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INTERPRETATION OF PLEASURE TIME

Abstract:

In recent times museums - with their unique and special world, functioned as a kind of learning scene - play central role in formal education. Museums open and change more and more with the aim to receive a wider scale of visitors. Discovering learning lays stress upon the active and information-searching self of children and students. Contemporary pedagogy puts the active learning with objects and interactivity into the centre of the learning process. Children are more sensitive to receive new knowledge in such an environment that gives the experience through direct, practical activity and training. Museum pedagogy is a tendency in pedagogy that helps even small kids to be sensitive to previous times by showing their collections based on acquiring knowledge and also with the help of infrastructural opportunities.

In my lecture I would like to search and show some possibilities that are hidden in museum pedagogy and are capable to widen educational work. I am going to show all this through the museum pedagogical supply of Savaria City Museum. I am also going to reveal the connection-system within Szombathely, through which experience, knowledge and a special atmosphere gets to kids and families. Finally I am going to deal with museum pedagogy as well. Basing museum pedagogy on museum pedagogy is significant.

My research focuses on the programmes of Savaria City Museum, on its relationship with the educational institutions of the city and on the museum's efforts to form adults' personality.

The following institutions and people took part in the research: the teachers and pupils of Zrínyi Ilona Primary School, the educators of Aréna and Donászy Magda Kindergarten (questionnaire) and the educators of the museum (interview).

I draw up my statements about the possibilities of delivering knowledge not only in institutional frames by valuing their opinions and by taking my own experiences into consideration. One of my students helped me to prepare the research and agreed to publish it.

Keywords:

education, life long learning, interpretation, interactivity, museum pedagogy, contemporary pedagogy

JEL Classification: I29

About the functions of museums

Different pedagogical researches that deal with the future of education claim that the institutions will face to a big challenge. Students want to gain knowledge not only from within the classroom but also from educational sites on the web or from the virtual world that contains and shows cultural heritage. Big differences can be found in the development of children because of family-environment or opportunities and demands that different schools give. So the role of museums reevaluates. Museums can give modern, up-to-date environment and authentic place for education. It is an ideal place because it is diverse, it has easily transformable spaces, educators are ready to hand, they are capable for team-work, dynamic processes can be observed there, they give knowledge through own experiences and examinations and we can get conclusion with the help of students. They can develop groups with different ability with the help of showing civilization. (Kárpáti, 2009, p. 30)

„Museum-pedagogy is an educational activity that deals with giving over some knowledge out of the walls of schools but within museums. Its foundation is the collection and exhibition of the museum and it builds upon the formal, school-system education and it also considers the age-group characteristics”.¹

Museum-pedagogy gives knowledge of material and intellectual goods as an experience with the tools of pedagogy. Its indirect aim is to bring up a museum-visiting generation who appreciate the material and intellectual heritage of past and who are sensible for social problems. Museum-pedagogy proposes to help pupils and students understand the materials of exhibitions. (Csesznák, 2009, p. 2) Learning as an entertainment or entertaining by learning are the same.

The method of museum-pedagogy

In babyhood we get experiences through stimuli from the surrounding world, through things that already happened to us. There are various theories and models existing about the learning methods, processes and opportunities of museum-visitors. Today, constructivist theory is the strongest and most valid as a trend to the methodological innovation of museum-pedagogy. To tell it in a simple way: environment, where we get our observations from strongly influences the interpretation of the given topic. Creativity and active student work have important role. It tries to use and build upon the extent knowledge of children. It works with interactions which helps to develop social ability. Cooperative learning methods are among the newest ones in museum-pedagogy. They can be used effectively in museums: argument- or project-method, discovering-learning, problem-centric learning. Activity can be reached by direct questions or by any tools that encourages the visitor to take part actively. (Koltai, 2009, p. 83)

About the research

The field of my interest is the museum-environment. To analyse the topic collection of data within the institute and getting in touch with the colleagues of museum was

needed. At the beginning of my work I asked for allowance from the director of the City Museum. I had no time not even enough capacity to read up the subject of the museum-pedagogical supply in Szombathely and to do a deep research about the network of relationships within museum-pedagogy in the city. So as to get as clear picture as it is possible about the museum-pedagogical work in the institute I made interviews and let questionnaires filled. Of course, the interpretation of documents and observation as a research method was essential. In choosing a school I wanted to draw one into research where a reform-pedagogical method is built into their educational program. The school I finally chose adopted the Rogers method into its educational work. As for the students, I wanted to choose some who are capable to form a correct and own opinion about things. I was also curious about the opinion of the nursery educators in connection with this topic. I chose two nurseries accidentally. I put the museum-pedagogical occasions of SMHVM, named 'Only by us, only with us' under a detailed examination.

I presume that knowledge gained by discovery-learning, through more sense organs is more everlasting than knowledge from traditional learning.

The museum offered the following program to the 2014/15 school-year:

The main conception of this year was the forest, the introduction and familiarisation of nature and the activities connected to environmental protection – all this within the frames of the 'Only by us, only with us' educational program. The occasions of this museum-pedagogical program-series were held between September 2014 and May 2015. There was an application form available on the website of Savaria Museum, this was the way to join to the program. Six department-institutes took part in the occasions. All museums let the groups work according to the institute's façade, and with the useful and creative applying of their collections. Also the educators did a devoted work.

The building and the collections of Savaria Museum give the base of the program-series.

For nursery kids and pupils in primary schools year 1-2:

Kids were dealing with the world of insects, using the material of 'Endless Diversity' exhibition in the Science Museum. They observed bugs and insects known from tales.

For primary school kids in year 3-4:

Build upon the elements of the above-mentioned exhibition, they searched for the most common animals of the world, knowing their lifestyle, appearance and conformation.

For primary school kids in year 5-8:

On the stone carved works of Savaria Museum one can observe several imageries of real and fictive living beings, forest animals and plants. On the occasions children tried to get answers for the reason why ancient people carved for example a rabbit on a gravestone.

For secondary school students:

Partakers endeavoured to find answer in teamwork that motivated them for self-dependent deliverance. They tried to find out what ancient objects tell about the ambitions of ancient people.

The museum-pedagogical resume of SMHVM

I tell my experiences according to the two occasions I visited at the museum, the time spent with the children and educators and the excursion to Látványtár and Vasi Skanzen.

Target group

The characteristic, that museum give service strengthens, as they get the scene for lifelong learning. In the written ambitions of SMHVM the organization of museum-pedagogical lessons, educational programs and camps occur increasingly. They offer occasions mainly for nursery kids and primary, secondary school students. It was a pleasure to me that student taking part in HID II program were also visitors of museum-pedagogical lessons. The number of visitors in the museum-pedagogical occasions was increasing in the examined period. In the 2011-12 school-year 567 visitors were registered in the Museum-opening programs, while in 2014-15 this number was 1013.

Personal conditions

To construct the occasions, well-qualified, vocative educators are needed. For this sake, the institute sent seven colleges to ELTE (Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest) to the museum-pedagogical department with the help of a scholarship. They all did successful examinations.

Besides the educators of museum-pedagogy there were some other specialists (for ex. archeologist, restorer) co-operating in the preparations of programs. The coordinator of the museum has an important role, his or her connective work is essential for fluency.

The educators of the museums do not have an easy job because they work in a wide scope of activities. They also have to deal with exhibition, have to co-operate with other institutes and most of them do their own research as well.

Material conditions

If there is a separated room or space for the museum-pedagogical occasions, it influences the activity positively. All institutes we visited had such a room. It also gives place for the hand-craft activities at the end of the occasions. In this regard, Vasi Skanzen is in a unique situation, as they formed more rooms for education connected to given topics. The small pillows of Iseum are really useful for kids when listening tales.

For the preparation of the occasions drawing tools and paper is needed, and they also need plaster, forms and plasticine for making objects like in the past. According to the kids' reports these conditions are given in the institutes. They specifically like hand-craft occasions, hurdle races and fill-in-activities. "Veverka claimed that knowledge

which we gain through activities remains in 90%, while knowledge that we memorize only by hearing, remains in 10%”.²

The institutes are infrastructurally good equipped according to the age-requirements. They are proper to interactivity. I mention some of the tools: interactive guide CD, touch info surface, computers and projectors. It is important to notice that these device do not distract attention.

Being in accordance with the aims of museum-pedagogy

The educators could teach according to the age-group characteristics (from small kids to adults). They encouraged visitors to learn the appropriate behaviour in the museums and to appreciate the material and intellectual heritage of the past. They also tended to let the children get ‘museum-friendly’ and ‘museum-respecter’ so as to be in their adulthood returning museum-visitors.

The applied methods of museum-pedagogy

Educators of the museums chose their methods by considering the environment and the characteristics of the given age-group. They outstepped from traditional teaching methods every time, and they built upon the creativity and activity of children. They put stress on games and activities, like looking for troops with nursery kids, identifying through pictures with primary school students or chipping stones with adults. It was interesting to experience, how reactions of kids changed for the changing of mimicry or speaking voice of educators. The interactive dialogue and discovery-games in case of an exhibition helped children and visitors to understand and to learn and store knowledge much easier. Common games are good for creating and developing co-operative work between kids.

Major result of the questionnaires constructed to nursery educators, teachers and students

Teachers

Out of 12 teachers only 1 does not visit museums with students. His or her reason: s/he is a foreign language teacher and there is no museum-pedagogical offers in connection with foreign language subjects. Out of 20 nursery educators 5 does not bring children to museum. Their reason was that parents showed no demand for visiting museums as nursery program. Regarding the age-distribution, the teachers are about 40 years old, nursery educators come from a bit older age-group (45-55). There were only two men respondent, all the others were women.

It is important to know that the majority of the respondents are teachers of lower classes in primary schools (7 persons). Museum-educators also mentioned that the number of lower classes taking part in the occasions is bigger than the number of upper classes. As a museum-pedagogical occasion lasts not 45 minute, like lessons in the school, it is not easy to organize the participation. This is easier to the lower class teachers, because small pupils belong only to a few teachers while in upper classes

there are more different subjects with many teachers. The administration anyway is not easy for schools.

Teachers get information about the museum-pedagogical programs mainly from the contact-person. So it is significant that this person should be aware of the museum-pedagogical programs and also can link the curriculum to the offers.

In the answers to the explanation of the notion of museum-pedagogy such other notions appear: environment of museums, the development of behaviour-culture, teaching and giving knowledge through the collections of museums and learning by own discovery. So we can claim that teachers are aware of what museum-pedagogy means.

The aspects of choosing programs differ in the case of nurseries and schools. While nursery educators choose according to the age, teachers prefer to choose according to the supply. Nursery education do not have such a wide margin by choosing programs.

All the educators and teachers claimed that these occasions develop the behaviour-culture of children. This is a main endeavour that museum-educators defined.

School-teachers tend to integrate lessons in museums to their educational program than nursery educators. Nursery educators consider these occasions as extemporal opportunities while school-teachers find them a good field for widen the curriculum and make it more interesting.

Out of the museum-pedagogical occasions kids are taken only such exhibitions and programs from schools that are directly connected to the curriculum. Nurseries decide to bring children to certain exhibitions according to the parents' wishes. By asking the usefulness of programs, nursery educators answered that they were useful because they were unique. Teachers claimed that spending free time matterful is the most useful.

Most of the respondents agreed that museums are good fields for lifelong learning.

There were some respondents who have never taken part in Museum-pedagogical occasions but they plan to visit them once.

The results of student-questionnaires

From the answers of children it turns out that all of them visited at least one institute of SMHVM with their families in Szombathely. Out of Szombathely, most of them visited museums in Budapest and Keszthely.

Primary school students from upper classes remembered 3 school-years back what kind of Museum-pedagogical lessons they took part.

Most of the students prefer lessons in the museum than in the school because they learnt as much as in the school but among looser conditions with more pleasure. Besides the experience of the teachers were that many times this knowledge remained better. Children also like hand-craft activities which they can do in the museums more often.

I quote the words of Andrea Csapláros, the director of the museum who valued year 2014 in the following way: 'In 2014 such a big exhibition-series started that has never been here before. Our first topic was the nature of Adria. The exhibition did not only attract tourists in a big number during the summer but it also motivated student-groups. At the beginning and at the end of the school-year, many groups from schools came to visit (...) The lesson of 2014 was that we have to step out from the walls of museums. The customs of visitors changed which the museum has to accommodate itself to: it is necessary to step out to the museum-yard and go out to the streets.'

It is significant that the change of aspect did happen which is proved by the increasing number of visitors. We hope that the legal background will also give more space and opportunities to museum-pedagogy.

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