

Assignment 1
Museum learning report

Museum
'wissens.wert.welt / blue cube & kidsmobil'
Klagenfurt



(own resource - by Melanie Buchacher)

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Museum learning report

Museum: *wissens.wert.welt - blue cube & kidsmobil, Klagenfurt*

❖ About the museum

The “wissens.wert.welt” museum - blue cube and kidsmobil is a hands-on museum for people over six years. The museums programmes contain themes out of the fields of art, culture, science, technology and social issues. Exhibitions are prepared in an age-appropriate way using "hands on, minds on" methods.

A special feature of this "hands-on museum" is the mobile part - the so called kidsmobil. This traveling hands-on museum is the only one of its kind in Austria and it is on the road throughout Carinthia. Another special feature of this museum is the time frame. The museums programmes last between three and four hours and are bookable mobile (via kidsmobil) and stationary (in the blue cube). In the blue cube there is an interactive exhibition every year on one of the topics mentioned above. Furthermore, there are the cartoon studio, the sound and television studio in which the visitors can create their own programmes or films.

In summary, the “wissens.wert.welt” is a modern interactive museum and acts as an exchange between the various sciences and the society. The museum learning programmes contain brain-appropriate teaching methods so that the content is prepared for all age-groups.

❖ Does the exhibition space support museum learning?

According to my appreciation I can say that the exhibition space in the museum of the “wissens.wert.welt” supports museum learning a lot. Most of the stations of the recent exhibition “More than colours” are interactive learning stations where children can try various things out to this certain topic. As the museum is called by the motto “hands-on-museum” it is a proper place where museum learning occurs.

The different stations of the current exhibition exhibit labels in two languages: German and English. So, people from abroad or people who are not native-German-

speakers can easily do the stations - at least they need to have the ability to speak English. Some of the stations are even self-explanatory, when visitors are curious enough.

New media devices are also included in some of the stations (iPads, computers) which encourages active handling with the media - away from pure consumption to an active, self-responsible involvement in daily life.

❖ **Does the website of the museum promote museum learning? In which ways?**

The website of the museum “wissens.wert.welt” does not provide online games. However, there is a possibility to download different learning activities for doing e.g. investigations at home, after the visitors have done the exhibition. There are also some special song lyrics and tunes of certain themes to download.

As a museum visitor it is also possible to download the files of the cartoon-movie, radio show or television-show they made. This way the museum offers their visitors to have something to remember of what they did in the museum. You only have access to the download button, when you already have visited the museum respectively the exhibition. If you’ve done so you get a little card with the appropriate access data and only then you can download the various files. This is a good idea, because this way people need to come to the exhibition first.

There is also a museum blog on the website, where all the different projects are shown and described.

The museum is also very active via social media. It has got a Facebook page and a channel on YouTube. The Facebook page is up-to-date (30.05.2018) concerning the current and upcoming exhibitions and projects the museum offers. The YouTube channel provides many videos from different project work in the past few years with various school groups (TV shows / cartoons / radio shows). This online-way gives a very good impression of what the museum work is about and secondly it represents a great advertisement.

❖ **What kind of educational methods are applied by the museum educators?**

Mrs. Schaffer, one of the employees of the “wissens.wert.welt” museum, explained that the main part of the educational methods is learning by exploring and discovering (minds on, body on). So, the visitors of the museum can decide independently with what they start and for how long they stay at each station. As Mrs. Schaffer states, this should foster the process of creativity. The museum educators also use special language-codes, always adjusted properly to the specific target group (e.g. easy language for children).

❖ **What kind of museum education programmes are offered by the museum (children, adolescents, adults)?**

The museum education programme is basically offered to all age groups, from children up to adults. There is something for every age group, so Mrs. Schaffer stated. In the cartoon studio there also some groups of adults already have done various workshop on special themes. This way Mrs. Schaffer mentioned again that the museum learning programmes of this museum are targeted on all age-groups.

The current exhibition “More than colours” offers many different stations where visitors (mainly children from six years onwards) can move freely and decide on their own with what they start and for how long they stay at each station. The museum educators are like education companions who explain the stations to the visitors when needed. Here again the motto is “minds on, body on”.

On the one hand, curiosity can be aroused, and creativity and imagination of the visitors can be promoted by the different programmes the museum offers. On the other hand, awareness of the importance of the cultural heritage of Carinthia can be raised by working with original objects. The museum works according to the principle of "learning by doing" and this allows content to be understood with all senses. The museum works interdisciplinary on the subjects, linking them with the everyday life of children, adolescents and adults.

In line with the experience-exhibitions visitors can explore some of their own competences and the children's self-esteem can get strengthened. The museum also promotes a creative and conscious use of technology and science. This could maybe also open new career opportunities for children.

❖ **Are there learning opportunities for people with disabilities (special labels, special devices)?**

The whole area of the museum (blue cube) is accessible for people in wheelchairs. It is also possible for them to do most of the stations respectively workshops. Unfortunately, there are no special labels for blind persons and no special devices either. As Mrs. Schaffer told me, there was no request concerning that so far. The museum therefore has not installed special devices concerning that yet.

❖ **Could museum guards provide information in English or another foreign language?**

It is primarily not intended by the museum to provide orally information in English or another foreign language. Neither the brochures are offered in any other language because the various overtures aim primarily to German speaking visitors from Carinthia. Only on the museum's website the information is offered in the languages English, Italian and Slovenian.

❖ **Personal impression of the museum**

I went to the museum (blue cube) two times. The first time I visited the "wissens.wert.welt" museum I got to know the head of the museum, Mrs. Sumper and one of the employees respectively museum educators, Mrs. Angelika Schaffer. Mrs. Schaffer guided me through the whole museum building. She showed me the exhibition room and all the other rooms, where the cartoon studio and the recording studio are situated. I got a very good overview of what the museum can offer to the visitors. Mrs. Sumper and Mrs. Schaffer were very open-minded and told me a lot about the blue cube building and what their work is about. I am very thankful and happy that they spent their time explaining everything in detail to me. They also told me about the development of the museum and about the pedagogical background of

the different active learning exhibitions/tours they offer to the visitors. Unfortunately, on the first day there was no registered group and therefore nothing to see about the current exhibition “More than colours” as you need to register in advance to experience the exhibition. Therefore Mrs. Schaffer invited me to come again on another day when a group of pupils were registered so that I also have the chance to see all the various stations working properly. Thus, we fixed a date and I got the possibility to see what the museum can offer. The museum also offers its exhibitions for birthday groups. On that certain day (it was Monday, 28th of May 2018) a birthday group of nine-year-olds came to celebrate the birthday of a girl and in line with that special day to do the exhibition tour and the film-studio. On this day I spent some time watching the children exploring and the museum educators working, and I got a very good impression of their daily work. I also tried out some of the stations and got a very good idea of what the museum “wissens.wert.welt” is about - hands on, minds on - it is true. This experience-exhibition make a lot of fun and visitors learn many things by trying out the stations actively. The museum educators are by their side all the time and accompany the pupils through the stations when necessary. They also give extended information and answer all the questions of the visitors. I am very impressed firstly of the whole building and of what the museum educators created concerning the creative exhibition space and investigation rooms. Each of the different studios (the cartoon-studio, the film-studio and the sound-studio) are high professional concerning the technical equipment. Secondly, I am impressed of the excellent pedagogical work of the museum educators and the passion they have behind their ideas and the visual implementing.

The only thing that maybe is not so advantageously about the museum is the place of location, as it is in the suburbs of the city Klagenfurt and as a result not really in first sight (even though of the huge size of the blue cube). You really need to know about the museum and the accurate address to find out where to go. But if you have found it, you are impressed a lot of what the museum is offering.

To show a possibility for solving this kind of issue is to install a bus station so that visitors can come more easily to the museum. Of course, this needs to be arranged with the city council.

❖ **What I would improve in the museum in order to promote museum learning (exhibition space, website, labels, programmes)**

Concerning museum learning, I absolutely agree with the various programmes and workshops the museum offers. From a pedagogical point of view the museum offers a high amount of active learning methods.

What perhaps could be improved in order to promote museum learning is to offer something specific for tourists or for spontaneous people. Something where it is not necessary to book in advance to visit this active-learning-museum.

Another possibility to promote museum learning would be offering the exhibitions also for people with foreign languages. Especially for people who speak Slovenian, as there is a minority group of Slovenes here in Carinthia it would be a great way of inviting them into the museum, which would foster the social community between the citizens of the Alpen-Adria region. If this is not possible at least the brochures or labels could be translated into the languages for interested visitors of the Alpen-Adria region.