Museum Education 101: Interacting with Primary Sources

SHAKER VILLAGE
of Pleasant Hill
Draw or Represent Education

(Shakertown Inn, ca. 1920s. Credit: Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill)
Pedagogy
- The art or science of being a teacher; Teaching.
- Usually refers to children

Andragogy
- The process of engaging adult learners in the structure of the learning experience
Educational Theorists

John Dewey (1859-1952)

-Dewey is best known for his belief in experience as a way of learning and knowing.

-The phrase *learning by doing* is often associated with Dewey and suggests that knowledge is gained through active engagement rather than passivity.
Educational Theorists

*Lev Vygotsky* (1896-1934)

- Suggested all learning is contextually and socially mediated.

- Believed intellectual development is the result of interaction with the environment.

- Social interaction with adults or more knowledgeable peers influences the level of performance exhibited by an individual.

- Scaffolding
Educational Theorists

Jean Piaget (1896-1980)

– Learning as a constructivist activity.

– The notion that children often perceive their world in a way that is qualitatively different from adults.

– Developmental stages of Piaget are sometimes controversial but important.

– He believed that at specific ages children are developing in certain ways.
Educational Theorists

• **Howard Gardner (1943- )**
  – Theory of Multiple Intelligences.
  – Multiple ways of knowing and processing information.
  – Education should celebrate and embrace diverse learners by respecting the different ways of accessing and processing information.
Educational Theory

- **Constructivism**
  Student centered in which the learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experience and reflection. Developmentally-appropriate facilitator-supported learning that is initiated and directed by the learner.

- **Behaviorism (Didactic/Expository)**
  Teacher centered with a PASSIVE student. Memorization acts as a tool to build knowledge in a hierarchical manner.

- **Discovery based**
  Student centered as they build upon experiences by discovery, focusing on the task and not the subject.
Educational Strategies

• Object-Based Learning

• Inquiry-Based Learning

• Visual Thinking Strategies
Educational Strategies

Object-Based Learning

• Look directly at an object, i.e. a sculpture or painting, artifact or advertisement, primary document or ritual object.

• Use a myriad of questions to discover its role and importance in our world - past, present and future.

• Objects are used to initiate discussion, as well as make connections to the learner’s own experiences.
Object-Based Learning

Why is it beneficial?
What are the advantages over lecture format?
Object-Based Learning

• Objects can have more than one meaning
• Study of objects enables relationships to be made between culture, technology, people, social structures, the past, present and future
Figure 11.3 Analysis, discussion and research, combined with sensory data, can be used to explore the object in depth.
Figure 11.1 The various themes and meanings stimulated by one specific object can be manipulated and controlled by the other things with which it is grouped.
Object-Based Learning: Building the Story

- Avoid an early end to the lesson
- What’s that?
Object-Based Learning: Suggested Questions

• How many parts does the object have?

• Who made it and why?

• What has happened to this object since then?
Figure 11.2 Touching, looking, listening, smelling, and (occasionally) tasting can be used in the preliminary exploration of objects and environments.
Object-Based Learning: Video

Video - National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOE7u_QVxFo&feature=youtu.be
Object-Based Learning: Activity

• Break into groups (one object per table)

• Complete your group’s object study sheet.

• Then discuss the following as a group:
  – What can we learn from this object?
  – What themes can be explored?
  – What else can be paired with your group’s object to tell a story?
Educational Strategies

Inquiry-Based Learning

- An instructional method developed during the discovery learning movement of the 1960s.

- It was developed in response to a perceived failure of more traditional forms of instruction.

- Inquiry learning is a form of active learning.

- Progress is assessed by how well students develop experimental and analytical skills rather than how much knowledge they possess.
Inquiry-Based Learning

• A student-centered, active learning approach focusing on questioning, critical thinking and problem solving.
• “Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand”
• Changing the focus from “what we know” to an emphasis on “how we come to know”
Inquiry-Based Learning

• Employing the Constructivist theory
• Students have pre-existing knowledge
• By allowing students to express that pre-existing knowledge through questioning, they effectively build upon previous knowledge to gain understanding
• Students can form their own foundation
Inquiry-Based Learning

• Who here has visited this historic site? Who here has visited any historic site? What do you think we will see?
• Where are we? How was this place used, how do you know, and why is it important?
Inquiry-Based Learning in the Classroom

• Approach or introduce specific topics with open-ended questions
• Refer back to student responses as a way to keep them connected to the material
Educational Strategies

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is a teaching method and school curriculum that centers on open-ended yet highly-structured discussions of visual art, significantly increasing students' critical thinking, language and literacy skills along the way.

- VTS is the result of more than 15 years of collaboration between cognitive psychologist Abigail Housen, and veteran museum educator Philip Yenawine.
Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

VTS is a student-centered curriculum in which students examine and discuss works of art, prompted by questions selected to support careful, evidentiary looking.

VTS Questions:

1. What’s going on in this picture?

2. What do you see that makes you say that?

3. What more can we find?
Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

During VTS Lessons:

• All Students must have ample opportunity to point out what they see in the art they examine and express their opinions about it.

• Students must know that their thoughts are heard, understood, and valued.

• Students must provide evidence to explain their interpretive comments.

• Students must see that each comment contributes to the group process of mining the art for multiple meanings.
Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

“Sometimes when we do VTS it feels like the class is teaching ourselves.”
– Elementary Student (quote from the VTS homepage)

Video - “A Discussion with Fourth Grade Students”
https://vimeo.com/9678839
Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

• What was the facilitator doing during this VTS session?

• What did you notice about the group?

• What stood out to you during this session?
VTS Practice Session

(Credit: Hamilton College Library)
VTS Practice Session

Image Caption:

Mount Lebanon Laundry
Mount Lebanon Shaker Community, New York

The Shaker Collection, Hamilton College Library
VTS Practice Session

Image Caption:

Shaker Meeting House
Photographer, Lester Jones
August 24, 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey,
Library of Congress
Additional Resources

- http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/
- http://www.loc.gov/teachers
- http://www.vtshome.org/
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