

The Final Report of the "ITP 2019"

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Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank the British Museum and the ITP staff for accepting me and allowing me to participate in ITP 2019 and giving me this great opportunity to join with all other international professional participants.

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I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the partner museum, to all the Glasgow Museums staff for their warm welcome, hospitality, fruitful and serious cooperation during our time in Scotland. And my special thanks go to the Glasgow Museums team (Patricia, Martin and Edward) for their efforts and contribution to the success of the training period in Glasgow.

Introduction

Before going into the content of the report, I would like to mention that these few lines do not in any way reflect a full my feedback of the training period, but just brief excerpts about the period that I spent in ITP 2019 at the British Museum from 6/7/2019 to 17/8/2019.

For many years I have been looking forward to joining the ITP, but I have not had the opportunity previously. Fortunately I joined this year. I was not alone in looking forward to participating in the ITP - there are many colleagues who wish to participate too due to its highly specialized, as well as highly professional training and the variety of issues it covers. It is not limited to a specific category of disciplines or a particular country. This enables you to build a professional and personal network with many specialists and experts within the UK or from the participating countries and exchange the different experiences, knowledge and skills.

The ITP 2019

The ITP 2019 has been characterised from the beginning for its accurate and highly organised nature. From the travel procedures upon arrival in the UK to the accommodation for all participants in one place, this increases the opportunity to build relationships and acquaintance more closely. I mention that because I am involved in organising some events at my museum so this was useful to me to observe.

The ITP not only included theoretical sessions, but also practical, recreational and brainstorming activities. Most of sessions were clearly discussed topics related to my work such as restoration lectures, educational activities and museum management, most of them relevant to the museum works. All these activities consolidate the information given but additionally it breaks the barriers between the participants and increases the degree of closeness and acquaintance despite the different cultures. As well as reinforcing the idea of working in one team, which allow you to think and collect more information, it shows that there is more than one way to reach the best idea. Actually, you cannot do everything alone, but together we can do a lot despite our differing specialties and cultures.

Galleries and Museum Management Issues:

I was very pleased with the idea of meeting with the Director of the British Museum to discuss with us our experience of the ITP. It makes you feel you are a VIP and you have special treatment and helps you to achieve what you want to learn. That must be applied in all the training or activities which occur all over museums because these simple things encourage the staff and give them the push to achieve more.

There are some words that are fixed in mind, what John Williams said, "If it's important to document the objects, at the same time you must also document human beings and staff", because they will be the part of the history of the museum.

When you decided to make a gallery, before you start to exhibit your objects, you must think about the audiences and if they have a specific opinion that should be respected. That is what happened when they discuss that with the visitors about the way to present human remains in the museum.

Besides selecting the objects according to the general theme of the exhibition, considering the needs of visitors in what they would like to see, the idea of



simulating the showcases by printing pictures of the objects and 'installing' them on the boards helps to make plans more realistic and avoid the mistakes.

Also you have to make sure you have cooperation between all employees involved - conservators, curators and designers - to ensure you can achieve the best display.

And one of the best ideas when you decide to prepare an exhibition is the important issue of marketing. I saw how one of the most important marketing methods of the exhibition is community participation in addition to advertising in metro stations, television and restaurants as well as the using marketing methods according to the target audience.

During the visit to Brighton Museum, I got a great idea of using stickers for visitors to show that they entered officially and paid the fees. I was thinking to also use this to identify the visitors who paid the fees for photography, but a decision has now been made to make free photography before I had the opportunity to apply that!

While at the Brighton Pavilion where you have a huge number of visitors with narrow corridors inside, they should carry bags in hands or front of them for easy control. In addition, giving each visitor an audio guide really helps the visitors to do a free tour

inside. In addition, preventing the photography is a good idea because it makes the visitors focus more in the objects and the story rather than taking photographs.

I enjoyed the training on how to prepare an exhibition of different objects, how to create a story around them, the selection of an attractive title for the exhibition and the work of linking the events of the story to what is behind the objects, to make your audiences says WOW! Moreover, consider the usefulness of using some modern tools, such as the audio guide and some documentary films. And how we must continue to measure the success of the exhibition by making surveys of the audiences about their needs and what they prefer so we know what required adjustments.

One of the best issues that I was interested in was training on the process of design thinking to solve problems related to the museum and to facilitate the requirements of the target audience. You may not see some mistakes in your gallery or museum because you look at them differently from visitors or other specialists so you have to ask your audiences to explore that and study their notes.

It is possible to use some tools of technology in the display, such as touch screens, but you must put in your mind to avoid technology that distracts the visitor from the object, which happened with us in one of the galleries at the Natural History Museum.



I also saw that before starting work on any exhibition you must do a lot of thinking and careful study of the idea of the exhibition. This happened in the Albukhary Gallery, where there was extensive study of the exhibition and objects. In terms of the exhibition venue, low-light levels were selected with light-sensitive objects, while less-sensitive objects were used in parts with natural lighting after making the necessary adjustments. Thorough study of the objects in the exhibition is useful, as is travelling to more than one country with similar exhibitions to know the mistakes to avoid. There was additional cooperation with experts and specialists to check the labels and panels. Besides that, documenting the gallery was an integral part of the exhibition itself and may be useful later if the objects are required for the preparation of another exhibition.

A large part of the success of an exhibition depends on the way of the interpretation of the objects. This happened in the *Manga* exhibition where some drawings were not obvious, but with the interpretation it became clearer.

I liked how you can separate and divided the space in a gallery by the use of colours instead of using barriers as they did in the Manga show and how in the Riverside Museum in Glasgow, they used a different way; they used different styles for the streets.

I also saw how when preparing an exhibition, you must bear in mind the facilities for disabled people. For example for the deaf you can provide video/movie interpretation, for the blind hands-on objects to touch directly after consulting the conservation department.

General and Personal Issues:

The variety of training methods helped to make a great link between the participants and allowed them to share ideas and make active discussions with your colleagues.

The period of the ITP not only spent on professional issues, but also for enjoyment. For example, we visited one of the most famous sights, not in the UK but all over the world, that is "Big Ben" although it is under conservation we still visited its location. In addition, we went to the Victoria and Albert Museum and Hyde Park.



Conservation Issues:

I saw conservation processes that were taking place which are somewhat similar to what we are doing but we were able to have some discussions on specialised issues and in addition to the tour inside the scientific labs, we saw different methods and techniques for the objects examinations such as SEM and X-Ray radiography which was, for me, the first time to see this.

At the same time I saw how there should be constant communication between many institutions interested in heritage, including specialised scientific labs which can help in the interpretation, explanation and study of the heritage, as in the research centre in the Kew Gardens, where they are studying botanical objects from across the world. Also, you have to make contacts and cooperation with other scientific institutions like hospitals for the CT scans for human remains.

The use of modern scientific methods to identify the components of the objects, such as the use of the VIL technique, which is used to detect the Egyptian blue where it appears in the pictures as a bright radiant colour. In addition, one of the new techniques that I saw was the micro fading technique to test the effect of lighting on coloured textile objects before display.

I also saw how when you are packing and storing objects, transparent packaging is the best type to use because it shows what is inside, especially when unpacking, also when you are unpacking you must examine all the packing materials as they may contain some other small parts inside.

Educational Issues:

I was interested in the educational activity in the Egyptian Gallery at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (one cube asked a question followed by other cubes answered in pictures).

Object in Focus Issues:

One of the best things during ITP 2019 is the idea of preparing an exhibition with a partner from another country, culture, language, specialisation and ideas working together with an object from a completely different country. It was a very good experience and a very good choice which helped us to brainstorm ideas, gain experiences and skills and to produce a suitable exhibition with the simple way in a short a time as possible.

Conclusion:

The ITP 2019 has now finished, but the knowledge, experiences and skills that we gained are existing, and I am going to apply most of them in different ways and moreover we will be keeping in touch with the ITP team and all the ITP2019 participants.