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Nóra Nagy

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## Addressing Controversy: Changing Pre-Service Teachers' Gazes Through an Exhibition Visit

Nóra Nagy

### ABSTRACT

This article describes a visit to the exhibition *CSÁTH The Death of the Magician* at the Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest in the context of a university course for pre-service teachers of English. The course itself focused on multimodal social semiotics and visual arts to equip students with confident knowledge and skills to use with a wide range of multimodal texts and museum collections in their teaching. The article demonstrates how a carefully planned visit can prepare students to engage with an exhibition dedicated to the life and work of a controversial literary figure. The dialogues and tasks aimed at creating a memorable extramural learning experience and empowering students with knowledge and skills to reflect on controversy from the perspective of an exhibition visit viewed as a multimodal experience.

### ABSZTRAKT

A tanulmány a Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum "CSÁTH A varázsló halála" c. kiállításának egy egyetemi kurzus keretében angol tanarárszakos hallgatókkal tett látogatását mutatja be. A kurzus fő témája a multimodális szociálszemiotika és a vizuális művészet volt, valamint fő célja, hogy olyan magabiztos tudással és készségekkel vértesse fel a hallgatókat, amelyek segítségével multimodális szövegeket és múzumi gyűjteményeket is fel tudnak használni a tanítás során. A tanulmány azt mutatja be, hogyan lehetséges gondos tervezéssel felkészíteni a hallgatókat egy olyan kiállítás látogatására, amely egy ellentmondásos irodalmi alak életét és munkásságát mutatja be. A dialógusok és feladatok célja azon túl, hogy egy emlékezetes osztálytermen kívüli tanulási élményt képezzenek, az volt, hogy olyan ismeretet és készségeket adjanak a hallgatók kezébe, amelyekkel egy kiállítás mint multimodális élmény szempontjából képesek reflektálni az ellentmondásosság kérdésére.

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## Controversial figures in classroom discussions

While controversial literary and cultural figures have long been in the spotlight of public interest, they often fall out of the educational canon. Discussions about such figures can become challenging both in everyday and academic contexts. However, teachers need to be prepared to address any issue – even divisive ones – during classroom discussions and help their students reflect on controversy. How can university teachers working with museum educators guide pre-service teachers in cultivating a gaze to approach artists and literary or historical figures whose achievements are disputed or whose

reception is changing? In order to offer answers to this question, I implemented a visit to an exhibition at the Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest (PIM) about Géza Csáth, born József Brenner (1887–1919), a Hungarian psychologist-writer who became well-known for his struggles with drug abuse, violence, and suicide as part of a course called *Making Meaning with Visual Narratives* on multimodal literacy development for pre-service English teachers at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE).

As controversial topics often incite emotionally loaded responses, pre-service teachers need experience in mediated dialogues to guide their own students in similar situations. Having experienced the positive impact of exhibition visits during previous semesters, I chose this particular exhibition to serve as a catalyst for such practice, and to offer an experience where students could practice analytical skills and knowledge introduced in class. Pre- and post-visit dialogues and a written assignment provided opportunities to engage with the exhibition and approach the controversy surrounding this author from a multimodal perspective, or, within the theoretical context of this paper discussed later, with a multimodal gaze.<sup>1</sup> Enacting such a gaze involves paying critical attention to how different modes of communication such as sound, image, objects, spatial design, and written or spoken texts interact in creating new meanings, opposed to a strong reliance on text-based learning typical in classrooms. In the context of this exhibition, it involved construing a narrative of the author's life and work through the interpretation of a rich variety of resources. This study describes the impact this unusual exhibition visit combined with explicit literacy pedagogy had on the students' perspectives of the author and their attitudes towards museums.

### **Course design: multimodal context and concepts**

The students in the course were in their final years of teacher education, already doing their teaching practice in secondary schools. They followed two majors, and their common discipline was English as a foreign language. Their other subjects mostly included Hungarian literature, history, biology or another foreign language, for example Russian or German. Students with such diverse backgrounds and some real experience in teaching promise an engaging teaching experience with opportunities for interdisciplinary discussions and reflection on their first encounters with teaching.

A number of factors played essential roles in the course design. First, I introduced the students to multimodal analysis based on the work of multimodal researchers Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen.<sup>2</sup> The course was divided into longer thematized sections informed by the phases of the scaffolding pedagogical approach called Teaching-Learning Cycle.<sup>3</sup> During the first phase, I introduced the students to the main concepts of social semiotic multimodal theory, focusing on visual analysis, image-text relations, and multimodal reading strategies.<sup>4</sup> Social semiotic multimodal theory is influenced by the work of the linguist Michael Halliday, and his principle that “language is one of the semiotic systems that constitute a culture; one that is distinctive in that it also serves as an encoding system for many (though not all) of the others.”<sup>5</sup> Based on this idea, multimodal social semiotics views language as only one meaning-making system among many, which include a wide range of resources, for example music, painting, photography or dance. In other words, multimodality views communication, learning, and representation from an interdisciplinary perspective, expanding its resources beyond language.<sup>6</sup> This view

on learning is an essential principle for museum educators and language teachers as it motivates collaboration for people coming from different fields, and also expands the resources and strategies used for teaching. Our exploration of the differences between reading print-based texts, illustrated books, and websites prepared students to approach the exhibition as a large multimodal text.

The second phase of the course was based on two exhibition visits. Before the visits, the group discussed language and learning in museums.<sup>7</sup> First, I asked students to write about a memorable museum experience, reflecting on the factors that characterized that memory. During the classroom discussions, we addressed the informal learning opportunities offered by museums with a focus on how language and cultural learning can be supported by leaving the classroom walls, while still building bridges with formal curriculum requirements. After the visits, the students wrote a one-page review of the exhibition. To conclude the term, in the final phase of the Teaching-Learning Cycle, they presented a personal project applying the approaches they studied during the course.

From the perspective of language teaching, the educational potential of the museum is significantly different from the classroom as it creates possibilities for real-life interactions and dialogues, engaging with real objects in the complex space of the exhibition. Moreover, museums can expand formal learning opportunities by presenting topics that are not covered in the school curriculum, and disciplinary knowledge discussed in class can be observed in the museum. Since museums are less affected by curriculum and canonical requirements than schools, they can offer unique perspectives and themes to expand school learning.<sup>8</sup>

### **The pedagogical potential of the exhibition**

The space of the exhibition bearing the title *Csáth\* \*The Magician's Death* curated by Anna Sidó is small yet dense. It is divided into five major sections: a narrow corridor filled with green plants and mirrors functions as a secret passage to the subconscious world of the author (Figure 1). The first room is dedicated to the cultural influences on Csáth's life, and it engages students with a multitude of objects and sensations in a small space. The second room is designed to resemble a doctor's office with white tiles, hidden drawers and cupboards in which the visitors can peek behind the walls to see morphine sets, medicine bottles, and erotic drawings. All of which gave the exhibition a 16+ rating. (Figure 2). This room encourages visitors to interact with visible and hidden elements and explore more. The third room mostly presents photographs, letters, and diary entries that record Csáth's mental deterioration. The texts on the wall function both as biographical documents and visual illustrations. The artistic video installations were created by contemporary video artists. One of them, the one featured on an interactive mirror of a cupboard is an award-winning video project. These aspects of the third room challenge visitors' traditional reading strategies in a new environment, encouraging them to consider different ways of viewing printed texts apart from reading them. The final space presents contemporary artworks, photographs, and audio recordings dedicated to the extended family of Csáth. When I first visited the exhibition, I immediately decided to choose it as one of the course visits for three reasons.

First, I found the theme of the exhibition engaging as it presents the life and work of Géza Csáth, who was a medical doctor, writer, critic, and music theoretician with an



**Figure 1.** Entrance to the exhibition space. Photograph by Csaba Gál. Photo courtesy of Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest.

interest in Freudian psychoanalysis. Since he is not included in the curriculum, whether his works are discussed in secondary school literature classrooms or not depends on the personal decision of the literature teacher. His life often overshadows everyday discussions of his artistic and medical work: his childhood was burdened with the early death of his sister. He struggled with being accepted as a musician and artist, and he became addicted to morphine after experimenting with it during an illness. Addiction and violence became recurring themes in his short stories, mostly in the ones written during his medical practice. His drug abuse, suicide attempts, and worsening paranoia spoiled his final years. The fact that he murdered his wife and then committed suicide had a great impact on his reception, and probably influenced his exclusion from the literary canon. Although other twentieth-century artists who had faced either drug problems or suicide attempts have since become canonized, the multiple challenges Csáth had to deal with still influence the reception of his artistic and literary achievements.

Second, the organization of the exhibition offered a truly multimodal experience, contributing to the main theoretical framework of the course. In the exhibition, the creative and functional use of paintings, drawings, diary excerpts, books, personal objects, video installations, and quotations from Csáth's works engaged the visitors in exploration and learning through all their senses. The interactive elements further encouraged the visitors to connect with the various aspects of the life and work of Csáth. Expanding the possibilities of classroom learning – which included mostly the written word and visual resources – the museum offered the opportunity for the students to consider how other media can convey different meanings and engage people in dialogues about a complex literary figure,



**Figure 2.** The doctor's office. Photograph by Csaba Gál. Photo courtesy of Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest.

providing new perspectives in a new context. In this process, it was essential to gain insights into how narratives can be constructed through a wide range of resources in space rather than through images and words on the page.

Finally, the additional resources written by museum educator Diána Sóki created further learning opportunities and showed the students that an exhibition event continues after the hours of the visit. Foldable activity booklets and the interactive website dedicated to ten short stories by Csáth made the reading and interpretation of the literary works of the artist more accessible.<sup>9</sup> The website guided the students in reading the short stories with before-reading questions, as it connects each excerpt with a section of the exhibition and reflections on the author's life through his diary entries. It also has a music mixing feature in which readers can create their own sound set linked to selected words from the works, thus leading the students towards a synecdochic response towards the pieces. Such scaffolding resources contributed to a holistic learning experience through the exhibition visit.

There were a number of other factors that contributed to selecting this museum, such as its vicinity to the university, the diversity of the topics it offers for further exploration, and the fact that it is well-known in the city. One of the two exhibition visits I organize each term is always at a famous museum, and the other one at a small local gallery most students are not familiar with. After my first exploratory visit, I contacted one museum educator of the museum, who offered a guided tour in which we discussed the possible learning outcomes of a visit for this specific group. Although the museum educator

offered a guided tour for my class, I decided to encourage my students to explore the exhibition guided by only a few of my questions so that they could rely on their own background knowledge to create new meanings in an informal learning situation, given that it was a group of pre-service teachers.

### **Ways of knowing: building knowledge for museum learning**

Apart from creating a memorable group experience, my intention was to broaden my students' perspectives on resources and places for learning. All through the lessons connected to the visit, I paid special attention to the students' attitudes and ways of knowing in the context of the museum. Tracking their changing perspectives of controversial figures was another point of investigation. The multidimensional conceptual toolkit and sociological framework of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) helped me with understanding, modeling, and analyzing such achievements.<sup>10</sup> LCT builds on the work of sociologist Basil Bernstein and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu concerning the processes of cultural transmission and conceptualizing knowledge and knowledge practices.

LCT conceptualizes ways of knowing in different disciplines and contexts by observing the roles of both specialized knowledge and social relations within them. For example, when disciplines give more importance to knowledge claims based on birth, social status or prolonged experience, they are classified as a *knower code*. Examples of such knower-code disciplines commonly include arts and humanities subjects. For instance, when a student visits an exhibition, his or her social background and previous experiences in museums with teachers or family members determine how they behave and learn in that context. Within the constructivist approach of learning in the museum, the understanding of the experiences students bring with them is essential for both teachers and museum educators. By looking at the nature of students' ways of knowing in the museum, we can both honor and predict how they engage with an exhibition to construct knowledge based on previous and current experiences combined.

Based on my previous research during a course in a similar context, I noticed that students more often valued their social experiences in connection with their memories of museum visits, and downplayed the relevance of gaining knowledge in such interactions.<sup>11</sup> This reminds us of the relationship between lived experiences and explicit knowledge within arts and humanities professions. An important question both museum educators and subject teachers might ask during museum visits is how they can guide the visitors in learning in the museum, without taking away the impact of the experience itself. A similar dilemma is described by Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee in their reflection on the role of information in the "delicate art" of museum teaching: "Deep knowledge of the artworks is a part of good gallery teaching. Information, together with seeing, is the source of ideas. The museum educator honors both objects and audience by bringing them together in an experience guided by scholarship."<sup>12</sup>

Approaching teacher education in the context of the museum, this fine balance between experience and information needs to be addressed during preparatory visits. In other words, if we expect pre-service teachers to critically reflect on the pedagogical potential of museum resources and incorporate them in their own teaching practice, we need to initiate changes in their viewing and learning practices in museums by giving them viewing strategies to engage with exhibitions.

Within the Specialization dimension of LCT, the concept of *gaze* informs us about how such practice can be transformed, and how students can feel confident to consider museums as places of both social experiences and learning. The concepts of *cultivated gaze* and *trained gaze* demonstrate how such transformation can be initiated. *Cultivated gazes* are demonstrated by those who attain legitimate dispositions through interaction with a “significant other,” such as the guidance of a master or immersion in a canon of artworks. *Trained gazes* are characterized by neither category nor dispositions and emphasize specialized knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Based on this perspective, when students take part in guided museum visits, they gain insights into viewing practices and gazes possessed by a teacher or a museum educator, both of whom are seen as legitimate knowers in their contexts. When students learn about an approach such as multimodal analysis or curating, they build specialized knowledge to engage with exhibitions in a meaningful way. With these visits, I aimed at *cultivating* the students’ gazes by first gaining information from the museum educator. This modified engagement with the cultivated gaze of the museum educator was influenced by the brevity of the museum session. In other contexts, a guided tour can result in a more direct engagement with the ways of viewing and learning of the museum educator. During the course, I also aimed to *train* the students’ gazes with the help of explicit exercises in multimodal analysis. The practices that contributed to learning are discussed below.

## **Scaffolding learning in the museum**

We approached the exhibition as a complex and interactive multimodal text, and we analyzed the written, visual, and spatial meanings of the exhibition space and installations. I designed a series of activities to use before, during, and after the exhibition visit. During the course I relied on pedagogical approaches that reinforce the relevance of scaffolding in dialogues, reading, and writing practice, encouraging teachers to help students construe new meanings as they interact with different texts.<sup>14</sup>

### **Tasks before the visit**

A short, informal discussion about the students’ knowledge of Csáth aimed at encouraging students to collaborate and activate any prior knowledge they had about the author and his contemporaries. The controversy surrounding the author entered discussions already at this stage. Tapping into students’ memories served to raise interest in the exhibition. As far as technical skills are concerned, the discussion of the role of labels and the principles of label writing further prepared the students for the visit. Since they are pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language, they were particularly interested in the role of language in such multimodal spaces. Linguist Jennifer Blunden’s research into labels in museums provided model texts to study in class and highlighted how labels can support independent learning in museums.<sup>15</sup> Thus, I also asked students to explore the resources and information leaflets offered by the museum, making them aware of already-available materials.

Not only the students, but the teacher also has an important task before the visit. I visited the exhibition twice before the group session, first on my own, and then with the guidance of Diána Sóki, a museum educator at PIM. This is how I explored the exhibition for my own pedagogical aims, and then gained further knowledge about the “secrets” of the exhibition. Insights into the intentions of the creators of the exhibition through design and



background information about choices regarding exhibits prepared me to write well-informed guiding questions for the students. For example, a long display featuring diary excerpts from Csáth's notebooks connected three rooms, and some of them were hidden in drawers in the doctor's studio. Such a choice aimed to create continuity between the different stages of the author's life through his writing. In the scaffolding questions, I managed to incorporate the often-subtle details of the exhibition space with the pedagogical aims of the course focusing on multimodal reading strategies.

### ***During the visit***

Although the museum had offered a guided visit, my decision to ask students to explore the exhibition without such guidance aimed at encouraging group dialogue and individual reflection. My objective with this decision was showing my students that they would be able to take the initial steps and explore museum resources using general questions, which they can adapt for other exhibitions. My primary intention focused on approaching the exhibition through its semiotics and use of language so that students could feel more informed in terms of the learning potential of such a space.

On the day of the visit, the students received a list of questions in print and digital formats. The questions were organized into five main categories: Csáth, Exhibition, Multimodality, Language, Learning, Second language learning, Discussion points. Here is a selection from the list:

#### Csáth

- What have you learnt about the life and work of Csáth during the exhibition?

#### Exhibition

- How is the exhibition organized? Describe the exhibition space.
- What is the theme and function of each exhibition area?
- How does the exhibition construe a narrative and share an experience?

#### Multimodality

- What semiotic resources contribute to the exhibition experience?
- What interactive elements can be found in the exhibition?

#### Language

- What is the role of written language in the exhibition?
- Find examples of interesting uses of language in the exhibition.

#### Learning

- What online and offline resources are available to learn more about the exhibition?
- What semiotic resources contribute to learning in the exhibition space?

## Second language learning

- How can this exhibition contribute to English language teaching practice?

## Discussion points

- How are sensitive issues (drug use, mental illness, suicide) approached?
- How does this visit influence your thinking about sensitive issues?

In terms of participation and activity, the event immediately showed signs of success. Not only did every student participate, some of them stayed for over two hours, walking back and forth, showing details to each other, taking photographs and notes, and asking questions. As they were reflecting on the organization of the exhibits, the positioning and the quality of the texts, I noticed that the peculiarity and density of the exhibits gave the experience significant value.

In this process, reflecting on the exhibition with a non-linear gaze helped students create their own meanings and narratives. I asked them to pay special attention to the various entry points through exhibits and find paths during their visit. Learning about visual grammar, the relations between image/objects and text, typography and the reading path of non-sequential art forms helped reveal the deeper levels of the meaning-making process. Borrowing the words of the museum educator, Diána Sóki, “the collection presented at the exhibition can be viewed as a lexicon.” However, the reading strategies used to engage with the exhibits are different from textual or illustrated narratives. Here, instead of reading a linear narrative that develops in time, meaning-making takes place in non-linear space. In such a space, as it is the product of a conscious and principled curating process, more meanings can be instantiated due to the complexity of possible links between exhibits and the students’ own associations. Students and teachers alike need guidance to find their way in this space. A multimodal perspective can help them make their own meanings in future exhibitions.

## ***After the visit***

The number of questions I received during the visit inspired the idea of asking the students to share an observation and ask a question in connection with this museum experience on the educational platform used during the course. This way the conversation continued between the visit and the next lesson.

Since the course also aimed at advanced language development, I included a review writing task after the visit. Prior to the actual writing assignment, I dedicated a lesson to review writing through model texts from popular periodicals. Students were then introduced to the main stages of the review genre as described by linguists James Martin and David Rose.<sup>16</sup> These stages (Context, Description, Evaluation) gave enough scaffolding for students to control the structure of their response, while they enjoyed the freedom to evaluate the exhibition.<sup>17</sup>

## **From exhibition to academic discussion: students’ voices**

I collected and analyzed different sets of data to understand how the exhibition influenced the students’ learning: my own notes; the students’ comments on the educational platform;

the students' reviews; and the students' post-course feedback questionnaire answers. I used qualitative content analysis based on Saldana's coding directions, and further examined the students' feedback through the codes of LCT Specialization to analyze the changes of the students' gazes.<sup>18</sup> The topics that the exhibition raised can be organized into four groups: literature pedagogy and the literary canon; the separation of the author from the text; sensitive issues; and the exhibition as a multimodal experience.

The theme of the separation of the literary achievements of an author from his/her personal life was one of the most discussed questions, leading to discussions of Roland Barthes's famous essay *The Death of the Author*. Students were reminded of scandals surrounding musicians and actors, and they mentioned that their own students might ask their opinion about this topic.<sup>19</sup> Links were made with other non-canonical authors, raising the question whether it was a good decision by curriculum makers to avoid controversial literary figures in school. This train of thought led students to share reflections, quoting one student, about the

tendency in education that one must learn about an author's life backwards, which usually serves as a filter, or more like an obstacle to having a first-hand experience with a piece of literature. What the organizers did was the following: they created a de-systematized, multimodal, non-linear exhibition, where visitors can construe an image of Csáth for themselves.

Another student, evaluating the exhibits for learning in the museum, also argued that the question of the author needs to be addressed: "And his life can be a really good topic in the classroom as well. Can we judge a writer's work according to his life?" Such questions inevitably lead to the exploration of Csáth's work, not only by pure inspiration after the visit, but also through the creative, online reading exercises designed by the museum education department.

Students appreciated that sensitive issues were not presented as taboos and the exhibition created opportunities for reflective dialogues. One student commented on how the exhibition approached morphine addiction and suicidal thoughts: "However, this is most of the time a taboo topic, it is still great for sensitization because it approaches these sensitive issues carefully, in a way that you still will not judge authors." Another student also mentioned how important it is to discuss these topics in high schools:

There are topics which are simply not dealt with in a high school class, and the inclusion of which could be crucial for such simple reasons as the physical and mental health of the learners. I think this opportunity can be used as an introduction, or an ice-breaker; so that everyone can express their ideas without any criticism or personal intrusion.

From the perspective of drug abuse, mental illness, and suicide, the exhibition created opportunities for students to share their own experiences in schools during their teaching practice. They reported that some of their students seemed to struggle with bullying, which they clearly identified as emotional violence. One student highlighted that "this kind of exhibition makes people more open, so they might ask those kinds of questions that otherwise they wouldn't dare to ask."

Apart from the topics raised by the exhibition, students also reflected critically on its organization, for example, saying

my observation was in connection with what is represented and said explicitly in an exhibition. Even though the early life of Csáth was detailed in-depth, there was no timeline or any of

such things that can appear in a narrative exhibition. I felt that this exhibition mostly built on the previous knowledge of the visitor and the exhibition focused on sharing impressions instead of portraying a detailed life.

In the reviews, the exhibition space was observed from a multimodal perspective, making critical observations about the functional value of interactive elements or the richness of materials, concluding that “I think choice is more important than the coherence and complexity of the installation.” Such sensitive and multimodal awareness was demonstrated by most of the students, with comments such as “the multimodality of the rooms resulted in a nice harmony instead of some disturbing cacophony, even if the exhibition was occasionally quite hard to digest.” Another student also reflected on the rich multimodal content saying “despite the plethora of text, the visual and auditory sources, for example, interviews, photographs and objects make the audience interact and engage in the themes.” The students’ focus on how they interact with this rich multimodal content in the exhibition space confirm the necessity of learning about multimodal strategies in interactions and learning in museums apart from discussing contextual and subject knowledge about the exhibition theme.

As with previous courses, the exhibition visit proved itself as one of the most popular parts of the whole course. In their answers, the students noticed shifts in their own ways of approaching museums: they reported how they became more conscious and learnt to see how different resources worked there. Most of them shared that they realized that exhibition visits can be made engaging for students and they learnt how these visits can be made more interesting through planning. Apart from the analytical and pedagogical benefits, some students reflected on the overall influence it had on their learning and synthesizing skills and how it helped them compile relevant information. Within the area of knowledge-building, a frequently shared idea is that museum visits help them see theory in real-life action.

### **Towards collaborative knowledge-building: implications for museum educators**

When there is no institutional agreement between museums and universities, co-operations can be initiated by university instructors or museum educators. There is value in single visits if they are selected by teachers and extend the curriculum demands, as it happened in the case of this study. Apart from reinforcing the need for even *a single unit collaboration*, this project also informs both teachers and museum educators in terms of unique themes for schools, how students engage with museum exhibitions, and how museum educators can facilitate engagement and learning. This experience resonates with the benefits experienced by the pre-service teachers during the large-scale partnership described by Megan Clark, David Ensminger, Colleen Incandela, and Heidi Moisan in the context of the partnership agreement between Chicago museums and Loyola University Chicago.<sup>20</sup> In their research, similar to this one, pre-service teachers identified developmental and learning theories in action in museums, and recognized how theoretical knowledge of pedagogy transcends formal learning environments. Although such large-scale projects are desirable but not always possible, a university teacher-museum educator collaboration can be an alternative. Moreover, the fact that the museum educator I was in contact with asked for feedback on these materials has led me to value the possibility of a collaborative project in terms of

materials development for school groups in museums. For example, after having studied the materials, a group of pre-service teachers could give feedback and ask questions in a discussion session with the educator.

An important potential of the informal learning context of museums is that *they can challenge existing canons, and they can explore controversy from multiple perspectives* tapping into subject knowledge areas and the personal experiences of visitors. By introducing sensitive or debated topics through exhibitions, learning becomes experiential and engaging, providing a valuable basis for classroom reflection. Although the students' initial responses to the Csáth exhibition were filled with confusion, after meaningful discussions they began to observe it from a critical perspective. They realized and appreciated that even taboos can be openly discussed if they have the right analytical tools to critically reflect on the information offered by an exhibition. Since the museum is perceived as a respected place, the students approached taboos with seriousness. Museum educators possess powerful creative freedom in addressing a wider range of topics than school teachers usually have.

My findings indicate how an exhibition can be viewed as a large multimodal space, and how *knowledge of multimodality helped make meaningful observations*. In this exhibition, the gravity of the topic was saturated by the use of rich resources, which created multiple pathways into the world of Csáth. This is how the project highlights the need for understanding meanings made through multimodal resources enacting multimodal reading strategies. Museum educators can provide such guidance through collaboration with the subject teacher. Apart from providing contextual and background knowledge about the history of the art objects and the theme of the exhibition, it is essential that at least the group teacher gains insights into the seemingly implicit choices made in designing the exhibition and museum activities. The discussion of labels, information about pathways to follow, and information about how sounds, colors, images, objects, and texts in a space work together can largely contribute to the museum learning experience. When a teacher works closely with a museum educator, they can create questions that focus on this aspect of the exhibition visit.

From the perspective of changing the students' gazes, we can conclude that three factors contributed to the students' shifts in their dispositions. First, the short but thorough practice in multimodal analysis helped students see how diverse resources work in various contexts. Second, the shared experience in an informal learning context followed by dialogues gave them the opportunity to share their own observations and raise new questions. Finally, the variety of tasks designed to ease students into experiencing an otherwise demanding museum experience gave opportunities for new knowledge to be enacted.

In this way, the study demonstrates the pedagogical value of collaboration between university courses, where specialized skills and knowledge are explicitly taught, and museums, where experience and inquiry-based learning are creatively demonstrated. In this process, the course tutor's correspondence and initial meeting with a museum educator before the seminar can generate essential knowledge for the rest of the course. Although the creation of classroom tasks is not the responsibility of the museum education department, pre-visit meetings can provide valuable perspectives for classroom work. This example shows that even without an institutional collaboration agreement, a small step taken by a course tutor towards the museum education department can already bear fruitful results.<sup>21</sup> Collaborations addressing sensitive or difficult topics can result in two important benefits: the

memorable learning experience outside the classroom walls and the knowledge-powered discussions, which allow students to challenge the most controversial topics of their communities.

## Notes

1. For more on multimodal social semiotics, see Kress, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach*.
2. The students read about a social semiotic approach to visual analysis in Jewitt, *Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*.
3. Rose and Martin, *Learning to Write, Reading to Learn*.
4. Kress, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach*; Kress and van Leeuwen: *Reading Images*.
5. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 2.
6. For a more detailed discussion of social semiotic multimodal analysis, see Jewitt, *Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*.
7. Blunden, “Adding ‘Something More’ to Looking”; “Dumbing down for Museum Audiences”; Blunden and Fitzgerald, “Beyond the Classroom”; Burnham and Kai-Kee, *Teaching in the Art Museum*, see Chapter 1.
8. For an overview on formal and informal learning in museums, see Hein, *Learning in the Museum*.
9. Sóki, *Szövegtetek*; PIM, “Csáth- kísérletek.”
10. For a detailed discussion of LCT, see Maton, *Knowledge and Knowers*.
11. Nagy, “Gaining Knowledge out of the Classroom.”
12. Burnham and Kai-Kee, “The Art of Teaching in the Museum,” 71.
13. For more information on gazes, see Martin, “Musicality and Musicianship,” 198.
14. These approaches are the Vygotskian sociocultural approach to learning and Sydney School genre-based pedagogy, an explicit approach to teach students to read and write different text types. For more information on these, see in Byrnes, *Advanced Language Learning*; Lantolf, *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*; Wells, “Halliday and Vygotsky”; and Rose and Martin, *Learning to Write, Reading to Learn*.
15. Blunden, “Dumbing down for Museum Audiences.”
16. Martin and Rose, *Genre Relations*.
17. Nagy, “Making Semantic Waves.”
18. Saldana, *The Coding Manual*; Maton and Chen, “LCT in Qualitative Research.” The data analysis happened in cycles, starting with thematic content analysis as described by Saldana, and then a Translation Device was created that presents the data in connection with Specialization concepts. This Translation Device is based on previous LCT analysis enacting the same concepts.
19. Students reflected on how the “Me Too” Movement had affected actors’ and musicians’ lives.
20. Clark et al., “Reflections on Museums.”
21. For more on university/museum partnerships and pre-service teachers, see the special issues *Museums, Universities and Pre-Service Teachers* and *Museums & Universities: Partnerships with Lasting Impact* in this journal.

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## About the author

*Nóra Nagy* is a doctoral candidate in English Applied Linguistics and TESOL at the University of Pécs in Hungary. Her research focuses on multimodal literacy development and arts integration in

advanced language learning and teacher education contexts in higher education. She had studied English Literature and Cultural Management at the University of Debrecen, and has worked in English language teaching publishing. She teaches advanced language development, academic writing and multimodal communication courses.

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