TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE ART MUSEUM GALLERIES:
TOUR GUIDE STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

A Thesis
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ABSTRACT

There are unique challenges to teaching and learning in the gallery setting that may impede students from learning and having enjoyable experiences. Museum theorists and pedagogists stress the importance of developing strategies and approaches that foster interest, and motivate students to learn and experience artworks, in order to lead effective tours for school groups. This thesis is a qualitative investigation that studies what affect the implementation of several touring strategies and approaches had on students’ learning and enjoyment in the gallery setting. The participants were students at 4-12 grade levels who received tours of exhibitions of contemporary art presented by the Wexner Center for the Arts, at the Ohio State University, in Columbus, Ohio. Through narrative, I describe how creating a comfortable learning environment, and using active-learning situations, helped increase the effectiveness of the tours I gave to student groups. The affects include high levels of participation in looking at, talking about, making meaning of artworks, and learning about artworks while having enjoyable experiences.
Dedicated to *all* of my teachers,
And in memory of Makayla
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CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THIS STUDY

During my first year as a graduate student in the Arts Policy and Administration program at the Ohio State University I received an appointment as a graduate administrative associate for the education department at the Wexner Center for the Arts. The Wexner Center is a multidisciplinary contemporary arts institution located on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus, Ohio. It is an experimental laboratory for international artists from the visual, performing, film and video arts. My work in the education department focused primarily on the tour guide program for art exhibitions.

My thesis, in part, is a reflection of my journey as a new tour guide giving tours to school groups. Through narrative I will share the struggles I encountered with teaching and learning in the gallery space and the strategies and approaches I experimented with to address some of these challenges. My literature review highlights what museum, art education and education scholars have to say about teaching and learning in the museum and some of the current practices in museum pedagogy. This review is a selective survey of education and museum education theories and approaches for touring school groups that I found helpful as a new tour guide.
Working for the education department at the Wexner Center was not the first position I held that involved education and the arts. Prior to my work as a graduate student I had worked professionally an artist, a manager of an art gallery, an art consultant for commercial businesses, a theatre arts teacher and a youth director. As a theatre arts teacher my focus was on the interdisciplinary nature of theatre education and its role in teaching and learning. Because of this, as a tour guide, I eagerly sought the opportunity to continue researching ways to integrate elements of drama into teaching and learning as one approach to giving tours.

As an actor working in university and community theatre I have studied different roles. When I became a tour guide I examined the role very carefully analyzing it from multiple perspectives. In theatre, when preparing for a role there are two basic questions I ask—what does this character say about him or herself and what do other people say about them? I analyzed the role of a tour guide in a similar way, asking what do the visiting students, their teachers and chaperones expect of me and what do I expect to accomplish in this role? The conclusion I came to was that being a tour guide is a complex of many roles. As a tour guide I am: leader, arts educator, arts advocate, facilitator, broker of ideas, disciplinarian, art critic, mediator, spokesperson, an ambassador to the arts organization and hopefully a friend. After carefully examining the roles I realized that there is a tremendous amount of responsibility being a tour guide! And there is also opportunity for great rewards. In this study I am looking for teaching and learning theories, and strategies that will be useful in approaching the multifaceted roles of a tour guide.
Before I go into detail about my thesis topic I want to describe the aspects of my graduate program in Arts Policy and Administration and how it has served to complement my research. This master’s of arts program allows for several areas of concentration. The core disciplines are: arts management, arts administration, public policy and management, and arts education policy. I chose arts education policy as my concentration. I came to OSU to learn to become a more effective advocate and policymaker for the arts in education, and also to explore the integrative-ness of the arts in our everyday life. My position at the Wexner Center was a perfect fit; assisting with the tour guide program as an administrative assistant allowed me to pursue my academic goals while conducting research in arts education. My professional experience in the arts and arts education—coupled with my course work as an arts policy and administration student—has provided a backdrop for my research in teaching and learning strategies in the galleries.

As a student of public policy I learned that there are three core values of developing good policies, they are: efficiency, effectiveness and equity. This philosophy is applicable to the development of museum education programs as well. Writing good public policy requires knowledge of how to utilize resources in a creative way that will achieve the greatest impact. When I began working in the education department with the tour guide program these tenants of public policy became the lens by which I viewed the resources in the department. I began to ask, how could the resources in the tour guide program be used to maximize the service to our constituents? I identify the constituents as students in grades K-12, teachers and the tour guides for the purpose of this study.
The Wexner Center’s largest exhibition audience is the K-12 student population; thousands of students in grades K-12 visit the center each year to tour the art exhibitions. Schoolteachers and their students from Columbus public schools and surrounding areas visit the center as a component of the ongoing partnership the arts educators at the center have with Ohio’s public schools. School programs at the Wexner Center are a resource for art education, giving students an opportunity to be exposed to and learn about contemporary art. Part of the overall mission of the center is to assist diverse audiences to participate in cultural experiences that enhance the understanding of the art of our time (Wexner Center Tour Guide Manual, 2000). In order to understand the history of the mission and purposes of partnerships between museums and schools I will share some of the theoretical underpinnings found in museum education and art education as part of my literature review. In doing so I hope to illustrate some of the core goals and objectives articulated in museum education over the past century.

1.1 Museum and school partnerships

I will begin with the historical perspective on museum educations’ partnerships with schools. In the early 1900s, Arthur Parker, Vice President of the American Associations of Museums, advocated that the museum be a place that actively serves the community (Zeller, 1989 p. 36). In 1984, the American Association of Museums’ commission on Museums for a New Century that education is the primary purpose of American museums and called for a closer relationship between museums and schools (1989 p. 40).

Identifying education as the mission of the museum and establishing partnerships with schools has raised questions. If museum staff and volunteers are going to be
involved in educating students from the school community what will their primary focus of education be? And what sort of pedagogy will be used in the museum? The answers to these questions are still being considered today among the museum education community. Ultimately the answers to these questions will affect the approaches and strategies used by tour guides as they give tours to school groups.

As an arts policy student, I spent my first year and a half of being a tour guide seeking touring methods to improve the effectiveness of my tours with school groups, however in order to evaluate the effectiveness of tours, I had to establish goals and objectives. Several philosophies seem to be at the center of the museum education discussion that asks, what will be the educational focus and pedagogy for the gallery setting? One potential answer is to focus on the goals in art education, which are currently characterized best by looking at the structure of disciplined based arts education curriculum. Another philosophy is to focus on the enjoyment and experience of viewing art, while another is to foster learning that aims to integrate art education with subjects taught at the K-12 grade levels.

According to the literature, most school tours that take place as a part of a partnerships between museums and schools tend to focus on the areas of art education curriculum: aesthetics, art history, art appreciation and art criticism. Museum instructors help students in the galleries see the formal qualities of the art, talk about the artist, the social-historical content and the art making process (Zeller, 1989 p. 45). This approach heralds both praise and criticism. On the one hand, teaching to the school curriculum may—in the minds of school administrators—make a trip to the museum an extension of
the classroom, that complements the teacher's lesson plan. While on the other it is argued that by rigidly focusing on these goals, the opportunity for personal experience with the artwork may be missed.

John Murphey, also a noted theoretician of museum education, states, "the only correct use of the museum education department is as a catalyst to experience; the end result of which is the amplification of a visitor's feelings rather than his knowledge" (Zeller, 1989, p. 46-47). In a published report in 1971, the Conference of Art Museum Educators and the educational work of the Cleveland Museum of Art during the long tenure of Sherman Lee, provide the following argument regarding museum's educational mission. "[The] primary goal is to help visitors of every age, circumstance, and experience to respond to the works in the museum galleries—to see, discover, and appreciate what happens inside a work of art...the beginning and end of the educational work of this museum is the personal encounter of an individual with a work of art" (1989 p. 55). Zeller makes this statement regarding the discussion on formal art education verses experienced-based education.

[A] narrowing of museum education philosophy toward the aesthetics /art appreciation approach is suggested by the influence that the Getty Center for Education in the Arts is beginning to exert in museum education. The interdisciplinary/humanities philosophy that has played so long and important a part in art museum education does not seem to fit the Getty's Disciplined Based Art Education model with its essentially formalist-expressive approach to aesthetics and criticism and its primarily Wolfflinian-Panafoskian view of art history. There are also difficulties and dangers in transferring a school-based theory such as DBAE to museums. The advocates of DBAE tend to equate education with teaching and view all educational activities as susceptible to organization based on sequentially structured curriculum theories; however, museums are not primarily teaching institutions but centers for enlightened entertainment whose audiences are socially and economically diverse, motivated by many different needs and interests and heterogeneous in age, education and experience" (Zeller, 1989, p. 78-79).
Zeller’s position highlights some of the factors that might limit the museum if espousing the DBAE approach to museum education, and infringe on the opportunity to infuse interdisciplinary and humanitarian studies as part of the museum education experience. He does not support the idea of the museum emulating the education system, which he criticizes as being too structured and not equitable to a diverse population.

1.1.1 Formulating teaching and learning strategies and approaches

Accomplishing any of the goals mentioned thus far in the literature, whether that is teaching art education, promoting an enjoyable experience for the visitor or integrating art education with other disciplines, means museum staff and docents will need to establish strategies and approaches to teaching and learning in the galleries. As Zeller describes, pedagogy in the museum that emulates the current school-based theories of teaching and learning can be problematic, and other museum education theoreticians agree. As part of her study in the practice of docent services in American art museums, Elizabeth Whitemore describes approaches to teaching in the museum education. She says that using a formal teaching approach is extrinsic and likens it to a “classroom manner,” while using an informal teaching approach in museum education promotes a personal experience and positions the docent as “the host.” A docent using a formal teaching approach is concerned with imparting information about the who, what, when and how of the object; while docents using an informal teaching approach is concerned with developing “sensitive observation” and enjoyment of the objects (Zeller, 1989 p. 45).
Thomas Munro, editor of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, finds middle ground in the debate between formal and informal teaching practices in museum education by taking the following position on what the service of the museum docent should be. “While some minimum of historical information about the period, the artist, the subject should be given, the primary aim...in gallery teaching, is to help the visitor to see; to perceive works of art visually; to develop powers to perceiving the details and subtle qualities in a complex form and how they are organized into a unified work of art” (Zeller, 1989, 53-54). He advocates for incorporating formal and informal approaches to teaching and learning in the museum but gives favor to the latter.

In addition to the ongoing philosophical discussion regarding how to approach teaching and learning in the museums—some logistical issues can also be noted. The inherent differences between the museum and the classroom setting are worthy of consideration according to museum scholars. Inez Wolins in *Learning Theories in the Museum Setting* says this, “[the] museum environment contrast with the more formal and structured classroom environment (Wolins, 1993, p. 33). Andery Avinoff, the director of the Carnegie Museum, says one should realize that “the visitor has not pledged himself to be attentive in a museum” (Zeller, 1989, p. 44). Teaching and the learning that takes place in the museum setting is not subject to the same policies, procedures and standards that exist in schools. Children are, for the most part, not being graded by their performance in the museum, nor do they have any internal incentives to participate. When setting goals and objectives for museum education and approaching teaching and learning in the galleries these are factors educators’ grapple with.
The research I am presenting in this paper is an overview of the discoveries I have made while trying to carry out these—sometimes competing—sometimes confounding educational philosophies. My aim in doing so was to develop effective and equitable tours that would impact the student’s learning and experience in the galleries, using formal and informal approaches to museum education. The touring strategies that I developed and experimented with are based on theories in teaching and learning taught by Brian Edmiston from the College of Education at Ohio State University, and theories from museum education. Most of the fieldwork I conducted was with 4-12 grade students, but I argue that most of the approaches can be used for touring groups of many different ages. I would recommend, however, that the content be altered to fit more mature audiences.

1.2 Adopting touring goals and objectives

Before I begin to share my experiences working with different touring strategies, I want to clarify and document what goals and objectives I adopted for teaching and learning in the gallery setting as part of my research. I will refer to it later when giving an assessment of how effective the strategies were in accomplishing the goals and objectives I have stated. While formulating my strategies and approaches for touring school groups, I had the following goals in mind: (These are not listed according to any hierarchical order).

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Challenge the students to create personal meaning.
- Promote dialogue among the students regarding the themes and ideas represented in the artwork.
- Help students make connections between art and their lives.
• Expose visitors to social and cultural issues represented in the art as a springboard for dialogue and the expression of different viewpoints.

• Engage the students into actively viewing and describing artworks.

• Aid in helping students learn about methods of art making used by the artists.

• Aid in helping students learn about contemporary art and artists.

• Engage the students in art dialogue.

The following is a list of some of the negative experiences I wanted to avoid while giving tours to school groups; these are experiences I did not want the students to encounter as a result of my teaching and learning in the galleries. I developed this list during a reflective exercise in which I thought about some of my personal experiences of being a museum visitor. By creating this list of negative experiences, it helped me clarify the positive experiences I wanted the students to have. I will also use this list to evaluate if the tours I gave were effective, and accomplished the goals and objectives I have stated.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

• Being lectured to.

• Believing that visitors do not have knowledge to talk about the art.

• Thinking contemporary art has little meaning.

• Feeling like visitors do not belong in the gallery.

• Being told what visitors think about the art is wrong.

• Thinking that art is created in a vacuum and has no relevance to life.

• Not having a meaningful experience with the artwork.
• Being forced to listen to information that is not interesting.

• Having to indulge people who like to hear themselves talk.

1.2.1 Evaluation instrumentation used in this study

As part of my field research, it is my aim to identify what approaches and strategies worked and which did not by evaluating and gauging the students’ responses. During the research process, I kept a reflective journal of the affect these touring methods had on the students’ participation and progress, individually, and as a whole. My research is qualitative and involves my personal notes, teacher evaluations and feedback from fellow staff members who occasionally observed my tours. The research is limited in a sense that the data I collected did not utilize recording devices, therefore the exact phraseology used in the tours and behaviors of the students can not be analyzed. Another factor that was not controlled for in this study is that an assessment of the students’ prior knowledge of art was not conducted. I do not see this as a threat to the internal validity of the study because the outcome being measure is not solely based on how much the students have learned about the exhibition, but rather on a combination of how effective the tour was in promoting dialogue and constructing meaning, as well as what knowledge students gained about formal aspects of the work.

The thesis of this paper is that there are unique challenges to teaching and learning in a gallery setting that may impede students from learning and having enjoyable experiences. Museum pedagogists must consider the learning environment of the museum and motivation level of the students when developing teaching and learning approaches and strategies in order to create a comfortable learning environment and
provide an entrée point for students to engage with the works. When these strategies and approaches are implemented they will enhance the museum experience and lead to greater participation in students learning.

1.2.2 Suggested applications for this study

My hope is that my research will be useful in the training and development of tour guides, and useful to any educator who wishes to engage students into exploring, experiencing, talking about and learning about art work. I also contend that these methods can be applied to the teaching and learning of any subject. I have found these principles and practices to be helpful in my teaching and learning experiences, interpreting life, developing relationships, work and school situations, and in practicing my faith.

I write this thesis with a metaphor in mind—that is—it is like writing a script. The play is based on a personal story—and it does involve drama (albeit educational—not personal...sorry). I identify several characters: students, tour guides, teachers, chaperones, artists, art educators, museum education policymakers, and theorists in education and museum education. All of which play a significant role. My character represents the protagonist who wants to improve the effectiveness of tours to school groups. The setting is the gallery space of a contemporary art exhibition. And I invite you to be my audience, hoping you will find my research to be enlightening—and even entertaining—to the extent that I entertain your thoughts as an audience member up until the very end. I also hope that you can identify with one or more of the characters and can see yourself in one or more of these roles.
CHAPTER 2

CREATING A COMFORTABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the importance of building teaching and learning strategies and approaches that are designed for the gallery setting. According to the literature presented in this study, the impact the museum's environment can have on the visitor's learning and experience is considerable. In this chapter I will concentrate on how the learning environment, as it is perceived from the visitor's perspective, affects the visitor's openness and reception to teaching and learning in the gallery setting. My premise is that addressing these concerns through teaching and learning strategies and approaches should be standard practices for docents. I also contend that without cultivating a comfortable learning environment, there is a risk that students will be less likely to enjoy their visit or to participate and will not be as open to learning as a result. Based on the research I am presenting in this chapter, students from school groups who come for tours of the exhibition arrive with a varying number of perceptions, questions, fears, anxieties, and preoccupations that affect the learning environment. What I am looking for are theoretical underpinnings for developing standard touring practices for school groups that will foster a comfortable learning environment.
2.1 Identifying the psychological concerns of the visitor

The first challenge I would like to address that hinders the student’s learning and enjoyment while in the museum is the visitor’s unfamiliarity and consequent discomfort being in the museum setting. Museum educators and theorists recognize the need for museum staff and volunteers to address the “comfort” of their visitors by implementing a plan to reduce the anxiety or fear that may be associated with their visit. Alexander and Hein posit that comfort is necessary to creating an environment conducive to learning, saying the museum should attend to the physical and psychological concerns of their visitors (Alexander and Hein, 1998, p. 13). The sheer physical structure of some museums can be daunting for some visitors, and as Hein and Alexander explain, tour guides cannot do anything about the physical aspects of the building that affect comfort levels, however, they recommend they can give attention to the psychological ones. “The physical sources of distraction can be remedied by physical means—reducing crowds, providing better facilities—while the psychological causes must be addressed through information and education” (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson, 1995, p. 74). In order to determine what “information” tour guides should present to school groups to help foster a comfortable learning environment, “the psychological concerns of the visitor” need to be identified.

Museums educators recognize at least three psychological concerns associated with the museum experience that can affect learning and enjoyment. They say that, in general, most students are unfamiliar with the museum’s setting and physical surroundings, the rules and guidelines for behavior, and the contextual contents of the exhibition, all of which cause psychological concerns for the visitor, thus hindering
learning and enjoyment. In this chapter I will address all three of these barriers that interfere with the students' comfort in the museum, beginning with the visitor's unfamiliarity with the museum setting and physical surroundings.

2.1.1 Physical orientation

Balling and Falk say that part of the anxiety of the visitor comes from a lack of orientation (1980) (cited in Alexander and Hein, 1998, p.11). Visitor studies suggest that people often are confused about their physical surroundings and are in need of an orientation to the exhibition site (p. 11). Judith Noble Fowler in her article, “Learning About Art in the Museum,” recommends that school groups take a pre-trip visit to the site to map out and investigate the exhibition in order to gain a sense of direction and familiarity with the environment before engaging in visual research (Fowler, 2002, p. 36). She also says in order to help orientate visitors, ideally trips to the museum would be frequent and “help students become familiar with the premises and feel less intimidated by museum staff and the artworks they encounter” (p. 34). These strategies are ideal and most people would agree that the majority of schools do not have the kind of resources that would enable them to make frequent trips to the museum. In light of this fact, it can be presumed that the responsibility of helping students become familiar with the museum is that of the tour guide. It can also be surmised that developing an orientation for the students to introduce them to the gallery space and exhibition site is an important part of teaching and learning in the galleries and will aide in creating a comfortable learning environment.
2.1.2 Orientation regarding rules and guidelines for behavior

In addition to the lack of physical orientation some visitors experience during their museum visit, some visitors may lack orientation regarding rules and guidelines for museum behavior. Being uncertain about rules and guidelines while in the museum can cause visitors to feel edgy and uncomfortable; this is another psychological concern that affects students’ learning and enjoyment in the museum. Fowler says walking into an art museum for the novice museum visitor can feel menacing and threatening: it can be intimidating to see security guards monitoring the gallery space, reminding people to keep their distance. If visitors are unfamiliar with museum policies, Fowler maintains that it can lead to a negative situation that might prevent them from wanting to visit again (Fowler, 2002, p. 35). Young students especially may not be aware that guidelines prohibit loud voices, rude behavior, and touching the artwork (p. 36). To address this problem, Fowler recommends that teachers discuss with their classes the guidelines for museum conduct before their trip to help avoid embarrassing or shocking altercations with the guards. It would stand to reason that if a teacher does not make these guidelines clear to the students prior to their visit, it would be the responsibility of the tour guide, museum staff or volunteer. Creating a policy that tour guides give an orientation regarding the museum guidelines help protect the students from experiencing the “negative situations” Fowler refers to and will help foster a comfortable learning environment.

Once a student is orientated to the exhibition site and has received rules and guidelines for the museum, (policies regarding touching the artwork and what is appropriate behavior...etc) does this address all of the concerns visitors may have about
being in and learning in the gallery space? Are there any other rules or guidelines that should be addressed in order to create a comfortable learning environment? What about the visitors concerns about participating in group discussions: are they experiencing anxiety about being asked to participate? And secondly, can the teaching and learning approach used by the tour guide hinder or help participation? What teaching approaches and strategies can tour guides implement to provide opportunity for students to participate, and to address the fears and anxieties students in their group might have about sharing their thoughts and ideas?

2.2 Promoting group participation

Museum educators recommend two teaching and learning strategies that can be implemented by tour guides to promote group participation and help eases fears and anxieties associated with contributing to group discussions. First, it is recommended that the tour guide firmly establish their role as the facilitator of group discussion and secondly, that he or she establish and enforce rules and guidelines for appropriate group interaction. The role of the tour guide as facilitator is an approach that is explored by Falk and Dierking. They say, developing a community of learners is an important strategy that requires the tour guide or docent think of themselves as a facilitator of discussion rather than a disseminator of information (Falk and Dierking, p. 194). In Zeller's article, The Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Art Museum Education in America, he quotes Harold Madison of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Madison supports an informal approach to teaching and says that it provides opportunity for more
participation from the visitors. He says, “Museum education should be informal and interpretative rather than instructional…” not to follow the schoolroom method of recitation and lecture (Zeller, 1989, p.45).

Facilitating discussions, as Madison, Falk and Dierking explain, is a departure from the common instructor role found in the education system. Discussion solicits input from students and gives opportunity for interpretation as opposed to listening to the “dissemination of information.” This means that students are able to contribute more to the tour because they are being asked what their thoughts, reactions and ideas are regarding the artwork. However, participating in a group discussion, for some visitors, may be a source of anxiety and fear. What are some ways the facilitator of discussions in the gallery setting can address the fears and anxieties of their visitors?

2.2.1 Welcoming all opinions and ideas

Fowler says as tour guides take on a facilitator role and encourage students to participate by sharing their opinions and thoughts, they should be “initiating and enforcing ground rules for appropriate behavior during these discussions” that communicate that all opinions and ideas are welcome (Fowler, 2002, p. 36). In McEvilley’s article, Revaluing the Value Judgment, he discusses an issue in teaching and learning that supports the need to develop group guidelines. He states, “when one community of tastes attempts to enforce its idea of quality [or interpretation] on another, an irrational and dangerous act is performed…” (McEvilley, 1992, p. 23-24).

Dr. Terry Barrett, Professor of Art Education at the Ohio State University, and my advisor in this research paper, stresses in his book Interpreting Art: Reflecting, Wondering, and Responding, “[A] diversity of interpretations will allow us to see that
one work of art can elicit many different interpretations, some different approaches
toward interpretation, and the opportunity to examine choices when we are faced with
multiple interpretations” (Barrett, 2002, p. 39). Fowler adds that a tolerance for a
diversity of opinions is essential among visitor interactions in the gallery when trying to
promote a comfortable learning environment (Fowler, 2002, p. 36). Facilitating group
discussions and enforcing rules and guidelines that promote participation and foster a safe
teaching and learning environment are two ways tour guides can care for their visitors’
needs, according to museum educators.

2.2.2 Addressing group discussion anxieties

In other visitor studies conducted by Fowler, she examines the fears and anxiety
visitors experience regarding participation in group discussions from a different angle.
She suggests that visitors can create their own barriers to learning and enjoyment in the
gallery by placing too high expectations on themselves regarding their learning and
appreciation of artwork, causing anxiety. “When visitors feel intimidated or fearful, or
when they try to sustain some rigid self-concept or achieve some predefined result, they
also lose the openness necessary for an enjoyable learning experience (Falk and Dierking,
1995, p. 74). As a result, visitors who have a “rigid-self concept” about participating in
discussions about art may be intimidated to speak for fear of sounding unintelligent. Not
only is it the case that students are hindered from participating because of high
expectations they place on themselves, but the opposite can also be true. Fowler says
students can also suffer from low expectations characterized by doubting that they posses
the ability to engage in a dialogue regarding contemporary art (Fowler, 2002, p. 35).

Consequently, students operating under this assumption will not participate for fear that they lack the skills required to engage in art talk.

Two experts in the field of art criticism counter the assumption that the novice viewer of art lacks the capability to participate in discussions of art. Although there are reasons for visitors to feel insecure when participating in a discussion unfamiliar to them, at the same time experts in museum studies argue that principles of art criticism are not entirely unfamiliar to students, nor is art criticism, an ability that requires education. Barrett states, anyone can make meaning and talk about contemporary art (Barrett, 2002, p. 1). Barrett, during his work with children has read responses written by fourth graders that were compatible with scholarly writings that criticize the same work (p. 31). Philip Yenawine, co-director of Visual Understanding in Education, says beginners actually have strength when it comes to their capacity to enter an image directly and to begin making observations (Yenawine, 2002, p. 3). Barrett states interpreting art is to make sense of it, and to "respond in thoughts and feelings and actions to what we see and experience, and to make sense of our responses by putting them into words (Barrett, 2002, p. 200). It is not difficult in this description to conceive that the methods of interpreting art are familiar routines we practice everyday in life, albeit not necessarily applied to art. At the same time, museum education scholars explain that the more exposure to contemporary art students have the more comfortable they will feel in discussing it. These arguments give credence to the claim that students are very capable
of successfully participating in group discussions. However, at the same time, there is a need to develop teaching and learning strategies and approaches that will empower students to participate.

2.3 Summary

Fears and anxieties that stem from a lack of physical orientation, lack of orientation regarding the rules and guidelines of the museum, lack of familiarity with the conceptual content of the exhibition, and a presumed lack of ability to engage in art criticism are all concerns that tour guides can address through “information and education. The literature presented thus far provides a theoretical basis for standardizing an orientation that includes the following information: orientation to the exhibition site, orientation regarding the rules and guidelines for the museum and for participation in group discussions, and an orientation to the conceptual context of the exhibition. In addition to including information that orients the students regarding these issues, I argue that another purpose of the orientation key to creating a comfortable learning environment is to develop a rapport with the students and their teachers and chaperones who accompany them. In the remaining portion of this chapter I will share my experience of being a new tour guide and the different ways I explored creating a comfortable learning environments for the students who visited Wexner Center exhibitions. My research included seeking ways to develop and implement an orientation for the students, and experimenting with developing and implementing rules and guidelines both for my self as a facilitator of discussion, and for the group.
2.4 Introduction to teaching and learning narrative

In the following narratives I will share my exploration, failures and successes, while implementing teaching and learning strategies and approaches that aimed at fostering a comfortable learning environment. Several of the teaching and learning approaches and strategies I will illustrate were gleaned from several sources: seasoned tour guides at the Wexner Center, the Wexner Center tour guide manual, and methods I incorporated from my studies in teaching and learning with Brian Edmiston in the college of education at the Ohio State University.

To restate my thesis, there are unique challenges to teaching and learning in a gallery setting that may inhibit students from learning and having an enjoyable experience. Developing teaching and learning strategies and approaches that focus on creating a comfortable learning environment and provide an entrée point for students to engage in the work should be standard to touring school groups and will contribute to more effective and equitable tours for the visitors. This next section focuses on my experiences trying to create comfortable learning environments.
2.4.1 Being an Ambassador to the Center

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #1

As children arrive at the Wexner Center, a magnificently and strangely shaped building, what is going through their heads? I wondered, as a new guide, what it must be like for children to leave their school, a place of familiarity, travel across town on a bus, which is an excitement on its own, to see an art exhibition. I can recall my experience of going on a field trip when I was a child. I grew up in Southern California. One of the trips I remember taking was to the Long Beach Harbor. I had sailed on my grandfather’s boat with my family in many harbors; being in the harbor was not foreign for me, although I remember there being anxiousness in the group. The ocean port was busy. Small and large boats filled the harbor and ship workers were busy all about. I wondered if children would be anxious coming to the Wexner Center, this portal for contemporary art, with small and large buildings all around and lots of campus workers and students busy all about. As an adult I know I can be a little out of sorts when things are unfamiliar.

There were other questions I had as a new tour guide. Will students visiting the center for the first time know what is going to happen once they get here? Do they know what an art exhibition is? Do they know what the Wexner Center is? Do they enjoy art? Do they know where they are? What I did know is that I was going to have a group of approximately 8-12 students for one-hour and I was experiencing my own set of anxieties. One way to approach teaching and learning in the galleries that would address the visitors’ potential anxieties about being in an unfamiliar place is to act as ambassador to the center for the students by providing a good introduction.
As the students filed off the bus, this marked the beginning of the tour experience and consequently when my role as an ambassador to the center began. While being trained as a new tour guide I observed tours given by experienced docents and they way they approached the ambassador role. During this training time I observed the warm and friendly way the guides greeted the students. I could tell how much they enjoyed working with the kids by the excitement and anticipation they displayed while waiting for their arrivals, exemplifying the qualities of a good ambassador. Following their example, I began to see myself as an ambassador having a duty to welcome and receive the students with openness in order to create a more comfortable learning environment. My strategy was to make myself visible to the group as they came into the space and try to project a message that it is good to have them here and that I looked forward to meeting them. Focusing on my role as ambassador to the center became very much a part of my approach. I understood that this was a new experience for some of the children and being visible when they arrived and a giving them a nice greeting would make them feel welcome and address any fears. I believed these strategies and approaches were valuable in cultivating a comfortable learning environment and were helpful in preparing them for their teaching and learning experience in the gallery. Familiarizing myself with the students by being there when they exited the bus and by greeting them as they entered the center helped me make the necessary connection with them that I needed to ease my own fears.
2.4.2 Developing, Orientating and Managing Difficult Groups

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #2

One of my strategies as a new tour guide was to minimize any conflict that may hinder the development of a comfortable learning environment. Looking for problems that may arise during the check-in process was one step. During my training period I spent some time just observing kids as they arrived to the center. I wondered if the students would be excited, bored, or anxious. I observed several behaviors as groups made their way off the bus. After school groups de-boarded their busses they were instructed by one of the Wexner Center staff members to gather into groups of 8-12 and wait in a designated area until their tour guide joined them. Some of the groups were full of energy and excitement, playful and exuberant, while others were quiet. Sometimes the students did not quiet down when the tour guide arrived to greet the group. In some cases there would be a student or two that were hyper-active and who would not calm down. This was a problem. So how is the tour guide supposed to proceed with an orientation for the students if they are being disorderly? What approach can the tour guide use to bring the group to order?

As a new tour guide I admit that while I was still getting comfortable with the role and was still learning about the exhibition I didn’t want the extra pressure of being assigned to a *rowdy group*. Until I became more experienced my strategy was to request groups that did not appear to be hard to manage. I looked for a quiet group that was more mature (usually the groups with mostly girls), and I also sought our groups with fewer students in them. Our tour guide coordinator also surveyed the groups as they came in and supported the idea of putting tour guides with groups that they felt most comfortable
with, whenever possible. When the need arose, she would strategically match the most experienced guides with the groups she thought might be especially challenging to tour or were oversized (over 10 students). There were some instances when the teacher would let the tour guide coordinator know that there were special needs in the group or that a group may be particularly had to manage.

The groups that I felt most comfortable with as a new tour guide were groups that waited quietly and were ready for their tour. What I noted about the checking in process was how important the teacher or chaperone’s guidance and directions were in preparing the students for the tour. When students were ready to meet their tour guide and anticipated following their instructions, it made the tour guides’ transitions into the group a lot smoother. Part of the instructions given to the teachers by a Wexner Center staff member prior to the tour explains the teacher and chaperone’s role in preparing the students for their tour. However, when they are not implemented there is a situation for the tour guides to manage.

So what happens when this is not the case and the group apparently has not been given any directives to wait quietly or orderly, or if they have, they are not following it? What if the tour guide approaches the group and the students are caught up in an activity or discussion, or even roughhousing in the gallery space and the tour guide’s presence goes unacknowledged? Does the tour guide jump in and break up their socializing or playing? How would the students respond to that? How can the tour guide approach this situation?
2.4.2.1 Soliciting help from teachers and chaperones

One strategy I tried to employ in these situations was to find the chaperone or teacher first and solicit their help in settling the group down before I tried to introduce myself. This way I got to avoid being seen as the disciplinarian who came in to squelch their fun, not what I wanted their first impression of me to be. I also did not want anything to jeopardize the rapport I wished to develop with the group. Having the teacher or chaperone intercede in circumstances when the students needed to be disciplined was a strategy I used to avoid these potential sticky situations. I figured the students’ one-hour teaching and learning experience with me did not need to made complicated by me playing bad cop. However, in the event that there was a need for discipline, a policy that the teacher or chaperone administer it seemed to work best. Developing a rapport with the teachers and chaperones who accompanied the students on the tour was an area I began to explore as a new tour guide. I tried to gain an understanding for how to engage them in the teaching and learning experience and foster a more comfortable learning environment for them as well as for the students and me.
2.4.3 ALIGNING WITH TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #3

In my first few months as a tour guide, my contact and communication with the teacher or chaperone who accompanied the group to the center was minimal at best. On the average it consisted of a casual meeting where I introduced myself to them, maybe inquired about their school, and engaged in small talk about how they were doing. Subsequently, not a whole lot of interaction with them took place until our goodbyes. It was not that I did not want to interact with the teacher or chaperone; I simply did not consider how they could be included in the teaching and learning experience. I believed our brief encounter before the tour began was something similar to the changing of the guards. The teacher was in command of the group, when I arrive as their tour guide for the exhibition they stepped down from their post and I took over as their educator.

In response to having an undefined and ambiguous role, the teacher would come along for the tour, sometimes stealth like, never to be heard from again until the tour was over. Other times their participation was Gestapo-like, and was heard only when there was a need for disciplinary action. Very rarely did the teachers or chaperones participate by contributing to the discussions. Although in the event that they did, some of their contributions were rich, adding insight and depth to our discussions. And on the other hand, sometimes their participation took us off track. As my experience in touring grew, so did my level of frustration with how to incorporate the participation of the teacher and chaperone during the tour. I questioned to what degree their participation would enhance or hinder the experience. Was the group missing out on something that the teacher and chaperone could contribute? In a museum studies class I took during my Master's
program, the subject of teacher participation during tours was broached and was helpful in my developing an approach to engage the teacher and chaperone in the teaching and learning experience in the galleries.

Among those participating in the conversation were teaching associates from the University who used the exhibitions as part of their course curriculum. Their perspective was helpful in recognizing how “an alliance” between tour guide and teacher could enhance the tour for the students. They were favorable to tour guides not simply taking charge of the class but rather joining the teacher as a co-leader in the gallery experience. Their comments led me to understand that the visiting teacher’s participation in the tour, as an educator and a person with whom the students have already built a rapport with, were two resources that could impact the students’ learning and experience in the gallery. In particular, their experience working with this group of students and their contextual understanding for how the themes and ideas of the exhibition correlated with the students’ current studies in the classroom should be capitalized on. By implementing a strategy to align with the visiting teacher and chaperone, I gained allies and advocates while trying to engage the students in the learning process, and consequently more links to the classroom could be made as the teacher listened and responded to teachable moments.

There were two practical ways I involved the teachers and chaperones in the tour. My initial approach to building an alignment with the teachers and chaperones was prior to the start of the tour to make the invitation for them to participate. Later I began to actively make them a part of the conversation by keeping regular eye contact with them and relying on them to answer non-art or art-related (for art teachers) questions, as a way
of positioning them as a co-leader. During my first year and a half as a tour guide I did not fully explore how to co-lead with teachers and chaperones, however I think it is a teaching and learning strategy that has great potential for increasing the effectiveness of tours for school groups and could be considered a part of a policy for touring school groups.
2.4.4 Breaking the Ice and Modeling Good Communication

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #4

While working with students in the school systems and the community, I have witnessed that building a rapport with students is an effective strategy for fostering a good learning environment. As part of my training at the Wexner Center, I followed seasoned tour guides and observed as they began to develop a rapport with students during their introduction to the Center; essentially what I was witnessing was tour guides making friends with students. Becoming part of a group of 8-12 year-olds is not an easy task, there is not a whole lot a tour guide has in common with 4th-6th graders; something to break the ice would be helpful. There were several ways I witnessed tour guides break the ice within the first five minutes of their tour that I believed helped create a comfortable learning environment.

2.4.4.1 Getting to know students

The most effective way I saw tour guides develop a rapport with the students was simply through their genuine care and concern for the students. They delighted in working with and getting to know the students. This was evident in the way they greeted the students, the way they asked them questions, and the way they listened to the students’ responses. Questions they frequently asked the students in their groups were: What school are you from? What grade are you in? How was your trip over on the bus? The tour guides usually knew the answers to these questions in advance, we all received a weekly schedule that stated which groups would be visiting the center, however asking the students these questions was one way to break the ice and build a rapport. It also got
the students engaged in conversation and brought a personal element to the tour. During this time the tour guides not only learned about the students but the students learned a little about them.

After I started to feel comfortable giving tours I began to explore ways to improve my approaches to building a rapport with the students. When I was just starting out my focus was much more on remembering facts and figures about the exhibition and less on building a rapport. However, eventually I did become less introspective and more focused on the students. In doing so I learned how important it was to build a rapport with the students before taking them into the gallery space. I also learned to how to use the introduction to foster comfortable learning environments. As I developed an introduction I purposed that one of my goals was to communicate how important each one of them was by taking an interest in them individually. I did this by finding out more about each person in the group, and as an ice-breaker I asked them a few questions. First and foremost, I wanted to know their names; then I wanted to know about their own art making practices, or any other art forms that they had experienced. Students responded really well when I showed an interest in them individually and made an effort to remember their names.

2.4.4.2 Giving individual attention to students

I also used the introduction as a time to model good communication practices. With several groups I explored what affect modeling good communication during the introduction had on the remainder of the teaching and learning time in the galleries. The results were good! I believe that this was a helpful strategy in fostering a comfortable learning environment. Let me explain what was involved in this teaching and learning
strategy. While students shared their names and talked about their work in the arts, I concentrated on giving each student my full and undivided attention. In addition I would turn my body to face each student while he or she spoke and I encouraged the students in my group to do the same. If at anytime there was an interruption, I would encourage the group (gently) by saying something like “let’s give Darin all of our attention,” and then I would reaffirm them that each person was going to get a turn. This was very effective in building a rapport with the students, and communicated that they were all very important. It also fostered a comfortable learning environment; our group became a safe place where every student could be heard, was respected, and was shown courtesy. As I implemented this strategy in the galleries, I watched with much delight students begin to turn and listen to their classmates without being told. They also became more patient in listening because I affirmed that they would get their turn. I did not always experience this type of response from the students but saw positive affects at varying degrees.

Another purpose and strategy for incorporating an ice-breaker into the introduction was to find out if there were students in the group who exhibited difficulty in speaking in front of the group. In some cases I encountered students who were shy or that had “an attitude” that hindered them from participating in the group discussion. In either case, I made a special point to encourage these students throughout the tour. In a teaching and learning class I had with educators working in the schools, we brainstormed on how to address this prevalent problem. One idea was to provide an opportunity to engage in a conversation one on one with the shy or obstinate student and to give him or her a chance to share their ideas and thoughts in a less intimidating format. Sometime this worked in
bringing students around so that they would actually contribute to the group, other times the students did not respond to the extra encouragement and remained quiet or obstinate for the rest of the tour.

My third purpose for the ice-breaker was to use the information shared by each student regarding their art making practices as a segue to introducing the ideas and themes of the exhibition. As we engaged in the exhibition I would try to refer to the students’ art making practices when talking about the artistic processes of artists in the show. I would say something like...“Just like Shelby selects the type of beads she wants to use to design her jewelry, this artist made choices regarding the materials they used to make this sculpture,” or “Just like Daniel likes to draw pictures of a certain subject—cars—this photographer favors a particular subject; he likes to photograph dogs.” This is an approach I used to develop a rapport with students and to provide personal connections to the artworks that I think had a positive affect on the students’ participation and engagement with the tour. I even witnessed several times students with poor attitudes at the start of the tour warming up during our time in the galleries.
2.4.5 Orientating the Students to the Exhibition Site

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #5

One of the policies of touring school groups that is communicated in the Wexner Center tour guide manual is that tour guides communicate the mission of the institution and orientate the students to the surrounding campus community. I was surprised how many of the students visiting the Wexner Center did not know that they were on a college campus. During one of the Wexner Center’s off-site exhibitions, fittingly called Away From Home, I was interested in finding out if the students traveling to the Canzani Center on the campus of the Columbus College of Art and Design (CCAD) knew where they were at. During this exhibition I explored ways to orientate the students to this site. While adapting to giving tours at this off-site exhibition location I too had to go through an orientation to familiarize myself with the surroundings. This made me feel more comfortable teaching and learning in the space. It also helped that the staff and faculty at CCAD, who partnered with Wexner Center to launch this exhibition, were hospitable and gracious hosts. However, the personal experience of feeling disoriented, until I became familiarized with the building and the culture at CCAD, there was a measure of discomfort. This confirmed for me how important it was to have an orientation for the students.

One of the installations in the Away From Home exhibition was a perfect tool to help orient the students to their surroundings and consequently I used this for my introduction to the students. An installation by Marcos Ramirez called Crossroads, was “an iconic signpost with arrows pointing every which way to varied far-flung locations, [offering] provocative quotations about each place and [time, recording] the distance
between those places and Columbus, Ohio (Wexner Center Tour Guide Exhibition Training Manual). I used this installation to talk about where we were in the gallery in relationship to their school. As an activity I asked them if their school was listed on one of these signs, which way would it be pointed to and how many miles away would it read? This activity confirmed my suspicion that the students were disoriented; invariably they pointed in different directions and gave various answers regarding how far away their school was. As part of my introduction to the exhibition I began to include talking about where the exhibition site was in relationship to places they were familiar with, providing them with a better sense of where they were.

The themes and ideas of the *Away From Home* exhibition were displacement, the nomadic lifestyles and travel, among others. These made it easy to address the subject of what it felt like to be in familiar and unfamiliar places. It was during some of these conversations that I got to hear candid answers regarding how students felt about going to new places. Their responses confirmed that being in new places often times made them feel uncomfortable and sometimes unwelcome because they did not have a sense of belonging. Consequently I continued to work on ways of communicating that the students did belong and were welcome in the space, a point I think cannot be stressed enough with youth. I am inconclusively aware of how the orientation to the site helped create a comfortable learning environment for the students, however I believe that psychologically it had a positive affect.
2.4.6 BEING A FACILITATOR OF DISCUSSION

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #6

During my year and a half of touring school groups in the galleries, my teaching and learning style went through several changes. As a new tour guide I made teaching and learning choices early on that did not foster a comfortable learning environment. I believe one mistake that I made was in setting the wrong tone. In my own museum-going experiences I can recall experiences in the gallery setting that felt stuffy, rigid and impersonal. I still get that feeling in some galleries I visit. They can be very quiet and sterile and I think sometimes that is projected onto the visitors. The mistakes I made in my teaching approach I believe achieved a similar affect of quieting the visitors and inhibiting personal connections to the objects in the space. To illustrate how I believe I set the wrong tone, I will share my experiences in preparing to give my first tour.

There were many steps to the exhibition training. Among the first step in preparing to give a tour was studying the information about the artists and their work provided in the tour guide exhibition training manual. It was much like studying for an exam; at times it was overwhelming! As a group, the tour guides received a special guided tour from the curator of the exhibition who talked about the work in the show. As a group, the tour guides also had discussion groups in which they shared various approaches to the touring the exhibition. As individuals each of us were encouraged to spend time going through the galleries to explore the themes and ideas of the show and to read and listened to commentaries about the work. The Wexner Center’s public programs were a good source for additional training for touring an exhibition. When it came time to give a tour I had much information to share—and that I did. I did not realize it at the
time, but I was trying to recite all I knew about the exhibition, all in one hour! When I did begin to ask the group questions and solicit their input, usually toward the end, this was about the time that I realized I had lost them, even though they were probably lost a long time earlier. I remember wondering why they were quiet.

Literature in the department of Museum instruction at the Art Institute of Chicago states, “[it is not the aim] to instill facts academically, but to present interesting and accurate instruction which will enhance the enjoyment of art (Zeller, 1989, p. 44). The frustration I experienced when I realized I was boring the children by trying to instill so many facts led me to re-evaluate my strategies and approaches. If I wanted to provide a more interactive learning experience for the students, one where I could still “present interesting and accurate instructions” and did not dominate and dampen the visitor’s experience in the gallery, I had to change my teaching approach. I explored a more informal teaching and learning approach for my subsequent tours. My hope was to create an environment where students felt permission to explore, question, talk about and examine artwork as opposed to being consumed by listening to a lecture. The teaching and learning strategy I explored was being a facilitator of a discussion rather than the disseminator of facts. I incorporated this method as a way to avoid creating a rigid, stuffy and impersonal feeling for the students I was touring.

2.4.6.1 Inquiry-based strategies

The teaching method I implemented to facilitate discussions was often times inquiry-based and encouraged students to construct meaning and make careful observations. I would ask questions like—“Who would like to tell me what they think about this painting?”—“Does anybody know what this is made out of?”—“Has anybody
ever seen anything like this before?”—“What does it remind you of?” After hearing the input from the group I would find opportunities to share interesting and accurate information when they flowed with the conversation. Using an inquiry based method made the learning environment more less formal and gave me more opportunity to solicit participation from the group, and there was an improvement in the way students were enjoying the tours, but I still did not feel that the students were connecting with the deeper concepts and ideas associated with the artwork. In Chapter 3 I will continue to share my exploration of teaching and learning strategies and approaches that aimed at producing more effective and engaging tours that helped students learn and experience the artworks in an exhibition at a deeper level.
2.4.7 Evaluating Touring Performance and Setting Group Guidelines

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #7

After leading many tours and facilitating many discussions with groups in the galleries, I engaged in a formative evaluation of my touring performance. What I discovered was that my teaching and learning approaches were not producing my desired results. I was not satisfied with the amount of participation I was getting from the students, nor was I satisfied with the depth at which the students were experiencing the artwork. While soliciting participation from the students I sensed that there were elements of the group dynamics that were intimidating for the students. I wanted to identify what was causing the intimidation, and see if I was doing anything to inhibit the students while leading the group discussions. It became my goal to identify the problems and work toward developing solutions, and then implement these new approaches as my personal policy for leading group discussions. The first area I explored was how my behavior as an educator and group discussion leader affected the students’ participation.

2.4.7.1 Oppositional and parallel speech

While I was starting out as a new guide I was also enrolled in a Master’s level teaching and learning course. The information I learned in this class was very helpful in shedding light on the problem. Dr. Brian Edmiston, who teaches in the college of Education at OSU, introduced to me a concept called “positioning.” This concept served to revolutionize the way I lead discussions. He talked about positioning in relationship to communication styles; he argued that teachers either engage in oppositional or parallel speech when they communicate with students. Edmiston’s strategy for good teaching and learning is using parallel speech and he says that this fosters an atmosphere where
students feel comfortable to participate. His definition of “oppositional speech” is when an instructor gets in a student’s face, and is defensive, confrontational and indifferent, and consequently community is lost. Edmiston says parallel speech is when the instructor gets along side of the students and looks for ways to align with them. Other characteristics of parallel speech are constituted by support and commonalities. As I learned these concepts and ideas in Edmiston’s class, I began to wonder if the problems I was encountering in the galleries—students exhibiting difficulty and discomfort speaking in the group setting—had anything to do with the type of speech I used with them.

Was I guilty of using oppositional speech with the students? I began a self-evaluation, exploring what type of speech I used while leading group discussions. I took note of how I responded to comments given by students. What I learned about myself was that I can be confrontational and I can be indifferent to other people’s ideas in subtle ways. Not blatantly but however very subtly I communicated my opposition to their thoughts and ideas, verbally and non-verbally. I began to explore how judgment and indifference sounded in a group setting. I wanted to pinpoint some of the phraseology that was associated with oppositional speech. Let me illustrate how subtly I was communicating my indifference and judgment while leading group discussions.

2.4.7.2 Unintentional judgments

Many times during my early tour experience I would ask students what they thought. I would ask students to tell me what they liked or disliked about a particular piece of artwork and what they thought it might mean. Many times I found myself saying after or while a student was responding, “Right!” “Yes!” “You’ve got it!” or something to that effect. Other times if I was opposed to their ideas and opinions, I would say
nothing. It was not until the tables were turned that I began to re-think this approach to leading discussions. During a visit to a contemporary art institution in Ohio, I was on a guided tour of an exhibition with a group of tour guides from the Wexner Center. As the tour guide conducted the tour I recognized that we had similar strategies and approaches and noted how enthusiastically he responded to the groups' participation in the discussion. However, as I observed and participated, he did not share enthusiasm for all comments, and at times my comments were not accepted with enthusiasm. I wondered if to some degree interacting in this way could be taken as judgmental? I began to wonder if by showing my acceptance to some opinions and thoughts by giving favorable responses and showing excitement was an act of validating certain ideas and opinions? On the other hand, if while hearing a student's response with which I did not agree or understand I responded by looking at the student perplexed and confused, did this subtly invalidate what he or she was saying? I thought deeper about how my responses to the group dialogue could affect the learning environment. Could I be causing students to fear that some of their comments might be rejected? In other words, as the person in authority, however subtly and innocently, was I subversively giving my stamp of approval or disapproval while leading discussions?

While I was wrestling with these questions about how my speech could affect the teaching and learning environment in the galleries, I read an article in Edmiston's class by Lawrence Cohen, author of a book called Playful Parenting. This article had a powerful affect on me and provided a powerful antidote on the issue of creating a comfortable atmosphere for students to speak in.
2.4.7.3 Listening to students

Cohen, a child psychologist, tells the story about a friend who made a three-day vow of silence after experiencing the death of a loved one. Prior to this three-day period, the woman had made plans for her and her son to go shopping. The son conveyed his wish to keep the plans as scheduled, even under the circumstances. During her vow of silence she and her son took a drive. During this time the son opened up, poured out his heart, saying things he had never told her before, about school, friends, feelings, everything. This is was her account as Cohen describes it.

She watched the road and kept quiet. After pulling into the mall parking lot, he just stayed in the car and kept talking. They never got out, they drove home, with him still talking. Clearly her vow of silence gave him the freedom to talk without fear of interruption or judgment. Sometimes we just need to get out of a child’s way, and the connection will happen spontaneously. The problem is, most of the time we don’t even know when or how we’re in the way (Cohen, 2001, p. 164-165).

The main point of this story is to illustrate the freedom that comes when there isn’t a fear of interruption or judgment that can be common with oppositional speech.

2.4.7.4 Joining the community of learners

As an experiment, while leading a discussion with the students, I made a vow to keep silent when a student was sharing his or her thoughts, opinions and ideas. I made no comments on whether something was right or wrong, but instead tried to understand the perspective of the one responding. Edmiston would say this is “coming along side” the learner and looking for commonalities. What I found was that by coming along side of the learner and trying to see from his or her perspective it curbed my tendency to want to
make judgments, verbally and non-verbally. Once I removed myself from the position of passing judgment, validating or invalidating their responses, I found that the group environment became more comfortable. Of course, I couldn’t stay silent for the rest of the tour, but while students were speaking I engaged in listening as if I too were part of the learning community. It was wonderful! I got to enjoy hearing their insights and their connections to the work, sometimes much more interesting than anything I had to say. It was humbling.

My epiphany was when I get in their way by responding to their comments verbally or nonverbally with any trace of opposition, I hinder the community of learners in the gallery setting. This personal policy to lead group discussions using parallel speech has been so effective I have had many occasions where I had to bring the discussion to close or else we would have spent more than a good portion of the hour on just one of the pieces in the exhibition. My approach to leading the discussion was to give the students ample time to give their input, and after a period of time I would then carefully and considerately share information about the artwork and artist in an interesting and child-centered way. I will share some of my experiences in trying to implement these strategies and approaches in Chapter 3.

2.4.7.5 Caring for the community of learners

After I discovered that I needed to make changes in the way I led discussions and change how I was reacting to student responses, it was not long until I began to wonder more about the group dynamics. How could the learning community be improved by setting guidelines for participating in group discussions? Would a policy that identified
what appropriate group criticism was, be helpful? Although Jr. high students can be very
caring and thoughtful at times they can also be hard on their peers. Coarse joking,
sneering and sarcasm are common in the youth culture.

I realized in examining the group dynamic while giving school tours that not only
did I need to be open-minded and not negative or inconsiderate to responses that did not
align with my own opinions and ideas, but I also needed to be responsible for ensuring
the rest of the group adhered to this guideline. Consequently it became a personal policy
to put a stop to any inconsiderate comments or criticisms during the tour and to prevent
them by communicating this guideline during the introduction. The policy was that
everyone’s comments and contributions were welcome and that showing courtesy during
the group discussion was expected. I communicated this in a very light and positive way
right from the beginning. As a teacher in the classroom setting I worked with similar
rules and guidelines, therefore this was likely a familiar policy for the students. Enforcing
these guidelines in the gallery setting meant monitoring the group’s responses and
reminding students who made inappropriate comments of the guidelines for group
participation. This policy made the group environment a less threatening and safer place
for the community of learners I toured. As I implemented this policy I experienced an
increase in participation with in the groups I toured.
2.4.8 Orienting Students to the Art Exhibition

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative # 8

Another guideline I found in the Wexner Center tour guide program training manual that I believe was helpful in creating a comfortable learning environment was the emphasis on building an orientation to introduce students to the exhibition. These orientations would include inquiring about the student’s knowledge and interest in contemporary art and a brief description of the exhibition’s themes and ideas. After asking hundreds and hundreds of students during my introduction about their experience with viewing and talking about contemporary art, what I found was that a high percentage of 4th-6th grade-level students had never been inside a gallery before and consequently had little experience engaging in art talk. During the exhibition training the tour guides would spend several gatherings trying to create a hook, something we could say about the exhibition that would capture the students’ interest and provide motivation for them to want to learn and enjoy the artwork.

In the following chapter I will resume with the subject of providing an entry points for students that are designed to help motivate and enable them to talk about contemporary art, and considers their lack of familiarity and experience in art talk.
CHAPTER 3

ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH ARTWORKS USING
ACTIVE LEARNING SITUATIONS

In Chapter 2 a number of challenges to teaching and learning in the gallery setting that affect visitors’ overall enjoyment and learning in museums were identified. Among the challenges mentioned were insecurities, fears and anxieties that stem from a lack of physical orientation, lack of orientation regarding the rules and guidelines for the museum, lack of familiarity with the conceptual content of the exhibition, and visitors’ presumptions that they lack the ability to engage in art talk. Also highlighted in this chapter were the importance of developing touring strategies and approaches that address these issues and foster comfortable learning environments. The touring strategies and approaches explored were: orientating students to the exhibition site and to the rules and guidelines for proper museum behavior, building a rapport with students in which good communication practices are established, leading tours as a facilitator of discussion, fostering a tolerance for different opinions and ideas, and cultivating a working relationship with the teacher or chaperone that promotes a co-leading mentality. In addition, the importance of orientating the students to the exhibition was introduced. Whereas Chapter 2 concentrated on issues relating to the students’ external environment and the need for an orientation to familiarize them with such things as their physical
surroundings and guidelines that affect the teaching and learning environment (physical surroundings, museum rules and guidelines for behavior, the docents' teaching style, and the groups' behavior), Chapter 3 will address teaching and learning strategies and approaches that consider potential hindrances to learning that are internal to the learner. These are the students' motivation level and personal interests. In this chapter I will consider how these issues can be addressed in the touring strategies and approaches developed for the gallery setting. I will explore teaching and learning methods that will increase the effectiveness of tours for school groups who, according to visitors' studies, are generally unfamiliar with where to begin the process of looking, making meaning and interpreting contemporary art (Yenawine, 2002, p. 3).

3.1 Preparing students to participate

"Museum educators are charged with helping these less-than-ideally prepared visitors engage meaningfully with the art exhibited" (p. 3). Motivating students to participate in learning and creating an interest in learning about contemporary art are two problems museum educators encounter while teaching and learning in the gallery. How can tour guides help the average student arriving at the museum approach an exhibition?

The educators who developed Wexner Center's school programs addressed the need for students to receive assistance prior to their tour of the exhibitions by offering to conduct a pre-visit. During this time, museum educators introduce the themes and ideas of the exhibition to generate an interest among the students in the artwork being exhibited at the Center. An activity designed to help students find connections to the exhibition, is also part of the visit. Pre-visits from the education staff help familiarize students with the activity of looking and making meaning of contemporary art. However, for students who
do not have any prior exposure to contemporary art or to the tools and processes of interpreting it, it is up to the tour guide, according to Yenawine, to introduce them and guide them into these processes. As a new tour guide, I wanted to explore different strategies and approaches that would help motivate students to engage with the exhibition by providing a variety of entree points.

Some of my initial thoughts were: How can I get the students interested in engaging in something that they know so little about? What if they do not care very much about contemporary art? What will motivate their interest? On a more personal level, I asked myself the same questions. What do I think is interesting about contemporary art exhibitions and what motivates my interest? A few reasons that immediately came to mind were: I am fascinated by expression, the expression of ideas, and the way artists’ use materials to express them. What motivates me as a viewer to engage in an exhibition is my interest in what is being expressed and the pure enjoyment of seeing how different materials are used to communicate. Another reason is my desire to engage in community discussion regarding ideas and issues relevant to culture.

Although it was my understanding that each person is motivated to view contemporary art differently, and that some people might have little or no motivation to view this genre of art, my premise was that most people would be interested and motivated to share their opinions about it. I believe most people are motivated to engage in a dialogue on issues relevant to culture, as it pertains to them. And most people will share their opinions and thoughts on the artistic merits of an artist’s work if given the opportunity and if it the opportunity is presented in the right environment. In order to
promote participation among the students to discuss these issues, my strategy was to develop active-learning situations that provided opportunities that were supported by a comfortable learning environment.

3.2 Motivation, interest and curiosity

In the remainder of this chapter I will examine how active-learning situations can be used to create opportunities for students to share their thoughts and ideas regarding the themes and ideas of contemporary art exhibitions. In my studies of museum education and teaching and learning theory, there are two components of active-learning situations that, if incorporated into the development of the activity, can increase the effectiveness of tours for student groups. They are learning situations designed to focus on the students’ interest, and learning situations that address different modes of learning. In the research I present in this study I examine the theoretical underpinnings for incorporating these components into active-learning situations for teaching and learning in galleries.

Falk and Dierking theorize, in an article entitled Intrinsic “Motivation in Museums: Why Does One Want to Learn?” that providing opportunities for personal involvement in exhibition tours motivates students to learn. Falk and Dierking say developing learning situations for the museum using intrinsic motivation involves three major components: the students’ curiosity, the students’ interest, and the museum educator providing opportunities for personal involvement with the exhibition (Falk and Dierking, 1995, p. 72-74). They argue that when these components operate together students will be motivated and will receive intrinsic rewards as a result of learning (p. 72). In contrast, receiving extrinsic rewards such as grades, awards, or other types of personal recognition for learning is motivated by factors other than personal interest or
curiosity (i.e., external pressure from teachers, parents or peers, or school policies regarding participation in school sports). Museum educators emphasize the need to draw on the students’ motivation that is derived from personal interests and curiosities.

3.2.1 Wonder and discovery

According to museum educators, there are several teaching and learning strategies that focus on building the interests and curiosities of students. Falk and Dierking say that the goals for museum learning should be to evoke the students’ sense of wonder and discovery about objects and to inspire visitors to see the relationship between the exhibits and their own concerns (Falk and Dierking, 1995, p. 73). Carl Rogers, a psychologist, and experiential learning theorist, suggests that the role of one engaged in teaching and learning is to set a positive climate for learning, balancing intellectual and emotional components of learning. He also states that this is accomplished by applying knowledge in an experiential way through personal involvement, and through self-initiatives that are evaluated by the learner (Kearsley, 2003, p. 4). Falk and Dierking say that in order for intrinsic rewards to be produced learning must involve a connection to the “deeper sense of meaning it provides” and seek to answer the question “how does the exhibit pertain to me?” They state, “When we are intrinsically motivated to learn, emotions and feelings are involved as well as thoughts” (Falk and Dierking, 1995, p. 73). These suggest that components of active-learning situations should also engage students personally, experientially and provide choices, to put the student in control of their learning.
3.2.2 Senses, emotions, and other modes of learning

Other characteristics of active-learning situations that leads to effective learning in the museum, according to the literature, involve engaging the students’ senses, emotions and different modes of learning. O’Connell stresses the importance of incorporating a sensory experience in learning. He states, “The more senses a child uses, the more fully he or she explores a topic and the more likely he or she is to remember the experience. The more the student can become part of the museum experience and be an active thinker and imaginative doer within the limits of evidence, the more likely he or she will move on to higher levels of thinking” (O’Connell, 1992, p. 256). Judith Burton, in her article, The Configuration of Meaning: Learner-Centered Art Education Revisited, states, “Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, and Dewey have committed to the view that the foundation of mental processes lies in action.” She says a combination of motor and sensory abilities start a chain reaction in the body that opens up learning. Burton also says the body is a powerful tool, acting as a sensory receptor for gathering information (Burton, 2000, p. 5-6). Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson state, “Learning involves the use of sensory and emotional faculties, as well as intellectual ones.” The use of senses and emotion lead into a more thoughtful negotiation of objects that considers information, new perspectives and sensitivity to context (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson, 1995, p. 73). Falk and Dierking advocate for activities that an emotional component in their book, Learning From Museums. “Capitalizing on emotion and is an important key to successful educational programming. Fun, excitement, joy, mystery,
sadness, surprise, pathos, anticipation, and empathy are all emotional experiences that can and should be considered fundamental constituents of learning” (Falk and Dierking, 2000, p. 194).

3.3 Practical applications of theory

What are some of the basic applications of active-learning situations that involve the students’ interests, senses, emotions, and different modes of learning, and allow for students to make choices? I would like to briefly highlight a few applications found in the literature I have studied. Benjamin Bloom identifies five examples of active-learning situations that he classifies as cognitive learning. They are: dramatizing, illustrating, interpreting, solving problems and demonstrating (Kearsley, 2003, p. 18-19). Peter O’Connell advocates that docents organize activities such as problems, tasks, or questions that require initiative and thought by children. “They can be asked to prepare a story, draw a picture or map of their house, or create a short role-play situation in which their characters have a problem.” He says, “these tasks give meaningful shape to an exploration…and strengthen the children’s roles as active learners” (O’Connel, 1992, 256). Wolins advocates using activities that incorporate props, costume pieces, (similar to those found in the painting), handling objects, drawing, storytelling and role-playing. Wolins designs active-learning situations where students dress in character and answer questions prepared by the docent. She says these activities requiring visual exploration and critical thinking while students study the artwork. Wolins argues that using “materials gets students involved in their learning and demands mental investment” (Wolins, 1993, p. 33-38).
The citations from museum educators and theorists presented thus far, illustrate that there are numerous ways to engage students in active-learning situations in galleries. Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson recommend, the direction of the museum should be to “take a more experimental approach, by becoming a more active learning institution.” And cite Screven, who says “only by experimenting with one alternative after the other, in an iterative process, can we learn what works and what does not” (Screven, 1976) (cited in Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson, 1995, p. 75). Most of the research I will share in the remainder of this chapter is made up of my experiences working with student groups in the galleries, trying out different approaches to teaching and learning, using various types of active-learning situations. Other research I will share includes interviews with museum educators, observations of decent led tours that incorporated active-learning situations into their educational programming and Internet resources. What I observed during my research was that educating and informing museum visitors using active-learning situations can be accomplished in a variety of ways, accounting for the diverse range of programs found in art institutions today. These include: living history reenactments, storytelling, role-playing tableaux, movement exercises and other creative drama exercises.

3.4 Field research

During a visit to the Cincinnati Museum of Art in Ohio, one museum educator shared how she engaged students into actively viewing and discussing the artwork. Her strategy to involve students in the tour was to give each student a card, with either a frequently asked question regarding the artwork or important information regarding the artwork. She initiated discussion among the students by having them read what was on
their card out loud. She reported that this allowed students to engage in asking questions and sharing information in a non-threatening way. As an icebreaker, I believed this would work to promote personal involvement among students. A variation of this activity that would be more student-centered would be to have the students write their own curiosities regarding the artwork on a card and have someone else read it.

At the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, one of the educators used movement exercises and dance to emphasize the themes and ideas in the art piece and to engage the students in the exhibition. While demonstrating this approach to a group of visiting tour guides from the Wexner Center, the museum educator incorporated music and movement to talk about the shapes and lines in the artwork. This kinesthetic exercise was used as a hook to peak the visitors’ interest in the artwork. It was also meant, to add fun and playfulness to viewing static collections, in addition to engaging the visitors’ bodies and emotions, by using sound and movement. This exercise was used to open up discussion on Andy Warhol’s art making process. This interactive activity provided an opportunity for students to gather information about the concepts and ideas into what Burton calls “the body’s sensory receptors,” which she declares, are a powerful learning tool (Burton, 2000, p. 5-6).

The Frick Art and Historical Center’s staff, also in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, developed several educational programs for students involving active-learning situations. Susan Bailes, the Program Coordinator for the art museum, describes her programs as content-based and interactive. In a program called the Black Plague, her programs are designed to teach students about the plague, compositions in artwork, and the French Revolution, among other topics. In these programs students are lead by museum
educators to create narratives, tabloids, and pantomimes that are based on historical information found in the museum's collection of paintings. The Center has collected props and costume pieces to be used by students to aid them in reenacting historical events. The museum staff, having become experts in their knowledge about the various historical events represented in their permanent collection, has several interdisciplinary lessons to offer teachers and their students that are engaging and educational. Both teachers and students report that learning and personal experiences in the museum are enhanced by these activities. These activities demonstrate that using materials to get the students involved in learning demand mental investment, a key component, Wolins argues, that motivates students to learn (Wolins, 1993, p. 38).

3.5 Resource materials for gallery activities

In addition to interviewing museum education staff from other art institutions, and observing the implementation of active-learning programs designed for student groups, I found many other resources for active-learning situations through the Internet and the museum education library at the Wexner Center. Token Response, designed by Drs. Eldon Katter and Mary Erickson, is described as

An instructional resource that challenges students to encounter important questions and distinctions about art and their responses to it. It stimulates active looking, thinking, and talking about artworks, Token Response deals with issues in aesthetics and art criticism, and to a lesser extent, art production. This resource can be used with artworks in a gallery or museum or with fine art reproductions in the classroom (Erickson and Katter, 1991, p. 2).

These activities in aesthetics and art criticism are designed for grades k-12 and require minimal preparation. Below is a list of learning objectives:
• That art can be considered from more than one point of view
• That different criteria are used to evaluate artworks
• That there is a difference between preference (I like it) and judgment (It is good)
• That different people prefer different works of art
• To respect differences of opinions about works of art
• That it is acceptable to dislike a work of art
• To identify a pattern in their preferences

Another resource for active-learning situations that I found was on the Internet is a website for the Ackland Art Museum (www.achland.org/education/k12). On this site is a list of gallery activities for students in grade kindergarten through grade twelve. These are all examples of activities designed to engage students in interactive lessons, requiring mental investment and choices to be made by the students. Activities include:
• Searching for types of lines in the artwork (e.g., curvy, wavy, jagged).
• Matching music to a work of art.
• Creating clue sentences about a work of art and having students guess which work of art it is.

Before I share my experiences using active-learning situations in the gallery setting, I would like to illustrate what the desired affects are for incorporating these into tours for school groups. I will do this by using an analogy. Think for a moment about a pinball machine, if you have had the good fortune to play one. The analogy I make suggests that the operation and dynamics of a pinball machine can be likened to the goals and objectives associated with using an active-learning situation in the galleries. Once
that settles in, we are halfway there. Next I need to describe a few things, relevant parts of the pinball machine and basic elements of the game, that are important to the points I will make.

3.6 Desired affect of active-learning situations

A pinball machine is rectangular in shape, has a plexi-glass top, and stands on four metal legs and slants slightly downward. On either side of the machine, where the player stands, are two buttons that operate the flippers located inside the rectangular box that are used to keep the ball in play. On the right side (another injustice to the left-handed population) is where a silver ball pops up when the game begins. When ready to play, the player pulls back a metal knob and it then springs forward, propelling the silver ball up a column and into the part of the machine where all of the action takes place. When the ball loses its momentum and begins to drop, it bounces off the elements inside the playing area. While the silver ball rolls around the surface of the pinball machine, it encounters bumpers and buttons that trigger points that add to a score.

In the pinball machine there are elements that swing, holes and alleys that the ball can go in and out of, all of which help the players add to their scores. One of the major aspects of the game is to skillfully use the flippers to keep the ball in the playing area and to score as many points as you can by hitting the elements with highest point values. During the game you can tell when lots of points are being scored by the number of times the bells sound. A lot of the excitement of playing pinball is hearing the different sounds associated with scoring points. So what does this have to do with using active-learning situations in the galleries?
3.6.1 Stimulating mental activity

When students are led into the galleries they are in many ways like that silver ball that has not yet made it into the game where there is excitement and mental activity. A player can talk to the silver ball all he or she wants, but until the knob is pulled back, and the ball is shot up into the game, it is just going to sit there. Active-learning situations are designed to propel students into learning and into an experience with the art. Just as the silver ball has an entry point into the pinball game, there are entry points to understanding and engaging with contemporary art. This chapter will focus on how active-learning situations can be used to provide an entry point for students to enter into discussion about the artworks. In the latter portion of this chapter, I will illustrate how I experimented with creating entry points by using active-learning situations. I used these while touring school groups in several exhibitions presented by the Wexner Center.

3.6.2 Keeping students engaged

So where does the tour guides fit into this analogy? While playing pinball the most important and instrumental parts of the game are the flippers. When used skillfully they will keep the ball in play. For the students visiting art exhibitions, tour guides are, in some ways, the most instrumental part of the experience. They are the ones who skillfully work to keep the students involved in the game of looking, making meaning and talking about artworks. And while conducting active-learning situations, they respond to the activity of the students like the flippers do to the ball during a game of pinball.

3.6.3 Looking for outcomes

Playing pinball can be fun and exciting, especially when one scores a lot of points. The same thing is true when using active-learning situations: they can be fun and
exciting, especially when one is enhancing the one’s enjoyment of the tour, and contributing to learning. Success can be measured by the way the students respond to the activity. It may not sound like the bells ringing in a pinball machine, however, if learning is taking place, and the students’ experience in the galleries are being enhanced, there should be some evidence.

Up until this point I have only used this analogy to discuss the teaching and learning methods and their intended affects, I have not referred to how a pinball machine is like the artwork in a contemporary art exhibition. I do not intend to address the artistic merits of a pinball machine, however, I have seen a pinball machine used in an installation during a contemporary art exhibition. Beyond that, what can be inferred in this analogy is: contemporary artwork is something that students can interact with, move around in—literally and figuratively—and explore from many different angles, given the right directives from the museum educator. One last pun: using active-learning situations in the galleries is one-way tour guides can get the ball rolling.

In the following section I will share my research in developing and implementing active-learning situations for three different art exhibitions curated for the Wexner Center. I utilize my journal entries that describe teaching and learning strategies and approaches I implemented while touring school groups. My journals are formative personal evaluations of my performance, during my year and a half of working with the tour guide program at the Wexner Center. In these entries I record the outcomes I witnessed, relating to the students’ experience, enjoyment, and verbal participation in describing, making meaning, and interpreting artworks. At the conclusion of each narrative I will address the qualitative outcomes, both positive and negative, that resulted
from the active-learning situations I created for student groups. Not all of these activities lead to students learning about the artwork. However, in almost all cases, students showed evidence of enjoying their tour, participated in talking about and interpreting the artworks.

The first two narratives I would like to share are teaching and learning strategies I began to integrate into the active-learning situation I developed shortly after I began touring school groups. I believe these were instrumental in addressing the students’ interests, and gave opportunities to students to have some control over their learning, two components that museum educators say are important to bolstering motivation in museum visitors. These strategies are 1) following the students’ lead and 2) sharing power.
3.7 STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING—FOLLOWING THE CHILD’S LEAD

Teaching and Learning / Strategies and Approaches Narrative #10

One of the teaching philosophies I learned while working with Dr. Edmiston was Cohen’s idea of following the child’s lead. I believe implementing this teaching approach was beneficial in developing student-centered tours for school groups; I also believe it is a good policy for museum and school partnerships. It was during the exhibition *From Pop to Now* when I started to implement this concept as part of my touring strategy. Prior to this my criteria for selecting the artwork I would include on my tours had to do with *my* comfort level with the art piece, how important *I* thought it was to the show, and my personal like or dislike of it. I wanted to show students parts of the exhibitions that *I* thought were most exciting. Ruefully, I admit it was not a part of my teaching and learning strategy to find out what the students might be interest in; it took one experience to change this.

While giving a tour to a group of students in grade four I made my way through the exhibition stopping at works of art I had pre-selected; I avoided ones *I* did not feel comfortable with, or did not find particularly interesting. My group indicated that they wanted to stop and look at a piece by Ashley Bickerton, entitled, *Green Box Cantina for Malcom Lowry and Donald Judd*. This was a stained-wood box decorated with various images. The tour guide exhibition training manual describes the images in the following way, “Brueghel-esque figures dancing merrily amid symbols of clichéd “tropical” vice: playing cards, mescai, palm trees and bongo drums.” (Wexner Center Tour Guide Exhibition Training Manual). I was of the opinion that parents and teachers would find the subject matter bordering on inappropriate. In addition, I did not find it appealing. I did
not intend on addressing it during the tour; however, on account of the groups’ strong interest in it we stopped. What proceeded was a wonderful experience of hearing the students participate in an important session of constructing a communal interpretation. The group examined the images of a half-naked catlike woman, a devil-like character with prominent male reproductive organs, a dancing skeleton, and images associated with various behaviors, drinking, smoking and gambling. I asked the group if they would like to tell a story about the images they were looking at. Without any hesitation several members in the group participated in telling a story about a man who lost his way in life and died as a result of his habits, carousing with women, smoking, drinking and gambling.

The groups’ strong interested in making meaning of this set of images, images they most likely they have not viewed collectively in an educational setting before, and most likely have not had an opportunity to talk about in a public setting, resulted in a communal interpretation. This moral allegory represented a perspective of drinking, smoking, sex and gambling that they wanted to talk about. Once the students were engage, and exhibited a personal interest in the artwork, it was easy to use this as a springboard to facilitate a discussion regarding the artist and her art making process. I was amazed at how interesting the box became, to this group of students, and to me, after the group discussed it.

The experience I had with this group of students helped me move away from my autocratic approach to touring to a more democratic approach. In the subsequent tours I gave I began to follow the students’ lead, and solicited their input, asking them what they wanted to see. This approach improved participation, and led to students being more
involved in the work, resulting in richer learning experiences. Without implementing this teaching and learning philosophy I see how learning opportunities were missed in my earlier tours. Without following their lead I put students in a position where they had to indulge me, as I led them in the exhibition to pieces they may or may not have had much interest in. In summary, having implemented this method of touring school groups I have more confidence that the students will enjoy their tours, as they are the ones that decide what artworks they will see on the tour.
3.8 Sharing power with students

Teaching and Learning Strategies and Approaches Narrative # 11

A concept similar to following the students' lead is sharing power, another teaching and learning strategy that I learned in Brian Edmiston’s class; I found this very applicable to museum education. He suggests that sharing power helps to “develop [an] ideal power and authority relationship in the everyday world of the classroom [or museum]” (Table 3.1). I adopted this teaching approach in the galleries, and it changed the way I led school groups through art exhibitions.

3.8.1 Changing speech patterns

Sharing power is a matter speaking, and of attitude. It changes speech patterns from making commands to asking the students to make choices. For example, instead of “let's go over here,” or “let me tell you about this,” it changes to, “would you like to go over here?” And, “can I tell you about this?” This puts students, as Falk and Dierking would say, squarely in control of their learning. By implementing this approach a tour would typically progress in the following way: allow the students to chose what they would like to see in the exhibition space, allow them freedom to explore, and when it is necessary, ask students if they would like to participate in an active-learning situation to deepen their engagement and conversation regarding the artworks. When their interest has been peaked: they have spent time describing and making meaning; and they are motivated to learn more, I would ask, “are you interested in knowing how the artist made this” or “are you interested in knowing about the artist’s background?” or “would you like to hear what critics say about the meaning of this work?” To my delight, many times when we would get to this point the students would respond with a resounding “yes!”
Other times it was “not really.” In this case I would respect the students’ decisions and move on to something else in the exhibition that interested them. Sharing power with the students required me to become more flexible, spontaneous, and more prepared for whatever they wanted to see and discuss. As I implemented this touring strategy with school groups I believe it brought new life to the tours I gave. Sharing power with the students allowed the group freedom to explore, to learn on their own, and it kept me from hindering them by determining what they would see and talk about.

3.8.2 Sharing decision-making

Other practical ways for implementing this teaching and learning strategy was to allow students to decide how much time to spend in one area of the gallery (after explaining the layout of the exhibition, and describing how many pieces there were to see in the exhibition). In addition, during group discussions there were times when I allowed the student who was speaking to decide which person in the group would share next. One of the negative affects I observed while implementing this strategy was the bias that students used in selecting from their peers; consequently, this made me think twice about sharing this authority with them. Several times I put a student in charge of leading the group to the next art piece, and put him or her in charge of beginning the next discussion. There were several positive outcomes to including students in on the decision-making process, and putting them in charge of their learning during tours.

Cohen illustrates a positive aspect of sharing power with students in the following quote. He says “the more we join them in their world, the more cooperative they’ll be when we drag them along to ours” (Cohen, 2001, p. 158). What I experienced while implementing this strategy was that students were more willing and receptive to the
decisions and choices I made for the group after sharing power with them. When I wanted to take the students to see a particular art piece in the show that I thought was important, even if they were initially not interested in it, most of the time they would be receptive and attentive because a mutual respect had been built.

The results of sharing power varied from group to group depending on the personalities of the students. Some students were more interested in leading and making decisions for the group than others; trying to keep things fair and balanced was sometimes challenging. However, over all, sharing power with the students increased participation, enthusiasm, and interest in talking about and looking at the artwork in the exhibitions.
3.9 Tools for developing active-learning situations

In addition to incorporating the teaching and learning philosophies of Cohen and Edmiston, following the child’s lead and sharing power, there were other strategies and approaches that I explored while developing active-learning situations that fostered interest and learning motivation among students. One strategy was to adopt a systematic approach for developing active-learning situations. In this section I will describe the tools I used to accomplish this.

While thinking about engaging students with artworks and developing active-learning situations for the gallery setting, several problems surfaced. Often times, finding an entrée point into the artworks was difficult. Contemporary art can be un-representational, un-familiar, and hard to access for some students. On the other hand, it can be visually spectacular and easy to engage with. However, one of the aims in touring students is to help them with their abilities to enjoy it all. How does one help students learn about the artwork, the artist, his or her art making process, and assist them in making meaning of artworks when they are unfamiliar with the “texts” and do not have a frame of reference for these “texts?” During my work with Brian Edmiston I was introduced to three tools that helped me provide a point of reference for students, and helped me assist students in engaging with the artworks. The first one I will introduce is what Edmiston calls, “Some Factors Affecting the Depth and Breadth of Readers’ Engagement, Comprehension, and Interpretations of a Text.” I used this tool as a guide in assessing the difficulty level of artworks in the gallery by substituting “artwork” for
“text.” Examples of “texts” in artwork are medium, art making process, what inspired it, the genre, the context it has in art history, information about the artist, and interpretations from various communities: the artists, curators, historians, collectors, critics, and society.

3.9.1 SOME FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF READERS’ ENGAGEMENT, COMPREHENSION, AND INTERPRETATION OF A TEXT

by Brian Edmiston

If a reader’s identification with

Low ←----------------------------------A CHARACTER-------------------------→ high
Low ←----------------------------------SETTING-------------------------→ high
Low ←----------------------------------PLOT-------------------------→ high
Low ←----------------------------------THEME OR TOPIC------------------------→ high
Low ←----------------------------------NARRATOR-------------------------→ high
Low ←----------------------------------AUTHOR-------------------------→ high

If this particular text assumes of the reader

Extensive ←----------------------------------PRIOR KNOWLEDGE-------------------------→ high
Extensive ←----------------------------------PAST EXPERIENCE-------------------------→ high
Extensive ←----------------------------------PARTICULAR VOCABULARY-------------------------→ high
Extensive ←----------------------------------NEED TO INFERENCE-------------------------→ high

If the decoding skills of the reader are

Minimal ←----------------------------------SEEKS MEANING-------------------------→ extensive
Minimal ←----------------------------------USES CONTEXT CLUES-------------------------→ extensive
Minimal ←----------------------------------WORD KNOWLEDGE-------------------------→ extensive
Minimal ←----------------------------------PHONETIC-------------------------→ extensive

When students’ familiarity level with the text of an artwork was low I would consider how I could design an activity to help them form associations with the text. The second tool I used was Edmiston’s “Ways in to a text.” I altered Edmiston’s chart to include texts associated with artworks (gray areas). And the last tool I used to create active-learning situations was, “Using the ABC of Drama to Plan.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Where? When?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artistic movement/period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot</th>
<th>What? How?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content/object/technique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters &amp; Narrators</th>
<th>Who? Why? Not only those who interact but also those referred to or implied in the text. All characters &amp; narrators have limited perspectives, positions and motivation, ethics, intent, objectives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist/curator/collector/Visitor/critic/scholar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>The big issues and ideas explored from multiple perspectives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Themes/ideas/concepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>His or her social, cultural, historical, ethical experiences and positions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist/curator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readers</th>
<th>Those who could read the text for different purposes with different audiences in mind.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tour guides/students/Teachers/visitors in general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9.3 USING "THE ABC OF DRAMA" TO PLAN
by Brian Edmiston

What did (will) the students CARE about?
(Or what do you have reason to expect that they might care about?)

- Caring for others (and their suffering)
- Fairness and justice (and unfairness and injustice)
- Fear (and survival)
- Danger (and risk-taking)
- Mystery (and discovery)
- Violence (and defense of the vulnerable)
- Death (and life)
- The forbidden (and evading discovery)
- Oppression (and freedom)
- Anger (and its productive use)
- Sex (and relationships among the sexes)
- Love (and hate)
- War (and peace)
- Outsiders (and insiders)
- Status (and getting it or losing it)
- Pride (and those considered less deserving)
- Fantasy (and reality)
- The rude (and the polite)
- Another human concern…

How might you listen (and watch) to better assess the students’ interests and their mood when you work together?

What BIG PROBLEM engaged (or would engage) them?
(Or what do you have reason to expect might engage them?)

How does the big problem connect with what they care about?
How open-ended is the big problem?
Is there choice? Ambiguity? A dilemma?

Is there a question of:

Why something happened (or should happen)?
What happened (or should happen)?
How something happened (or should happen)?
Where or when something happened (or should happen)?
Who should be chosen?
How might you make the problem bigger or engage them more deeply?

How did (will) you engage **ALL** students to **AGREE** to adopt the same position on the **BIG PROBLEM** (or how might you engage them)?

How did you share power? How did you share authority? (i.e., How did you position yourself relative to the students’ attitudes toward the big problem?) How did you (or might you) use activities beyond talking? Could the students move? Read? Write? Draw? Paint? Make something? Sing? Dance?

How might you draw more on their energy? Their prior knowledge? And what they are good at doing?

In Chapter 4 I will illustrate how I used “The ABC of Drama” to Plan, “Ways into the Text,” and “Some Factors Affecting the Depth and Breadth of Readers’ Engagement, Comprehension, and Interpretation,” as part of the active-learning situation design process. In addition, I will share an evaluative tool I used that was helpful in understanding the effectiveness of the learning situations I designed. My evaluations are based on “levels of engagement,” created by Dorothy Heathcote, pioneer of process drama, and teaching and learning theorist. I was introduced to Heathcote’s work during my course work with Edmiston. Heathcote describes levels of engaging students in teaching and learning as progressive, illustrated in the following way: attraction, interest, motivation, engagement, concern, and then, investment. In Chapter 4 I will illustrate how I used “levels of engagement” as a guideline for evaluating the effectiveness of the activities I used with students.

In summary, the criteria for developing learning situations involved creating activities and inquiry that pertained to the students’ interests, cares and questions. The aim was to provide situations, tasks, activities, or discussions for students that would
address these interests, cares and questions, as they related to the artworks; the purpose being, to provide a frame of reference for students. "Contextualizing" the artworks to the students' experiences and studies in school became a component of the active-learning situation design process.

3.9.4 Determining the accessibility of the artwork

During my stages of wondering about the accessibility students have to contemporary works of art I made the following classifications. These are the preliminary thoughts I had on creating classifications of accessibility.

**Category I  Easy to Access - Explicit Text**

Text is explicitly used, written, spoken or through iconography that is easily translated and non-complex. The themes and ideas are universal, common, and applicable to most ages. There is spectacle or general appeal.

**Category II  Hard to Access – Explicit Text**

Nature of the work is difficult. Themes and ideas require a certain maturity level. The subject matter is highly removed from the general audience. It is highly conceptual, philosophical, it has many competing texts, multiple layers of information, and has multiple themes and ideas. Work is static.

**Category III  Easy to Access – Implicit Text**

Text is not apparent. The medium is familiar (e.g., photography). The themes and subject
matter are easy to approach and are familiar. It appeals to a broad audience. There is an element of spectacle or a "wow factor" that attracts the visitor’s attention; for example, the work has a sensory component.

**Category IV  Hard to Access – Implicit Text**

Text, theme, idea, or subject matter is not apparent. The medium, genre, or form is not familiar to the visitor (e.g., abstract expressionism, installation art and time-based media art). The artwork is static and does not have sensory appeal or spectacle.
CHAPTER 4

ACTIVE-LEARNING SITUATION NARRATIVES

As I approached preparing tours for two exhibitions presented by the Wexner Center, From Pop to Now and Away From Home, I considered the accessibility of the artworks, levels of engagement, ways into the text, and Edmiston’s ABC’s in order to develop active-learning situations for the students. Incorporating these components into the design of the active-learning situations helped students in looking, experiencing, and making meaning of the artworks in the exhibitions. In the following narratives I will share the active-learning situations I developed, and how these situations progressed, and how they helped students learn and experience the artworks. Although in most cases these activities resulted in discussions that involved layers of “texts,” my narratives will only illustrate the entrée point I used (e.g., the activity), how it generated interest and motivation to learn, and one or more of the teaching and learning experiences that resulted. On the following page I illustrate Dorothy Heathcote’s levels of engagement that were mentioned in Chapter 3. In this illustration I describe the terminology I have adopted for “the levels of engagement” as my evaluative tool in assessing how students were engaged with the artworks during active-learning situations I designed.
## 4.1 Terminology Used to Evaluate Levels of Engagement

### Attraction:
Students were drawn to the artwork through their senses, and on their own initiative. Students physically sought to engage with the work in the gallery. The impetus may have been the aesthetics or sensory components. Students judged if the artwork was worthy of pursuing or not, based on their accessibility to the artwork, their initial reactions, or perceptions.

### Attention:
Students committed to spending time with the artwork, however, this could come to an end at any time. They were willingly to participate in activities initiated by themselves, by members of the group, or by me. These activities included examining an artwork, talking about it, or by participating in an active-learning situation.

### Interest:
Through an activity, initiated on their own, or through an active-learning situation, students exhibited curiosity, and were engaged in developing inquiry about one or more aspects of the work, verbally and non-verbally. The impetus may have been reactionary, such as like, dislike, affect, or an emotional response, or it may have been prompted through an active-learning situation.

### Motive:
Students who reached this level had found a reason to stay engaged with the work. Students related to an aspect of the work that provided a deeper sense of meaning to their lives, personal relevance, or a connection to a big question or concern that they had. The impetus may have been prompted by active-learning situation or motivated by external means (e.g., positive peer pressure or wanting to impress).

### Engagement:
Students exhibited a cooperativeness and curiosity to participate in dialogue, by listening and or talking about the artwork. They verbally expressed what they thought, saw or felt, or exhibited evidence of formulating opinions, thoughts and ideas.

### Concern:
Students wanted to know more (e.g., about the artists and their statements, their processes, what others said about the work, the genre, or its context in art history). Students continued to explore, inquire, make meaning and interpret the artwork, collectively and individually.

### Investment:
Students gave and received information willingly, and contributed to the community of learners by formulating individual and corporate interpretations.
### Description of Artwork:
Lisa Brice uses graphic symbols to express a sequence of dangerous events. The pictures are like those we might see on street signs, yet tell stories of hazardous travel. (Illustration 4.1)

### Type of Active-Learning Situation:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Existence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story-telling</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role-playing</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem-solving</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tableaux</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement exercise</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What might students **CARE** about?
Fear, danger, violence, death, war, terrorism, security, and images and symbols used for communication.

### What **BIG** questions might students have?
What is being communicated through the images? Why did the artist use these images?

### What might students **ALL** agree to do?
Make meaning of the images by telling a story.

### Ways into the text:
Content/themes/artist's experience

### In what ways does the active-learning situation involve students?
Visual exploration, making meaning, decoding, analyzing, verbalizing, and making choices.
Illustration 4.1 *Sout Piel Series*, 2000, Lisa Brice
OBSERVATIONS FROM ACTIVE-LEARNING SITUATION #1
Levels of engagement with the artwork

ATTRACTION:
Students readily engaged at this level. The visual components of the artwork (e.g., the light) were an attraction for students. Students recognized the symbols. Students took initiative to visually explore the images. *An active-learning situation was initiated.*

ATTENTION:
Students readily and enthusiastically engaged in the activity of making meaning of the images.

INTEREST:
Students responded emotionally to the images with surprise, shock and anticipation. Students shared various responses, and began to develop inquiry, such as, “that’s harsh, what’s up with that?” and “why did they do that?” Students exhibited curiosity. They took initiative, approaching the images like they were mini-mysteries, or puzzles that could be solved. *To connect the themes and ideas in the work to the students’ cares and big questions, inquiry was initiated.* “Where have you seen symbols that resemble the ones in the artwork?” “Where were you when you saw them?” “What information do they communicate?” “When have you relied on images to give you information?” “How has the artist altered the images?” “Have you ever felt insecure or threatened while traveling?” “Why?” Few questions were difficult for the students to answer.

MOVITATION:
Some students became more attentive, participating in the discussion, while others were distracted, still reacting emotionally to the images. Students demonstrated an understanding of the artist’s use of iconic language to represent the idea of “danger lurking.” Selected students made connections with the themes and ideas, illustrating how they were personally relevant to their lives by sharing personal feelings of fear while traveling or being away from home. Student shared where they had seen images like the ones used in Brice’s work (e.g. airports, bathroom, on the street-signs).

ENGAGEMENT:
*To engage the students with interesting information about the artist and her artwork, I asked “Does anyone wonder why the artist uses these images in her work?” Does anyone want to guess?*

CONCERN:
Select students were interested in knowing more about the artist and her work and were willing to make inferences about it. They shared their opinions: “She’s angry,” “Mad.” Students wanted to know about the artist’s experiences, as they related to her work.

INVESTMENT:
I could not determine if any students reached this level.
Personal Evaluation of Active-Learning Situation # 1:

This work could have been approached from two different angles, a subversive angle, discussing violence and threats, or from a non-subversive angle, discussing symbols and communication. The daunting nature of Brice’s work made the two inseparable; in this activity we addressed both. The difficulties I had during and after this activity was negotiating with the students the unsettling nature of the graphic language, and the conversations evoked by the work. I found it difficult not having anything redemptive to say after hearing and participating in the group discussions. One teacher, in an evaluation of a tour said, she wanted to hear me tell the students that violence was wrong—I did not always comment on the immorality of violence. However, this demonstrates how provocative and relevant art is to life and the need for social discourse on issues that are prevalent in our culture (e.g., violence). Art reflects life, or as seen in Brice’s work, gives warning of the dangers in it. During many of the tours I gave involving this work, students reflected on dangers that exist in our and societies around the world. To improve on the inquiry component of this activity, I could have developed more discussion regarding the non-subversive issues (e.g., mass communication and the use of symbolism), although, most students were far more interested and concerned with the subversive content of the artworks.
### 4.3 There Is No Place Like Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Artwork:</th>
<th>Type of Active-Learning Situation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He combines photographic portraits with evocative and provocative captions, expressing a variety of extremely personal experiences of home, immigration, belonging, and exclusion. This piece allows for discussion of &quot;home&quot; as more than the structure you call home, it can refer to a city or country. (Illustration 4.2)</td>
<td>story-telling □ activity □ role-playing □ tableaux □ problem-solving □ movement exercise □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What might students CARE about?**

Caring for others, fairness and justices, oppression, anger, outsiders, the rude, and exclusion.

**What BIG questions might students have?**

Why do some people feel at home and others do not? What is home? Why is the billboard inside?

**What might students ALL agree to do?**

To imagine that we could interview the people in the photographs. To formulate questions and share or not share them with the group. Create a tableau of the person they were most interested in and share it with the group.

**How does the active-learning situation involve students?**

Making choices, active thinking, imaginative doing, questioning, visually exploring, critical thinking, experiential involvement.

**Description of Active-Learning Situation:**

Allow students to visually explore the work. Ask students if they would like to perform one or both of the following tasks: find the person on the billboard that interests you the most, someone you would interview if you were given the opportunity. "If you could ask anyone on this board a question, who and what, would you ask?" Or create a tableau of the person you find most interesting, and share it with the group. The group will try and guess who is being portrayed.

**Ways into the text:**

Characters, plot, themes, and ideas.
Illustration 4.2, *There Is No Place Like Home*, 2000, Ken Lum
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations of Active-Learning Situation #2</th>
<th>Levels of Engagement with the Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attraction:</strong></td>
<td>The size and position of the billboard in the gallery immediately attracted students to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention:</strong></td>
<td>The photographs and text (including the controversial use of the words “god damn”) caught the students’ attention, and created interest among the group. Many students responded by reading the text out loud. A select few began to describe what they felt was going on in the photos. More students continued to visually explore the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest:</strong></td>
<td>In order to assist the group into more experiential learning, and making personal connections with the issues in Lum’s work, I led them into the activity of creating tableaus and investigative inquiry. Students began to formulate questions about the people in the photographs based on their curiosities. They began to make emotional connections (e.g., pathos) with the people, asking questions like “why don’t you like your home?” and “who made you mad.” Some students began to make inferences, stating, “it is because they are immigrants” or “because of their race.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation:</strong></td>
<td>As students shared their questions, I endeavored to help them see the personal relevance of the issues and themes in the work by asking, “What do you think makes people feel at home or not at home?” or “What makes you feel at home?” Students were very interested in exploring this big question, and we explored what it means to feel displaced, and unwelcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement:</strong></td>
<td>Students participated in sharing what their thoughts and opinions were on the subject of what makes a home: “home is where you are fed,” “I feel at home in lots of places,” “home is where your family lives.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concern:</strong></td>
<td>Students were not that interested in knowing more about the artist or about his other work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment:</strong></td>
<td>Using leading questions, such as “do you think there are people in your school or neighborhood that might feel like one of the people on this billboard” and “what would your response be to this billboard if you encountered it post in your neighborhood?” Students continued to explore the implications of the work on their lives, saying “I would not want people to be angry about seeing it,” and “I don’t think it should be outside.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal evaluation of Active-Learning Situation #2

The work evoked many emotional responses that I found challenging to handle. As students moved beyond the superficial feelings (e.g., wonder and surprise) associated with Lum’s work, emotion was sometimes the source of difficulty with this activity. The question about what makes home was deeply personal and sometimes a painful subject for the students. I, at times, did not know how to handle the real emotions being experienced by the students as a result of our inquiry and investigation about home. Sprunger and Edmiston, in their article “Death, Desertion, and Despair: Responding to Intense Feelings About War,” say “if we want our students to engage authentically in drama...we must be prepared to accept the depth and range of students’ emotions as well as their thoughts” and “once we recognize that emotional responses are essential to take work beyond the superficial then we can learn to use and direct students’ energies in productive ways” (Sprunger and Edmiston, 1998, p. 53). Beach and Myers, in their book Inquiry-Based English Instruction state, drama “puts the student into the events of the play, and the ideas of the play into the events of the students’ everyday lives” (Beach and Myers, 2001, p. 10). To handle intense emotions while engaging students in drama, Sprunger and Edmiston recommend, “We need to be careful that their intense feelings are solidly grounded in the fictional world of drama” (Sprunger and Edmiston, p. 59). They also recommended that inquiry should stay in the dramatic world, asking students “what if’
someone in your school felt this way?” or “I wonder what it would be like to feel what this person is feeling?” Otherwise you are asking the student to pour his or her heart out and then have to move on without being able to address it.

The activity in many cases was a catalyst for a discussion among the group about the social and cultural themes relevant to the commentary in Lum’s work. Students made connections to subjects they study in school (e.g., Native American History, civil rights and discrimination laws). In tours with other groups, the topic of public art was raised, and students engaged in debates on whether or not the work should be displayed outside of the gallery setting. In some cases students analyzed Lum’s artistic choices regarding color and composition, but more often the social interests were their bigger concern.
### 4.4 The Vessel Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Artwork:</th>
<th>Type of Active-Learning Situation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An interactive, participatory installation suggested by the tea houses of his native Taiwan. He brings elements of nature in to the gallery space, using trees, a bird sanctuary (with live finches), to create a sensory environment that is relaxing and inviting (no illustration available).</td>
<td>story-telling  □  activity □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>role-playing □  tableaux □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>problem-solving □  movement exercise □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### What might students CARE about?

Environment, aesthetics, and relaxation.

#### What BIG questions might students have?

How does the design of the space affect how we perceive the environment?

#### What might students ALL agree to do?

To participate in an experiment involving sensory experience.

#### How does the active-learning situation involve students?

Make choices, experiential learning, visual exploration, question, sensory awareness, and restraint, imaginative doer, active thinking and applying knowledge.

#### Description of Active-Learning Situation:

Prepare students for entering the vessel (e.g. remove shoes). Students agreed to participate in a sensory experience. Students were challenged to not make any sounds upon entering the vessel for a period of 30 seconds to a minute. They were given the permission to do whatever they felt like doing inside the space (e.g., sit, stand, or explore the construction of the space), with the exception of talking or making any other noise. I encouraged them to be aware or not of the other people in the space, and to concentrate on how the space made them feel.

Part II – Ask students, if they had a space like this at home, what would they use it for?

Ways into the text:

Artistic movement, and the artist.

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### OBSERVATIONS OF ACTIVE-LEARNING SITUATION # 3
### LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ARTWORK

#### ATTRACTION:

Students were very attracted to this installation. Many students began to inquire about the work after spending time exploring its outside structure.

#### ATTENTION:

Students took the initiative to explore and engage in inquiry among themselves. I allowed them to think and make inferences about what it might be before sharing any information.

#### INTEREST:

Students initiated questions about the space, its function, its form. They expressed their opinions and shared their judgments about the aesthetics of the installation before entering the vessel (and before beginning the activity). *(After the sensory experiment that lasted 30-60 seconds).* Students eagerly participated in the discussion about how the space made them feel.

#### MOTIVATION:

Students illustrated in their discussion how they experienced the space. Students were ready to engage with the big question, *how does the design of the space affect our perception of being in it?* Students visibly demonstrated what they shared verbally. Students stated they felt “calm,” “peaceful” and “relaxed.” *In order to connect to the deeper sense of meaning that Mingwei communicates in his artistic statement, we discussed what they thought the purpose of the interactive-installation was.*

#### ENGAGEMENT:

Most students shared their thoughts opinions and ideas about what the space is meant for: “to think,” “to listen to your thoughts,” “to contemplate,” “to write,” “to meditate,” and “to get away from the noise of the day.”

#### CONCERN:

Several students were interested in theorizing about whether or not Mingwei’s work was art. Students were interested in hearing more about his participatory work in galleries (e.g., other shared experiences, such as the *Letter-Writing Project*, and *Dining Project*).

#### INVESTMENT:

Many students did not want to leave the space, but wanted to continue to experience the space and each other’s conversation.
Personal observations of active-learning situation # 3

Mingwei’s work is an active-learning situation in and of itself. However, I believe structuring the activity, to see if we can be silent—approaching it like it was a game—was important, especially for energetic youth. The activity allowed students the opportunity to experience many of the sensory elements of the installation without the distraction of excess noise. However, on occasion, there were distractions (e.g., noise from other groups, and noise from other installations that had sound components). Another challenge presented in implementing this activity was having too many students in the space. With 8-10 people, students could not choose where and how they wanted to use the space. However, for the most part, students were very engaged with the artwork and experience of being in the vessel.

For some students this was their first experience with participatory art installations. They were very curious about what Mingwei calls, “everyday rituals,” (e.g., dining, writing letters, sleeping, contemplating) being presented as art. In one discussion, a student proclaimed, “Everything is art!” I lead the students into a challenging debate where we discussed what elements of Mingwei’s work they thought were artistic, and what they thought constitutes art. During our discussions, students developed a deeper awareness of what interactive and performance art is. Our contemplative talks in the vessel were very enjoyable, and it was hard to get some students to want to leave the space, because they were so engaged.
4.5 HINDRANCES TO ENGAGEMENT DURING ACTIVE-LEARNING SITUATIONS

- Students did not feel comfortable (e.g., pressure or intimidation, by me, the teacher or chaperone, or by students in the group).
- Students did not identify with the ABCs (e.g., the BIG QUESTION, or the CONCERN) used to develop the active-learning situation.
- I was unprepared (e.g., the ideas and concepts of the activities were not adequately developed, or I failed to give good instructions).
- I was over-prepared, and lost a sense of spontaneity and flexibility.
- I did not develop a good rapport with the students (e.g., I felt intimidated or insecure, or I was being egocentric).
- I was distracted.
- I got too wordy, or used language that was not accessible to the students.
- The activity was too complicated, the students were not prepared to participate at this level (e.g., not mature enough or did not have enough information).
- The gallery space was too crowded.
- Students were in engaged in something else (e.g., other students).
- Students were distracted (e.g. physically or psychologically).
- Student did not have enough time for the activity.
4.6 OTHER TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES I
EXPLORED AS A NEW TOUR GUIDE THAT DID NOT INVOLVE ACTIVE-
LEARNING SITUATIONS

4.6.1 INTELLECTUAL AND SCHOLARLY APPROACH:

- Lecture-based, sharing: intriguing facts, quotes, selected statements
  commentaries, and posing arguments and facilitating debate.

OBSERVATIONS:

When I used this approach as a primary method of touring school groups, most
students were bored, inattentive, and fidgety. One teacher observed that the students were
overwhelmed, and could not take all of the information in. She also commented that the
students were uncomfortable and were hindered from sharing their thoughts and opinions.
However, there were times that students were very engaged if the information was
presented in an interesting way. Burton argues that lectures can engage the feelings and
emotions of a child if they are done thoughtfully (330).

4.6.2 INQUIRY-BASED APPROACH:

- Inquiry-based: Posing questions, soliciting input from students.

OBSERVATIONS:

This approach worked in some situations to promote dialogue and participation in
group discussions. Most times, students could answer questions related to their opinions
or reactions to the work. Students had a harder time with describing, analyzing and
interpreting, without an appropriate amount of time to spend with the work, and the tools
to do so. I did not always formulate good questions, and sometimes asked questions pre-
maturely. Students, at times, were unable to answer, or were confused with some of the questions that required more knowledge or experience with the artwork. Constructing a line of inquiry that helps students make meaning, and pull from what they already know, provides students with more contexts to answer questions. Morgan and Saxton's book, * Asking Good Questions*, which addresses teaching and learning with literature, was helpful in developing questions for the gallery setting (Morgan and Saxton, 1994, p. 41-49). The following is an excerpt from their book:

**Category A: Questions which elicit information:** Questions which draw out what is already known in terms of both information and experience.

- Questions that focus on recalling facts
- Questions which supply information and or suggest implications

**Category B: Questions which shape understanding:** Questions which help teachers and students fill in what lies between the facts, and sort out, express, and elaborate how they are thinking and feeling about the material.

- Questions which focus on making connections
- Questions which press students to rethink or restate by being more accurate and specific.
- Questions which help promote expression of attitudes, biases and points of view.

**Category C: Questions which press for reflection:** Questions which demand intellectual and emotional commitment by challenging the individual to think critically and creatively.
- Questions which focus on personal feelings
- Questions which develop critical assessment/value judgments

Let me illustrate how I used these categories to ask a series of questions to assist students in making a connection to a work in the gallery. While discussing Andy Warhol's *White Brillo Boxes* with a group of students, prematurely, I asked, "Why do you think the artist chose Brillo Boxes as his subject matter?" To answer this question well, most students would need a prior understanding of post-modernism and the pop art movement to know that artists of this period often selected the banal things of life as the subjects for their art. A question that would be more accessible (Category A: soliciting information they know), and would allow for students to begin to relate to *one* aspect of the artist's intentions (e.g., banality, inverse "consumer snobbery"), would be to ask, "What is your relationship to detergent" or "How many of you have detergent in your home?" And then asking them to suppose Warhol chose a different type of box for this work (e.g. Rolex, Sax Fifth Avenue), how might we respond differently to the work (Category B: shaping understanding)? At this time, the question, why he might have chose Brillo Boxes as his subject matter, would enable student to construct more meaning (Category C: asking for reflection, e.g., critical assessment or value judgment).

Education is a process of inquiry and questions are the chief agents by which meanings are mediated whether they are used within discussion, to promote research, as summary or reflection, to focus the intelligence of the group, to generate a collective emotional perspective, to foster shared contexts and joint understanding, to offer springboards to new knowledge, to invite student participation, to encourage talk, to present different ways of communication...(Morgan and Saxton, 1994, p. 51).
4.6.3 HYPER-ENTHUSIASTIC APPROACH:

- High energy, highly animated, and lecture-based.

OBSERVATIONS:

This approach had its positive and negative effects. Sharing information with the students about the artists and their work, in interesting, highly animated, and energetic ways (e.g., telling a story) helped engage students in learning. However, I wondered if, to some extent, the students were more engaged with me, while I was in a “performance mode,” and not engaged enough with experiencing the artwork. I also wondered if my energy was overwhelming and intimidating to students, and if, in the midst of my enthusiasm, I overlooked ways of including the students in the discussions. This approach was hard to sustain, and not always authentic. I have been on tours where the tour guide’s approach was similar to what I have described: it made me feel alienated. I did not share the same enthusiasm or energy.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have outlined some unique challenges to teaching and learning in the gallery setting, which inhibit students from learning and having enjoyable experiences. I have illustrated that museum pedagogy should consider the learning environment of the museum, and motivation level of the students, when developing teaching and learning approaches and strategies; this is done by creating comfortable learning environments, and providing entrée points for student to engage in the work, using active-learning situations. In my narratives, I have described the strategies and approaches I implemented in gallery spaces, demonstrating how these practices can enhance the museum experience and lead to greater participation in learning.

In this last chapter, I revisit the goals and objectives that I outlined in Chapter 1. I do so in order to evaluate how effective the teaching and learning strategies and approaches I mention in this study were in realizing these goals. Also in this chapter, I provide a summary of the feedback I received from participants and observers who provided a qualitative evaluation of my work in the galleries, to answer the question: What did others think of the strategies and approaches to teaching and learning I used while working with the school groups? At this time, I will also explain how this research might be used.

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As I implemented different strategies and approaches for touring school groups in the galleries, in my year and a half as a tour guide at the Wexner Center, my desire was to accomplish the following goals and objectives:

- Challenge the students to create personal meaning.
- Promote dialogue among the students regarding the themes and ideas represented in the artworks.
- Help students make connections between art and their lives.
- Expose visitors to social and cultural issues represented in the art as a springboard for dialogue and the expression of different viewpoints.
- Engage the students into actively viewing and describing artworks.
- Aid in helping students learn about methods of art making used by the artists.
- Aid in helping students learn about contemporary art and artists.
- Engage the students in art dialogue.

The teaching tools and theories that I encountered in my Master’s program, through the Department of Art Education, the College of Education, by following seasoned guides at the Wexner Center, and through other educators on the Wexner Center staff, exposed me to many new thoughts and ideas on how to reach these goals. In addition, I learned from other communities of teachers and learners: educators inside and outside of the museum, educators I study with in my place of worship, educators from my undergraduate program, family, friends and students I have worked with, have all helped shape who I am as a teacher and learner. The strategies and approaches I used for creating comfortable learning environments, and for developing active-learning situations, were very helpful in realizing the goals and objectives stated. As illustrated in
my narratives, I believe, as my experiences working with student groups increased—and being critical and self-reflective of my performance—so did my awareness of how to increase the effectiveness of the tours I gave to school groups.

Incorporating active-learning situations, and establishing a comfortable learning environment, helped me avoid most of the negative experiences, which were also stated in Chapter 1 in this study.

- Being lectured to.
- Believing that visitors do not have knowledge to talk about the art.
- Thinking contemporary art has little meaning.
- Feeling like visitors do not belong in the gallery.
- Being told what visitors think about the art is wrong.
- Thinking that art is created in a vacuum and has no relevance to life.
- Not having a meaningful experience with the artwork.
- Being forced to listen to information that is not interesting.
- Having to indulge people who like to hear themselves talk.

As I reflect on some of the strategies and approaches for museum education that I mention in this thesis, I am aware that there are many others, even ones that could be borrowed from other disciplines (e.g., theatre, dance and public policy). The range of strategies and approaches addressed in this study are limited, however, I believe they are fundamental practices to any tour guide or docent program.

By creating a comfortable learning environment, tour guides: assist students in getting acclimated to the museum surrounding and rules and guidelines, get to know students, get teachers and chaperones involved, and get communication started. And by
using *active-learning situations*, tour guides: get students involved, get them interested, curious, active, making connections, and give them interesting and important information about the artists and their work. The formal evaluations I received from teachers who observed the use of these touring strategies, made very positive remarks. Teachers often reported that students were actively involved and engaged during their tour and that their experiences were very enjoyable. Comments included (Appendix A):

- **Tours guide was very engaging.**
- **Students responded well to “mystery solving groups.”**
- **Tour guide addressed material at the students level**
- **Tour guide presented interesting material.**
- **Tour guide asked good questions.**
- **Responses from students were affirmed.**

Wexner Center education staff members who observed these strategies being used, also had very good remarks on the effectiveness of these strategies and approaches, and shared their desire to see more of these practices used.

These evaluations were qualitative, and do not represent all constituents; formal evaluations from students would have also been beneficial. In order to produce a more thicker study of the affects of the touring strategies and approaches used in this study, the next step would be to produce a video document of the strategies and approaches being implemented in the galleries. Video taping tours, using these methods, would allow for the data and outcomes to be analyzed more thoroughly, through other qualitative instruments.
And finally, I would like to suggest, as demonstrated through this study, and
illustrated through narrative, that effective tour guide practices and tour guide programs
involve: investigation, reflection and experimentation. Investigating what other people
are doing in the education field, borrowing teaching and learning theories from other
disciplines, outside of art and museum education, and utilizing museum resources on the
Internet, are just a few ways to work toward increasing the effectiveness of tours given to
school groups. Reflecting on touring performance is another important practice that can
help increase effectiveness. Performing self-evaluations and soliciting the evaluations of
others (e.g., staff, peers, teachers, and students) are valuable steps to making
improvements (Wexner Center Tour Guide Training Manual). Taking notes after tours or
when receiving tours can help identify effective practices. Best practices should be shared
with others, so tour guides can experiment with new practices.

To increase the effectiveness of tours for school groups, I recommend that best
practices be institutionalized, through a well-designed training program that includes:
mentoring, demonstration and co-leading. As museum education policy, implementing
these strategies and approaches to teaching and learning will help insure that time, money
and other resources, afforded to the museum for school partnerships, are being utilized to
their maximum potential.

As a closing thought I would like to use a concept that most people in America
are familiar with. Over the course of this paper, what I have described as effective
teaching and learning experiences for the gallery setting—in many ways—can be
summed up as, “a basic department store mentality.” Imagine what it would be like if the
teaching and learning environment in the museum, and the performance of museum educators, were more like department stores and sales clerks? Let me illustrate what I mean.

In a department store there are many products—like learning opportunities we envision in learning institutions. The salespeople, whether they are working on commission, or not, know that every person that enters their store is a potential buyer, implementing the attitude educators and administrators should have, as ambassadors to the museum and art advocates. A successful salesperson is very attuned to providing a warm welcome for the potential buyer; part of their goal is to make people feel at home and comfortable while they look, or search for what it is they need or want—imagine this in the museum. Merchandisers of department stores, as well as salespersons, are trained to promote their product, and want people to buy more of it—good goals for museum educators and administrators. Department store merchandisers do so by making the store attractive and interesting, so you will be motivated to buy. Good salespersons provide you with the assistance you need during your visit to their department store, and endeavor to make your experience in their store a positive one—they also leave you alone to have time to think by yourself. All of these “department store goals.” are good aims for tour guides when engaging visitors in experiencing and learning about artworks. Good salespersons are also aware that, even though you may not buy something now, they need to make sure you have a good experience in their store so that you will be inclined to return at another time—basic principles of audience development for museums.
### Table 3.1 POWER AND AUTHORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is my purpose for using my power as a human being (tour guide)?</th>
<th>What is my purpose for using my authority as a teacher (tour guide)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can I share power so that students (visitors) can use their power?</td>
<td>How can I share authority so that students can develop their authority?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can I use my power to change the authority relationship?</td>
<td>How can I use my authority so that students can show their competence and knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power – What teacher (tour guides) and students can do in a particular context…to do something because I am competent and knowledgeable.</td>
<td>Authority – the social status and privilege to be able to use power in relation to others…to do something because of how I am treated (e.g., because of my job, class).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO TAKE ACTION</strong></td>
<td>To take action on behalf of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO ATTEND AND BE INTERESTED OR SHIFT ATTENTION AND INTEREST</strong></td>
<td>To bring ideas forward for consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO FOCUS</strong></td>
<td>To organize and be in charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO CHOOSE AND MAKE DECISIONS</strong></td>
<td>To expect that my choices/decisions will be valued by others and determine what is socially accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO LISTEN ACTIVELY</strong></td>
<td>To be heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO MAKE CONNECTIONS</strong></td>
<td>To create significance for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO ASK QUESTIONS</strong></td>
<td>To be dominant/subservient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO TALK, SING, DANCE</strong></td>
<td>To give everyone a voice/silence others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO INTERACT</strong></td>
<td>To position others as having more/less worthy positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO MOVE</strong></td>
<td>To move as and when I wish to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO WRITE, OR MAKE, SOMETHING</strong></td>
<td>To have what I write or make, read or seen by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO PROTECT MYSELF</strong></td>
<td>To protect others (e.g., from being dominated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO EVALUATE (AND RE-EVALUATE)</strong></td>
<td>To evaluation (and re-evaluate) for others to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH OTHERS</strong></td>
<td>To insist on/resist agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO SHIFT AND/OR CHANGE MY POSITION</strong></td>
<td>To shift and/or change others’ situation or context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO CHANGE AUTHORITY RELATIONSHIP: Equal, less or more authority</strong></td>
<td>To use power over others or share power with others: To make decisions: along, with others or ask others to make decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When using drama, you have the power</strong> to actually do things that I rarely do in everyday life to imagine doing things that are difficult or impossible to do in everyday life to imagine having more/less authority than in everyday life (because we imagine that we are someone else and/or elsewhere)</td>
<td><strong>When using drama, you have the authority</strong> to use whatever is imagined to show that we are only pretending to imagine having more/less power that in everyday life (because we imagine that we are someone else and/or elsewhere)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Power and authority are inextricable interrelated.
- We can develop ideal power and authority relationships in the everyday world of the classroom.
- When we use drama we can imagine how power and authority relationships could be different: ranging from situations which are highly ethical to those that are highly immoral. We do so in order to reflect on how we might create or respond to such situations and thus affect how we evaluate them in everyday life.
LIST OF REFERENCES


APPENDIX

TEACHER EVALUATIONS
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour:

Thank you for visiting the Wexner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

Yes because of the great job done by the present guide.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

Very much so due to the skill and enthusiasm of the guide. She reached the children exactly when they live and poetry came to life.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

No, the small group format was perfect.

Comments and suggestions?

The professor at one exhibition was above the maturity level of some of my students, but most handled it in a way that made my proud, again due to the sensitivity of our guide.

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1393.
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour: [unsigned]

Thank you for visiting the Wexner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

The tour was arranged by the Art teacher. The tour was part of the Art curriculum.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

Yes - students were very attentive. The guide gave out good information and the students had time to ask questions and comment on different things.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

Because of our time frame, the students were not able to see and hear about all the artwork.

Comments and suggestions?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1333.
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour:

Thank you for visiting the Wexner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

Yes. Mrs. Miller, our Art teacher, had planned the exhibit for us to see.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

The tour guide was very interesting and informative. She was very willing to answer all of the questions the students asked.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

No other than we seemed rushed to see all of the "Away From Home" exhibit.

Comments and suggestions?

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:

_________________________
_________________________
_________________________

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1393.
Thank you for bringing your students on an ArtVentures tour at the Wexner Center. It would be a great help to us if you could complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help!

TOUR AND ACTIVITY EVALUATION

Did your class receive a pre-visit from Wexner Center staff prior to the tour? If so, did the lesson help prepare the students for the tour? How so?

Yes. The students were shown parts of the exhibit.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Explain.

I was very impressed with the guide. She was very good with the children. She brought things down to their level and she was very patient. The children really understood and appreciated the art.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

The guides tied the exhibit to what the children already know. It was interesting to see everyday objects arranged in different ways.
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour:

Thank you for visiting the Weizner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

Yes. Groups were the right size. Length of time was good. Slides for architectural tour were helpful prep. My tour guide – Gisele – was super excellent. All the other teachers & parents said. Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain: Super – questions were excellent as well as affirmations so kids weren’t afraid to talk.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

No

Comments and suggestions:

Tour was great. Communication with Weizner (Adelia) clear & specific (where to park bus etc.)

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:


Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Weizner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43216-1393.
OFFICE USE: Name of Guides

Jamie Carmine, Kendra Girardot

Name of School: ____________________________
Date of Tour: ______________________________
Number of Students: ________________________

Thank you for bringing your students on an ArtConnections tour at the Wexner Center. It would be a great help to us if you could complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help!

TOUR AND ACTIVITY EVALUATION

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Explain.

Yes. It went above and beyond. The kids wanted to stay in the galleries longer or come back again so that they could see all of the work.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

Yes, the information was good. The graduate student (have the guide wear nametags?) was very good. She had them break into "mystery solving" groups and the students responded well to that.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (i.e. not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)

The students expressed that they wanted to express their views about the work and not have to listen to thedocent the entire time. There are many ways to get the students in involved and much needed verbal time. Have them sit sometimes (silently?) They get very tired standing for an entire hour and they
Can't concentrate on what is being said.

How did the hands-on activity relate to the exhibition and tour? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and/or themes of the exhibition?

The students always enjoy this part. Interestingly some wanted to make something "harder" and others enjoyed just having the time to experiment. They also wanted a more "finished product" (not my choice).

Please include any other comments and suggestions.

This tour was so stimulating for the students. They wanted a round table/debate discussion after Chris's visit and after the tour. Maybe you could have a group discussion for to be after the tour. Videos of the artists at work (workshop) and descriptions of how things were created would be helpful since I got a lot of questions about that.

Thank you! —Thank you!
Morning Stories Evaluation

Date of Program:

Thank you for participating in the Morning Stories program at the Wexner Center for the Arts. It would be a great help to us if you would complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help.

Was the story age and content appropriate for your group? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and themes of the exhibitions?

Yes! Good job. Stretched their imaginations.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain.

Yes! Our group leaders was super. She kept the tour moving & interested. Great! This is imp.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

Yes, good questions.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)?

No!

Was one hour enough time for your group to spend in the program?

Yes!

Please include any other comments and suggestions:

I like the book, tour, & activity. Keep all 3 to cont. an appropriate

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1393.
Morning Stories Evaluation

Date of Program:

Thank you for participating in the Morning Stories program at the Wexner Center. It would be a great help to us if you would complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help!

Was the story age and content appropriate for your group? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and themes of the exhibitions?

yes - yes - also story was incorporated well with art project

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain.

yes - worked well to have a few groups instead of 1 big group; children's behavior was better in several small groups.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

yes - worked out well with our group.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)?

no

Was 45 minutes enough time for your group to spend in the program?

yes - especially for 3-5 year olds.

Please include any other comments and suggestions:

Thank you very much for having us!😊

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1933.
Thank you for bringing your students on an ArtVentures tour at the Wexner Center. It would be a great help to us if you could complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help!

**TOUR AND ACTIVITY EVALUATION**

Did your class receive a pre-visit from Wexner Center staff prior to the tour? If so, did the lesson help prepare the students for the tour? How so?

The lesson lacked enthusiasm.
It was very hard to understand what she saying. I don't know if the students were clear on what she was saying.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Explain.

The tour was fantastic! The guide was very knowledgeable and enthusiastic! The students were interested and engaged.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

It was very appropriate!
The students loved it!
Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (i.e., not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)

No! It was great! 😊

How did the hands-on activity relate to the exhibition and tour? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and/or themes of the exhibition?

That was fantastic!
The students were active and excited about what they were doing! 😊

Please include any other comments and suggestions:

I was very impressed with the tour, the activity, and the exhibit! I want to thank you so much for the opportunity to visit! 😊

Thank you!
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour:

Thank you for visiting the Wexner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

Yes. Mrs. Miller, our Art teacher, had planned the exhibits for us to see.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

The tour guide my group had was very interesting and informative. She was very willing to answer all questions the students asked.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

No other than we seemed rushed to see all of the "Away from Home" exhibit.

Comments and suggestions?

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:

________________________________________
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________________________________________

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1393.
Morning Stories Evaluation

School:  
Date of Program:  

Thank you for participating in the Morning Stories program at the Wexner Center for the Arts. It would be a great help to us if you would complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help!

Was the story age and content appropriate for your group? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and themes of the exhibitions?

Yes. They were very engaged & wanted to know more.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain.

Yes. It showed a variety of media. They saw things they haven't seen before.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

Some things they couldn't relate to because of their limited background and life experiences.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)?

No. The small groups worked great.

Was one hour enough time for your group to spend in the program?

Yes.

Please include any other comments and suggestions:

I loved that they included literature.

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1393.
Thank you for bringing your students on an ArtVentures tour at the Wexner Center. It would be a great help to us if you could complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help!

**TOUR AND ACTIVITY EVALUATION**

Did your class receive a pre-visit from Wexner Center staff prior to the tour? If so, did the lesson help prepare the students for the tour? How so?

Yes, it gave the students background information they needed to understand the lessons.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Explain.

Yes, some of the concepts may have "bored" the students but it's good to expose them.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

See above.
Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (i.e. not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)

NONE

How did the hands-on activity relate to the exhibition and tour? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and/or themes of the exhibition?

It was a fun activity for the students. It showed some of the difficulty in designing a building.

Please include any other comments and suggestions:

Thank you!
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour:

Thank you for visiting the Warner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

Yes - very enjoyable

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

Yes - the docent was very educated on the art exhibits

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

No

Comments and suggestions?

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:

[Space for name and address]

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Warner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1313.
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour:

Thank you for visiting the Wexner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

Yes - we were expecting to see things related to being away from home.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

Yes, a guide was excellent. She explained the art very well and enlightened us with the artists' perspective.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

No

Comments and suggestions?

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:


Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1993.
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour: 

Thank you for visiting the Wexner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

- Yes, everything ran smoothly and students were intrigued with the exhibit.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

- Yes.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

- Just a shortage of guides. We were supposed to have 6 for us both days, but both days we were one or 2 short. However, we all made it work and still had a great time.

Comments and suggestions?

- Thanks, we had a great experience!

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:

__________________________
Name:
__________________________
School:
__________________________
Address:

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1393.
Tour Evaluation

Date of Tour:

Thank you for visiting the Wexner Center. We hope your tour was helpful and that you will return soon and often. Please complete the form below. It is an important part of our education program.

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain:

Yes - wonderful!

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please explain:

Yes the tour guides were great!

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see the artwork or hear the guide)?

Shortage of tour guides.

Comments and suggestions?

Can't wait to come again.

Announcements for upcoming events and workshops are periodically sent out to teachers. If you would like to be on our teacher mailing list, please include your name and address:

________________________________________
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Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1383.
Thank you for bringing your students on an ArtVentures tour at the Wexner Center. It would be a great help to us if you could complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for those programs. We appreciate your help!

TOUR AND ACTIVITY EVALUATION

Did your class receive a pre-visit from Wexner Center staff prior to the tour? If so, did the lesson help prepare the students for the tour? How so?

Yes, my class did receive a pre-visit prior to the tour and it was very informative!

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Explain.

Yes! The tour was out of sight! We were able to see how common and ordinary things were put together to make a wonderful masterpiece. I really liked the toothbrush display.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

Yes!
Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (i.e. not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)

None.

How did the hands-on activity relate to the exhibition and tour? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and/or themes of the exhibition?

The hands on activity was a great lead into the tour and it did help the students identify closer with the art pieces on the tour.

Please include any other comments and suggestions:

In the most part everything on this tour was great! The only problem that I had was the way the two young men dressed who were assisting the students with the hands on project. As a teacher I am responsible for the way that I carry myself around my students because I want them to carry themselves in the same manner. As a result, anyone who may come into contact with them while they are with me will hold the same expectations.

The girls were of great help and unfortunately young children aren't able always to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate clothing so it must tell them the difference.

Thank you!

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Morning Stories Evaluation

School: 
Date of Program: 

Thank you for participating in the Morning Stories program at the Wexner Center for the Arts. It would be a great help to us if you would complete the form below and return it to us in the envelope provided. Evaluation is an important component of quality educational programs and funding for these programs. We appreciate your help!

Was the story age and content appropriate for your group? Do you feel that it helped engage the students with the art and themes of the exhibitions?

Yes - kids loved the story

Did the tour meet the needs and expectations of your group? Please explain.

We did not know what to expect. We went in blind.

Did you find the information given and questions asked informative and appropriate to your group? Please consider the vocabulary used and the quality of interaction in your response.

Yes - all the children's responses were affirmed.

Were there any logistical difficulties with the tour (e.g., not being able to see or hear the guide, location of artworks, pace too slow or fast, etc.)?

We didn't get to see all the major pieces of the exhibit.

Was one hour enough time for your group to spend in the program?

No - but we still loved the program

Please include any other comments and suggestions:

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it in the envelope provided to the Education Department, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210-1393.