

WHAT AN EDUCATIONIST LOOKS FOR FROM A MUSEUM - PRIMARY AGE

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The question that must initially be asked is - Where do you start?

One is placed in the position of a new teacher at the beginning of the school year when they have to ask themselves - "What do they know", or more cynically, "What don't they know."

The dilemma that faces the teacher is to organise a learning programme for the class. Pupils have different backgrounds, different learning rates, different environments. The good teacher must cater for children with different abilities and expectations. (These comments are personal, could be controversial, but none the less are probably valid.) Some aims listed by the teacher may be difficult to achieve, but the aim should be high.

These discussions refer to 5 to 12 year olds. Tramway museums probably cover "material history of man" category. Where do people fit into the picture? The interaction between people and trams, geography, economics, sociology. Why did they stop? Why aren't they running now?

We must create the era of the trams to allow children to get the "feel", new concepts, new words, children talking about the age of tramways. A real working tram makes the difference - a static exhibit is meaningless. Their horizon must be enlarged, with films, sound recordings, posters and photos. The children for their part might want to write about, model or draw the trams.

We should aim to stimulate research - the impact of trams on the environment, the energy crisis, competitive modes, interviews with former employees. Subjects are inter-related - there is no black and white distinctions.

TEACHER'S ROLE

The teacher having a practical session at the museum would make it a unit of 1900 - 76 period, i.e., the children's grandparents and parents period.

The specific objectives of the individual schools are matched to the local area. The teacher is responsible for the development of the responsible, autonomous, flexible children capable of thinking and with positive feeling. They have to understand why things happen.

What does the local transport museum have to offer?

A printed list of the material sets out items for the teacher to use for teaching. A bibliography with index of books suitable for different grades of readers is also a handy item. The quality of presentation will be adapted to the level required. It is important to list material for the teacher with a summary of each item.

People must be able to answer questions in children's language and must not have any worries about being taped. The Lachlan Vintage Village has done these things and consequently

aided the lazy teacher.

Children must develop values and this may be interpreted differently for different schools, classes etc.

Children can partake in various activities over a number of visits to aid in the development of skills in recording, interviewing, reading (research or pleasure), writing, (imaginative explanatory), thinking, (processing information, classification), form judgments, generalisations, hypotheses, develop concepts, an understanding.

The good teacher will also help to stimulate the child by setting specific tasks to do before the visit actually takes place.

CONCLUSION

The museum is the source of information, a place for people. Education is people business. People can extract information on how previous generations travelled to work, to sport, to the beach, to pleasure by participating in the museum. Children's education can be enhanced by good teachers, a willingness of the museum members to answer questions and the provision of source material.

DR. RADCLIFFE

We have to temper ideals to expediency. To what extent can we present source material. Is there any assistance in presentation or cost to teacher or children. Is it legitimate to charge extra for special material.

REPLY

Most places incorporate material in overall cost. An all inclusive rate of \$2.00 to \$3.00 per child is not unusual or unreasonable. The Australian Assistance Programme may give help - also local bodies such as Rotary.

MR. HINMAN

At Ferrymead we find that they got their parents to come along at the weekend. Teacher preparation is all important. A free pass is available for one future visit. A bus is available to help transport groups.

REPLY

I have sponsored after hours teacher courses for the Lachlan Village as a resource. Apply to local education department for assistance that you may need in this.

MR. WHITE

Are articles for Teacher's Journal (S.A.) and Teacher's Federation Journal acceptable?

REPLY

Yes. Good quality articles probably acceptable.

MR. STEELE

(1) Excursions:- varying age groups - one class probably maximum at one time. What minimum age approximate for visit?

REPLY

One class at a time is probably ideal for the teacher as well. The teacher will use the museum as he sees it as a resource.

MR. STEELE

(2) Therefore, when is the best time to have visits?

REPLY

Visits should be made during term time. Weekends are not unreasonable.

MR. DANIELS

Museums and teachers could get together to try and get visits, programmes, etc., sorted out.

REPLY

Go out and sell your museum - First try the schools in the immediate area for a sample run and see what their reaction is. Expand from this.

DR. RADCLIFFE

Do you see any role in Secondary schooling?

REPLY

Probably not with teenagers as an educational experience.