

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

General Museum teaching approach

I hear and I forget
I see and I remember
I do and I understand

The Children's Museum has a commitment to helping everyone learn from an increasingly tough and demanding world through direct experiences with real materials... We believe in learning by doing... Insights come naturally from simple activities with interesting things.

Mike Spock
Former Director of TCM

(From Stephen Ferber article on The Boston Children's Museum , which bears further reading)

Cultural Program Teaching Goals

-- To develop exhibits, programs and ancillary materials that promote an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity, and that contribute positively to reducing racism and discrimination.

(From Common Goals For Cultural Programs: Long Range Planning)

Multicultural Program Teaching Goals

- To help make the museum a more relevant, useful and interesting institution to a racially, culturally and economically diverse audience, through programs, exhibits and curricula.

- To reduce racism and discrimination
- To promote appreciation and enjoyment of cultural diversity.
- To increase knowledge of cultural similarities and differences.

Japan Program Teaching Goals

- To teach our visitors about another culture's way of life by showing them first hand what it might be like to live in a real Japanese house.
- To introduce to our audience ideas about cultural awareness and ethnocentricity
 1. Develop an awareness and understanding of ethnocentricity, the tendency in all cultures to perceive one's own behavior as not only desirable, but superior. Insights into this can provide learners with increased humility concerning their own assessments of other peoples and cultures.

To be different is not to be wrong.

Learn to look at people through their relationship with their own culture, history and background, rather than only in comparison with one's own culture and background.

All people of all cultures have the same basic needs- food, shelter, health, companionship- and the ways that people fulfill these needs distinguishes one culture from another.

Babies are born without culture: all culture is learned.

Cultural differences can make life both difficult and interesting.

Our own culture is often invisible to us. We can learn about our own culture by learning about another culture.

It is very important for people to learn how to accept and learn about culture because the world is a rapidly shrinking place and these skills will be necessary in the future, not only in preparation for coming in contact with many different people and living in very different places, but in learning how to live together and respect and identify with each other in our future global society.

Consider:

All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people like us are "We",
And everyone else is "They"

But, if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by looking on "We"
As only a sort of "They"

Rudyard Kipling

(Excerpts taken from Asia: Teaching About and Learning From, by Seymour Fersh and Face To Face: The Cross-Cultural Workbook, by Virginia Vogel Zanger)

Recommended reading : Learning About Peoples And Cultures, by Seymour Fersh in East Asian Office

We are currently focusing on such basic issues as:

Differentiating between Japan and China (geography, culture)

Emphasizing the fact that Japan is a modern country with many, many similarities to ours in terms of goods and daily life

Meanwhile teaching about differences as well which are true to life and not stereotypes