

In-depth Thinking in the Partnership Between Schools and Museums: How Can We Establish a Partnership Between Them to More Effectively Facilitate Children's Arts Education?

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ABSTRACT

Our global village is in a rapidly and unpredictably changing time ([1]Craft et al, 2011). Increasing people are considering what they need and what they can do ([1]Craft et al, 2011; [2]Facer et al, 2011). The probable, possible and preferable futures of many areas have become a concern, especially in the education sector ([3]Inayatullah, 2008; [4]Rawnsley, 2000; [5]Chappell and Jobbins, 2015). Therefore, this research study revolved around the concerns. It is significant to develop an individual viewpoint for the future of arts education. Through extensive reading about the arts and its educational future, and this article – A Focus on Art Museum/School Collaborations ([6]Berry, 1998) was found – because it embodied the partnership between schools and social institutions (museums). The article is a combination of empirical, reviewed and theoretical articles. It provided people with a direct insight so I could understand and explore this specific partnership. It enabled readers to identify the functions involved in this type of partnership in future arts education and how schools and museums can best act in such a partnership to support student learning. It has been recognised what had worked well in the existing partnership between schools and museums and what could be improved upon to establish a win-win partnership in the future through its help.

Keywords: Partnership, Schools, Museums, Arts education

1. INTRODUCTION

Our global village is in a rapidly and unpredictably changing time ([1]Craft et al, 2011). We profit from global development and simultaneously assume a series of resultant issues ([1]Craft et al, 2011). The good and bad changes mutually drive and influence each other ([2]Facer et al, 2011). As part of this general development, individual and social demands are also being continually promoted, and increasing people are considering what they need and what they can do ([1]Craft et al, 2011; [2]Facer et al, 2011). The probable, possible and preferable futures of many areas have become a concern, especially in the education sector ([3]Inayatullah, 2008; [4]Rawnsley, 2000; [5]Chappell and Jobbins, 2015). Therefore, this research study revolved around the concerns. It is significant to develop an individual viewpoint for the future of arts education. Through extensive reading about the arts and its educational future, I tried to find an article which was not only attractive to me, but also significant for my future teaching and learning. Many articles revealing

different points of view were instructive to some extent but I decided to choose this article – A Focus on Art Museum/School Collaborations ([6]Berry, 1998) – because it embodied the partnership between schools and social institutions (museums).

The article is a combination of empirical, reviewed and theoretical articles. It provided people with a direct insight so I could understand and explore this specific partnership. It enabled readers to identify the functions involved in this type of partnership in future arts education and how schools and museums can best act in such a partnership to support student learning. It has been recognised what had worked well in the existing partnership between schools and museums and what could be improved upon to establish a win-win partnership in the future through its help. In addition, some useful knowledge was extracted and its drawbacks was analysed during this learning process. As a learning summary and outcome, this essay initially provides a basic knowledge of arts and its educational future. Subsequently, this research will discuss the reflective analysis of the chosen article including its

cohesion, rigour and contribution to knowledge and practice. Finally, a conclusion will be presented. This learning outcome will bring sense to the subject, not only for my benefit but also for other educators, teachers and researchers for future teaching, learning and research.

2. BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF ATRS AND ITS EDUCATIONAL FUTURE

In the rapidly changing world, society is continually updating its demands on technology, economy, culture and education etc. ([1]Craft et al, 2011). For meet these increasing needs, we need to develop as individuals but also as a society. Teachers are responsible for the development of education so current problems need to be resolved but also consideration should be given to creating a better probable, possible and preferable educational future ([3]Inayatullah, 2008; [4]Rawnsley, 2000). The concept of probable, possible and preferable future comes from futurism ([4]Rawnsley, 2000). Possible future requires an examination of current trend sand creativity and imagination are needed ([4]Rawnsley, 2000). Probable future requires a logical and possible connection between the current position and the envisaged future; the future is fluid and as different possible alternatives are possible, some futures are clearly more feasible than others ([4]Rawnsley, 2000). Preferable future requires choosing between alternative futures. Students or decision-makers need to clearly understand which alternative future is more appropriate ([4]Rawnsley, 2000). Different people have different opinions about the future of education. Many researchers believe that there will be more personalized education in the future ([5]Chappell and Jobbins, 2015). Five learning lenses have given me different perspectives about a preferable educational future; learning as conditioned behaviour, social and interpersonal, and creative partnerships emphasise the impact of external factors ([7]Chappell and Craft, 2011). At the same time, this highlights the influence of relationships, dialogue and partnerships ([8]Downey et al., 2007). Chappell and Craft ([7]2011) state that creative learning conversations are a way of contributing to change which can move us towards an educational future fit for the 21st century. The dialogic space is an ongoing process without force and stress from university academics, teachers, artists and students collaboratively developing knowledge of their 'lived space' together ([7]Chappell and Craft, 2011). Thus, open space is important and partnerships between schools and social institutions can build broader settings for dialogue and individual learning. By studying the reviewed article, partnerships as a preferable future in education will be discussed.

3. A CRITICAL AND REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHOSEN ARTICAL

3.1. COHESION

3.1.1. Main perspectives and discussion in this article

This article concentrated on the partnership between schools and museums through data collection and a literature review. It provides a direct insight into accessing, understanding and exploring this specific partnership. The following issues were examined: why it is important that students learn from works of art in a museum context; what functions are present in this type of partnership in arts education; how children can learn from works of art in museums and schools; how art museums and schools can collaborate effectively to support student learning; what had been successful in the existing partnership and what could be done to improve this situation to establish a win-win partnership in the future ([6]Berry, 1998).

In the introduction, the author firstly reveals that the reason for the paper was to provide a theoretical base for bringing the two institutions together by answering the above questions. In the first main section, we learn that many organisations have attempted to establish this type of partnership since the end of the eighteenth century ([6]Berry, 1998). Moreover, the partnership is important and significant as museum learning is different from classroom learning. Museum learning can alter its delivery approaches from an object-centred modality to a people-centred modality ([6]Berry, 1998). Furthermore, the museum setting empowers school audiences as "active, equal, thinking members of an expanding community of inquiry" ([6]Berry, 1998). The second section suggests that a successful partnership between schools and museums is collaborative in nature rather than cooperative. Collaboration is explained as are the differences between collaboration and cooperation. Collaboration is built on an equal footing so they can plan and execute shared goals and outcomes ([6]Berry, 1998). As a result, the synergistic relationship between two institutions is crucial. In the third section, the author highlighted a successful example of the partnership – The National Center For Art Museum/School Collaborations (NCAMSC). He further revealed that the NCAMSC meets user needs by conducting focus group interviews which collect participants' ideas, concepts, attitudes and beliefs about museum-school partnerships ([6]Berry, 1998).

The fifth section discusses what museums can do from a school perspective. The author argued that the partnership as a collaborative programme and mutual support activity requires museums to be more familiar

with school content and provide an experience which can facilitate the children's learning process and validate their art instruction in school ([6]Berry, 1998). He also mentioned that museums should provide print reproductions of artwork, not only in the form of slides but also by using posters and postcards etc. ([6]Berry, 1998).

In the sixth section, the author examined what schools could do. In interviews with the focus group, the author discovered that teachers involved in the partnership should bring their knowledge to a museum context, communicate with their museum colleagues and actively participate in order to retain a familiarity with permanent collections and regular programme offerings ([6]Berry, 1998). Moreover, it is needed that schools frequently update their curriculum to help them keep up to date with educational trends and reforms ([6]Berry, 1998).

Next, there was an analysis of how to build museum-school collaborations. Creating personal networks, recognising each other's goals, maintaining original motivations, listening to each other's thoughts and keeping in mind the joint ownership are all important factors in initiating a museum-school partnership ([6]Berry, 1998). The importance of conversation is particularly noteworthy. Clearly, dialogue plays a vital role in such a partnership ([7]Chappell, Craft, 2011). In the subsequent three sections, the author presented and analysed the valid data collected from 600 art museum educators from different museums involved in the NCAMSC. The author examined what had gone well in these surveyed institutions and what could be improved upon in order to set up a win-win partnership in the future ([6]Berry, 1998). Six bar charts illustrated the results of the survey. The first two bar charts highlighted a high incidence of collaboration between schools and museums. The third showed that teachers were the principal collaborators during the collaboration process, more than principals, university professors, curators or others. A common method used in the partnership programme is 'multiple visit' as revealed in the fourth diagram. The fifth chart demonstrates that the main audience in the museum-school partnership programme involves elementary schools. Furthermore, the method for assessing the students' learning in the programme was mainly teacher observation. The sixth bar chart not only displays the current situation of museum-school partnerships, it also exposes some drawbacks. For example, the age group is relatively concentrated on an early age, funding and time are insufficient, and the feedbacks are obtained directly from teachers ([6]Berry, 1998).

3.1.2. An analysis of the article's logic and cohesion

This paper is logical, articulate and coherent.

Initially, the author posed the core questions to be discussed. Then, he divided the paper into six small sections in order to specifically discuss each point and interpret individual views. By dividing it into sections, readers can grasp the key points of each subheading. In addition, it is coherent and layer-layer progressive, and there are close relations between each section. One paragraph runs into the next with little break for transition or explicit connection. Therefore, readers can understand and explore the main topics step by step. Conversely, some content repeatedly emerges which may disperse the key ideas of each section. Moreover, some points cannot be discussed and explored in depth. For instance, the parts including The National Center For Art Museum/School Collaboration and the focus group could be described in more detail since the intention is to provide specific examples. The two parts are shorter than the others which results in an uneven division in the number of words. If the two parts were discussed in more detail, each section would be more standardised and readers could understand more about the specific survey background. It is suggested that more details should be provided in these two sections.

3.2. RIGOUR

In terms of rigour, the majority of the resources used are American and only one article comes from the UK. In total, eleven pieces of literature were referenced to support the argument. All of the literature was produced at the end of the twentieth century so the viewpoint argued may not be new. However, this article is still persuasive because it was published in Arts Education by the National Art Education Association. Also, these references and data effectively support the author's point of view. Firstly, the literature is derived from education-related journals and books, and the references include not only the reporting of a study which collected and analysed the data, but they also review related literature and practice, as well as some significant theories. Through an appropriate connection of theories, data and practice, the author's views about museum-school partnerships have been adequately tested in terms of validity and rationality. For instance, he used the NCAMSC as an example and an object of specific analysis which is a good direction in which to develop his argument. In addition, using data also is convictive and pellucid method to support the discussion. Brief bar charts were presented so readers can directly obtain information that the author wanted to deliver. Besides these examples, these perspectives can be also verify by other articles about partnerships and arts education in museums and galleries. For example, Pual ([9]2000) stated that visual arts learning needs a kind of learning which takes place beyond the school setting. Many researchers and educators have paid attention to the partnership between schools and museums. Smith and Walker ([10]2003) made a connection between higher

education and museums and galleries. Similarly, Kalin et al. ([11]2007) discussed a collaboration between a university and a museum through a certificate programme. Xanthoudaki ([12]2004) also argued that the contribution of museum learning differs from the contribution of school learning but both are important. This article is reliable according to the provided data, literature and practical analysis. However, there are still some issues which can be discussed in depth, for instance, the importance of museum-school partnerships. Furthermore, it only provided an improved approach for the collaboration modality and it lacks some foresight into future museum-school partnerships.

3.3. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

By studying this article, the definition of a museum-school partnership, its functions, how be built it and which areas should be improved in the future was demonstrated. The museum-school partnership should be established upon an equal relationship between museum staff and school teachers because the partnership is a collaborative relationship and a mutual and equal authority is a guarantee for ongoing development ([6]Berry, 1998). This type of work modality is different from others. Other literature has advanced different cooperation modalities; for instance, with a teacher as the main organiser in a museum ([12]Xanthoudaki, 1998). This modality moves the classroom from the school to the museum. Another modality utilises museum staff and artists as the main knowledge transmitters and they provide the whole museum learning process ([13]Illeris, 2006; [14]Bianchi, 1999). A freer modality has been mentioned by Valerie ([15]2010) and this provides enough time and space for students to explore what they are interested in and what they want to learn. All of the modalities have different advantages and disadvantages. This article has provided me with a good collaboration approach which is similar to my gallery learning experience in the Spacex Gallery in Exeter. Compared to others, it is more appropriate for partnerships in future arts education. It not only gives students ownership and responsibility for their learning and respects their voices, it also links museum knowledge with curriculum content. Furthermore, the author considered the differences between collaboration and cooperation which is significant to me. Partnerships can be collaborative or cooperative involving two different ways of working together. The collaborative way is an equal and win-win work method. Therefore, connecting the two conceptions together for further consideration of future partnerships is a possible developmental objective.

3.4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE

This article contributes a good example of how museums and schools can work together more effectively in arts education. The notions of partnership and collaboration inspired me. I absorbed this knowledge and transferred it into my setting. As a future dance teacher, I have proposed a partnership between a school and a theatre to facilitate students' dance learning. How this partnership can be developed in future should be considered by educators, teachers, artists and researchers. In future practice, the linking schools with broader social institutions is a probable, possible and preferable ideal because education would then be a lifelong learning instance of solo school training (Inayatullah, 2008). In addition, multi-cooperation and multi-collaboration are significant factors in providing a broader environment for learning. In these different settings, learners can access more resources, information, knowledge and content (Inayatullah, 2008). They will have more ownership, authority and responsibility in these diverse and embraced learning contexts. Partnerships between different institutions, between teachers and artists, and between teachers and researchers will be increasingly popular. For example, in China, partnerships in education are still rare but how they can be utilised should be given more attention by Chinese educators. By studying the article and combining what I have learnt from this module, I will give this area more consideration in my future practice settings.

4. CONCLUSION

This essay has firstly revisited the main content of this module and reviewed a journal article in order to develop my viewpoint with regard to the future of arts education. To analysis the journal article and connecting and referring the course content inspired me new thinking about preferable educational future in both dance and Chinese settings. Society is still rapidly changing so we need to update our knowledge, keep foresight in mind and continually explore probable, possible and preferable futures for education. The current situation should be improved to create a preferable future which can meet social and personal demands. The collaboration between schools and museums is a effective way to facilitate the promotion of art education in school. A partnership between dance classes and theaters should be considered for dance education. In future practice, linking schools and wider social institutions is a possible, probable and preferable ideal, because then education would be an instance of lifelong learning rather than school training alone. Multi-collaboration provides more chances to children and art-lovers to get information and knowledge from different settings including schools and museums.

Especially in China, partnerships in education are still rare, as a result, it has a lot of room for development. By cooperation, Chinese children and art learners could develop an awareness of off-campus learning. Meanwhile, it is possible to bring the knowledge acquired in school out of the classroom and into life.

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