



Module 4

Unit 7

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Unit 7: Tactile explorations

Task 1: Multiple choice¹

Question 1

Why is touch a crucial sense for persons with sight loss (PSL)?

- a) Because touch can effectively substitute sight in most situations, including a museum tour.
- b) Because touch is more straightforward than sight, and it enables PSL to get an idea of the objects around them faster.
- c) Because touch is a primary means of experiencing the world.
- d) Because touch can help to experience the shape and the beauty of objects, including art objects.

Question 2

Art appreciation through touch can depend on several factors. These however do not include:

- a) aptitude and propensity of the visitor with the sense of touch.
- b) knowledge and experience of the art world.
- c) causes and symptoms of the blindness.
- d) constant training of the sense of touch.

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¹ The responses are based on the ADLAB PRO core videos. Only one answer is correct.

Question 3

During a live touch tour, a human guide should not

- a) ...touch the PSL and direct their hands to the right spots to explore.
- b) ...stay away from the visitor and guide them through the exploration giving detailed instructions.
- c) ...follow a fixed order of exploration.
- d) ...make the visitor experiment different ways of tactile exploration (e.g. with both hands, with fingertips, etc.) during the same tour.

Question 4

According to De Coster and Loots (2004), touch is:

- a) "Specific, slow, analytical and active".
- b) "Successive, slow, analytical and active".
- c) "Separate, slow, analytical and active".
- d) "Definite, slow, analytical and active".

Question 5

Choosing which items to make available for tactile exploration is always difficult and it can depend on many factors. In the National Tile Museum of Lisbon, for instance, tiles to be reproduced and touched were chosen:

- a) ...based on motives that were similar to the ones that people could find in everyday life.
- b) ...based on motives that were easier to reproduce in plaster.

- c) ...based on motives that were elaborate and more interesting to the touch.
- d) ...based on motives that were chosen by PSL with a background in art.



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Unit 7: Tactile explorations

Task 2

Aim(s):

- Learners get acquainted with the basic theoretical and applied elements of tactile exploration.

Grouping: individuals and pairs.

Approximate timing: 2 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- Additional video on tactile exploration
- Any art object, ornament, knickknack learners can find at home.

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Development:

1. Learners watch the additional video and note down the most relevant procedures of tactile exploration as explained by Loretta Secchi.
2. Learners apply the knowledge acquired watching the video to the art object they have in class.
3. Blindfolded learners touch an object and try to identify its relevant features.

Additional comments:

A thorough study of the literature (cf. Reading list) should be considered. As a homework, small groups of learners should focus on



one relevant article each and draft a checklist of appropriate strategies for effective tactile explorations. Handouts produced by learners should then be shared collated into one document which will be shared in class so all learners have a comprehensive reference list.



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Unit 7: Tactile explorations

Task 3

Aim(s):

- Learners can identify most relevant oral/haptic strategies used in tactile tours.

Grouping: individuals, pairs or groups.

Approximate timing: 2 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- Recorded AD of “Atalanta and Hippomenes” by Guido Reni (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLITmFJSujhUAul_5UlyNqwBnulccMNpW). At the moment of writing this task, the AD is available in English, Italian, Slovene, Russian. The language selection will expand.
- Recorded AD of any other live tactile tour.

Development:

1. Learners listen to the AD.
2. Learners randomly note down all the references to tactile exploration and their comment on them.
3. After doing so, learners can refer to the handout and expand their awareness.

Additional comments:

1. The same task can be performed individually or in groups in a museum where a live touch tour is offered.
2. Different learners can perform the test in different museums, and then compare their note in a class session to share similarities and differences.
3. Tactile tours should be accompanied by an experienced human guide to work best. However, pre-recorded audio guides can be a functional substitute in given circumstances. If learner can access the recording of both types of ADs, they can discuss the differences between the two.



Task 3: Handout

When listening to the description and focusing on all the references to tactile exploration, what have you noticed?

Where do they occur in the text (beginning/middle/end)?

- What is their function?
- How detailed are they?
- How flexible are they?
- How much freedom do they leave to PSL?
- How general and reusable are they in other contexts?
- How specific are they to the artwork being described?
- Can you identify regular linguistic formulations when referring to tactile exploration?



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Unit 7: Tactile explorations

Task 4

Aim(s):

- Learners can perform a simple simulation of live tactile exploration in class.
- Learners know how to guide a blindfolded person.
- Learners know the basic terminology linked to tactile exploration.

Grouping: pairs.

Approximate timing: 90 minutes.

Material and preparation needed:

- Bas-relief/3D reproduction of painting or artwork.
- Alternative: Any art object, ornament, knickknack learners can find at home.

Development:

1. Learners work in pairs on a bas relief or on any object reproducing an artwork or a statue.
2. Learners alternate their role and each guides the blindfolded colleague in the recognition of the basic elements of the object in question.
3. Learners note down their difficulties in both roles (guide and guided) and discuss them.

4. Learners share their experience with the class.



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Task 5

Aim(s):

- Learners can identify which museum items are suitable for audio and/or tactile exploration.
- Learners can identify which items can be touched in their original form and which should be reproduced.

Grouping: individual, pairs or groups.

Approximate timing: 4 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- This task shall be performed in a (preferably small) museum as a homework or on a field trip with the trainer.
- After reading the relevant literature, learners prepare a checklist guiding them in their choices and helping them justify their choices.
- Recommended reading: Dobbin, C., Eardley, A. F., Neves, J. (2016). Ektashif: Art through Senses –Families shaping museum programmes in Qatar. *Multaqa: Professional Journal of the Gulf Museum Educators Network*, 2, 11-19.
- Recommended reading: Neves, J. (2012). Multi-sensory approaches to (audio) describing the visual arts. *MonTI: Monografías de traducción e interpretación*, 4, 277-293.

Development:

1. Learners should gather some material on the scope of the museum.
2. Learners should visit the museum thoroughly and select a few items (max. 4-5) for tactile exploration.
3. Learners should select which items can be explored in their original form and which in their reproduction, and explain why.
4. In class, learners compare their choices and discuss them.

Additional comments:

Choices on which items should be selected for tactile exploration should be made together with the museum staff. However, for this task it might not be possible to rely on their availability. A thorough work on the literature will help learners to do a good job anyway.



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