

THE group training workshop 2008

Round table: Learning by talking

The following questions emerged after a round table animated by Maria Xanthoudaki at the ECSITE pre-conference of THE group.

They are reported here as they emerged from the discussion.

- Is it too demanding to ask “everything” to an explainer? In particular psychological skills?
- How to recruit/identify explainers with psychological capacities?
- Is local experience/practice as important as formal studies?
- What is meant by silence? Is it or not the contrary of conversation? Who's silence? What kind of silence?
- Isn't dialogue sometimes against the visitors will?
- Do explainers need additional science content training to support dialogue?
- How do we link formal and informal education (school + museums)?
- How can be a science centre recognised as an expert in science communication?
- How do we “educate” teachers to use science centres as teaching tools?
- How do you create *sustainable* training for young explainers?
- Should explainers focus on scientific facts or on science dynamics (sociology of science, philosophy of science)?
- Would the dynamic of the museum change if all people were one gender?
- Why is the interest in science declining?
- How do you know when visitors have received enough information, and if it is time to stay away and let them alone?
- How can we identify the purpose of the visit of different visitors or groups, to tailor our actions?
- Many adults don't seem to want dialogue. What do we do?
- Should we ask our local communities what kind of teaching experiences they want?
- How to keep children attention?
- How to engage mixed aged groups?
- What are the minimal requirements for an explainer?
- What is the best training model?
- Should explainers be volunteer or full time payed?
- How can we have a sustainable training for young explainers?
- Do you need a structured approach of training for all explainers?

COMMENTS

- Explainers need to know how to say I don't know
- Training needs to let explainers play, learn by doing. Not to push to much pressure on one individual.
- Diversity includes both content and audiences
- Explainers need time to develop their strategies to work w/ different audiences.
- Categorization program

Main themes emerging:

- KNOWING THE VISITORS
- TRAINING
- RECRUITMENT + HIRING
- PROGRAM STRUCTURE/PURPOSE
- MUSEUM CONTEXT IN LOCAL EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE