

EVALUATION OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S
SATURDAY SCHOOL
at the
VICTORIA and ALBERT MUSEUM

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SUMMARY

This report evaluates the “Saturday School” programme for young people at the Victoria and Albert Museum, run during 2002/3. The programme included masterclass lecture programmes in design and in fashion, as well as smaller group workshops and portfolio building sessions. The programme was diverse, offering stimulating and creative opportunities, and useful training opportunities for the young people attending.

The evaluation used a number of different methods including survey forms for participants to fill in at the end of each session, and informal interviews with attendees, workshop leaders and helpers. The evaluator also attended a number of the workshops and lectures.

Data collected during the evaluation clearly shows the general satisfaction of the young people with the programme, with a significant number of those attending responding in a very positive and enthusiastic way. Many mentioned a variety of learning outcomes, especially skills development.

The staff providing the sessions were dedicated, highly experienced artists and good communicators.

A number of useful ideas for improvement were also highlighted by the evaluation. However in general terms it is clear that the programme was a success both in terms of numbers attending and in levels of satisfaction.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The V&A has been running a pilot series of workshops (2002/3) and master classes on various topics for young people. These events took place on Saturday so the sessions are referred to as the Saturday School programme. They cater for young people aged between 10 -22 year olds, with separate sessions for different age groups (eg 10-13, 14-16 and 17-21).

This report provides the results of an evaluation of this programme, the evaluation focus varying for each type of course but with general aims to find out:

- If the students liked the format of the session
- What kind of provision the different ages wanted?
- Which sessions the students found most beneficial?
- What did they feel they got from the sessions?
- Were the sessions useful insights into the role of the artist/designer/useful ways of learning skills?
- How much the different age groups would be prepared to pay?
- What was their impression of the quality of provision (content, tutor, staff etc) given by the V&A?

2.0 Methodology

The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, using the results to support each other. The statistical data adds “weight” to the more in-depth interviews with young people, adding validity to the results.

Tools used:

- *Evaluation forms* given to students at the end of all Saturday School sessions from the Autumn 2002 until April 2003 (see appendix one for an example). Evaluation sheets were designed by V&A staff and were used to gather quantitative and qualitative information at all the programmes. The data collected included information about where they had heard about the session and their feelings about it.
- *Observation* of young people attending six of the sessions. These were:
 - * Lectures on Design and Advertising and on Fashion
 - * Part of a day each on the portfolios and sketching and sculpture courses
 - * A day each on two of the workshops for gifted pupils
 - * A day on one of the costume workshops

- Short and *informal interviews* with a selection of young people at a selection of the events attended by the evaluator. The evaluator talked to a range of different young people including those of different ages, gender, cultural, and social background. The questions asked were:
 - 1 Are you enjoying the workshop today?
 - 2 Is it interesting?
 - 3 Do you like the way it is structured eg do you like the lecture format?
 - 4 Do you like the way the tutor presents it?
 - 5 Does it help tell you about the way artists work?
 - 6 Has the organisation of the workshop been OK?
 - 7 How much would you pay eg more than was actually charged?
 - 8 What other sessions/topics would you like?

Not all the questions were asked on each occasion, the choice depending on the time available, the session being attended and the initial responses from the interviewee.

- *Telephone interviews* with a small number of young people who attended the workshop masterclasses on fashion, that the evaluator was unable to attend
- *Informal discussion* with a number of course leaders, tutors and helpers and (inclusion of any feedback forms they produced) to find out their feelings about the session.
- A wider range of materials is needed in some sessions to help offer a stimulating and creative experience.

8.0 Overall Discussion of the Saturday Programme

8.1 Reflections on the ages/age groups of students

No specific age group appeared to be a problem. Generally the groupings seem to “gel” and function well together and all ages responded to the activities/lectures. All the outcomes from the workshops and portfolio sessions were to a high standard. Pastoral care for younger ages did not appear to be a problem. Their immaturity only showed in the length of time they could concentrate for. The only comment was that the 16 year olds in the portfolio sessions felt they were at a more advanced stage in terms of career planning than the younger students attending.

All ages enjoyed the lectures, although the statistics do show that those who were older were happier with this approach.

8.2 Different programme approaches

The Saturday School Programme included a range of different approaches, workshop, portfolio session and lecture. The different approaches used all worked well. The masterclasses in lecture format managed to inform many

young people about the profession and how to join it and what to expect if one does. The use of a range of media added diversity and helped inspire the audiences. Most had not heard of the speakers, although some had heard of the companies and so it was not this aspect, which attracted the young people to attend. In fact the surveys show that most young people attended because their teachers had suggested it or given out leaflets. The fashion lectures also worked particularly well because they linked in to a very popular exhibition.

Even more successful were all the practical workshops which all provided opportunities for the young people to develop their own skills and creativity. Younger members in particular found these sessions had great impact with a number saying it was one of the best things they had ever done or that it was something they had not done before.

8.3 Practicalities

A number of practical aspects were highlighted in the evaluation.

- Of note were the good planning and publicity. Refreshments were generally adequate but young people do like water rather than tea or coffee. Most rooms used in the V&A were comfortable and spacious. Most also had a pleasant atmosphere and were well equipped. Although some negative comments were made about the seats in the lecture theatre.
- Several comments were made by tutors for the need for more computers and in particular printers and for wet areas to do more messy sculpture techniques. Again a wider diversity of materials would be helpful. For example more diverse materials could be made available eg in the costume sessions allowing individuals to design accessories or in the sculpture classes to diversify outcomes.
- The helpers used to support the tutors were essential and always effective.
- The display of costume, and final show of work for parents of gifted pupils were all very successful. There is a need for exhibiting the work produced, even if just for parents, as this helps develop a sense of pride within the students.
- There is a need to continue valuing the high quality tutors (and helpers) used for these events. Not only should they be rewarded appropriately, but their opinions on the courses should continue to be used in evaluation. It would also be useful to develop a process of feedback from the lecturers who spoke at the larger lecture format masterclasses.
- Motivation of students in portfolio classes need to be considered when promoting such classes

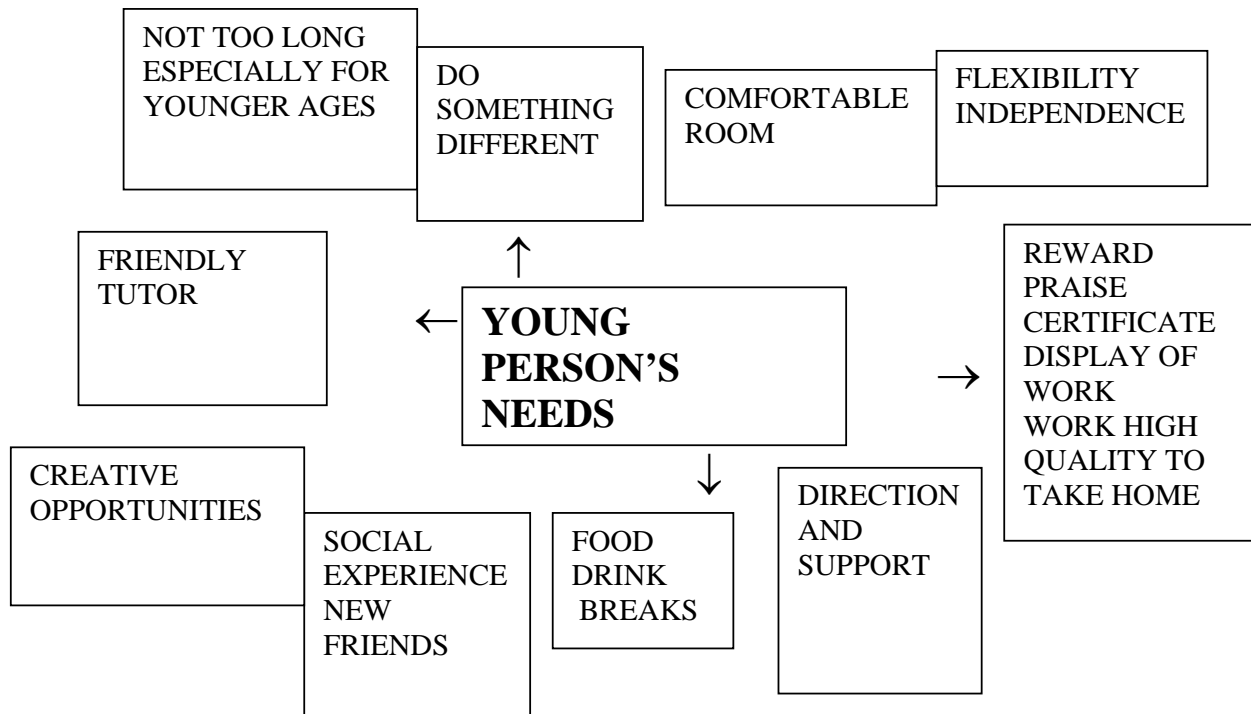
8.4 Quality

The issue of quality was raised in a number of course evaluation aims. The qualitative data collected offers evidence of quality experience, particularly in the practical sessions where young people had the opportunity to extend their own skills and creativity. The question is then, what factors actually support this quality experience? Using the data the evaluator can suggest a number of factors which regular occur and which may relate to the children's experience. The factors shown in the spider diagrams that follow relate to the tutor, the surroundings, the materials, and the basic needs of students. These factors link in well with research elsewhere in museums and thus could be used as a way of assessing quality¹. To do this requires the collection of in-depth data as done in this evaluation, rather than tick boxes. In observing sessions, viewing outcomes, talking to students, tutors and parents, and in the use of surveys data can be collected to assess quality by building a complex picture of the programme.

Firstly there are the needs of the young people themselves. Some of these aspects clearly relate to the quality workshop and quality tutor discussed below. But it should also be pointed out that the basic needs of refreshments, toilets, comfort, and orientation have to be satisfied before any learning will take place². Generally the programme catered for these basic needs. However some young people complained about the lecture room seats and the lack of diversity of teaching approach used during the lecture programmes. Figure 1 highlights the range of needs highlighted in the data that young people had during the Saturday programme.

¹ eg work at Walsall,

² see Hein, the Constructivist Museum where he discusses the Maslow triangle and also what he sees as appropriate factors in supporting visitors.



**Figure 1 Young person's needs
A Saturday school evaluation**

More generally we can also look at a quality workshop/event. Again certain aspects were highlighted in many of the different types of programme offered. Figure 2 illustrates these "quality factors"

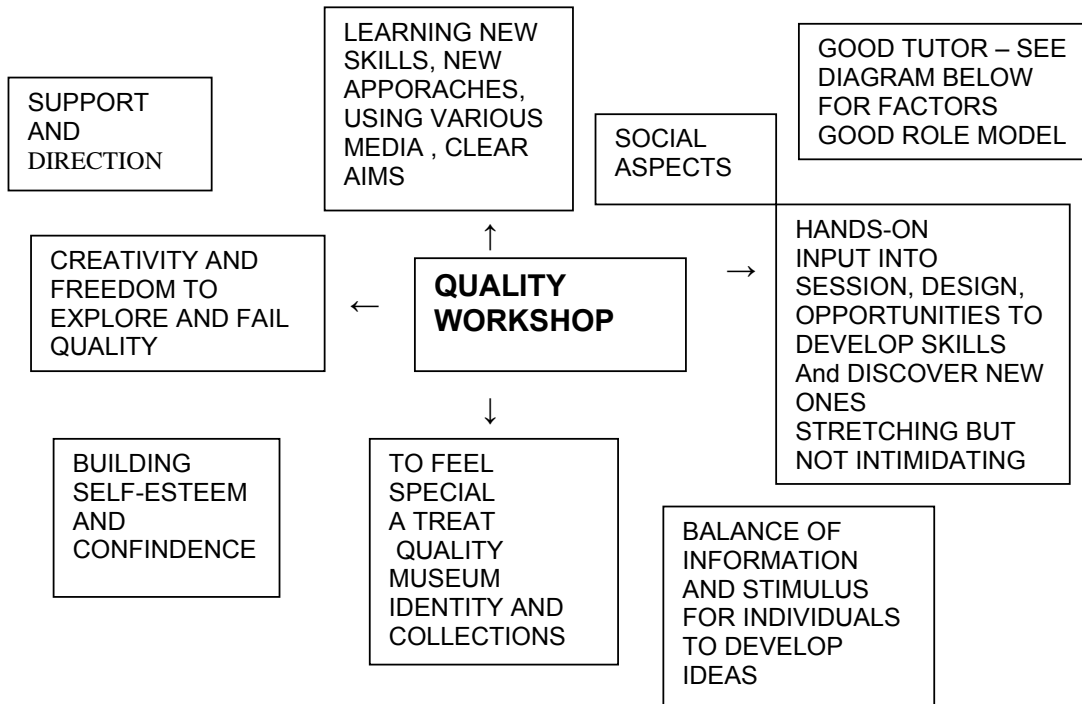


Figure 2 Factors for a quality workshop

This spider diagram illustrates the range of factors that relate to a quality event in the Saturday school programme. A number of these factors can easily be assessed before any event takes place, including the room, the work programme refreshments etc. Assessing some of these, such as a quality tutor might be difficult. Others such as the opportunity to build self-esteem, socialise and be creative relate to the tutor and the approach used. It is therefore clear that the tutor/speakers is a key factor in the success of such events. Using skilled artists is obviously critical in offering appropriate knowledge and skills, and in providing a role model. This aspect could have been made more of with all tutors bringing examples of their work in. As important, though, is the use of artists who have good and appropriate communication skills. Being able to support and direct as well as providing freedom for the young people to be creative is not an easy balancing act. All the tutors managed this very well and many of those lecturing also provided a balance of information and stimulus. Figure 3 summarises the different factors that tutors need to consider when planning work for young people's programmes.

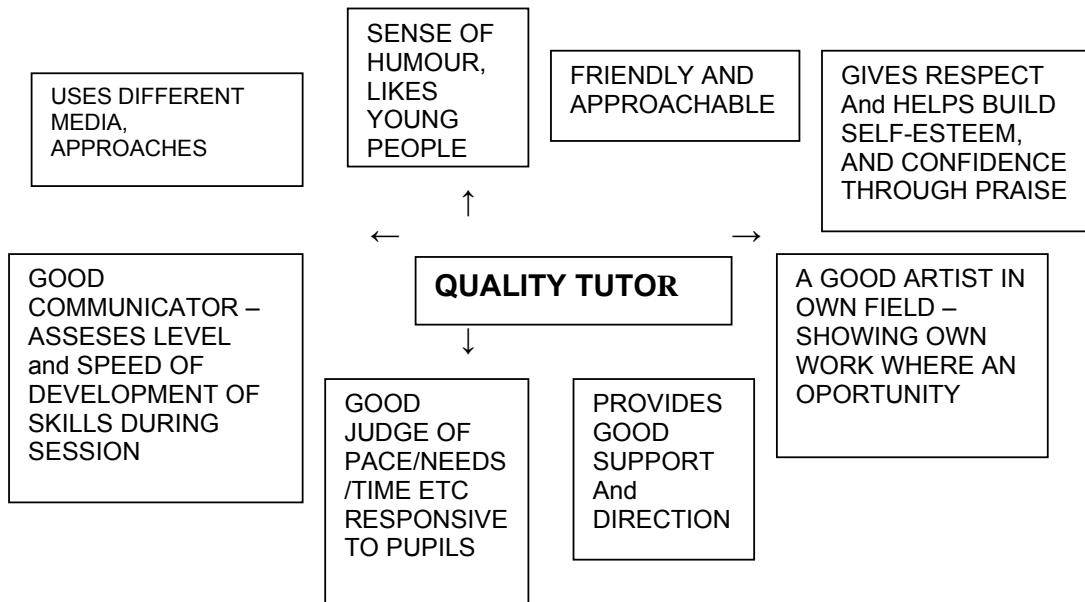


Figure 3 The factors which help to make a quality tutor

As can be seen in Figure 3 the tutors need many different qualities usually developed from much tutoring experience. The need to develop self-esteem and confidence is central to the teaching and to the student's future development. The use of tutors who the institution is familiar with or who can show sympathy with this style of tutoring should be used.

The evidence on the factors relating to quality could be used successfully in future evaluation of programmes as well as aiding in planning and development work.

8.5 Overall recommendations

There have been a series of recommendations through out this report. It is useful that the more important aspects are summarised here so that they can be easily accessed for discussion and future development plans. Firstly though it is important to note how successful this programme, and its range of events, has been.

It is recommended that:

- 1.0 The Victoria and Albert Museum **continues to run a range of events on Saturdays for young people.**
- 2.0 **Internal evaluation should also be continued** as a means of monitoring visitor response. It might be useful to use one evaluation form or a similar set of questions for all types of

events so that comparisons can be made. If quick analysis is needed it might also be more useful to make the answers more closed with opportunities to provide a score or assessment (e.g. poor, adequate, good, very good) for more of the responses.

3.0 Evaluation responses should be sought from all tutors and helpers.

4.0 The range of publicity should be continued and an attempt made to extend the audience so that future programmes do not just cater for returnees. **Adults (parents and teachers) appear to strongly influence the decision** to attend and this should be remembered when considering marketing.

5.0 Links to major exhibitions such as Versace offer good opportunities for marketing.

6.0 This evaluation has provided interesting data through the use of qualitative analysis (using survey forms and other sources such as interviews and observations) and highlights the factors, which relate to a quality experience. This type of approach³ helps to build up evidence of learning in museums and should be used again in the future

7.0 All the different age groups were positive in their feedback on the events. The tutors responded well to the different needs of different ages.

8.0 The V&A needs to consider and discuss changes as a response to the student's feedback. Each section highlighted specific points but frequently mentioned basic needs such as seating and refreshments and the need to offer a diverse range of opportunities within the event. Specific points are raised below.

- Providing more interaction in lecture events, through the use of debate and questioning. Some young people wanted more hands on activities but these would certainly be difficult to provide in such an event. The use of diverse media should be continued
- Providing longer breaks in lecture events
- Provide greater freedom for older students attending workshop events
- Make workshops for older students longer
- Charges can certainly be increased but it is recommended that this might be done gradually
- Portfolio sessions are particularly useful for 16-17 year olds and could be longer although some preferred a later start.
- Motivation of students is important to consider when accepting bookings.
- The gifted sessions offer great opportunities and could be used for a wider range of audiences.

³ Compared with more quantitative approaches

Evaluation of the Saturday School

- The younger ages (10-11) require longer breaks and/or shorter days.
- There is the potential to use a wider range of materials for some of the sessions.

Appendix 1

Other subject areas for young people’s sessions (as suggested by the young people surveyed)

These topics were suggested at the bottom of evaluation forms and were prompted by the question “What other workshops would you like run at the V&A”

Subject	Request frequency
Fashion (including design, pattern cutting)	54 ⁴
Photography	22
Art (including watercolours, sketching)	16
Interior Design	12
Film and set design	8
Architecture	5
Computer animation	4
Victorians	3
Sculpture	3
Music	3
Journalism	3
Jewellery	2
Accessories	2
Engineering	2
History of fashion	2
Art History	2
Drama	1
Ceramics	1
Collage	1
Boxes	1
Video/web	1

This table highlights the range of interests of young people. It also suggests that there area number of courses that would run successfully within the current clientele, let alone new users.

⁴ There is obviously a larger number of requests for fashion as a number of the events focused on the Versace exhibition