



Tacit Knowledge of Art Educators

A qualitative reconstruction of normative orientations of museum educators and insights on quality in art education

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Abstract: What constitutes 'good' art education? This study focuses on the quality measures used by museum educators for their programmes. Following the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 1964), we hypothesise that implicit, conjunctive knowledge and explicit, communicative knowledge both serve as orientations. In a videographic survey at an art museum, we analyse the orientations of four museum educators. Using the Documentary Method (Bohnsack, 2010; Bohnsack & Nentwig-Gesemann, 2010), we examine the implicit, conjunctive knowledge that guides their actions, as captured in our recordings. The result is a typology of pedagogical orientations in the museum: (1) 'The museum is not an abstract, distant and unpleasant place', (2) 'The lifeworld of children', and (3) 'Children are artists, too – but not really'. The process of orientation involves balancing these concepts, which are sometimes contradictory. This understanding of professional orientations leads to a redefinition of the profession as the reconciliation of conflicting orientations. Therefore, professional learning should involve reflection on this process, which can be guided by research methods.

Keywords: *Art education; Documentary method; Museum education; Professionalism; Reflection; Theory-practice interaction*

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Introduction

Today, educational programmes for different audiences in museums and galleries are widespread and commonplace. Museum education is a significant field within art education (see, for the situation in Germany: Hofmann, 2016; Commandeur et al., 2016; Czech et al., 2014). In the context of museums and galleries, art education mostly consists of guided tours and workshops in art museums. From an educational science perspective, it is important to understand how 'good' art education in museums and galleries can be defined. As we cannot find a shared, defined understanding of quality, we have chosen to take an ethnographic approach, searching for concepts of quality in museum education within the field itself. We explore the different orientations to quality adopted by museum educators, considering these as not only individual but also collective, “conjunctive” orientations (Bohnsack, 1991; Mannheim, 1964). As these orientations constitute tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967), they must be made explicit through an interpretative process. Our research question is: What implicit, conjunctive orientations can be found among museum educators in educational situations?

Quality in Art Education – a relational approach

No consensus about „good“ art education, but different concepts of quality

But what does 'quality' mean in the context of art education, particularly in museums and galleries? This so-called 'key concept' (Fuchs, 2014) is very vague:

- Often, no standards or guidelines exist (Hofmann, 2020a, pp. 79–90).

- If guidelines do exist, they are often contradictory. For example, consider the completely different quality catalogues of the German Association of Museums, the German Association of Museum Education and the German Association of Art Education (Hofmann, 2020a). A more detailed overview can be found in the following sources: Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung (1996); Deutscher Museumsbund & Bundesverband Museumspädagogik (2020); Deutscher Museumsbund und Bundesverband Museumspädagogik (2008).

- In other cases, the guidelines are vague. For example, the German Association of Museums' guidelines demand 'variety of methods and formats', without clarifying any benchmarks or providing guidance on how to select appropriate methods and formats from this variety (Deutscher Museumsbund & Bundesverband Museumspädagogik, 2020).

- Sometimes, standards are disputed. Discussions about the definition and educational purpose of museums held by the International Council of Museums in recent years have revealed a variety of opposing concepts of museum education (see the process and results of the discussion in: International Council of Museums, 2023). In fact, there is no consensus on what constitutes 'good' museum education (Robinson, 2017).

Quality is a relational and normative concept. Museum educators must decide which idea of quality they relate to and which benchmarks they relate to within this idea of quality:

Therefore, we cannot expect to find clear concepts of quality; rather, we must examine how educators handle the challenge of deciding what constitutes quality. As there is no consensus in the field of museum education about what constitutes “good” education, can we apply concepts of “good” education from other fields? Following this idea, we find that even the concept of educational quality is not agreed upon (Hofmann, 2020a). Is it about outcomes, legitimation, or subject orientation (Cheng & Tam, 1997)? Educators can adopt one of these three perspectives according to their interests, needs, and structural logics (Hofmann, 2019, 2020a).

- Outcome and consistent quality in an input-output model (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008);
- Legitimation and further development of the field;
- Educational aspirations, subject specifics, and a subject-oriented perspective of 'doing a good job' through 'good educational processes'.

In all three cases, quality is an evaluative and prescriptive concept (Sauerwein & Klieme, 2016, p. 462). It is used 'for the evaluative, objectified assessment of the quality, value or general level of an object (in the broad sense)' (Terhart, 2000, p. 814, emphasis original). This presupposes a reference base, a benchmark or standard (Terhart, 2000, p. 814). References for quality are constantly evolving in scientific discourse. For instance, after years of emphasising individual learning, communities are now receiving more attention (Gupta, 2025). While scientific discourse is ongoing, professional discourse 'must always be pragmatically terminated in the interest of administrative and pedagogical capacity for action' (Sauerwein & Klieme, 2016, p. 468).

Quality is a relational and normative concept. Museum educators must decide which idea of quality they relate to, and which benchmarks they associate with it.

Therefore, rather than expecting to find clear concepts of quality, we must examine how educators handle the challenge of deciding what constitutes quality. Quality is both relational and normative. Museum educators must decide which idea of quality they relate to, and which benchmarks they relate to within this idea of quality.

Given this, we cannot hope to find clear concepts of quality. Instead, we must examine how educators handle the challenge of deciding what constitutes quality. If museum educators have to choose quality standards and these standards are often vague and rarely written down, how do they proceed? What 'orientations' do they relate to, and how? Is there a collective understanding of quality in museum education beyond the individual level?

Educators relating to 'conjunctive orientations' – the documentary method by Karl Mannheim and Ralf Bohnsack as a theoretical framework

We assume that educators strive to provide 'good' art education, suggesting there is an specific individual understanding of quality in art education. Following the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 1964) and the theory of professions as social worlds (Nittel, 2011), this understanding is both individual and conjunctive; museum educators share a tacit understanding of quality (Polanyi, 1967). This is because social groups acquire knowledge through a shared space of experience (e.g. milieu, institution, education, generation, professional group).

According to the Documentary Method (Bohnsack, 2010; Bohnsack & Nentwig-Gesemann, 2010), within the sociology of knowledge, we can distinguish between 'communicative knowledge' and 'conjunctive knowledge'. The former is explicitly known and can be expressed in words. The second is implicitly known, acquired through experience, and guides action. It is common among certain groups, e.g. teenagers in rural villages, doctors in Western hospitals, and museum educators. This is conjunctive knowledge because it is acquired implicitly in 'spaces of conjunctive experience'. For example, working as an educator at an art gallery and spending time at art exhibitions and meeting people in museum cafés creates knowledge of how visitors perceive art. This knowledge is acquired implicitly and is shared by people who have had similar experiences. It also guides action, even though museum educators also have explicit knowledge about art, visitors and education. Professional action is highly influenced by implicit, conjunctive knowledge (Mannheim, Bohnsack).

Following the differentiation between implicit and explicit, orientations can be differentiated into 'schemes of orientation' and 'frames of orientation'. 'Schemes of orientation' consist of communicative knowledge, i.e. explicit guidelines, and strive towards certain goals ('in order to'). In contrast, the 'frames of orientation' are more action-guiding. They are implicitly known and derived from conjunctive experiences (motives 'because of'). The Documentary Method aims to examine these implicit orientations, making them explicit, in order to uncover conjunctive knowledge and characterise the group that shares it.

The study assumes that museum educators have an implicit understanding of 'good' education, which can be made explicit using the Documentary Method. The outcome of the study may not be what 'good' museum education should be, but rather what ideas of 'good' museum education are common and shared among educators.

Methods

Research question and research design: Orientations of educators

For the research project, this means: We will focus on how educators handle communicative knowledge, especially conjunctive knowledge, which are the implicit orientations they share with others. As the latter is more action-guiding, the research question is: what tacit conjunctive orientations can be found among museum educators in educational situations?

The project aims to elaborate on and explain such conjunctive knowledge about quality using the Documentary Method (Bohnsack, 2010; Bohnsack & Nentwig-Gesemann, 2010). This will enable us to provide a reconstruction of the quality standards that are empirically present in the field.

The Documentary Method is a qualitative empirical research method, meaning that pedagogical actions were observed and the orientations of the art educators were interpreted. The Documentary Method follows an ethnographic approach, striving for an insider's view. It also takes an interpretative approach, reconstructing meaning in an empirical way based on data, but not on a large scale or in terms of numbers, focusing instead on characteristics. In a dialogue-based, multi-stage process, the project addressed the following question: What are the orientations of art educators in museums?

Research subject: Guided tours and workshops with children in an art museum

The project "Pedagogical Quality in Art Education (paedQ)", which was funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung, was a collaboration between a university (Fliehdner University of Applied Sciences) and an art museum (Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen).

Participants

The most important participants are four museum educators. In Germany, they are usually freelance and have typically graduated in art history, fine arts, or art education. The museum educators we met for the project had good relationships with the museum's employees, who appreciated their informal communication style. They develop concepts for workshops, work out content and methods, and supervise daycare groups, all of which they have done for several years. The team of freelancers told us that they mostly see their colleagues as friends, meeting at events in 'the art world', where they talk about art in general and their jobs in particular. All of them hold an MA or PhD in art education, art history, or general education. One educator also identifies as an artist. Two educators graduated from the same university at the same time, the third from a different university at the same time, and the fourth from

a different university 20 years later. Three of the educators have worked in museums for over 30 years, and one for around 20 years.

The freelancers' participation in the research project was motivated by a desire for professional advancement, viewing participation in a research project as a form of professional development or continuing professional development. Participation also continued a tradition of advancement for the entire educational department (including employees and freelancers). However, participation was also driven by the notion of a directive, as power lies with the institution. The invitation to participate in the research project came from the museum. The museum was acting in cooperation with a university of equal power.

For these reasons relating to unequal power, we designed a dialogue-based, multi-stage research process. We were keen to encourage and maintain the participation of freelance museum educators. This approach was important for ethical reasons. On the other hand, good cooperation in the research project was crucial to making the educators' implicit knowledge explicit.

Situations

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is a public art collection housed in a large 18th-century building in the centre of Düsseldorf. As the museum has decided to focus on early childhood education, it has built a special room with custom-made furniture called the 'Little Studio'. Day-care groups with children aged 3 to 6 usually visit the museum, where they enjoy a 45-minute guided tour led by a freelance museum educator and a 45-minute workshop in the 'Little Studio'.

Research team

The author of this article initiated the research, inviting the head of education at the museum to work as project leader alongside them. The museum's early childhood team consisted of four freelance educators. They were invited to participate by the museum and, having consented, were seen as part of the research team. Finally, some of the research team were students from various courses at the university. The analysis was conducted by the author and two groups of students. One group of 23 students conducted the formative and reflective interpretation over three months. Eight students formed a longer-term interpretation group, continuing work on case comparison, typology, a final discussion and publication.

Research process

The videographic survey involved four art educators conducting workshops with four daycare groups in total. Four of the workshops were recorded using an interaction-guided camera and each workshop lasted between one and a half and two hours. Later, the material was viewed together with the corresponding art educator in a first pass through the material. The evaluation was then carried out using formative and reflective interpretations, as well as case comparisons and typologies (for a detailed description of the procedure, see Geißler, 2020; for a general

description of the documentary method, see Asbrand, 2011; Bohnsack, 2011; Nentwig-Gesemann, 2010). The results were then validated communicatively (Mayring, 2016).

In line with the postulate that 'the object of human science research is always humans, subjects', The subjects affected by the research question must be the starting point and goal of the research' (Mayring, 2016, p. 144), as well as qualitative-empirical research demanding a focus on the perspectives of the actors and viewing research as communication (Flick, 2017, pp. 28–29). Great importance was therefore attached to theory-practice interaction. The research process was therefore designed so that the educators' perspectives were not 'discovered' from the outside, but rather explicated together following several steps:

- First visit of the students/researchers to the museum to familiarise themselves with the research field.
- Opening event with project leaders and art educators only: presentation of the research project; alignment of interests; group discussion on orientations in art mediation.
- Workshop with students/researchers and art educators to get to know each other and form research teams of students/researchers and art educators. Interviews about orientations in art mediation will be conducted and documented as field notes.
- Videographic observation (conducted by students/researchers) of art education in the museum, led by freelance museum educators.
- Video workshop: first viewing of the videos by students/researchers and art educators. Generating contextual information (e.g. 'I decided to talk to this group about this painting because...'), documented as field notes.
- • Analysis process: evaluation of videos following the documentary method (Bohnsack, 2011; Nohl, 2010). This includes formulative and reflective interpretations, case comparisons and typologies. The formulative interpretation focused on the topical structure of the material, asking merely: 'What is said or expressed?' The reflective interpretation focuses on the style and *modus operandi* with which the topic is elaborated, asking: 'How is it said or expressed?' During the analysis process, we first generated a formulative interpretation in the form of a table of contents for each video, describing what was said or done to express the educators' orientations. This was done for all four videos. Then, we generated a reflective interpretation of selected sequences. The selection comprised sequences in which the educators' orientations could be analysed particularly well. This means: 1) passages with high interaction density; 2) opening passages (as these reveal how participants frame a topic themselves, without external guidelines); 3) contrasting sequences, i.e. segments where differing positions clash, or where the group shifts from a general consensus to a contrary stance. The reflective interpretation was conducted over the course of several data sessions in which the video sequences were viewed and analysed for verbal and non-verbal expressions. A group of 23 students, supervised by the author, analysed every sequence to identify orientations in an interpretation process. Chapter 3 provides an example of this process. At the end of this process, a set of orientations was created for each case. The next step was a case comparison,

in which the orientations of each case were reviewed by a smaller interpretation group of eight students. Finally, a typology was created; this process is documented in Chapter 3.2.

- A common final discussion was held, in which the students/researchers and the art educators interpreted the results and came up with a common conception of the publication. This part was crucial in creating the final results. The university's interpretation group and the museum educators had to agree on the results. We held a final joint discussion, recorded it, and used the contributions as comments or context in the results section of the project publication. This approach avoided identical statements and created more contextualised results.
- Preparing a book publication (Hofmann, 2020b) that clearly presents different situated partial perspectives (Haraway, 1988) on the research process and results, and illustrates the processual and perspective-bound nature of the insights.

Results

Interpretation of Data

First, we gathered videographic material that we expected would reveal tacit knowledge. We then proceeded with 'formulative interpretation' to gain an understanding of the content of the interaction ('What is said?'), followed by 'reflective interpretation' to reconstruct the participants' shared perspectives ('How is it said?'). This precise interpretation of how the participants talk or interact provides insights into what they consider to be 'normal' and 'common'. Finally, a case comparison creates a typology.

As we adopted a qualitative-empirical approach, extensive interpretations of the three cases were conducted. This article cannot display all the interpretations, but provides excerpts connected to key results. While "formulative interpretation" is a quick step that provides a kind of "table of contents" for the videos, "reflective interpretation" is time-consuming and results in longer texts. Looking at case 2, for example, we can see the interpretation process in a sequence where the museum educator talks with the children in front of large portraits of women. The 'reflective interpretation' focuses on the question 'How is it said?', meaning we have to analyse all kinds of meaningful interactions, such as the educator's speech, gestures and facial expressions. We also have to reflect on the characteristics of these interactions. How does the educator speak, ask questions and comment on answers? Combining all of these elements in the sequence, we created an orientation called 'The lifeworld of children'. This means that the educator considers the terms, actions and perceptions of children's everyday lives. When talking to the children about the portraits, the educator starts to refer to the human body and face, which the children find easy to follow. Throughout the sequence, the educator leads a conversation with the children, listening to their ideas and reflections and building on their contributions. She uses gestures and facial expressions extensively.

However, she also refers to the artworks and leads the conversation in a direct manner, aiming for specific topics and conclusions. This makes the theme 'The lifeworld of children' ambiguous. The educator also takes a stance that diverges from this orientation. We observed this throughout all video sequences in all cases. A reflective

interpretation was conducted for each case, and such ambivalence was frequently observed in all three cases. The next step was to compare the cases and create a typology:

Typology of pedagogical orientations in the museum

Examining the reconstructed collective orientations of art educators reveals a duality. This means that we found orientations that act as both positive and negative counter-horizons in terms of the documentary method. In other words, these are aspects to which art educators orient themselves, but also distance themselves from simultaneously. This dual nature is striking and evidently characteristic of art education activities in museums.

The orientations of museum educators can be described using the following typology:

- Duality 1: The museum is NOT an abstract, distant and unpleasant place.

Museum educators almost unanimously reject the idea of the museum as an abstract, distant and unpleasant place, or of a museum tour as a monologue. Instead, they transform the museum into an experiential space (Hofmann & Preuss, 2017) and explicitly state this. For the introduction, the museum educator in case 2 arranged cushions in a circle in the middle of the museum entry hall. The children can sit there, much like in a kindergarten ("Let's sit down comfortably first", says the educator in case 3). She introduces herself by her first name (which is very uncommon in Germany) and asks the children their names and if they are well. After asking the children what a museum is and what they can see there, the educator invites them to touch the columns in the hall, thereby signifying that a museum can be explored physically.

This is in stark contrast to the definition of a museum that the educators provide at the same time. In case 2, the conversation sequence starts with: 'What can we see in a museum?' The children don't know. The educator answers: 'Everything to do with art.' (00:02:34). She emphasises the word 'art'. She pauses briefly before saying it, then emphasises it by making an opening gesture with her hands, as if describing something big. This gesture resembles the position that preachers take when addressing their congregations. As she continues, it remains unclear what 'art' means. She emphasises that art encompasses more than just 'pictures' (00:02:29) and comprises 'all sorts of things' (00:02:32). She says that the word 'art' is a difficult one. The museum and the artworks it contains are described as something almost holy.

This means that a particular 'definition of the museum' is presented, while a completely different 'practice of the museum' is realised. Although art educators use the museum as an experiential space, the concept of the museum as a 'white cube' (O'Doherty, 1976) is frequently referenced. They emphasise that the museum is a special, neutral, quasi-lifeless 'space of art', yet they encourage playful, bodily and childlike activities within it.

- Duality 2: The lifeworld of children.

On the one hand, there is a clear demarcation: The museum is not like the kindergarten. In case 3, the museum educator begins the introductory conversation by asking, 'What is different here compared to your kindergarten?', repeating the

question as answers are given to encourage further responses. She repeats the question a third time later on. She concludes that the museum is different. It is not a place where children usually go; it has completely different rooms to those at home or in the kindergarten, and children have to behave differently here than in their usual environment. In case 2, the children must hold onto a long rope and walk through the museum one behind the other. This means they cannot run through the halls or touch the artworks. As soon as the group arrives at the point where the educator wants them to view the next artwork, the children must lay the rope down one metre from the artwork. This creates a barrier between the children and the artworks.

At the same time, however, there is also an element of interaction with the children, for example through the use of 'child-friendly' methods such as tactile exploration of the columns. This is similar to activities that normally take place in a kindergarten when the educator in case 3 says, 'All the children repeat what I say and imitate me. Everything I do.' She holds her arms forward and wiggles her hands, and the children do the same. She then brings her hands to her eyes, shaping a circle with her thumbs and forefingers like glasses. With these 'glasses', she repeatedly turns to the left and right. While performing this movement, she says, 'In the museum, can I look...' First she lifts her arms up, then down, and walks with her arms moving back and forth alternately. She says, '...what the artists build...' (in German it's a rhyme) and so on. She is teaching them a kind of lullaby that clearly belongs to the world of children. It is astonishing that both orientations are used. The museum is both different from and similar to the lifeworld of children.

- Duality 3: Children are artists, too – but not really

As mentioned previously, we found an ambiguous or dialectical attitude towards artists. On the one hand, children are referred to as and addressed as artists. The lullaby in case 3, which starts with 'In the museum', describes what artists do and ends with 'And I say: I'm able to do that, too!' Thus, children are taught that there is equality between what artists do ('building', 'thinking', 'collecting', 'painting') and what they do. The final sentence further emphasises this equality: 'I'm able to do that too'. Furthermore: At the end of the guided tour and at the start of the workshop in the studio, the educators announce: 'Now, we will work as artists, too.'

However, it is also made clear: Children are not like artists. In case two, the educator explains what a museum is and says that paintings are exhibited there. One child asks: 'Will our paintings be exhibited in the museum too?' The answer is 'no', delivered as if it were a matter of course. In cases 2 and 3, the journey from the exhibition to the studio is presented as a transformation, a miracle of sorts. 'That's the studio where the artist works. That's where we go.' However, she explains that the children have to perform a magic trick to open the door. She, the educator, will open the door with her keys ("because I can't do magic"), but the children might be able to. They just have to say a magic spell and see if the door opens. Before walking through the studio door, she tells the children: 'Well, I hope to see you later. If you want to make an art column, everyone take a step back. I'm curious to see you again. I'd be happy if you opened the door.' Before she disappears into the studio, she waves to the children. The children murmur spells and, after a little while, the door opens to their great amazement. (VM 00:46:40) The trick is that there is an electrical

switch in the studio that opens the door. This simple mechanism is staged in a spectacular way: Getting into the studio is only possible by magic. This means that children are not 'naturally' artists who go to the studio. They have to perform magic to get there.

As with the other orientations, this one is ambivalent.

Coping with ambiguous orientations

Overall, the educators' activity proves to be one of mediation. It is not an activity in which clear guidelines lead to specific actions. Rather, museum educators have to cope with ambiguous, dialectical orientations.

Quality, as a relational concept, means the following here: The educators base their actions on different scales, even contrary ones. They do not decide on one of these orientations alone (which would allow them to act in a stringent way), but rather practise a kind of dialectics that unpacks this term more clearly between the contrary orientations. So, educators use double-orientations.

In terms of the Documentary Method, these double orientations can be differentiated. We can distinguish between 'schemes of orientation' and 'frames of orientation' (Bohnsack et al., 2013, p. 179). Schemes of orientation represent 'communicative knowledge', i.e. knowledge about specific orders or expectations, such as curricula or standard operating procedures. Before walking through the studio door, she tells the children: 'Well, I hope to see you later. If you want to make an art column, everyone take a step back. I'm curious to see you again. I'd be happy if you opened the door.' Before she disappears into the studio, she waves to the children. The children murmur spells and, after a little while, the door opens to their great amazement. (VM 00:46:40) The trick is that there is an electrical switch in the studio that opens the door. This simple mechanism is staged in a spectacular way: Getting into the studio is only possible by magic. This means that children are not 'naturally' artists who go to the studio. They have to perform magic to get there.

As with the other orientations, this one is ambivalent. Educators are oriented towards the idea that children are like artists, but at the same time they are oriented against this idea, turning away from it more or less explicitly:

- Double figure 2, 'The lifeworld of children', is based on common knowledge about children, kindergartens and the environments that are most suitable for them. This is a form of communicative knowledge. For example, educators explicitly know that children love lullabies. It is therefore a scheme of orientation, meaning that educators use it for a specific purpose. The dual nature of the orientation 'The Lifeworld of Children' is that there are two purposes: One is to distinguish between museums and kindergartens. In this case, the scheme of orientation is used negatively, serving as an opposite (Bohnsack calls this a 'negative counter-horizon', which provides clear orientation). The other purpose is to make the museum more like a kindergarten, so that the children feel at home. In this way, the scheme of orientation is used positively. Although there is a difference in using this scheme of orientation (negative/positive), it is the same scheme. They are purpose-rational and serve as orientations 'in order to' (Bohnsack et al., 2013, p. 246). Frames of orientation represent merely group- and milieu-specific 'conjunctive knowledge', sedimented into a habitus

and forming action in a very direct way. They are orientations 'because of'. Using these terms, we can be more precise.

- Double figure 1, 'The museum is not an abstract, distant and unpleasant place', makes mediation more complicated as it consists of different types of orientation: a scheme of orientation ('in order to') and a frame of orientation ('because of'). Educators use widespread knowledge of museums as abstract, distant and unpleasant places to explain what museums are. They use this explanation as a negative counter-reference to dissociate their concept of a museum from this widespread knowledge. They want to do something different. This 'something different' is merely a frame of orientation. The experience of a museum where you can explore exciting things; a museum as an experiential space. We can assume that people who work in museums have experienced them as exciting places. This means they share tacit, conjunctive knowledge that informs their professional actions; they act the way they do because of their experience of museums as experiential spaces.

The mediation between the explicit, communicative counter-horizon of a museum as an abstract, distant and unpleasant place, and the implicit, conjunctive knowledge of a museum as an experiential space, may not always be easy, but it is possible. Of course, there are people in museums who adhere to the idea that museums are white cubes where visitors must behave quietly, staidly, thoughtfully and docilely. There are certainly orders not to touch objects. However, when the educators' explicit and implicit knowledge coincide, it is possible to mediate such conflicts.

- Double figure 3, 'Artists are children too — but not really', consists of an orientation scheme and an orientation frame. However, as these orientations are opposite and have a different character, mediation becomes complicated.

Firstly, many actions in this regard are intentional and purposeful (e.g. going to the atelier or referring to an artist as 'Tomas'), and thus follow a scheme of orientation. The educators present children and artists as equals in order to encourage appreciation of the children. However, more unconsciously and immediately, the educators are aware that children and artists are usually not treated the same way in the art world. The educators have conjunctive knowledge, which serves as a frame of orientation. Due to their shared experience and tacit knowledge that the art world distinguishes between children and artists, they follow this knowledge more directly and have to differentiate between the two groups. This leads to conflict, discrepancy and contradiction in their professional actions.

Striving for „quality“ means mediating between different orientations – different in content and in character

In our investigation, we found that educators have to cope with different orientations. However, it is important to understand how they differ.

There are differences in extent. The educators in this study use a 'scheme of orientation' (communicative knowledge, explicit, in order to), but use it for both negative and positive orientations. In the guided tours investigated, they refer to and avert from the lifeworld of children. The mediation that has to be done is either to take a certain position on this spectrum or to generate a dialectical process.

There are differences in the character of orientation, but the content coincides. The educators in this study use both types of orientation — the 'scheme of orientation' (communicative knowledge, explicit, in order to) and the 'frame of orientation' (conjunctive knowledge, implicit, because of) — and both match. This was observed in the concept 'the museum is not an abstract, distant and unpleasant place'. Mediation is only necessary with people outside the situation. To people who believe that museums are abstract places, the educators must explain that they agree, but not when working with children. Within the situation, no mediation is necessary. The orientation of the educators in this study is consistent in both explicit and implicit knowledge.

However, there are differences in the character of orientation, and the orientations differ in content too. If there is an orientation towards communicative knowledge (here, that children should be treated as artists) and an orientation towards conjunctive knowledge (here, that children are not treated as artists), the mediation becomes complicated because they differ. In this case, explicit and implicit knowledge diverge, and there is a difference between the theoretical concepts that the educators in this study appreciate, and their contrary experiences and habits. This presents a challenge to the professionalisation of museum educators.

Regarding the typology of the double-figures and the findings about three coping strategies, we can conclude about quality in art education at the museum:

As quality is a relational concept, it is important which relations are made by educators. We found a certain number in this case, most important the double-figures „The museum is NOT an abstract, distant and unpleasant place“, „The lifeworld of children“ and „children are artists, too – but not really“. It is interesting that these orientations appear in a ambivalence or duality. We did not find clear orientations that led to clear action. Instead, orientations of art educators at the museum are more complex.

If we differentiate between orientations, there are schemes of orientation (communicative and explicit knowledge, intended to achieve something) and frames of orientation (conjunctive and implicit knowledge, intended because of something). As the educators in this study have to cope with their different, sometimes opposing, orientations, three combinations can be identified: (1) One type of orientation (here: scheme of orientation, lifeworld of children) and two opposite ways (referring to/averting from); (2) Two types of orientation (here: scheme of orientation, museum is not a white cube; frame of orientation, museum is not a white cube), which coincide; and (3) Two types of orientation (here: scheme of orientation, lifeworld of children; frame of orientation, museum is not a white cube), which do not coincide. (2) Two types of orientation (here: scheme of orientation 'museum is not a white cube' and

frame of orientation 'museum is not a white cube'), which coincide. (3) Two types of orientation that differ in content.

The educators in this study have to cope with this. So their job involves a kind of mediation. The challenge lies not only in the different orientations in terms of extent and content, but also in their character: This involves communicative and conjunctive knowledge, as well as explicit and tacit knowledge based on experience that is common among art educators.

This means that the professionalism of art education in museums must not only deal with conflicting aims, but also address the clash of different orientations that differ not only in content, but also in character.

Discussion

Scope and Limitations

The research design is both ethnographic and qualitative, which affects more than just the number of cases or interpreters. Furthermore, the roles of the participants and researchers were complex. The museum educators, in particular, were both observers and observed. As the method aimed to explore the educators' tacit and implicit knowledge, it was crucial to include their interpretations and address them as both experts in their field and owners of tacit knowledge, which was to be explored using a scientific method and a group of researchers. The educators' involvement influenced the analysis, which was evident throughout the process. The results presented in this text are not facts, but rather the situated, partial perspectives (Haraway, 1988) of various individuals. Further research is needed to investigate how museum educators cope with this situation in their professional interactions.

The detailed, exploratory research design can provide deeper insights and findings that can inform future research. It should be acknowledged that this study was conducted in one museum, involved only four educators and four daycare groups, and focused on children aged approximately 3–6 years. It is possible that the shared orientations may reflect the culture of this particular museum rather than that of museum educators more generally.

At this point, the findings are consistent with the discourse and insights from professional practice. There are no clear, straightforward views on quality in art education at museums – educators must mediate between different approaches. The theoretical framework is adequate in that it provides a useful distinction between these approaches. Further research should be more extensive and include a wider range of museums. Building on our initial typology and the categorisation derived from the Documentary Method, future studies could develop a typology incorporating various biographical or academic aspects, different types of museums, and different regions. As an exploratory study, this investigation provides a reasonable basis for further research into quality in art education at museums.

Perspectives on professionalism among art educators at museums: Does professionalism lie in mediating conflicting orientations?

It is evident that the art educators involved in this study operate professionally by mediating conflicting demands (Schuetze, 2000). Our findings allow us to specify this further. The demands are not only conflicting in terms of those from others (directors, curators, teachers, children, etc.), but also in terms of the educators' own orientations. We can also localise the conflicts more precisely: (1) the spectrum of referring to and averting from specific communicative knowledge; (2) joint communicative and conjunctive knowledge that differs from that of others; and (3) divergent orientations in communicative knowledge and conjunctive knowledge. When explicit and implicit knowledge, experience and habitus do not coincide, it is challenging to mediate between them. Our findings can expand Schuetze's and Nittel's (Nittel, 2011) model of professionalism: Conflicts about orientations and the challenges of mediating them are not only a matter of their content, but also of their character.

Incidentally: Reflecting on our shared research and reflection process (see chapter "Research Process"), we can also recognise and process this mediation performance reflexively. The educators in this study were part of the interpretation process. When we came together in workshops, they discussed their difficulties in dealing with different orientations, identified certain conflicts, and explained their coping strategies. This leads us to conclude that museums educators have a potential for reflexivity and professionalism that museums and researchers should build upon.

Conclusions: Redefining Professional Learning for Museum Education

The results show that the quality of art education is characterised by certain common orientations, i.e. conjunctive ones. These orientations can be defined more precisely, and their origin can be identified (see chapter "Results"). Our study provided initial insights into these orientations, their origins, and how museum educators handle them. Further research may expand upon these findings.

Furthermore, our project promotes discussions about professional learning. We hypothesise that the process of making implicit, tacit knowledge more explicit could facilitate a discourse on pedagogical quality. The methods we used can inspire reflection on, determination of, and further development of pedagogical quality in art education. This raises questions about what professional learning for museum education might entail (Tran et al., 2019). Our findings may contribute to these considerations by: Professional learning that (1) incorporates tacit knowledge of museum educators and (2) focuses on reflection on this knowledge requires a clear, distinct methodological framework. A research project can provide such a framework, as can a research methodology. 'In this sense, it is not about an external assessment of quality, but about determining with the various stakeholders which factors and conditions promote quality' (Unterberg, 2018, p. 13). Among these factors, implicit, tacit knowledge is an important one.

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Declarations:**Author Name:** Hofmann, Fabian**Department:** Early childhood art education**University, Country:** Flinedner Fachhochschule Dusseldorf**Email:** hofmann@fliedner-fachhochschule.de**Conflict of Interest:** none. This work was supported by Robert Bosch Stiftung [grant number 01000142]**Data Availability Statement:** The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to participant confidentiality agreements but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.**Use of Artificial Intelligence Statement:** For refining the use of english language, the software DeepLWrite has been used.**Ethics Statement:**

- Informed consent from the museum educators: Information meeting, written information about the project, written consent.
- Informed consent from the children: Written information in adapted form, presentation of the researchers and explanation of the study before the visit started, verbal consent.
- Parental/guardian consent for the children: Written information about the project, written consent.
- As the solely recording in a public group situation at the museum was not seen as critical, we announced that children without written consent will not be depicted in the publication. There has been no child without written consent.
- Confidentiality: All members of the research team have been committed to confidentiality. Names of children have been pseudonymised; names of museum educators have not been pseudonymised due to their will.
- Following european data protection law, participants
- Video recordings storage and protection: The video recordings have been stored at the university in a way only members of the research team had access.

Author Contributions:

Fabian Hofmann: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration, supervision, validation, writing

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