

Learning at The Museum Will Enhance the Skills of Historical Thinking (KPS) Students

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Abstract

Museum is an institution that is deemed as the most effective place to spread knowledge. Through this method, students' ability to reflect on history, or known as skills of historical thinking (KPS) will increase tremendously. Students are encouraged to think in a sense that is critical and analytical through the aforementioned thinking ability. This proposal will focus on the aspect of introduction to museum and KPS, as well as the complication that arise among students in learning History subject in schools. This proposal will also discuss on the role of museums in embedding KPS in teaching and learning processes.

Keywords: Museum, historical thinking, learning

1. Introduction

The museum institutions have long existed not just in Malaysia, but the whole world. The first ever museum establishment in Malaysia has started from 1883, under British administration. The British government has built the Perak Museum in Taiping, followed by the Sarawak Museum in Kuching in the year of 1888. It is then followed by the Selangor Museum in 1899, currently known as Malaysian National Museum starting from 2007.

Museums can be deemed as an institution to sharpen minds and produce culturally aware citizens through the activities organized, particularly through exhibitions. Museums are capable of being role models to foreign educational system. In this century, museums should be more versatile and improved in terms of their image so that the public will be more attracted. This can be done by organizing activities that emphasize more on technologies and those that

bring the community together without negatively impacting them emotionally and spiritually (Dzulfawati, 1999).

The establishment of museums is an effort to preserve our historical artefacts and local cultures. These precious and timeless collections are proofs to the historical events that have taken place in our country. Museums play a critical role as reference and research institutions. A plethora of research and writings have been documented in order to spread knowledge to the citizens, so that they can delve deeper into the pride of the nation.

Museum is a long-established institution whereby knowledge is spread. This is based on the objective of the museum establishment, which is to give exposure to the visitors pertaining to the history of a race and country. Another objective is to display the historical culture of a state. Dato' Paiman (2005) in his paperwork entitled "Muzium dan Masyarakat" states that museums act as a medium to nurture and develop citizens of a country. Other than that, museums are also historically and culturally rich,

aside from being institutions that deliver information and education for the community.

Museum is the best medium to spread knowledge to students, specifically through high-tech exhibitions in order to instill Kemahiran Pemikiran Sejarah (KPS) or the historical thinking capability in students when they go for museum visits in Malaysia. In addition, the educational programs organized by museums such as seminars, workshops and forums are capable of strengthening students' thinking ability in history subject.

Kemahiran Pemikiran Sejarah (KPS) or the historical thinking capability is a thinking process that allows students to unravel complex ideas. KPS consists of:

- Understanding chronology
- Discovering proofs
- Making interpretation
- Imagination
- Rationalisation

2. Problem Statement

History subject is a core subject which is made compulsory to lower form students. History is not estranged to the citizens, as Malaysia has its own history to begin with. Civic values are embedded in such subject as a means to produce students that are passionate and aware of the importance of history. The aim of History subject is to instill the spirit of loyalty and love towards the country as Malaysians. Through deep attachment towards the history of the country, students are able to show empathy towards certain communities and the country. This in turn will create a sense of harmony and togetherness in a country that owns the same language.

In the context of teaching and learning of History subject, remembering and describing the facts are regarded as major problems among students. This is evident among students who are academically underperforming. However, after much observation and scrutiny, these problems arise from the lack of reading and interest in this subject. Also, students are practicing the wrong way to memorize facts without having much consideration of the concept and chronological events. The attitude of students also contribute to the aforementioned problems, in which they do not ask for clarifications for the topics they do not understand. Other than that, students are too reliant of textbooks, whereby they are not able to answer the questions even when there is a slight change in the question's structure. Being too dependent to the long and winding sentences in History

textbook has caused rigidity and difficulties for the students to think.

3. Steps That Are Executed by Museum Administrators as Strategies to Instill Historical Thinking Ability Among Students

3.1 The usage of latest technology

Science & technology are growing rapidly in Malaysia in alignment to the Vision 2020, where information technology is a medium to the country's development. Malaysia's ex-Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir asserts that Malaysia is in need of a powerful technology to drive the country to rapid development by the year of 2020.

In museum institutions, learning activities that use traditional methods such as text display can be considered as obsolete. This does not arouse student's interest to understand historical chronology and the fold of events. Traditional methods are also making museums appear very lifeless. As stated by Syahrul Nizam Junaini (2008) in his article 'Muzium Institusi Warisan Bangsa', the usage of special multimedia sound effects such as birds chirping will add to the authenticity of the ambience in the museum space. This type of interaction will bring life and greater impact to the visitors, rather than merely witnessing statues dolled up in traditional Malay attire. Subconsciously, students will return home with precious experience in an educational institution such as museum.

Based from Othman Yazid (2005), the usage of technology in the museum institution will give a turning point to students to comprehend historical facts, and they are not restricted to only reading. The utilization of technology in museums has been a new medium to ensure that such institution will remain relevant as a destination for students to do historical research in Malaysia.

Hallinger (1998) asserts that a lot of countries have offered a variety of curriculum, bringing a meaningful and improved educational quality that ultimately lead to a remarkable paradigm shift. The usage of multimedia technology in education gives students convenience in learning process. Latifah binti Abdul Majid, Wan Nasyrudin Wan Abdullah, Nurul Hidayah Binti Ahmad Zakhi (2012), current educational setting has been served with the advancements of science and technology.

Siti Fadzilah Mat Noor and Shreena Mohd Arif (2002) state that teaching process will be much more interesting, effective, active and fun with the usage of multimedia technology as it incorporates practically all of

human sensory. Aside from that, the utilization of multimedia materials plays a role in shaping children's virtue.

From the 2011 research done by Norhayati Che Mat regarding to the effectiveness of animation in leaning Arabic language, it is found that the usage of animation applications cuts the learning time and helps them understand the content of the subject in a more vivid way.

The world of education has reached a drastic point of change due to the usage of high-end technology. The institution of museum needs to take a step forward to ensure that visits from students are educationally beneficial and not in vain in order to suit the function of museum itself.

Some museum learning facilities that incorporate the latest technologies are:

1. QR Scan – also known as Quick Response is an application that gives information to the visitors and eases students' experience to seek for information with their smartphones.
2. Interactive Kiosk – an interactive medium that uses touch screen pad to retrieve information, and can be utilized as a learning medium.
3. Big Television – can be used as an information displayer for exhibitions.
4. Hologram 3D – provides a realistic environment, as though the visitors are taken back in time.
5. Screenplay – displays simple animations that are easily understandable by students, especially the chronological events.

3.2 Exhibition Space

The wonder of a museum is determined on the exhibition items, and how they are presented in various techniques with smart usage of the space. The arrangement also plays an important role for visitors to enjoy the learning environment in museums. This serves the purpose for students to comprehend the historical chronology in the museum. For instance, Hang Tuah Museum in Melaka is divided into two sections, which are Ruang Hang Mahmud and Ruang Dang Merdu in accordance to the name of Hang Tuah's parents (Norzaifirah Binti Zaini, 2017).

3.3 Educational Activity

Educational activities in museums through history-reliving programs and educational visits are academically appropriate approaches that lead to two-way communication. Those are

the best approaches that shed light to the participating students. As a result, the informal learning process that takes place will elevate students' memory pertaining to the history. It is evident that this academic approach brings convenience, gives in-depth knowledge with ease, aside from providing students with engaging learning experience.

4. Conclusion

Generally, museum institutions play a paramount role in spreading knowledge and information regarding to history and civilization of a country and race. Based on Ruth Rentschler in her 2011 work entitled 'Museum Marketing : No Longer A Dirty Word', the role of museum can be split into two, the first one being the connector of activities organized in museums, and the second one is in the academic importance.

History has proven that museum is the best place for academicians and historians to gather and exchange their point of views. It is closely related to the educational institutions. Both entities are closely interrelated and complement each other, whereby academic institutions need museums as a part of teaching and learning process in schools. Reciprocally, museums need academic institutions as a medium to educate and spread information to the citizens, particularly the younger generations pertaining to history, arts, cultures and national heritage. Museums should not be viewed as a mere tourist attraction during holidays, but they need to be utilized to the fullest in order to gain knowledge.

Museums also give a concrete view and that explains why museums are deemed as an effective medium of education. This gives students the golden opportunity to understand and be passionate about their own country, thus implementing the historical thinking ability (KPS) in a more effective way aside from exposing themselves to the nature of historical research.

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