

Project Management Update from Italy¹

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The Education of Project Management in Italy

Introduction

This first 2022 Regional Report will be a short resume concerning the effort, embraced by PM Associations throughout the last two decades of 21st century, in order to create Project Management educational patterns which are able to exploit the affinity of the PM discipline with the most common skills people use in their everyday life. Every year, in Italy, there are about 8 million students, and not less than 450 thousand of them are trying to close their secondary school cycle. From this point on, it is expected that students have been acquired the citizenship key competencies, in other words the “skills for life”. In this report, we will show how those skills and competencies can be compared with the key concepts and principles of Project Management, and how PM Associations tried and are trying to help Italian school system to improve their results.

The Italian context of reference

The need to bring both new instruments and a higher awareness of their abilities and competencies to 21st century generations emerged on our continent in December 2006, when the European Parliament issued a recommendation (2006/962/EC) on "key competences for

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lifelong learning" to which the Member States should have responded by producing a renewed training offer incorporating the new strategic reference framework. As a response to that, in August 2007, the Ministry of Education issued the "Italian Law from 2007 for the new obligation of education" in which the transposition of the European recommendation resulted in a set of actions with the objective of directing all students, through four pivotal cultural axes (axis of languages, mathematical axis, scientific-technological axis, historical-social axis), to the acquisition the following "key competences of citizenship":

- **Learning to learn:** each young person must acquire his own method of study and working
- **Designing:** every young person must be able to use the knowledge learned to give themselves meaningful and realistic goals. This requires the ability to identify priorities, assess existing constraints and possibilities, define action strategies, make projects and to verify their results
- **Communicating:** every young person must be able to understand messages, handling different levels of complexity in the various forms of communication and must be able to communicate effectively using different languages
- **Collaborating and participating:** every young person must know how to interact with others understanding the different points of view
- **Acting independently and responsibly:** every young person must be able to recognize the value of rules and personal responsibility
- **Solving problems:** every young person must be able to face problematic situations and understand how to solve them
- **Identifying links and relationships:** every young person must have the tools that allow him to face the complexity of living in the global society of our time
- **Acquiring and interpreting information:** every young person must be able to acquire and critically interpret the information received by assessing its reliability and usefulness, separating facts from opinions.

One interesting aspect is the transversality of the skills mentioned above; they can be acquired through the action of all four cultural axes, which for us can be translated into the fact that they might be achieved by a student of Classical, Scientific, Technical or any other kind of Institute or High School.



ISIPM Motivation for the Project Management Education

The mission pursued by the Italian Institute of Project Management (later ISIPM), in the definition of Project Management Education initiatives is to give a significant contribution in the assessment and the diffusion of key competencies and of good practices of active citizenship through the spreading of the discipline of Project Management.

The primary focus of ISIPM since its foundation (October 2005) is promoting the growth and the development of the Project Management culture among all stakeholders in their different roles (customers, suppliers, sponsors, consultants, etc.), exerted through processes based on the application of the best modern knowledge acquired at national and international level. Therefore, an ISIPM working group tried to answer the following question....

Why Project Management at School?

- *The life of each of us partly consists of projects:* a project is nothing more than a temporary commitment undertaken in order to create a specific result with unique characteristics. Numerous examples of life projects: marriage, development of a professional career, ...
- *Students are involved in projects already at pre-school age:* that are parties, group works, performances, school projects ... however, they are generally not provided with all the management and interpersonal skills needed to make them successful.
- *Teachers manage projects and support students:* teachers regularly manage projects that are not only strictly formative ones. Project Management is for them an increasingly important competence, and they can be the most suitable figures to transfer it to their students.
However, teachers are often not adequately trained for the knowledge, techniques and tools of Project Management.
- *Because project management skills will be useful for any path students will want to undertake:* PM in the army, PM in health care, PM in the school, PM in the organization events, PM in tourism, PM in ICT, PM in archaeology, PM for engineers, PM in research, PM in construction, PM for surveyors, PM in training, PM for European projects, PM for banks, PM for software development, PM for banks sports events, PM for cinema, PM...

- **Because it's exciting!** In different experiments conducted by ISIPM from 2010 to the present in different schools:
 - students are particularly active and engaged in learning
 - students perceive studying "grown-up things"
 - students have the opportunity to work on real problems
- **Because in fact it has already been decided:** indeed, the directive 2006/962/EC on "key competences for lifelong learning" for a renewed training offer in the Member States reports "...that everyone needs for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment" (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council "On key competences for lifelong learning", 2006).



Vito Introna² (ISIPM Board Member & PMWJ Honorary International Academic Advisor) introducing "Why Project Management in the School"

The roadmap of Project Management Education paths development in ISIPM

2008 – ISIPM Board member (Biagio Tramontana³) proposed first matching on "key competences for lifelong learning" & Project Management Discipline.

² <https://pmworldlibrary.net/vito-introna-phd/>

³ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/biagiotramontana/>

2010 - The first experimental course of Project management in Upper Secondary School Classes V held by Alessandro Quagliarini and Emanuele Remediani⁴, after which students passed the ISIPM-Base exam;

2011 - First ISIPM Conference on "Project Management and Key Citizenship Skills", in which it was shown the parallelism between them:

Key Citizenship Skills	Vs	Project Management
"To organize one's own learning by identifying, choosing and using various sources and various methods of information and training, also according to the available time of one's own strategies and method of study and work."	Learning to learn	Projects are by definition unique, so it is absolutely necessary to use your past skills and experience adapting them to the context under consideration. One of the main challenges of the PM is to learn from past projects.
"Develop and implement projects relating to the development of its study and work activities, using the knowledge learnt to establish meaningful and realistic objectives and related priorities, defining strategies for action and verifying the results achieved."	Designing	It is the definition of project! Result orientation is one of the fundamental principles. Definition of the alternative analysis project strategy. Triple constraint (time-cost-quality). Identification of critical activities. Progress control and performance analysis.
"Understand messages of different type and complexity, transmitted using different languages using different media"	Communicating	Communication is one of the elements of knowledge! The project manager is above all a communicator. The Communication Plan is one of the main project management deliverables.
"Interacting in groups, understanding different points of view, valuing one's own and others' abilities, managing conflict, contributing to common"	Collaborating & Participating	The project is a team work! Team building and team working, motivation, negotiation, conflict and crisis

⁴ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/emanuele-remediani-697a311a/>

Key Citizenship Skills	Vs	Project Management
learning and the realization of collective activities, in the recognition of the fundamental rights of others."		management are basic knowledge elements. Sharing is also a learning opportunity (e.g. lesson learned).
"To be able to insert themselves actively and consciously in social life and to assert their rights and needs within it, while recognizing those of others, common opportunities, limits, rules, responsibilities"	Acting independently and responsibly	Definition of responsibilities (matrix of responsibilities) through the identification of clear and measurable deliverables that become the instrument of verification of the outcome of the individual; Ethics is one of the basic knowledge elements of PM!
"addressing problematic situations, constructing and verifying hypothesis, identifying appropriate sources and resources, collecting and evaluating data, proposing solutions using, according to the type of problem, the contents and methods of the different disciplines"	Solving Problems	Problem solving is one of the basic knowledge elements of PM! Impact measurement (time-cost-quality) Re-planning and verification of assumptions
"to identify and represent, by elaborating coherent arguments, connections and relationships between different phenomena, events and concepts, also belonging to different disciplinary areas, and distant in space and time, grasping their systemic nature, identifying similarities and differences, consistency and inconsistencies, causes and effects and their probabilistic nature"	Identifying links and relationships	Stakeholders' analysis Matrix; Design grid and systemic approach; Probability analysis techniques (e.g. PERT for the probabilistic duration of the project and risk analysis).
"to acquire and critically interpret the information received in the different fields and through different communication tools, evaluating its reliability and usefulness, distinguishing between facts and opinions"	Acquiring and interpreting information	Orientation to measurable results (project deliverables); Understanding the situation based on data analysis.



Prof. Santina Petrosilli⁵ explaining the students experience in Project Management course

Since 2012 – School seminars spread throughout the country. ISIPM started seminars in all Italian regions for school that demonstrated interest in Project Management discipline.

Since 2013 – Project Management courses included, since 2013, the class held at ITS (Superior Technical Institute) Automotive Sector of Val Di Sangro⁶ thanks to a great contribute of Patrizia Monacelli⁷ as volunteer and Member of the board of ISIPM;

2014 - Second Conference “School and Management. Skills to Govern Change” in collaboration with the main Italians School Organizations as:

- National School Head Association⁸, from its constitution the most authoritative point of reference for the analysis and proposal on school autonomy and the modernization of the education system in Italy, which exposed the complex problems of the School Manager in today’s School.
- INDIRE⁹, which since its establishment have assisted the evolution of the Italian school system.
- INVALSI¹⁰, whose mission includes the periodic and systematic verification of students' knowledge and skills and the overall quality of the training offered by institutions, also in the context of lifelong learning, which described the essential points of the Assessment of School Leaders.

⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/santina-petrosilli-30050a60/>

⁶ <https://itsmeccanicabruzzo.eu/>

⁷ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patrizia-monacelli-a89ba965/>

⁸ <https://www.anp.it/>

⁹ <https://www.indire.it/>

¹⁰ <https://www.invalsi.it/>

In that context, ISIPM proposed Project Management as a fundamental discipline to manage complex projects and objectives of change, also ensuring, with a stakeholder-oriented approach, attention to both economic and social objectives. Thus, it has been with main speech “Project Management, a discipline for management of Complex Projects” by Alessandro Quagliarini¹¹ and “The Stakeholder Paradigm for Value Social and Economic” by Massimo Pirozzi¹².

Since 2016 – First National Project Management Competition dedicated to all Secondary Schools and ITS (Higher Technical Institutes) located in Italy. The papers, based on any type of project carried out in a purely scholastic context including the experiences of Paths for transversal skills and guidance ¹³(PCTO), could be submitted by a schoolteacher. The winning Schools was awarded and given the opportunity to present their projects during a dedicated online ISIPM event, the annual PMEXPO¹⁴.

Since 2018 - First experimental course of "Paths for transversal skills and guidance" (PCTO). The ISIPM standard course for PCTO provides, in the collaborating schools, for the creation of a "Project Management Office" (later PMO), that will take care of census and standardize all existing projects within the school itself in order to verify that each of them is represented and managed according to the good practices of Project Management.



The PMI Italy chapters experience – a bit of history

From research carried out on the web, the PMI (Project Management Institute), through its foundation for education (PMIEF), already in October 2006, within the meeting "PMI Leadership Institute" in Seattle (Washington DC), launched concrete proposals to transfer basic PM knowledge and methods first to American High Schools (14-18 years old), and then to so-called Middle Schools (11-14 years old) and Elementary Schools (5-11 years old).

These proposals were implemented a year later at a further PMI Global Congress held in Atlanta (Georgia) in 2007, resulting, in July 2008, in a pilot project at a Seniors High School in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania).

With the label of "college passport", the course was structured as 4 hours a week for a period ranging from 6 to 10 weeks in which teachers assumed the role of "mentors" of the training paths called "Project-Based Learning". In these courses, students get to deal with real life

¹¹ <https://pmworldlibrary.net/alessandro-quagliarini/>

¹² <https://pmworldlibrary.net/authors/massimo-pirozzi/>

¹³ <https://www.istruzione.it/alternanza/>

¹⁴ <https://www.pmexpo.it/>

projects, working in teams and exploiting knowledge and methods of typical of PM. With this pilot project, the PMI set itself the objective of extending the initiative to all schools.

Digging further into the initiatives already undertaken overseas, we actually find an experience dating back to June 2006, based in Italy, sponsored by the "Northern Italy Chapter" of the PMI, in some elementary schools in Milan. From these experiences, a "Kit for Primary School" was born which welcomes and summarizes the concepts of PM and makes them available to teachers indicating the learning methodologies to be used. The success of the initiative is confirmed by the additional realities that have been formed as the competition for primary schools in Gorizia "budding projects" sponsored and implemented by the PMI-NIC.

From the website of the Educational Foundation of the PMI (<https://www.pmi.org/pmi-educational-foundation>) you can see that currently in the USA there are many courses, not only for students but also for their teachers, sponsored by universities and multinationals interested in finding and cultivating talents already in school age. Similar programs are active in Canada, Mexico and Brazil, but also in South Africa and Ghana some PMI Chapters have made significant experiences.

Based on the experience matured in recent years, the PMI makes available to all a small PM book entitled "Project Management Skills for Life" which, in fact, is a real "Bignami" of the PMBOK written for children, in which they summarize the main concepts of the project lifecycle and make available worksheets and templates to start working on projects.

The main motivation of all the experiments and documentation produced is the basis of the slogan "Building Project Management Skills for the 21st Century" present in all the publications.



Project Management Skills for Life (PMS4L) is an initiative of the PMI-SIC¹⁵, which is carried out in collaboration with the Regional School Office (USR¹⁶) of Campania. It provides seminars on Project Management at secondary schools in order to spread this discipline, in this way helping young people to pursue their goals in terms of personal and professional life.

- The first edition 2014-2015 involved 5 schools, 150 students and 10 teachers, within the province of Naples.
- The second edition 2015-2016 involved 18 schools, 832 students and 71 teachers, within all five provinces of the Campania region.

¹⁵ <https://www.pmi-sic.org/category/project-management-skills-for-life/>

¹⁶ <http://www.campania.istruzione.it/home/home.shtml>

- The third edition 2016-2017 involved 28 schools, 944 students and 90 teachers, within all five provinces of the Campania region.
- The fourth edition 2017-2018 involved 23 schools, 857 students and 50 teachers, within all five provinces of the Campania region.
- The fifth edition 2018-2019 involved 22 schools, 836 students and 51 teachers, within all five provinces of the Campania region.
- The 2019-2020 edition did not take place because of the pandemic from Covid-19.
- The 2020-2021 edition involved 15 schools and 368 students, within the provinces of Avellino, Caserta, Naples and Salerno. The seminars were held remotely, and the new version of the initiative was called PMS4L WEB. The numbers were lower than those of the editions held before the pandemic, but it was important to give continuity to the initiative hoping to return to higher numbers when the situation will allow.
- In February 2022 will start the seventh edition of the initiative Project Management Skills for Life, born from the collaboration between PMI-SIC and Regional School Office (USR) of Campania and which provides for the provision of seminars on project management in secondary schools of 2 grade in order to disseminate this discipline to the new generations. The seminar will be held in the version called "PMS4L WEB", introduced last year, and includes 2 lessons. The previous editions were attended by a total of 111 schools, over 250 teachers and about 4,000 students. The seminars are held by volunteers from PMI-SIC (project management professionals) and are based on the PMBOK standard. of the SME. The target of the initiative are students of the three-year secondary schools of 2 grade, with preference to third and fourth classes.



This year there are 18 schools (2 in the province of Avellino, 4 in the province of Caserta, 9 in the province of Naples and 3 in the province of Salerno). The seminars will be held until May 2022. The tutors will attend the meeting organized by the USR for Friday 21/01/2022 at 9:30 am, to be informed about their role in the course of the seminar. All participants (students and tutors) will receive the certificate of participation of the PMI-SIC.



Project Management Olympic Games (PMOGs) is an PMI-SIC¹⁷ initiative carried out in collaboration with various public and private partners. It was launched in Apulian schools, then it was extended to schools in Campania thanks to the collaboration with the Regional School Office (USR) of Campania.

It includes training sessions on Project Management (for teachers and students) and a competition in which students compete both individually and through group work, facing several tests during the training course and the showing the project work in a final event, during which the announcement of the winners and the awarding of prizes take place.

- The first edition 2015-2016, saw the involvement of 11 schools, 50 teachers and 250 students from the Puglia region. The final event took place on 9 April 2016 at the Politecnico di Bari University.
- The second edition 2016-2017 involved 10 schools (8 Apulian and 2 bells). The final event took place on 13 May 2017 at the Teatro Impero in Brindisi.
- The third edition 2017-2018 involved 17 schools (7 from Puglia and 10 bells), 35 teachers and 450 students. The final event took place on 19 May 2018 at the Politecnico di Bari.
- The fourth edition 2018-2019 involved 13 schools (3 from Puglia and 10 bells), 30 teachers and 300 students. The final event took place on May 3, 2019 at the Campus of Monte Sant'Angelo of Federico II University.
- The 2019-2020 edition started but was then suspended due to the pandemic from Covid-19.
- The 2020-2021 edition did not take place because of the pandemic from Covid-19.

Participation in the initiative for this school year entitles participating schools to participate in the 2022/2023 edition of "Project Management Olympic Games", another initiative of the PMI-SIC that provides training sessions on project management for teachers and students, as well as a competition to reward the best group work, Project Manager and speaker. It is relevant to point out that these activities are totally free.

¹⁷ <https://www.pmi-sic.org/project-management-olympic-games/>

The time spent for both the lessons and the realization of the exercises will be valid for the purposes of reaching the hours stipulated for the "Paths for transversal skills and guidance" (PCTO) pursuant to Law n. 145/2018.

PMI-SIC important news are:

- The PMS4L WEB seminars held by volunteers of the Chapter of Turkey with the support of our volunteers are taking place in Turkish schools. In this regard, it is recalled that colleagues Ceyhun Kucuk, Deniz Cabadak and Ahmet Fatih Ak attended the seminar at the G. Marconi Institute in Nocera Inferiore last May 2021; subsequently Deniz attended the closing meeting of the seminars in July 2021;
- The USR of Sicily and the PMI-SIC have signed the memorandum of understanding for the launch of project management initiatives in Sicilian schools. The seminars will be held by Sicilian volunteers with the support of volunteers from Campania. It is worth pointing out that these successes have been achieved thanks to the availability of the USR Campania in sharing our vision and the commitment of students and teachers of Campania schools.

Conclusions

Despite the effort described in this brief report, in Italy there is not yet enough awareness about the great extent of usefulness of an introduction to the discipline of Project management at school. As argued in our short essay, it would be quite useful to integrate PM didactics in school, strengthening young students' personal skills either for bridging them towards work or for improving their studying path at University.

About the Author



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Alessandro Quagliarini, MScEng, PMP, MBA, is an experienced Program Manager, with more than 18 years of experience in the ICT sector. He holds a Master's Degree in Telecommunication Engineering from the University of Rome "Tor Vergata" and a Doctor's degree in Business Administration from the Bologna University Business School. He got both PMP® and ISIPM-Av® advanced certifications in Project Management, and he is also certified as an Information Management Systems Lead Auditor. He is a Member of the Board of the "Italian Institute of Project Management" (ISIPM) for ten years, and he is an Accredited Teacher in Project Management.

Alessandro is currently engaged in the "Digital Transformation" engineering and industrialization programs of the new Italian "Open Fiber" telecommunications network, with particular focus on the engineering of delivery and assurance processes for the provision of retail, business and industries customers, on the operational management and procurement support for the definition of specifications and contracts, on the definition of operating rules/instructions for maintenance and of requirements for systems development, on the support to the commercial and regulatory lines for the definition of services and processes for customers (Other Licensed Operators and Industries), and on the definition and management of operations compliance with ISO Standards and International Best Practices.

As a Member of the ISIPM Board, he focuses his volunteer activities mainly on the cultural diffusion of the project management to young people – specifically to high school students and also staff, including teachers. As an ISIPM accredited teacher, he has taught project management in public and private institutions, in schools and in universities. He has experience in the organization of events and as a speaker in conferences, and also in proposing and managing EU-funded projects.

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