ALL ABOARD! *THE SALUTO-GENIC MUSEUM*

Examples of functional developments and innovations

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The room is constructed in such a way as to stimulate all the senses and to facilitate participation, activity and autonomy. Accordingly, the materials and the design are multi-functional and flexible. Different activities can run in parallel.

In order for the room to function flexibly, all the loose educational materials are kept on trolleys which can be placed in the adjacent storeroom. This means that one can readily change the appearance of the room for different uses and needs. It was important to decide from the beginning which functions should be fixed installations. In the All aboard! room these include the sails, block and tackle, the marine-archaeology wall and the relief map.

Photo Karolina Kristensson / SMM

Roaring lion door opener

The door opener to the *All aboard!* room is set inside a copy of a lion-head mask from the warship Vasa. When one puts one's hand into the lion's mouth photocells react, opening the door and letting out an alarming roar. The functional door opener has been designed so that it gives visitors a memorable meeting with the warship Vasa and forms a natural part of the narrative. The inner door is opened by remote control so that one can pass freely into the room.

Photo Karolina Kristensson / SMM

Relief map with trolley, figures and key

This shows the places where the Vasa was built, fitted out, set off from, and sank. Instead of using a simple relief map we designed a visually attractive map that everyone can gather round. It is supported on a frame with wheels so that it can also be used out in the museum. Seven different materials have been used to denote different features such as water, cultivated land, forests, etc. There is a separate key to the map in the form of samples of materials and Braille explanations of them.

The map also includes 6 churches from different periods and 6 landmarks from our own time such as the T-centralen subway station and the Gröna Lund funfair. These can be fixed to the map with magnets. The map allows us to travel in time since the various buildings date from different historical periods.

Diving bell instead of lift for the disabled:

Making use of what the room already offers is important. A room with certain parameters is most usually the point of departure. Here we have a relatively small room. But there is a high ceiling which needs to be exploited. Moving between different vertical levels makes the activities and experiences more exciting. Being able to raise oneself up without help broadens one's horizons. If we had just built some stairs and then added a lift for people who find stairs difficult the lift would have become a *lift for the disabled*. But by turning the lift into a diving bell it becomes integrated into the room and increases its functions. The accessible and, thus, democratic option should be the most attractive one. It is not a question of everyone doing the same thing in the same way but that all children get to experience their own competence (I can do it!) and independence regardless of their physical functioning.

Photo Karolina Kristensson / SMM

Photo Karolina Kristensson / SMM

Marine archaeology boxes and research materials and Marine-archaeology wall

There are 30 boxes of materials for working with individually or in groups. The boxes also contain Delta Sand which is a mouldable material. This means that items which are placed in the box are fixed as though to the seabed. Archaeological finds from the seabed take the form of copies of coins, drinking vessels, spoons, measures, dice, etc. that were found on the Vasa. There are also patinated skeletons and materials from our own times like soda cans. The boxes have cloth covers with two slits in them so that one can put one's hands through and try to identify the objects by feeling them.

There is a work tray for each box on which one can put one's finds. Finds can then be weighed and measured, inspected with a magnifying glass or with a microscope. The microscope can be connected to a computer so that everyone can look at the image together. Documentation can then proceed by photographing the items, writing about them or dictating one's observations. Since not everyone can write with a pen we also have MP3 recorders so that one can dictate whatever one wants. The material that the children produce in the form of pictures and written materials can then be sent back to their school class by e-mail. There are naturally pencils, scissors, magnifying glasses and other implements with different sorts of handles and grips.

The wall depicts the seabed. Mounted on the wall are items that were found along side the Vasa such as a cannon, a barrel, ballast stones, etc. The items are contemporary with the ship. In various cavities in the wall there are finds from both the 17th century and the present day. The cavities are at different heights and have different shapes. Sometimes one grasps objects from above, sometimes from in front or from the side. The different heights of the cavities mean that seated children can also reach various finds. The tactile qualities of the seabed mean that children who have impaired vision or who are totally blind can more readily take part by feeling their way. The room can also be darkened so that everyone has to feel their way using a flashlight or head-lamp. The design makes it possible for children with different functionalities to work together.

Photo Per Dahl

Signs by the sculptures

We have chosen to use magnetic signs to make it easier to remove or exchange signs. The signs are clearly written in Braille or Blissymbols. Written information by the sculptures means that children with hearing difficulties can have access to the information. These readily exchangeable signs in different languages can be used in many contexts.

Marine-archaeology doll from three periods

This doll can travel in time. It has three interchangeable sets of equipment: 17th century diving gear, a heavy diving suit from 1961 and current diving equipment used by marine archaeologists. The doll provides an introduction to working with marine archaeology. What equipment is necessary? There is also an opportunity to co-operate. The diving instructors stand on the balcony while the doll is lowered or raised in the diving bell (from 1628) against a wall illustrating marine archaeology.

Photo Per Dahl

Photo Emma Fredriksson

Ocean waves/Rolling function

This consists of a surface that can be set in motion so that one can experience standing on a rolling ship. It can be used standing up or sitting down.

Photo Per Dahl

Blissymbol magnetic memory cards

These comprise all the characters from the Bliss site map. The cards are magnetic and can be fixed to whatever they indicate. This means that all the Bliss materials that we have produced can be used in contexts where children and adults are learning Blissymbols.

Photo Per Dahl

Vasaljudspelet

Hur lät det när skeppet Vasa byggdes? Här kan man trycka på knapparna och gissa på olika ljud och hitta rätt kort för rätt ljud som man sedan lägger på en spelplan. När alla kort lagts vänder man på spelplanen och fram träder då en taktil bild på ett sjöodjur. Här finns tecknade illustrationer, Bliss-tecken och punktskrift kombinerat och bilderna är magnetiska och kan även lyftas med en magnetisk vante. Här man spela tillsammans oavsett funktionsbehov.

Tables

In a multifunctional room it is important that tables can be height adjusted. This makes them suitable for use by children of various ages as well as by adults in meetings. Pressing a button raises or lowers them. The tables here are of different shapes and can be used singly or combined to produce a long table as required. The tables can be removed or taken out as needed. At times one wants clear floor space for activities and at times tables are required. All the tables were specially designed for this room by a cabinet-maker. But the basic design could be adapted for other needs.

Photo Karolina Kristensson / SMM

Photo Emma Fredriksson

Evaluation tubes

Children who visit us all get an opportunity to say what they thought of the visit. In one of the tubes one marks the fact that one has been here. Visitors then get three balls to place in one or more of the four tubes. Since there is not a ball for each tube one has to think more carefully about one's decision since one can't just put one ball in each tube. The four possible judgements are: It was fun, It was dull, I learnt something, I want to come again. There are advantages from the point of view of accessibility in using clear images instead of words and easy-to-grasp balls that are too large to put in one's mouth.

Photo Karolina Kristensson / SMM

Photo Karolina Kristensson / SMM

Entrance hall, Afferent flow

Initially one enters a small room or hallway where groups can assemble. With its soundtrack and moving visual images, this room gives one a sensation of being at the bottom of the sea. An experience or environment that stimulates several senses at the same time is all the more important to children who perhaps have limited physical mobility. Afferent flow using senses like feeling, hearing, stroking, etc. helps to stimulate the brain. It is also important to be able to shut down all the sounds and the moving lights when there is a need for this. (Afferent = conducting inwards. Used to describe nerve-paths that leads impulses from the periphery of the body to the central nervous system; e.g. from sensory organs to the brain.)

Computer game – At the "helm"

From the "helm" one can steer the entire ship. The game has been specially produced for steering the Vasa by oneself or together with others, using a joystick. Several different joysticks are available and can be easily exchanged to suit different hand strengths. Even a weak hand can steer the ship. One can sit at the "helm" monitoring progress on a screen. Or one can shut down the monitor whereupon the ship's movements are projected onto a screen down on the deck where other people can stand and give instructions. The Vasa was steered using a whipstaff which meant that the helmsman was below deck and relied on orders from the mate up on the deck.