

MuseumEdu 3

Museums and Education - Research approaches

INTRODUCTION

MuseumEdu 3, *Museums and Education - Research approaches*, is the third issue of the online, open access, peer-reviewed international journal *MuseumEdu*, published by the University of Thessaly Museum Education and Research Laboratory in June 2016. It includes papers in English as well as in Greek, accompanied by abstracts in both languages.

The rationale

MuseumEdu 3, *Museums and Education - Research approaches*, presents research studies that focus on museums' communicational and educational character and roles. Besides its research orientation, this volume has been designed so that it addresses issues related to how contemporary Greek, European and global reality (i.e. contemporary wars and their implications to human societies, refugees' and immigrants' experiences and their reception by local societies) are represented in various live or digital museum spaces. The papers of this issue discuss a range of research questions that could help us to better understand the historical, educational, social, political and digital dimensions of the representation and perception of crucial issues in museum spaces; an understanding that could promote and enrich the everyday practical work that is done as part of museums' educational mission. In this way, we wish to underline the importance of establishing close links between museum practice and research, as well as between the museum world and contemporary social realities.

The structure

MuseumEdu 3, includes nine articles. The first three address issues of museum engagement with contemporary social and political issues, since they, respectively, refer to the study of a. the representation of the implications of World War I - let us remind to our readers that we live in a period (2014-2018) that is marked by the 100th anniversary of "The Great War", b. the representation of Asia Minor refugees' settlement in Greece in 1922, just after the end of World War I, together with the representation of the type of relations that evolved between the newcomers and old

citizens, and c. the use of immigrants' oral life histories in museum education contexts with the aim of improving relations between 'native' and immigrant school children. The next two articles, article 4 and 5, study, respectively, student-teachers' perceptions of memorial spaces and performances, and school students' historical thinking as evidenced through their responses to the material, printed or digital presentation of archaeological relics in museum and school environments.

Articles 6, 7 and 8 study, respectively, focus on aspects of the educational and ideological function a. of museum webpages, b. of big national museums, and c. of exhibitions in public everyday spaces, such as the Athens *Attiko* Metro.

Finally, article 9 reports 14 independent research works that study museums' relations with their different audiences, the handling of controversial issues, and the importance of reflection for everyday museum practices.

More specifically, [MuseumEdu 3](#) includes the following articles:

KOSTAS KORRES

Informal history education in museums: Representations of the First World War in the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* Museum in France

This article is based on the author's MA dissertation (2015) that was conducted at the University of the Aegean School of Humanities. It is based on ethnographic on-site observations carried out in order to probe issues of representation of the First World War in one of the most important and innovative contemporary museums of Europe, the "Historial de la Grande Guerre" of France. In this article, Kostas Korres discusses the different museological representations of the First World War in the Museum *Historial*, in relation to their connections with different approaches to history, and presents the results of his research about the educational outcomes of the use of new technologies in the representations of the traumatic memory of the First World War.

ELENI BOUMPARI

Oral history-based exhibits: Do they affect visitor movement in museum exhibitions?

The paper examines the ways in which oral history-based exhibits affect visitor movement in museum exhibitions in relation to basic theories on visitor circulation patterns, and on the use of oral history narratives as exhibits. It is based on the author's MA dissertation at the Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester (2015). The "Museum of the city of Volos" was used as the case study, especially the Museum's first and temporary exhibition, "Volos - Nea Ionia. So far away - So close", which is dedicated to the 90 years from the Asia Minor Refugees settlement in Nea Ionia (at the periphery of the city of Volos) and the influences of the mass arrival and settlement on the city and the relations that were evolved between the refugees and the local society. The methods used in this research (2015) were: in situ observation of visitors (visitor

tracking, timing, stops, etc.), questionnaires and interviews. The article summarizes the key issues that have arisen by the analysis and concludes by making recommendations for the particular museum and for the wider museum sector through some proposals of good practice.

MARIA VLACHAKI

The impact of life histories on the transformation of primary school students' perceptions about immigrants

This paper is based on the author's PhD thesis (2014) at the University of Thessaly Department of Early Childhood Education. It examines the use of oral history in educational programs carried out in schools and museums, which aimed at challenging stereotypical perceptions of many primary school students about immigrants. Groups of children of native and diverse ethno-cultural origin and their parents collected immigrants' oral life histories and presented them in special museum exhibitions they organized at the end of the educational programs. According to the research results, these educational activities enabled the students to participate in the negotiation of the migration issue in their area, in the construction of cultural identity and local social history. Through critical reflection, patterns and stereotypical perceptions of participants were transformed. Their self-esteem was strengthened and cooperative relations and equal communication was developed.

ELENI APOSTOLIDOU

Continuity and change in commemoration practices: Student-teachers' ideas about public celebrations in monumental places

This article reports preliminary findings based on an analysis of 60 student-teachers' written answers to a questionnaire in which they were asked to comment on the controversies over the commemoration of Resistance against the German Occupation (1941-1944) in an Athenian neighbourhood in Greece (Kessariani). The author aimed to investigate whether students recognize such public celebrations as means of constructing historical narratives about the past. The 60 students were first introduced on the history of the area, especially on its traumatic past - during the Second World War the German occupation authorities used it to carry out executions, including, most famously, the execution of 200 communists on May 1, 1944. Students were also briefed on the controversies over the construction of a monument commemorating Resistance and over the commemoration practices themselves, including an annual memorial ceremony conducted in this site. In this article, the author discusses the 3 patterns of historical thinking that emerged through the analysis of students' responses, in terms of the concept of "change" and "repetition" in memorial ceremonies.

GEORGIA KOUSERI

Studying archaeological material relics at school and the museum: Affordances and limitations

This article is based on the author's PhD thesis conducted at the University of Thessaly Department of Early Childhood Education (2015). It discusses the affordances and limitations of 12-13 & 15-16 year-old students' expression of historical thinking in the course of their interaction with archaeological relics in two different educational environments (museums and schools) and on the basis of three different forms in which relics are presented: in the form of material objects, in the form of printed representations and in the form of digital representations. This empirical study was based on a qualitative analysis of 189 students' written and oral responses (questionnaire and semi-structured interview) and on the author's observations. According to the results, the study of relics in the form of material objects in museums seem to help students to express historical thinking more than the study of printed or digital representations of relics in schools, especially in terms of the induction of historical perspective, the understanding of historical context, and the re-contextualization of relics in historical time and space.

MARIA RINO

Digital history education applications on museum webpages

The article is based on the results of a research conducted in the context of the author's MA dissertation at the University of Thessaly Department of Early Childhood Education (2014), which examined whether digital history education applications on museum webpages are based on traditional or contemporary ideas in terms of their museological background, their approach to history education, the learning outcomes and the use of new technologies. In this article the results of the analysis of the 13 selected applications are discussed in terms of the first three above mentioned parameters. The analysis of the results revealed that the museological background tends to affect the other parameters, and demonstrates that many museums do not take advantage of new technology educational affordances, while the hybrid environment of digital applications in which high technology is used does not, necessarily, ensure users' substantial participation nor does it always induce a contemporary approach to history education.

ALEXANDRA BOUNIA, NIKI NIKONANOU, ALEXANDRA NIKIFORIDOU & EVI-MARIA PITSIAVA

National Museums: Visitors' perspectives. The pilot study in the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens

This article presents results of a research that was conducted in the context of the European Program EuNaMus (European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen). The authors, members of the research team that participated in the program that took place in 9 European countries, focus on the methodological planning and the research questions of the pilot study carried out at

the Athens Byzantine and Christian Museum, in 2011. The analysis led to important observations about audiences' profiles, their ideas and perspectives over the role, the function, the educational character and the narratives of national museums. It also underlined the significant role of pilot studies in the definition of the research tools, especially for broad audience researches.

IRENE REBOUTSIKA

The Athens Attiko Metro as a museum space: Audiences' ideas and perspectives

Irene Reboutsika's article is based on the research she conducted in the context of her MA dissertation (2013) at the Harokopio University of Athens. On the basis of a critical presentation of the museological, communicational and educational background of the Athens Attiko Metro as a museum space, the author discusses the ideas and perspectives of 194 metro users about the exhibition of archaeological objects and art works of contemporary Greek artists in the areas of the Metro stations, together with the propositions they made for the improvement of the Metro's museological, communicational and educational orientation.

LISA MCINTOSH, ALEX DE COSSON & DAVID ANDERSON

Research informing the practice of museum educators: Backgrounding the key issue for praxis

In their article, Dr Lisa McIntosh, Dr Alex de Cosson and Dr David Anderson (University of British Columbia), offer a commentary on 14 independent research works that were published in the collective volume they edited, *Research Informing the Practice of Museum Educators: Diverse audiences, challenging topics, and reflective praxis*, that was published in Rotterdam, by Sense Publishers in 2015. These inquiries, which posit important issues that affect the educational practice of various cultural institutions, offer good examples of alternative approaches to museums' relations with their different audiences, the handling of controversial issues and the promotion of reflection in the context of everyday museum practices. Thus, this article functions as an important epilogue of *MuseumEdu 3*, underlining the crucial role of research for museum praxis.

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