CONNECTING TO THE ART MUSEUM THROUGH AN EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP: A CASE STUDY

A thesis submitted to the College of the Arts of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

By

Stacy M. Stewart

August, 2010
Thesis written by

Stacy M. Stewart

B.A., Kent State University, 2006

M.A., Kent State University, 2010

Approved by

_________________________ , Advisor
Linda Hoeptner Poling

_________________________ , Director, School of Art
Christine Havice

_________________________ , Dean, College of the Arts
John R. Crawford
Connecting to the Art Museum Through an Educational Workshop: A Case Study (121 pp.)

Director of Thesis: Linda Hoeptner Poling

Building a relationship with an art museum can provide an art teacher with a valuable tool for connecting students to art, thus promoting art museum awareness and providing unique opportunities for students to learn about art in their community. The primary purpose of this Action Research study was to examine my own teaching practices in relation to establishing a connection to an art museum, and through that relationship, develop opportunities for my students to experience the art museum as a way of learning about art. This thesis documents the experiences of a high school advanced art class and their teacher, myself, while they formed a connection to a local art museum, take part in the museum’s educational workshop, and use what was learned back in the art classroom. Through questionnaire responses, students’ reflective journaling, observations and field notes, and both student and art museum professional interviews, data was collected to discover that students do benefit from learning through the art museum and that learning continues long after their initial experience. Interesting themes that emerged from the data included: Connecting to the art museum; students’ preconceived notions versus actual experience; benefits of learning in the art museum versus learning in the classroom; and applying learned knowledge to classroom activities.

Through this research, my goal was to improve my teaching while actively seeking new ways to connect students to art in the world around them. I want my
experience to encourage other art educators to seek out local opportunities to connect students to art. This study demonstrated how art educators can use the art museum to teach their students about art and create unique learning opportunities.
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDIXES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Significance of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms Defined for the Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Museum</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Program (Workshop)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Museum Professional</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations and Assumptions of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development of the Art Museum</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifting Roles: The Art Museum and the Art Museum Educator</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Theories: The Visitor-Centered Approaches</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Models in Art Museum Education</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Importance of the Art Museum in Art Education</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Service Art Educators and the Art Museum</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Utilizing the Art Museum</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Games</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Dialogue</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table of Contents

- Forming School/Art Museum Partnerships ........................................ 31
- The Art Museum and the Internet .................................................. 33
- Applications for the Art Museum Website ...................................... 37
- Technology and Interactive Spaces in the Art Museum ...................... 40
- Conclusion ..................................................................................... 43

III. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS .............................................. 45
- Overview ....................................................................................... 45
- Action Research as Methodology .................................................. 45
- Case Study as a Method .................................................................. 47
- Participants in the Study ............................................................... 47
- Site of the Study ........................................................................... 49
- Art Museum Workshop Description ............................................. 50
- Methods of Data Collection ......................................................... 50
  - Surveys/Questionnaires .............................................................. 50
  - Observation ............................................................................... 52
  - Interview .................................................................................. 53
  - Reflective Journaling ................................................................. 55
- Data Analysis ................................................................................. 56

IV. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS ............................................ 58
- Overview ....................................................................................... 58
- Connecting to the Art Museum ..................................................... 59
  - Establishing Contact ................................................................. 59
  - The Art Museum ......................................................................... 61
  - Meeting the Art Museum Professional ...................................... 62
  - Planning the Class’s Visit .......................................................... 63
  - Constructing the Educational Workshop ................................. 64
  - Summary .................................................................................... 66
- Students’ Preconceived Notions versus Actual Experience ............. 67
  - Students’ Expectations .............................................................. 68
  - The Element of Surprise ............................................................ 70
  - Students and their Teacher Learning in the Art Museum: The Experience ..................................................... 72
  - Summary .................................................................................... 79
- Benefits of Learning in the Art Museum versus Learning in the Classroom ..................................................... 80
  - The Art Museum Environment .................................................. 80
  - How the Workshop Impacted Students .................................... 83
  - Working with the Artist and Art Museum Professional ................ 85
  - Summary .................................................................................... 87
- Applying Learned Knowledge to Classroom Activities .................. 88
Using Techniques and Skills
Learned during the Workshop ........................................89
Students’ Art Works .....................................................92
Conclusion .......................................................................93

V. REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS ........................................95
   Overview ........................................................................95
   Personal Development .....................................................95
   The Difference between the Art Museum Utilized in this
   Study and Other More “Traditional” Art Museums ..........96
   Art Educator Development in the Context of this Study ......100
   A Reflection on Teaching Strategies
   Used During the Workshop ............................................101
   What My Students Gained ............................................103
   Researcher Development ..............................................105
   Implications for Art Educators and Pre-Service Art Educators...106
   Implications for Museum Educators ...............................109
   Final Reflection ..........................................................111

APPENDIXES ...........................................................................113
   A. Pre-Visit Questionnaire .............................................114
   B. Post-Visit Questionnaire ..........................................115
   C. Reflective Journal Prompt # 1 ....................................116
   D. Reflective Journal Prompt # 2 ....................................117
   E. Post-Visit Lesson Plan ..............................................118

REFERENCES .........................................................................119
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Example of Student Work, Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Example of Student Work, Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Example of Student Work, Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Example of Student Work, Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Example of Student Work, Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Example of Student Work, Photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF APPENDIXES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Appendix A, Pre-Visit Questionnaire</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Appendix B, Post-Visit Questionnaire</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appendix C, Reflective Journal Prompt #1</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Appendix D, Reflective Journal Prompt #2</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Appendix E, Post-Visit Lesson Plan</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words cannot express how very thankful I am to my advisor, Linda Hoeptner Poling. I would have never made it this far without your patience, guidance, encouragement, and wisdom. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for making me feel like I am doing the right thing, and for being such a role model and hero to me. You are an art education warrior!

I would also like to express my gratitude to the members of my committee, Robin Vande Zande and Janice Lessman Moss, for giving their time and attention to this thesis. I am very thankful to you both. To the other art education faculty that have taught me so much and shaped who I am today, Koon Hwee Kan, Juliann Dorff, and Anniina Suominen Guyas: Thank you for all that you have done and all that you do.

I would also like to thank Sara Kass and the staff from the Cliffside Artists Collaborative. I could not have done this thesis without you. Your dedication to art, learning, kids, and life is an inspiration. To my students, I thank you for your willingness to help me with my goals and to be “sponges.” You have taught me so much, even though I am your teacher. Thank you for reminding me, all the time, why I became a teacher.

And, most importantly, to my family and friends, a special thank you for always loving me and supporting me through the good times and the bad. It has been a long and bumpy road, but I would have never come this far without you. I am so lucky to have such wonderful people in my life.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Overview

The art museum is a depository for collecting and displaying objects of human creation and reflections of culture. Museums own collections that are not only seen as national treasures, but are considered treasures of humanity (Lopez, Daneau, Rosoff, & Congdon, 2008). The art museum is an institution established for artistic purposes. It also serves an educational purpose in that it displays objects borne from history and human expression and interpretation, as well as providing opportunities to those who visit to learn about human life and its most creative aspects. Art museums offer evidence of human cultural heritage, human beings’ creative nature, and provide examples of visual art objects (Stone, 2001). They stimulate, inspire, and teach. It is important to acknowledge that art museums are an essential component of learning about art for visitors, adult and children alike.

My love of the art museum is what inspired me to conduct this study. As an art teacher with only a few years of experience, I have found that in the midst of creating your own teaching techniques, styles, and ideas, it has been an interesting journey of learning and self-discovery. Each art teacher brings her own interests and inspirations to students, hoping to, in turn, inspire them as well. So here I am, trying to inspire, and hopefully shed light on the processes and experiences of connecting the art museum to students.
Art museums may seem like formal, traditional institutions; however, it seems today’s art museum is largely working for educational improvement and accessibility to a wider audience. Today, more art museums are increasing their modes of accessibility to visitors, including teachers and their students. One way is through the use of educational programs and tools provided by the art museum, either through actual physical visits to the institution or through the use of technology such as the Internet and art museum websites. Art museums have also designed and promoted educational programs that take their visitors in-depth with their collections and exhibits by offering hands-on experience with actual works of art and expertly researched information. Some of these programs can be experienced while visitors are present at the museum or even through distance learning made possible by new technologies allowing real-time learning to go on in a classroom or at home while art museum professionals execute Internet video streaming and video-conferencing (Roland, 2005).

These art museums’ educational programs provide educational tools for art teachers to connect their students to the community, outstanding learning opportunities, and new material that can be used in their classrooms. In addition to providing access to information about art, art museums also offer teachers opportunities to incorporate the museum as an important aspect to learning and accessing art through workshops. Art teachers continuously seek ways to connect their students to art through different methods and by looking at what is available in their community. They are evaluated on how they use unique and innovative lessons, and teaching techniques and practices to tap into relevant issues in students’ lives.
Fortunately, for art teachers, community institutions like art centers and art museums are creating more educational programming, workshops, and learning opportunities that align with teaching standards and practices (Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2004). An art class can take information learned through an art museum workshop and put it to use in the classroom through lessons and in art projects. These workshops may be taught by museum educators, docents, and/or local artists.

This Action Research study aimed to examine how a high school art class and its teacher utilized an Ohio art museum’s educational program, and documented the experience before, during, and after the students participated in the program. Forming a relationship with art museum professionals and students’ actions and reactions were highlighted during the experience. This study demonstrates an example of how an art museum can be incorporated into a 21st century high school advanced art class, and documents the effects and experiences involved throughout the journey. Hence, the research question became: How will participating in an Ohio art museum’s educational program affect the teaching and learning experiences of a 21st century high school advanced art class and its teacher?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine my own teaching practices by forming a relationship with an art museum and exposing that institution’s educational program to my art students. It also examines how to form connections to art outside the typical art classroom setting, and explores the benefits of using the art museum’s features
as an alternate way to learning about art beyond the classroom. The aim of the study was to inquire how an art teacher can involve her students in the art museum’s educational program and utilize the techniques and tools provided by the institution and the school, while examining the effects and experiences her students form in the process and after taking part. The use of art museum educational programs is one option towards incorporating new methods of teaching and learning about art and can aid in promoting art museum awareness; thus providing art students knowledge of a world of art beyond the walls of the classroom.

I have always had an interest in the art museum. During my teaching preparation courses, I came to realize that the art museum was an important resource for teaching and learning about art, and promoting art museum awareness was critical, but I did not know how to go about making the steps necessary to get involved. This study will help me, and the readers, in finding ways in which to use the art museum for teaching my own students, and make them aware of the importance art museums hold in art and our culture as human beings.

Being a classroom art teacher in a suburban high school, this study directly affected my students and me, because I reflect on my own teaching practices and how I can better serve my students. When studying to become an art teacher, one learns about many approaches to teaching, and aspires to create methods that are exciting and meaningful, and that their students will come away from the experience reevaluating what they think and feel about art that will last their entire lifetime. It can be overwhelming to keep up with finding new ways to introduce students to art learning.
But if we do not persist in searching and trying new things, then we have only perpetuated the cycle of art learning that barely skims the surface of what art can do and what is out there to be discovered.

Art does not exist exclusively in our classrooms. It exists in so many aspects of life that it is our duty to reach out. The art museum is a stepping stone, a doorway, an open window to learning experiences that cannot just be talked about, but must be felt and experienced. I feel that the art museum is an important aspect to teaching and learning about art. These institutions are learning centers and can be in themselves a work of art. The art museum is also a cultural institution being that it houses many objects of human culture and life.

I would like my students to be able to experience the art museum, and now that these institutions have created ways in which to reach out into the community, we can legitimize our engagement. Utilizing their educational programs and tools will open a means into new experiences and new knowledge.

For this study, I focused on involving my students with the art museum’s educational program and used the techniques and information learned in the workshop to create dynamic lessons for my students. My students then took what they had learned and used it back in the classroom to create artworks and continue learning. My intention was that this study would improve my methods of teaching and incorporating the art museum into the classroom. This research study may also present an example of methods for other classroom art teachers to consider when bringing the art museum experience to their students, thus making the art museum more accessible. My hope is
that art teachers will use my experiences when considering strategies for incorporating the art museum. I hope they will come to realize the possibilities that are presented, and that reaching out beyond the classroom is feasible.

Proposed Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it presents a different dimension to teaching about art and provides students with experiences perhaps previously unknown to them. This study will serve as a real account of how an art teacher can form a connection to an art museum and bridge those experiences between the classroom and the museum.

Many benefits can be gained by using the art museum’s educational program and tools. Students gain live experiences with actual works of art, learn from local artists or art museum professionals, and art museum websites provide a cost effective way of viewing works right at the tip of our fingers, rather than spending money on costly reproductions. Images from the art museum can be projected from the classroom computer onto a screen in high quality and are viewable by an entire classroom full of students. Visiting the art museum also provides students with the most up-to-date information about the museum’s collections and exhibitions. Many art museums are consistently marketing their upcoming exhibitions and promoting the institution’s collection. Having students from local schools visit is a great way to get the word out about what they have to offer.
Key Terms Defined for the Purpose of the Study

Art Museum

Art museums preserve, safeguard, and exhibit significant artifacts of aesthetic value. By acquiring and caring for works of art, museums provide a service to society by advancing knowledge and understanding of culture. Art museums are complex institutions, balancing specialized departments, a variety of services, and diverse staff. Art museums around the world vary in size, type and scope, which therefore determine their staffing and organizational needs (Stone, 2001).

Educational Program (Workshop)

For this study, the educational program comes in the form of a workshop. The workshop is linked with a tour that inspires artmaking activities. The particular art museum visited provided a workshop instructed by an artist whose work is displayed in the museum. Workshops include a hands-on component where students get to create actual works of art while visiting the art museum.

Art Museum Professional

Art museum professionals or museum educators design educational services to meet specific school needs. They help align field trips with art curriculum and standards (Stone, 2001). Most museum educators will work with teachers, tailoring their services to meet the needs of the teacher and students.
Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

This study focused on a specific art class, a semester-long painting and collage class, with one teacher, myself, within a specific suburban high school located thirty minutes away from an art museum. Methods of gathering information occurred amongst a small group of students within a specific context. I have taught the course for the fourth time, and the course’s lesson plans are flexible and are aligned with the state and school district’s standards. I planned all the lessons involved with the course and developed lesson ideas based on the content of what the art museum’s educational program involved. Equipment and supplies were limited to what was available in the classroom and school building, and what was provided by the art museum.

As an art teacher and art education graduate student, I assume that art museums are important to learning about art and need to be included in an art student’s educational experiences. I also assume that utilizing an art museum’s educational program and tools is a feasible way in which to incorporate art museum education into regular art class learning. I also assume that by utilizing the art museum’s program, I will effectively meet my goals of improving my teaching methods by going beyond the classroom to learn about art. This chapter introduced the purpose and significance of this study, the research question, important terms that relate to the study, and the limitations and assumptions inherent in the study.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

It is important to identify that art museums are an important component of learning about art and culture. This chapter aims to examine the shift in roles of the art museum, the art museum educator, and the visitor in terms of educational theories. It is also important to consider how using art museums as an instructional tool by classroom art teachers is an important aspect to a child’s art learning. As researchers and art educators gain knowledge of how visitors learn in art museums, more information will be available on how an art museum can effectively contribute to the art education of individuals, whether through actual visits to the art museum, or through the use of technological tools provided on art museum websites on the Internet. Through various means, it is considerably important to make students aware of the art museum and what opportunities and experiences are offered that can enhance and enrich their lives and learning. This chapter will first explore the development of the art museum; the shifting roles in the art museum and art museum educator; educational theories relative to museum education; curriculum models in art museum education; the importance of the art museum in art education; pre-service art educators in relation to museum education; strategies for using the art museum; forming school/art museum partnerships; the art museum and the Internet; applications of the art museum website; and technology and interactivity concerning the art museum.
The Development of the Art Museum

The idea of “collecting” as a basic human tendency led to the development of what we think of as museums. Collections have existed from the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The modern notion of the museum can be traced to the humanistic interests of the European Renaissance, when collectors and patrons amassed extensive quantities of art objects that included “antiquities, jewels, paintings, and other ‘curiosities,’” (Stone, 2001, p. 5). These collectors were most often members of nobility or clergy, wealthy individuals, as well as members of royalty (Stone, 2001).

By the 17th century, private collections were slowly beginning to become available to wider audiences. Special sites and buildings were being constructed to make public displays and exhibits of private collections possible. When the Louvre opened its doors in 1793, during the French Revolution, it radically altered the definition of the “museum.” For the first time, art was being made accessible to all who wished to see it (Stone, 2001).

Shifting Roles: The Art Museum and the Art Museum Educator

Art museums operate through many aspects including: the acquisition of donated and purchased works and collections, the important process of preservation, display and exhibit design as the primary instrument of communication, and education through programs and workshops (Wink & Phipps, 2000). It was not until the late 18th century that art museums began to emerge in the United States. Soon after the Civil War and the
Industrial Period ended, there was a rise in the wealthy class in the United States that valued culture. For some, collecting and displaying art became a passion. During this time, the philosophical basis of the modern art museum began to appear. The establishment of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston helped to define the terms of what encompassed an art museum.

Strong, extensive collections and the financial support of wealthy patrons helped to create these institutions; and soon after, more art museums began to appear throughout the country. By the 1970s, the creation of modern art museums, such as the MOMA, Guggenheim, and the Whitney, had indicated that the center of the art world had shifted from Paris to New York City (Stone, 2001).

Ebitz (2005) asserts that many art museums experienced a shift from care of collections to care of visitors. Since the 1970s, there has been a shift in art museum policy to include more educational services (Attenborough, 2002). In addition, the role of the visitor has evolved. Art museum education was a relatively new concept in the 1960s, and its content focused primarily on academic art history. Art museum educators felt that museum education should be an aesthetic experience, so focus moved to visual literacy. Visual literacy involves teaching the knowledge and skills of how to “see” the artwork—a slightly modernist approach (Mayer, 2005).

Interactivity is a term related to the teaching methods of the art museum educators. The objective of interactivity was to replace the passive listener with active interchange between visitor and art museum educators; however, there was a tendency of art museum educators to narrow discussion of artworks to the formal elements and
principles of design. Museum literacy, another approach, focused not only on deriving meaning from the artworks, but also understanding the institutional codes of the museum (Mayer, 2005).

For some museums, placing an object on view in a setting that removed them from everyday life was considered the primary educational role. Others took more action by interpreting the objects for the visitors. This ‘modernist’ conception of the art museum’s role is still very familiar in many of the world’s museums (Henry, 2010). Master teaching came about in the 1980s. This concept involved the notion that visitors should model the master teacher (in other words, the curator) and enjoy the encounter with the artworks the same way as the experts, in which visual literacy was a basic component; yet, art museum education was continually criticized for a lack of grounding in educational theory (Mayer, 2005).

With new approaches, new art histories brought a shift in meaning-making from object and artist to the viewer/interpreter, as the modernist view exited and the post-modernist arrived. Finally, in the 1990s, the function of the art museum turned from the objects to the visitors. The art museums are under enormous pressure to demonstrate their new public role under this shift. Art museum educators can assist these institutions in this challenge by articulating why and how education does function at the center of their art museum’s mission (Mayer, 2005).

The audience and learner-centered theories of art history and education, and the emerging interest in visual culture, can justify and enrich the practice of art museum educators in a constructivist museum. Art museum education has professional standards
to follow that involve accessibility, accountability, and advocacy. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork, planning, implementation, and assessment. Most art museum educators hold a degree in art history, and others in art education. Many art museums require their educators to have completed a master’s degree. One of the many skills required by employers involves the use of technology and computers, and more importantly skills in written and verbal communication. Surprising and troubling though, skill in working with diverse audiences is lacking emphasis from art museums (Ebitz, 2005).

The role of the art museum educator has changed along with the role of the art museum itself. It has, in the last thirty years, become a profession rather than a practice (Ebitz, 2005). There is the newest concept of the ‘post-museum,’ which is beginning to emerge. Here, exhibitions are conceived as forms of dynamic pedagogy, representing different perspectives and multiple interpretations. The visitor is seen as the collaborator in the construction of meaning and the art museum engages more in the life of the community in which it exists (Henry, 2010). There is now a responsibility of the art museum educators to empower and enable visitors to have personally significant experiences with art museum objects (Ebitz, 2005).

Throughout the evolution of these roles was the desire to place the visitor within the process of interpretation and at the center of meaning-making (Mayer, 2005). Art museums have been in the process of change, evolving to become collaborators with museum visitors in the construction of meaning (Henry, 2010). Now, with art museums being expected to hold a visitor-centered view, art museum educators have become
important figures in upholding this expectation. The position of art museum educator can be an appealing alternative to those seeking a position in teaching art, but who do not desire the typical school setting (Mayer, 2005).

Educational Theories: The Visitor-Centered Approaches

So where is the visitor in this shifting experience? Investigations on the art museum visitor have provided a means through which art museums can aid in making visits more useful and meaningful. According to EunJung Chang (2006), there are many characteristics that need to be considered in order for the art museum to meet the needs of visitors. These characteristics fall under demographic variables, such as age, gender, race, education, income, occupation, and geographic distribution. Other characteristics are found in psychographic variables where visitors are labeled as either frequent, occasional, or non-visitors. Personal and cultural history variables show that participation in art museums is influenced by early childhood experiences and parental modeling. Also, many art museum visitors share similar perspectives about cultural history. Environmental factors such as word-of-mouth, advertising, and promotional campaigns can influence the art museum visitors as well (Chang, 2006). It would seem that visitor behavior is influenced by many of these characteristics and can result in the amount of time spent in art museums and label reading in terms of social content and context for artworks or exhibitions.
It is typical for adults to visit voluntarily, where as school-age children have little or no choice with organized school trips. Henry (2010) states that most adults make the decision to visit museums based on personal knowledge and past experience. Many visitors are repeat visitors and museums are becoming popular destinations. Others who rarely or never visit art museums tend to feel uncomfortable and ill-prepared to understand works of art. Reasoning for this could be a lack of educational preparation and focus on museum use in art teacher preparation, and the public’s perception of the museum as an institution.

There is a growing interest in the nature of the museum experience and connection of learning (Henry, 2010). As for art museum experience research, the Personal Meaning Mapping and Learner Report are methods of gathering knowledge about visitors and how they experience art museums. Personal Meaning Mapping (PMM) is designed to ask visitors to write down as many as possible: words, images, or phrases related to prior and subsequent learning experiences in an exhibition or in participation in a program. They are then asked to explain why they wrote down what they did. The Learner Report (LR) studied how visitors experience an art museum and how these experiences influence their learning. LR is similar to PMM because it asks visitors to write about their art museum experiences, but LR uses prompting headings to guide visitors in their writing (Chang, 2006). As these methods continue to be employed in future studies, it will no doubt continue to evolve and produce other related approaches that have not yet been considered.
Researchers have used the Interactive Experience and Contextual Learning models to construct clues as to how personal, social, and physical contexts play a part in a visitor’s experience at art museums. Because art museum learning is based upon these contexts, art museum professionals have limited learning experiences to compare as knowledge-based outcomes (Chang, 2006). This separates art museum learning from traditional learning settings, like schools.

The Interactive Experience model assumes that all experiences are contextual and the model involves the transaction of three contexts: personal, social, and physical. The personal context includes motivations, expectations, interests, prior knowledge, and experiences. The social context includes co-visitation patterns and social interactions within groups, between visitors and staff. The physical context includes institutional restrictions, policies and rules, architecture, layout, activities, collections, and facilities (Chang, 2006). All three contexts contribute significantly to visitors’ art museum experiences, though not necessarily in equal proportions in all cases.

The Contextual Learning model is based on free-choice learning (Mayer, 2005). This model is a refined version of the Interactive Experience model that involves three overlapping contexts: the personal, the socio-cultural, and the physical. In this model, the personal extends to involve motivation and expectation, prior knowledge, interests, beliefs, and choice and control. Some visitors may come to the museum because visiting the art museum is a habit formed in childhood. For others, it may be their first experience. The socio-cultural context consists of within-group, socio-cultural mediation, and the content facilitated mediation by others. Some visitors may come
alone or with a group of friends or family, or as part of an organized group. Their choice
to visit alone or with others affects their experience. Lastly, the physical contexts
includes advanced organizers and orientation so that people can learn better when they
feel secure and oriented in their surroundings; exhibitions, programs, or websites where
learning is influenced by design; and reinforcing events and experiences that take place
outside the art museum setting. An art museum’s architecture can be imposing and
intimidating to first time visitors. The layouts of galleries, lighting, and arrangement of
works can all affect the physical context of a visitor’s experience (Chang, 2006; Henry,
2010). Visitors come to the art museum with differing sets of personal experiences that
operate within differing socio-cultural contexts, and each is affected differently by the
physical context of the museum and individually made choices within that context
(Henry, 2010).

Among these two models, other educational theories and approaches can be considered. For example, Constructivism is another important approach in visitor
learning. It is based on visitors constructing knowledge by making connections between
their lives and the objects they encounter in the art museums. Aesthetic development
deals with visual literacy, or the ability to interpret relationships, content, and meaning in
works of art (Mayer, 2005). The literary theory involves learning that occurs when
visitors create their own narratives pertaining to what they see at the art museum. It is
suggested that most importantly, conversation among visitors be encouraged, rather than
conversation with experts, in order to inspire personal connections and discoveries.
Visitors are interested in obtaining a meaningful experience that has relevance in their
own lives. Viewing original works of art can expand and boost awareness, facilitating the discovery of meaning (Henry, 2010).

Curriculum Models in Art Museum Education

Curriculum models can also be explored for mapping out art museum education. Vallance (2004) has revisited and re-conceptualized four traditional models and proposed a fifth that may fit into the art museum setting most appropriately. The first four models are designed for students who attend public schools; however, each can be applied in many aspects, to art museum education.

The first model, the “Commonplaces” of Education developed by Joseph Schwab in the 1960s, is the most universally applicable. The four commonplaces are subject-matter, teacher, students, and milieu (setting). Each can be applied to art museum education through its collection as subject-matter; art museum educators, curators, docents, and even the visitors themselves can be considered teachers; students as visitors of all ages who come voluntarily with many different backgrounds; and the art museum’s building itself as the milieu.

The second model is called the Tyler Rationale, initiated by Ralph Tyler in 1949. This model, much like discipline-based education, involves goals and objectives, learning activities to meet those goals, implementing the resulting curriculum, and evaluating the outcome. This model is closely related to Discipline-Based Art Education, or DBAE. Evaluation can be somewhat problematic for art museums; however, they do evaluate in terms of surveys and visitor counts.
The third model developed by Dwayne Huebner in 1966, is called Ways of Valuing the Curriculum. This model identifies five ways of valuing what happens in schools, which are technical, scientific, political, ethical, and aesthetic rationales. Art museum education is guided primarily by the aesthetic rationale.

Model four is called Conflicting Conceptions of the Curriculum, developed in the 1970s, which dissect educational discourse for the overarching purposes it assigns to schooling. These conflicting conceptions define areas of disagreements that lead to discussion of reform. These conceptions include academic rationalism, cognitive process, social reconstructionism, self-actualization, and technology.

The fifth model is a proposed “Storyline” View of Museum Education. The storyline model suggests criteria of narrative coherence that can be applied in an evaluative way similar to art criticism. These criteria include purpose, engagement, and reflection. Visitors seek stories and art museums to tell them. This model may offer vocabulary and syntax for guiding and assessing art museum education in aesthetic terms (Vallance, 2004).

Art museum education can be coordinated much like the ways in which art teachers in the schools plan for their students. These models have similarities; however, those involved are different from the common school setting. One aspect that many art teachers have difficulty in is the aesthetic aspect through which art connects. Since art museums are primarily based on this aesthetic aspect, it is an ideal instructional tool in which to teach students how to make aesthetic judgments. Although having access to an art museum can be problematic in terms of visiting, many art museums are now setting
up virtual tours on their websites where students could view artworks in the collections. There are many models for curriculum, but the “storyline” best suits art museum education. It connects mostly to a visitor’s personal experiences. This personal aspect is what truly relates aesthetic elements to the learning of the visitor, while they also engage in art criticism, historical, and studio activities.

In many ways, some of these approaches are similar, if not identical, to the approaches used in the schools. Like students in schools, visitors have many different styles of learning and need different approaches to learning. Challenges that art museum educators come across, that differ from classroom art teachers in some ways, are that they deal with visitors from all different backgrounds in terms of culture, ethnicity, gender, age, and ability in a non-disciplinarian institution. Visitors choose whether or not to learn in the art museum. Meeting their needs can be difficult, and there are no set ways in which to do so. Having varied approaches helps reach more visitors in terms of learning, but art museums need to build more strategies with these approaches in mind.

Contemporary art museum educators now have access to various theories of learning, as well as innovative teaching strategies. Exploration in the field has led art museum educators to teach not only the collection, but also to teach ways in making the experience personally meaningful (Mayer, 2005). Challenges have arisen with friction between curatorial staff and the educational departments. However, education in art museums has presented a number of successes, including raising art museum attendance and bringing in financial benefits (Attenborough, 2002).
The Importance of the Art Museum in Art Education

Museums reflect the basic human impulse to collect and are reflections of the characteristics of organization, maintenance, and display (Stone, 2001). Today, there are a number of different museums extending from art museums, natural history museums, to planetariums and zoos. Museums are continually seeking new audiences, with cultural diversity in mind as an important goal (Henry, 2010). The art museum should serve as a bridge or translator between art and the public (Attenborough, 2002). Art museum professionals must investigate the needs of visitors in order to provide meaningful learning experiences for them (Chang, 2006), and they need to consider who is visiting. There is a lack of communication in many art museums that hinders the learning progress of visitors. Finding ways to communicate to all types of learners is most important. The artworks and exhibits may not directly reflect the personal, cultural, or social aspects of every visitor, but the method in which the information is conveyed can be catered to reach all different types of visitors who are there to learn and engage in aesthetic experiences. Henry (2010) notes that positive museum experiences are key to repeat visits. Understanding viewers’ expectations can help museums develop exhibitions and educational programming that address a range of visitor needs.

There have been many attempts to re-define the role of art museums as they relate to the world of art education. Art museums provide ways to form relationships across and among traditional disciplines, and to connect ideas. The value of using art for the integration of other subjects creates acceptance, experimentation, and imagination
(Attenborough, 2002). With the pressure from educational legislation, both national and local, to integrate the visual arts with other subject disciplines, organizing partnerships with educational departments of art museums provides an excellent source for art educators to stake claims of legitimacy.

Art educators see the art museum as a hub of learning activity that can be connected to more than just core school subjects, but a connection to art and life. Art museums collect objects from various historical periods and document multiple aspects of humankind and artistic expression and skill, which include art as a reflection of emotions, intelligence, and the general human condition (Stone, 2001). Children learn from connecting experience and previous knowledge to new ideas. The art museum is an excellent way to connect children to their surrounding community, a community that they know. Art teachers can utilize their local art centers and art museums, and guide their students in making those connections. Not to mention, the art museum can be a wonderful instructional tool. Time is an essential component of learning in art museums, and researchers, museum educators, and K-12 teachers need to recognize its importance in the experience. Learning occurs over time and is an ongoing process. Understanding expectations of visitors and addressing the many differences in them are crucial to developing relevant museum programming (Henry, 2010).

There are challenges that could be faced, and are probable, which include objections from schools’ administration and educators who feel they are not knowledgeable enough about visual art to introduce their students to the connections between other subjects and art. Perhaps to remedy this situation, art museums can extend
their hand to the schools in their communities by making programs accessible for those schools that may not have the means to connect.

Much emphasis is placed on showing artworks from reproductions, which are essential to teaching art lessons; however, teachers should keep in mind the importance of exposing students to original art objects. It is very important to get them thinking about artworks in ways that involve more than just looking, and in ways that are less passive and more interactive.

Pre-Service Art Educators and the Art Museum

The art museum can and should be used as an instructional tool. Art teachers can also promote that the art museum is an important aspect of artistic learning and life. There is a benefit in seeing an original work of art. Art teachers can take better advantage of art museum educational programming, but may lack the knowledge of how to use the art museum and incorporate its collections and resources into their teaching. Carole Henry (2004) discusses a course she developed for university students that focused on the art museum’s role relative to art education. The course was structured to introduce history and theory of art museum education. Students also explored teaching strategies to use in the art museum setting, in addition to visiting the art museum and meeting the art museum educational staff.

After conducting some surveys determining to what degree colleges and universities include instruction in the use of the art museum, Henry discovered many differences. In the survey conducted in 1996, there was a principle idea expressed that
art museums are important cultural institutions and can be exciting learning environments that provide access to original art objects. She also expressed that there is a need to develop the belief among future art teachers that introducing students to art museums is an important part of teaching (Henry, 2004).

Henry expresses a valid point about educating pre-service art educators and utilizing the art museum in college courses. It is a surprise that more universities and colleges do not offer courses for their art education students in using the art museum. A course in art museum education can show how instructional games and resources can be implemented into a lesson to make an art museum visit more enjoyable and meaningful, and university students can also meet with educational staff at art museums to learn how they function and what they offer. The following paragraphs will discuss strategies that can be and have been used by different institutions to engage their students in art museum activities and learning.

Strategies for Utilizing the Art Museum:

Field Trips, Learning Games, Group Dialogue, and Workshops

Field Trips

Making field trips with students is one way to take advantage of the art museum. Successful art museum field trips will increase the significance in the encounters that students have with works of art, especially when they get back to the classroom, and in other subject areas (Stone, 2001). Wink and Phipps (2000) suggest steps to follow when visiting an art museum. These steps can be modified and adapted to the classroom. It is
first important to know about the art museum and what an art museum does. Art museums house, preserve, and exhibit works of art, while also offering educational programs.

It is important to profile the art museum before visiting. Profiling an art museum consists of planning what to see in the art museum before arriving. This can be accomplished through viewing an art museum’s catalogue, and more conveniently, the art museum’s website to view what the collection consists of. This can also be useful when planning a classroom trip for students based on their course of study. Students and their teachers can collaborate on profiling the art museum they want to visit. Wink and Phipps (2000) also suggested knowing the art museum’s protocol and rules, obtain maps and brochures, and visit as a collective group. If students have sufficient preparatory information about the collections and art objects they will see, they will be more likely to benefit from the visit (Stone, 2001).

The entire art museum should not be taken in all in one visit, mostly if the art museum being visited is exceptionally large. Attempting to take in the entire art museum in one visit does not account for a rewarding experience, but planning to engage with parts that spike interest or course relevance will aid in a more engaging visit. Time spent with artworks can thus be more extensive, and there may be an opportunity to return for the artworks that were skipped over (Wink & Phipps, 2000).

Wink and Phipps (2000) also suggest that when visiting the art museum, providing students with a visual analysis guide would be beneficial. This can include prompts about basics, formal elements, cultural contexts, and expressive qualities that
they can use when viewing works of art. In addition, fun activities can also be planned for students to enjoy and have fun while visiting. Some activities can include sketching, naming untitled works, a scavenger hunt, identifying journalistic works, and recognizing symbols and icons in art.

It is also important to “bring home” the art museum. This means writing and making art after the art museum visit has been completed. Activities can be appropriate instructional strategies for getting students involved in contemplating and discussing works of art in the art museum. Further instruction can be taken back to the classroom through the form of writing and making art (Wink & Phipps, 2000). When students begin to consider art museums as exciting learning environments, they will be more likely to frequent such institutions later in life. They may grow to appreciate local cultural institutions as valuable elements of their community (Stone, 2001).

**Learning Games**

The Toledo Museum of Art Family Center and the University of Toledo Art Department had the opportunity to collaborate and develop the Children’s Art Workshop. The program began in 1978, and has proven to be a successful course for developing skills in art for young children while also allowing university students to put theory into practice. Through the program, young children are introduced to artworks housed in the art museum and engage in related art experiences (Danko-McGhee, 2004).

Before beginning, the university students obtain background information on the participating children. They are then partnered with a child and initiate developmentally
appropriate art criticism and art appreciation games. The games involved are Color Match, Match the Object, Match the Emotion, Painting Puzzles, Storytelling, and Guess What’s on My Glasses. Color Match involves children matching color swatches to artworks in the art museum. Match the Object involves searching for an artwork that contains an object chosen by the child. Match the Emotion entails matching up pictures of human faces showing emotion with an artwork that the child feels is similar. Utilizing small reproductions that are cut into puzzle pieces is used in Painting Puzzles, where students find the artwork that matches their puzzle piece in the art museum. Storytelling engages children in making up stories for particular artworks. Guess What’s on My Glasses involves the child wearing cut out glasses with a reproduction of an artwork attached to the frame. The university student describes what is on the reproduction while the child searches for the artwork in the art museum (Danko-McGhee, 2004).

The child is then led in studio activities that relate to the artworks that were favored by the child. Each game and the studio experience help develop language, visual perception, critical thinking, problem solving, hand-eye coordination, and cultural sensitivity. The university student also gains the opportunity to sharpen observation, reflection, and communication skills (Danko-McGhee, 2004).

This program seems to be very beneficial not only for the child but the university student as well. This situation is very unique in that the University of Toledo is located next to the art museum, which makes the program very successful in terms of accessibility. The program also prepares university students in using the art museum as
an instructional tool, while also promoting that the art museum is an important aspect of artistic learning and life.

The instructional games mentioned above are useful strategies for engaging young children in art criticism activities that lead up to studio experiences. However, they may not work for older children at the middle or high school level, without being altered or made more challenging. Each of the games could be modified for older children by including more critical thinking and writing activities with each game. Also, each game could be altered to be a more extensive search within the art museum. Those that are not within a reasonable distance of an art museum could still create these instructional games using reproductions of artworks or through browsing the art museum’s website, even though the benefit of seeing original objects is important.

*Group Dialogue*

Group dialogue holds a prominent place in today’s art museum education. Hubard (2007) explains the effectiveness that back-and-forth discussions have in art museum education and ways in which educators can promote group inquiry through posing thoughtful, open-ended questions that encourage students to look closer at artworks, acknowledging all responses and weaving them together within a larger context, and inviting students to ground comments in what they see. The aim is to empower audiences to collectively discover layers of meaning in works of art. Programs based on the delivery of information can severely limit the possibility for a perceptual
and personal relationship with an artwork. Students assume that their participation is
irrelevant and that other people have already defined what is important to know.

Contextual knowledge, however, is not necessarily a negative thing when
discussing art in the museum, but teachers need to know when is the right time to divulge
information so not to interfere with personal discovery. Hubard (2007) describes when it
is appropriate to convey contextual information and how it should be used when
promoting group dialogue to students. First, become familiar and comfortable with
teaching by discussion. Be informed; consider the importance a piece of knowledge is to
the understanding of a work of art; be mindful of the impulse to psychoanalyze an artist
and to relay ‘gossipy’ information responsibly; and consider the relevance of the
information to the different audience. This may become information that students get
stuck on without moving on to make relevant personal perceptions.

Other important steps need to be considered such as timing, distinguishing
between facts and interpretations, and addressing cultural meanings. Offering contextual
information too early may shut down viewers’ ideas, but if investigation comes close to a
particular piece of information and the dialogue can go no further, then it may be
appropriate to share the information with them. It is also important to distinguish
between what is factual information and what are interpretations because either can
interfere with personal discovery if not related accordingly. An artist’s comments about
their work can be factual, such as how it was made and what materials were used, but
more often they are interpretations because meaning can go beyond the intent of the
artist. Original cultural meaning can be lost to contemporary audiences. Viewers may
not be familiar with the cultural background of a work or artist, which does not make their responses necessarily wrong or insensitive. They may not know the significance of the cultural meanings. It is also recommended to be cautious of presenting meanings as truth to the exclusion of personal responses (Hubard, 2007).

**Workshops**

Some art museums may offer workshops that link to the museum’s collection to hands-on studio activities. A workshop may include anywhere from students sketching in one of the galleries, to working in a studio room reserved for art-making, or to participating in creative writing such as creating poems inspired by what is seen in the art museum. Depending on the art museum that is visited, workshops can go as far as inviting artists and experts to speak to or teach students that come to the art museum, especially if they are local. Often, teachers may choose the art-making processes and materials that relate to current curriculum topics for the students that are visiting (Stone, 2001).

Art museum workshops can be very beneficial to students who visit the art museum, possibly changing their attitudes toward museum visits. Having these educational opportunities may show learners that there is more to visiting an art museum than the traditional walking and talking tours. These workshops may also demonstrate to students that learning about art skills and techniques can exist in places other than schools. When students are working with local artists, either through a collaborative project or through more traditional methods of learning skills and techniques in a
particular medium, much like an atelier, they can form new perceptions about learning and art. The atelier was a method used in the Renaissance as a way in which individuals could study works of master artists by copying or imitating their works to solve artistic problems while working with the master artist in their studio. These artists’ studios displayed artworks much like art museums display the works in their collections (Meyer, 1974). Collaborative works, another reflection of the Renaissance, are discussed further in the following section.

Forming School/Art Museum Partnerships

Schools may have the opportunity to form partnerships with art museums and/or art centers. Art museum educators often design educational services to meet specific student and school needs. Art teachers, in turn, can help art museum educators by giving them feedback about programs and resources that their students have participated in. School-museum partnerships are based on the willingness to exchange ideas and openly discuss educational issues (Stone, 2001).

Often schools and art museums have an artist-in-residence visiting and participating in a collaborative project, inviting students to work alongside them. This can be a regular occurrence at universities and colleges. Forming a partnership may be one way to get students involved with not only art objects, but also working artists. Often, the art masters collaborated on what we call masterpieces in the guilds of the Renaissance. Christo’s Running Fence (1976) can be considered a contemporary collaborative work, involving many hands. Collaborative projects correspond to overall
personal growth of the individuals involved (Wallot & Joyal, 1999). These projects can also show students that not all artworks are created individually and that artworks can be made with the help of many hands.

Forming a partnership with art museums that promote collective works and allow students to join in the process is an ideal source for learning how to work with others. Often, art instruction and production is done on an individual basis. Working with others is something that most will encounter at one point or another in their lives. It is a necessary skill and since art contains that flexibility to integrate many school disciplines, it can also integrate life skills. It is also important to show students that artists are not always working individually, but in many cases with partners or teams of other artists. Showing them that masterpieces were not necessarily constructed by one person, but by many, may help them realize there is a place for them in art. Getting students involved with community artists at art museums or art centers will also teach them to value collaboration, while putting them in a unique setting outside the usual classroom (Wallot & Joyal, 1999).

It would seem that art museum relationships offer meaningful curricular connections with art museum collections. Teachers and students may begin thinking about learning art in a new way. Students begin to see museums as integral and important parts of the community.

So how can one begin making an art museum connection? Stone (2001) suggests that first an art teacher should get to know the art museum, either through participating in workshops offered at the art museum, or by meeting the art museum educators. Making
contact with an art museum’s educational department represents an important opportunity to begin exploring the relevance of art museum services to one’s own teaching. One should find out about art museum materials including teacher packets, lessons, ideas for classroom instruction, teacher guides, and support materials. From there, one can develop a partnership that will lead to many benefits for both the teacher and students, and for the art museum educator. Partnerships can allow teachers to field test and improve art museum materials so that they best meet teachers’ needs.

A school-museum collaboration may delve even further that just a partnership because they represent a special partnership in which members from both institutions work together to form an alliance. During these collaborations, both members develop programs specifically designed for students’ needs on a more pin-pointed level, and can be short or long-term, formal or informal. They may include multiple visits by students to the art museum, or the art museum professionals and educators may bring materials and works of art to the students at their schools. Students thus explore more in-depth learning about art (Stone, 2001).

The Art Museum and the Internet

In addition to the many programs and partnerships that are developed by art museums, these institutions are utilizing the Internet as a form of outreach and a 21st century necessity. Many art museums have recently focused more on creating engaging Web resources, many of which are for educational purposes. These art museums are utilizing the Web to not only promote their museums, but also to provide educational
materials and opportunities to the many that enjoy the art museum, including teachers and their students. These art museums are using the Web to display many of the artworks that they do not have the physical space to display. Many of these artworks sit in storage, and by presenting them on the Web, educators and others can have access to them even when they are not being displayed in the actual art museum. Also, because so many art museums are taking advantage of the Web, educators and their students benefit from being able to view artworks and their information from art museums that would not realistically be visited, either due to geographical, financial, or administrative reasons (Roland, 2005).

Many art museums are “digitizing” the artworks they have in storage, therefore widening their collection. In addition, art museums are allowing educators and students to gather images for a personalized digital collection that can be used for teaching and learning (Dyrli, 2007). The “virtual museum” is a potentially inexpensive way to exhibit more treasures beyond limited space. It is a way to exhibit certain fragile items, reach young or new audiences, and measure existing ones. Art museums that offer “virtual” exhibits expand the market and revenue for their institutions and their shops. Modern art museums with digital and multimedia works are pioneers in mounting online exhibits. In general, museums are among the most popular tourist destinations. There could be anywhere from 2 million visitors on any given day. The Guggenheim Virtual Museum is, for example, one of the largest efforts to create an entire museum in cyberspace. This “museum” can only be “visited” or seen on a computer. Art museums that support efforts
for cyber-learning offer online multimedia searches and navigation tools, interactive learning, and distance learning (Conhaim, 2005).

The “virtual museum” is a leap towards the 21st century from the standard, traditional period of the art museum. Art museums are taking steps and have already succeeded in updating their image in contemporary society. By providing these online tools and virtual exhibits, the art museum is reaching out to more people than ever before. The traditional art museum is visited in a quiet, orderly fashion with labels for artworks and headphones for self-guided tours. Occasionally, there will be the interactive area with permission to touch and create. The virtual museum and/or exhibit can be enjoyed in the comfort of home or in a classroom setting for an alternative way to experiencing the art museum. Although, not set up in front of an actual artwork, discussion and learning can take place, perhaps even more in depth, as if an art museum visit were in place.

In addition, art museum websites can be used to plan field trips, make available links to other useful sites, display up-to-date information on art museum hours, workshops, lectures, special events and exhibitions, obtain teaching materials, and can be highly useful for educators that are geographically distant form the institution. One highlight of using an art museum’s website is that many offer virtual tools, which can be very useful for those who cannot physically visit the museum. Although a virtual visit is not the same as an actual visit, individuals can learn much about artifacts in art museums around the world (Stone, 2001).
It would seem art museums with established websites are of special interest to art teachers. They offer immediate access to selected work in their collections, art historical information, curriculum materials, and more. Art museum websites are especially valuable for locating relevant art reference materials for classroom use. The content they provide is generally more reliable and authentic than you might find elsewhere on the Web. Also, because art museums are trying to appeal to a wide public audience, the material on the sites is often accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds (Roland, 2005).

Art museums vary greatly in how they present their collections on the web. Some aim for wide coverage, including most images of the pieces along with text. Others focus on displaying highlights of the permanent collections and special exhibitions, some offer virtual tours of the museum or specials exhibitions accompanied by audio narratives. Even more, some offer in-depth analyses of selected works, including subject matter, facts about the work and/or artist and even provide zoom-in capabilities for viewing artwork details. Some provide search capabilities that allow you to retrieve items of interest by subject, artist name, title, media, place, or date. Some organize their online collections by categories according to media or curatorial department. Some museums use their websites as an interactive educational medium that applies toward the variety of learning styles and understanding that visitors bring to the online viewing experience (Roland, 2005).
Applications for the Art Museum Website

Students can visit art museum sites, do research, and create their own websites with information they have gained from an art museum website. This can increase and enhance computer-related skills; however availability of computers and equipment must be considered. It is also important to search for appropriate art museum sites and identify how these sites will contribute to student learning (Stone, 2001).

One senses that the past ten to fifteen years have produced many unique possibilities for expanding and transforming the learning environment in the art classroom through the use of the Internet and digital technologies. Classroom applications of technology intertwine with curriculum goals. The Internet can help build a richer teaching and learning environment. Many people today respond to visuals and depend heavily upon television and digital technologies like the Internet, to gather information and communicate with others around the world. The definition of technology conveys that it encompasses all the tools, techniques, methods, processes, and systems that we use in our lives to extend our abilities and solve emergent problems (Roland, 2005).

One benefit of Internet access in the classroom is the opportunity it provides for students and teachers to work with up-to-date information, real-time events, and people from different geographic locations. Digital technologies collectively constitute a new genre of contemporary art forms that are dramatically altering our cultural landscape. Students are drawn to the Internet for its interactive and multimedia features, the vast amounts of varied information it provides, and its capacity to instantaneously connect
them with people, places, and ideas around the world. Students have grown up in a technology-rich environment and have an inclination to use the Internet for a variety of academic, personal, social, and recreational purposes. Teachers can make use of these technologies to help bridge the gap between what happens in our classrooms and what happens in our students’ everyday lives (Roland, 2005).

When considering using the Internet and the Web for part of instruction and lessons, we must consider that there is a lot of information available at the click of a mouse. Much of that information can be useless or incorrect, and not helpful for the lesson. However, with guided practice, students can be lead to the most useful sites with reliable information. Art museum websites can be considered reliable sources because their role is to know about artworks, especially the ones they contain in their collection. It is safe to assume that they have the most knowledge about specific pieces of art. Projects can be created based around contemporary social issues and the Web can be used for research that leads to creating artworks reflective of a developing understanding of an issue. Art museum websites can be used as sources of “official” information about an art object. Students can be exposed to a variety of information and interpretations about artworks, and with help, they can come to their own conclusions about the artwork (Buffington, 2007).

Some art museums have also collaborated to create websites specifically for use by teachers and students in schools and have gone so far as to provide actual teacher training in how to use these sites. The Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Walker Art Center in Minnesota have created the ArtsConnectEd website. The idea behind the
website was to create a resource that would provide full educational access to collections and resources of both art museums in a digital form. Through the increase of technological advancement of the World Wide Web, these institutions joined together to present educational material in a new way, rather than through letters and mailings that would ultimately be discarded by many art teachers (Sayre & Wetterlund, 2002).

The train-the-trainer program was developed by committees of these two art museums in order to reach a majority of K-12 teachers in the state of Minnesota. The goal was to select interested and qualified teachers to come for training by a “lead trainer” to show them how to make use of the ArtsConnectEd site. After their training was complete, the teachers would go back to their districts to train others. When the program was complete, the teachers were surveyed to find what techniques were most helpful from the program (Sayre & Wetterlund, 2002).

Sayre and Wetterlund (2002) expressed that it is highly important to include continuing professional development for K-12 teachers regarding technology. Art museums also need to consider diversity in skills when developing online resources. Including a range of tools and interfaces for accessing electronic materials would be more accessible for a more diverse population (Sayre & Wetterlund, 2002).

Useful workshops on using art museum websites may help teachers get familiar with the site’s materials as well as using the computer. Nearly all teachers today use a computer in some way and art teachers may be able to introduce technology into their classrooms by incorporating sites sponsored by art museums, like the ArtsConnectEd website. It is interesting to find that both art museums involved with creating the site
came together to create a visual database of their collections for the use of teachers, and even took it further to provide tools on creating lessons, interactive games, and other instructional materials. These institutions also created marketing strategies by recruiting teachers to train other teachers on how to use the site for classroom instruction. The art museums have thus become more exposed to a wider audience. There were some downfalls, however, in that there were a handful of schools that were not supportive in sending teachers away to participate in the training workshops. Unfortunately, these were the schools most likely to cut art out of the curriculum in times of budget crises. This trend can be found in many districts that are trying to balance the issues of funding and curriculum, all while trying to provide teachers with meaningful professional development (Sayre & Wetterlund, 2002).

Art museum websites are very useful for classroom instruction if the resources are available. Although many schools are updating and increasing their technology resources, there are still realities where schools less fortunate are waiting for available resources. Grants can be obtained to purchase technology equipment, but many teachers are unaware of how to go about obtaining these monies (Stone, 2001).

Technology and Interactive Spaces in the Art Museum

There is a large connection to technology with education, which is something that teachers are constantly looking for. Technology is highly stressed as an integral part of learning and succeeding in today’s world, and has even been included in many of the
teaching licensure procedures and requirements. Using the art museum website is just another way technology can be integrated with art into the classroom, especially when using the interactive sites with virtual tours and activities. Art museums can reach out to classroom art teachers and students by promoting what their sites can offer. Additionally, technological tools are being updated and used within the art museum.

The Orlando Museum of Art wanted to present an exhibition that not only addressed a diverse audience, but also connected to young people. By taking the traditional audio tour or podcast a step further, museum educators incorporated the iPod as part of the art museum’s educational strategies to teach about the artworks. They found that the iPod could play video clips along with audio recordings. Through the iPod, visitors were able to not only hear what an artist and experts were saying about the works, but they could also see video clips of them speaking and pointing out certain details.

This led to the official program of iVE, or interactive Video Experience. The museum educators felt that the iPod would feel familiar to younger audiences. Through the program, visitors were able to pick and choose what they wanted to know from a concentrated program designed for the iPod. Visitors could either bring their own iPods with the program already downloaded, or rent an iPod from the museum’s visitor information desk (Lopez et al., 2008).

Art museum educators found that when adults used the program, they tended to only listen to the recordings rather than look at the video clips. Eighty percent of college students spent time looking back and forth between the video clips and the art works.
This demonstrates that there is a gap between generations on how technology is used for learning in the art museum. Some museum professionals worry that too much availability of information through technology may interfere with the potential for aesthetic responses and that it could possibly replace an actual visit (Lopez et al., 2008).

Many art museums have developed interactive spaces for visitors to experience art learning in the art museum. Art museums are making efforts to attract more diverse audiences, encourage repeat visitation, and enhance student learning through the use of interactivity. However, concerns have risen about how to make these experiences authentic to the content and the creative processes for all age groups. Common threads found throughout each of these programs show evidence that interactivity is quite popular with visitors and encourages family attendance; however, each have come up against issues concerning meaningful learning that may not occur as much as “play.” Defining the dimensions of what an interactive experience in an art museum can be; defining what is meant by “play” and its relationship to learning; developing clear, reasonable, meaningful outcomes for the visitor’s experience; designing responsible interactive experiences to effectively communicate content and meaning; and mediating to facilitate learning in a social context all can be considered when creating an interactive space or exhibit at an art museum (Adam, Moreno, Polk, & Buck, 2003).

Having these interactive spaces and exhibits at art museums can be an effective way to strengthen the connection between the visitor and the art museum, as well as broadening the audience of the art museum. By reaching a larger, more diverse audience more learning is occurring about art and art objects. Utilizing an interactive area can be
one way in tapping into multiple learning styles, especially with children. This will expose them not only to the collection by viewing and discussing works of art, but can also be a way for them to experience art differently than that of traditional art museum experiences with hands-on activities and new technologies. Adam, et al (2003) mentioned that interactive does not always mean “please touch.” This is interesting because it is commonly misconceived that “interactive” means to physically touch objects in order to learn. This is not ideal for an art museum, especially when touching can lead to damaging an artwork. If clear definitions and/or directions are enforced and reinforced, this could be avoided and learning can still be successful. By including interactive spaces within the art museum, children can thus be taught to care for objects that are considered special with appropriate behavior, while also giving them opportunities to expel energy and exercise knowledge gained from the art museum’s collection.

Conclusion

It is important to reflect on this evolution in the function of an art museum when considering how learning occurs with visitors and students. The last thirty years have seen changing attitudes and approaches in the art museum setting. The art museum has focused its efforts towards the visitor, due to demanding pressures of the public and the changing views from modernism to the post-modernist era. There has been considerable ongoing research in the hopes of discovering the best solutions in providing visitors with an enjoyable and beneficial art museum experience. These approaches must be
considered when exposing students to the realm of the art museum. It is also important to consider how art museums can be essentially useful for art learning, and using strategies for learning in the art museum can make the most of an art museum trip for school students. By getting students involved with the art museum, whether through visits or technology-driven experiences, teachers instill a value and love of the art museum in their students so that their future will include important cultural awareness and community connections to be passed on for generations. When schools and art museums work together, they can open up a range of possibilities for their learners. As art museums change their approach from the object to the visitor, this possibility of working together with schools can be realized and furthermore prove highly successful. In order to establish contexts for the following chapter, this chapter covered the areas of the a short history of the art museum; shifting roles in the art museum and art museum educator; educational theories relative to museum education; curriculum models in art museum education; the importance of the art museum in art education; pre-service art educators in relation to museum education; strategies for using the art museum; forming school/art museum partnerships; the art museum and the Internet; applications of the art museum website; and technology and interactivity concerning the art museum.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Overview

For this study, Action Research was determined to be most appropriate for the information that would be studied. The following chapter outlines Action Research and its methods, and how it is applied and used for this particular study. The aim of the research study was to examine an in-depth experience at an art museum and how it affects a high school art teacher and her students. The following research question guided this study: How will participating in an Ohio art museum’s educational program affect the teaching and learning experiences of a 21st century high school advanced art class and its teacher?

Action Research as Methodology

Action Research is “research conducted by one or more individuals or groups for the purpose of solving a problem or obtaining information in order to inform local practice,” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 572). More specifically, Action Research is a distinctive approach to inquiry that is directly relevant to classroom instruction and learning. It provides a way for educators to enhance their teaching and improve student learning and understanding (Stringer, 2008).

As a method, Action Research involves individuals and/or groups identifying areas for improvement, generating ideas, and testing these ideas in practice. This type of
research develops the capability for teachers to be discriminatory and distinctive in order to make informed decisions about their educational ambitions and means of bringing these ambitions and practices together (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2009).

Practical Action Research is intended to address a specific problem within a classroom, a school, or a similar community. Its primary use is to improve practice in the short term as well as to inform larger issues that may arise in the future. “Practical Action Research can be carried out by individuals, teams, or even larger groups provided that the focus remains clear and specific,” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 573). It can be integrated into regular classroom activities as assistance to lessons, and to enhance teaching and improve learning. It is not just a formal process of inquiry, but may be applied systematically as an instrument for learning in classrooms and in schools (Stringer, 2008).

Action Research was selected as the preferred choice of method because of the position of the researcher. As the researcher, I also take on the role of the classroom teacher. It is important to me as a professional and an individual assigned the privilege of teaching children about the immense and exciting world of art, to become one who consistently examines and researchers my own practices. Not only does this keep my knowledge current, but also aids me in providing my students with more up-to-date practices in teaching and learning.
Case Study as a Method

In addition, the method of Case Study was used because of the circumstances of the study. A case study involves the study of just one individual, classroom, school, or program. With an intrinsic case study, the researcher is primarily interested in understanding a specific individual or situation. The goal is to understand the case in all its parts including its inner workings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Case study applies to this research because I am trying to understand a specific class of art students while they engage in meaningful experiences with an art museum. Stake (1995) notes that we study a case when it itself is of very special interest. The cases of interest in education and social service are people and programs. Focusing on a class I am personally involved with connects with Action Research, and Case Study narrows the study down to a more specific and accessible location.

Participants in the Study

The role of the researcher is as an active participant in the study, observing and instructing what is taught and learned. Much of Action Research is teacher-centered, focusing on teacher reflection, instructional practices, and assessments of student outcomes (Stringer, 2008). The teacher/researcher takes an active role in developing the instruments to make them locally appropriate. I, being the teacher, became an active participant as well as researcher, carefully constructing materials and instruments used in data collection.
In addition to the teacher as a participant, students enrolled in an art class at a large, Northeast Ohio, suburban high school were selected to be participants. These students were selected to be participants because they were enrolled in the Advanced Painting course at the high school. There were a total of nineteen students ages fifteen to eighteen. Eighteen students were female and one was male. All students were Caucasian. The students represented mixed socio-economic statuses. These students were selected because they elected to take the course knowing that it was not required for graduation. They also had successfully completed the prerequisite course of Painting and Collage and obtained techniques and knowledge learned in that course.

Lastly, an art museum professional that works at the Ohio art museum participated. The professional was selected because of her direct involvement with the art museum, its educational program, and her knowledge of working in the art museum setting. This art museum professional was Caucasian, female, in her sixties, with thirty plus years of experience in the field of architecture, art education, and museum education. She not only acts as the museum’s educational coordinator, but is also the art museum’s owner and director. She contributed valuable knowledge about her experiences and the world of art museums. She also exuded a positive attitude towards student learning in terms of art museum education and was enthusiastic in her general treatment of school-age children when they visited the art museum, showing genuine care for their well-being.
Site of the Study

The sites chosen for this Action Research study were the high school where I currently teach and an Ohio art museum located approximately sixteen miles from the high school. The high school is located in Northeast Ohio, nearly fifteen to twenty miles from two major cities. It is a comprehensive high school with an enrollment of approximately 1,455 students, grades nine through twelve. This site was chosen primarily because of accessibility as it pertains specifically to me and Action Research.

The Ohio art museum was selected because of their willingness to work with me and my students, distance from the high school, and its uniqueness as it houses only Ohio artists, many of whom are still living. The art museum collects, preserves, presents, and promotes the work of visual and performing artists in Northern Ohio for the enrichment and education of its citizens and the global community. It was founded in 2001 to serve as a repository for art by regional artists and as an educational resource for the community. The museum was built in the 1970s and underwent many renovations and restoration to become its current state. It was dedicated in 2003, and continues to acquire pieces of art from regional artists. Since 2008, this museum has been developing an art awareness program that gives local students the opportunity to work alongside regional artists. The setting provides a unique and welcoming environment for students of all ages and encourages them to appreciate and explore art. Because the majority of artists featured in the art museum are still living and working in the area, the museum is able to bring them in to interact directly with students (Art Awareness Program, 2010). Though relatively smaller than other art museums, this site provided a unique museum experience.
for my students. This quality fulfils an Ohio state standard that addresses specifically students learning about Ohio artists (Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2004).

Art Museum Workshop Description

During the actual workshop in which my students participated for this study, students were able to spend several hours with a trained watercolor artist. The artist has thirty-plus years of experience and is local. The objectives of the workshop were for students to view and discuss works of art in the museum that displayed watercolor techniques, create their own watercolor paintings of a wintery landscape, modeling after the artist/instructor, and then finally participate in a critique in which the students could view and discuss their works with the artist and their peers. In addition to working with the artist, students were able to explore the museum during their lunch break and during any extra time available when they were not working on their paintings. To compensate for the expenses of the visit, students raised money through a candy fundraiser. The total cost for the workshop and visit was $750.00.

Methods of Data Collection

Surveys/Questionnaires

Surveys are an instrument for collecting information from a group of people in order to describe some aspects or characteristics of the population of which that group is a part (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The main way in which information is collected is
through asking questions. Information is collected from a sample rather than every member of the population. Surveys most commonly come in the form of questionnaires.

With a cross-sectional survey, information from a sample has been drawn from a predetermined population. Information is collected at just one point in time, although it may take days to weeks to collect all the data. I selected a particular art class to study. This class was determined to be the most appropriate for the art museum visit due to the fact that the class focuses on the medium and techniques of painting and collage, indicating a good fit for the museum workshop content. The class also is generally small with only nineteen students. These students were also upperclassmen, meaning they have completed at least two art classes prior to the current class. The population is then predetermined, and because they meet daily in my classroom, instruments were passed out and applied at the same time and place. Due to my small sample size, and to the fact that I wanted to value each student’s voice, I chose not to randomize responses, but did keep them anonymous.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) describe a panel study that surveys the same sample of individuals at different times during the course of the survey. Here the researcher can note changes to the sample’s characteristics or behavior and explore the reasons for these changes. I surveyed the same group of students and observed their dialogue and behaviors throughout the study. I observed and surveyed the group of students to note any changes during the course of the study. The questionnaires (Appendixes A and B) were given before and after the museum visit.
As the researcher, I used direct administration to the group in which I have full access to all the members of the group at one place at the same time. Here I was able to administer the surveys all at once. The advantages of this are the high rate of response, the low cost factor, and the opportunity to explain the study and answer any questions that the participants may have had.

**Observation**

Observations work the researcher toward a greater understanding of the case. During observations, the researcher keeps a good record of events to provide a relatively indisputable account for further analysis and ultimate reporting (Stake, 1995). Observation is one of the most utilized forms of data collection, especially for educators. Much can be learned from just observing what your students are doing and how they are behaving. In participant observation, the researcher actually participates in the situation or setting they are observing (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

As the participant-as-observer, the researcher participates fully in the activities in the group being studied, but also makes it clear that she is doing research. While students participated in the workshop, I continuously observed their actions, reactions, and dialogue, while I also engaged in the activities along with my students.

Observations also took place back in the classroom after the museum visit took place. I observed how the students took what they learned from the workshop and used that information back in the classroom while they worked on art projects of their own and
projects I assigned. Here I could see the students back in a familiar environment with new knowledge to utilize.

**Interview**

Interviewing is the careful asking of relevant questions for getting insight into what a person is thinking about a certain subject. It can be a very important way of checking the accuracy of the impressions the researcher gains through observations. Semi-structured interviews are somewhat formal and consist of a series of questions designed to elicit specific answers on the part of the respondents (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), but also allow for some deviation. The purpose of interviewing is to get unique “descriptions of episodes, linkage, and explanations,” (Stake, 1995, p.65) from the interviewee’s individual experience. The information from these interviews can be compared and contrasted for making conclusions. I chose to interview three students based on my observations. These were students whom I knew to be very motivated by the museum visit and also able to speak their mind about what they experienced without hesitation or timidity.

Interviewing these students provided a more in-depth analysis of their personal experience at the art museum and afterwards. By allowing these students to use their own words to answer questions in a semi-structured interview, they willingly provided even more information on their thoughts than they had on their questionnaires. They were also able to elaborate on questions that may have been answered vaguely on the questionnaires. The following questions were used in the interviews with students:
• What art classes have you taken since beginning high school?
• What were your thoughts when I told you we would be working with an art museum during this class?
• Tell me how visiting the art museum and participating in the workshop influenced your interest in art museums in general.
• How does visiting the art museum change your overall experience with art?
• Tell me how it might change your thoughts about art in school.
• What have you gained by from working with the art museum?
• Tell me what about the workshop inspired you. Disappointed you.
• How might this experience affect you in the future?

In addition to student interviews, an art museum professional was interviewed to gain insight into museum education and the inner workings of organizing workshops for student groups. In this case, the owner and director of the art museum was interviewed because she is directly involved with all aspects concerning the art museum and its workshops for student groups. Interviewing the art museum professional helped me gain knowledge on a different perspective of organizing an experience for the students, whereas I organized on the end of the school while the art museum professional organized on the end of the art museum. The following questions were used in the interview with the art museum professional:

• Tell me some background information about yourself and how you became involved with the art museum.
• What daily responsibilities do you have as a museum professional?
• Tell me about your museum’s program and workshops.
• How did the program begin?
• Tell me what goes on during a typical workshop.
• Tell me about your interaction with the classroom art teacher and their students.
• How has museum education changed since you began your program?
• Give me some examples of past experiences with other schools that were successful or not so successful.
• Where do you see the future of art museum education?

Reflective Journaling

Reflective journaling allowed for students to elaborate, in writing, their thoughts and feelings on what they observed before, during, and after the museum visit. Students were given journal prompts to inspire their thoughts and help them start their writing. This method helped supplement the student interviews and questionnaires. The students spent twenty minutes of class time the day before the visit completing the first journal entry. They then completed the second journal entry on the thirty-minute bus ride home from the museum. The following prompts were given to students for their reflective journal entries:
• Journal Prompt #1
  o Outline how you predict tomorrow’s visit will take place. (Guiding sentence: Tomorrow, I will be visiting the art museum and this is what I think will happen).

• Journal Prompt #2
  o Describe step-by-step what you experienced at the art museum today. (Guiding sentence: Today at the art museum…).

Data Analysis

Data gathering has no particular starting point. It begins even before there is a commitment to the study and a significant proportion is picked up informally as the researcher becomes familiar with the case (Stake, 1995). As I collected data, I consistently made interpretations and attempted to make sense of the information. I took field notes during the students’ participation in the museum’s workshop and while they explored the museum. The notes were descriptive and detailed. I then made observations of the students when they returned to the classroom and worked on their art works. I conducted and then transcribed interviews with the three students and then the art museum professional. I compiled all the questionnaires and journals of the students. Triangulation is the cross-checking of data using multiple data sources or multiple data-collection procedures. It improves the quality of the data that are gathered and the accuracy of the researcher’s interpretations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). I sorted through all of the data, looking for patterns and codes in an attempt to categorize and simplify the
information so that it could become understandable. Several categories emerged to become the basis and structure of my data analysis. I found there were many variations in the data that, at first, were difficult to narrow down. Commonalities and themes that surfaced most frequently became the most obvious choices to focus upon, and will be discussed and become the focus of the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Overview

When I began teaching, after the first-year jitters settled and I was able to focus on what it was I wanted to bring to my students and how I would like to affect them through art, I researched ways in which to do so. Through old and new materials, tried and true teaching techniques and some brand new, crazy role-playing and formal droning/lecturing, successes and failures, I tried everything I could think of. I am still trying. I kept things that seemed to work and threw out what did not work at the time, thinking to myself, “One day I will figure this out!” As nearly four years flew by quickly, I had yet to construct strategies on how to get my students involved with an art museum. Not just passively involved, but actively engaged in more than just visiting and looking at art. Either by intimidation or simply not knowing where to start, I did not really know how to go about setting up the steps in which to get my students connected to the art museum. I used this research opportunity to really understand and internalize what it takes to make that connection happen and how it would affect me, and ultimately how it would affect my students.

By carefully searching and selecting an art museum that was appropriate for my students, establishing a relationship with the museum to set up educational programming that was relevant to the curriculum, getting my students to the museum, and continuing learning after their experience at the museum, I was able to construct opportunities to gather research to find out how this process affected myself and my students. Through
interviews with three students and one art museum professional, questionnaires, observations, and reflective journaling, I was able to assemble data to help answer my key research question: How will participating in an Ohio art museum’s educational program affect the teaching and learning experiences of a 21st century high school advanced art class and its teacher? As the information was compiled and reviewed, the following categories emerged: Connecting to the art museum; students’ preconceived notions versus actual experience; benefits of learning in the art museum versus learning in the classroom; and applying learned knowledge to classroom activities. This chapter will describe the data related to each category and my interpretations of the data.

Connecting to the Art Museum

Making the connection to the art museum was a personal journey for me as a teacher. As an individual, I could choose how I wished to connect to the art museum by either visiting or researching websites on my own, in my time. In this case, I had to make this connection with nineteen other individuals in mind, my students.

Establishing Contact

When I first decided that I wanted to get involved with the art museum and somehow incorporate it into my teaching practices, I began by searching the local, more established art museums. I began researching the art museums’ websites to find out who the educational coordinator was, what kind of educational programming was offered, and what teacher resources were available. After corresponding with several professionals
from the art museums, I had found that many were not willing to work with me and my students unless we conformed to pre-planned activities that the museum had already created. Other reasons included distance from the museum to the school. I was also passed around from different departments within certain museums to get any response from them about working with a high school group, and I did not get any reply at all from at least two museums.

Frustrated and feeling a little defeated, I spoke with my advisor about my situation and she was able to recommend a different museum that could possibly work with me and my students’ needs. I came to find out that this museum, although much newer and much smaller than the other museums, was a wonderful discovery.

After emailing back and forth with the art museum director, I found that I was treated with great respect and enthusiasm, a very different response than what I received before. Not only was this museum willing to work with me, but they wanted to know what they could do for me and for the students. Instead of having the students participate in something already planned, this museum plans the visit and educational programming based on the needs of the classroom teacher and the students, working with the teacher to create a unique and dynamic workshop for the students to participate in. She said:

The programs and workshops are basically designed around the needs of the classroom teacher. It’s to prepare kids to go to college, in a sense. I’m not saying the classroom teacher isn’t doing that, but I think it’s going a little bit beyond that of getting kids to think about their career. Do I want to be a graphic designer? Or an architect? What does an architect do? What does somebody in industrial design do? What does that entail? Can I talk to somebody? Can somebody tell me about the educational program? So it’s kids coming to a series of workshops, getting a skill, being able to talk to somebody who’s gone through the different fields and experiences, and starting to think about, “How am I going to make a living doing
The Art Museum

Shortly after communicating through email, the art museum’s director invited me to come out to the museum to see it for myself. I was very surprised and impressed by what I found. When you think of ‘art museum,’ you often think of some monumental, grayish building that reminds you more of those memorials you find in Washington, D.C. Truly, many of the most well-known art museums, like the MOMA and the Met in New York City, are seriously massive buildings. I found myself driving through the woods to a modern looking home with beautiful surroundings and large sculptures around it.

The art museum was a renovated home, converted to house and preserve the works of living (and a few deceased) artists of Northern Ohio. It was also established to bring art to the community in which it exists and serve people in ways of educating about art. As I entered the art museum, I heard a woman call out, “Hi Stacy! Sign the guest book when you come in. Take off your shoes if you want to. Get comfortable.” Take off my shoes? What kind of an art museum is this? After I signed the guest book, I was able to start taking in my surroundings. This could not be an art museum! The museum had multiple levels and was beautifully decorated with paintings and sculptures literally everywhere. There were no blank spaces on any wall, at least not that I could see as I was taking the tour. What was unusual about this art museum was that it was set up just as a modern home would be, except for the artworks that overloaded the walls and spaces. There were bedrooms and bathrooms, a kitchen, an in-door swimming pool, a
great room (or living room), multiple decks that looked over a ravine and the wooded
area, and even a pet parrot. This was not what I was used to as far as what I had already
experienced with art museums. It made me very curious and excited about learning, and
I am the teacher!

Meeting the Art Museum Professional

The art museum professional was anything but what I expected. She greeted me
warmly and told me how happy she was to be meeting me. She offered me drinks and a
dinner invitation! Quite a change from the dry responses I received from many of the
other art museums’ staff. After taking me on a tour of the museum, which was only open
for me, we were able to sit and discuss what it was that she could provide me and my
students.

As we were sitting there talking openly about their educational programming, we
were able to come up with ideas of what would be a unique and meaningful workshop for
my students. The museum professional invited me to come and watch another high
school group that would be participating in a similar workshop to what we had discussed.
I was able to come to the workshop and see firsthand how a high school group interacted
at the museum and was able to put into place the motions to get a visit set up for my
students.
Planning the Class’s Visit

Planning and going forward with the visit to the art museum turned out to be more difficult than I expected. Ultimately, my biggest obstacle turned out to be finding the funding for the field trip. Permission to go was not a problem and setting up the day’s events was a breeze in comparison. I had to find a way to come up with $750 to pay for the workshop and use of the art museum facility. Because this art museum is relatively new and much smaller, it does not have the kind of funding that larger museums take pleasure in. Even with multiple grants for their programs, the art museum cannot come up with enough funding to offer the workshops and visits for free. When speaking with the art museum’s director, I came to find out how difficult it was to coordinate and run an art museum.

…the money isn’t giving the workshops. We break even, [be]cause we’re non-profit… the money, well sometimes you have to rob Peter to pay Paul. So in other words, I’m going to be having some superintendents that are going to come down and use this as a retreat. The money I make from that, I will use that money to buy art supplies for the workshops, or to pay a consultant if I need a consultant for something…or I charge for a tour down here. I give the tour. I take that money and I donate it. I do not get a salary from anything I do down here. And… because we are a small foundation, there just isn’t money to pay me. I know that the money to pay somebody would eat up all the profits I think we could use for the workshops… and I have a lot of volunteers that come through here and help with different things.- art museum Director, May 15th, 2010.

After speaking with the director, I came to realize how important establishing a relationship with the community is for an art museum. Larger art museums rely on grants and funding from the government, but they also have the privilege of boasting benefactors on their side. This is something that is difficult for a much smaller museum. Most of the donations come in very small amounts because the community is small.
After my own experiences of applying for grants and pleading with my school’s associations, and then being turned down on top of that, I could relate to the situation that the art museum faced in terms of funding. The students and I came up with the idea to do a fundraiser to compensate for the trip. Every student in the class pledged a willingness to sell candy in order to come up with the funds for the field trip. After doing the fundraiser for nearly a month before the visit (which was a whole other experience for a teacher), we successfully came up with the money to pay the cost for the workshop and visit.

Scheduling the date of the visit had to be carefully planned so not to interfere with important school events. I had to be mindful of how many field trips were being taken that week, and if any testing was scheduled for students who missed dates of the Ohio Graduation Test, I had to be aware of who had to make up their tests. Fortunately, that was not the case for any of my students and the week we planned the trip was fairly sparse of other field trips. I had to fill out mounds of paperwork, make phone calls to the bus garage to confirm pick up times and directions, and make sure all my students filled out permission slips and emergency contact forms.

**Constructing the Educational Workshop**

In my search for an art museum with an appropriate educational program, I found that most museums I looked into had educational programming that related closely to their own collections and resources. Art museum educators and curators designed the educational programs for visitors, whether they were school children or adults. Goals
and objectives were already established ahead of time, and teachers interested had to use what was already put in place for the program. Some art museums had little more than just guided-tours for school groups. This particular art museum did not have any pre-scheduled program, with the intent on collaborating with the art teacher to design the program specifically for what group of students would be visiting.

While the technicalities for getting to the art museum and paying for the visit were being established, putting the educational workshop together for my students was taking place. To determine the appropriate workshop events and goals, I collaborated with the art museum professional to come up with a workshop that would benefit student learning.

…each workshop is geared toward the individual teacher and what they want. It’s not me dictating which instructor you get. I may make a suggestion, but when I do talk to each instructor, [I tell them] they must talk about their career and their education. They must talk about the struggles along the way. What worked for them, what didn’t work for them. And they must teach why this particular [person] made it, and to get the kids interested. - art museum Director, May 15th, 2010.

Because the students were in an advanced painting class, it was determined that a watercolor workshop would be most appropriate. Watercolor was not something I was comfortable teaching because I had not mastered any techniques pertaining to watercolors. Because the art museum had multitudes of watercolor pieces displayed and connections to many regional watercolor experts, it seemed to be an appropriate subject for the students to learn about. I also saw this as an opportunity for me to learn about watercolor, so that perhaps in the future I could create lessons and artworks for future
students. The art museum professional was able to suggest a popular watercolor artist that was willing to come to the art museum to teach my students.

When planning the workshop with the art museum professional, students learning from the artist became the focus of the day’s events, rather than a tour of the art museum or any structured art criticism activities. The art museum professional explained that in many cases, school groups will make a series of visits because trying to fit all those activities into one visit would seriously limit the quality of each activity due to time constraints. Unfortunately, I was unable to get permission to take the students for a second, follow-up visit. Once the plans were set, it was time for me to get my students prepared for their visit and take them to the art museum.

Summary

I found that connecting to the art museum proved to be one of the biggest, most important steps I would take in this research study. It certainly proved to be one of the most difficult. Finding an art museum to work with you and your students, one that wants to collaborate with the art teacher to find the most appropriate educational programming for the students, and one that makes student learning a priority can be difficult. Maybe the larger art museums have too many groups to serve, which is where they come up with pre-planned programs for school groups? Or maybe some art museums are not comfortable providing educational programs to school groups beyond that of guided tours? No matter what the issue be, searching and finding an art museum
that is right for your students may not always be achievable, but that does not mean the connection cannot be made. Other ways may have to be explored.

Additionally, gaining cooperation from school administration depends greatly on timing and funding. Having to pay a fee to use the art museum and participate in the workshop was not something I originally expected; however, a solution was found by organizing a fundraiser. Although another responsibility to add to the list, it was well worth it for my students to have this opportunity. They deserved it.

Working closely with the art museum professional to plan the most appropriate and beneficial workshop for the students was key to having a successful experience. By having a carefully constructed plan for the day, time was well managed and students were able to use every moment to learn and experience as much as they could. Also, the art museum professional was able to gauge the needs of the students and myself to prepare her staff for when the students came to the art museum.

Students’ Preconceived Notions versus Actual Experience

There was a very big difference in what the students had expected when they visited the art museum in comparison to what they actually experienced. Much of these expectations stemmed from students’ past experiences with art museums and with how art museums are portrayed through the media. For some students who had never visited an art museum, they did not know what to expect other than what they had seen in movies or television.
Students’ Expectations

When I told the students they would be visiting an art museum, they became very excited, but mostly the excitement came from the idea that they would be getting out of school for a day. They did not consider that they would be going to learn about art somewhere other than their classroom. I explained to them that this visit would include a workshop with a watercolor artist. Two days before our visit, I gave the students questionnaires to gauge information about their expectations of art museums and what a visit would be like (See Appendix A). I also gave them a journal prompt (See Appendix C) to help them explain further what they may not have conveyed through their questionnaires. Through interviews, the three students that were selected were able to explain in their own words how they truly felt. What I found shed light on what students expected from visiting art museums.

Through the questionnaires, I was able to discover that fourteen of the nineteen students had previously visited an art museum, whereas only five had never been to one. The majority of the students who had visited an art museum went to a large museum within driving distance. Students associated the importance of art museums in society with the fact that they display artworks, hold evidence of history, and educate the people who visit them. Popular responses from students on how art museums are important to them personally involved “personal learning,” “interest,” “something to do,” “inspiration,” and “fun.” Four students answered that “art museums are not important to them at all.” Popular responses from students on what is involved when going to an art museum were “looking at art,” “learning,” “getting ideas,” and “being quiet.” When
asked what students thought was learned at art museums, their responses included “techniques and styles,” “art history,” “artists’ meanings,” and “appreciation of art.” What students wanted to learn from visiting an art museum included “learning new things,” “getting better at doing their own art,” and “learning art history.” What students wanted to do at the art museum included “looking at art,” “making art,” and “talking with professional artists.” With students’ responses to how this visit will impact them afterwards, the most popular responses included that they will “become more knowledgeable,” “gain new ideas,” “become inspired,” and “feel more appreciation for art.”

When I was reading through the students’ reflective journals on what they thought would happen during their visit to the art museum, I noticed many students mentioned going on a tour and listening to someone talk about art. One student wrote, “I think we’ll spend the majority of the time browsing artwork…” Another student wrote, “I predict that we will learn about some artists. We will see a lot of old paintings. We will probably have a guest speaker, too.” I thought this to be interesting because we were the guests at the museum.

Some students mentioned what would happen during the workshop with the artist. “We will be taught how to watercolor and shown many examples. There will be a watercolor artist at the museum…” one student wrote. Another student wrote, “We will meet and have a lesson with a professional watercolor painter, who will teach us techniques and methods of watercolor painting.”
The majority of the journal writings were very vague, even though they were encouraged to write as much as they could think of. I believe the majority of the responses and writings were based on previous experiences at an art museum and/or how art museums are viewed in general. I found that the little writing the students contributed to the questionnaires and the journals strongly correlated with how little they knew about art museums. I discovered my interviews with the students, after the visit, to be more telling of their expectations.

…bigger art museums focus more on sculptures as well, and drawings too…-student interview, April 16th, 2010.

…I expected you know the single file, you know the little guide… you have to be like twenty feet away from stuff. You couldn’t go right up and look at anything- student interview, April 20th, 2010.

I thought it was going to be like an actual museum, or something. I mean, it is a museum, but I thought it was going to be like, you know, the ones where you walk in and they just have like one painting and then you walk down and see another one, walk down and see another one. I thought it was just going to be that. Just looking. Like a line…-student interview, April 21st, 2010.

*The Element of Surprise*

Figure 1: photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010
We arrived at a wooded area, and drove down a path. We saw an interesting-looking house, which was the museum. Outside of the museum were two metal sculptures and a small pond. We walked inside and there were paintings everywhere! All over the walls! We go in and take a seat where there is paint, paper, and brushes waiting for us—student reflective journal, March 24th, 2010.

The minute the bus turned onto the winding road going through the woods towards the art museum, I could tell that the students were surprised by where we were headed. “This is the museum?” and “It looks like a house!” were exclaimed even before we got off the bus. When compared to their expectations of what they would be seeing, doing, and feeling, the students were literally taken aback by a whole new concept of what an art museum was or could be.

Through the questionnaires and reflective journals, it was expressed by many students that the art museum was nothing at all what they expected. They felt the art museum was more modern because it was a reconstructed house. Nearly all the students mentioned how surprised they were that the museum was a house. Other popular responses were that they were surprised by how much art was displayed within it, how their class was the only one there, and how comfortable they were made to feel by the art museum professional and staff.

When asked what surprised them about the art museum, the most popular answers were “the architecture,” “the natural surroundings,” and “the way the museum was set up, just like a modern home,” but with “way more art on the walls.” This element of surprise seemed to change their expectations of what art museums can be.

…art museums… that they don’t always have to be the, I don’t know. This one was just out of the box, like I don’t know how to really define it. It was just like a cool, funky place. - student interview, April 20th, 2010.
Once we arrived at the art museum, we walked down the drive towards the museum and were met by the art museum professional and the intern. Students were greeted and welcomed. The art museum professional spent two minutes giving students an introduction about the art museum, its architecture and how it came to be a museum. Students were also told about the museum’s sculptures and landscaping. After students were invited to ask questions, they began entering the museum. They shuffled in quietly, with hushed whispers. They were instructed that they could take off their shoes (for comfort) if they wished and to sign the guestbook as they entered. They looked back and forth between each other, puzzled. They all signed the guestbook, but none of the students took off their shoes.
It was surprising how quiet the students were as we entered the art museum. At the time, I could not figure out if it was because they were nervous, tired, excited, or just simply out of their element. I had never seen them in this state; then again, I do not often get to see them outside of my classroom. My classroom is not typical of other classrooms. It is an art room: Loud, noisy, music playing, people up and moving about. A freedom, in a sense, from the typical structured classroom of most other subject areas, the art class provides a less structured environment than that of other classes. It was interesting for me to see them in this state.

Once students signed the guestbook, they went to the third level where the workshop was set up. The setting included a big open room with a fireplace lit, hardwood floors, and large windows that allowed viewing of the surrounding trees and ravine. Students were instructed to sit at tables, placed in a U that were set up with all the supplies they would need for the workshop. The artist/instructor was set up at the head of the U, with all her supplies and a reflective demonstration mirror so that students could view what she was doing while she instructed.

Figure 3: photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010
The supplies included watercolor paper, brushes, palettes with watercolor paint in them, water and cups, paper towels, masking tape, table easels, spray bottles, handouts, and an example printout.

They were then introduced to the artist that would be instructing for the workshop. Many student reactions included wonderment and quiet. Many of the students were looking around at the setting with curious looks. The watercolor artist introduced herself once all students were settled and began the workshop right away.

She first began by telling students that they would be learning about creating watercolor landscapes and winter scenes. She then talked about watercolors and passed a few examples of her work around. Students also were shown works from previous workshops that the artist had finished. Many students commented about the works as they were being passed around: “Wow, that’s amazing. That would take me five weeks and it only took her five minutes!”

During the workshop, in which I was able to participate alongside my students, the artist instructed the students in how to do watercolor paintings of wintery landscapes. It closely resembled the idea of the atelier method, where a small group of students works very closely with an artist in learning techniques and skills pertaining to a specific medium in a studio-like atmosphere. The artist showed them many techniques and skills in working with watercolors. She demonstrated how to create a white border with masking tape, how to make a grey, wintery sky, how to wet the paper and push the paint around to create a natural effect, how to create evergreens and use a razor blade for bare trees, how to create thin branches using a thin, long-bristled brush called a rigger, how to
create a zigzagging stream, and how to create a “snowing effect” by flicking a brush with white paint at the paper.

Over a two and a half hour period, the students were able to create a small sample work for practice and begin a larger work for their final piece. Each student learned by copying the steps from the artist as she demonstrated. During the workshop and while students were working, the artist, art museum professional, and the intern walked around to offer encouragement, compliments, and assistance to the students and myself.

The students took a break for lunch, which they had brought themselves. The art museum provided soda, chips, and cookies for them. They were informed that they could choose anywhere in the museum to eat their lunch, and most of them chose to eat in the window room where there were tables and chairs. As students were eating, they made many comments about how “cool” the art museum was, that they wished they did not have to go back to school, and expressed that they wanted to come back. They seemed to be a little stunned and still taking in their situation. I asked students about what they thought of the art museum and many were very impressed and surprised by what they saw. Many did not think that this was a typical art museum or the one they had been imagining.

After students broke for lunch, they were invited to go explore the art museum for about thirty minutes before they had to come back to finish their final artworks. They created small groups on their own and explored the pool room, the outside decks, the bedrooms, and more. Often they would look at the paintings and ponder the way in which the art was hung in the various rooms. One student asked to play the piano and the
art museum professional said, “Sure!” I noticed many of the students as they went from room to room claiming they wished to live at the museum. They seemed to be relaxing into their usual selves as they spent more time in the art museum.

The building was so interesting. It had lots of levels and almost seemed like a maze. The building itself was like a piece of art.-student reflective journal, March 24th, 2010.

They asked questions of the museum professional about why there were bedrooms and so many bathrooms in the art museum. The art museum professional stated that art should be functional and that this museum was unique in that it shows how artworks can be displayed in a setting that is more “home-like” than how it is displayed in a more traditional museum setting. She stated that “art should be accessible and part of life,” just like the works are part of the “house-museum.” Many students took pictures of the artworks, the rooms, and the outside.

Figure 4: photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010

The museum was like no other museum I’d ever been to. It was like a house with a kitchen and bedrooms! There was beautiful art on every wall you looked at. – student reflective journal, March 24th, 2010.
After students explored the museum, they were asked to come back to their paintings to add some finishing touches. As I walked around to observe the students, I noticed that many had created their version of the example work in much of their own style, but similar to the sample. The artist stated that it was a good thing that they were able to apply their own style to the work, making it their own, and that it was okay because everyone paints and sees things in different ways.

Some students expressed some satisfaction with their ability and were very pleased with how their works turned out. Others were a little puzzled about using the watercolors and seemed unsure, but kept working and trying to recreate the example. Throughout the workshop, students worked diligently and quietly. Many were very receptive to suggestions and help from the artist and the museum professional.
While they worked, another artist came in to see what the students were working on. The museum professional introduced the students to the artist and gave some background information. The artist had been part of some court trials in which cameras were not allowed and he was the artist who created all the courtroom works for the media. Many of the students were very impressed. I heard one student exclaim, “Dang! Is everyone she knows famous?” referring to the fact that the artist had actually won a few Emmys for his work.

After the paintings were finished, students were asked to hang their pictures in the window in the “table room” where the sun could help them dry quickly and the students could “show and tell.” When all the works were hung, the artist and the students grouped together to observe what all the students had accomplished. She again stated that it was good to see all the different styles and personalities that were apparent in all the different paintings, although they were modeling their works after the example. She also gave positive feedback to the students about their work.
At the end, we all looked at what each other did. The instructor said mine was the best and I felt proud because I walked in thinking I wouldn’t be able to paint with watercolors that well. –student reflective journal, March 24th, 2010.

The students were also able to compliment each other and see how their peers approached their works differently.

After students finished exploring, they gathered their things, thanked the museum professional, artist, and the intern over and over as they exited the building and headed for the bus. On the way out, several students were still snapping pictures of the building and the sculptures outside.

Once on the bus and heading back to the high school, students were very talkative. They talked about the museum and how they enjoyed it. They asked me questions about how I found out about it. The students were very thankful for the opportunity and were interested in more programming that the museum would offer in the future. While students rode the bus, I passed out another journal prompt (See Appendix D) for them to fill out for homework. On the prompt they were to outline their experience at the museum and what their thoughts were. We arrived back at the high school right on time.

Summary

It was clear that students’ actual experiences at the art museum exceeded their expectations. The notions that art museums are quiet, boring places where work is displayed for visitors to go around and just look is challenged by an art museum like this. Even when I decided to do this research study, I had first imagined a “typical” art
museum, like my students had, as being part of their experience. Not only did my students get a new view of what art museums can be, but I also gained a new outlook for the potential of art museums. “Expect the unexpected” is an understatement concerning this art museum, and we were pleasantly surprised.

Benefits of Learning in the Art Museum versus Learning in the Classroom

It cannot be denied that learning in the art museum differs greatly from learning in the classroom. An entirely new environment and strangers affect the ways in which students behave and learn in a given situation. In this case, the benefits of learning in the art museum were quite visible in students’ reactions, dialogue, and behaviors.

The Art Museum Environment

…this one was a lot more, like, kind of homier feeling. So the environment was friendlier, and I felt more welcome. - student interview, April 16th, 2010.
It was obvious to me in my observations of my students that the environment of the art museum greatly affected them. It nearly overwhelmed them. Even in all my preparing, explaining that this museum would be quite different from others they may have been more familiar with, the beauty of the surroundings, and the unique set up of all the works of art, it was not real for my students until they stepped off of the bus.

I immediately noticed a difference in their behavior as we entered the art museum. Students were quiet and reserved, when in school they are usually chatty and rambunctious. This fascinated me in that I had never really seen them out of the element of the art classroom. I watched as they absorbed the surroundings and focused intently on what the artist and art museum professional were saying before and during the workshop. The beautiful location and the real works of art that surrounded them no matter which room they were in affected the students. These were not just reproductions or posters, nor were they old examples of projects from the teacher and past students. These were art museum quality works, and to students, that was a major thing. Many students believed art museums are only associated with displaying works of famous artists from long ago. I watched them work diligently on their artworks, almost as if they were trying to please the artist with their focus.

I was also able to see how effective the set up of the workshop was for them. In an interview with one of the students, she remarked…

I think that there should be like… like everyone should just sit down, and there should be like a real demo for everything. Like real explanation for stuff, [be]cause some people like… I don’t know if they have no idea [be]cause no one showed them, or if they can’t think of anything, you know. I don’t know, I’m just sitting down and like “huh.” Or just explaining step-by-step, you know that helped me a little bit more. [Be]cause I’m real, you know, a visual learner. Like,
“Oh go paint a picture of this...” well ok... sometimes you’ve got to show me how, but I can, once I know it, I can do it. But that’s just me; I don’t know how it is for other people. - student interview, April 20th, 2010.

This idea of having the students follow along step by step worked for them in this situation, this atelier method. It helped them focus on the tasks, techniques, and skill that they were learning from the artist. They also were able to look at their classmates’ works all throughout the process, to see how others were learning and applying the techniques and methods.

I think it was just, I guess, like everyone doing it. I love that, like looking at my work, compared to others, and getting ideas. I think that is what’s really cool, ‘cause I was sitting next to Shannon. I would look at what she was doing, and then I could see what [the artist] was doing up at the front too. I think I like interacting with other people too. At the same time. - student interview, March 24th, 2010.

Working with a professional artist also affected them in that I believe they were intent on taking her seriously because she was an established artist with many years of experience. In addition, she showed some of her works to the students and pointed out the ones that were displayed in the art museum. This impressed the students, that she was qualified to hang her work in a real art museum.
How the Workshop Impacted Students

When I was driving, I realized what that lady said was true, about painting the part of the sky that’s above you…I feel better about painting things like that. They always seemed boring to me…-student reflective journal, March 24th, 2010.

I found that many of the students took away different learning experiences from the workshop. In the post-visit questionnaire (See Appendix B), students were asked what they learned from the art museum workshop. The majority of them answered vaguely that they learned new watercolor techniques, new painting techniques, or that they learned how to do those techniques better. However, a few students answered more specifically. One student wrote, “There are a lot of great, local artists.” Another student wrote about the materials and tools, “I learned that I love that brush that is called a rigger. And how to use a razor blade to make trees, the snow effect, and making the sky!”
Another student mentioned more specifically the concept of “the cool colors being in the foreground and the warm being in the back.” No student claimed they did not learn anything from the workshop.

The effect that seemed common with quite a few of the students is that they gained more confidence with a medium they were unsure about and gained confidence doing art with their peers. They were no longer afraid to try new things.

So I definitely learned a new style. I was so stuck on drawing and stuff, [be]cause I loved it. I was like, “Ok, then maybe I’m just really good at that.” But then you can see that oh, “Well, I’m good at other things too”, so I can try more things.- student interview, April 21st, 2010.

These effects were later observed in the classroom, as I saw more and more students trying out the techniques they learned on their own. The students’ first impressions were that they were going to have a difficult time with something they had not tried before. They surprised themselves at how well they were able to learn the techniques and skills, and create an artwork that turned out “not too bad.” Several students expressed that they would not be able to do it, but after they had proven themselves wrong, they strived to get better.

Overall, they were very pleased with themselves and really enjoyed the whole experience. When students were asked if there was anything they were disappointed with or anything they wished they would have gotten to do, the majority of them answered that they only wished for more time to spend there. They felt that they did not have enough time to go around the art museum to see all the artworks. Once they had gotten to the art museum, spoke with the art museum professional, and met the artist, they became much more interested in the works that were displayed. When they realized that this art
museum was very different from others, and that they would not have to stand in a line going from piece to piece, the concept of viewing the artworks in the museum did not concern them as much until the end of their visit, when they had run out of time to go around the art museum.

*Working with the Artist and Art*

*Museum Professional*

For students to learn in this matter, from someone other than their teacher, was a unique experience for them. In many ways, it seemed to work better for some. The artist, art museum professional, and the intern greatly impacted the students. Many students expressed that the treatment they received from the staff made them feel extremely welcomed and comfortable. The respect and care they were shown made them feel special, and I believe, in return, the students felt more compelled to impress them with their good behavior.

The lady who owned this place was so friendly and motherly. I loved her. She took great care of us, giving us snacks! She was a character…-student reflective journal, March 24th, 2010.

The art museum professional took great care to be kind and welcoming to the students, the same way she treated me when I first met her. Working with a group of teenagers can be difficult, but the staff showed genuine care for them and their happiness while they were at the art museum. They helped all throughout the day, whether by getting the students accustomed to their surroundings, or by assisting them during the workshop, or just chatting with them as they went from room to room asking questions.
When I asked the art museum professional about working with the students, she remarked…

…it’s trying to teach a kid creatively to look around the museum and investigate a little bit. And to problem solve a little bit, instead of going through each painting. Then I will go around as the kids ask me [about the museum]. Usually… the first time [they visit], they’re overwhelmed, like your kids were, but they come the second or third time, then we start taking them around [to talk about the artworks]. And usually I say to the kids, “Take off your shoes. Make yourself at home.” I find that when you have kids that are relaxed like they are at home, the more apt to learn and absorb like a sponge. If they are in a situation when they feel uncomfortable, they’re not going to look and be curious, and it’s like a treasure hunt, going around the museum, seeing all the different levels and everything that’s sort of neat, hidden in different spots… learning to recognize that art is every place no matter where you go. And it should be that way. And not to be afraid of art. I think sometimes large museums are intimidating to kids … and especially the docents or the curators. They’re very formidable. They’re not relaxed, and if you get the kids to relax, they’re going to be more curious, and more creative, and explore. And that’s what we want kids to do because education, as far as learning, is exploring. - art museum Director interview May 15th, 2010.

Students did begin to relax after spending some time at the art museum. It was obvious to me that they were becoming more comfortable when they were exploring the museum. They seemed to “loosen up” the more they realized how much freedom they were given to learn. As I was preparing students for the visit, I mentioned that good behavior was expected. I believe they associated “good behavior” with being quiet while they were being spoken to, not touching the artwork, etc. I also believe that their preconceived notions of art museum conduct paired with my expectation for good behavior affected their initial actions (being very quiet and reserved) earlier in their visit. Once they felt they had permission to “let loose a little”, and as they adjusted to their environment, they became more apt to exploring and participating in dialogue with the art museum professional and the artist.
Being taught by a professional artist had quite an impact on the students, as well. What I learned from the students was that they were so impressed by how skilled and knowledgeable she was about watercolors. I do not think they realized, before we came to the museum, what a professional artist was like. That they really, truly know quite a lot about what they are trained in, have many years of experience, and they are real people. It seems the students do not really understand that until they have it right there, in front of their faces. Many students responded in their reflective journals about how good the artist was and how much she knew. They were also impressed by how helpful and encouraging she was towards them. A student commented, “They would stop by me and show me the technique of holding the brush and how to properly do a brush stroke.”

I just saw the simplest, you know, didda-didda-didda (waving hand), going like that, and suddenly those are the leaves for your tree... Like, the lady just did her thing, the simplest brush strokes, and it turned into something really cool once all the pieces were put together. She gave me hope, like I could probably paint. I was pretty impressed and I know she’d been doing that way longer than I have, but coming from someone that, really to do all that, that was just kind of like “aw!” I was kind of jealous (laughing)... and I just really wanted to absorb what she said and just learn to use whatever different way she showed us, like a razor blade. Who’d thought of that? - student interview, April 20th, 2010.

After working with an artist who not only taught them skills and techniques in watercolors, but also gave them respect and encouragement, the students gained a better understanding of who professional artists are, what they are like, and what it takes to get to where they are.

**Summary**

The combination of the art museum environment, learning from the artist, art museum professional, and staff provided many benefits to the students and me. Not only
did the art museum’s environment foster a creative learning situation, but the staff and artist’s demeanor and treatment of the students greatly affected their appreciation of art museums and art in general. The creative environment seemed to prompt students in being creative and the artist and staff’s support and encouragement of the students made them feel not only welcomed, but successful. The set-up of the workshop inspired me to rethink the ways in which I teach my students as well, to collectively work together to learn techniques and skills.

Applying Learned Knowledge to Classroom Activities

After students returned from the art museum visit, I saw a change in their attitude as well as in how they were approaching their art works. The ways they had interacted with an artist and an art museum had inspired them, and I took that opportunity to continue teaching and learning after the visit to the art museum.

Figure 11: Example of Student Work, photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010
Using Techniques and Skills Learned during the Workshop

When students returned to art class, I decided to allow them some time to work with watercolor materials, not only because we wanted to continue learning after the museum visit, but also because they asked for them. The workshop had affected them significantly enough that students actually wanted to keep working with the materials. Whether they just basically enjoyed using the materials and what they learned, or just the fact that they were still trying to problem-solve to get better, all the students wanted to keep working with them. We had one day before spring break, and I gave the students the opportunity to play and experiment with the watercolors.

When we returned after spring break, I assigned the students a project using watercolors (See Appendix E). I told students to create a watercolor piece using the skills and techniques they learned in the art museum, but to add a little more of their creative personalities to the works.

Figure 12: Example of Student Work, photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010
They were allowed to choose any subject matter they wished, whether it be continuing landscapes like they did at the museum, or using creative designs they enjoyed doing, or to experiment with something entirely new to them. I asked them to research what they wanted to paint. Some of the students looked up information on the computer. Others brought in photographs from home or from their photo classes. Others just let their imagination and creativity take over and they made more abstract designs or cartoons. Whatever the subject matter be, I wanted them to create their own personal watercolor painting that showed their interests and personal artistic style. I was curious to see where they took the knowledge and how they combined what they already knew with what they learned during the workshop.

Because we had been gone over spring break, I had students warm up by doing some small, practice works where they could reintroduce themselves to the watercolors. We discussed what they remembered from the workshop, and surprisingly, they remembered quite a lot. Many of the students remembered the materials, especially the razor blades and the rigger brush. Others remembered how to do gray skies, and to wet the paper before applying the paint. When a student asked a question about how to do something, many students were able to recall the answer and assisted each other with getting reacquainted. It was pleasing to me to see the students working together in the classroom, rather than just working on their projects individually. During the week that followed, students created several artworks each.
…now I do all these watercolors, since then, I like fell in love with watercolors now. It’s like cool. I never thought I’d be good… I tried doing one thing and it’s like, I had some art kit I had at home or whatever, and it had watercolor and I tried working with it and, you know, it looked like crap. And then I go to this place and then, you know, it looked really good. I was like, “This is sweet!” So now I’m excited and I get to do more watercolors. - student interview, April 21st, 2010.

When observing the students in the days following the workshop and art museum visit, I noticed quite a bit of dialogue between them involving the terms and techniques they learned, and other general comments about how impressed they were by the art museum they visited. They often shared memories of working with the artist and how much they wanted to go back to that “house.” I also witnessed them using the techniques they learned with mixing the paint and applying it to the wet paper, holding the brushes at the right angles, and even taping the edges of the paper to create a white border. We discussed other types of works using watercolors, such as cards and cartoons, floral pieces, and still lifes. Students often recalled pieces that they saw displayed in the art museum, and expressed that they wanted to try creating similar works.
Students’ Art Works

To continue learning after the art museum visit, I created a lesson based (See Appendix E) on using the techniques and skills gained through the art museum and applying them to student art works. This not only allowed for students to continue working with the watercolors, but also to create artworks that involved the techniques and skills they learned from the artist combined with their own creative ideas and personalities. From my observations, I was able to see how the students took what they learned and applied it to their artworks in creative ways. Many of the students spent time recreating landscapes, whether to get more familiar with the watercolors, or because they really enjoyed working with them during the workshop. Other students created abstract designs, focusing on color, while some incorporated more materials in with the watercolors.

![Figure 14-15: Examples of Student Works, photos courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010](image_url)
One student experimented with using the watercolors on primed canvas, and another student created a rubber-cement resist. I found that the students were very creative in how they took what they learned a step further, by trying new things. Trying new things seemed to be a common theme after the workshop, and many of the students previously reserved about experimenting were the ones doing the most experimenting! I loved to see that my students had gained that kind of confidence, where they could try these things independently, whether they worked out or not.

Figure 16: Example of Student Work, photo courtesy of Stacy Stewart © 2010

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present the data I collected and demonstrate how it represents the ways in which my students and I were affected by incorporating art museum education into our class. After analyzing all the data, I was able to come up
with common themes to help me organize and make sense of it: Connecting to the art museum, students’ preconceived notions versus actual experience, benefits of learning in the art museum versus learning in the classroom, and applying learned knowledge to classroom activities. These common threads helped me gain a better understanding of how this experience, involving the art museum with my high school advanced painting class, affected my students and myself in many positive ways.
CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview

Throughout this journey, I have gained a new appreciation for the importance of art museums in our society and in the art education of my students. This final chapter will present my personal development in light of this research study; the difference between the art museum utilized in this study and other more “traditional” art museums; my development as an art educator in the context of this study; a reflection on teaching strategies used during the workshop; what my students gained; and my development as a researcher in the field. I also aim to provide implications for art educators and pre-service art educators concerning the implementation of museum education within the curriculum and in utilizing the art museum as a valuable resource for art learning; and implications for museum educators on how they can reach out to connect with classroom teachers.

Personal Development

When I began this study, I had not imagined where it would take me. I also had not realized what kind of impact it would have on me personally. My idea of the art museum had been much the same as the students, being a quiet place to view artworks on display. Art criticism, aesthetic experiences, and genuinely experiencing art in the world outside of school, were what I thought to be most importantly gained by visiting the art
museum, and in other words, things I came to find out later as the “boring stuff.” Because of my personal interest in art museums, I did not think of this “stuff” as boring, but as something truly enjoyable; however, this was not a study of just my own experiences, but that of a group of teenagers. It is hard to put yourself in their shoes, but if you imagine what it was like when you were their age, with alternative interests, growing pains, and emergent knowledge about the world around them, you may be able to sympathize with them when they think of places like museums. You cannot assume that they will see art museums the way you do, no matter how enthusiastically you present the idea.

It was not only a learning experience for my students, but a learning experience for me as well. I learned how art museums can range from a large institution in a thriving city, to a house in the woods. Each can offer quality educational programming depending on the needs of the teacher and the students. I also learned more about my students, their needs and interests.

The Difference between the Art Museum Utilized in this Study and Other More “Traditional” Art Museums

There exists a hierarchy of what constitutes an art museum. This hierarchy is driven by what many deem fine arts. Throughout their history, art museums have conceived themselves as the “holders of specialized knowledge and the museum visitor as the more passive receiver of that knowledge” (Henry, 2010, p. 11). When the art museum emerged in the United States in the late half of the 19th century, institutions like
the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston developed extensive and distinctive collections with the assistance and support of wealthy patrons. These collections encompassed what was considered to be “great art,” which meant classical art, fine paintings and sculptures, high quality decorative arts, and other select artifacts deemed masterpieces of their kind. This established a pattern of what art was, and what it was not (Stone, 2001).

This became the common standard for defining what an art museum was, and it is still what many would consider. However, many art museums are moving in new directions, breaking these standards and exhibiting works that would never have been displayed early in the history of the art museum. Folk art, computer art, machines like cars and motorcycles, are all now being included in art museums alongside paintings and sculptures. This has caused many art museums to reconsider the role they play in society (Stone, 2001).

The art museum used in this study was unlike any art museum my students and I had ever encountered. It was much newer and smaller. The design and architecture of the art museum was different. There were no galleries or special exhibitions. There were no guards standing in doorways, making sure you did not get too close to the artworks. It had a very home-like design and atmosphere. Its staff, perhaps what made this art museum more unique than any other, was warm and welcoming, and made the students’ well-being a top priority during their visit.

This concept of caring about the students who visited the art museum was unique in that it made for a more positive experience. They were not hushed or monitored.
They were not ignored. They were encouraged to be curious, to ask questions, and to feel comfortable. The students’ interactions with the professional artist and the staff made their experience unique in that I do not believe they would have received the same treatment elsewhere. This positive and encouraging atmosphere most certainly contributed to the positive experiences of the student participants and must be accounted for in affecting the data outcomes.

Would the data have been the same if the study had taken place in a larger, more established, less intimate museum? It is my opinion that their experiences would not have been as meaningful to them. I believe that their previous expectations of what an art museum visit entailed would coincide with an actual visit at a larger art museum. These institutions can be intimidating and reinforce the idea that an art museum is a quiet place meant for viewing artworks, and nothing else. For more traditional art museums, the protocols and institutional codes requiring guards and rules for behavior are essential to protecting and preserving the work that is displayed. Additionally, some of these museums do provide spaces where students and visitors can have more freedom in exploring; however, the art museum that was used in this study was so different from the students’ expectations that I feel that is why their experiences were so positive. Had the students visited a more traditional art museum, I believe a positive experience would have been achieved, although it would have taken place much differently, requiring more instruction from me rather than from the museum staff and artist. In that case, this study would have reflected more of the approaches of museum education that have been emerging in the last thirty years, in which teachers plan activities for students before
visiting and take a larger role in implementing those activities rather than learning from museum educators and artists. It is possible that learning from a local artist may not have occurred. It may have become less about the workshop and art museum’s environment, which is what so greatly affected and impacted my students.

Key to the positive experience was the notion of care, and the care shown to my students and me during our visit. To show students that we care about and respect them fosters a relationship in which they feel more compelled to return that respect to others. Nel Noddings (1991) expresses that “uncaring homes and uncaring schools are likely to produce uncaring students” (p.165). It is a responsibility for teachers and community figures, like museum educators, to help young people learn how to contribute to caring relationships, and being cared for might be necessary in learning how to care.

The treatment of my students by the staff at the art museum was unique and special. Henry (2010) expresses that the museum staff can create the setting in which it is most likely the visitor can have a meaningful experience. The staff at this art museum did just that, and maybe not in a traditional way from what art museum personnel would normally do, but it made my students’ experiences special. By engaging in genuine dialogue, showing a caring attitude, building their self-esteem and confidence, and simply paying attention to them, students can learn to become caring individuals to others (Noddings, 1991).
Art Educator Development in the Context of this Study

I wanted my students to have a meaningful experience with an art museum because I feel that the art museum is an important resource for the art education of a child. I also wanted to become a better teacher, and from this process, Action Research gave me the means through which I could examine where I was as a teacher, and where I wanted to be. Time and experience help teachers develop into better educators. Although my years are few, my experiences thus far have changed and transformed my attitudes and approaches to teaching children, and will continue to do so throughout my career.

I have gained a new understanding of how to create opportunities for students to learn outside of the classroom through field trips. At the same time, I now understand the steps and procedures in getting those opportunities from ideas to realities. At first, I was afraid to ask to take students away from school, for fear of being rejected. Additionally, I had never been told or shown how to go about setting up a field trip. There are no manuals or instructions beyond what papers needed to be filled out. There is so much more to planning and executing a field trip than I had ever imagined, but now that I have gone through the processes, I feel confident that the experiences can be replicated in the future. Although taking students away from school can challenge a teacher’s comfort level, meaningful educating happens beyond the classroom while a teacher’s role still remains intact. To make it happen, I had to be open and flexible, and it required some creativity to plan a successful and worthy field trip for my students.
A Reflection on Teaching Strategies Used

During the Workshop

Instead of the art museum’s collection becoming the main focus, the educational workshop and learning from the artist emerged to be the primary focus of the visit. Through the educational workshop at the art museum, I was able to see how the environment of the art museum and the methods the artist used to instruct my students affected them. It opened my eyes to methods I had not really used in the classroom, to help my students learn and understand. Most often I introduce lessons by discussing artworks and artists, showing examples, talking about vocabulary, and demonstrating techniques and materials. This then leads to students going off on their own to create their works individually.

I have gained a new appreciation for the idea of the atelier method, of showing students techniques and skills while they follow along every step of the way, all creating similar art pieces that help them gain an understanding of how those techniques are applied, thus leading them to expand on their own later when they create their own works of art. They are also able to view what their peers are doing at the same time as they watch the artist/instructor.

This is a challenge to the long held assumption that “copying” is questionable and somehow less valid (Hurwitz & Day, 2007). The atelier method capitalizes on copying, and is it right to ignore a 16th century system of learning from an art master? It would seem that sometimes, art teachers are more concerned with the idea that our students produce works of originality to prove that we are up to date with teaching strategies. I
believe that we become more concerned with teaching strategies and fads, rather than being concerned with the happiness and needs of our students. Students want to learn techniques and skills, and they are unimpressed by art world fads. Art teachers should recognize that teaching art was different in the past and it may be useful to learn from it, rather than reject it (Meyer, 1974).

At first, this idea of copying was problematic to me in that I was discouraged in teaching those particular methods for fear of compromising student originality and creativity, as is the trend in pre-service training for teaching art. The formalism approach was known but not encouraged as a primary method of teaching. I learned through this experience that, although formalism is not ideal for teaching all art learning and education, it is not unreasonable in some instances.

That kind of collective working and creating seemed to aid students in learning; instead of me, as the instructor, showing them the steps all at once and then sending them off to do it on their own. It also promoted some class camaraderie. Students could converse with each other and talk about what they were doing and how they were doing it, and give one another support, encouragement, and ideas to try. This method can also be mirrored in the classroom by teaching demonstrations as a group, collectively doing steps and creating artworks together at the same time. As students advance with the techniques and skills that they learned, they then freely choose subject matter and explore at their own pace.

“Copying for the sake of learning and creating is far different from copying as an end in itself” (Hubbard, 1991, p. 38). Copying was one way of learning from other
artists when photographic reproductions did not exist and when there were few or no art museums to visit. Through this method, students learn how an artist had solved artistic problems, like creating realistic skies, depth and perspective, and how light and shadows are created. Copying may also present opportunities for students to search for artistic styles (Hubbard, 1991).

What My Students Gained

Before my students visited the art museum, they expressed that they expected to “become more knowledgeable, gain new ideas, become inspired”, and “feel more appreciation for art” by visiting an art museum. These prior expectations seemed almost rehearsed, as if students knew what they were supposed to say, instead of what they really thought. I think that we, educators, have overloaded students with ideas of what is supposed to be, instead of what is, and because we are the authority in their young years, they believe us. I am not saying that we do not know what we are talking about, but are we ruining the element of discovery for our students? I told my students we would be visiting an art museum and they thought it would be a different experience of what it turned out to be. Even though I explained to them that this museum was unlike others, they still expected what is commonly thought of art museums: large institutions, quiet, boring.

Referring to their prior expectations of what they would gain from visiting the art museum, I have found that they have gained new knowledge of what constitutes an art museum. They have gained new knowledge of what can be learned at an art museum.
They have gained new knowledge of art that exists in their local communities. They also have gained new ideas. These new ideas range from subject matter for art projects; to using other tools besides a paintbrush to make a painting; to their abilities as artists; to creating works of art in a medium they are not familiar with; and being successful in their own minds. They have gained inspiration from working with a professional artist, seeing what their peers have created, and by seeing works of art as a functional part of daily life.

Finally, they have gained more appreciation for art by seeing it created in front of them, hanging on the walls of a museum unlike that of any they had ever seen before, and by realizing that it is accessible to them and not something reserved for art experts. So in a sense, my students were right about their expectations, but I do not think they realized how this experience would surpass those expectations way beyond anything they could have imagined.

Additional to the environment and the workshop, the concept of being surrounded by actual art pieces was beneficial for the students. To be able to see actual works of art, as opposed to reproductions, is valuable to the students in that it can lead to an understanding of the relationship between humans and material objects, and an appreciation for the human creative spirit (Stone, 2001). Henry (2010) notes that “seeing original works of art can deepen and enrich perception, facilitating the discovery of meaning,” (p. 19).

Although the visit to the art museum became less about going around looking at the art, and more about the participation and interaction in the workshop, the students no less benefited from being able to view the art works at their leisure. Students were able
to view works of art that they found interesting, and further were able to construct their own meanings of the works without interference from the staff or me. Furthermore, seeing the original works of art in a setting like the museum that we visited, students gained an appreciation for how art is relevant to everyday life. I believe that if there had been an opportunity to visit a second time, then students would be able to view the artwork longer and information could be conveyed for further learning.

Researcher Development

I believe that teachers are constant researchers. Whether researching teaching methods, materials, student behaviors, and student achievements; or to research interactions between teachers and students, students and students, or teachers and administrators; teachers constantly research ways in which to improve their teaching practices and ways to help students succeed, sometimes without even realizing it. As a teacher and researcher, through Action Research, I was able study my own practices and learn from what data I collected.

Action Research allowed for me to research what really mattered to me: to improve my teaching practices to ultimately give my students more meaningful learning experiences. I have also had the opportunity to gain a better understanding of how to do research as a teacher, so that maybe in the future I can conduct research on other levels concerning teaching and student learning. As a result of this study, opportunities arise for further research. Topics that may be of interest include: a comparative study of smaller art museums versus larger art museums; elementary school students participating in
educational programming at art museums; distance learning via art museums; art museums that visit schools; and substituting virtual art museum “visits” for actual visits.

Implications for Art Educators and Pre-Service Art Educators

After this experience, this research study has given me the opportunity to get my students involved with an art museum. It has also given me ideas on how art teachers, generally can make opportunities to incorporate museum education into their curriculum. The art teacher can help demystify the art museum and help in making it more accessible to a larger audience (Henry, 2010). It starts with these teachers; art teachers and future art teachers who desire art learning that connects to places outside of the classroom, and who wish to see those connections come true. By introducing students to the art museum, their positive experiences will continue on with them in their memories, leading to future visits and passing that view on to others.

I hope that this study and my experience can serve as an implication of incorporating the art museum into art class. Furthermore, art teachers can take other opportunities and steps in making connections to the art museum. Making that connection is so important because it shows students that art exists beyond their art class, and that art learning does not happen exclusively in school.

There are few programs in pre-service education that address museum education in depth, or field trips for that matter. Often, it is only covered briefly because art education encompasses so much that it is difficult to make time for every single possible
branch within a semester course. But for future and existing art teachers that do want to start thinking about ways to connect students to the art museum, there are steps that can be taken in setting up a field trip.

Start by researching all the art museums and art centers within a fifty mile radius of your school. You can do a search on the Internet, contact the local library, or ask those with insider knowledge of unique places that may be relatively unheard of. There may be some unknown art museum that will surprise you, very much like what occurred in this study. Once you have compiled a list of possible art museums, you will want to contact their educational coordinator either by email or phone, to see what programs they offer for school-age children. The educational programs may even be listed on the art museum’s website.

Many art museums offer programs that are designed to be age appropriate for diverse visitors. Consider what programs are appropriate for your students and how they correlate to the curriculum and standards. If no program exists or is what you are looking for, then discuss with museum educators the possibility of designing a program that is specific to what your students need. Museum educators may be willing to collaborate with you to design what program will be beneficial for your students. Once an educational program is designed and/or determined, you can begin taking the steps required by the school to conduct a museum visit.

Schools normally have procedures and steps in place that must be taken in order to set up field trips for students. Find out what those steps entail, and follow them thoroughly. In the case of this study, I had to choose a date for the field trip a month in
advance making sure that it did not conflict with other school events; fill out an
application for approval to take students away from school; contact the bussing
department to confirm pick up and drop off times, as well as directions to the art
museum; and obtain signed permission forms for all students attending the field trip.
Additionally, a substitute teacher request was required, as well as lesson plans for
students who were not going on the field trip. All these factors need to be considered in
the planning.

Before taking your students to the art museum, become informed of the art
museum’s policies. Know the hours of operation, rules, and procedures for visitors. It is
essential to visit the art museum on your own before the field trip. Here you can get an
idea of what to expect and have a better idea of how to prepare your students for their
visit. Lastly, be sure to confirm all events with the museum educator.

Taking a field trip may not be a possibility for some art teachers, but that does not
mean a connection to the art museum cannot be achieved. Whether through distance or
lack of funding, there are still ways to bring the art museum to your students. If distance
is an issue, then consider art museums that offer a distance-learning program. Some art
museums will bring works and programming to your school. Others have on-line
programs like video-conferencing where a museum educator can broadcast real time
video of them going through the art museum’s collection and carry on discussions with
students while they are in the classroom watching from the computer or projector. If
funding is an issue, research grants and organizations that may be able to help in giving
access to funds for a trip. If, like in my situation, grants were not attainable, then
consider doing a fundraiser. Although they are extra work and organization is needed, fundraisers can provide the means through which a class can take their field trip. The benefits to the students far outweigh the negative aspects of fundraising.

No matter the connection that is made, it is equally important to continue learning after an art museum experience. Through instructional strategies and lesson planning, art teachers can use the art museum experience to continue learning and reinforce ideas and knowledge gained. “Post-visit activities can deepen understanding of both the works that are seen and the museum itself,” (Stone, 2001, p. 29).

Implications for Museum Educators

Through this unique experience, the art museum that worked with us showed me the potential museum educators can have in increasing the importance of art museums in the lives of children. By reaching out to schools and teachers, museum educators can make valuable connections that not only bring visitors to the art museum, but also establish lasting relationships that create a reciprocal effect. Students will tell their parents about their experiences; their parents will tell their family members; family members will tell their friends; and friends will tell their co-workers, and so on. Positive experiences students have with an art museum will create lasting effects throughout their lives.

Henry (2010) acknowledges that museum educators agree that a primary way to encourage visits and repeat visits is to help visitors of all ages and backgrounds have positive experiences that are both meaningful and memorable. There are inherent
differences between museum and school environments. Where museum educators direct their attention to objects, their history, interpretation, and protection of those objects, art teachers are concerned with pedagogy, curriculum, time, relative content and contexts, and most importantly, their students. Stone (2001) suggests that both museum educators and art teachers align their perceptions and expectations to create meaningful art museum experiences.

To establish connections and constructive relationships with schools, museum educators need to first understand how different school students are from visitors in general. Being able to teach is an art in itself and to be a successful museum educator, some teacher education background is helpful. Because it is still relatively uncertain exactly how visitors learn in the art museum, whether through personal, physical, or social contexts, it can be hard to establish any sort of preset techniques and procedures when teaching in the art museum. By coordinating with the art teacher, those techniques and instructional practices can be determined and amended to provide ultimate learning experiences for students. Every teacher and every student is different, and learning occurs differently for all. Being flexible to accommodate those differences will lead to more successful outcomes. What may work for one group of students, may not work for another.

For museum educators, being aware of curricular connections can be a basis for designing educational programming at the museum. These connections can also help students identify with both art and the museum in a personal way by relating what they learn in the classroom to what they are learning in the museum, or vice versa.
Additionally, by making art museum resources more accessible, such as teacher packets, lessons, and ideas for classroom instruction, teachers may be more inclined to reach out to the art museum to form a connection (Stone, 2001). Lastly, art museum educators that present themselves as enthusiastic and willing participants in making those connections will demonstrate to art teachers that they, the students and their teachers, are welcomed and respected aspects to the art museum’s existence.

Final Reflection

I began this study with my own personal beliefs that art museums are important to art learning. After this experience, I can confirm that I still believe art museums are important, even more so than I originally thought. They are important to children, they are important to their communities, and they are important to art teachers who want to teach their students that art exists beyond the four walls of the classroom.

I have also come to conclude that art museums come in many different forms, each having their own unique ways of creating meaningful experiences for their visitors. The experiences of my students and me became less about what was displayed in the art museum and more about the experience of the environment, staff, and idea of learning outside the classroom, and how those experiences exceeded our expectations of what art museums can be and do. Conducting this study has opened my eyes to the strategies of the atelier method and made me rethink my own teaching strategies; the concept of caring about students as an essential component to their education; and the importance of field trips and educational learning beyond the classroom. I believe that further research can
be conducted to gain even more understanding in how students are affected through art museum education, whether through workshops or teacher constructed-museum activities.

Although this study focused on one particular case, its outcomes are valuable to learning about art museum education and its importance to the art education of children. Ultimately, it is the education and interests of our students that should become the main focus of our teaching. These learners are the center of our “teacher-universe” and creating opportunities for them to gain knowledge, build confidence, and enjoy themselves is our duty and our privilege.
Pre-Visit Questionnaire

Name:___________________________

Please answer the following questions...

Have you ever visited an art museum? If yes, what museum/s and when?

What importance do art museums hold in today’s society?

What importance do art museums hold in your life?

What do you think is involved when visiting an art museum?

What do you think is learned when visiting an art museum?

What do you expect will happen during a visit to an art museum?

What do you want to learn from an art museum?

When visiting the art museum, what would you like to do?

How do you think technology is connected to art museums?

How important is technology in your life?

How do you think visiting the art museum will impact you afterwards?
Post-Visit Questionnaire

Name:_________________________________________

Please answer the following questions...

Now that you have visited the art museum, would you visit an art museum again? Why or why not?

What are your thoughts on the art museum’s importance to society now?

How is the art museum important to you now that you have visited it?

What did you like about visiting the art museum?

What did you learn from visiting the art museum?

What did you wish you could have done or learned that you did not get to while visiting the museum?

How did the art museum live up to your expectations?

How did the art museum surprise you?

How has the art museum had an impact on you now that you have visited?

Additional comments?
Journal Prompt #1
Outline how you predict tomorrow’s visit will take place...

Tomorrow, I will be visiting the art museum and this is what I think will happen...
Journal Prompt #2

Describe step-by-step what you experienced at the art museum today...

Today at the art museum...
APPENDIX E

POST-VISIT LESSON PLAN

Overview:

Students have visited a local art museum and learned from a professional artist how to use watercolors. They will then create a watercolor painting using techniques and skills learned during the workshop at the art museum, implementing their own artistic styles and choices.

Materials:

Watercolors, watercolor paper (varying sizes), brushes, masking tape, photos, water and cups, and palettes.

Objectives:

- Students will practice skills and techniques in watercolors on small pieces of watercolor paper.
- Students will research subject matter and pre-plan, through use of computers and photographs.
- Students will create a water color painting on watercolor paper that reflects techniques and skills learned through the workshop and add their own stylistic choices to the subject matter that reflect their artistic personalities.

Assessment:

- Participation = 25%
- Creativity = 25%
- Craftership = 25%
- Composition = 25%

Total Points = 100
REFERENCES


