

## *PASCAL Special Interest Groups (SIG) on 'Cultural Policy and Cultural Literacy Development'*

### *Summary of a joint seminar organised by the European Museum Academy – EMA and the PASCAL Observatory in Aarhus, Denmark September 2018*

As part of European Museum Academy Conference and award ceremony at the wonderful open-air museum Den Gamle By (The Old Town) in Aarhus the academy and PASCAL Observatory I arranged a joint seminar for museum professionals and researchers.

**The first presentation was given by Rob Mark, PASCAL Learning Cities Coordinator,** University of Glasgow. Rob presented the PASCAL organisation and went on to demonstrate how learning networks works. *“Learning networks are Interactive policy-orientated groups of stakeholders within cities, sharing ideas, experiences directed at innovative responses to the big issues confronting cities”*. Cities meet many challenges such as:

- ✚ - Infra structure development including connectivity and international links
- ✚ - Economic development
- ✚ - Promoting vibrant cultures and sense of place Increasing and Ageing Populations
- ✚ - Technological Change – sustainable and smart technologies
- ✚ - Climate Change
- ✚ - Access to finance
- ✚ - Identifying Priority Issues- benchmarking procedures to help identify priority issues
- ✚ - Strength and weaknesses in strategies
- ✚ - Sustainable strategies

Rob then discussed the role and the potential of learning in learning cities and stressed the following points - Learning is central to meeting city challenges, learning is both formal and non-formal. It is individual and organised learning. Communities attempt to learn collectively to change their own futures and we should include learning by doing and learning by interacting in the workplace and look across all sectors, organisations and government.

**A presentation given by Catherine Lido, Lecturer in Psychology and Adult Learning and Maggie Jago,** Lecturer in Art Education University of Glasgow followed. The term “Cultural Literacy” is an analytical tool defined for example as the ability to understand & participate fluently in a given culture and understanding connections between, and complexity, of cultural artefacts & activities.

Catherine and Maggie asked for different needs in the relation between cultural literacy and cultural policy such as:

- ✚ Encourage broad cultural perspectives through open discussions & sharing of practices
- ✚ Should celebrate difference & support approaches/ ideas that transcend a narrow viewpoint
- ✚ Involve multiple voices of practitioners & professionals
- ✚ Should be aware of implications for education & implications for learning (formal/non-formal/informal) should be central to all cultural policy development
- ✚ Should reflect the human element

Catherine and Maggie explained how cultural literacies is one type of literacy which is most often left out of the whole group of different literacies seen as different life wide literacies:

- ✚ Reading
- ✚ Writing
- ✚ Financial
- ✚ Health
- ✚ Digital & Data
- ✚ Environmental
- ✚ Scientific
- ✚ Political
- ✚ **Cultural**

Life wide literacies can lead to potential life outcomes such as:

- ✚ Educational achievement
- ✚ Future income
- ✚ General physical & mental health

The point here is that cultural literacy is as important that the rest of the different literacies to achieve positive life outcomes. Catherine and Maggie illustrated the above points with examples from The Urban Big Data Centre from Glasgow where hundreds of people by social media capture, lifelogging cameras and GPS sensors combined with surveys to 1500 households has provided fundamental information about their attitudes, literacies and behaviours. Especially about cultural literacies it seems that a code term to make attitudes and behaviours understandable is “belonging”.

**Henrik Zipsane, Deputy Director, European Museum Academy and Observatory Pascal associate gave the last presentation in this seminar.** The theme of the presentation was cultural policy development and Henrik started of by showing how during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century international and European collaboration had produced overarching conventions and agreements which included the right to cultural expression in human rights and later even competence development in cultural expression. Policies also defined and protected material and immaterial heritage.

In the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century a series of forceful statements on the role of Europe has been presented by The Council of Europe and the EU:

- ✚ All forms of cultural heritage in Europe constitute a shared source of remembrance, understanding, identity, cohesion and creativity (Council of Europe, 2005)
- ✚ The ideals, principles and values, derived from the experience gained through progress and past conflicts, foster the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Council of Europe 2005)
- ✚ There is an increased recognition at European, national, regional and local level of the social dimension of cultural heritage and the importance of activating synergies across different stakeholders to safeguard, develop and transmit cultural heritage to future generations (European Union, 2014)

It seems that cultural policy development is moving towards a common set of European set of values which is perceived as manifested in the heritage which the political stakeholders demands should be used for shaping European identity.

Henrik went on to illustrated what this could mean by using the Kronborg Castle in Elsinore as example:

The traditional history of the castle would centre around the following:

- ✚ Locally: The history of military garrison and later tourism
- ✚ Regionally: The history about an important power base
- ✚ Nationally: The history about the struggle for control of the waters
- ✚ European: The history of absolute monarchies and the Hamlet

A post nation state (European) history of the castle could be developed with the following perspectives:

- ✚ Locally: The stories about entrepreneurship (i.e. a key competence)
- ✚ Regionally: The stories about cultural expression of power (i.e. European role model)
- ✚ Nationally: The stories about import of Dutch architecture (i.e. transnationality)
- ✚ European: The stories about places in European literature (i.e. shared literature)

**The participants in the seminar discussed several issues raised from the presentations.** Among the themes which create much debate were the term “cultural literacy” and the difficulties in thinking European. Is there a risk by using the term “cultural literacy” that some would be associating to literacy and illiteracy as such? Would that lead to politically misuse of the term? Catherine said that we would have to live with such a risk when constructing analytical terms and methods, but she considered it could be mitigated by using the definition in line with notions of cultural capital, rather than deficit models of ‘illiteracy’. Another issue was about how to avoid that thinking about European values - whatever they are – and European identity should exclude global perspectives and inclusiveness.

#### **Presenters**

**Henrik Zipsane, European Museum Academy & PASCAL Observatory.**

**Maggie Jago, Programme Leader , MSc Museum Education at Glasgow University**

**Catherine Lido, Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Adult Learning, School of Education, University of Glasgow**

**Rob Mark. PASCAL Learning Cities Project Coordinator**