiographical Foundations of Digital Public History*, in S. Noiret, M. Tebeau, G. Zaagsma (eds.), *Handbook of Digital Public History*, Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022, pp. 19-33.

¹⁶ S. Noiret, M. Tebeau, G. Zaagsma, *Introduction*, in Noiret, Tebeau, Zaagsma (eds.), *Handbook of Digital Public History*, cit., p. 7.

¹⁷ E. Grandi, É. Ruiz, *Ce que le numérique fait à l'historien.ne*, «Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea», 10, 2012, p. 3.

by Perim and Grosvenor¹⁸ and Cauvin¹⁹, must then be rethought considering the new technological context facing society. Our research project meets the challenges posed by the digital revolution. One of the aims of the project is to collect and make available in Open Access all sources relating to the teaching of literature in French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino over the last two centuries, which implies both the collection of a substantial corpus and the use of digital tools to manage and share this corpus.

Given the extent of the corpus to be collected and the aims of the research project, our team had to develop a classification and data management system that accomplished the following: in the short – and medium-term, to provide ourselves with a searchable database enabling team members to make selections and circulate efficiently within the overall corpus; and in the longer term, to ensure that the system put in place facilitates the deposit of data in an external repository, in accordance with the commitments made to the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)²⁰.

Therefore, we opted to deposit the sources collected onto a secure platform, with each source entered into a searchable database in Excel format, meaning it was necessary to consider the following beforehand: 1) the tree structure of our data platform and the logical grouping and prioritising of sources; 2) the relevant categories of information to be retained for describing sources (metadata); and 3) how to link the platform and database to enable the rapid location of documents in the latter.

The overall process involved several stages. First, to design the platform's tree structure and establish the database descriptors, we had to define the corpus to be collected and determine its characteristics. Then, we identified four sets of sources:

- 1) At the legislative level, all the texts (e.g., laws, regulations, circulars, decrees) relating to the organisation of the primary and secondary schools included in the project are of interest. Analysing these texts would allow us to understand the evolution of the cantonal school systems and establish an initial cross-periodisation of the cantons studied.
- 2) At the prescriptive level, the curricula and syllabi drawn up by the school authorities enable us to understand the evolution of the mother tongue as a

¹⁸ K. Perim, I. Grosvenor, *Future Pasts: Web Archives and Public History as Challenges for Historians of Education in Times of COVID-19*, in F. Herman, S. Braster, M.M. del Pozo Andrés, *Exhibiting the Past: Public Histories of Education*, Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 177-196.

¹⁹ T. Cauvin, *Digital Public History in the United States*, in Noiret, Tebeau, Zaagsma (eds.), *Handbook of Digital Public History*, cit., pp. 235-242.

²⁰ On this subject, see the Subsidies Regulations of 27 February 2015, Article 47, URL: <https://www.snf.ch/media/fr/ICCrvpOHZ38Hbg5Y/allg_reglement_16_f.pdf> [last accessed: 16/09/2024].

school subject and the various ways in which literature is present depending on the levels and systems of education.

- 3) The textbooks and schoolbooks validated, prescribed, or both for teaching reading and literature facilitate the identification of the text corpus, preferred authors and intended purposes.
- 4) Finally, we are interested in pedagogical journals notably for access to debates on the teaching of literature and the positions of those involved.

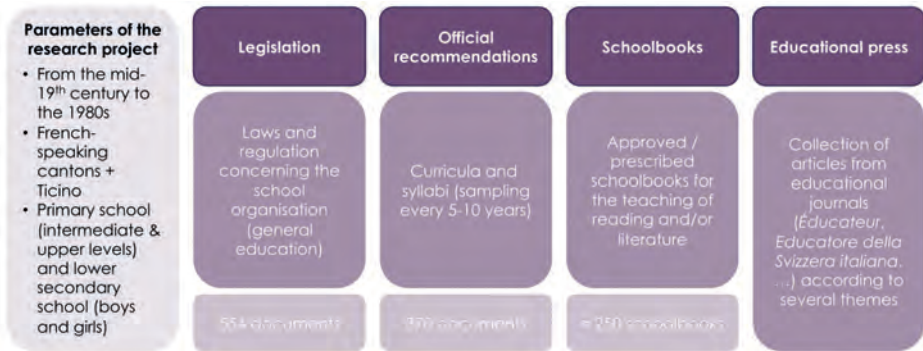


Fig. 1. Identification of sources to be collected and grouping into sub-corpus

The focus then shifted to the criteria for grouping and classifying them. In view of the specific features of the Swiss context, it was necessary to determine the relevant entry according to the source type and periods involved and then the subsequent branchings. The following hierarchical criteria were defined:

- Criterion 1: Does the source concern one canton, several cantons, or a linguistic region?
- Criterion 2: Is Criterion 1 valid for the entire research period or does it vary from period to period?
- Criterion 3: Does the source concern a particular level of education?
- Criterion 4: Does the source concern a specific population (female or male pupils)?

We established the tree structure of our data platform based on these criteria (see Fig. 2). We began by identifying the source types for which the geographical criterion was relevant and then differentiate between legislation and regulations on the one hand, and textbooks and the pedagogical press on the other, for which this criterion was irrelevant. Textbooks, for example, may be used or produced by several cantons. Regarding legislation and regulations, while the geographical classification is relevant, the scale of their circulation may vary depending on the period. Thus, these sources were grouped first by canton until the 1970s and then according to a regional factor determined by the process of intercantonal harmonisation that was emerging at that time. The subdivisions within each first-level file follow an internal logic (see Fig. 2).

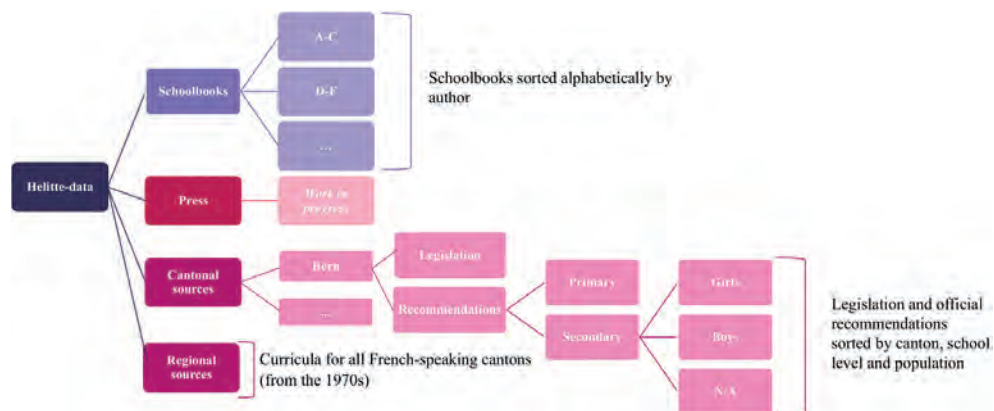


Fig. 2. Tree structure of the data storage platform

While designing the tree structure, we had to propose other possible corpus entries and gather information about the sources collected. So, we created a database in Excel format of all the sources deposited onto the platform. For the database to be searchable, we developed a series of descriptors which are:

- Identification of the source: source type, title, author or authors, date and place of publication.
- Elements relating to its use: canton, level of education, institution and population concerned.
- Provenance of the source: place, archive number, call number.

These descriptors are divided into two categories: 1) searchable descriptors and 2) other characteristics deemed necessary but not used for sorting. These criteria were established primarily to facilitate our research into the history of the teaching of literature in French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino. The next challenge was adapting a platform to make it available to an audience of not only researchers but also non-specialists, with a view to setting up a public history of education project.

4. Mapping the Digital Public History and the Public History of Education

The triptych composed of digital humanities, digital history and public history is forcing changes in how historical content is communicated and the sources from which it derives. Historians are, thus, led to contemplate the different ways of mediating between the results of research and a non-academic audience; in turn, the need arises to (re)think the way in which historical research is carried out²¹. Therefore, we are currently adopting a

²¹ Herman, Braster, del Pozo Andrés, *Exhibiting the Past: Public Histories of Education*, cit.

meta-position, critically examining our own data dissemination practices and objectives.

These considerations can be incorporated into more profound reflections on the public and, subsequently, social role that historical knowledge is called upon to play in society today²². One response is provided by the possibilities outlined by public history and its application in the field of history of education which, as Bandini reminds us, is a discipline at the crossroads of sociology, anthropology, psychology and pedagogy²³.

Public history was born in the United States between the 1970s and 1980s as a response to the gap between social needs and academic research²⁴. In this context and in response to this lack, historical methods and approaches were adapted to promote collaborative study and a broader conception of history that appealed to a wider public beyond the academic sphere²⁵. The objective of public history is to valorise history while examining the reasons for the discipline's existence and its role within civil society as a key to understanding the present, with this change in perspective also impacting the way history is taught and shared²⁶.

Outside the English-speaking world, Italy has been a pioneer in the development of public history in Europe. From the end of the 1990s onwards, public history featured in initiatives led by associations; ten years later, it was also at the core of reflections of the scientific community²⁷. These years saw what Cauvin describes as a «new process of internationalisation» of public history, which reflects the interest shared at international level in the way public history was conceived, developed and practised²⁸. Within this dynamic context, several Manifestos were being drawn up with a view to defining the objec-

²² G. Bandini, S. Oliviero (eds.), *Public History of Education: riflessioni, testimonianze, esperienze*, Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2019; N. Offenstadt, *L'histoire un combat au présent*, Paris, Les éditions Textuel, 2014.

²³ G. Bandini, *Manifesto della Public History of Education. Una proposta per connettere ricerca accademica, didattica e memoria sociale*, in Bandini, Oliviero (eds.), *Public History of Education: riflessioni, testimonianze, esperienze*, cit., p. 44.

²⁴ T. Cauvin, *The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective*, «Historia Crítica», 68, 2018, pp. 3-26.

²⁵ S. Noiret, «Public History» e «storia pubblica» nella rete, «Ricerche storiche», 2-3, pp. 257-327.

²⁶ G. Merlo, *Il museo dell'educazione: una nuova prospettiva di Public History per la formazione docente*, in Bandini, Oliviero (eds.), *Public History of Education: riflessioni, testimonianze, esperienze*, cit., pp. 91-101.

²⁷ M. D'Ascenzo, *Esperienze di Public History of Education nell'Università di Bologna, tra ricerca scientifica e didattica*, in Bandini, Oliviero (eds.), *Public History of Education: riflessioni, testimonianze, esperienze*, cit., p. 211.

²⁸ T. Cauvin, *Public History. A Textbook of Practice*, New York, Routledge, 2016; Id., *The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective*, cit.; S. Noiret, *Digital Public History*, in D. M. Dean (eds.), *A Companion to Public History*, London, Wiley, 2018.

tives and spheres of action of public history and public history of education²⁹. Finally, in 2016, the Italian Public History Association³⁰, the first national public history association in Europe, was created³¹.

Public history has been more widely addressed by scientific communities in other European countries since the 2010s³². On the other hand, in Switzerland, as highlighted in the last issue of *Traverse* edited by Asmussen, Binnenkade, Gillibert, Schubert and Späti, public history is only rarely institutionalised in research and teaching at Swiss universities and colleges of education³³.

4.1 A Selection of Digital (Public) History Projects in Switzerland

Since the end of the 1990s, there have been several projects in Switzerland aimed at achieving, implicitly, some of the objectives of public history. These include the open archives *Memoriav*, *Archimob*, *notreHistoire.ch* and *Swiss Sports History*. Focusing on these examples will allow for identifying what is necessary to establish a public history of education.

The *Memoriav* association was founded in 1995 through collaboration between several national institutions involved in managing and promoting audiovisual archives³⁴. Since its creation, *Memoriav* has been actively and sustainably committed to the preservation, enhancement and widespread use of Switzerland's audiovisual heritage³⁵. This heritage has been available to the public since 2001 through the open archive *Memobase*³⁶. Recently, public par-

²⁹ Examples: J. Guldi, D. Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014; AIPH, *Manifesto della Public History italiana*, 2018; G. Bandini, *Tempi duri per la storia. Il contributo della Public History of Education alla consapevolezza delle nostre complesse identità*, in G. Bandini, P. Bianchini, F. Borruso, M. Brunelli, S. Oliviero (eds.), *La Public History tra scuola, università e territorio. Una introduzione operativa*, Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2022, pp. 95-110; Herman, Braster, del Pozo Andrés, *Towards a Public History of Education: A Manifesto*, cit., pp.1-35.

³⁰ URL: <<https://aiph.hypotheses.org>> [last accessed: 08/11/2023].

³¹ Cauvin, *The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective*, cit. p. 20.

³² See, for example, the research centre and university courses offered in Luxembourg, URL: <<https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/fr/research-areas/histoire-publique>> [last accessed: 08/11/2023].

³³ *Traverse* 2023/3, *Das Material der Public History*. Issue edited by T. Asmussen, A. Binnenkade, M. Gillibert, Y. Schubert and C. Späti. URL: <<https://revue-traverse.ch/fr/ausgabe/2023-3/>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

This statement needs to be qualified. Some universities and tertiary education institutions offer training in this field. This is the case of the University of Fribourg, which offers a master's degree with a focus on public history (URL: <<https://studies.unifr.ch/fr/master/hist/history-didactics/>> [last accessed: 08/11/2023]).

³⁴ See the *Memoriav* website, URL: <<https://memoriav.ch/en/memoriav/>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

³⁵ URL: <<https://memoriav.ch/fr/mission/>> [last accessed: 15/01/2024].

³⁶ URL: <<https://memobase.ch/fr/start>> [last accessed: 08/11/2023]. *Memobase* currently

ticipation in preservation activity has been questioned and new categories of support and conservation are now taking shape³⁷. However, as per Noiret, Tebeau and Zaagsma's definition, *digital public history* «entails the combination of academic knowledge of history with modern digital communication practices to engage the past while incorporating user-generated content and sharing authority with participating communities and publics»³⁸. Hence, it leads to the establishment of methods by which «historians and their publics, in mutual interaction and co-dependency, gather, collect, consume, disseminate, and engage with history and its sources»³⁹.

In 1998, Memoriav helped to found Archimob (*Archives de la mobilisation*). In a controversial context in which Switzerland was questioning its role in the Second World War⁴⁰, Archimob was created with the aim of collecting testimonies about this period. Five hundred and fifty-five interviews were conducted, and their recordings helped to build this audiovisual memory⁴¹. While this project has proved successful, its conservation is now a matter of concern. Currently, only the index is available online, and the archive is difficult to access for non-specialists. As Fink points out, ensuring its survival is, at least for now, a challenge⁴². While Memoriav has done well digitising and recording the original tapes on hard disks, making these archives accessible and bringing them up to date in Swiss history requires financial resources and institutional commitment. This case study shows the importance of adopting a long-term vision when collecting audiovisual and written archives and making them available permanently to the public.

Active public participation in creating an open archive to promote the written and audiovisual heritage of Switzerland is at the heart of the multilingual and multicultural *notreHistoire.ch* project set up by the Foundation for the Preservation and Promotion of the Audiovisual Heritage of Swiss Radio and Television (FONSART⁴³). The portal, first launched in French-speaking Switzerland (2009), then in Romansch-speaking and Italian-speaking Switzerland (2017) and, finally, in German-speaking Switzerland (2023), invites the public to publish, participate and explore Swiss history in order to build a collective

brings together the archives of 67 institutions, with a total of approximately 400,000 documents (data provided by the foundation for the period up to 2020).

³⁷ URL: <https://memoriav.ch/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Memoriav_Geschaftsbericht_2023_IT.pdf> [last accessed: 10/11/2024].

³⁸ S. Noiret, M. Tebeau, G. Zaagsma, *Introduction*, in Noiret, Tebeau, Zaagsma (eds.), *Handbook of Digital Public History*, cit., p. 3.

³⁹ Ivi, p. 14.

⁴⁰ See N. Fink, *L'histoire publique aux oubliettes: Archimob*, «Public History Weekly: The international Blogjournal» 6, p. 35. URL: <<https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/6-2018-35/archimob/>> [last accessed: 22/01/2024].

⁴¹ URL: <<http://archimob.ch/fr/home/>> [last accessed: 15/01/2024].

⁴² Fink, *L'histoire publique aux oubliettes: Archimob*, cit., p. 35.

⁴³ URL: <<https://www.fonsart.ch>> [last accessed: 08/11/2023].

memory and bring the history of the different parts of Switzerland closer to the public⁴⁴. The editorial teams manage the portals and act as moderators⁴⁵.

However, the example of this project raises questions about public participation, given, for example, the nostalgic vision of the past portrayed in some posts. The site raises questions about co-participation and the sharing of authority between historians and a non-expert public in creating and disseminating archives and, by extension, the collective memory that flows from them. As Bandini points out, it is essential to support the public in the development of a historical approach in order to encourage a critical view of the object studied and shared⁴⁶.

Finally, in 2018, a project to create a digital portal in three national languages (German, French and Italian) on the history of Swiss sport was launched. Combining digital history and public history, Swiss Sports History⁴⁷ aims to facilitate access to the history of sport for different audiences, in particular researchers, the media and schools. To that end, work is being done in the following areas: making numerous audiovisual sources available; raising the profile of inventories of sources and offering support to associations for the preservation of their archives with a view to a history of sport; making research results prepared for schools and sports clubs available. The portal also acts as a mediator, bringing together contemporary witnesses to the history of sport, such as Swiss sport personalities, with the public. It is supported by the SNSF through the Agora instrument and funded by a private foundation and the University of Lucerne⁴⁸. The initiative combines making sources available for research and disseminating scientific knowledge while acting as a unifying force for several institutions and players in sport history, notably thanks to what has been termed an *intermediation*, which has been drawn up with the assistance of a history specialist to help users quickly find the content that answers their questions.

⁴⁴ URL: <<https://notrehistoire.ch/pages/a-propos>> [last accessed: 08/11/2023].

⁴⁵ The various portals now have 10,798 registered users (as counted by us on 08.11.2023). These users have shared a total of 137,427 documents (as counted by us on 08.11.2023). The portal includes as users several institutions.

⁴⁶ Bandini, *Manifesto della Public History of Education. Una proposta per connettere ricerca accademica, didattica e memoriasociale*, cit., pp. 41-53.

⁴⁷ URL: <<https://www.sportshistory.ch>> [last accessed: 22/01/2024].

⁴⁸ This project is co-directed by Professors M. Jucker (University of Lucerne) and C. Koller (Swiss Social Archives). Swiss Sport History, Communiqué de presse. Lancement de la *Swiss Sports History: vivre, préserver et explorer l'histoire Suisse du sport en ligne*, University of Lucerne, 2019. URL: <https://www.sportshistory.ch/site/assets/files/3157/communique_de_presse_ssh.pdf> [last accessed: 22/01/2024].

4.2 *Applications of Public History to the Field of Education*

Public history is also attracting interest from the international community of history of education researchers. Here, too, Italy occupies a central position. In 2019, Bandini and Olivero published a collective work on the need to rethink the history of education in the light of public history in order to bring academic knowledge closer to educational contexts⁴⁹. In his studies, Bandini shows the potential of orienting the history of education towards public history, particularly in the context of teacher training. According to Bandini, offering teachers a public history of education would enable them to become aware of their role in the past in order to identify the characteristics still active and in motion and discard the prejudices and summary classifications, reinforced by tradition and habit, which frame reality⁵⁰. At international level, the same debate is being taken up by Herman, Braster and del Pozo Andrés, who highlight how the current societal context encourages historians of education to turn to public history to make their research results accessible and tangible⁵¹. They state that «now questions such as how do we attract audiences, how do we keep them interested? and how do we make history accessible to them? become key forcing them more than ever to also think in terms of the musealization, mediatization, digitalization, aestheticization as well as playification of the history of education»⁵². These needs led them to draw up a *Manifesto of Public history of education*⁵³. Among the eight constituent principles outlined in the text, the following, in particular, caught our attention: the need to make the histories of education accessible (principle 1) so that the past can be offered as a frame of reference capable of bringing difference into people's lives (principle 7) while reflecting on a transmission capable of restoring the plurality of our societies (principle 8).

As with the place given to public history in the academic context, the public history of education does not seem to be adequately valued or institutionalised within Swiss universities. However, in this case too, it is possible to highlight a series of projects and associations active in the field of education and which touch (implicitly and explicitly) on some of the objectives at the heart of the public history of education. Most of these associations are rooted in the cantons and aim to promote and preserve their tangible and intangible educa-

⁴⁹ Bandini, Olivero (eds.), *Public History of Education: riflessioni, testimonianze, esperienze*, cit.

⁵⁰ Bandini, *Manifesto della Public History of Education. Una proposta per connettere ricerca accademica, didattica e memoria sociale*, cit., pp. 45-46.

⁵¹ Herman, Braster, del Pozo Andrés, *Towards a Public History of Education: A Manifesto*, cit.

⁵² Ivi, p. 12.

⁵³ See Herman, Braster, del Pozo Andrés, *Towards a Public History of Education: A Manifesto*, cit.

tional heritage. By way of example, we might mention the *Cercle d'études Grégoire Girard*⁵⁴ and the *Centre de documentation et de recherche Pestalozzi*⁵⁵, whose heritage preservation and enhancement projects are linked respectively to the figures of the two pedagogues and their educational thinking. Other associations, such as the *Fondation vaudoise du patrimoine scolaire*⁵⁶, have set similar objectives but do not limit themselves to associating their efforts to promote and conserve heritage (intangible and tangible) with a single educational figure.

Of a different nature and on a different scale is the project initiated by the History of Education Switzerland platform¹⁹. Created with the support of the SNSF, this open archive project continues its work thanks to the support of the *History of Education Switzerland Association*⁵⁷. The platform aims to enable «researchers, students, teachers and interested members of the public to carry out discipline-specific and multilingual research on sources and data relating to the history of education research in Switzerland»⁵⁸. It also strives to give researchers the opportunity to publish historical research data on education as per the SNSF's Open Research Data strategy⁵⁹. Although essential for the disseminating archives relating to the history of education, this project does not allow the public to participate actively in creating and preserving history.

A final example of the public history of education in Switzerland is the very recent project *150° – Passato, presente e future della formazione docenti in Ticino*, run by the University of Applied Sciences of Italian Switzerland's Department of Education and Learning to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the teacher training college in Ticino⁶⁰. The platform uses an interactive timeline with direct access to sources and presents the history of the teacher training institution in the Italian-speaking canton. Finally, the website provides access to episodes of the podcast *racconta la tua storia* [Tell us your story], which was created with the participation of the public, who were invited to share their professional and personal experiences that intersected at one time or another with the history of the institution itself. This participatory project has enabled us to retrace a multi-faceted history of teacher training in Ticino, weaving a genuine dialogue between history and memory.

⁵⁴ URL: <<https://cerclegregoiregirard.ch>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

⁵⁵ URL: <<http://www.centrepestalozzi.ch/accueil>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

⁵⁶ See <<https://www.musee-ecoles.ch/fr>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

⁵⁷ See <<https://verein.bildungsgeschichte.ch>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

⁵⁸ URL: <<https://www.bildungsgeschichte.ch/en/about/>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ URL: <<https://150magistrale.supsi.ch/mostra-150-anni/>> [last accessed: 16/01/2024].

5. *Some Points to Consider When Setting Up a Digital Public History of Education Project: Concluding Remarks*

The public history projects mentioned in this paper are particularly inspiring and enable us to determine what institutional and financial possibilities might exist in the multilingual Swiss context. In addition, existing inventories and initiatives in the history of education aim to achieve objectives related to public history. Our research project could thus make the most of the archives still housed in public educational institutions while mediating between this content and the target audiences, including curriculum designers, trainers and teachers, enabling them to frame the current debates on the teaching of literature in Switzerland in a more complex historical context. Including the launch of our platform in a national approach to the development of sources would then allow us to highlight our data while ensuring active dissemination and networking. Moreover, consulting educational institutions and the public would let us continue collecting sources in association with our thematic priorities while diversifying their archival nature for posterity.

To achieve these goals, we have identified six points to consider when setting up a digital public history of education project. We have determined these points based on the Manifesto by Herman, Braster and del Pozo Andrés⁶¹, which we have compared with the examples presented in the previous section. They are as follows:

- 1) Ensuring the sustainability of such a project means anticipating the institutional, financial, infrastructural and technical needs over the long term. It is a question of not only setting up a public history of education project, but also of thinking about its sustainability.
- 2) Multiplying communication channels in order to reach a variety of audiences using different communication tools.
- 3) This means opening up a shared space for discussion. A conscious digital public history of education anticipates which audience or audiences could potentially join the initiative and, thus, guarantees a plurality of stakeholders. As a result, it also examines what audiences might be absent and tries to retrace its history.
- 4) Putting various sources into dialogue so that history, individual memory and collective memory come together. This dialogue must be contextualised to facilitate analysis and not treat each source as anecdotal but as part of a complex and plural system of sources.

⁶¹ Herman, Braster, del Pozo Andrés, *Towards a Public History of Education: A Manifesto*, cit. Although, as highlighted in the previous sections, several manifestos related to the public history of education have been drawn up, we have chosen to follow the one by F. Herman, S. Braster, M.M. del Pozo Andrés as it fits and retraces the reflections proposed by the manifestos that preceded it.

- 5) Assume the position of historical mediator in order to help the public appropriate the tools of the trade. The aim of this approach is to encourage all those involved to develop a critical position and reflexivity.
- 6) Occupy the offline public space in order to inscribe these stories in a concrete reality outside the digital world and give the history of education a tangible frame of reference.

These points should serve as guidelines so that the digital public history of education is not just a showcase but a laboratory facilitating encounters between audiences, researchers, sources and their histories.

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