

Touching Memories: A Case Study of the Educational Programs for the Elderly in the U.K.

Chia-Li CHEN

Professor

Director of Graduate Institute of Museum Studies, Taipei National University of the Arts

Abstract

In recent years, increasing museum professionals believe it is necessary to relate the museum resources with the elderly to expand its social role and therapeutic potentials. How does the museum plan the educational programs for the elderly of different needs by multi-sensory objects? How does the museum cooperate with professionals of different disciplines to enhance the well-being for those living with dementia?

Methods of interview and observation are applied to analyze how the Museum of Liverpool facilitates learning and recollections of the elderly. The research finds that the museum uses and designs various activities such as “Memory Suitcases”, “When I was Little” and “Meet me at the museum” to triggers intergenerational memories and memories of the elderly. In the training session, the “House of Memories” centers experiences and feelings of those living with dementia and applies knowledge and skills of theatre and museum to support carers and social workers to build up confidences and well-being of the elderly. Lastly, ideas and practices of the Museum of Liverpool are discussed to provide practical suggestions in the future.

Keywords: Museum and the Elderly, touching objects, House of Memories, the Elderly living with Dementia, Museum Education