

A Study of Interactive Digital Media as a Learning Resource for Young Learners in Museums.

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Abstract

This study looked at the application of Interactive Digital Media in museums in an educational context for young learners aged 8 to 15. To analyse how Interactive Media could be effectively applied as a learning tool in museums this study used a literature review to analyse how museums, operate as places of learning and the strategies and underlying pedagogies they put in place to maximise this learning. Further analysis identified the prevailing research on Interactive Digital Media in Museums which established that effective Interactive Digital Media was contingent on careful and thoughtful application based on number of factors such as pedagogy, resources and staff knowledge.

A qualitative framework was created based on George Heins "Museum Educations Theories Model". This model was chosen as it incorporated many of the pedagogical themes found in the literature review that were found to be conducive to effective learning. It was further suitable as it specifically designed to be applied to museums. It was compared against the education programmes of two museums, the British Museum and Irelands National History Museum: History and Decorative Arts. It was found that in the case of the British Museum, digital resources were applied effectively to create improved learning outcomes by being used in tandem with strategies that strongly identified with the criteria laid down by Hein. In the case of the National Museum of Ireland: Decorative Arts and History it was found that Interactive Digital Media was scarcely used, however many of the constructivist ideas within the framework was present and so a solid foundation existed for the successful implementation of Interactive Digital Media in the future.