făcute ca parte a unei opera mai mari sau a unei figure.

Sculptura poate fi făcută din:
Lut
Fibre de sticlă
Lemn
Piatră
Nisip
Pământ
Sticlă
Alge
Frunze
Iarbă
Urzici
Tufișuri (care ar trebui să fie tunse în anumite forme)
Metal
Fructe sălbatice
Bușteni

3. **Grupul 2 intervievat pe 18 iulie.**

O statuie este o sculptură.
Sculptura este:
Prețioasă
Fragilă
Stă fermă în picioare
Nu se mișcă și nu vorbește
Este făcută pentru a fi păstrată și avută grijă de ea
Este pentru a fi privită
Este expusă într-un muzeu
Este expusă într-o poziție specială
Poate fi afară
În afara Sainsbury Centre
În afara Woburn Abbey
În afara unei biserci
Poate fi magică, ține la distanță spiritele rele

THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE LEARNER IN THE ART MUSEUM: TWO CASE STUDIES IN THE UK

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

A large part of the job of an educator in a museum, is to help people who are non-specialists, whether they are teachers, adults with general interest, children, or school pupils, to understand and to make use of aspects of the collections, and to feel confident that they can function in the museum as thinking, reflecting individuals. Even specialists such as artists and art historians can need an introduction to the culture of a particular institution, and may need to undergo some kind of induction process in order to explore what the museum has to offer, and to discover what is individual about it. To some extent, this exploratory process is necessary anywhere new. But the art museum presents a special case, partly because of its role as a cultural repository to which people defer as an arbiter of taste and visual communication. Many people find the environment intimidating precisely because they think they are expected to know things, and furthermore, things which are not necessarily very clearly defined. In educational situations, especially for schools, a feeling of unfamiliarity in the art museum can be especially debilitating, even dis-empowering. This can be more than usually difficult for a teacher bringing a party of children. The teacher needs to feel in control: not only of the potential areas of knowledge and the learning experience, but of behaviour and social interaction. Especially in the current climate of target setting, of rigid adherence to curricula and of guaranteeing certain positive outcomes, a teacher needs to know more or less in advance that the work

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with the museum is going to be worthwhile, and that the time and money spent on it will be justifiable (Xanthoudaki 1998). So the teacher is the first person who needs to be confident that s/he can respond well enough to the museum environment, or can be securely guided there, in order for her/his group to gain solid achievements. Teachers often turn to museum specialists for guidance and one of their key requirements is to do with their own empowerment, in order to enable them to conduct their familiar pedagogical role with ease.

But are we really looking at an environment where the teacher's pedagogical role is the same as their familiar one from school? I think not. Teaching methods in the art museum are by no means uniform, but do tend to be different from those familiar from school. Over many years in my own practice I have observed numerous times how ideas stimulated by observation of an object can be developed and shared dynamically via group discussion; that examination and discussion of objects can lead to sudden revelation in an individual or among a group; and that people can very rapidly feel not only empowered, but changed by the experience (Sekules 1999, Tickle 1996, Sekules, Tickle and Xanthoudaki 1999, Sekules and Xanthoudaki 2000). These characteristics can all be verified in the literature as known museum-related phenomena (Figure 1). There is a growing body of research which is highlighting the extent to which the type of encounter in the art museum with open-ended aesthetic education, can lead to a growing confidence in social and cultural understanding, which is in turn highly motivating towards general educational advancement (Hein, 1998; Falk and Dierking, 1992; Falk, Dierking and Holland 1995; Cziksentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990).

In order to explore and illustrate these educational issues, I shall therefore summarise two recent case studies concentrating on the fine line between formal and informal education which operates between museum and school. I shall attempt through these studies to characterise key aspects of the cultural, environmental, organisational, educational and interpersonal conditions within which the learner operates between the two types of institution. I shall hope to highlight some key conditions and factors which have been common to projects in which the learner has been empowered and to draw a number of conclusions which can form the basis on which to plan future projects.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS AND APPROACHES TO TEACHING WHICH BEST EMPOWER THE LEARNER IN WORK ACROSS THE SCHOOL AND THE ART MUSEUM?

In the art museum, there is potential, providing certain ground rules are observed, for more than usual *empowerment* of the learner. But first of all, what do I mean by 'empowering the learner'? One way of characterising this would be to say that giving the learner new resources or new skills and competences in preparation for a new experience is empowering. Is it a question of setting new goals and allowing the learner the space and resources to achieve them? To some extent the answer has to be 'yes' but if this were enough, then it would suffice for the teacher to set out a plan for teaching and then to test to see if those items which have been defined have been learnt, which is part of the normal and accepted routine both of school and of traditional museum education. Is it a question of respect for the learner, taking into account their particular experience and

desire for improvement following a constructivist approach to museum learning (Hein 1998)? Yes, to some extent it is this too. But I would like to go further than this and state that the key to real empowerment for the learner lies in more unpredictable terrain and to some extent terrain that needs to be negotiated together between teacher and learner. In whichever environment he/she is located, the learner needs to be allowed to roam beyond the limited expectations of the teacher, indeed, both teacher and pupil need to allow their learning to move beyond their own limited expectations (Sanger and Tickle 1993). Put simplistically, they may set off to learn one thing and end up learning something quite else and they need the freedom and courage to explore wherever their instincts and inclinations take them. To be really empowered, the learner needs to acquire the confidence to explore the learning terrain independently and to be able to use it creatively, to be able to see some potential for his or her own further development, something which has been identified as 'transformative experience' (Ross 1982). To be really empowering, the teacher should not lead too strongly, but should be prepared to listen to the pupil. The teacher should outline areas of operation rather than setting limits. Pupils should have room for creative manoeuvre within tasks and not find themselves constrained by tight boundaries.

While this may be a logical way to work in the museum, this is not an easy philosophy of learning to adopt in school and it will not work for all subjects. Any teacher, who sets a learning goal, as teachers have to do by law, necessarily engages in setting limits. In defining the terms for their pupils' learning, teachers have to circumscribe them. In reaching defined goals for learning, pupils need to prioritise certain types of thinking and ignore others. The assessment culture awards marks for goal-oriented prioritised thinking, for benchmarks, which show progress (this is discussed more fully below in relation to a case study). While school is geared towards this method of assessment-driven learning, the museum, currently, is not. The definition of learning currently being adopted by a British Government sponsored research project into the future promotion of life-long learning in museums is as follows:

'Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings, or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more'
Inspiring learning for All, A Framework for Museums Archives and Libraries, (Re:source 2002.)

It assumes a self-directed programme of learning resulting in a self-motivating continuum, open to stimuli and unconstrained by limits. A museum is a multi-sensory environment in which we cannot predict how any individual is going to respond and this may be exploited to advantage as an ideal environment for working more openly in order to test limits and boundaries. It is also one for which many claims have been made, for transformative experiences in learning (Figure 1). The viewer/learner has potential freedom there and recognising that the learner's responses will be variable and unpredictable and allowing them to explore those responses is a potentially empowering experience.

EMPOWERMENT ON WHOSE TERMS? DIFFERING JUDGEMENTS OF SUCCESS IN A SCHOOL-MUSEUM PROJECT

Since the introduction in England of the Government Literacy Strategy for Key Stages 1 and 2 in 1998, there has been pressure on all types of schools in England and Wales to improve standards of reading and writing. Each school had to devote at least one hour per day to a carefully prescribed sequence of work. Museums and art galleries anxious to continue to encourage school visits in a context of reductions of time and money for extra-curricular work, quickly came up with interdisciplinary projects in order to allow literacy strategies to be applied to their collections (Wilkinson and Clive 2001). Under their Museums and Galleries Education Programme of 2000, Government funding was given to a whole range of projects which would prioritise both literacy and numeracy (since that year also subject to its own Strategy for improving standards) and disseminate new practices. For example, the Fitzwilliam Museum and Kettles Yard Art Gallery in Cambridge, devised a secondary school programme called, 'I see what you mean', which resulted in a contribution to a website also funded by the scheme (www.accessart.org.uk) offering a menu of approaches to objects, plus suggested workshop activities devised in partnership with teachers. Other projects applied to pupils with language and literacy problems, such as those at the Horniman Museum's 'Visions of Africa' exhibition and at Fabrica, an artists run gallery in Brighton, each aiming to work with a number of different age-groups with problems of reading deficiency, or dyslexia. In each case, the opportunity for art to provide a focus for descriptive vocabulary and expression was seen alongside the potential for esteem development, as educationally innovative.

It was in this literacy-focussed climate that an educational project between the Sainsbury Centre and the Special language Unit at a Norfolk secondary school was organised as a piece of research, to test the feasibility of using the art museum environment to develop oral language skills for a group of language-deficient pupils ranging in age from 12 – 15 years. As well as working on their language, the teacher wanted to encourage in the pupils in greater understanding of their visual strengths and for them to develop co-operative working patterns.

The pupils began work with several morning sessions in the museum with me and their teacher. They described objects in detail, and had then began to make up stories inspired by them. After observing how inhibited they were by their fear of the word recognition, grammatical or spelling rules associated with reading and writing, we allowed them to use tape-recorders to give them the freedom to create spontaneous narratives. The project still needed to concentrate on literacy skills, and thus a visual element had to be introduced without detracting from this. Two artists were employed to assist here and came up with a solution which would enable both visual and verbal development, involving the making of simple animations for the stories, by means of shadow projections, using overhead projectors. In the course of preparing their animations the children extended their stories into separate scenes which could be performed. This also proved to be a perfect vehicle for other kinds of conversation, necessitating negotiation and teamwork among pupils and teachers (Ling Chang and Wells, 1988). There

were also interesting discoveries about the varied rate of development between languages, visual and verbal. Sometimes new story ideas would develop as a result of experimenting with visuals, sometimes through discussion. Skills were interdependent, and sometimes it could be shown that one developed either to the detriment of the other, or simply at a different rate, involving different types of interaction and thinking. (Gardner 1983, 1999)

This was a good example of a project in which the outcomes, in terms of a general rise in articulacy, confidence and creative output among the pupils was striking and much greater than anticipated. At the end they performed their animations in public overcoming considerable personal inhibitions. They were, in other words, empowered in a number of ways. Many of these characteristics have been identified in other museum education projects (Figure 1). However, it was also apparent that the school teacher and myself and the artists had different approaches both to teaching methods and to judgements of success. There had clearly been different expectations on all sides, and outcomes were differently valued, depending on whose opinion among artists, teachers, museum personnel and pupils, was being sought. The school teacher's expectations, clearly generated within a climate of the government's technical framework for literacy assessment, were for her pupils to become more self-critical, able to judge good and bad stories and to recognise which aspects of their performance they needed to improve. She was concerned that her pupils did not achieve what she regarded as significant gains in reading age development (which to be fair, we had not set out to improve) or measurable literacy skills.

Later, the teacher and I discussed the issue of standards and criticism at some length. It was clear that she had not been aware of the value attributed in art museums, to the maintenance of a fluid and positive context in discussions and activities with non-specialist audiences. (Wilkinson and Clive 2001, Cox, Lamb, Orbach and Wilson 2000). It is common for educational projects, especially in the art museum, to be exploratory and while overall aims may be set, and desirable outcomes predicted, unless they are very specific products (like drawings of particular objects, for example) these tend not to be defined in terms of precise targets. On the contrary, the assessment-driven atmosphere of school has been described as one of 'technocratic rationality' (Hamblen 1984), characterised by the setting of controllable goals and establishment of clear parameters for 'right' and 'wrong' opinions and answers. Our project demonstrated a different kind of institutional agenda, the art museum tending to have a 'looser external control of learning activities' than school (Haanstra , 2003).

Significant gains in social and 'esteem development' among the whole group of children were readily acknowledged both by school and museum. This is where the professional context and exploratory agenda of the art museum environment really showed its advantages. The facilitatory style of teaching there, enabled the pupils to become more confidently articulate and observant. Their judgements in a setting of high cultural value were trusted, and it brought them major benefits in terms of social skills, which included collaborative working, confidence in performance and overall, a sense of self-worth and group achievement. (Sharp and Dust 1997, 10) Whatever their lack of quantifiable skill-gain in reading, pupils provably gained

competence in general communication skills, and produced some really original new work. For example, one boy who would barely communicate at the start, was regularly borrowing the tape-recorder in order to make up more stories at home. We were able to witness among the pupils something akin to what Malcolm Ross and his research team defined as 'transformative experience', in that the striving among the pupils for greater expressive power was leading to personal development as much as academic gain (Ross, Radnor, Mitchell, Bierton 1993).
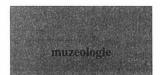
This project hit upon one of the most contested subjects in school-age assessment, that is, how to take account of improvements in areas which are difficult to quantify, yet which nevertheless mark a distinct development in the whole person. The teacher concluded, that in assessing the entire range of beneficial outcomes as well as failings and disappointments, she must be alert to individual strengths and weaknesses and produce a sensitively modulated evaluation ((Hargreaves 1989, 150-156; Ross, Radnor, Mitchell, Bierton 1993). 'It is not an exact science you know', said one of her colleagues reassuringly. She gained a deeper knowledge of the range of her pupils' skills and at the end was better equipped to plan further developments to assist them in specific ways. She resolved as a result of the course to teach the pupils in two groups according to their particular needs and abilities and we decided jointly that ideally any future course should alternate between art museum and school, the exploratory phases in the art museum being consolidated in school through more directed practical teaching.

In order to address the issue of differing judgements of success in art projects between arts organisations and schools, there needs to be a real sharing both of knowledge and of aspirations between the educational staff from each institution. Not only the development possibilities must be outlined at the start, but also, the potentially restrictive parameters need to be known, so that the project can lead to a strong partnership between specialist staff who each understand the potentialities of their roles.

USING SCULPTURE TO BROADEN THE EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG CHILDREN

This is an account of another research project which demonstrated different aspects of the potential in the museum for empowerment of the learner. One day in May 2002, I suddenly got a plea for help from a teacher of infants at a small rural primary school enclosing a photocopy of a recommended 'Scheme of Work' by the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, for the subject, 'What is Sculpture?'. Her problem was that this Scheme of Work, designed to assist teachers in delivery of the National curriculum for 5 to 11 year old children, placed heavy emphasis on creating art in the environment, using natural materials. She had no experience of this and could not see how she could adapt it to suit her own situation and curriculum for her young children. The Scheme of Work, which was intended as a guide rather than a statutory instrument, supposed that at the end of the project, most children would be able to: 'explore ideas about sculpture; investigate and use materials and processes to communicate ideas and meanings in three dimensional form; comment on similarities and differences between their own and others work; adapt and improve their own work.' Visiting an art museum as part of the work was not necessarily envisaged, but the teacher was experienced in this area, and for us

it was to become the part of the project that produced the most significant developments.

The teacher and I began with some detailed planning. We were from the outset explicit about wanting to add use of the museum to the programme in order to build new experiences, and encourage greater articulateness, alongside the encouragement of new competences and skills. Empowering the learners was our aim, although we did not use this precise term.

Our overall aims were:

To explore the question 'What is sculpture?' with reference to the pupils' existing experience and to try and build on that through working on language and observation skills in class and in the museum.

To encourage the use of specific terms associated with sculpture, in particular form, shape, space, scale, colour, tactile qualities eg. hard, bumpy, rough, smooth.

to explore the properties of different materials and to look at different kinds of subject matter.

We wanted to work with an artist in order to develop the pupils skill both in understanding and in making sculpture, using clay or modelling material and using found materials from the local environment.

We also planned to make use of the world-wide focus of the art collections in the Sainsbury Centre to gain some broader understanding of sculpture as a cultural phenomenon, to look at different kinds of sculpture made for different peoples in different cultures and periods.

We planned an outline programme weekly activities. There were basically three main levels of input:

Observation, handling and discussion of objects in school

Observation, discussion and drawing in the museum

Children making their own sculptures in the museum.

The teacher began her programme by discussing some objects of her own with the children. Then she asked them to bring in 3 items each from home which were special to them. From each session either the teacher or I recorded data, either in note form or on tapes. At the end of each session we had an evaluative discussion on which basis we confirmed plans for the following week.

Initially we had planned other elements, such as displaying sculptures and setting up a class museum, putting three objects together to make up a story about them, making up a class book. But as we began our programme, we quickly discovered that we had to adapt the order and content of our sessions in response to what we perceived as the pupils' emerging needs as we worked. In a sense this in itself is evidence that we were empowering the learners, in that we were prioritising their needs over our curriculum plans, or any external guidelines. In order to work like this it was essential that we kept careful data and evaluated it at least to some extent immediately.

Group discussion as a means of establishing values

Looking back upon data from the early observation sessions, there is evidence for rather more different kinds of learning than we realised at the time. In appreciating each other's precious objects, discussion repeatedly showed that pupils were deferring to that person's set of values and that there was a kind of consistency about the reasons why special objects were chosen. These mainly centred on preciousness, rarity, fragility, monetary value, sharing of identity, favourite activities, hobbies and interests, family values and relationships. Some of the

objects had significant childhood meaning, such as a favourite comfort object *'this is my favourite bear, I sleep with it and it goes everywhere'*, or, *'the dog I got for Christmas, it is my best toy of my bed stuff'*. There is also special clothing for a particular role: *'I have worn this...when I go to football matches, I wear these when I watch matches, I use these when I play football at home'*.

Often the expertise of the bringer of the object was deferred to: *'Are you an expert in football?'* *'Are you an expert in sharks?'* *'Are you an expert on owls?'* Discussion of the materials of their objects was exploratory, they were experiencing them in terms of sight, hearing, smell and feel. Lewis's stone (a found object about which they could all be objective) was a good example of exploration in which they used almost all the senses, as they passed it round, commenting:

'it looks quite silky; looks like a potato; smells like a potato; it's got lines on it; it doesn't smell of anything; it is smooth; does it make a noise? It's hard, it's made of rock; it's a bit scratched; it looks as if it has been cracked open; it feels sticky; it's cracked open by the veins; it smells a bit funny; it looks like a dinosaur tooth, the way it curves and got a short bit'

Descriptive vocabulary here was already quite rich, but discussion deepened when we looked at other objects, which the pupils did not own and could therefore be more objective about, which was an important next stage. These objects ranged from things which were clearly sculpture, to borderline things, toys and found objects and a wide range of materials: an antler, carved tusk, horn, bone comb, Javanese shadow puppet, wooden African figure, glass paperweight, ceramic figure, cast wax candle with figures, stones, driftwood. We also compiled a list of words relating to materials and techniques which we could have recourse to as a means of reinforcing learning. As it happened we didn't refer to them at all. The instant the children saw the objects they were bursting to touch them and to talk about them, and it simply was not appropriate to begin to drill them in 'correct' words or conventional descriptions. Both the teacher and I felt instinctively that a list of words would have been inhibiting rather than empowering at this moment. We felt that the best way for such young children to learn about this subject was experientially, but that we would push them to develop their vocabulary as we examined more and more objects. Each person was allowed to speak in turn. The children more or less alternated between describing as imaginatively as possible what they saw and felt, or echoing what had been said before. Overall it was noticeable how their vocabulary was widening. As our discussions progressed, it was clear that they were interpreting these objects simultaneously as cultural phenomena and as physical ones and as they searched their memories or imaginations for comparisons which would help them identify them, they were keen to associate them with a range of experience (Perkins 1994). They inspired each other to make especially rich comparisons and it was sometimes clear that the children enjoyed seeing what memories the object evoked and liked to develop ideas among the whole group.

The role of the museum in deepening experience

The experience of viewing objects in the art museum began the process of taking the work out of the realm of the personal and enabled the children to think more objectively, sharpening their observations. Discussion really started to flow as they recognised in the museum many

examples of the kinds of objects and materials they had been handling in class. The professionalism and high quality of the museum display and lighting was clearly an important factor in heightening their awareness of objects and their cultural value. Their understanding deepened further as they made their own work under the guidance of an artist. They became increasingly self-motivated and their sense of ownership and involvement with their self-generated imagery was very striking. They showed signs of relating their own ideas to objects in the museum, notably to a North American Indian knife, an ancient American mask, a modern sculpture called 'Bucket man', a Club from the Marquesas Islands, and while it appeared at first that they were trying to copy them, in fact they chose spontaneously to try make their own versions as a means of response and engagement. They were making the collections their own.

But most striking of all, through making their own objects, and most importantly, discussing them afterwards in class, they began to establish a new set of values which were all to do with interpretation and narrative. This is a good example of a situation where the learners were empowering each other. Having set the agenda in terms of their own responses to objects and experiences in the museum, they were affirming them in this session, giving each other licence to develop further responses. Furthermore, it became apparent that these personally generated and negotiated narratives went on to become stimuli for the continuation of their work. For example, one boy who made an owl with a moveable head, went on to find more owls in the museum on the next visit and to make another owl-related environment during the next practical session (he had also brought the owl book in as his precious object, so this was a consistent interest in his case). His final impressions of sculpture were influenced by the worry that his fragile owl would wobble and break. Strongly motivated by his own experience, he insisted to the end that sculpture was fragile and precious and could not move by itself (Falk and Dierking 1992, 104-106). Another boy showed remarkable consistency in following his interests through making four different versions of a figure of an 'old man' in response to a figure he had seen in the art museum. These related to a gift from his grandfather which had been his initial chosen object from home.

Narrative development continued after the children visited the museum the second time and made new sculptures, this time using found materials in the environment. The artist allowed them to collect anything, such as leaves, twigs, feathers, soil, stones, and they were given a completely open brief to create whatever they liked. As we viewed the work with the artist at the end of the workshop, each group of children (they had mostly worked in groups) discussed their work in terms of stories that had occurred to them as they made their sculptures. The overriding aim in their sculptures became to bring imaginary things to life in three dimensions, and thereby, they began to understand one of the principal roles of sculpture. Most remarkable was a 'chain of leaves', which was seen by the 6 year old girl who made it, not only as a synthesis of her recent experiences of objects, but as a metaphor for change in the future, and the recognition of good and evil about which she later wrote a poem.

Empowering the learner

The atmosphere of open discussion we had gradually built up over the project and the consistent encouragement for the pupils to express their points of view

contributed to a general increase in articulateness and creativity (Mercer, Edwards, Maybin 1988). The teacher said:

'They talked a lot about those sculptures they did at the Sainsbury Centre. It's amazing really how much they wrote. ... It was very striking to see how much they they improved. Some of them are talking a lot more and are using a wider vocabulary. It was the visits that really helped to stimulate that especially....'

By the end of the work in the museum, the teacher could see how the pupils were setting their own agenda for wide-ranging learning which she could follow through in an interdisciplinary way (Wilkinson and Clive 2001). So, afterwards they went on to link the work with mathematics and with writing *'The amount of maths work was outstanding – really stretched the year 2s.'* They developed their own stories following on from the final practical workshop at the museum. These were derived from a group exercise where they established main characters, the teacher transcribed the main story then each person adapted it. The results were strikingly different from each other and demonstrate once more the unpredictable results of open-ended working.
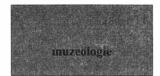
The childrens' enthusiasm for multi-layered responses to sculpture was strikingly evident to us, and they developed a repertoire of understanding, which was greatly improved over the course of our work and in many ways went far further than was envisaged in the Scheme of Work we had started from. In order to test their concepts, we finished by interviewing them to gain some firmer idea about how their understanding had developed. The results of the interviews were very revealing of their attitudes and are summarised in table

form in **Figure 2**. The children had enough sophistication to debate issues among themselves, for example, as to which materials to define as sculptural, whether it was legitimate for sculpture to move, or the circumstances in which a dinner knife could be considered as sculpture. What is particularly revealing is the difference in emphasis of qualities and values between the two groups interviewed, which demonstrates the importance of not making assumptions that all pupils are learning the same thing. These disparate results not only show the effect of group dynamics on shared understandings, but are, I believe, shown up by empowered learners who have been allowed to develop their independence and who have also, as Vygotsky analysed, been influenced by social contexts (Vygotsky 1978, Mcmanus 1987). It also highlights that discussion alone does not guarantee uniformity or consistent standards. In the context of exam-oriented cultures, discussions need to be supplemented by didactic reinforcement of the key issues and terminology pertinent to the subject. Very stable foundations were laid for continuing the work and I feel confident that the remaining detailed knowledge of vocabulary could more easily be acquired after they had built up their personal experience of the nature of sculpture.

CONCLUSIONS

In both the case studies outlined here the teaching methods allowed for the children to roam beyond our original expectations and in many ways they far exceeded them. The museum environment provided a culture where this approach could be both developed and controlled. Using the museum to explore a framework for teaching in order to empower the learner, exploits its characteristic as an environment where roaming and making choices is the norm. There will always be a tendency there for the

mind to wander and for the pupil to learn all kinds of unpredictable things, and not necessarily that which the teacher thinks is being taught (Sword 1993). It is also, most importantly, an environment where responses to objects can be professionalized in a context of high cultural value. Children could not only recognise things they knew and have their initial impressions confirmed, but see them in a new context with a heightened awareness, elevated to a greater importance and degree of concentration. The experience was in that sense transformative.

Recognising stages in the growing empowerment of the pupils was an important role for the teachers. In these projects we recognised that we had to allow the children to develop experience at their own pace and it is important for the teachers to judge what is the appropriate level of empowerment, and not to set ambitions for pupils' development too high. The artists also played a crucial role here, in enabling new skills which could turn these transformative experiences into creative opportunities whereby pupils were enabled to say something new through the work they made. The process allowed for continuation of personal development into a new phase and it was especially important that the artists should not give tightly controlled recipes for making art, but should act as facilitators encouraging invention. Had they been too directive, prescribing too tightly what was to be made, they might have constrained the learning and squashed the pupils' initiatives. The democracy of the situation is very important and this becomes even more important in such work with older pupils (Stringer 1999, Sharp and Dust 1997). I am convinced that the atmosphere we created of intellectual balance, even equality, between course tutors, artists and pupils, helped the pupils to feel confident, empowered, and trusted to be uninhibitedly creative.

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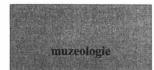
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Figure 1: Claims that have been made in UK research reports and case studies about the value of learning in Museums and art galleries

Enhances observation skills
Encourages discussion
Values personal opinion
Encourages independent learning
Raises moral and ethical issues
Enhances social development
Develops self-esteem
Boosts confidence
Allows contact with real objects
Promotes understanding of history, archaeology, material culture
Assists with literacy
Encourages communication
Enhances the image of the school
Hands on activity
Flexible working spaces
Allows different skills to be practised
Peace and quiet
Opportunity to work with varying group sizes
Opens up new means to creativity in writing or visual arts
Changes attitudes
Evokes feelings
Has a long-term impact
Enjoyable, attractive and fun

(summarised from Oddie and Allen 1998, Sharp and Dust 1997, Anderson 1999, Wilkinson and Clive 2001)

Figure 2
Definitions of 'What is Sculpture?'
This shows the extent to which the children's ideas were enriched over the course of the project, having started off as fairly limited in the initial session.
Derived (1) from class discussion with objects (2) and (3) from interviews with VS, 3 children in each group.

1. Initial ideas (May 15. before museum visits or making)

Shadow puppet is not sculpture because it is flat
Normally sculptures are metal
Sculptures are smooth at the bottom
Things that stand up are sculptures
Things that lay down aren't
Woollen Joseph is sculpture (has a stand)
Woollen sheep can't be sculpture because it doesn't have a stand
Paperweight is sculpture according to child's grandmother, not sculpture according to her mother (she accepts her grandmother's view).
2. Group 1 interview July 18.

Sculpture is hard to make.
It needs to have a stand.
It must be made.
Things (eg. everyday objects, natural materials) need to be turned into sculpture by being added to, shaped in some way, displayed on stand, made part of a larger composition or figure.
Sculpture can be made from:
Clay
Fibreglass
Wood
Rock
Sand
Mud
Glass
Seaweed
Leaves
Grass
Nettles
Bushes (which have to be sawn into shape)
Metal
Glass
Berries
Logs

3. Group 2 interview July 18.

A statue is sculpture.
Sculpture is:
Precious
Fragile
Stands firmly
Doesn't move or talk
Is made to be kept
& to be looked after

Is for looking at
Is shown in a museum
Is shown in a case or on a special stand
Can be outside
Outside Sainsbury Centre
Outside Woburn Abbey
Outside a church
Can be magical, to keep away evil spirits