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Can the experience be experienced?

The possibilities of cultural institutions using the flow-based pedagogical model



ABSTRACT

What makes a cultural institution modern in the 21st century? How can they adapt to a changed and constantly moving society and conditions dominated by social media? Due to the questions above, the appearance of experiential pedagogy and the flow-based pedagogical model (DOMINEK 2022) in the cultural institutional environment is an important area.

KEYWORDS

cultural institution, flow, higher education, experiential pedagogy

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INTRODUCTION

The task of experiential pedagogy is education through experiences and experience-based learning. In a pedagogical approach, experience-based learning means the rediscovery of natural human learning forms. It is important that the means of our education be the experience that can be experienced personally (DOMINEK 2021a). In our opinion, cultural specialists, such as museum pedagogues must teach within the framework of experiential experiences, because knowledge material of the museum is fixed much better through experiences than during passive reception. According to Csíkszentmihályi, those who experience flow more often, were more likely to show higher self-esteem and lower anxiety, used active coping strategies more often and passive coping strategies less often than their less autotelic peers. Based on these, we can describe a process in which the visitor creates, during which a novel, original and usable end result is created. These innovative tools, methods and procedures serve this purpose which, with their extracurricular application, with appropriate pedagogical methodological preparation, creativity, flexibility, result in improved performance, a sense of success, and a high degree of motivation among visitors.

FLOW IN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Constant attention, independent thinking and creativity are expected from visitors (DOMINEK 2021b.). This statement is also confirmed by the flow-based pedagogical model (DOMINEK 2022), during the creation of which Dominek brings creativity, playfulness and humour into the life of cultural institutions, among other things. If we project this onto the world of museums, then, as we can read in the study (WICKENS 2012), if the students listen to a story, look at objects and do activities in the museum, and this is used by the museum pedagogues to connect the students better from the plot and characters to the authentic objects and experiences in the museum, the experience will already appear. The examination of “flow and culture” is necessary, and it is essential to better understand flow and its impact on human experience, motivation, and development.

In our opinion, if cultural institutions provide experiential education, they are able to convey a real experience connected to the sessions, thus bringing the visitors into the flow channel. However, for this establishment, it is necessary to apply the flow-based pedagogical model, with the help of which the visitors can experience the flow and are able to look at the institutions in a different way afterwards.

PRESENTATION OF THE FLOW-BASED PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

According to the flow-based pedagogic model (Dominek 2022), cultural institutions must provide a transcript related to the knowledge to be transferred from the content side of the museum material, it must be developed with a positive approach, which is the baseline of experiences, novelty and excitement. If we associate the contents with this, attention and motivation are available, so with the help of these, the museum pedagogue becomes capable of competence development. This can be achieved if the visitors feel safe and during the prompting to action, as a result of the discovery and experience that comes from within, they interactively join the playful environment created in the museum class. A model is valuable, in my opinion, if it provides an opportunity to measure and evaluate, thus, this model includes all testing systems, with which the museum pedagogue can measure the effectiveness of their museum class during the application of the model. This model was used in own research conducted in 2020 and 2021 (Dominek 2020, 2021a), so it is a proven and tested model in the field of museum education.

In the practice of museum pedagogy, which forms the backbone of museum experiential pedagogy, there are methods, with the help of which we can carry out educational activities in the museum space. The success of the game depends on the activity of the participants. The 21st century museum is already introducing the use of digital tools. One of these supporting tools is, for example, AR, i.e. augmented reality. The essence of this is that some digital content is connected to a real object that the camera recognizes. A classic example of this is that the camera shows the original design and operation of an object, and to what extent it has changed during the course of time.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH

The purpose of our research is to assess the effect of flow on student visitors in cultural institutions. The students of the University of Public Service could take the course entitled “Discovering Hungarian Culture - Csontváry Program” as part of the elective class. During this particular class, they visited 5 cultural institutions and were able to participate in the program announced by the institution. They were able to get to know behind-the-scenes skills that can be used outside the classroom to challenge the students, who at the same time enjoy the path leading to the solution. If the specialists of the cultural institutions can create this, then the student can be placed in the flow channel, thus, it is easier to develop creativity. It is important that students have this experience, for this reason, measuring the state of flow in institutions with a questionnaire serves the purpose of receiving feedback on whether cultural institutions are able to induce the state of flow.

The research took place in the spring semester of the 2021/2022 academic year and the following cultural institutions took part in the Program:

1. Museum of Fine Arts or Hungarian National Gallery
2. National Theatre
3. Hungarian State Opera
4. Capital Circus of Budapest
5. Danubia Orchestra

The Participating Institutions held a preparatory lecture for the students before the events, and a closing lecture after the events. Within two days after each visit, the students had to complete the Flow Status Questionnaire (hereinafter FSQ). During the questionnaire, the respondents encountered 20 statements, the series of questions can be divided according to two factors. The first factor is the challenge-skill balance, which includes 11 variables, while the second factor bears the summarizing name of merging with the experience, and the remaining 9 variables belong to it. The measures of the two factors are formed by assigning aggregate scores to each of them, formed from the points of the corresponding items (1-5), and then average them per factor. In addition to the scores, we also calculate a percentage of the two indicators, which shows how close the members of that group get to the flow state. According to MAGYARÓDI et al. (2013), there are two basic factors of the flow experience: the balance of the person's skills and the challenge posed by the situation, as well as immersion in the experience, merging with it. In our present research, we used the 20-item FSQ developed by them. The FSQ therefore measures the basic dimensions of the flow experience. The internal reliability of the scales is adequate ($\alpha_{K-K} = 0,92$; $\alpha_E = 0,91$). The respondents report on the experiences they usually had during the nominated activity. In this study, the questionnaire refers to the experience experienced in the cultural institution.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the flow experience differ in the case of visits to cultural institutions of different types?

In terms of basic data, the questionnaire was filled out by students enrolled in the optional course of University of Public Service (N=321 people). The results of the institutional data can be read according to the two factors of the validated FSQ, that the students (N=321) participating in the performance of the Capital Circus of Budapest reached the deepest state of flow during the performance. Based on the data that can be read from the SPSS program, the integration with the experience was over 88 percent, while the challenge-skill balance value was over 90 percent. However, it can be stated that all cultural institutions produced similar results, see table no. 1.

Based on table no. 1, it can be concluded that the differences in terms of cultural institutions are insignificant. Cultural institutions can be ranked according to the two factors of the FSQ questionnaire, however, every institution is capable of imparting an experience and providing performances and exhibitions of an appropriate level for the age group.

	N	Average	Percentage	Deviation	Institution
Challenge-skill balance	321	51,00	92,72	6,05	Capital Circus of Budapest
Merging with the experience	321	39,79	88,42	6,45	Capital Circus of Budapest
Challenge-skill balance	268	48,31	87,83	8,58	Danubia Orchestra
Merging with the experience	268	35,17	78,15	8,46	Danubia Orchestra
Challenge-skill balance	289	48,83	88,78	6,95	Hungarian State Opera
Merging with the experience	289	37,07	82,37	7,64	Hungarian State Opera
Challenge-skill balance	289	43,58	79,23	11,01	National Theatre
Merging with the experience	289	31,47	69,93	10,41	National Theatre
Challenge-skill balance	274	47,86	87,01	7,48	Museum of Fine Arts / Hungarian National Gallery
Merging with the experience	274	35,34	78,53	8,61	Museum of Fine Arts / Hungarian National Gallery

(Source: own construction)

After each visit to a cultural institution, after filling out the FSQ questionnaire, students were asked to express their opinion in their own words about the experience they had in the cultural institutions. To the question “How did the visit affect you?” we would highlight the following answers:

“I really enjoyed the visit, the circus productions were surprising to me. I feel that I have become more open to circus performances and plan to visit again. I last went to the circus approximately 10 years ago, and I feel like it was a pity not to go.”

“I experienced it positively, thanks for the Csontváry Program for the opportunity! The first opera of my life, I was a little afraid of it, but I was very pleasantly surprised! I can absolutely imagine my partner and me going together in the future or even in our retirement years!”

While to “Did you get the experience you expected?” we highlight the following from the students’ answers:

“I got more than I expected. I am especially glad that I had the opportunity to listen to the information after the performance, which covered, among other things, the world of the circus, artist training, the creation of productions, and the duration of practice.”

“Yes, maybe even more. I had an experience beyond my expectations, which is significant because I haven’t been to a similar event for a long time, so the bar was set high. My stimulus threshold has been exceeded by a high level.”

The conclusion can also be drawn from the above quotes, according to which the students found pleasure in the performance and exhibition provided by the cultural institutions. Based on the opinions of the students, it can be said that participation in these new, interesting classes that differ from traditional ones is considered important. This course also assumes the foundation of a kind of innovative, new methodology. Accordingly, a new curriculum must be developed, that the given courses, which would take place outside the higher education institution, would be able to develop the students participating in the course by knowing and mastering the flow. The use of the Flow-based pedagogical model helps in the above.

SUMMARY

The emergence of creativity and its development are extremely important for higher education students (DOMINEK 2021c). By applying the flow-based pedagogical model in cultural institutions, the cultural specialist can make a great contribution to provide experience-based education to higher education students, thereby developing creativity.

If we teach through direct experiences and interactive actions in cultural institutions, the motivation base for learning can also be created. Learning requires a high level of motivation (RUBIN 1975), but motivation can also be described as part of a dynamic process (Manolopoulou-Sergi 2004 cited in BARNUCZ-URICSKA 2021).

I think it is important to emphasize that achieving cognitive flexibility among students is an innovative possibility, which can be used to develop soft skills, thus, the use and incorporation of the flow phenomenon may be the key to enhancing experiences. The flow-based pedagogical model, as a model establishing an experience-based teaching methodology, creates an opportunity for cultural institutions to provide the above opportunity to students.

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