

## Museums as informal educational institutions for Children with Special Educational Needs

Dr Georgios Papaioannou

Lecturer in Museology

Museology Lab, Department of Archives, Library Science and Museology

Ionian University, Corfu, Greece

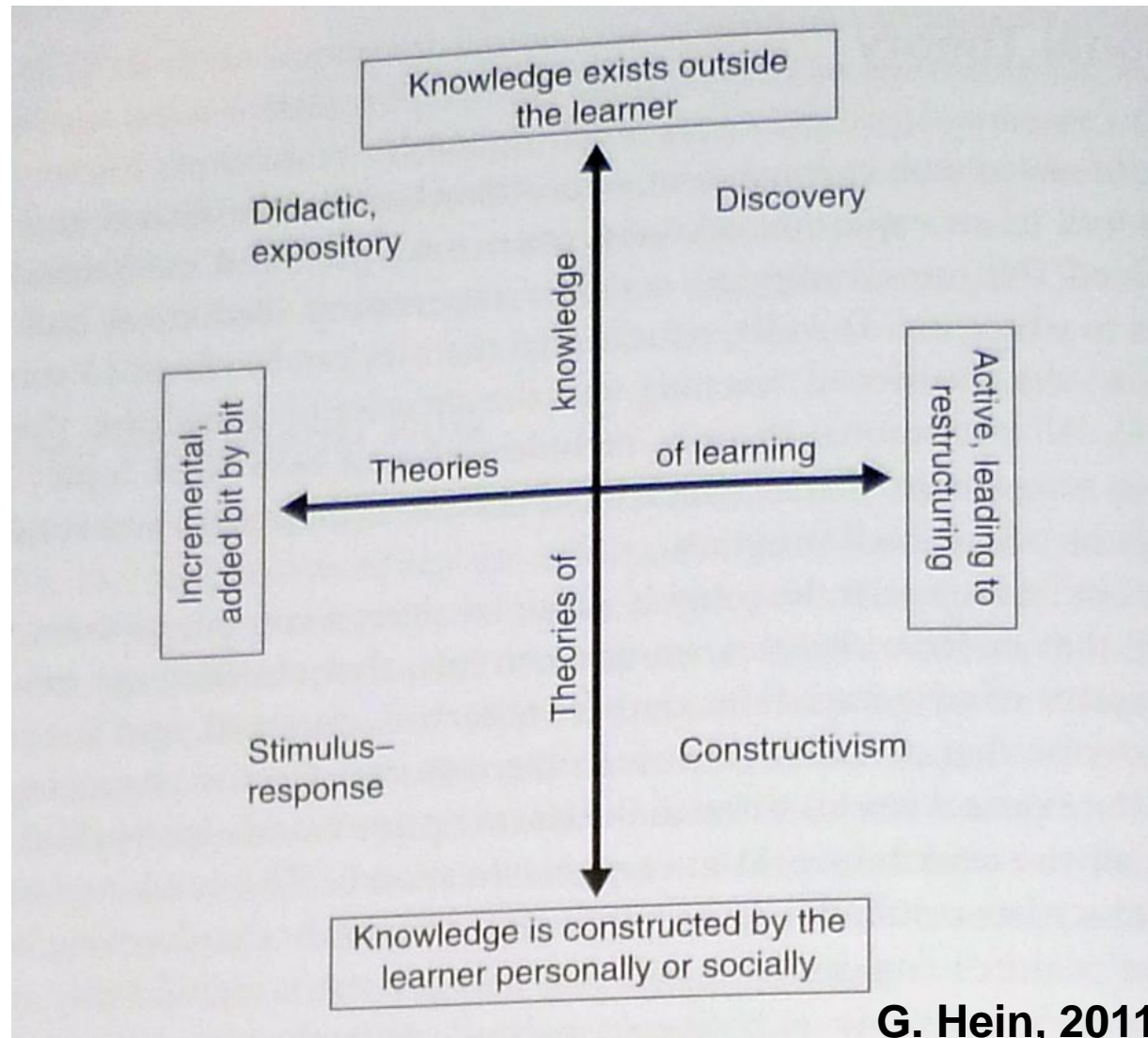
# Aims & objectives – Parts of presentation

- **Aims and objectives**
  - Support the informal educational role of the modern museum.
  - Inclusivity, museums and people with disabilities.
  - Spot the joined collaborative educational efforts of the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education of Thesprotia, the Ionian University, the Archaeological Museum of Igoumenitsa and the local nursery, primary and secondary schools.
- **Parts of this presentation**
  - Museums and people with disabilities: checklists.
  - Designing museum educational programmes for children with disabilities and/or SEN.
  - The Igoumenitsa museum educational endeavour.

# Museums, education and people with disabilities and/or SEN

- Disability does not discriminate. Note that we are all likely to suffer from some form of disability as old age approaches.
- Museum must be open, accessible and hospitable to all.
- Museums must be prepared for visitors with disabilities.
- Museum is an inclusive informal learning environment.
- Museum must provide guided tours and educational programmes for people with disabilities
- Museums must cooperate with SEN education specialists to create special educational programmes

# Museum education theory



G. Hein, 2011

# Checklist: outside the museum

- Orientation for the disabled visitors
  - Appropriate signs and land marks?
  - Marketing material in large text size?
- Access routes/paths
  - Clearly marked (including edges and kerbs)?
  - No obstacles (including signs, gratings, dustbins)?
  - No open windows?
- Ramps/steps
  - Ramps: do they exist everywhere?
  - Sufficiently lit?
- Doors/halls
  - Wide enough for wheelchairs?
  - Not Heavy to open? See-through? Automatic? Not followed by steps?  
Clearly marked when glazed?

# Checklist: inside the museum (1)

- Orientation
- Levels (signage? Services at suitable wheelchair heights?)
- Lifts (handrails? Signs? Buttons at the right height?)
- Seating
- Material and surface finishes
- Lighting (display lighting, not glare)
- Heating
- Disaster management (getting out of the building)
- Induction loupes (for those using hearing aids)
- Signs (legible? Consistent? in Braille?)

## Checklist: inside the museum (2)

- Touch exhibitions / displays / tours / workshops
- Café / Restaurants
- Toilets
- Guided tours
- Proper communication and consultation with disabled people
- Establish advisory panel with SEN experts and specialists
- Employ people with disabilities and/or SEN
- Train the museum staff
- Establish special user groups
- Publicize ways in which the museum assists disabled visitors

# Museum educational programmes for people with disabilities and/or SEN

- Created by **both** the museum specialist and the educator.
- Check the museum with the aforementioned checklists.
- Be clear on aims and objectives.
- Design for content and experience.
- Make it fun!
- Design in three phases:
  - Phase I: Before the visit (preparatory tasks)
  - Phase II: During the visit (activities, fun and breaks)
  - Phase III: After the visit (consolidation activities)
- Pilot, execute, assess, get feedback and redesign.



## **A museum educational endeavour in Igoumenitsa**

- Museum educational seminars for nursery, primary and secondary school teachers, organised and run by the Ionian University, the Archaeological Museum of Igoumenitsa and the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education.
- Museum educational activities for secondary school students, designed by museum specialists and secondary school teachers.
- Museum visits to the Archaeological Museum of Igoumenitsa by the Nursery School and the Primary School for Children with disabilities of Igoumenitsa.
- Research projects, congress papers and publications on the results of museum educational interventions to children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.
- Final comment: Our moto is:

***Making the museum accessible for people with disabilities,  
enhances the standard of facilities for all visitors***

Please do not hesitate to contact us  
and

“multumesc” for your attention

**Dr Georgios Papaioannou**  
**Lecturer in Museology**

Department of Archives, Library Science and Museology  
Ionian University  
Corfu, Greece  
gpapaioa@ionio.gr