We Begin To Intervene: A Narrative Case Study of An Employment Model for Museum Educators at The Wexner Center for the Arts

A Thesis

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By

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Abstract

This research relates to the topic of professionalization in museum education and the issue of pay as compensation for labor, as evidenced in the growing trend of education departments in art museums around the country transitioning to employment models for museum educators. This research examines a particular case by the Learning and Public Practice Department at The Wexner Center for the Arts on the campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. Case study and narrative inquiry methodology guided this research while data was collected using qualitative interview informed by oral history. Thematic analysis was used for data interpretation and analysis. Results of this research show that the transition to an employment model for museum educators has increased team diversity while reducing historic financial barriers to access. Docents who are now paid educators feel a greater sense of dedication to their work while acknowledging an appreciation for the inclusion of a greater diversity of perspectives. Staff feel optimistic about the quality and cohesion of the new educator cohort and that the new program aligns closely with their mission and values.

Keywords: art museum, museum education, docents, pay, labor, care

Dedication

This work is dedicated to educators, everywhere.

Acknowledgements

This process has been the most challenging yet rewarding experience of my professional and personal life. It has tested me in ways both expected and unexpected, but the growth that I have experienced as a result has been incredible. Of course, I did not and could not have done this work alone and so I want to first say thank you.

I want to first thank the staff and educators in the Learning and Public Practice Department who participated in this research. Your willingness to share your stories with me has been invaluable, and I only hope that I have done them justice in the telling of them.

I also want to thank the faculty and staff of the Arts Administration, Education, and Policy Department at The Ohio State University. Your faith in me as a candidate for the program is what allowed me to have this opportunity to begin with, and your wisdom and instruction will carry me forward, confident and prepared to tackle whatever challenge comes next. I want to thank my advisor, Dr. Dana Carlisle Kletchka, as well. The impact of your dedication, passion, wisdom, and guidance on the person and professional I have become is immeasurable. I could not have asked for a better mentor and teacher.

As a final note, I want to also thank my friends and colleagues, both in AAEP and elsewhere, who have been with me throughout this journey. Your support, advice, and encouragement has meant the world to me, and I am truly and eternally grateful.

Vita

Education

2023 M.A. Art Education, The Ohio State University
with specialization in Museum Education

2013 B.A. Drama, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Professional Experience

2022-2023 Graduate Teaching Associate
The Ohio State University

ARTEDUC 2600 Visual Culture: Investigating Diversity and Social Justice
In this course, we critically investigate personal, national, and global identities. Personal and communal narratives surrounding visual culture define and construct meaning in our everyday lives. Visual culture (which includes both visual art and popular media) is investigated as a site through which social and cultural definitions, norms and values, and expectations are reinforced, constructed as well as challenged. The goals for this course are to develop students' skills in writing, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression and foster an understanding of the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture(s) of the United States.

2020-2021 Project Coordinator
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
Fayetteville, AR

Provided administrative and logistical support for a research study conducted by the University of Arkansas in partnership with various local arts organizations investigating the implementation of an arts-integration model for teaching and learning at three public high schools. Programs coordinated included an in-person teacher professional development session, online teacher professional development sessions via zoom, and a final teacher project presentation day

2019-2020 Arts Integration Research Associate
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville in partnership with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
Bentonville, AR

Conducted informal qualitative research on arts-integration as a model for teaching and learning in K-12, art museum, and arts organization settings. Conducted an informal evaluation of art museum school partnership programs

and provided recommendations to school programs leadership for improving adherence to arts-integration practices.

2016-2019 Museum Educator
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
Bentonville, AR

Facilitated guided, standards-based tours for K-16 students and conducted research on the museum's collection toward the creation of artist and exhibition content guides for the use of fellow museum educators. Created and facilitated the Art and Medicine program in partnership with the University of Arkansas Medical School designed to encourage medical students to practice critical thinking and engage with the topics of access and race in the context of medical practice.

Fields of Study

Art Education, Museum Education

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Prologue

Officials at The Art Institute of Chicago determined that change was needed, and that where it was needed was the institute's docent program, a program that had been in operation for over 60 years (Pogrebin, 2021). On Sept. 3, 2021, Veronica Stein, the museum's Executive Director of Learning and Public Engagement, sent an email to roughly 100 docents informing them that the current version of the docent program was ending (Fernando, 2021; Pogrebin, 2021). The decision and subsequent action appeared sudden to those out-of-the-loop, but in reality the decision to end the program had been in consideration for years. The Art Institute, which had viewed the program as logistically unsustainable, had not been training new docents since 2012 and began talks to restructure the program in 2019 (Pogrebin, 2021; Cascone, 2021).

The institute's motivations underpinning its reasons for ending the program were made clear in the original letter. It clarified that the new model incorporating paid educators would be phased-in in such a way as to allow community members of all socio-economic levels to participate, respond to issues of class and income inequality, and eliminate requirements regarding financial flexibility (Pogrebin, 2021; Gellen, 2022). Conceived from the beginning as a complete rebuild of the previous program, the new corps of paid educators would be formed by new and former educators, the latter of whom would be invited to apply for a paid position, with several already interviewing at the time news of the new program was reported (Cascone, 2021; Pogrebin, 2021).

The docents, however, struggled in the aftermath of receiving the news, lamenting the Institute's decision (Pogrebin, 2021). The President of the Art Institute's Docent Council expressed dismay on behalf of herself and the other docents in feeling blindsided by the decision, noting that they had been excluded from the decision-making process (Fernando, 2021). Defending herself, the other docents, and their commitment to the Institute, Vaffis argued,

> Regardless of our age, regardless of our gender, regardless of our income level, we know the Art Institute's collection extremely well and are highly trained to facilitate arts engagement across diverse audiences…Our goal is to facilitate tour conversations that are as dynamic as the audiences we serve. (cited in Pogrebin, 2021)

A little more than a week after the Institute's email, the Docent Council responded with a letter of their own. In their September 13th letter, the docents protested the decision to pause the program citing their extensive expertise on the museum's collection and the numerous hours, months, and years of training, research, and writing they had done in service of the Art Institute

(Fernando, 2021). At the conclusion of the letter, written to the museum's Director, the docents urged the Art Institute to reconsider. They agreed it was necessary that the museum better reflect the community it serves, and that their knowledge and commitment would contribute greatly toward this mutual goal (Pogrebin, 2021).

Administrators and members of Education Department staff were likely prepared for the response from the docents and the Docent Council. What they were unprepared for was the swift and vitriolic response from forces outside of the museum. Of the attacks, James Rondeau, President of the Art Institute, emphasized that the attacks had taken a significant toll on the staff saying, "Clearly we were not prepared for this to become a discussion of identity politics…We are only focused on our mission" (Pogrebin, 2021). However, the controversy and the attacks continued. One example from an essay published in *The Wall Street Journal* lambasted the Art Institute's decision saying, "In the name of what they call civic-minded diversity, the museum has thrown overboard a group of people who actually see it as their duty to help the public understand art…That's not very civic-minded, is it?" (cited in Pogrebin, 2021). Essays like those published in the *Journal* and in other media outlets, as well as on social media platforms and periodicals, had real and visceral consequences for staff members. Of the attacks, staff remarked,

> The violent, weaponizing language an overwhelming number of people are using in letters and emails to describe the museum's evolution has been startling, and if I'm being honest, scary…As a result, the museum now has increased security. Our frontline staff have already experienced erratic and harmful behavior. Our goal now is getting the facts out and keeping our staff safe. (Pogrebin, 2021)

The controversy surrounding the Institute's decision reignited debate about docent programs and equity across the field and in museums across the country. At the center of the many positions to consider in that debate was a critical but not altogether clear choice: whether to edit the existing program or to dismantle and rebuild (Fernando, 2021). Amidst the fervor, museums continued to interrogate more appropriate and meaningful ways to educate the public about art while also reflecting the diversity of their communities, and for many that new vision included transitioning from volunteers to paid staff (Fernando, 2021). The change, however appropriate, remains elusive for many institutions and professionals who agree, and the reason falls to a question of power. Kelli Morgan, a curator and activist, said,

> People are upset about getting rid of docents because it is shifting the balance of power…I think that's something that has to happen across the board at all institutions — because when you leave the status quo as it is, nothing changes. (cited in Cascone, 2021, para. 8)

The long-standing legacy of the Docent program is an adherence to the way things have always been, a legacy which makes them difficult to adapt and which risks perpetuating the culture of white dominance, colonialism, and racism that are systemic in museums (Murawski, cited in Fernando, 2021). At the same time, a switch from volunteer to paid labor is considered to be just the first step toward much greater change as calls for salary reform echo out in the name of eradicating systems of inequity that rely on unpaid volunteer labor in favor of those privileged to work for very little (Pogrebin, 2021). At times, equity requires bold action, and the dismantling and disrupting of legacies designed to, "hold some up and others out" (Williams, cited in Fernando, 2021).

Part 1

Introductions

Chapter 1

How and Why

"The docent program is like kind of, it's a huge deal in museums all over the country…" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022).

The end of the docent program at the Art Institute of Chicago was a story heard by many, and it quickly became the archetype for how transitions from volunteer to paid models for museum educators worked. It was not, however, the only institution to make that decision. The Birmingham Museum of Art formally ended its volunteer docent program in the Summer of 2020 after it completed an audit of the program on the grounds of diversity and inclusion (Cascone, 2021). Its new program consists of paid teaching fellowships, modeled after a similar program at the Mississippi Museum of Art, that allows students to gain training, experience, and skills

toward their future careers (Cascone, 2021). The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum made the same change and in much the same way in 2014 (Gellen, 2022). The museum's new model uses younger volunteers who work for college credit (Fernando, 2021).

Regardless of cases of other museums implementing their own form of compensated educator programs, Chicago remained the exemplar and the one which was elevated in the minds of museum professionals and docents alike. Among them were the staff and docents of the Learning and Public Practice Department at the Wexner Center for the Arts. The team, rather coincidentally, were preparing to propose a change to their own docent program — a process made more complicated in the wake of the news surrounding the Art Institute because, "…our docents knew about it. They knew of that, at the time when we were proposing a similar transition. And there was a lot of like tension because of the way that that was handled at Chicago" (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022). Critically, this feeling was widespread despite the fact that little is known outside of the Art Institute about the specifics of their transition plan and its aftermath. There are almost no published details beyond those I was able to find in online periodicals about what occurred after the new program was announced and even fewer about how, or even if, the new program was implemented.

Why now?

Superimposed on the history of art museums and university galleries in North America as holders of collections of art are broader concerns for social problems and conditions along with the idea of museums as agents of well-being and social change (Silverman, 2010b). This has been true for nearly the entirety of the history of museums in America and more so in the wake of national suffering at the hands of great social injustices and global health emergencies. The

museum as an institution and as a fixture of cultural life has faced calls in the past to respond to these ever-green truths, and in the aftermath of these most recent tribulations is being called on to do so again. For museums to survive into the future, they will need to rely on this understanding and begin to engage in a practice of intentional diversity work (Ng et al., 2017).

Intention and diversity were behind the actions of the institutions I described earlier, and they were behind the actions of the administrators at the Art Institute. Each of them chose to act in a way that they felt best met the needs of the communities they serve, acting as both a reflection of contemporary museum practice and a demonstration of how museums serve their communities according to the political and social contexts they exist within (Kletchka & Casto, 2020). By increasing accessibility to a program that has traditionally served as a fortress of exclusion in the field of museum education, these institutions and others like them are working to become welcoming and relevant spaces for their communities by working with those most affected by historic systems of interlocking oppression (Ng et al., 2017). More than that, they are responding to a growing call within the field for the elevation of equity and inclusion through the dismantling of economic systems of advantage that have prevented those very same marginalized and oppressed groups from participating in the system of education most practiced in art museums today. Such calls are demanding that an investment be made by museums to support and invest in the people that give them life by offering living wages and benefits while also ensuring wage parity and transparency (Ng et al., 2017). It was this call that the staff and educators in the Learning and Public Practice Department at the Wexner Center for the Arts answered, and it is their story that is at the core of this research.

Informed by prior research

The story at the center of this research is one of educators, and it joins a long, if uneven, tradition of research in the field of museum education on the lives of educators in the art museum. Goodson (1981) argued that since teaching is an exceptionally personal process it is incredibly important, if not critical, that we know who the teacher is. Despite the different and unique environment, this is equally true of the museum educator. However, historically, the voices and experiences of museum educators have not featured prominently in institutional definitions of museum education or in existing literature (Reid, 2012; Lemelin, 2002). Even within their own institutions, museum educators are often almost invisible with many lagging behind in terms of improving practice resulting in feelings of frustration or a desire to pursue more elevated careers in the museum (Lemelin, 2002).

Duthie (1990) was one of the first to actively investigate docents and, specifically, their perspectives on gallery education programs and their level of engagement in ongoing processes of learning how to help others learn (Duthie, 1990). Their research found that docents, while sufficiently knowledgeable in their practice, lacked an adequate knowledge base for interpreting the gallery's exhibitions (Duthie, 1990).

As one of the first studies to look specifically at museum educators in an attempt to fill the research gap, Spock (2000) conducted investigations into the identities of museum professionals through their personal stories of museum experiences. Prior to these studies, there had been no systematic, holistic attempt to examine the earlier museum experiences of museum professionals and what could be learned from them (Jensen & Spock, 1999).

Lemelin's (2002) dissertation went beyond previous studies of museum educators by placing herself within as a participant researcher. While interning at the Musée d'art

Contemporain de Montréal (MACM), she immersed herself in the professional culture of the education department, documenting the processes that she, twelve educators, and a coordinator went through collaboratively in order to better understand their own professional practices in an action research setting (Reid, 2012).

Dillenburg's (2005) work resulted in a short article for the journal *Exhibitionist* that examined narratives told by fellow museum professionals about the defining moments in their careers that changed their understanding of the museum or the field (Reid, 2012). Among them were stories about how they came to be in their positions, some early defining moments, the impact of their work on visitors, interactions with objects, and decisions to leave a position, an institution, or the field (Reid, 2012). Reid's (2012) dissertation revolved around two fundamental beliefs: Exploring the narratives of others and our own can help us better understand the communities in which we live, and analyzing and amplifying suppressed narratives found within the traditional discourse is an important step toward understanding (Reid, 2012).

The role of the educator in the art museum has since been thoroughly explored, but with the advent of new beliefs and practices regarding labor, equity, and access there is a new gap forming on the subject within the literature. In the history of the field, there have only been a handful of documented education programs that compensate docents monetarily, suggesting that the practice is relatively rare (Hoppe, 2008). In my own investigation of the literature for this research, I was also unable to find studies detailing examples of institutions who pay, or have begun to pay, docents/educators despite the fact that examples exist. The story told in this research hopes to begin addressing this gap in the literature by detailing an Education Department's effort to tackle systemic inequities in the field through the advent of pay.

The story at the heart of this research also hopes to address further gaps and add to the literature by detailing the personal and professional histories of museum educators. As true now as it was then, there is a great need to explore the personal and professional histories of museum educators, how those histories affect their developing professional stories, and to understand the sources of their current beliefs and values (Reid, 2012). While there were a handful of publications by art museum educators in the late 1960s and 1970s, very few of them detailed who they were as individuals and practitioners constitutive of their unique backgrounds, education, training, and experience (Kletchka, 2010). Even now, there are relatively few studies which consider educators as unique and whole individuals, something which this research aims to counteract.

How and why

Often when research is concerned with humanistic inquiry, the why of something becomes as important as the how (Suchland, 2022). These were the two points of departure that I used throughout this research to interrogate the methods and reasons behind the case of Learning and Public Practice transitioning to an employment model for museum educators. For the members of LPP staff, I was curious to learn why the team decided that a change in the docent program was necessary and why the employment model was chosen as the best option to satisfy those needs. These questions then led to supplementary questions such as what values and beliefs do the staff hold related to professional practice that informed their decisions and processes related to the transition. I also wondered how the team developed the idea for the new educator program at the Wex, and how they enacted the processes they created to align with the goals that the program was meant to achieve.

For the former docents who became paid educators, I wanted to know why they chose to continue under the new program and what relationship that decision had, if any, to their values and beliefs toward the role of the museum educator. Following from that, I wanted to know how each educator participant perceived of the role of the educator in an informal learning space like the art gallery, how that perception informs their practice, and how their position was impacted by their new role, if at all. Then for myself, as a researcher engaged in practice, I was interested in understanding how I could approach this process, what methods were available to me for doing so, and why those methods were most appropriate for my purposes.

How this paper is organized

The research suffers, as Sandelowski (2000) argues, at the hands of epistemological credibility when the researcher feels forced to make their work fit into pre-established methodological structures regardless of whether that approach is consistent with their chosen framework. It is suggested instead that the conventional organization of the qualitative research report be re-conceived into some form which no longer artificially isolates the voices of participants (St. Pierre, 2009; Guttorm, 2012). The voices of participants are found throughout this paper at various times and places. The voices of staff will appear in discussion around the topics that inform the field of museum education and the case at the center of this research. The voices of the educators will appear throughout the paper as interludes. Rather than be taken as interruptions, though, these interludes are meant to invoke the voices of the educators as omnipresent participants in the conversation.

The paper itself is divided into five sections: Introductions, Ways and Means, The Frame, The Case, and (Not) The End. Within those sections are chapters, each of which details an

essential aspect of this research and contribute to the telling of this story. I arranged it this way so that the story unfolds in sequence, each section building to and supporting the next. It also more closely mimics a traditional story chronology in that the elements that I considered and practiced first (methodology) arrive before the results of those initial practices (relevant connections to the literature and a description of the case). In this way, there is possibility for the research report to read more like a novel, brimming with rigorous and imaginative scholarship — a good story that is at all times coherent and consistent as well as intellectually and aesthetically satisfying (Kletchka, 2010). Such a perspective holds particular meaning in the context of this research because stories have the power to mobilize us toward collective action (O'Toole, 2018).

I have also tried to situate myself within this story by writing in the first-person. It is suggested that the researcher write in the first-person as it is often difficult to know exactly how to position ourselves in the research and therefore how to speak when presenting the data (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Also, by writing in the first-person, it might become possible to see through the data to find our own interpretations and personal positions (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

One last thing to consider before beginning is you, the reader, and the part you will play in the telling of this story. We, as the researcher and the participants, have done what we can to present the story, but it will need you to finish it. Reading a text is a process of actualization whereby the reader fills in the gaps left behind by the text's many indeterminacies (Iser, 1978). In your role as reader, you provide a valuable affective response that instantiates you as a co-producer of meaning (Fish, 1980).

Jane

It's a typical July morning. The air is heavy and thick despite the early hour. Whatever hopes I had of escaping the Summer heat when I moved North to Ohio have long since evaporated, unlike the humidity which had also tagged along. Fortunately, for the moment at least, the weather is far from thought. I'm sitting in the café of The Wexner Center, about to have my first conversation with Jane. Jane began as a docent at the Wex in 2009 and has been working under her new title of Educator since May of 2022. We're sitting together at one of the café's small tables just around the corner of the stairs from the gift shop and the entrance to the Wex's galleries. We sit across from one another, my notebook open with pen in hand, Jane's hands at rest below the table, when her story begins.

Jane's fascination with exploring and discussing artworks in museums goes all the way back to her childhood, where she spent a great deal of time browsing her local art museum's

galleries with her grandparents saying, “I grew up in Boston, and my grandmother was an artist. And so my art education started with going with my grandparents to museums. I spent a lot of time at the museum” (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022).

It was also during these days at the museum that Jane began her education in the art of talking about art. Led by her grandparents, she was encouraged to wander around the gallery and allow the art to bring her in before asking herself some important questions.

> And my grandmother was way ahead of her time because the way I went through the art museum was, she would let me wander and when I stopped in front of something, she would say, ‘Why’d you stop in front of that one? What do you like about it? What does it make you think about it?’ All this open ended questioning and, you know, observer to item centered stuff that is now all the rage in museum education. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

From these roots, Jane’s interest and passion for education grew. She later went on to pursue a formal education, which included courses in art history, and then later became a professional educator and a mother. As a mother, just as her grandmother had done for her, she brought her children to the museum, carrying on the tradition of curiosity and inquisitiveness that she was raised with. It was a bag of tricks that served her well…for a while.

> And they worked great for many, many years, until I had a kid who loved contemporary art, and who asked to come to the Wex…and say, ’Wow, can you see why the artists did that, wasn’t that a cool idea?' And I would kind of nod my head and say, ‘Sure', maybe, whatever. So I'm a docent at the Wex because I needed more information in order to not

be a stupid parent bringing a child who wanted to be here. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

As it happens, I had a very similar experience. Everything I learned about visual art came from my job at a museum. Before that, I didn't have a very good appreciation for contemporary art, I think largely because it just wasn't a big part of my life. And it wasn't a part of my education. But I always had a great deal of admiration for those who find appreciation in contemporary art. The same holds true for Jane. While she often finds it challenging to see the meaning and intent that contemporary art holds, she understands that the meaning it holds for others and its potential for sparking conversation supersedes that challenge and, more than ever, allows her the space to continue learning and growing in her practice and as a person.

I can't always see the art in the art. But the people who are passionate about contemporary art are people who are passionate about art as a visual media and are passionate about art as sparking conversations and change. I am definitely a lifelong learner in the arts. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

Jane's early education in the art museum with her grandparents was uncharacteristic of practices in museum education, both then and now. While the more informal structure of conversation that Jane was raised with is more common in contemporary museum education, it has certainly not been the norm for most of museum education's history, a history that Jane was intimately aware of. As a visitor on a guided tour in the art museum, her experience has been much closer to the traditional gallery tour.

> I once took my kids to the Met. And, and, I, my kids, and my husband and I were the only six people on the tour. And after 30 minutes at a single object, I finally said, 'Excuse me, please, I know you've done a lot of research and you love this object. And you really are passionate about exploring that. But my kids would like to see other things in the museum.' And that was the old model of art education, that somebody who knew everything about a piece of art lectured at you. And it was assumed you would stand still and absorb. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

For Jane, the struggle as a museum educator has been the tension between these two competing models of learning in the gallery. Having been on both sides of each approach, whether it was as a young museum-goer with family, as a visitor with a family of her own, or as an educator watching a colleague struggle to engage a group of young students through lecture, Jane understands that a conversational approach clearly works better than the historical lecture model, despite her personal preference for the latter.

> And I think the failure of museums over the last couple of decades was to, was not to be able to homogenize the docent corps at the new technique rather than the old technique. What's really interesting is, I personally prefer the lecture. As a museum goer. On the other hand, I much prefer as a docent a much more informal conversational approach. And to be honest I think the best tours I've ever given, I have relayed the fewest facts. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

Facts, in keeping with Jane's philosophy on teaching in the gallery, are less important to the experience than what the individual brings to it and what they can take from it. Grounded in the senses, Jane tries to create an experience where the visitor can see themselves reflected in the

art so that they may be able to access those parts of themselves buried deep, beyond their conscious awareness.

> And one of the things I say to everybody on every tour is look, you're always right in an art museum. It's like looking in a mirror. Everything you've ever seen or heard or felt or tasted or touched, is in your brain, and your subconscious automatically gets it when it's in front of an object. And your job in the art museum is to be able to articulate what it is that your subconscious is telling you. Whether you like it or you don't like it, whether it reminds you of something or it doesn't, what it makes you feel. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

Her position touches on one of the most central questions informing this research regarding why each educator chooses to teach in the informal setting of the art museum and how that has contributed to their decision to continue on as paid educators. To Jane, the art of teaching in the art museum goes beyond the purely observational into the realm of the personal and the unknowable. But, the question remains as to the purpose of her role to begin with. In Jane's case, the purpose of teaching in the art museum is not far removed from her beliefs on the learning experience itself: it's all about the individual. No matter how revolutionary that may seem.

> My job as a museum educator is to give someone a positive experience in the gallery so that once in the rest of their lifetime, they will come back again. I know that's a really low bar, but I think that's, all that's important. It doesn't matter if somebody goes home and can say I saw this by this artist and that by the other artists, and it fits into this genre or this time period or this country or any of the other facts. We have Google for that. And at

> times that's been in direct conflict with the the docent protocol. And it's one of the very few places where I'm disobedient. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

It is a position likely informed by her experiences growing up in the company of her grandparents and walking through art galleries asking some of the very same questions that she, and many other museum educators, now ask. They were the very first memories that came to mind for Jane, and they had a strong influence toward informing her purpose for teaching in the museum. Her intentions toward that purpose extend beyond encouraging visitors to come back, too. Before they even leave, Jane hopes to make them feel empowered with their new knowledge so that when they do come back they will do so as art experts ready to pass the knowledge on to others.

> I think that my second intention is to make somebody feel that he or she is as expert as I am. I would say ‘you are now an expert. You can be a tour guide. Bring your, your family and your friends and your favorite people here and walk through the galleries and talk to them about art’ . Or when I would say ‘wow, you saw, you’ve just taught me something. You made me look at it differently. Thank you!’ All of those are ways to validate. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

In essence, bridging the gap, so to speak, of the educator and the visitor, helping them realize their own potential as museum goers, as students of the arts, as learners in general. Bringing in some of that humility to say, I don't know either, I’m learning right alongside you, and for the confidence that instills in a young learner to take those lessons with them into

whatever learning environment they may be in. So that, when confronted with a teacher or some other authority about the "truth" of something, they will have the power to first question and then wonder. In Jane's view, this is one of the most essential responsibilities she carries, personally and professionally.

> It's the critical thinking aspect. If you empower someone to have confidence in their ability to be a critical thinker and their ability to be a good communicator you've empowered them to be successful wherever they go in whatever they choose to do. Those are some really fundamental skills. You know, as an educator, and as a parent, I can't think of anything more important to people's long term success. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

One of the most important questions we addressed in our conversation, and in all of this research, is of course why each individual chose to remain and become a paid educator. One of the wonderful things to discover was that they each had their own varied and unique reasons for doing so. In Jane's case, the decision was, in part, the opportunity it promised to meet, learn from, and work with a greater diversity of individuals whose backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives could impart upon and broaden her own. In a return, of sorts, to her identity as a life-long learner and the value she places on appreciating what comes naturally to others.

> I think I was honored to be asked, and I was really impressed that the Wex was going that route because it was clear that the Wex was committed to diversifying the docent corps and the, that they think that this will be a step. But what attracted me most to that was that I was looking forward to, as a lifelong learner…What I was missing as a docent was the fact that some of the educators here are those people who get the contemporary art

> right away. And that maybe once this was a paid program, I was kind of expecting that… we would have, really a touchstone person to help us explain a kind of depth about the artwork that you can't get just by talking about it from the outside. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

In effect, it signaled to Jane the seriousness with which the department was taking its efforts to diversify the program and the hope that, as a consequence, there would be an equal amount of motivation to intentionally seek out those new voices and change the dynamic of the educator team for the better.

> Actively look for individuals who were excited and connected to the artwork that was being presented, and that would be part of our education team. So I'm, I'm hoping that as our group gets, you know, our group is still mostly white and still mostly 60 plus, and still mostly just people who are lifelong learners who are passionate about sharing what they know, and learning from people who come through the door. But when there's money available, some recruitment could diversify us better. And that would help us all I think. (Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

In our second conversation, I was more interested in hearing what was on her mind than I was in asking what was on mine. I wondered if starting things off this way might lead us to a topic we hadn't covered yet, or that I wouldn't have thought to ask about, and in fact it did. Jane was enjoying her time under the new program, but more than that she was beginning to notice changes in her practice and how those changes were manifesting in different spaces.

> Things are great. I'm enjoying being a professional educator. I realized that the extra training and an extra focus makes me better at both places. I was never really comfortable with the lecture model. And I was never really comfortable with some of the strategies for extracting information from tour participants so that they could participate in a dialogue. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

The differences continued. Jane found that her preferred method of tour facilitation, where she asks questions, waits for responses, and then asks more questions, worked better in some settings than others and with groups whose level of exposure to museums, or lack thereof, benefited from the opportunity to hold a conversation. More so in the context of a contemporary art space like the Wex where the works they encounter may exceed expectation.

> My preferred method of touring has always been to ask a million questions, and somebody is bound to answer one or another of those questions, and then wait for the discussion to die down and then ask another million questions. What I've learned here recently is that that methodology is perfect for populations of people who have never been in an art museum before or who are coming face to face with works that are unexpected. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

Jane acknowledged that there are also differences among the people themselves, between those who choose the Wex over other available options and those that don't. There is a sense of adventurousness or openness to confrontation in the visitors that Jane encounters at the Wex that isn't present in those she finds elsewhere. Audience expectation, then, plays a significant role in how she approaches the work of teaching in the gallery and how she engages with praxis across learning environments.

> I think, the folks that come in the door here, for whatever the reasons they walk in the door, are sometimes more open to the new artists and the new messages and the new discussions…I think more traditional museum goers have expectations for themselves in the institution, in the tour, that are different and don't necessarily expect to have their language or their ideas or their preconceived notions or they're perhaps not noticed prejudices, staring them in their face. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

Confrontation is an important theme for understanding Jane's reasons for teaching at the Wex and for continuing on in the new educator program. Confrontation to Jane is a signal, to those on the outside, of the institution's intentions and identity as a place wholly different from any other they may know or expect. While other institutions may claim interest in challenging expectation and engaging visitors in meaningful dialogue with works of art, for Jane that mandate is very real.

> Confronted is a word for contemporary art museums. Confronted is not the kind of word that you would ever find in the mission or the model or the expectations of a more traditional art museum. And so while they are working on being welcoming and inviting, and having diversity up on the walls, they are not interested in announcing themselves as places where you can confront art. The differences between conversation and confrontation. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

It was also a very clear signal of the new direction that the department was taking with its decision to employ educators moving forward. The number of dramatic changes being made showed Jane that the character of the Wex and the department was in transition.

> And it was very clear from the communications I was getting from the docent corps at the Wex as it went through all its changes during COVID, during management changes and everything else that this was going to be a really forward thinking, I never would have thought to use the word confrontational then, but confrontational kind of place. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

All of these elements, from beliefs about teaching practices to favoring an atmosphere of confrontation, inform Jane's reasons for not only staying on at the Wex and continuing in her practice but for doing so in the knowledge that the team that came along with her would be very different from those she was used to. The demands made on the new team would be a departure from those that most docents could manage or support, requiring a very different sort of individual and a different sort of team capable of adapting quickly.

> And so as docents we're given a lot of tools in our toolbox on how to recognize challenges and meet challenges…And I think that's real, but that would have been too hard to do in a volunteer corps. Or in a bigger docent corps. And that's because we have folks that still believe in the 'I researched, I lecture' format of docent-ing. Those are really different philosophies of touring, and so I think a smaller corps that's very consistently educated can bend and change as a group as needs happen, rather than trying to herd cats. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

Following from Jane's point, a smaller corps of highly-trained, dedicated educators will be more flexible, capable, and willing to change as needed and as directed, qualities which she can already see developing in the new educator group saying, " I think the group we have here now is really willing to try anything and to accept and adjust to constructive criticism. And I

think those are really important characteristics for educators. All educators at all times" (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022).

Beyond the professional advantages that the new team of educators offers, there are the added personal advantages specific to Jane and her place at the Wex. These advantages, impacting both her personal and professional position, will make her not only a better educator but a better person, colleague, and global citizen.

> I'm thinking that the having a formal paid docent corps has distinct advantages, especially in smaller institutions. But I have to say it's a wonderful benefit for the you know, you know, retired little white lady docents whom I represent, to learn from all the other different subsets of the universe. And it makes us better docents and it makes us better people, to have exposure to people who are different than we are. And it definitely affects our, our ability to relate and to cultivate conversations with people. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

Interestingly, as much as there was a desire on my part to know how and why the new program was created, there was an equal amount of curiosity on Jane's. She was aware that the Wex staff were in the process of unionizing and assumed it was related to that, but she also wondered if there were reasons specific to the department that might have influenced the decision and if, generally, people felt that it was a success.

> I'm really curious as to how it came about here. It would be nice to know. I know that staff and, and graduate students and everybody are thinking of unionizing. So I always assumed that this was a partial reaction to that. But I'm curious whether there was a more

> pedagogical reason for making the docent corps professional rather than volunteer. Is it working? Is everybody agreeing that it's working so far? (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

At the time, I didn't have answers to those questions as I was still working toward learning them myself. But, what Jane and I were able to wonder about was the effect this transition had and will continue to have on her practice and the perception of her role, with the most prominent theme being professionalization. Jane had a higher estimation of her abilities as an educator and attributed that feeling to the increase in professional support she and the other educators were receiving. She also sensed a change in the attitudes of those around her related to how she was now being perceived compared to her time as a volunteer saying, "And I think we do it better. I think we do better be — because we're getting more support. I think people, people are more impressed when you say you're an educator than you're a volunteer" (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022).

Professionalism, however, wasn't the only significant impact on Jane's mind. Related to that, she also mentioned the decrease in the number of individuals becoming docents. As the current generation of docents retire or leave their institutions, gaps are being created and left unfilled, leaving museums without a new generation of docents to step-in and take their place.

> It's probably a perfect storm of wanting more professionalism, more, wanting more homogeneity, wanting more forward thinking, more, adding more diversity. And I think the big issue is probably having fewer and fewer volunteers available. Because even 15 years ago, when I started, the numbers were going down in terms of…housewives

available during the day to to give tours to people that might show up at a museum. (Jane, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

The issue is certainly on the minds of museum education professionals and docents working in the field currently. It was even mentioned in a recent meeting of The National Docent Symposium Council in which one member noted a, “lack of new blood because of working young women" (*Docent/staff relations*, n.d.).

It’s our final conversation. It’s October now and we’re back in the Wex café. It isn’t busy yet, but the staff working in the kitchen are roughly handling the dishes and silverware so we’re having to speak a little louder across the table to each other. Happily, Jane came prepared with some early responses, prompted by her reflections on the topic of docents. The addition of a new cohort of professional, diverse educators had presented her with the chance to notice the full range of difference that before had been hidden behind a wall of uniformity.

> That's one of the really nice things that happens when you, I guess, at least in my experience, as we've professionalized this docent corps, is we aren't all white. We aren't all women. We aren't all wealthy. We aren't all of one religion or another. And because we are all acknowledged intersectional, we uh, we appreciate those differences in each other in a way that isn't necessarily even acknowledged in a more traditional docent corps. And I hope it's as big a mind shift for the traditional docent as it is for the new model educator. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

These differences were just the first of several that Jane had noticed since the transition started. She now felt she was working more, but she attributed that feeling to a change in her

mindset more than an actual increase in responsibility. It was all part of a larger set of observations and questions that she had noticed since becoming a paid educator.

> And I think having more months of being a professional paid educator has made some things ring truer than I might have expected. I'm working longer. I'm working harder. I'm doing more research. I'm taking my commitment more seriously…But there's a difference between being one of an interchangeable number of unpaid volunteers and being one of a select few chosen team members. That hadn't really internalized at the beginning of our experiment that I can feel much more so now. And I think, I think that's somehow related to being more loyal, more, more connected, as, as a staff member rather than as a volunteer. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

Perhaps one of the biggest changes, and one of the most difficult for Jane to adjust to, was the loss of the title "docent." For most of her life and for all of her time in the museum, docent was the only word she knew to encapsulate what it meant to be an educator in the gallery. As time has passed, however, she has grown more accustomed to her new title and gained a greater appreciation for what it now signals to visitors looking for an educational experience.

> You know, I am of a socio-economic and age background that docent has been, is in my vocabulary really way longer than I can remember. So I have a historical warm fuzzy feeling about docent. I had a very difficult time transitioning away from docent as a title. But as I think more about it, as I am an educator for longer, I so much appreciate the educator. First of all, more people who aren't at all familiar with art museums have an entry point when you use educator than when you use docent. It is astounding how many people don't know what a docent is, and to spend time on a tour explaining what the word

means seems to me ridiculous. Do I have a nostalgic connection to it? Yes. Do I care if it evaporates as a term? Not at all. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

This laissez-faire perspective is now reflected in Jane's self-perception as a museum educator, a working professional no different from any other education professional in any other setting. With her new title of educator, she is elevated.

> But as time goes by, I just say I'm working as a part-time educator at OSU because that feels more authentic to what I'm doing. And I think I've always acknowledged that, but it's nice for the world to acknowledge that. The best analogy I can make is that I feel like a guest lecturer. It's as if I am from the Art History department…And I guess I've always taken it seriously but again, the title educator gives it a gravitas that docent doesn't. It's not entertainment. It's education. And that's the difference between docents and educator. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

So where does her story go from here? What does Jane's ideal future look like? As a former docent and now paid educator, what is she most looking forward to learning and experiencing? As a confessed life-long learner, she hopes to learn even more about museum education pedagogy and how the field of education fits into the larger picture of art museum organization, history, and contemporary practice.

> I think, you know, I'm all into continuing education. And so everything that we're learning about, techniques for using, for different subgroups of patrons is useful, but also in particular, as volunteers, with a history as volunteers, a lot of us only know very small bits and pieces about how education fits into museum management…there

> are certainly other things that I don't know to ask about, that are struggles for education departments as they go forward in institutions. And the more we know about that, as educators, the more we can represent our organization fully. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

Jane is also excited to continue developing her practice in co-touring, a method of instruction not commonly used in galleries but recently adopted by the education team as its primary facilitation strategy moving forward. It is a challenging strategy for a number of reasons, not the least of which being the level of trust and teamwork required by the co-educators to successfully plan and execute an experience that they have always done alone. Jane, though, is confident the new team, under the new program, can meet the challenge and become even more effective facilitators, working off of one another's strengths to the benefit of every visitor.

> The other thing I'm looking forward to is learning how to seamlessly co-tour with all of my peers. It's been a wonderful learning experience, and it would be awesome to be here for long enough and have enough experiences with enough of my peers that management could say 'for this group this team would be ideal.' I think that's a far-fetched dream, but I think moving along that continuum makes us individually and as a team much more versatile. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

So for Jane there is a great deal of optimism and hope for the future. But, with any great change, there is always an element of apprehension. It is a natural consequence of deviating from what is known, and as such I thought it would be important to ask Jane if she had any concerns about what comes next. She didn't have many, but her most pressing concern was that, for the

moment, few schools and visitors were scheduling tours, and that as of yet the newly gathered team of professional educators were going under-utilized.

> I don't really have concerns. My, my only concern is that we aren't getting as many tours as we might have had, we had easier exhibits. And so for the very eager group of educators that we've assembled, we are trying so hard to be polite amongst ourselves, and not on tours, so that everybody gets a chance. And I assume that, I assume that we will have exhibits in the future that are not easy, and that we will continue to have this as an issue in the future. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

Embedded within this concern is the relationship, as described by Jane, between the mission of the education team and the Wex, and between the Wex and the rest of the university. According to Jane, there is a disconnect between these interests. The Wex makes decisions about programming and exhibitions independent of the needs of the education team and the university behaves as though the Wex doesn't exist altogether.

> I don't think the institution finds this an issue. I think the institution decided a long time ago that it's willing to invest time and money in bringing forward ideas that are uncomfortable, even if that means, even if that means that there's not a lot of foot traffic. And so we can only hope that as we move forward in time, foot traffic will improve. I personally think the key is connecting more to the campus. I think we have a built-in audience here that I've never seen exploited as an audience, and I think if our mission is to be consciousness-opening and awareness-seeking and we're a university institution that perhaps those should be our primary target. (Jane, personal communication, October 7th, 2022)

Most importantly though, Jane sees the changes taking place at the Wex, and her role in them, as a positive.

> But we're moving in the right direction I think. I think it is wildly successful from the educator point of view. Because we've gotten to know each other better. Because we, I at least, have been able to identify who's a resource in certain areas because the depth of the research that's available to me is stronger. And because the opportunities to explore are expanded….(Jane, personal communication, July 14th, 2022)

Part 2

Ways and Means

Before telling the story of how and why the Learning and Public Practice Department made the change to an employment model for museum educators, its important to first explain how the story was learned and why the particular methods used to do it were appropriate. The following chapters detail the methods and methodologies chosen for this study for collecting, analyzing, and reporting of the data. The first chapter will detail case study as both a qualitative method and methodology, followed by a chapter on narrative inquiry as a qualitative methodology best suited to storytelling. Then, a chapter on thematic analysis for making sense of the information learned and concluding with a chapter on the qualitative data collecting method of interview informed by oral history.

Chapter 2

Making a Case

It is said that all humans come to know by direct or vicarious association with particulars (McWhinney, 1989). Case studies were one of the first types of research to be used in the field of qualitative methodology (Starman, 2013). The beginnings of modern day case study research are most often cited as being conducted in the Chicago School of Sociology between the 1920s and1950s (Stewart, 2014). As practitioners, sociologists and anthropologists investigated the lives of people, their experiences, and how they understood the social and cultural context of their world with the purpose of gaining insight into how individuals interpreted and attributed meaning to their experiences and constructed their worlds (Harrison et al., 2017). Later, in the 1970s, and corresponding with these developments, educational research embraced case study as

a way to evaluate curriculum design and innovation (Harrison et al., 2017). Innovation is of particular relevance in the context of this case study given that the case in question revolves around the implementation of a new institutional practice that is also relatively new within the broader field of museum education.

The development of case study research in education in both the United States and the United Kingdom focused on the need to determine the impact of educational programs and provide evidence for policy and practice decisions that supported social and educational change (Simons, 2009). As with general case study research, educational case study research is concerned with human beings and their behavior, from a multitude of perspectives, including the researcher's (Unluer, 2012). In this orientation, the researcher's perceptions and interpretations become part of the research resulting in a subjective and interpretive orientation that is present throughout the inquiry (Creswell, 2014). This is essential given that it is crucial for social researchers to clarify their roles, especially for those utilizing qualitative methodology to make their research credible (Unluer, 2012).

From these humble beginnings, case study research has, "grown in sophistication and is viewed as a valid form of inquiry to explore a broad scope of complex issues, particularly when human behavior and social interactions are central to understanding topics of interest" (Harrison et al., 2017, section 2).

Qualitative inquiry

Although case study can include quantitative elements, it is most often described as qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2014). The breadth and flexibility of qualitative inquiry is evident in its applicability across methodologies. The paradigmatic potentialities of qualitative inquiry

are broad, encompassing exploratory, explanatory, interpretive, or descriptive aims with examples including phenomenology, narrative research, ethnography, and grounded theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It is fitting then that case study research, as an example of qualitative inquiry, is described as a, “bridge across paradigms” (Luck et al., 2006, p.103). That is, in part, why I specify narrative case study; it elicits a more direct association between case study and a purely qualitative paradigmatic approach.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is characterized by, “an interpretative paradigm, which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual" (Starman, 2013, p. 30). Following from this characterization is the understanding that qualitative methods are ideal for the study of a phenomenon’s nuances and contradictions of real-life experiences (Sandelowski, 1996). In addition to the interpretative paradigm, qualitative research also allows for an idiographic approach which emphasizes an individual’s perspective on the overall investigative process and its composite elements (Vogrinc, 2008).

The term qualitative in relation to research references the examination of concepts and their meanings and interpretations in specific contexts (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). A case study as a form of qualitative research is, in effect, a form of descriptive method (Starman, 2013). To go even further, and to make a connection between the elements of qualitative inquiry, case study, and narrative, qualitative research can also be understood as a practice reliant on storytelling in order to make sense of real-world scenarios (Fawcett et al., 2014; Merriam, 2009).

Case Study Defined

Case study is the examination of an instance in action (Macdonald & Walker, 1975; Schell, 1992). Present day application of case study involves an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in its natural context with the use of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003; Schell, 1992). In this case-oriented approach, the researcher approaches the case as a whole and attempts to comprehend its essence (Sandelowski, 1996). The case is an object to be studied for an identified reason, often one that is peculiar or particular (Hyett et al., 2014). To do so involves careful consideration of the nature of the case, the historical background, the physical setting, and other institutional and political contextual factors (Stake, 1998). Fundamentally, the goal of case study research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue with unclear boundaries (Harrison et al., 2017), in context, with a view to understand the issue from the perspective of participants (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). As such, investigations tend to focus on the interactions between the individuals involved and collect data that is unique to that particular case. Case studies, therefore, "focus on the dynamic and multifaceted connections that arise between human relationships, events and other external factors. They analyse and interpret sources of data specific to the focus of the study rather than making generalizations based solely on statistics" (Ates & Lane, 2019, p. 234).

Researchers of case study methodology have of course developed more specific definitions. Merriam (2009) defined case study research by its particularistic, descriptive and heuristic characteristics, highlighting the purpose and qualitative nature of case study research and its focus on a specific entity with a motivation to understand and describe the findings. Yin's (2014) two-part definition focuses on the scope, process, and methodological characteristics of case study research with an emphasis on the nature of inquiry as empirical and on the importance

of context to the case. Inversely, Stake (1995) preferences flexibility that, while concerned with rigor, maintains a focus on what is studied (the case) more so than how it is studied (the method) (see also Starman, 2013; Hyett et al., 2014). Flyvbjerg (2011) agrees stating that the choice of case study in research is a selection of what will be explored and not a selection of method.

For Stake, case study centers on the study of the particular complexities of a single case and coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake, 1995). Merriam (2009) elaborates on Stake's principal of what is studied and the products of the research when defining case study as: "... an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). For Stake and Merriam, the bounded system is the case, and it is the defining feature of case study research. In other words, case study research focuses on a particular thing, and the product of an investigation should be descriptive in nature (Ates & Lane, 2019; Creswell, 2013).

Unlike its more quantitative contemporaries, case study research is more exploratory than confirmatory (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Harrison et al., 2017). Its purpose is less about proving relationships or hypothesis testing and more about identifying themes and patterns of behavior (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In that tradition, it is always directed toward a goal of understanding for some purpose, whether that is of a singular entity, like a person, or a "spatio-temporally" defined object such as a family, organization, cultural group, or event (Sandelowski, 1996; Sagadin, 1991; Simons, 2009). My purpose in using case study to investigate LPP's transition to an employment model was never to generate a hypothesis or test a theory. I wasn't in the market for confirmation of an existing belief about practice or process. My purpose throughout this project was only ever to understand so that I could tell a story that might help others understand, too.

Importantly though, and in the context of this research, case study is not intended to investigate an entire organization (Noor, 2008). For example, this research primarily concerns the actions, experiences, beliefs, motivations, and meanings of individuals within a single department of an organization. It can, however, be useful for capturing the imminent and emergent properties of life within an organization, especially when that life is changing very rapidly (Noor, 2008). When viewed maximally, the departmental change that is the focus for this research is occurring quickly, with the majority of the process taking place in a period of just over two years.

Such a focus indicates a developmental factor, meaning that cases are generated and evolve over time, often as a series of specific and interrelated events occurring in that particular time and that particular place (Starman, 2013). The end result and defining characteristic of the case study, unlike comparative methods which investigate relations among multiple cases for similarities and differences (Starman, 2013) is a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis including the characterization of the case and events as well as a description of the discovery process of the research itself (Mesec, 1998). This includes identifying pertinent variables, structures, forms, and orders of interaction between participants (Mesec, 1998). Simons (2009) developed a similar definition with the crucial additional element that case study research involves an in-depth exploration, "from multiple perspectives" (p. 21). The case at the center of this research was explored from the perspectives of both staff and former docents-turned-paid educators, my own as a researcher and museum education professional, as well as voices and perspectives from the literature.

One important additional distinction that bears mentioning, particularly in relation to the idea of multiple perspectives, is that of nested studies, which involve the comparison of elements within a single case (Starman, 2013). While my research concerns the LPP Department's decision to adopt an employment model for museum educators, the analysis of that decision derives from the multiple perspectives of the individual participants and how those perspectives coincide to define the broader case. In this way, the case may be thought of as layered.

There is, however, more to a case study than the description and analysis of the thing itself. Beyond stating which case has been selected, the investigator should also identify the research field — in other words, the "class" or "sub-class" of events within which a single case or several cases are to be studied (George & Bennett, 2005). The subject of the study is then an instance of some phenomenon, and the phenomenon comprises the analytical frame, otherwise known as the object (George & Bennett, 2005; Moore et al., 2012; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the research field is that of museum education and, more specifically, the trend within that field of institutions transitioning to paid models for former volunteer educators. The object, then, would be the instance of the Learning and Public Practice Department's transition to a paid model for museum educators.

Case selection

Before any thoughts should be entertained about populations and samples, a case study must begin with deciding what the case in question will be (Sagadin, 1991; Schell, 1992), especially when case selection is a precursor to case analysis, the defense of which must be convincing (Merriam, 2009). Among the myriad possible criteria for case selection are two

important considerations: cases selected based on the research purpose and question and for what they could reveal about the phenomenon of interest (Harrison et al., 2017; Hyett et al., 2014).

Another possible option for case study selection is to select a case for a research unit where a practical problem of interest outside of the typical or average exists (Mesec, 1998). It should also be a case which has the potential to, "cause changes in the characteristics and specificities of the object" (Thomas, 2011, p. 514), or that can facilitate the understanding and insight of a given issue (Stake, 2006; Gammelgaard, 2017). Appropriately, this was my rationale for choosing this particular phenomenon as the object of my investigation. The rarity of cases involving a shift to an employment model for museum educators qualifies it for the label of outside the typical or average. Furthermore, as it is a distinct departure from the Learning and Public Practice Department's historically normative procedures, my choice of case also intends to describe changes in the characteristics and specificities of the object.

Case study is especially adept for that purpose because of its propensity for illuminating decisions, sets of decisions, rationales behind those decisions, and results (Yin, 2003). I mentioned at the start of this paper that my broader purpose for conducting this case study was to understand the how and the why, or put another way, "process" and "context" (Sonday et al., 2020; Stake, 2008) which, it turns out, is case study's bread and butter (Yin, 2009; Schell, 1992; Harrison, et al., 2017; Schell, 1992). So, very broadly, selecting case study in order to ask and answer why LPP did this, how they did this, and why the former docents most affected by this transition chose to do it, as well.

Asking the how and the why inevitably leads to a great deal of information, a fact that plays into yet another characteristic of the case study in that, as a form of research, it is data rich

(Smith, 2018). Case studies become particularly useful when one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information (Noor, 2008). It is also useful in the sense that case study necessitates deep and varied sources of information (Tellis, 1997). These multiple sources of data often come in the form of the participants and the researcher, which also serves as an indication of the researcher's level of connection and immersion in the field (Harrison et al., 2017).

Case selection criticisms

Case selection has also been targeted by some case study critics. This criticism focuses mostly on possible subjective case selection or selection bias (George & Bennett, 2005). On this note, it should be said that, while other institutions across the country have implemented paid models in the past with some doing so quite recently, significant factors influencing my decision to choose the case of the LPP Department and The Wexner Center include the institution's location at the university where I was enrolled, and that I had a prior established working knowledge of and relationship with Education Department staff as a student and an intern.

There are also counterarguments in favor of case selection made based on prior knowledge or familiarity. One such argument is that cases selected on the basis of prior knowledge are crucial for enabling the development of a strong theoretical base for the research, which makes the procedure of theory testing more rigorous (Starman, 2013). While the purpose of this research was not to develop or test a theory, my proximity to the institution and my professional experience in the field did allow for a stronger theoretical understanding of the elements of the case that I was then able to build on over the course of the research process.

Generalization

There appears to be some general disagreement in the literature on case study regarding the topic of generalization. On the one hand, there is the view that case study analysis can help researchers develop theories that may be applied to similar cases, phenomena, or situations (Ates & Lane, 2019). In fact, the value of the case study is, "measured by the degree to which the incidents discussed can be generalized to other situations" (Schell, 1992, section 2.3). Further, the case-oriented approach is, "especially useful for showing how the same set of factors, varying in the same way, can interact differently and have different consequences in different cases" (Sandelowski, 1996, p. 526), and, in reporting, the case researchers often write details that will provide a comparison for the readers (Suryani, 2008). This aligns well with one of my original purposes behind the study of this case in that I wanted, by uncovering specifics, to show how it is both similar and unique to other instances in the field.

Contradicting this position is the belief that case study has limited value precisely because it does not permit generalizations to be made, despite the fact that in many instances the studies were not conducted for that reason (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to this view, case study is not an inherently comparative approach to research because the objective is not statistical research, and the aim is not to produce outcomes that are generalizable to all populations (Thomas, 2011). Stenhouse (cited in Bassey, 1999) concurs and states that the task of case study is to produce reports of experience and to offer evidence, not deal with generalization. Connecting the issue of generalization to case selection, Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that cases should be chosen less so for their potential generalizability and more so for their anticipated information thickness. In the context of the art museum, evaluations were conducted which provided specific findings and that yield new knowledge easily applied to a variety of situations.

But the argument is that, since a majority of these studies represent case histories or descriptions of programs in a single institution, their results cannot be easily generalized (Petitte, 1984).

The argument then shifts to a re-framing of the definition of generalization. Under these new parameters, both case and case-oriented qualitative studies do permit naturalistic or idiographic generalizations to be made *from and about cases* (emphasis in original) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, readers of a case study may obtain what is known as *naturalistic generalizations* derived from their own personal or *vicarious experience* or the sharing and understanding of others' social experience (all emphasis in original) (Stake, 2005). This is the conceptualization of generalization that I ascribe to and where I depart from Petitte's argument against the validity of generalization from cases centered on a single institution. Transitions to employment models are occurring in institutions everywhere and in greater numbers than any previous period within the field. Sharing the story of this case will provide perhaps yet another example for others to study, and from that experience make natural comparisons which may benefit their practice and their organization. In my mind, this is an even more salient point considering that the transition at the Wex is, at the time of writing, still underway. A fact which may be true, or might soon be true, for other institutions, as well.

Generalization is therefore possible by, "recognizing the similarities of the objects and issues in different contexts and by understanding the changes as they happen" (Sturman, 1997, p. 69). But, in order for this to be possible, the salient features of the case must be documented so that new situations can be illuminated through a thorough understanding of the known case (Sturman, 1997). Without this, "there may be difficulties generalizing case information to other

situations. This is especially true when there are few cases of a critical phenomenon, and little delineation of the phenomenon by the use of deviant examples" (Schell, 1992, section 4.0).

Methods

Case study research is more flexible than other qualitative approaches such as grounded theory or phenomenology (Hyett et al., 2014; Schell, 1992). It is less a method as it is a design frame that may include a number of methods (Starman, 2013). Merriam (1998, 2009), unlike Yin (2014), promoted a theoretical framework or research questions to guide the case study as well as systematic data collection to manage the inquiry process (Harrison et al., 2017).

Qualitative researchers have at their disposal a broad scope of methods and interpretative practices for collecting data in a given study, but they typically include observations, interviews, and analysis of participants' words (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The selection of methods is informed by the researcher and the unique needs of the case, making use of naturally occurring sources of knowledge such as people or observations of interactions that occur in the physical space (Stake, 1998). Additional options for methods available to the case study researcher in pursuit of that goal include narrative stories, vignettes, and thick description, which aim to provoke vicarious experience with the researcher in their interaction with the case (Hyett et al., 2014).

There are, naturally, trade-offs in the use of purely qualitative methods in research. In practice, qualitative researchers operate with fewer degrees of control (Hammersley, 1992; Schell, 1992). Qualitative data collection methods like structured interviewing, specifically, inhabit a "no man's land" between naturalism and control where attempting to exert greater control may unintentionally influence the data in ways that compromise the representativity of

the subsequent analysis (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). Bounding the case, framing its relevant parameters, is also essential to focusing and managing data collection and analysis (Harrison et al., 2017). In the data collection stage of a qualitative case study, the researcher will often spend more time at the research location, have a personal interest and contact with participants, and mark reflections about the phenomenon being investigated (Suryani, 2008).

Insider/Outsider

The subjectivity of the researcher plays a vital part in the context of the study results (Starman, 2013). It contributes significantly to an understanding of the researcher in terms of both positionality and relationality, and as such the common indicators of Insider/Outsider are used. Insider researchers choose to study a group to which they belong (Unluer, 2012). Leveraging this position allows the researcher to explore, understand, and present the participants' perspectives while occupying their natural setting (Creswell, 2013).

According to Bonner and Tolhurst (2002), there are three advantages of being an insider researcher. The first is having a greater understanding of the culture being studied. Examples of this cultural element include speaking the same insider language, understanding local values, cultural knowledge and taboos, and knowing formal and informal power structures. In regards to research practice and methods, elements include obtaining permission to conduct the research and to interview, and getting access to records and documents to more easily facilitate the process (Coghlan, 2003). As a former museum educator and now student of art education, my extensive understanding of the field certainly positioned me at an advantage to those for whom the culture of the art museum would be foreign or unapproachable. Additionally, my prior experience as a professional in the museum education field invested me with the knowledge of

how museum educators perceive their roles, communicate with one another about issues concerning their work, and function within the larger organizational structure of the museum.

The second is that being an insider does not alter the flow of social interaction unnaturally. Aside from the occasional question from those especially curious, my presence in and around the LPP offices and galleries went more or less unnoticed, even more so once word eventually got around about why I was there. The last advantage is that it carries an established intimacy which promotes both the telling and the judging of truth. I'll never know, of course, whether the participants would have been as open in our conversations had I been a true outsider with no connection to the Wex or the art museum field whatsoever. All I can be certain of is that the conversations I had were welcoming, relaxed, and rich with the sharing of lived experience.

Beyond this trifecta of benefits, insider researchers also generally know the politics of the institution, not only the formal hierarchy but also how it "really works" (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). I would say that this was true in my case though in much more general terms. I wouldn't say that I held a great degree of understanding of the politics of the broader institution given that my time at The Wexner Center was limited. But I do have a good degree of understanding of the politics of the art museum as an institution more generally, and of the LPP Department specifically, since that is where I spent the entirety of my time.

There are benefits, but there are also of course problems associated with being an insider. Being an insider researcher breeds a greater level familiarity, but this familiarity can lead to a loss of objectivity. This can then lead to the unconscious adoption of false assumptions based on the researcher's prior knowledge resulting in a risk of bias (DeLyser, 2001). There may also be a belief that case study researchers don't follow systematic procedures and thereby allow their

biased views to influence the findings and the conclusions (Suryani, 2008). Additionally, there are disadvantages to be found in the collection and processing of research data. These include adopting a role duality (participant/researcher), overlooking routine behavior, making assumptions about the meanings of events and then not seeking clarification, assuming the researcher knows participants' views while the participants may tend to assume you already know what they know, and a closeness to the situation which may limit the researcher from seeing all dimensions of the bigger picture while collecting the data (Herrmann, 1989).

To counter this risk and conduct credible insider research, Smyth and Holian (2008) suggest,

> insider-researchers must constitute an explicit awareness of the possible effects of perceived bias on data collection and analysis, respect the ethical issues related to the anonymity of the organization and individual participants and consider and address the issues about the influencing researcher's insider role on coercion, compliance and access to privileged information, at each and every stage of the research. (cited in Unluer, 2012, p. 2)

Ultimately, the role and position of the researcher needs to be self-examined and understood by readers in order to understand how this influenced interactions (Hyett et al., 2014). Participants for this research were aware of my background as both a museum educator and as a graduate student in the Art Education program. This, in combination with my epistemological position grounded in de-centering the authority of the researcher, was intended to place me more in-line with the role of participant than researcher in my interactions with others. As a result, I am aware that the possibility of overlooking the significance of certain participant statements and of making assumptions about their meanings exists. Often in the

course of conversations with participants, topics would be introduced using a few key terms that we both understood to be referencing a specific subject or issue and then quickly skipped without more needing to be said; our mutual knowledge and opinion of the topic served as a sort of short-hand allowing us to move on to the next thought or topic. This of course means that the potential exists that these moments became missed opportunities for further discussion and understanding resulting from the insider status that I held.

In defense of case study

In my elucidation of case study research, I have attempted to anticipate, counter, and overcome certain prevailing critiques of both its use as a methodology/method as well as particular reporting insufficiencies identified in the literature. One of the first and probably most critical is that few authors provide a description or justification for the use of case study methodology that demonstrates how their study was informed by the methodological literature (Hyett et al., 2014). My hope is that my review of the relevant literature on the purpose and application of case study research in the context of this project has sufficiently justified both its selection and informed position.

Furthermore, descriptions of the case are often not adequate to explain why the case was selected or whether or not it was a particular exemplar or outlier (Thomas, 2011; Hyett et al., 2014). Time will tell if this paper, as a description of the case, has sufficiently described why it was chosen. The paper itself can often be the focus of further critique of case study as a methodology. Writing qualitative case studies in a short and compelling way can be both challenging and limiting since such studies go into great depth of detail into a phenomenon

(Gammelgaard, 2017). While certainly not short, I have still tried to make the telling of the case compelling in a way that makes the destination worth the journey.

Miles (1979) makes an excellent point that the added degree of energy needed to conduct and write a qualitative case study is responsible for significant researcher stress, which may be even more pronounced in the case of the lone researcher (Schell, 1992). It is probably redundant to say that research is stressful, but I can attest to experiencing my fair share of it over the course of this process, and that the unique characteristics of case study were at least partially to blame.

Yet another critique found in the literature is that a justification of qualitative research (case study) is not likely to succeed under positivist assumptions thus linking it to a (presumably inferior) subjective, phenomenological, epistemological position under which the views of actors is the empirical baseline (Schell, 1992). Essentially, the usefulness and application of the case study, and of qualitative research, is subject to interpretation (Schell, 1992). There are certainly many reasonable and relevant rebuttals to this critique, but in terms of relevance to this project and my role as the researcher there is this: On two points, case study's connectedness to everyday life and its abundance of individual elements are important for researchers (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The first is that a case study is important for developing different views of reality, including that human behavior can't be understood as just an act that is driven by a rule or a theory. Second, and most especially for me, case studies can contribute to the professional development of a researcher by providing concrete, context-dependent experience that increases their research skills (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Case study's continued use for understanding the complexities of institutions, practices, and processes has demonstrated its utility for researching complex issues and testing causal

mechanisms that can be applied across varied disciplines (Harrison et al., 2017; Schell, 1992). Case study's flexibility, applicability, and resilience as a qualitative research method and methodology made it the perfect companion to the purposes of this research.

Chapter 3

Might I inquire?

One of the most time-honored forms of communication and knowledge transfer is the narrative (Schell, 1992). It is how we naturally talk about ourselves and our lives and we can learn a lot about our lives from these stories (Byrne, 2017). A story is generally understood as a narrative structure that describes human events (Sonday et al., 2020; Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). All stories, accordingly, illustrate the story structures a person holds (Bell, 2002) as they become the narrators at the center of the tales which tell the broader personal context of their lives (Riessman, 2008; Frank, 2010; Andrews, 2004; Gavidia & Adu, 2022). So, stories provide a window into people's experiences as well as their beliefs (Bell, 2002). Clandinin & Connelly

(1994) argued that, “Experience . . . is the stories people live. People live stories and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones” (p. 415).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000), along with Polkinghorne (1997), believe that we all live storied lives and every person has a story to tell. In the realm of qualitative research, narrative inquiry is the ideal vehicle for the telling of those stories because narrative inquiry is an exploration of a person’s lifeworld through storytelling (Smith, 2018; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Further, it invites those stories which reflect the participants’ perspective without a regard for context (Smith, 2018). To make the connection with narrative even clearer, in the field of narrative research, Connelly and Clandinin refer to the researcher and subjects as storytellers and characters, respectively (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995).

Origins

The biographical-interpretive method is part of the narrative tradition and was first developed by German sociologists to produce accounts of the lives of Holocaust survivors and Nazi soldiers (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Its primary theoretical principle is the idea that there is a gestalt, meaning a whole that is more than the sum of its parts that informs each person’s life (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Clandinin’s (1990) definition of narrative inquiry states that story is the study of experience where experience means the phenomenon under study (Anderson, 2018). It was at least partially developed as a response to a dissatisfaction felt toward positivism’s ability to describe lived experience (Riessman, 1993).

Narrative inquiry as a research methodology began with Mishler (1986) and Riessman (1993) when they suggested that qualitative researchers should listen to their participants stories and seek to understand the ways that their stories were constructed and positioned (Hickson,

2016). Graham (1995) supports the reflexive narrative and critical analysis approach suggested by Mischler and Riessman in the field of education when claiming that education is simultaneously, “a narrative and a political enterprise” (p. 209). In the field of education, narrative inquiry appeared in the work of Connelly and Clandinin and included a focus on lived experience (Clandinin et al., 2007). The work looked mostly at the ways in which teachers' narratives shape and inform their practice (Bell, 2002). It was designed by Clandinin as an especially fitting pedagogical approach for educational research because, “educators are interested in life” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxii). And life, according to John Dewey, is education (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It follows then that narrative inquiry is used to study educational experience because humans are storytelling organisms who lead storied lives (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Purpose & Philosophy

The central premise of narrative inquiry is that stories, as means of understanding lived experience, are collected and analyzed through research (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). The focus of the inquiry is the people telling stories about their lives, and as such this storytelling methodology is closer to real life events than methods designed to elicit explanations (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Significantly, this doesn’t necessarily mean that a full life history is required in order to achieve this understanding when what matters most are the aspects of the self that are most crucial in context and to the lens through which the narrator views the world (Behar, 1996). Narrative, then, is never separate from real life but moreover a conscious revisiting of those life experiences considered influential by the storyteller (Lyle, 2009).

Narrative inquiry, through storytelling, is used to deconstruct values, assumptions, and beliefs and to challenge taken-for-granted meanings (Gavidia & Adu, 2022; Frank, 2010; Andrews, 2004). It is situated firmly in the postmodern frame of thinking, challenging assumptions about truth and the right way to do things (Fook, 2002; Bruner, 1984; Chase, 2011; Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Saavedra, 2011). Appropriate, given that postmodernism privileges, "no single authority, method or paradigm" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 27). The paradigmatic connective tissue is created by narrative inquiry's modern interest in learning, understanding, and concern for agency and human action with postmodern concerns such as discourse and power (Goodson & Gill, 2011). The consideration of culture toward conventions of storytelling, the motivations of the teller, the audience, and social context all influence the production of narrative (Bruner, 1984; Chase, 2011; Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Riessman, 2008).

Narrative inquiry takes as its purpose more than consideration and deconstruction of our conceptions of knowledge and authority. It is also the way by which we come to know and understand the social world and construct our social identities (Somers & Gibson, 1994; Pitre et al., 2013). To do so, narrative inquiry relies on an interpretivist approach that sees all knowledge as socially constructed (Sparkes, 1992). Clandinin and Connelly (2000), extending their conceptualization of narrative, emphasize that, "People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context" (Sonday et al., p. 2). In this view, narrated subjects are not constituted in language or discourse but in relation to other subjects and to the material reality of everyday life (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008).

From this conceit comes the idea of the narrated self, an inherently relational construct that doesn't exist in isolation or inter-relationship with other narrated selves and that is grounded in the material reality of everyday life — a key part of which is formed by the narration of selves and others (Stanley, 1993; Ricoeur, 1984). As such, narrative is the social construction of meaning and therefore it gives insight into how participants come to understand and value their experiences (Anderson, 2018).

Within this constructivist frame, narrative inquiry tends to be identified with reflexivity, interpretivism, and representation as primary features of the approach (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Lincoln delineated further separation between conventional qualitative methods and constructivist methods that emphasize holism by highlighting the ontological stance of constructivist research as realities that are constructed and subjective (Lincoln, 1992). Approaching the socially constructed perspective from within a critical paradigm views the social world as mediated by power relations in a constructed experience with social and historical contexts that then shape social reality (Ravenek & Rudman, 2013). The inevitable conclusion being that narratives are social and relational and infused with power relations (O'Toole, 2018; Smith & Sparkes, 2005; Pitre et al., 2013).

Narrative inquiry is informed by the narrative turn which emerged in the context of new philosophical discussions on the relationship between, "self, other, community, social, political and historical dynamics" (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p. 18). The epistemological cornerstone on which narrative inquiry rests is that human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures. In other words, we actively choose elements of experience to

which we will attend, and we pattern those elements in such a way to reflect the stories available to us (Bell, 2002).

Plot

Those stories which are available to us, and from which we organize and describe our own, are often ordered around a unifying story structure or plot. The argument being that narratives are structured with a beginning, a middle, and an end, held together by plot and resolution (Sarbin, 1986). As it goes, the events and experiences of a narrative must be ordered this way so that questions of how and why something happened can be addressed (Maines, 2006).

Seeking knowledge in narrative inquiry intends to advance understanding of the experiences of people across place and time (Dewart et al., 2019). Emplotment therefore is central to understanding narratives in that narratives are generally understood to have some form of chronology (O'Toole, 2018). This is generally how history, told through narrative, has been understood since historians have constructed that narrative with an inherently temporal thread where current events are understood as rising out of the past, pointing to future outcomes (Carr, 1986; White, 1981).

The counterargument is that narratives don't necessarily have a plot or even a structured storyline, but instead are interruptions of reflection in a storied life (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Ricoeur (1984), reflecting on temporality and the subjectivity of truth in narrative as experience, claims, "…One after the other is merely episodic and therefore improbable, one because of the other is a causal sequence and therefore probable" (p. 41).

In the context of narrative inquiry, this means looking for the ways in which sociality, temporality, and place intersect in the stories of participants (Gavidia & Adu, 2022). Sociality consists of personal and social conditions while temporality concerns the elements of stories that evolve based on the experience occurring in a particular time period (Dewart et al., 2019; O'Toole, 2018). Place, then, is the physical environment where the experiences unfold (Dewart et al., 2019). This description of sociality, temporality, and place, in turn, acknowledges the lived experience of participants as the knowledge source (Gavidia & Adu, 2022).

Stories as data

In narrative inquiry, stories become the raw data (Bleakley, 2005; Elliot, 2005; Riessman, 2008). As stated previously, stories in narrative inquiry are helpful for leading the researcher toward a better understanding of phenomena (Gavidia & Adu, 2022). To do so of course means selecting salient data, a feat that is as central to the inquiry as it is difficult to operationalize (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995).

Story is also the anchor for the analysis, the various analytical approaches of which can take different forms such as, "stories within stories, memos, reflections, debriefs, individual interviews, team interviews, audio analysis, and metaphoric analysis" (Gavidia & Adu, 2022, p. 2). It involves an inquiry directed at the narratives of human experience which produce data in narrative form (Hoshmand, 2005; Conle, 2000). I conceptualize this process as a circle, where narrative, viewed through this lens, is more than a tool for data collection and reporting. It is a methodology by which the researcher, through narrative, uncovers the data (Lyle, 2009). Writing, the process of presenting these stories as data, is more than an act of dissemination — it is a way of knowing, discovery, and analysis (Richardson, 2000).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity, as a general term in relation to research, is thought to be authenticity with oneself, the research, and the audience (Gavidia & Adu, 2022). It has also been used as a technique to deepen understanding of a central issue (Hickson, 2013). Narrowing this definition to within the context of narrative inquiry argues for narrative researchers that adopt a reflexive approach encompassing a critical examination of the nature of the research and the researcher's role in it (Elliott, 2005; Larsson & Sjo¨ blom, 2010). Cole and Knowles (2000) support this approach to knowing by positing that an exploration of self leads to a researcher that is better able to investigate the phenomena. Being reflexive allows the researcher to become aware of their role and influence in the process of deconstructing stories toward the co-creation of knowledge and reality (Gavidia & Adu, 2022), or put another way it allows the researcher to use the self to learn about others (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Trahar, 2011). The infusion of reflection in narrative inquiry also assumes that participants would use context to situate their own experiences, too (Sonday et al., 2020). By reflecting, they embark on a journey through the objects, places, events, and people that construct their being (Bloom, 1998).

As Craig (2009) argues, narrative inquiry and reflective practice are interdependent and, going further, are the responsibility of both the researcher's and the participants' capacities to reflect. From the researcher's position, critical reflection should be used to consider the entirety of the influences imposing on them, from the values from which they are operating, to the variety of points of view that are offered to them, and to a capacity to be open to new understandings or knowledge related to what is happening and why (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Taylor & White, 2001; Lyle, 2009). This acknowledgment derives directly from the philosophical principles of critical

reflection, specifically reflexivity and pluralistic ways of understanding reality, knowledge, and power (Sarantakos, 2005; Lyle, 2009). The power of the researcher, specifically, to tell the story (Adams, 2008) and by extension frame contextual conceptions of facts and knowledge, or the effects of power (Lather, 1991).

It can be easy in the course of considering the question of power to fall into a view of the concept as binary opposites between those with power and those without, considering new ways that power is experienced, what it is, and how it can be used (Hickson, 2016). Critical narrative inquiries should attempt to recognize ways in which power is held in the researcher/participant relationship, something that can be achieved by exploring the participants' views on the experience and indulging curiosity about their reasons for participating (Hickson, 2016). This holds true for every stage of the research process including data collection, data analysis, and reporting (Hickson, 2016; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). It is important to consider reflexivity during the writing phase of narrative research, as well.

Representation

Debates on the issue of representation often call into question the processes with which the voices of participants are believed to be captured and presented (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). According to Denzin, this so-called representational crisis is characterized by the assumption that "much, if not all, qualitative and ethnographic writing is a narrative production …" (Denzin, 1997, p. 4). A serious consequence of which is that researchers often then take these stories, these narrative productions, and place them into a larger narrative thereby imposing meaning on lived experience (Bell, 2002). The lasting impact of this imposition is that participants can never be quite free of the researcher's interpretation of their lives (Denzin, 1997).

Wherever possible, the writing must refuse to impose meanings on the reader so that the text itself can be a place where multiple interpretations can occur (Denzin, 1997). This holds true even in the telling of stories about ourselves given that we choose what to tell, what to leave out, and to forget altogether that which is most important to us and the reader (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). The distance is even greater when representing the stories of others as the narrator first decides the story they will tell before the writer decides what material from it they will present (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). Further complicating the issue is the element of language and the recognition that, since it is never neutral, stories constructed through language are inherently value-laden (Sparkes, 1995). Critical narrative researchers must then question how to represent the experiences of others when it is unknown whether language itself could ever accurately reflect experience (Denzin, 1997; MacLure, 2009).

The challenge of writing, so central to the narrative methodological approach, is the bringing into presence something, only through the use of words, which escapes all representation by balancing the tension between presentation and understanding (van Manen, 2006). The assumption then follows that the writer is capable of capturing such a thing with only meticulous transcripts and analysis (Denzin, 1997). From this debate comes a critical recognition: the role of the narrative researcher is to describe lives, tell stories, and write narratives of experience. So, by telling a story, the narrator assumes a tremendous responsibility for making the relevance of that story clear and creating meaning between the storyteller and the listener (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007; Byrne, 2017).

Ethics

Byrne (2017) suggests that, “the way narrative researchers tell the stories of their participants is not unproblematic” (p. 38). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) define the ethics of narrative inquiry as a thread permeating the whole process of conducting a narrative inquiry, impacting the relationships the researcher has with the participants. Such a representation of others and their lives thus invokes an ethic of care (Clandinin et al., 2007).

A challenge of using narrative inquiry is in the management of the story, at least in terms of establishing relationships in the field of research (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000), how participants are represented, or how they are spoken for in the presentation of data (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). It is an issue of ethics to know enough about practices and policies to shift the conditions in which people live without considering the way people think and feel on how they compose their lives (Gavidia & Adu, 2022). On top of that, there is the challenge of how the researcher will present themselves in the data when the options are often presented as either present, absent, or backstage (Gavidia & Adu, 2022). Lather (1991), characteristically, asks a challenging question on this topic by wondering whether the author’s voice could ever be anything but intrusive, and she further wonders how to explore our reasons for doing the research without re-centering ourselves. Lather’s question echoes sentiments discussed in feminist epistemologies regarding tensions involved in knowing others, with the addition of questions like who can be a knower, what can be known, and how do we know what we know (Code, 1991; Alcoff, 1996).

The problem of representing others is undoubtedly unavoidable, and so it is argued that perhaps the least that can be done is to make the presence of the researcher known while making space for the voices of others to appear as they will, without imposition (Byrne, 2017). Such

messy texts (Byrne, 2017) make open the possibility of presenting more than a straightforward account of subjective experience by allowing room for the voices and interpretations of others as the text sways back and forth between description, interpretation, and voice (Denzin, 1997). To do so may be the only method we have for understanding the messiness and complexity of human experience (Byrne, 2017).

Despite critique, this partial and contextual view of the omnipresent self is approached by narrative inquiry as an advantage (Lyle, 2009). Since researcher influence is inevitable, there is no need to be concerned with claims of representing the voices of others as unaffected (Byrne, 2017). This is because narrative inquiry is highly interventional (Wolgemuth & Donohue, 2006). Conversations held in the narrative methodology can resemble what Foucault termed a confessional, where participants risk sharing their personal stories (Foucault, 1978). These "confessions" often show the researcher the identities of the individuals that share them (Butina, 2015).

One strategy utilized for this research related to an ethic of representation was member checking. Member checking allows participants to review their responses for accuracy both toward the words and their meaning while also ensuring credibility (Gavidia & Adu, 2022). A moral obligation is then created on the part of the researcher to make any requested changes resulting from this process of participant authentication (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Throughout the writing process, drafts of sections which incorporated a significant contribution of the participants' voices were sent to them for review. The goal of this was to ensure that their words and, more importantly, the meaning behind them and how that meaning was presented were accurate and appropriate.

There were two rounds of member checking. In the first round, I sent early drafts of the interludes to the educator participants. All but one of the educators responded, and of the three that did only one made requests for clarifications or changes. The other two educators responded that the drafts were accurate. I made significant changes to these chapters and then re-sent drafts to the educators to review but didn't receive feedback on these revisions. In the second round, I sent drafts for two chapters to members of LPP staff for their review. One participant acknowledged receipt of the drafts but did not respond with feedback. Another member of staff responded and suggested minor edits, one for clarification of a particular detail and another to add an attribution for a quote. However, since it is true that not everyone responded, I can only claim that what I have written is my version of events (Byrne, 2017)

Critiques

As with any research methodology, narrative inquiry is not necessarily a suitable approach for every study. It requires a fairly significant time commitment that makes it unsuitable for studies with large participant sets, sets which narrative inquiry also requires close collaboration with so that the constructed narrative and analysis highlights both sides equally (Bell, 2002; Byrne, 2017). A further critique, relevant to the context of this research, is that narrative inquiry and the stories that it describes can often present said stories as good practice, which problematizes them as representations of life because to criticize an individual's story as a representation of identity is to criticize their identity directly (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Also, stories can be leveraged to verify practices and defend accepted truths such that in the field of education stories can be viewed as promotions of good practice or laying claim to certain notions of professionalism (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Although claims related

to professionalism and practice are made throughout this research, those making them are always clear that such views are entirely their own and that, while they apply in this case, they may not, and should not, apply in all cases.

Chapter 4

Variations on a Theme

There are many ways to approach qualitative analysis but the most common of these is narrative thematic analysis, where content within the text is the primary focus (Butina, 2015). Its origins can be traced back to an older tradition of content analysis (Joffe, 2012) deriving from quantitative methodological and analytical paradigms of the early 20th century, primarily in the social sciences and the humanities (Smith, 2000). In particular, thematic analysis had been used in research in the fields of psychology, literature, business, and sociology (Boyatzis, 1998). Although it had fallen into relative obscurity, thematic analysis and the value of its application in qualitative research has recently gained new recognition, due in large part to the work of Braun and Clarke's (2006) publication in the field of psychology (Byrne, 2021).

Thematic analysis

Like case study and narrative inquiry, thematic analysis isn't tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective, making it a very flexible method and bestowing on it a considerable advantage considering the diversity of work conducted in learning and teaching (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Importantly, this flexibility benefits thematic analysis as a useful research tool that provides rich, detailed, but complex, accounts of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is most appropriate for studies that seek to discover using interpretation (Alhojailan, 2012). However, thematic analysis, along with other descriptive methods such as content analysis and descriptive phenomenology are best suited to the researcher whose purposes prioritize fewer degrees of interpretation and complexity (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). This is one of the key reasons why I chose thematic analysis for this study. It allowed me to process large amounts of data with minimal description (Braun & Clarke, 2006), making the process easier to manage, and it fit well with my chosen methodologies in that this type of content analysis is also classified as a form of narrative analysis (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003; Sparkes, 2005).

Fundamentally, thematic analysis provides researchers the opportunity to understand the potential of an issue more widely (Marks & Yardley, 2004). Applied to this study, thematic analysis provided me the opportunity to understand not only the transition to an employment model in the context of the Learning and Public Practice Department but to understand that transition in relation to the issue of pay and labor in art museum education more broadly. The purposefulness of my choice is aided with the recognition that thematic analysis is capable of detecting and identifying factors or variables influencing an issue as generated by participants (Hatch, 2002; Creswell, 2003). As a result, participants' interpretations are the most significant

and appropriate for explaining their behaviors, actions, and thoughts (Hatch, 2002; Creswell, 2003).

Themes

Themes are the end result of thematic analysis, and they are meant to reveal patterns in the data that are important or interesting, address the research, or say something about an issue (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Themes are traditionally understood as constituting domain summaries, which are defined as summaries of participant responses in relation to specific research topics or questions (Braun et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2019). It's important to mention in addition that Braun and Clarke, in revisiting their definition, have clarified that domain summary themes are organized around a shared topic but not shared meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

There are other ways of developing themes. They can be hypothesized based on existing theory relevant to the research topic prior to data collection. Themes developed with this method can then be supported with evidence gathered from the data in the form of codes (Terry et al., 2017). Alternatively, the first step can be skipped altogether and themes can be hypothesized just from familiarization with the data (Terry et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2019). For this research, both approaches were used. I identified several salient themes based on my existing knowledge of the field and of the issues informing the case as well as themes based on analysis of the interview data. Proceeding from this definition, a theme can be defined as a coherent integration of the disparate pieces of data which then constitute the findings (Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012). There is also the question of the importance of themes in thematic analysis. The view that I agree with, especially as a qualitative researcher, is that it isn't necessarily dependent on quantifiable

measures but instead on whether or not it captures something important in relation to the overall research question (Spencer et al., 2003). Even more so given that in thematic analysis themes can often be quite abstract and as such difficult to identify (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000; Spencer et al., 2003).

Finding themes

There is the question of what a theme is. But, there is also the question of where they come from. It might be natural to assume that themes are generated from the data, and so it is from the data that they are created. However, it is also possible that themes are not in the data at all, just waiting there to be identified and collected by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2021). Rather, they are more like creative, interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection created by the researcher's theoretical assumptions, analytic resources, skill, and the data itself (Byrne, 2021; Houghton & Houghton, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Regardless, the themes must be found. And so the question remains as to the how. A good place to start are transcripts which typically come from interviews. Interpreting interviews begins by highlighting the most interesting information, labeling it, and then putting it into a category (Seidman, 2012). Categories generally reflect the themes that have already been identified (perhaps through one of the methods listed earlier) and tend to represent the major findings of the study (Creswell, 2014). Categorizing for its own sake, though, is rarely if ever the intended aim, and it is not recommended solely as a means of tagging all pertinent data on a topic (Richards & Richards, 1995). Alternatively, the goals of categorizing are often to discover and order ideas and themes, store growing understandings, link ideas to data, cross-referencing, sorting, and clarifying (Richards & Richards, 1995). As themes develop, they begin to allow the researcher to

make sense of the data as a formed, cohesive narrative (Charmaz, 1990). Themes for this study were identified as described earlier and then incorporated into the reporting process as the chapters of this paper.

Analysis

There is no distinction between data collection and its analysis (Cassell & Symon, 1994), nor is there a limit to the variations of analysis that can be applied. There are two, though, that I believe are important to delineate in the context of this research. Analysis, at the most basic level, can take the form of content analysis, which is a determination of the frequency of particular words or phrases in the text (Guest & McLellan, 2003). On the surface, content analysis appears separate and independent from thematic analysis, but there are important similarities. The analytical interventions used in content analysis are also applied in thematic analysis which include the classifications of generated initial codes, defining and naming themes, reviewing themes, and searching for themes (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Content and thematic analysis are both also suitable for answering questions regarding the concerns of individuals and their reasons and motivations behind certain actions (Ayres, 2007). They both also share the same aim of analytically examining narrative materials from life stories through a process of deconstructing text into smaller content units for some future purpose (Sparker, 2005).

As an added benefit, content and thematic analysis also don't require a specially focused research strategy (Humble & Mozelius, 2022). A final connection is that their data collection and analysis processes run parallel so that analysis begins at the same time as data collection, and that further data collection is grounded on what has already been analyzed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This should not, however, give the impression that data analysis processes in both

approaches are linear as they move from one phase to the next but rather are recursive with multiple rounds of review (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Content and thematic analysis are demonstrably similar in their approach and application. To such a degree that I know either would have served well as a method for interpreting and analyzing the collected data for this study. My choice of thematic analysis was therefore made according to a few critical differences. I've noted some unique characteristics of thematic analysis already, but in direct relationship to content analysis there is the distinction that thematic analysis moves beyond the surface frequency counting of words and phrases in order to identify and describe ideas and themes (Namey et al., 2008). These ideas or themes are then developed into codes and linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis (Namey et al., 2008). It also allows for the possibility that large data sets can be used again in separate studies with different research questions (Humble & Mozelius, 2022).

Codes

Codes represent the researcher's interpretations of patterns of meaning across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Historically, the process of codes generated by the reduction of text has positivist associations with quantitative methods designed to find relational patterns (Bernard & Ryan, 1998). Identified codes are then often collected as lists in what researcher's refer to as a research codebook. Researchers that approve of codebook approaches, however, typically abandon these positivistic conceptions of coding reliability and instead recognize that data coding is highly interpretative (Braun et al., 2019; Sandelowski, 2010). The interpretative nature of data coding allows the researcher to use open coding in which codes are developed and modified throughout the interpretative process in lieu of using pre-set codes (Maguire &

Delahunt, 2017). Using a process of open-coding versus a pre-existing code frame is preferable in cases where the researcher is attempting to best represent meanings as they are communicated by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Open-coding was therefore an appropriate fit for this study, with its emphasis on representing the participant, and was used throughout the coding process.

To generate codes applicable to a body of text and compile a codebook requires repeated exposure to the raw data, a process which essentially grounds the researcher in the data (Guest & McLellan, 2003). This process inevitably increases the researcher's familiarity with the text, but it could also obscure the bigger picture, making connections across the dataset more difficult (Guest & McLellan, 2003).

There are a number of types of codes identified in the literature which can then be used in combination to categorize and sort research data. Semantic codes are surface level markers of data which identify the explicit meanings of participants' words. In using semantic codes, the researcher doesn't intend examination beyond what is either said or written (Byrne, 2021). Going a level deeper, latent coding can be used to interpret deeper levels of meaning and meaningfulness (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). I used a combination of semantic and latent codes when analyzing participant responses in relation to the intended purpose of the research questions. General research questions designed to invoke descriptions of events and processes prompted direct responses appropriate for semantic codes while questions aimed at interpretative or reflexive responses were more appropriately coded latently.

Regardless of code type or method used, coding should be conducted from a critical position from which the researcher continually questions the assumptions made in interpreting and coding the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Doing Thematic Analysis

A framework for the use of thematic analysis was created by Braun and Clarke (2006) and it is generally defined as a six-step process. The six phases of this process are,

> 1) Familiarising yourself with your data, involving transcription, immersion and taking notes on initial ideas, 2) Generating initial codes from the data that identify a feature of the data, semantic content or latent, that appears interesting, 3) Searching for the themes by collating codes into preliminary themes, 4) Reviewing themes, and checking if the themes work in relation to codes and data extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), 5) Defining and naming the final themes, and refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, and 6) Writing up the presentation of the found theme and fine-tuning the overall story. (p. 87)

Furthermore, its important to clarify that the process of review and analysis of the texts is always in-progress given that it is impossible for the researcher to know before and during the investigation what the salient problems will be or what theoretical concepts might emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Tuckett, 2005).

While this is the most often cited process for conducting thematic analysis, it is certainly not the only variation nor in certain cases the most appropriate. For example, it has been argued that Braun and Clarke's (2006) method is limited in its capacity for critical specificity when attempting to connect everyday discourses with larger social and cultural practices nested in

unequal power relations (Lawless & Chen, 2019). Such a limitation prevents it from adopting a critical perspective that seeks to analyze assumed perspectives and to understand how oppressive social conditions became reified as "given" (Cannella & Lincoln, 2015). Assuming a critical perspective grants the ability to deconstruct "archeologies of knowledge" of how human discourse is connected to broader social constructions, narratives, and ideologies (Foucault, 1972, cited in Lawless & Chen, 2019), a common purpose of interpretative practice (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995).

What unites the variations of thematic analysis is that the final result should describe the most salient constellations of themes in the analyzed dataset (Joffe, 2012). Further, the end result of the process should be the identification of a story, told with creativity by the researcher about the data in relation to the research questions (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Induction/Deduction

Qualitative and quantitative research are quite similar. At least as far as concerns approaches to thematic analysis since both traditions have examples of induction and deduction (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). Inductive thematic analysis is used in cases where no previous studies exists concerning the particular phenomenon under investigation, and as a result the coded categories are derived directly from the textual data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Induction, then, makes sense in the context of this study given that it is the first and only study concerned with the Learning and Public Practice Department's transition to an employment model for museum educators. It speaks to the inductive approach's propensity for analyzing qualitative data guided by specific evaluation objectives (Thomas, 2006). This approach is also commonly recommended for analyses where the studied phenomenon has insufficient or fragmented

existing knowledge (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), as was the case with my investigation. There is a relatively limited amount of research on The Wexner Center and an equally limited amount of scholarly attention given to employment models in art museum education or transitions to these models in specific institutions.

In an inductive analysis, as with general thematic analysis, themes or categories emerge developmentally from an iterative process of re-reading and grouping data into meaningful units (Love & Corr, 2022; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). This process is often characterized as data-driven and bottom-up (Patton, 1990; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Guest & McLellan, 2003; Kearney et al., 1994). Originally characterized by Richards and Richards (1995), this description of integrated hierarchy of data also includes theory driven, or top-down. Code hierarchies are typically created at the conceptual level according to research objectives or the perceived logical relationship among codes (Guest & McLellan, 2003). These methods, though, don't necessarily capture patterns between themes in the text; rather they create taxonomies based on subjective interpretation of logically consistent conceptual relationships between themes and codes (Guest & McLellan, 2003). Researchers who adopt induction may also wish to produce codes that are solely reflective of the content found within the data, meaning that it is free from any pre-conceived theory or conceptual framework (Byrne, 2021).

Even after a thorough discussion of the differences in approach and application of these two methods, it is still worth noting that coding and analysis rarely fall cleanly into one or either of these approaches and, more often than not, use a combination of both (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Philosophy

To the question of epistemology, thematic analysis is most associated with realist/ essentialist and constructionist paradigms and can be conducted using either one, but the outcome and focus will be different depending on which is chosen (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using an experiential/constructionist orientation requires the researcher to appreciate that the thoughts, feelings, intentions, hopes, concerns, feelings, beliefs, and experiences of participants are reflections of personal states held internally by the participant (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). The researcher can do this to clarify their intention to reflect either the experience of a social reality or examine the constitution of a social reality from a critical orientation (Byrne, 2021). An essentialist perspective toward language inculcates the researcher into adopting a uni-directional understanding of language and communicated experience, in that language is assumed to be a simple and direct reflection of meaning and experience (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995; Terry & Hayfield, 2020). On the other hand, researchers adopting a constructionist perspective subscribe to a bi-directional understanding of language and experience where language is viewed as implicit in the social production and reproduction of both meaning and experience (Burr, 1995; Schwandt, 1998; Terry & Hayfield, 2020). Relating the constructionist paradigm back to the practice of coding, the researcher takes into account the reality of recurrence while simultaneously appreciating meaning as the central criteria in the coding process (Byrne, 2021).

With all of that said, framing different versions of thematic analysis in binary terms is, in practice, quite limiting if and when it happens that they are not actually in conflict (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). Regardless of the available options, the flexibility of thematic analysis demands that the researcher identify their particular perspective in relation to the data and the

implications of this for their analysis because the theoretical orientations of the researcher and the questions they apply to their data define the way it is used (Terry & Hayfield, 2020). I applied something of a mixed approach for this research. I adopted an experiential orientation toward my understanding of participants' internal states while adopting an essentialist orientation toward language as a direct communication of meaning and experience.

Chapter 5

So Tell Me About Yourself…

For qualitative researchers, the most widely employed tool for collecting information is interviews (Cassell, 2005; Nunkoosing, 2005; Jamshed, 2014). It's purpose is to contribute to a body of conceptual and theoretical knowledge based on the meanings of life experiences held by the interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Interview also holds that there are multiple ways of knowing as well as multiple truths (Kuzmanić, 2009). It is through the connection of these many so-called "truths" that interview research contributes to our knowledge of the meaning of human experience (Warren & Karner, 2005).

Qualitative interview is a tool for gathering rich data from a purposefully chosen sample of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest from the point of view of what

it is, how it is perceived, how it is explained, and how it was experienced (Connelly & Peltzer, 2016; Gill et al., 2008; Opdenakker, 2006). In addition to allowing us to comprehend experiences, qualitative interview opens a window into participants' beliefs as well as our own (Dilley, 2004; Mann, 2011; Denzin, 2001). As a method of qualitative research, interview isn't necessarily looking for universal principles that are true at all times and in all conditions but rather seeks to understand the complexities of specific circumstances, meaning that interviewing is both situational and conditional (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

So then why use it here, in research that is so heavily focused on narrative? It's because the interview itself is a story. Seidman (2012) said, "I interview because I am interested in other people's stories" (p. 7). These stories are collected through interview for, among other things, oral histories, ethnographies, and case studies (Dilley, 2004). It is well-suited for allowing individuals to tell stories about themselves (Denzin, 2001) because in an interview people are encouraged to think and talk about the issues through which they reconstruct their particular life histories and narratives (Kuzmanić, 2009). The participant can do so freely and without concern because the nature of the interview allows the participant as the storyteller to share their narrative without regard for the minutia of the research process. These rich descriptions of phenomena can be shared by participants while leaving the interpretation and analysis to the researcher (Warren & Karner, 2005).

Interview follows from a very simple belief that the stories being shared should be heard because the stories of individuals are of worth (Seidman, 2012). It is a critical consideration of interviewing as it provides access to the context and meaning of people's behavior (Seidman, 1998). Experience and behavior are therefore approached holistically such that the meaning of

experience effects action, and interview, as a method, places that action in context toward the ultimate goal of understanding (Seidman, 1998). Interview was particularly appropriate in the context of this research as it relates to the relative rarity of the case and to its association with the field of education. Interviews are best for when little is known about the study phenomenon, or where detailed insights are required from individual participants (Gill et al., 2008). Cases involving art museum education departments transitioning to employment models for educators are still fairly uncommon with studies detailing those transitions even more so. With such a dearth of available research, it then becomes especially important to seek and record the insights of participants, as they are likely the only individuals who possess it. In the context of education, and interwoven with the purposes of this research, interviewing is a convenient method if the aim is to understand the meaning that those involved in education make of their experience (Seidman, 2012). The whole of this research was concerned with the experiences of educators and the meanings of those experiences they carried, making qualitative interview a perfect partner for the hearing and telling of their storied lives.

Methods

The interview transcends protocol or design (Dilley, 2004). As such, there is no common procedure for interview research (Kvale, 1996). There are, however, a multitude of available options suitable to a variety of purposes for the qualitative researcher in need.

The face-to-face interview, and ones conducted in-person specifically, are the traditional form of generating data in qualitative interviewing (Creswell, 2013). They allow for the observation of not only verbal data but also non-verbal data (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004). In the same room, participant and interviewer can view and asses sources of non-verbal data such as facial

expressions, gestures, and other forms of communication that might enhance the meaning of spoken words (Carr & Worth, 2001). As my first foray in qualitative research and with using interview, I was not actively mindful of non-verbal cues or communication. My primary focus was on the words participants used so that I could be sure to address both the questions I had prepared and any new lines of inquiry that participants introduced. Were I to have the chance to do it all again, I would try to make non-verbal communication a more salient element so as to capture even more of the participants' already rich stories.

Sharing the same space, with all of the varied forms of communication that allows, can also significantly aid in the building of rapport between the researcher and the participant, increasing the potential for the sharing of experiences that might not have been shared otherwise (Shuy, 2003). Rapport is vital to any research relationship and especially so when using qualitative interview because of its more personal nature.

The individual in-depth interview is well-suited for deep examination of social and personal matters (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). It can unravel the complexity of others' worlds (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and allow the researcher to rebuild, through understanding, experiences in which they did not participate (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The interview is an appropriate partner to case study, then, as both are designed to reconstruct experiences of which only a select few have first-hand knowledge. This is a universal trait of the interview but variation does exist in regard to the researcher's purposes for achieving that understanding as well as the unique properties of the investigation like the research question and the researcher's discipline (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). For this research, that purpose was to better understand the unique properties of the Wex, the Learning and Public Practice Department, and

the factors and motivations that led to the creation of its new employment-based model for museum educators. Additional advantages of the in-person interview include aiding in maintaining participant involvement by reducing drop-outs and greater clarity in the information being communicated (Musselwhite et al., 2006).

Gubrium and Holstein's (2003) active interviewing concerns both the *how* and the *what*, or the processes of an interview and the content of the questions and responses (emphasis in original). From the beginning of the research design process, I envisioned the interviews I conducted to be conversational in nature (they are even labeled as conversations in my research files), inviting the participants to speak freely and without placing restrictions on the method or manner of their responses. This form of conversational interview gives the researcher and the participants flexibility to co-create the conditions of the interview, and it facilitates a space where participants have a high degree of control over the stories that are performed (Blodgett et al., 2011).

Digital interviews

Digital technology has been used in a variety of ways for the qualitative researcher, and that includes interviews. As an example, qualitative researchers have used the internet to conduct literature reviews and used software programs for data analysis and bibliographic storage and creation (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). In regard to the qualitative interview, video conferencing software is commonly used and allows participants in different locations to communicate using audio and video imaging in real time (Gough & Rosenfeld, 2006). While a number of interviews for this research were conducted in-person, several were held online using the video conferencing program Zoom.

Digital advantages

Those who have used video conferencing for interviews do so for the flexibility and convenience of participating online (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). I offered all of the participants the option to meet in-person or over Zoom for each of our meetings, and in several cases participants chose to meet online. While I don't know for certain, I imagine their choice was made in part for the ease and convenience it offered compared to traveling from their homes to a separate location. As the researcher, I never wanted to force one method or the other on participants, both because I was conscious of never wanting to impose myself and because I knew that online interviews were just as effective as in-person; comparisons of face-to-face and online video conferencing found no difference in quality (Cabaroglu et al., 2010; Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). The choice to use video conferencing software also does not negatively impact participants' willingness to participate in a virtual research interview, particularly when discussing a sensitive topic (Sipes et al., 2019).

The most significant advantage of the virtual interview is accessibility to participants (Gray et al., 2020). The lack of travel time and the reduction in conflicts between competing schedules made it that much easier to schedule online interviews. Further advantages include time saving conveniences, secure data generation and storage, personal safety, and cost effectiveness without compromising a meaningful connection with the participants (Gray et al., 2020). Zoom, for example, includes a password protection feature that ensures confidentiality and a recording function that sends files to either the host's computer or Zoom's cloud storage, enhancing participant confidentiality and protecting against data vulnerability (Buchanan & Zimmer, 2012). These were all features of the platform that I was aware of before beginning the

interview process and another reason why I preferred using it versus other video conferencing software.

Online interviews offer flexibility for participants but they were also often convenient for me as the researcher. For the researcher, conducting interviews in their own workspace provides the assurance of a stable internet connection, managing technical problems, and the ability to complete administrative duties such as saving interviews for transcription (Gray et al., 2020). These factors, while not insurmountable in more unfamiliar settings, are less stressful when handled in a space the researcher knows well, and eliminating unnecessary complications or causes for potential disaster are key in any research project.

Digital disadvantages

No method, regardless of its benefits, is without its share of disadvantages. As discussed, while digital interviews allow participants and the researcher to see and hear each other, they still don't occupy the same physical space, which can result in missed opportunities to observe the participants and respond to body language and emotional cues (Cater, 2011). This was less of a concern to me in the context of this study given that non-verbal communication wasn't a focus, but it is still worth considering for any future research design. Also, while there is convenience in the ability to choose your own space, doing so may result in distractions or a lack of privacy (Gray et al., 2020). Despite this requisite release of control by the researcher over the home environment, the familiarity it brings might help participants relax and result in a more productive interview (Kvale, 1996). On that note, this was one area where I was aware of participants' non-verbal communication. In all of the online interviews, conducted in our respective homes, participants appeared calm and relaxed. They also appeared unfazed by

distractions or interference such as pets making noise in the background or spouses asking them to move to a different location. Also, since they were in their own homes, they remained calm and comfortable in moments when they chose to move to different places, walking with ease and without needing to pause the conversation.

Less a disadvantage as much as an important detail to mention is that researchers utilizing video conferencing software will need to consider potential technical difficulties and decide if they have the necessary and appropriate skills to conduct interviews on a virtual platform (Rowe et al., 2014). I had extensive knowledge of and experience with the Zoom videoconferencing platform, as I imagine many now do, and felt very comfortable with its use and with managing any potential technical issues that might arise. Importantly, while the experience of the participants remains essentially unchanged between in-person and virtual interviews, the researcher still needs to be aware that creating and maintaining rapport with participants might work differently (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013).

Interview quantity

Some research occasions call for only a single interview while others demand multiple interview contacts (May, 1991). Seidman (1991) called for a series of three interviews. The first, focusing on life history, allows participants to speak about themselves in concert with the research topic. The second interview focuses on more specific, concrete details of participants' experiences in the topic area. The final interview allows participants to consider the meaning of their experiences in this area. I didn't know that this prescribed series of interviews existed before I began my interview process, but it is essentially the same series that I used. My first interview with each of the educators focused on their life and professional backgrounds and their

initial impressions of their roles. The second interview allowed them to reflect more on these influences as well as any others that might be on their minds at that moment. The final interview was designed to encourage participants to reflect on all of their experiences, what those experiences meant to them, and what was most important to them for the future. The exception to this was in the interviews I held with members of staff. Not only were the purposes of those interviews different from those with the educators, but I was also unable to schedule as many with each person, such that for some members of staff there was only one interview while for others there were only two.

I designed the interview process so extensively in an attempt to learn the most that I could over the most amount of time possible, but there are other benefits to using multiple interviews. Multiple interviews foster a stronger researcher/participant relationship, in that the latter may develop more comfort describing difficult or emotional experiences to the researcher with whom he or she has prior contact and at least some level of trust (Adler & Adler, 2002; Laslett & Rapoport, 1975, cited in Knox & Burkard, 2009). Planning for a series of interviews also allows the researcher and participants to return to topics from previous interviews and explore any additional thoughts and feelings or reactions (May, 1991). Each of the subsequent interviews I conducted began with a period of reflection in which participants were asked an open-ended question encouraging a return to past events or interview topics. In a few cases, I also prepared specific questions ahead of interviews designed to return to discussions from previous conversations to make sure that we covered as much ground on that topic as possible.

Considerations of cost and benefit must be taken into account, however, related to the use of multiple interviews so that the potential cost can be balanced against the perceived benefit of

new data (Knox & Burkard, 2009). In this case, costs were limited to time and gas when interviews were conducted in-person. Costs which, in my view, were outweighed by the benefits of the opportunity to continue learning from participants, a benefit which was only reduced in cases where interviews resulted in information that had already been learned in previous conversations.

Interview structure

In terms of how the interview might be structured, one option is the consensual qualitative interview in which the interview protocol is shared with participants in advance, indicating a planned conversation that is meant to be held in the same way with everyone (Knox & Burkard, 2009). The aim of this approach is to give participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences so that they may be prepared to discuss how they might relate to the topic of the investigation (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). I took this approach with the first interview held with all participants and for the very same reasons. I wanted everyone to have time to read the questions and reflect on how they personally understand and relate to them before we discussed them together.

Kvale (1996) went to bat for an open-ended approach to interview that is more concerned with attuning to the participant rather than following the same path for all respondents. Questions are thus asked of each participant with the option to pursue more in-depth subjects that emerge for each interviewee (Hill et al., 2005; Hill et al., 1997; Patton, 2002; Hickson, 2016; Stuckey, 2013; Britten, 1999; Jamshed, 2014). With the exception of questions I prepared for specific participants based on previous discussions, each participant was asked the same set of grounding questions with additional questions generated during the interview based on their unique

responses. Such an approach that favors minimal structure and flexibility is ideal for data collection and thorough exploration of the research topic (Sandelowski, 2000).

Another way of describing the method outlined above is the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews use open-ended questions prepared ahead of time that are based on the central premise of the research study and are designed to elicit relevant and specific information comparable across cases (Knox & Burkard, 2009; Stuckey, 2013; Jamshed, 2014; Donalek, 2005; Patton, 2002). For researchers invested in conducting naturalistic interviews, study-specific questions are typically generated from scratch rather than relying on pre-written questionnaires or surveys (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). They are also the most widely-used interview format in qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The semi-structured interview is commonly the only data source for a qualitative research project, and they are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and location (Adams et al., 2002; Robson, 2011). While other sources of data, such as relevant research literature, were used for this study, semi-structured interviews were the primary source and were, in alignment with the literature, scheduled in advance at a specified time and place.

The interviewer's role, effectively, is to limit or remove ambiguity surrounding the interview (Cassell, 2005). All parties should know the location of the interview and plan travel time accordingly; it should be held in a quiet place when possible, the expected time-frame of each interview should be shared with participants beforehand, and they should be given a sense of what will occur (Donalek, 2005; Gill et al., 2008). I communicated this information to the participants using e-mail, and I tried to do so at least a few days before the scheduled interview whenever possible.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation is also an essential consideration with this form of research because, in truth, it takes training and practice to write effective open-ended questions (Sofaer, 2002). Admittedly, I have relatively little of either, and so the effectiveness of the questions I created is something of an open question itself, the answer to which will likely be determined by others who will decide if the information I have presented has achieved the goal it was intended for. Interview questions can follow a semi-structured or unstructured approach depending on the purpose of the study (Donalek, 2005). The aim of the interview question is to, "activate the respondent's stock of knowledge and bring it to bear on the discussion at hand in ways that are appropriate to the research agenda" (Wolgemuth & Donohue, 2006, p. 75). The mark of a good question is one that is open-ended, neutral, sensitive, and comprehendible, and it is often good practice to start with easier questions before moving on to those concerning more difficult or sensitive topics (Britten, 1999). Such a method is referred to as laddering, where questions about actions or knowledge precede those about philosophy, beliefs, and values (Price, 2002). Open-ended questions in this format are used to explore the participant's unique insider perspective while encouraging participants to respond creatively and expansively in their own words (Chenail, 2011; Stuckey, 2013; Alsaawi, 2014; Flick, 2002). The flexibility inherent to this approach allows participants to share information that is important to them but may not have previously been considered relevant by the researcher (Gill et al., 2008). Such flexibility is important because, from my experience, it wasn't possible to anticipate the topics that participants would consider important or how they would interpret the questions I prepared toward informing their responses. Using participant responses to questions as a stepping-stone,

researchers can then create follow-up questions that aim to delve deeper and discover more about the participant's particular experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008; Rubin & Rubin, 2006; Seidman, 2006). As the researcher learns more, questions can be altered or new ones created following a cyclical process of data analysis and collection (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, cited in Knox & Burkard, 2009).

The semi-structured interview is an effective compromise between the structured and unstructured approach. Using an interview plan with too much structure may inhibit the elicitation of participant experiences, thoughts, and feelings as well as place undue limits on the storytelling experience (Sonday et al., 2020; Bryman, 2008). However, this does inform one of the criticisms of the semi-or-unstructured approach which is that it is less reliable than the structured interview (Arvey & Campion, 1982, cited in Alsaawi, 2014). Regardless of the study topic or purpose, questions should be written with sufficient focus so that the selected homogenous group of participants will have shared, relevant experiences (Miller & Crabtree, 1999).

The role of the researcher

Because interviews occur in real-time, a considerable level of concentration is required on the part of the researcher regarding the questions they ask and the responses they receive, especially when using a semi-structured approach where new questions are formulated out of the conversation between the two sides (Opdenakker, 2006). This double attention (Wengraf, 2001) means that the researcher must both be listening to participant responses toward understanding while being mindful of their own needs related to the information they are seeking within a fixed

period of time (Opdenakker, 2006). This was one of the most challenging skills to practice, to the point where I often found myself either writing notes or listening but rarely both.

To partially assist in this effort, interviewers are advised to listen more often than speak so that rich and accurate data can be collected, and to write research questions in a clear and non-threatening way (Robson, 2011). Responses from participants assured me that the questions I prepared were clear and non-threatening, but I confess to speaking more than listening. I felt no small amount of embarrassment after reading the interview transcripts and seeing just how longwinded I was at times. In the moment, I justified speaking so much as an attempt to build rapport and position myself as an ethical researcher through the reciprocal sharing of personal experiences. But, in effect, my inexperience resulted in a high concentration of moments that left the participant in silence for long stretches of time and a balance unattained.

Data collection

Recording interviews — either audio or video — is non-negotiable, especially when using semi-structured and unstructured approaches (Alsaawi, 2014). The quality of the recording is also tremendously important with conditions like excessive background noise, weak batteries, and the placement of the recorder all influencing the end result (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Digital recorders are effective and commonly used, but they can also be complicated. It is recommended to practice with the recorder that will be used before the interview process begins (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Donalek, 2005). All of the interviews for this research were recorded using an audio recording application on my phone. I did a few test recordings before the interview process began to make sure that I knew how the app worked, how recorded files were stored, how to access previously recorded files, and how to export files. Helpfully, the

application also included a noise reduction filter which, when applied to recorded files, boosted the level of the speaker while reducing the level of all background/non-essential sound. This feature was especially useful in a select few cases where the interview was conducted in a space that began quiet but became noisy and pausing the interview was not ideal.

Equally, all recorded interviews should be transcribed afterwards so as to protect against bias and provide a permanent record of what was said (Pontin, 2000). Transcriptions for all interviews in this study were first made using a software application called Otter (Liang & Yun, 2023). The application uses predictive AI to transcribe audio files in real time which can then be exported into a variety of text file types. It is often challenging for transcribers to capture the spoken word in text because of complex factors including sentence structure, quotations, omissions, and mistaken words or phrases (Meadows & Dodendorf, 1999). So, factoring in the unique cadences and speaking styles of individuals, it quickly becomes necessary for transcribers to make judgement calls (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Each of the audio files I recorded were transcribed first with the Otter application, but the software isn't perfect. There were a number of errors in each resulting transcript that needed to be corrected so, while the text file created by the program served as a good foundation and saved a great deal of time, it was necessary to do a second round of review. In this second round, I listened back to each of the audio recordings while reviewing the rough text files, making corrections as I went. I also made grammatical additions, like bolding certain words for emphasis or placing commas, periods, dashes, and other notations, to indicate as best I could each participant's pattern of speech.

Power

The issue of power for both the researcher and the participant has been widely disputed as a shortcoming of interviews (Nunkoosing, 2005). On this question, the impact of roles is especially important as both the researcher and the participant assume particular roles during an interview as either the speaker or the listener and often alternate between them (Farr, 1982, cited in Kuzmanić, 2009).

The question of authority is also significant in regard to potential outcomes and to the context of the researcher as they are both a seeker of knowledge and hold a degree of methodological expertise, a privileged knower (Nunkoosing, 2005). The researcher is the sole vessel for obtaining data from participants, and as such it is through their interaction that context is created about the participant's world and experiences (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). The particular reality of the interview relationship generally assumes that an unequal power relationship exists with the interviewer positioned above the interviewee, likely a result of the traditional downward view of the social sciences toward research subjects or the view of subjects as mere sources of data to be leveraged for personal gain (Oakley, 1981). The latter of these suppositions is supported by early positions on social science which characterized the interview as an obtaining of information more so than an exchange of it (Goode & Hatt, 1952, cited in Winchester, 1996).

Post-modern values have shifted this early perspective of the interview relationship to one occupying more equal ground. Such a shift is spurred on by realizations regarding the openness with which participants exercise their power to share their personal experiences, many often kept hidden from those close to them, and that these elicitations may increase feelings of shame, fear, anxiety, and vulnerability (Birch & Miller, 2000; Sinding & Aronson, 2003; Corbin

& Morse, 2003). Therefore, interviewing should be a two-way street (Oakley, 1986) where the qualitative interview is understood as a joint venture, a dialogue, or discourse (Mishler, 1986, cited in Connelly & Peltzer, 2016).

In all respects, a qualitative research interview is a shared journey where the resulting story is not only the participant's telling of past experiences but rather a co-created tale emerging from interaction (Donalek, 2005; Oakley, 1981). To take a more supportive, empathetic position regarding interviewing is to adopt the role of an interviewer that willingly exposes something personal of themselves, giving back something to those interviewed (Winchester, 1996; Brenner, 1985; Lofland, 1971, cited in Winchester, 1996).

Rapport

The interviewee is a responder while the interviewer is a rapport promoter (Oakley & Cracknell, 1981, cited in Alsaawi, 2014). The strength of this relationship is one of the most important aspects of qualitative research as it is through this relationship that all data are collected and validity is strengthened (Adler & Adler, 2002; Kvale, 1996). Unlike the more conversational format of interviews often employed in more extensive ethnographic studies, other qualitative interviewers must establish rapport rapidly in order to develop the same positive relationship between researcher and participant (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Its quality affects participants' disclosure and the depth of information they may share about their experience of a particular phenomenon (Knox & Burkard, 2009). Speaking on the method of interview most effective for grounding and building this quality, Polkinghorne (1994) suggested that in-person interviews yielded more authentic and deep descriptions of phenomena due to the

format's ability to allow the interviewer to facilitate trust and openness, lessening the interviewee's need to manage impressions and permitting the examination of private experiences.

Further, developing a rapport prior to the interview enhances the elicitation of information (Elmir et al., 2011; Gill et al., 2008). I had previous opportunities to develop rapport with participants through an internship I completed with the Learning and Public Practice department. But, my level of rapport was greater with the members of staff than with the educators, and so a process of rapport development was still necessary by the time the study began.

Ethics

Most institutional ethics committees require that specific consent for each element of the study be received prior to starting. Sections of the consent form related to interviewing should include permissions for tape-recording and be signed prior to the start of the interview process (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Written consent must also include the right to refuse to answer a question, to stop the interview at any time, to reschedule, or to withdraw from the study without consequence (Donalek, 2005; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). I was required to write and provide a research consent form prior to scheduling interviews which included these provisions and were signed by all participants in this study.

Anonymity and confidentiality are critical in qualitative research concerned with the life stories of individuals, and as such it is vital that participants be informed of the details of the study's ethical principles before any interview takes place (Britten, 1999). It is considered good practice to keep files containing the research participants' real names, pseudonyms, and all other relevant identifying information secured and accessible only to the researcher (Tuckett, 2005).

Most qualitative methods allow for the protection of participant identities, but it is important for participants to know ahead of time that it cannot always be guaranteed and any consent requested must make this clear (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, the contributions of participants should not be exploited for personal gain. The research plan should include a method of acknowledging these contributions toward the success of the research process and reimburse them for their efforts (Anderson, 1991).

Sample selection

Sample size is not straightforward in qualitative research (Butina, 2015). Seidman (2012) provided two criteria regarding the size of the sample used in qualitative interviewing. The first is whether the researcher feels the size selected is sufficient to their needs. The second is saturation, meaning that the researcher finds they are hearing the same information they have already obtained from previous interviews. My frame-of-reference for what a sufficient sample size would be in the context of this study was limited. The only comparison I could draw was from a project I completed for one of my courses in which only three participants were selected. To the second point, saturation was a much more evident benchmark to clear, particularly once I held enough conversations for repetition in the data to appear. Saturation is also the greatest contributing factor for why I chose not to pursue conversations with certain individuals suggested to me by participants in the study. Between the information covered in interviews and the data I collected from the literature, I believed that any information I might obtain from these additional conversations would not be significantly different from the information I already had.

Flick (2002) argues that the appropriateness of a sampling method can only be judged in relation to the research problem. For in-depth interviews, participants can be chosen from a

process known as purposeful sampling which looks to maximize the depth and richness of the data applied to the research question (Kuzel, 1999). Samples should also be fairly homogenous, sharing critical similarities related to the research question (McCracken, 1988; Boeije, 2010). The reason for using a sample selection strategy with so much purpose behind it is that, as the researcher, my theoretical understanding of the topic assumes that certain individuals might have a unique perspective on the case being studied and that their presence in the research should be included (Mason, 2002; Trost, 1986). Participants for this study were chosen for their association with the Learning and Public Practice Department and for their relationship to the Department's transition to an employment model for museum educators. Educator participants were chosen specifically for their status as former docents who chose to become paid educators, a unique subset of museum educators that have gone relatively unexplored in research on the field.

Ideographically, interview research also asks for a sample size that is small enough so that the voices of individual cases (or in this case participants) can be located within the study and an intensive analysis conducted (Robinson, 2014). Small sample sizes are also more common in life history research where there is greater likelihood of engaging with committed participants interested in in-depth conversation with a researcher over several meetings (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Less pressure is placed on the researcher when designing the study knowing that the sample size can be increased if/when the data shows that a person or group have been left out and should now be added for the support and validity of their perspective (Silverman, 2010). Over the course of the study, I made one change to the original sample size by adding one member of staff to the original three. In total, eight participants were selected for this study. Of

those eight, four were members of LPP staff and four were former docents who became paid educators.

Something to be mindful of when considering sample selection and choosing participants is the concept of self-selection bias where participants who volunteer for a research study do so for reasons outside of the chosen sampling criteria (Costigan & Cox, 2001). For those studies where extensive self-disclosure is necessary, samples may result in individuals pre-disposed to being more open, patient, and interested in the study topic than those from the broader general sample (Robinson, 2014).

Oral history

Mary Stokrocki refers to oral history as the recording of a primary source in the form of spoken words and reminiscences by a narrator with first-hand knowledge (Stokrocki, 1997). Often this effort is aimed at a specific historical moment witnessed by said narrator (Lieblich, 2014; Janesick, 2010). Oral history as a practice grew out of oral traditions found in all cultures, persisting more often in illiterate societies (Lieblich, 2014). These practices deal with ordinary people — the narrators — who tell their stories in an ordinary language.

Oral histories can be very useful for adding new dimensions to traditionally conceived notions of historical validity by way of the personal accounts of ordinary people thereby troubling historical objectivity (Stokrocki, 1997; Kletchka, 2010). Speaker subjectivity in research, then, allows us to learn more about events by learning more about what those events meant to those who lived them (Portelli, 2009). In fact, the life history approach for better understanding a research topic is one of the fundamental reasons why a researcher chooses such an approach in the first place (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Aiding in this practice is the fact that

oral histories are often conducted in the narrator's natural setting (Lieblich, 2014) in an attempt to make the telling of their stories as easy of a process as possible (Kletchka, 2010). Or, to put it simply, oral history collects memories and commentaries of significance using recorded interviews (Ritchie, 2003; Lieblich, 2014).

Daniel

If I were to choose a word to describe Daniel, other than those that apply equally to him and his colleagues like passionate and dedicated, it would be "plugged-in." A docent, now Educator, at the Wex since 2016, his story is one of life-long connection to the art museum and the transformative potential of the gallery. From his background as an undergraduate in art education to his history of professional development in the field, his story shows that even after setbacks and sojourns, the art museum is home.

Daniel's career in the art museum began at Ohio State and what were then known as the University Galleries. He was receiving his undergraduate degree in Art Education, but his real education was found in the galleries. His work there ignited a spark and a passion for public education in art spaces that continued with his first job as a professional museum educator for another university's gallery, until it was dimmed somewhat by forces outside of his control.

> I have kind of an unusual relationship with Ohio State and their gallery programs. When I was an undergraduate student I became a work-study student working at the University Galleries. And it was probably as important as any other part of my education. I was in art and art education…working for a gallery that was absolutely committed to the art of that time was just about as exciting as it could be. And I probably would have stayed in gallery work, especially public gallery work…maybe forever except that the Reagan years rolled around and the program that I was employed through was savagely cut. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

With the path he chose closed to him, Daniel made the decision to continue pursuing his passion for art education but in an entirely different venue: the public school art classroom. He had received his certification during his undergraduate studies and used the opportunity to put it to use in a place where he felt there was the greatest need. For Daniel, that place was in middle schools in economically disadvantaged districts. As the art specialist, his curriculum included visits to various art museums including the Wex, an institution he was intimately familiar with given that he had worked in its previous iteration as a student.

> The one, of the things that was true of my life when the program closed down…I was out of college by 10 years by then. And I had qualified for teaching certification while I was in college…I got a couple of offers, went urban because I thought it would be more interesting and there was honestly a greater need. I'm a little bit altruistic on that score. I became an urban art educator and taught almost all my years at middle, urban middle schools with a focus on the arts where I would be the art specialist 20 years…I took some

of my students to various art museums, including the Wex. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

Daniel spent the entirety of his professional career in public art education until his retirement after nearly four decades. But, it wasn't long after that he began to feel drawn to it once again and started looking for an avenue to return to the field of public art education. With his experience as a student in the University Galleries and from his time as a teacher taking students on field trips, there was really only one choice.

> But eventually I got to retire after 35 years of education and public employment. And so 2017, two years after I retired, I sort of felt the need for a teaching thing and an art fix at the same time and what better thing to do than to take the training to be a Wex community docent. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

With such an extensive background in public education in both the art museum and the classroom, the question becomes how Daniel views the role of the museum educator and of informal learning in gallery spaces. In relation to the visitor, his view is that his role is to understand them and their particular needs so that he can tailor the learning experience to what would be most beneficial to them in that moment.

> I get concerned I guess…about there being a rote explanation for any art but particularly contemporary art, and my, what I do with people looking at art, whether they're young or old, is trying to find out where they are…Find out what I know that might be of interest or useful to them and try to structure an experience where art is experienced in the best way possible in any given situation. I'm sort of a supporter of some of John Dewey's

notions…early 20th century stuff. I probably do believe that art as a social dialogue serves society in important ways. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

In terms of the institution, Daniel approaches the work as a conversation around expectations. He believes that his role should come with an expectation of flexibility and responsiveness that allows him to maneuver within conversations in the gallery rather than telling visitors what the institution expects him to say.

I'm a little careful. I would really like to know more of what the Wex expects of me as a museum educator. I would hope that it's not particularly limiting. I would not be comfortable in a role where I was, you know, basically talking a company line constantly…You know currently I'm very comfortable with how the Wex has structured its education program. It seems very, very open to interpretation of the work with a really decent amount of research….(Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

Daniel's views toward his role in the gallery are informed by his education and professional experience, but they are also informed by lived experience. His upbringing encouraged an enthusiasm for intellectual curiosity and exploration where ideas could be debated. This was supported by his early exposure to the arts as the perfect landscape for this environment of free exchange and development.

I grew up in a very open intellectual environment, and freedom of thought and openness of thought was, was really important and the arts were really valued as, as as a place where certain kinds of experiences and ideas could be worked out and expressed in, in very complicated ways by both the makers and the consumers of that art; that it was a

really good healthy dialogue that produced better people. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

With the change to an employment model comes the question of impacts. How will this transition change the institution and the educator's role in it. In Daniel's view, one of the first things it will do is make the Wex a more welcoming place for the diversity of perspectives that are traditionally withheld from arts institutions, to the detriment of the spirit of open-dialogue and appreciation for outside experiences that Daniel values so greatly.

One of the, one of my overreaching concerns is that, since I believe that artistic dialogue is important as a, as a mark of a good culture…developing or maintaining an active arts community is really, really, really important. I think we're much less likely to be close minded and encamped in extreme positions if we can look at fresh situations and learn to appreciate things that have previously been outside of our own experience…So the equity and inclusion stuff. Absolutely. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

Daniel also wonders about the institution generally and what he sees as a potential issue of institutional power in regard to the promotion or relegation of particular artists. In his mind, there is a question as to where and how the institution is leveraging its resources to preference certain viewpoints and, by extension, artists.

I worry a little bit that the Wexner, or any institution so structured, hits a good and fair balance between supporting artists and leading the arts. I think especially in a public university. Right now, I think they probably do a pretty fair job. But also, and I don't understand the workings of the support and the media support that the Wex provides for

> artists sometimes. Whether or not, how they're, the artists, are chosen for support and…is that sort of the the Wex being able to enhance the work of certain artists that…they would have some kind of curatorial preference toward…Ethically, it's tricky. I think it's probably entirely manageable. People just need to be open and aware. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

The introduction of pay is also a significant contributing factor for Daniel for a number of reasons. He believes that it will add a degree of professionalism that wasn't possible or evident under the old volunteer model, and that this new sense of professionalism will encourage greater commitment and a greater work ethic among those who choose to participate. This will then create a stronger bond between the educator and the institution through the formal recognition of the relationship in the title of employee. More than that, he sees it as an opportunity to fulfill a moral obligation to value the labor of others with financial compensation regardless of each educator's individual need.

> I think being paid, I think, implies a degree of professionalism, that, that just isn't discussed in your volunteer situation…I think it both challenges you to make sure you're worth whatever it is you're being compensated. I think it also justifies working harder if you're inclined to anyway…And you know, it also probably implies that there is something more of a formal relationship between the institution and the educator…It, and all in all, that it's being part of a more ethical situation, which I think should make anybody feel better about what they're doing. Whether you need the money or not. (Daniel, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

As a museum educator, Daniel likes to split his attention between what is happening at the Wex and what is happening in the rest of the field. It is a practice that he's kept for most of his career, and doing it allows him the opportunity to compare notes, as it were, across the profession in order to better understand contemporary museum practice and how those practices may be applied in his own work.

> I, you know, am interested in art beyond my role as an educator at the Wex...to get to the Whitney Biennial literally in its last days…I followed biennials for a long time…But I always end up comparing what other people are doing with what is happening at the Wex. (Daniel, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

Specific to his beliefs related to his role as a museum educator, Daniel looks outside of the Wex to other institutions for inspiration and strategies to help bring more people in. Whether they are local or visitors who would not otherwise have access, it is important that every museum consider who has access to it's exhibitions and how it can reach greater audiences because it is one of the great contemporary issues in the field.

> Which brings me to another comparison about institutions and exhibitions, and that is how you extend the exhibition and make it more available to a public that isn't on site. I have kind of really fallen in the habit of tracking what the New Museum in New York is doing…And doing it in a way that…really does extend their programming and make it more available. And, you know, the Wex does not do a bad job with that. It really doesn't…But you know just, these are issues that are current and are affecting people and are probably, certainly should be addressed to some degree by everyone. (Daniel, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

Ultimately, its these two priorities — the visitor and the institution — that are center in Daniel's thoughts on how the Wex can understand its position among fellow art institutions and how it can leverage its resources and messaging to best serve everyone who passes through its doors. In this moment, Daniel believes that the Wex is managing this balance well and hopes that it will continue to do so moving forward.

> It often comes down to the museum's position in their own security…And I currently would applaud the Wex for their bravery, and I have fair confidence that people are agile enough to keep things going well. I certainly hope that's the case. And I would love to be able to, to hear sort of a nice discussion…about how those factors balance out and how it fulfills a role that is appropriate for the Wex. I'm not arguing that it's not. I argue rather that it is, but I'm not… I don't have the language. (Daniel, personal communication, September 19th, 2022)

Looking ahead to the future of the program and to the future impacts it might have, Daniel is encouraged by what he has seen so far. Although the new program is a dramatic departure from what came before, he feels that the team and the institution are moving in the right direction and that the Wex continues to be a space for free expression and discussion of ideas and beliefs.

> Yeah, I think the, the Wex is doing a great job with trying to find its way around the educator issue. It seems right now to be a very, very open forum for ideas and creativity, for adaptation…But I think the model that's being developed is good. (Daniel, personal communication, October 14th, 2022).

Concern for the visitor is also clear in his thoughts. Daniel has always wanted to make the gallery space as welcoming and useful for the visitor as possible. He believes that the Wex has always created the right conditions for this type of learning environment to exist, and he hopes that will continue to be the case as the new program develops.

> I would hope that we continue to make our tours very, very appropriate or as appropriate as possible for the group that happens to be in the room at the time. And that we meet them there and we develop as much as we can in a positive way, from whatever that situation is. (Daniel, personal communication, October 14th, 2022)

This is true not only for the visitors but for the educators, as well. Daniel prizes an environment where teachers and educators feel free to explore their own thoughts and beliefs and express them with one another in a way that is positive and mutually supportive. In his experience, this is the type of environment that leads to the greatest amount of learning and growth, and so he is encouraged by the team of educators he now works with at the Wex who he feels align with and contribute to that effort through their work.

> The, so, well the other thing too is, I hope that we continue to, to allow educators a lot of personal freedom in the way that, that they express the objectives of the institution. Because in my experiences as a teacher…where teachers were given a lot of freedom to be themselves and to express to some extent their own enthusiasms, the more that really positive energy helps to engage audience or students. And we've got a fabulous group of educators right now, I think. I'm always humbled to be in my peers' presence. (Daniel, personal communication. October 14th, 2022)

Daniel also hopes that the institution continues to extend itself further into the community so that larger portions of it can begin to see the Wex as a consistent and life-long arts resource.

> I would hope that there's a real continued effort to bring people from the broad community into the Wex for the art exhibitions, but you know, for the other offerings in the arts. It's a fabulous resource. It's, it could, it has the potential of being just an amazing resource for the larger community. And you know, I think everyone's doing a great job now in that regard. But I would hope that that, that direction would continue to be emphasized. (Daniel, personal communication, October 14th, 2022)

Daniel is still cautious, though. His experiences early in his career of the arts struggling to be recognized and supported, particularly through government funding, have taught him that a place in the arts is never guaranteed, even for established institutions. His hope is that the Wex will survive and succeed well into the future despite this, and will do so proudly as the institution it wants to be, held-up by a strong foundation of community support.

> But so, you know, I, I would just hope that the Wex can find a way to thrive. I was in the arts during the period of time when the NEA just, you know, was really repressed. I don't think you ever want to be so cautious that you weren't presenting the programs you think you should be presenting. On the other hand, I think it's really important at all times, to really, really build a broad base of support for institutional function. (Daniel, personal communication, October 14th, 2022)

For Daniel, the present and the future of the program are bright. There are challenges certainly, and things to be mindful of, but overall he is encouraged by the changes that have been made and for the possibilities that they represent. If he were to pick an area where he believes there is more work still to do, it would be toward a particular type of audience perspective that he would like to see more of in the gallery. He doesn't believe that he sees enough of the perspective of older generations in the galleries. He owes this to what he believes is a guiding assumption in museum education that members of older generations aren't interested in engaging with contemporary issues, particularly in the context of the art gallery. He doesn't want to shift the purpose or direction of the program to suit the needs of this group. He only wants to leave an open invitation for them, in recognition of the truth that even older people like a good challenge now and then.

> Other than that, I think, you know, I can't see anything in terms of my own role. There are things about including older perspectives and being in the program…and all of that. I would hope that we could engage more older populations in our exhibition touring…an assumption that we sometimes make is that…an older audience isn't interested and capable of engaging in what really are the issues of this time. I would never suggest that we cater to an older audience's perceived interests. But I would really hope that we would invite them in to the dialogue on where contemporary art is right now. It's good to be challenged as an old person (laughter). (Daniel, personal communication, October 14th, 2022)

Part 3

The Frame

An effective case must be bound, and so before it can be told it must first be framed. The chapters in the following section detail the essential context that informs the unique properties of this particular case, with each chapter building on the previous one and culminating in the final section: the telling of the case itself. The first chapter explores the topic of feminization in the context of education in America. The next chapter describes the history of the docent in American museums followed by a chapter on the topic of pay and its association with labor. The final chapter examines the history of the Wexner Center for the Arts and its education programs.

Chapter 6

Feminization

Feminization, very broadly, has many multiple and distinct meanings. These include a very direct counting of absolute or relative numbers of men and women, a curricular emphasis on school ethos, teaching strategies and education policy, and perceptions of the effects of any or all of these (Griffiths, 2006). An International Labor Office (ILO) report about OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries considers feminization to be a statistical meaning used for the calculating of percentages of men and women in a given profession (Wylie, 2000). Feminization employed specifically in the field of education has referred to markers of the number of women teachers in relation to men, the culture of the teaching environment and

whether it is biased towards females, and the utilization of the political tool of retaliation (Skelton, 2002; Smith, 1999).

Feminization in professions often refers to an increase of women, and commensurate decrease of men, working in a specific field with a concomitant decrease in pay (Kletchka, 2010). Feminized jobs are a category historically understood to be those assumed by women in patriarchal societies like cleaning, catering, nursing, entertainment, and textile work (Dalton, 2001; Giltinan, 2008). The expansion of predominantly female professions coincided with the expansion of education and welfare institutions (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982). Prior to the rise of capitalist societies, the household served as the primary productive unit of society with the wife carrying out the bulk of the productive work, namely childcare (Chodorow, 1978; Douglas, 1977). Childcare was conceived out of the bourgeois, patriarchal model of the family with a male earner and a female carer as the social and moral pillars in society (Holmlund, 1999; Vandenbroeck, 2006; Kaga et al., 2010). Women teachers, by extension, possessed a shared status with middle-class housewives as those expected to graciously perform childbearing tasks in reflection of raising healthy families (Morgade, 1997; Nosan, 2003).

Feminization's prevalence in the workforce is rooted in social and cultural essentialist beliefs that presume that the care of the young is what women naturally do (Cameron et al., 1999; Rolfe, 2005; Cortina & San Román, 2006; Yannoulas, 1996; Halford & Leonard, 2006). Gilligan (1977) argued that this presumption of care was also in part socially constructed given that women were socialized to include an ethic of care in their moral development (Kletchka, 2010). Notably, definitions of care developed out of third-wave feminism retroactively modified these essentialist gendered psychologies to place them within broader social and political

concerns (Cockburn, 2010). This gendered association with labor derives predominantly from a deeply embedded habitus that associates caring jobs with those of low-pay, low-status, and essentially female jobs (Van Laere et al., 2014; Rake, 2001). Care is thus constructed as the natural duty and responsibility of women, holding to a vision of care as unpaid labor conducted in private space (Lister, 1997; Noddings, 1984). Feminization could be said to have occurred, then, because of a perceived fit between economic need and defined gender roles and where no fit could be found, professional opportunities for women were few (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982).

One of the few acceptable professional opportunities for women was teaching. Training as a teacher was viewed as a good investment for a daughter's future due to the perception that it provided skills for marriage, increased the chances for attaining a dowry, and protected against widowhood (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982). Teaching was also seen as acceptable for women because it allowed the possibility of a social life and job outside of the home while still conforming to the bourgeoise patriarchal model of the family (Forrester, 2005; Barkham, 2008). Given that professional paths for women were few, teaching was therefore seen as both a viable choice and liberating experience (Fischman, 2007).

Feminization of education

In the United States, as elsewhere, teaching as a profession was born feminine (Deem, 1980; Acker, 1996; Hoffman, 2003; Cameron et al., 1999; Cameron, 2001; Griffiths, 2006). Developed initially by Pestalozzi, the image of the teacher as a surrogate parent was perfected and perpetuated by Friedrich Froebel who championed the notion that the ideal teacher of children is one that is like a mother made conscious (Steedman, 1985; Fischman, 2007; Burman, 1994; Vandenbroeck, 2003; Peeters, 2008). Feminist historians argue that the stereotypical

impression that women are best suited for education was further reinforced through attachment theory which portrays the mother as the ideal childcare worker (Singer, 1993a).

Motivated by a commitment to evangelical principles, women in the 19th and 20th century mobilized in pursuit of personal missions taking the form of paid careers in the church, education, and other fields deemed to be in the realm of social housekeeping (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982). Teachers and teaching became paradigmatic images reflecting women as lay missionaries devoting their lives to the nurturing of future generations (Fischman, 2007; Douglas, 1977). Women who attended universities, many of whom also became docent educators in museums, attended institutions whose mission reflected this mandate, such as Wellesley College and its motto, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Nosan, 2003, p. 50). This early feminization of the profession presented teaching as a semi-religious calling, and it soon became a standard qualifying factor for admission into the profession (Fischman, 2007).

The representation of education, and women's role within it, as an extension of the home is further supported by patriarchal administrative structures that position male supervisors over female teachers (Alliaud, 1993). This structure, as with the presumption of women as teachers, is considered natural, wherein women teach under the supervision of men while receiving less pay (Fischman, 2007). It is a microcosm of 20th century American society permeated with gendered hierarchies, not only in education but in religion and healthcare, as well (Kletchka, 2010). These conventional, and presumably "natural," gender roles were mapped out and set within educational settings cementing the perception of the maternal teacher and the paternal administrator (Prentice & Theobald, 1991). The presumptions informing these gendered roles also extended to the presumption of education level deemed appropriate for practitioners with the

elite level of secondary education reserved for men while women were relegated to the division of elementary education, the one place where they could achieve standing and recognition outside the home in a time of great hostility toward women employed in the public arena (Weiner & Kallo, 2000).

Industrialization

The introduction of women into the industrial labor force sparked a complex interaction of economic, structural, and cultural forces (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982). With the new industrialized economy, women's participation in public life increased while the effects of industrialization in their private lives were felt in the supplanting of most tasks of domestic production (Giltinan, 2008). As these traditional methods of domestic production ended, women's self-esteem and pride also faltered, leading some to seek new areas of expertise (Giltinan, 2008). Industrialization also had a tremendous impact on the field and feminization of education, primarily effected by the number and types of jobs created for men which often paid more than teaching (Boyle, 2004). Due to low comparable pay with jobs in urban centers, school committees tasked with finding new teachers often searched fruitlessly for men before finally hiring women (Rury, 1989), who continued to stake their professional claim in areas abandoned or unwanted by men (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982; Douglas, 1977). What men they were able to find and hire were often found to be just as difficult to keep, as they were far more likely to abandon the job of teaching than their female counterparts (Tedesco, 1980, 1982).

Professional shift

Profession, as it's been understood in sociological and historical contexts, tends to exclude fields controlled by women due to a perceived lack of autonomy and expertise crucial to

the concept of professional power (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982). The popular conception of female professions as those naturally suited to women compounds this traditional practice with the assumption that professional qualifications were not needed to perform them (Van Laere et al., 2014). Lack of formal qualifications, therefore, resulted in a lower social status and a reinforcement of the accepted belief that education was a field reserved for women (Van Laere et al., 2014). Inevitably, the negative effects resulting from this lack of professionalism were applied to non-formal education fields, as well. Citing a lack of overall professionalization, insufficient academic preparation, inconsistencies in the scope and responsibilities of the work, and variability in public perception, scholars and researchers argue that educators in informal institutions struggle to succeed professionally and financially (Rende et al., 2021).

Museums

19th-century notions of improvement and the sublime shaped not only the discipline of art history but the context and language of the art museum as a sacred space of uplift and improvement in that, "both docent and curator are job titles the museum world borrowed from the Catholic Church" (Giltinan, 2008, p. 104). As an extension of the educative role assigned to women in American society, women are likewise pinned as the ideal embodiment of the educator in the art museum, amplified by the perception of education in the art museum as the absence of an intellectual arena (Kletchka, 2006). Feminist museologists note that contemporary museum spaces are largely staffed by women (Levin, 2010) with the majority of them employed in learning, outreach, and community engagement (Downs, 1994; Miller, 1994).

Men and women have historically conformed to separate gender roles and spheres (Giltinan, 2008). In the confines of the art museum, curation, collection, organization,

scholarship, and the categorization of art emerged as the dominant male tasks of museum work (Kletchka, 2021). Education on the other hand, as is the case across society, is largely female and, significantly, primarily staffed with unpaid volunteers leaving education in museums positioned low in the institutional hierarchy (Arth, 1994). An Andrew W. Mellon Foundation survey from 2015 found that 60% of staff in American art museums are women, a number which increases to 70% when isolating the jobs of curators, conservators, and educators (Schonfeld et al., 2015).

Seeing the profession of teaching as frivolous and of low-esteem betrays a perception that runs deeper than what might be referred to as women's issues; it is a reflection of our attitudes and perceptions toward museums (Weber, 1995). There are consequences to a field becoming increasingly and disproportionately female such as lower wages and a decrease in status (Brumberg & Tomes, 1982; Cain Miller, 2016; Kletchka, 2006). In the art museum, educators become "subjects of incoherence," misunderstood and vaguely defined in relation to their cohorts in curatorial and other departments whose positions are historically well-understood (Kletchka, 2021).

Chapter 7

By Any Other Name…

"We're inviting them into a new program and what the difference between a docent and an educator was, was a real sticking point. We have lots of discussions about that word docent because that's another thing, that was their title" (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022).

Education and the art museum are synonymous (Petitte, 1984). The model for education in the art museum traces its lineage to the Lyceum movement in the 19th century and its principles of enlightenment through lectures, seminars, and debates (Petitte, 1984). They served as expressions of that spirit of enlightenment and an enthusiasm for tolerance and equality of opportunity in education (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Out of this movement sprang the first museums in the United States including the American Museum of Natural History and the

Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1870s (Blackmon, 1981). Early museum professionals believed that these institutions had a higher purpose to address the social, aesthetic, and educational needs of the people through a universal language understood by all (Lucas, 2008).

Volunteerism in America

Volunteerism describes efforts addressing needs beyond the necessities of life and has been associated with certain intangibilities such as that which makes life worthwhile, the improvement of life and society, the experiencing of joy, and a sense of transcendence from greater self-realization (Petitte, 1984). Other definitions focus on the actions themselves, performed without promise of compensation, coercion by law or force, or physiological compulsion (Smith & Baldwin, 1974).

In the United States, volunteerism has a long and unique tradition with American national identity as a public service as well as with colonialism (Clover, 2015). This civic humanist tradition traces its roots in the United States to Protestant Puritanism and European immigration (Ludwig, 2007). For proponents of this conceptualization of volunteerism, to do good was equal to religious grace, and to do good meant enacting religious freedom through missionary work, evangelization, and charity (Ludwig, 2007). Modern volunteer outlets are an evolution of community-minded men's clubs originally organized by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia starting with the club Junto for craftsmen and businessmen (Giltinan, 2008). From these early iterations came countless others focusing on a variety of professions and public services such as volunteer fire departments, academies, and hospital groups (Giltinan, 2008). Voluntary associations for women first grew out of churches, culminating in the formation of the Women's

Sanitary Commission during the Civil War and later developing into women's clubs such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Junior League (Giltinan, 2008).

Museums and the volunteer

Museums in the United States, and elsewhere, rely heavily on the donated time and labor of volunteers (Clover, 2015; Newsom & Silver, 1978; Giltinan, 2008). Known as Docents, volunteers in education lead tour groups through galleries and exhibitions and are sometimes and in some places also known as interpreters, tour guides, and gallery instructors (Giltinan, 2008). This civic participation through volunteerism allows organizations to accomplish more than they would without it (Clover, 2015; Petitte, 1984). In 1963, a survey conducted by the American Association of Museums (AAM) found that 131 of the respondent art museums used volunteers as tour guides (Smithsonian Institution, 1965). A decade later in 1974, a survey contracted by the National Endowment for the Arts showed that more than two-thirds (67%) of the staff members of art museums were volunteers, half of which were working in education (National Endowment for the Arts, 1974).

The Institute for Volunteering Research (2006) reported that museums continued to rely on volunteers because their service allowed them to provide programs they would not otherwise be able to offer, save money that would be spent on paid staff, and increase staff diversity. In 1978, fifty years after the Newsom and Silver report on the prevalence of volunteer use in museums, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and American Association of Museum Directors (AAMD) released the *Impact Study*, which reported similar findings regarding the use of docents (NAEA/AAMD Core Team, 2018). So critical have volunteers

become to the operation and survival of museums that, without them, smaller institutions with fewer available resources would likely have no educational programs at all (Petitte, 1984).

Origins of the museum docent

The first mention of the need for expert guidance in the art museum was in an 1892 letter written by a Museum of Fine Arts Boston trustee named J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr. (Gilman, 1918, cited in Schero, 2021). Education had been part of the charter of American museums since the 1870s, but for most of that time education in museums was interpreted to mean the acquisition, preservation, and exhibition of art (Petitte, 1984). With no other mandate, early American art museums became "gloomy temples" of assorted random objects that failed to educate the public in any significant way (Dana, 1917, cited in Schero, 2021).

Docents are often referred to in the feminine, but the first use of the term docent in an art museum referred to a man, Benjamin Ives Gilman, the first to conceive of docents as gallery guides (Giltinan, 2008). Gilman, who served as the Secretary of the MFA Boston until 1925, believed that museums had three essential duties: to preserve (*gardant*), to exhibit (*monstrant*), and to teach (*docent*) (Gilman, 1918, cited in Schero, 2021).

There is some general disagreement as to where Gilman developed the title docent from. One version of the story is that Gilman borrowed the term from the French noun *docent* meaning a college or university professor and/or someone who conducts tours (Webster, 1983, cited in Petitte, 1984). Another version is that the term was taken from Latin. Docent, like the term curator, has Latin roots, and the Latin root for docent, *docere*, means "to teach" (Giltinan, 2008). Using the Latin root also lent the term docent a sense of authority and tradition given its strong association with antiquity (Bleick, 1980; Giltinan, 2008). The argument for the Latin derivation

is further strengthened when factoring in the association to Catholicism mentioned previously whereby terms such as docent and curator were borrowed from the Church. It should be noted, however, that Giltinan (2008) is the only source I found that suggests this connection making its veracity less reliable.

In 1907, Gilman asserted that art museums needed interpreters to enhance a visitor's experience (Petitte, 1984). He believed that it was more important to inspire new visitors to the museum than to instruct them in art history or art making, and soon after in the same year the first docents were introduced publicly at the MFA Boston (Giltinan, 2008). Not long after, other museums followed with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History introducing docents, as well (DePrizio, 2016; Giltinan, 2008). Until Gilman's departure from the MFA Boston in 1925, he, along with other male officers of the museum, provided the museum's docent services (Giltinan, 2008).

From 1907 to 1920, the MFA Boston used the term *docent* to apply specifically to the hired, paid staff of the museum, a period of time that began with the hiring of the first professional docent, Garrick M. Borden (Giltinan, 2008). Other docents followed including Louis Earle Rowe, an assistant in the MFA Egyptian Department (Schero, 2021).

In the decades between 1930 and 1980, museum education experienced substantial growth in the areas of the number of museum educators, variations in educational offerings, and attention to visitor needs (Schero, 2021). The need for staffing additional educators grew out of a combination of factors including a shift in focus toward school-aged children and the diversification of educational programming (Adam, 1937; Low, 1948; Munro, 1933). Further, the demographics of art museum audiences and American social, cultural, and economic norms

changed, resulting in a transformation of the definition and role of docents, leading eventually to women assuming a majority in the profession (Giltinan, 2008).

Docent profile

In Gilman's book *Museum Ideals*, the chapter *Exegesis* outlines the ideal practices of the museum docent with the positives including the guiding of student imagination and attention, and the negatives including gossip, making generalities, and praise (Giltinan, 2008). Hartt (1910), in an article on docents in *The Outloo*k, later described the docent in more specific terms saying,

> Awakened appreciation, the opening of eyes—that is the docent's province. Call him a guide and you miss the point. Any average-witted man can learn to convoy visitors about a museum deafening them with his glib, machine-made patter of names and dates ... But the docent is a bird of another feather. Broadly intelligent, trained to know not only pictures and statues but people, versed in the delicate art of imparting not information alone but inspiration — the real docent is born, not made. (p. 703, cited in DePrizio, 2016)

Miner, an Associate Curator at the American Museum of Natural History, had a much simpler definition composed of just a handful of traits: a thorough knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, a sympathy for others referred to as "tact", and personality (Miner et al., 1919, cited in Schero, 2021).

Later ideas about the constitution of the docent were more specific, a reflection of how considerably the idea of the docent had developed in the years since Gilman's first conceptualization. New definitions focused on specific character traits and personal skills related

to learning and teaching needed to ensure the best chance of a successful educational experience. According to one such definition,

> Museum instructors must not only be persons of real culture and good training, but they must have broad vision and an unusual amount of initiative. They must be able to think clearly and express themselves with accuracy in an entertaining and inspiring manner. They must be dynamic enough to arouse both interest and thought on the part of those instructed so that each person will become an active participant in the work. They must be creative workers and act as pioneers in continually thinking out and presenting new methods. They must have an understanding of psychology and know how to meet the average man and woman as well as groups from the schools . . . . Considerable initiative is required to work out different methods of presentation so each group may receive the best type of instruction. (Ramsay, 1938, p. 210, cited in Kletchka, 2010)

Women and museum education

Gilman could not have predicted the outsized emphasis that museums would place on the role of the docent nor the interest that museums would hold for those women privileged to do the work (Petitte, 1984). Women's clubs like the Junior League, formed in the wake of volunteer associations, had provided women with informal educations in organizational management, business administration, and wealth accumulation through fundraising, which the women used in their roles as docents in art museums across the country (Giltinan, 2008). The mostly affluent, educated, white middle-class women working through these volunteer associations were able to strategically leverage their status and stereotypical gender traits to occupy positions in the traditionally male-dominated public sphere of the museum (Giltinan, 2008; Douglas, 1977). By

1908, the NEA had established a Department of Women's Organizations declaring them, "open to any professional or volunteer worker in education" (Giltinan, 2008, p. 121).

Docents in many museums are understood to belong to a particular demographic, specifically white, cis-gendered women who are university educated and either retired or semi-retired (Haigney, 2020; Merritt, 2019). It is a profile that is remarkably unchanged from prior descriptions of docents as white, female, and from the upper-middle class segment of the community (Bleick, 1980). Other qualifying characteristics of the museum docent include women who were beyond childbearing or raising and did not need to earn an income, meaning they had the time and the ability to volunteer (Kletchka, 2010; Graves, 2020). The general assumption from this profile is that docents are older (Pekarik, 2008), but additional demographic information shows that a majority of museum volunteers identify as over the age of 55 (Merritt, 2019).

Docent motivations

The motivations that spur docents to invest their time, knowledge, and expertise in the art museum have been well-addressed in the literature. One of the primary motivations that docents most often name is a passion for life-long learning, as well as great interest in the subject matter (Hoppe, 2008). More than just gathering new knowledge, docents have also noted an enjoyment for sharing the knowledge they find most fascinating with visitors (Pekarik, 2008). Additional motivations include a sense of fulfillment from giving back to society, a strong belief in the institution's stated mission, interacting with visitors, feeling a sense of belonging among peers, and remaining active in retirement (Office of Policy and Analysis, 2007). Broadly, volunteering offers docents a positive environment for the benefit of their own psychological well-being,

suggesting that those who volunteer as docents may need it as much or more than the institution needs them (Petitte, 1984).

Beyond the personal and non-quantifiable benefits that docents name as a motivating factor are the tangible benefits that many of them receive from their institutions which can include anything from name tags, store discounts, and guest passes to newsletters, discounted memberships, and parking passes (Hoppe, 2008). These benefits and motivations combined allow contemporary institutions to maintain the volunteer tradition through physical renumeration and through the opportunity to work with an organization that closely aligns with individual docents' personal values (Light & Keller, 1979). As a result, docents are likely to self-select into those institutions whose pedagogical and philosophical beliefs match their own (Hoppe, 2008).

Docents in the literature

Past studies of docents have generally presented them less as individuals and more as a monolith, focusing on them purely in terms of their roles as mediators of a gallery experience (Modlin, Jr. et al., 2011). Examples of the ways in which docents have been described as such include viewing docents as the museum's voice in interactions with visitors and in challenges to injustice (Acuff & Evans, 2014), public-facing volunteers whose positionality regarding their knowledge base shapes perceptions around works of art (Anderson & Keenlyside, 2021), and as the essential interface between visitors and the institution (Ap & Wong, 2001).

Importantly, the depiction of docents in the literature and through other sources has also often been problematic, relying heavily on stereotype (Graves, 2020). As they are the most ubiquitous sources of information about docents, this reality can have significant consequences.

In a study by Susan Ashley (2016) of docents at the Royal Ontario Museum, it was found that volunteers were consistently marginalized and underestimated by members of staff while simultaneously patronized in a gendered way with staff adopting monikers like feisty and busy-bodies (Graves, 2020).

At the 2011 National Docent Symposium, in a presentation titled *The Good, the Bad, and the Docent*, one of the first slides said, "It takes intestinal fortitude to deal with problem docents" (Krupka & Rutledge, 2011, slide 2). In an article for *The Wall Street Journal* by Joe Queenan (2011), Queenan wrote to never take a tour with a docent because, in retirement, they become "pathologically garrulous" and turn from just being annoying to being truly dangerous. Petite (1984), in her dissertation on docents, segregated the participating docents she observed into five types which she labeled pluralists, pedagogues, professionals, prima donnas, and polly-annas (Graves, 2020).

A more recent example can be found in a dissertation by Rudham (2012) which used critical ethnography to study docents' interactions with students on school tours. In describing the docents who agreed to be involved in her research, Rudham asked, "Is this a desperate act of a dying breed who feels that their world is crumbling before their eyes?" (Rudham, 2012, p. 202). In light of such characterizations, I agree with Graves' view that, "While the author displayed great sensitivity to students of color visiting her museum, she resorted to ageist and sexist tropes in her characterization of the docents she studied" (Graves, 2020, p. 62).

The use of sexist and ageist characterizations makes it possible for the powerful to ignore or mock docents while reinforcing negative stereotypes about them (Graves, 2020). In the case of Rudham's work, her vivid comparisons betray a visceral hostility on the part of a staff member in

relation to volunteers, reflecting real tensions experienced by these two complimentary groups (Stebbins, 1982). Such bias, in effect, discredits the researcher's conclusions regardless of how well-developed they are (Graves, 2020). Other researchers describe docents as incapable or unwilling to learn and change, an oversimplification that denies docents of their individual agency and capability for growing in their practice (Schero, 2021). There is also the important element of gendered characterizations. In Petite (1984), women are encouraged not to seek attention, mention their own opinions, or seek compensation (Graves, 2020). Furthermore, her use of dismissive epithets suggests both that she held a low opinion of women volunteers and that this opinion would be accepted by her professors and the broader museum community (Graves, 2020).

Professionalism

"Professionals teach and volunteers give tours" (Williams, 1976, p. 3).

The work of being a docent is no longer viewed as a way to waste spare time (Petitte, 1984). While they are unpaid, docents are expected to be professional through their conduct and contributions (Sweney, 2007). In fact, the term professional has appeared regularly throughout the history of museum education and the history of docents (Schero, 2021). The terms *professional* and *professionalize* describe actions taken by an individual in a designated occupation complete with its own credentials and regulatory body overseeing qualifications and standards (Wilensky, 1964). Since the role of docent historically has few if any qualifications, they are perceived more as para-professionals, chosen on the basis of their individual ability and trained with the expectation to meet stated job requirements (Petitte, 1984; Grinder & McCoy, 1985). The classification of para-professional also reflects efforts in the late 1980s and early

1990s to elevate the museum educator position evidenced in the report *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (Hirzy, 1992).

The movement to professionalize museum educators began in 1915 and was quickly followed by further efforts in 1919 at an AAM conference session which was dedicated to discussing ideas for the appropriate preparation of museum educators (Howe, 1946; Miner et al., 1919, cited in Schero, 2021). In 1969, in an effort to unite museum educators into a single professional body, the Museum Educator's Roundtable (MER), later called the Museum Education Roundtable, was formed as an informal network for museum educators in Washington, D.C. (Williams, 1994). A decade later, the United States Association of Museum Volunteers (later changed to American Association for Museum Volunteers) was incorporated in 1979, becoming an AAM affiliate by 1981 (*Who we are*, n.d.). Also in 1981, The Museum Education Affiliate Group was formed within NAEA, which then led to the creation of the Museum Education Division of NAEA. The work of this group advanced museum education by establishing professional educator networks, offering sessions that connected classrooms to museums, and creating a forum for research, theory, and practice (Schero, 2021).

In that same year, The Indianapolis Museum of Art hosted the first National Docent Symposium (Fischer, 1991). The NDS was formed out of a recognition for the desire to organize a space for the exchange of ideas for docents, guides, and interpreters (Keller & Kramer, 2001), and represented a commitment on the part of docents to examine and discuss their educational responsibilities (Petitte, 1984). The symposium in 1985 was hosted by The Oakland Museum, at which the 400 attendees voted to open all future meetings to docents from institutions of all disciplines in addition to those in the fine arts (Fischer, 1991). Each of the docent symposia

culminated in the publishing of a Docent handbook. This practice continues today with the most recent handbook, titled *Tours with Children and Teens: A Handbook for Docents and Guides*, published by the National Docent Symposium Council in 2022 (*Handbooks*, n.d.).

Chapter 8

Two Pennies

"What would it mean if we reversed the institutional story to look at people first?" (Whitaker, 2021, p. 254).

Compensation in relation to informal educators has been part of museum education discourse for decades (Morrissey et al., 2020). Ignited once again by recent global hardships, conversations and debates around educator professionalization, value, and equity are in focus as major concerns for the field at large (Rende et al., 2021). Employees are a museum's most valuable asset suggesting that wage equity, as one of their primary concerns, belongs at the heart of museum discourse (Nie, 2017). Recent shifts in perspective, aided by a focus on social justice practices, have propelled the experiences of museum workers to a position of prominence as sites

for transformation (Catlin-Legutko & Taylor, 2021; Murawski, 2021). A shift on which the future life of art museums depends (Whitaker, 2021).

The history of the art museum is fraught with tensions arising from their elitist and colonial foundations and their mission of education and public outreach (Whitaker, 2009). They are foundations informed by vestiges of the 17th century curiosity cabinet and 19th century beliefs that culture could elevate the masses (Bennett, 1995; Coleman, 1939, cited in Whitaker, 2021). Derived from this elitist history is a lack of focus on pay and the structural economics of museums which, through architectural expansion in the final decades of the 20th century, pay enormous operating expenses that constrain the salary as a budgetary item (Whitaker, 2021). Intensifying the lack of natural and consistent pressure on museums to offer higher wages is the relative scarcity of jobs in the art museum field. According to a 2018 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report, there were only 174,000 total museum jobs in the whole of the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018; Friedman, 2019).

Nolan, in the midst of the Great Recession in 2008, described museum educators as being in a state of crisis, helpless in the face of museums struggling through financial hits and looking to museum educators as the obvious sacrifice (Nolan, 2009). The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 has had a similar and no-less devastating effect on museums and museum workers. As a result of financial losses in the immediate aftermath of the Covid pandemic, the American Alliance of Museums estimated that one-third of U.S. museums might close (American Alliance of Museums, 2020). Looking closer at the effects of the pandemic on the internal operations of museums, Covid-19 revealed weaknesses that were already there and were now exacerbated by the crisis (UNESCO, 2020). As funding structures continue to change and the call for expansion

and growth grows louder, these gaps and weaknesses become more and more apparent (Middleton & Hagen, 2022). Prime among these were that staff were already receiving low or contingent pay, a fact contributing significantly to a lack of inclusion in art museums' workforces (Whitaker, 2021).

It is important to clarify who is meant by staff who receive low or contingent pay. The most precarious and poorly paid in museums are LGBTQ+ staff and staff of color (Middleton, 2021). They have known what so many of us are only now, in the wake of the pandemic, coming to know (or perhaps choosing to see) which is that institutions do not care for workers so the workers must care for each other (Antar et al., 2020). This issue, and others, which are so well-known by marginalized members of staff are now more salient for white staff members who have historically enjoyed greater levels of privilege and security in the museum (Middleton & Hagen, 2022). An Andrew W. Mellon Foundation survey found that education staff in museums were majority white and female (Schonfeld et al., 2015). For these predominantly white educators, global events like the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have contributed to their growing understanding of how privilege has allowed them such extended careers in a field with historically low pay (Rende et al., 2021).

Marxist and socialist feminist perspectives

Liberal and socially progressive discourses shroud the art museum's long-standing inequities, in the form of poor wages, and reflect a patriarchal internal hierarchy (Nie, 2017). Marxism positions labor as a form of social reproduction layered within capitalism such that hidden within one layer of social relation, in the form of the capitalist and the worker, is another layer in the form of the household between husband and wife (Armstrong, 2021). For Marxist

feminists, the focus is on imperialism and its reliance on women and oppressive ideologies of gender, given that imperialism relies on gender oppression ideologies to capture new markets, force workers into waged work, decrease wages, and exploit resources (Armstrong, 2021).

Socialist feminist praxis developed new explanations for the comparatively low pay of women's work in the late 19th century by challenging the factory as a site solely for men's work and seeking entry for women into collective bargaining units and unions (Zetkin, 1976). Socialist feminism synthesizes feminist analyses of gender, social reproduction, and economics while broadening traditional views of women's oppression to include these influences (Armstrong, 2021). This intersection of economics and gender discrimination is well-entrenched in American society, and as such it serves as a useful lens through which museum practices can be better understood (Nie, 2017).

Feminization and pay

Gendered power relations in the context of the debate surrounding the issue of pay, specifically the gender pay gap, are embodied and perpetuated daily (Equality Challenge Unit, 2010; European Union, 2007). In the field of museum education, this perpetuation is evident in the gendered relation between museum careers and the position they are granted within the institution. As the profession of museum education has been feminized, educators themselves are positioned beneath more masculine and intellectually-perceived careers such as curators (Kletchka, 2006), with around a 20% lower compensation level (Callihan & Feldman, 2018). The museum field has responded to the issue of gender discrimination in the past, notably with the formation of the Gender Equity in Museums Movement led by Anne Ackerson and Joan Baldwin (Ackerson & Baldwin, 2017). However, with the museum field still bearing the mark of a pink-

collar profession, more attention than ever is focused on ways in which to address pay inequality and gender stereotypes in the museum (Ackerson & Baldwin, 2017; Rende et al., 2021).

The term pink-collar profession refers to a field or profession consisting predominantly of underpaid women (Nie, 2017). According to a 2017 National Museum Salary Survey, museum educators were shown to be predominantly women (83%) (American Alliance of Museums, 2017). Coupled with that is the fact that the term pink-collar profession has become a sort of short-hand for women's work, labor that has been consistently devalued by the American labor market with suppressed salaries to match (Howe, 1977; Levanon et al., 2009; Nie, 2017). As a result, according to that same AAM survey, women working in museums make less than men in the same jobs (American Alliance of Museums, 2017). Connecting this data with the point I made earlier about the precariousness of contingent and part-time staff, if the data factored in race, it would likely show that white women are paid more than Black and Latina women and that cisgender women are paid more than transgender women (Patten, 2016; Nath, 2018).

One of the more serious points to come from this debate, and one that warrants genuine consideration, is that museum professionals might disregard these arguments and allow inequities to continue because very generally they consider themselves to be more progressive and un-biased resulting in a lower level of vigilance (Kendi, 2019; Nie, 2019). This potentiality exists despite words like inclusivity, diversity, and equality becoming industry buzzwords intended to define the future of museums (Nie, 2017). At all times, it is important to remember that lower wages can and have depressed participation by those from marginalized backgrounds and that this effect can diminish stated commitments to diversity and inclusion (Wetenhall, 2019).

Compounding the issue of pay inequity is the concept of sweat equity in which lower pay is given as compensation for jobs with a strong association with service, or what is known in the museum field as the museum sacrifice measure (Merritt, 2016). This phenomenon, in the context of museum education, is characterized by the exploitation of highly motivated educators invested in contributing to the museum's public service mission (Merritt, 2014; Rende et al., 2021), an expectation that, given the gendered nature of museum education, is also heavily laden with sexism (Nie, 2017).

The public face of the museum field engenders the esteem of the public trust and promotes the value of a love for learning while simultaneously leveraging museum educators' passion on the idea that they should be grateful for the work because they are doing what they love (Friedman, 2019). Museum professionals have confirmed as much when describing their interactions with museum administrators. They tell of senior staff taking advantage of them out of a belief that because they are passionate about their work it is okay to pay them less for it, and that museum education is a calling undeserving of higher wages (Rende et al., 2021). This expectation regarding a job's intrinsic value as fair compensation is, in effect, another form of inequity designed to perpetuate white, male supremacy in museums by associating education with the work of women and therefore less deserving of fair pay (Rende et al., 2021).

Pay and empathy

At the root of pay equity is empathy (Whitaker, 2021). Empathy, in turn, is at the heart of ally-ship, and a museum's ability to understand and share the feelings of its communities toward developing a more profound purpose to the work of museums (Ng et al., 2017). Tied to an ethics of care, it, along with emotion, is valued more than rules and rights (Hamington, 2010). It

demands that we see ourselves reflected in the Other who then becomes a mirror reflecting our image back to us (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012). Being in relation to the Other this way makes us answerable to them and responsible for them (Cavell, 1979). Without empathy, care is not experienced as care, and when it is offered, not through an immediate response but through reasoning, it is experienced as insincere and calculated (Keller & Kittay, 2017).

Illustrative of this concept is the practice of framing pay as an expense rather than an investment, a demonstrative assumption of the worker as a burden rather than an asset (Salerno & Gold, 2019). Such an assumption carries deep associations with the capitalist position on workers and pay. Under capitalism, workers receive wages which capitalists take as profit, leaving those who produce to receive no recognition for their labor in either wages or in social value and rendering them invisible or a burden to the system (Armstrong, 2021). Such sentiments are embodied by museum professionals, many of whom profess a desire to leave the field due to disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the consistent failure of the institution to address concerns related to systems and practices that devalue their work as educators and perpetuate systemic racism, classism, and sexism (Rende et al., 2021).

One further threat to the stability of the people-centric museum is that senior staff receiving significantly higher pay might be insensitive to the marginal yet critically important difference between what museums pay their workers and a living wage (Whitaker, 2021). However, even assuming a feminist position that centers on equal representation of women in leadership positions is not, on its own, the most appropriate solution. Critiques of such a representational-political view of women in museum leadership beg an infusion of a class-based inequality perspective, noting that issues of pay inequality will persist regardless of who is at the

top if that person is making twenty-times more than their employees (Fox et al., 2021). It is a critique granted even greater significance in light of the rise of managerialism and its effect on women leaders as they navigate the dilemma of whether or not to embrace, subvert, or resist the masculinity that is inherent to their role (Griffiths, 2006). Responsible empathy should be used as a strategic imperative to guide the work of the institution at every level of leadership, including museum directors and members of the board, who together prioritize the work across the museum (Ng et al., 2017).

Pay and change

When the internal issues of the museum are ignored, public preaching of high-minded ideals appear disingenuous and short-sighted (Nie, 2017). Museum educators are one of the groups facing the greatest struggle for professional and financial recognition (Rende et al., 2021). Pay is the greatest catalyst for change, a reaction which begins with managers and administrators in lieu of an economic system that does not adequately address the issue of equity (Whitaker, 2021). Viewing the art museum workforce as an asset earns it an equivalent status to other assets of the organization and the goodwill of the public and its ability to see themselves in the art museum's image (Whitaker, 2021). People, then, are everything. As Whitaker states,

> Those people may appear interchangeable or expendable, but to center their stories is to pave a pathway toward a more stable and exciting future for art museums in the United States. To ignore them is to risk that the status quo works until it does not, leaving museums penny-wise and pound-foolish, skimping on pay because they can, only to later realize they have lost much greater assets of public trust. (2021, p. 254)

Chapter 9

The Wex

"It's a pretty new institution…just a little over 30 years old" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

The Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University is a multidisciplinary arts complex serving the university and surrounding community through its programming in the visual, performing, and media arts (Stinson, 1998). It was founded in 1989, and when it opened it was conceived of as a multidisciplinary research laboratory for contemporary art, combining and expanding the University Gallery of Fine Art and the Mershon Auditorium (Hoppe, 2008). The original push for the expansion and subsequent establishment of The Wexner Center was undertaken by the university's College of Art (Stinson, 1998), also known as the College of the

Arts and now referred to as the College of Arts and Sciences. Robert Stearns was the first Director of The Wexner Center for the Arts, and he was appointed in 1988 (Stinson, 1998).

Conversations among the College of Art faculty about a concept for the new center began as early as the 1970s (Stinson, 1998). Prior to the Wexner Center, the exhibition of fine art was limited to the University Galleries. Originally opened under the auspices of the College of Art in 1966, the Galleries were first housed on the ground floor of Hopkin's Hall before being expanded to a collection of spaces split between there and Sullivant Hall under the direction of Betty Collings in 1975 (Marcus, 2022). The initial plan for the expansion of what was then called the University Gallery of Fine Art (Marcus, 2022) soon ballooned and, with the administration's support, resulted in a proposed project estimated to cost around $7 million (Stinson, 1998).

It was here that Les Wexner, a prominent Columbus philanthropist, expressed interest in the project by pledging $10 million toward its construction and announcing an architectural competition that was ultimately won by J. Peter Eisenman (Stinson, 1998). According to material published by The Wexner Center at the time of its opening, construction of the Center began in 1985 after Wexner's original contribution was increased to $25 million (About the Wexner Center for the Arts, 1989, cited in Stinson, 1998).

In the year before the first director was appointed, in July of 1987, a report was released by the College of Art outlining The Wexner Center as both a visual arts center and a resource for teaching and research (Stinson, 1998). In the beginning, during the initial planning stages, there was a mandated relationship defining the new center as a project under the auspices of the College of Art with the expectation, given its location on campus, that The Wexner Center would carry a more direct and purposeful mission of education (Stinson, 1998). Elaborating on this

vision, the Center would be a multidisciplinary institution that brought together artists, historians, designers, and other scholars across a wide variety of disciplines, as well as provide students with professional experience through apprenticeships and internships and establishing relationships among academic departments (Stinson, 1998).

In reality, this proposed relationship with its focus on education never happened (Stinson, 1998), at least not at first. College of Art administrators in the early years of the Center noted that at the time of The Wexner opening it was represented only as a cultural institution in Columbus without any reference to its association with the university (Stinson, 1998). As a probable consequence of the poor early publicity, students at Ohio State interacted very little with the Center, and communication between Wexner Center staff and the College of Art was minimal (Stinson, 1998). Thus, despite its campus location and close proximity to students, the Wexner Center became distanced from its university audience (Hoppe, 2008). Internal organizational structures and decisions didn't help matters. Operations within the center did nothing to encourage development between the campus and the Wex, exhibitions were scheduled during the periods of time in which classes were not in session, and the Wexner Center's hours of operation conflicted with the schedules of everyone including the students, faculty, and staff (Stinson, 1998).

Education at The Wex

The education program at the Wexner Center had a less than stellar start. Administrators in the College of Art said at the time that the Wexner Center's educational purpose was so nebulous as to likely be impossible to carry out (Stinson, 1998). However, the educational mission of the Wexner Center has since become clearer. In a later version of the Wexner Center's

mission statement, education is mentioned in reference to programming and the context of the Center as a laboratory for exploration where established and emerging artists test ideas (The Wexner Center for the Arts, 2015, cited in Moser, 2015), a mission which today remains largely unchanged (*Mission*, 2023).

Community docent program

The Wexner Center for the Arts began its community docent program in 1991 and for most of that history has fielded a corps of volunteer educators largely from the surrounding Columbus area and whose demographics match closely with historic trends, namely individuals who are older/retired, white, and female (Hoppe, 2008). In 2006, the formal position of Educator for Docent and Teacher Programs was created. The position was first held by Tracie McCambridge, who had previously worked as an education specialist at the Kohler Arts Center (Hoppe, 2008).

In its original iteration, the community docent program was open to anyone who was not enrolled as a student and who completed a mandatory training process prior to receiving active status (Hoppe, 2008). To be considered, community docents were required to submit their resume and a statement of purpose before being invited to interview with the Education Department staff (Hoppe, 2008). For Shelly Casto, the former Director of Education, this process was necessary for finding the most qualified and capable docent educators saying, “I’ve almost never hired anyone that’s not been trained as a docent because that’s what it’s all about. The central core of what we do is teaching in the galleries. And I won’t hire someone who’s never done that” (Hoppe, 2008, p. 86).

The need for a docent program was clear when considering the opaque-nature of the Wexner's original educational mission. The Center's educational mission was at first quite abstract, with the assumption surrounding learning in the galleries being that students would learn just by seeing cutting edge contemporary work (Stinson, 1998). Pedagogy under Shelly Casto was very different and far more specific. Describing the goals of the docent program she said,

> The program in general is more about the visitor. It's about making sure that the public in general is engaged with contemporary art [and sees it] as a great opportunity for discussing contemporary issues, engaging with other people, and understanding the focus and mission and purpose of the Wexner Center. (Hoppe, 2008, p. 86)

Student docent program

For a time, the community docent program was the only avenue for experienced or interested educators to facilitate gallery learning experiences at the Wexner Center. Then, in 2005, the Wexner Center established a new paid student docent program designed to train students to teach in the galleries in concert with the already long-established volunteer docent corps (Kletchka & Casto, 2020; Hoppe, 2008). In contrast to the community docent program, there was no requirement of previous experience on the part of the student; the only stipulation was that students interested in becoming paid docents had to complete a training program before they could be certified as active docents (Hoppe, 2008; New Docent Training Course, 2014). The program was designed to introduce students to fundamental theories and techniques employed by the Wexner Center for teaching in the galleries and included instruction in contemporary art, tour

facilitation strategies, and methods for encouraging active group participation and discussion (New Docent Training Course, 2014).

An added incentive unique to the student docent program was the offer of receiving academic credit to both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the Department of Art Education (New Docent Training Course, 2014). Crucially, while students could receive academic credit for participating in the program, they could not be penalized academically for failing to complete the training program by the end of the term, and were instead advised to shadow active docents and co-tour with them until they felt prepared to facilitate tours on their own (Hoppe, 2008). Students also had the option of foregoing academic credit altogether (New Docent Training Course, 2014). I mentioned earlier that, unlike community docents, student docents were paid for their participation in the program. A stipend was given to students for each tour completed once they had successfully finished the training program, a model that was later adapted and re-designed in 2016 as the Wexner Center Paid Internship program (Kletchka & Casto, 2020).

The operationalizing of the student docent program was challenging in the first year of its existence due in no small part to the complicating factor of pay. Shelly Casto delayed the program slightly after recognizing how important it would be to first gain the support of the community docents saying,

> We realized that we needed to have a series of meetings with those community docents in a safe, open way where they could feel like they had really voiced their concerns and had given us input about how to go about it. It was going to happen whether or not they wanted to. But I wanted to give them time to digest it and give us feedback…I knew we

couldn't do it without them. I didn't want to dispense with them; it's just not an option. (Hoppe, 2008, p. 91)

Whenever a decision to add paid staff is made, questions are inevitably and swiftly raised about expense. Yet Casto, much in line with Whitaker's (2021) and Salerno and Gold's (2019) views toward staff as an investment, was untroubled by the challenge saying,

> We had to create a new budget line item for paying the students but that was no problem at all. It just made a lot of sense and [has] proven to be money well spent…And I say they really should examine that because it is probably one of the chunks of my budget that is most well spent because it just pays back in greater returns…I've been trying to encourage it because I just really think it's worth it. (Hoppe, 2008, p. 92)

It is important to note, however, that while there was a great drive and benefit to ensuring that student docents received monetary compensation for their work, there was also a perception that paying docents in general can create complications unrelated to funding. Casto found that paying docents didn't necessarily result in greater reliability, preferring instead the flexibility afforded by a volunteer's schedule adding, "paid workers are great but their strict schedules can restrict their work hours" (cited in Moser, 2015, p. 39). As a counter-argument, Eklund (2007) proposed that hiring and professionalizing gallery teachers required less training, increased reliability and consistency, and raised tour quality while meeting desired outcomes (cited in Hoppe, 2008).

The Wex and change

There is a long history in the United States of art museums being called upon to provide visitors with educational experiences that address the present needs of the community while

responding to issues of social inequality (Kletchka & Casto, 2020). To do so is the directive of the successful 21st century museum, an institution which must adapt its goals, activities, and resources to prioritize community engagement and demonstrate its relevance to the public (Hoppe, 2008). A 2002 report by the Smithsonian Institution expanded on this imperative declaring, "In the dialogue, the three interconnected roles of facilitator of civic engagement, agent of social change and moderator of sensitive social issues are especially important" (Office of Policy and Analysis, 2002, p. 2).

The Wexner Center has a history of making strides over its three decades toward achieving these goals. An analysis commissioned by the Ohio State University Senate Diversity Committee in 2008, related to the Wexner Center's efforts, showed that,

> The center's diversity plan reflects a strong, continuing commitment to diversity. The plan shows clear measurable goals to indicate the unit's progress. It also incorporates the recommendations made by the Diversity Council last year and indicates the successes while articulating the ongoing challenges in the areas where there has been little progress. The center's leadership has been proactive in consulting with campus diversity leadership for guidance as they move forward. (The University Senate Diversity Committee, 2008, p. 46)

Actualizing the lofty ambitions of the Center's original mission, the Wexner, "balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service" (Wexner Center for the Arts, 2019, para 5, cited in Kletchka & Casto, 2020). Identified as especially remarkable by the Diversity Committee's analysis was the Wexner Center's dedication to nurturing a diverse staff,

including docents, which would promote further staff diversity into the future (The University Senate Diversity Committee, 2008). More recent efforts made by the Wexner Center to promote diversity and equity include the introduction of the paid intern program in 2016 (Kletchka & Casto, 2020) and Learning and Public Practice's new paid educator program. Such benefits may ultimately show that museums who are able to pay may discover new interest from those who in the past did not have the time or ability to participate (Hoppe, 2008).

Josie

Picture in your mind your ideal workplace. One that aligns perfectly with your values, beliefs, personal needs, and professional goals. What would that place look like? For Josie, it looks like the Wex. Josie's story is one of alignment, of the many varied influences, ambitions, and paths that define her, converging and terminating in a particular place and time embodied by an institution, echoing and magnifying like ripples in a pond.

Josie's journey has taken her on a long path of art and learning that began at Ohio State and continued across the country before eventually returning to her home of Ohio for work and family.

> My background is I got my degree in the History of Art from Ohio State University in 1999. And I, see, worked for a contemporary art gallery in Texas after I graduated with my undergrad. Then I moved back to Columbus and I was an art consultant/art dealer

here in town. And then I raised children for about 20 years and most recently decided to embark on getting my Master's in Museum Studies. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

In between school, work, and raising a family, Josie also found her way to the Wex for the first time. Her children were a little older, and Josie decided to use the extra free-time to return to her passion for contemporary art by becoming a volunteer educator.

But I should say actually, before I did my Masters, I decided about six years ago, to come back to the Wexner and be a docent. My children were little-ish, but not so little, so I was able to volunteer during, you know, times that I could, I could give, and just get my foot kind of back in the door. But also just sort of circling back on my passion in contemporary art. So that's sort of a sum of it. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

It's a passion that Josie has been engaging with at the Wex for around seven years now. For Josie, though, the Wex was so much more than a contemporary art space or a vehicle for teaching. It was a source of inspiration to continue growing in her understanding of the field of museum education. Like ripples in a pond, the inspiration taken from the Wex reinforced a desire already living within Josie to better familiarize herself with contemporary art museum spaces and continue developing as a museum professional.

So I would say that the Wexner definitely inspired me as well to go back to school. Just personally not, there was no, it was nothing from anyone here really. It was just me wanting to dive deeper in, in sort of like the museum world. And I figured I really needed

> to like be up to date with what's going on in contemporary art museums now. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

If I have ever had anything like a quintessential light-bulb moment, it was the moment I discovered museum education. For as long as I can remember, whether it was helping my 3rd grade teacher grade spelling tests or teaching a friend how to play their first notes on clarinet, I have felt a sort of natural affinity for teaching. But, the rigid structure of the formal education system had always discouraged me from pursuing it seriously.

Josie had a very similar philosophical perspective on the subject of formal and informal learning environments. The relatively restrictive environment associated with formal learning spaces is a significant impediment to learning for her, and its just one of the biggest reasons why she prefers the flexibility and freedom that the informal learning environment provides.

> I think there's a huge need for that separate, certainly when we're speaking about children, separately from a school setting, which is more academic more, hate to say it, I mean, of course, there's bureaucracy, everywhere, but the more formal setting that there has to be a grade, there has to be a curriculum. When you're in an informal setting like the Wex, I think there's more flexibility and possibility to learn. And I say children, but of course, even adults as well…I could never be a teacher in a classroom setting. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

Importantly for Josie is the difference this distinction makes for students who visit the Wex and go on a tour with her in the galleries. In addition to a curriculum, there are a number of other constraints that the formal education system places on students that often discourage

participation and learning that are simply absent in the informal learning environment of the museum, and it's one of the reasons why Josie chose to be there.

> With, you know, again, the younger crowd I think is a little more opened to stepping into a physical museum space versus a physical classroom. Right? There are so many constraints around that age group I think that it's another, 'Oh do we have a test after this. There's gonna be a test here.' It's more free and open and there's no test. I would say that's a big reason why I'm here. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

But it is far from the only reason. The term contemporary applies to more than just the art on the walls. It extends to the philosophy of education practiced in the galleries and to the forward-thinking identity of the institution that sets it apart from any of the other options that Josie could have chosen to dedicate her time to.

> So we have I would say, two, maybe three contemporary art spaces that one could look at for employment, volunteer. I have, I chose the Wexner six years ago…because of the contemporary progressive nature that I saw exhibitions sort of following and I liked that. Other museums are not like that in this town, and I have found it more and more as I have gone on like with, certainly with my Master's work, I wouldn't be anywhere else other than here. Because of the contemporary art, the progressive nature and where it's headed. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

The truth of this was never more evident for Josie than in the course of events of the last few years and the social injustices that were brought to the fore in the wake of national tragedy and the Covid pandemic. Josie believes very strongly that museums have a responsibility to respond to such events with a progressive mindset or risk extinction. Such a mindset begins with

a long, critical look inward at their practices and policies, and their effects on the community outside and the people inside, to better understand what the institution has done and how it might do it differently.

> It's very complicated for museums, but I would say in today's world and in today's sort of temperature if you are not progressive in that nature, I don't believe you'll succeed as a museum. And we are at such a crucial turning point I think. And I would say that I think Covid and like racial injustices that were really seen during that time and inadequacies throughout. I'm not even talking obviously, about museums. I'm talking about health care and you know, a lot of different facets of our society. A lot of industries were forced to look hard at what are we doing, what's going on and how can we make it better. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

Josie has found that in her experience as an educator at the Wex. It is something she is very grateful for at this stage in her life when time, and where it is spent, is so important. She is fully aware that as time decreases its value increases, and as a result she is very thoughtful and methodical about the places and people she chooses to spend it with. These recipients then assume the value of the exchange so that there can be no mistake in its significance.

> And, and I think this institution at the Wex is way ahead of their game. When I was doing my museum studies work I kept coming back to, I'm so impressed with the Wexner. I'm so proud to be a part of that institution versus something else, and I'm at a point in my life that I am very specific about where I put my energy. And it's such a gift to be…
>
> doing this and sort of creating a whole new little chapter for myself, but I'm specific

about where I put my time and energy and this is obviously where I've chosen to do that. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

Across the whole organization, Josie finds inspiration in the efforts being undertaken to address the issues that are most important to her personally and professionally. Without resorting to mandates and requirements, the institution motivates her to pursue her passion for the work and provides her with the space she needs to exercise that passion in such a way that she feels drawn to it.

> And I'll just, I'll jump in and say not only the Education Department, I would say all the departments here, I see a strong tie that they understand that it is going to be a whole, a whole team effort in every single department to make these changes occur. But I would say that the Wexner and my education, recent education, push me there…And maybe it's just who I am, too. I mean, I don't have to do any of this. And this place, the Wex, serves as a great outlet for those things. And a vehicle sort of to get somewhere. They're all aligned. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

There is a feeling that a great many changes have already taken place and that soon more will come. The docent corps of the past, with its particular identity and size, is now exactly that: a part of the past. But the memory of this former group is still clear, and it is one that Josie reflects on critically.

> We are sort of like at this precipice, right, of this whole department is changing, and there's a real opportunity specific to docents/educators. But when I started, like six years ago, it was a huge group. And the majority of them/me are white, rich women. We have

to say that right? We have to know that that is...those are the only people that could do it. Women, a lot of women that probably like myself, stayed home raised kids but always loved the arts and wanted to get back to it. I only say that because history is so important. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

History is incredibly important. And for Josie, so is timing. Nearing the end of her graduate studies and looking for what comes next, she instinctually returned to the institution she knew so well as the site best suited to put her newly earned education to good use.

Timing is so important. Obviously. When I was getting ready to graduate with my Master's, which was literally like six months ago, nine months ago, I, I came to Diana. And I said, 'I'm interested in doing more I want to dig in deeper here. What's going on?' She said 'Hang on, just hang on' to like, bear with us. 'We're working.' I got a feeling she, you know, they were working hard, right? This is not, this didn't happen like overnight, but the education team was prepared to make these changes I would say, and boy, did they. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

Fresh on the minds of everyone involved was the news of the Art Institute of Chicago making a similar change to their long-standing docent program and the resulting backlash that they received. When that happened, comparisons were quickly made by many of the docents between what they heard took place in Chicago and the changes they were being told would take place at the Wex, Josie included. Where she differed from her colleagues was in her perspective regarding the need for the change and for how the Wex was doing it differently, and better.

I'm sure you've read about Chicago and what they did, of course, and that was harsh, I guess. I would say I kind of believe in it. I agree it probably needed to be done. The

> Wexner did it gentler. So they did it in a really interesting fashion of presenting here's where we are going, are you on board? Do you want to do this? Not everybody was. I experienced it with some of the women. But they didn't understand it. They were of a different generation. And they were very confused as to why we needed to do this diversity, equity, and inclusion. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

What it all amounted to was a transition. The educator program at the Wex was changing from something it was to something it had never been, and when that happens the unavoidable truth is that some will be left behind while others remain to face the unknown together.

> That it's, there is a time where it's time to move on. Right? If this vision is not something you're interested in, then it is time to move on. I am so happy to see that there are 12 or whatever dedicated educators that are ready to take this on. It's not gonna, it's not easy. It is not going to be easy. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

What, then, will the new unknown become? What will be one of the significant impacts of this new reality as the team moves further away from its history as a volunteer corps toward a future as a group of professional educators? To Josie, the addition of pay will make a tremendous difference. It will be the change in the air, so to speak, generating a higher level of motivation and dedication that volunteerism simply doesn't.

> I think like right off the bat, I think when someone is paid, we take it more seriously. I don't know if that's just like a human nature thing. But I've done volunteer work, and I've done paid work. And I think there's more motivation. So if you're asking me what the diff — I mean, I think a volunteer can be more laid back. Of course, it's very personal.

> Each person will take it differently. But I think when you're like, 'Oh, that's right. I'm getting paid. I need to be there.' (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

For Josie specifically, motivation was never an issue before becoming a paid educator; she was happy and excited to be involved in the work whether pay was a factor or not. But, she does believe that it will be a strong motivator for many others, especially for those who until now would not have had the financial opportunity to participate.

> Now, I don't personally, I feel like I did that as a volunteer probably just because again, like sort of back to the passion in it for me and I was excited to be here. Whether I was being paid or not. For me it was like a little bit of an outlet for some, just personal me time away from kids and family. But I do think it's more motivating to be paid. And I also strongly believe that we're now including more people in that that could not afford to just give their time freely. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

All of which circles back to Josie's greater passion for inclusion and equity, something that was at the center of her drive to continue her education and that continues to be at the center of her practice as an educator. Josie goes a step further by recognizing that pay is a good start, but there is a great deal more to do in relation to material benefits that could attract an even greater degree of diversity to the profession.

> And that goes back to just DEI work. You know who are we including in every single department of the museum, right? Yeah, I would also say, you know, there's no benefits, you don't have any health care. There's nothing like that. So there's work. There's still work to do. Right? If, I mean, how many more people could, could we get from even

more diversity, getting more diversity in the staff? You know, if, if you could have even more benefits. (Josie, personal communication, July 8th, 2022)

It's the future now. A couple of months have passed since our last conversation. This time we're meeting over zoom, and we've scheduled a slightly shorter session so that Josie can make it to her other appointment right after. Since it had been a couple of months, and like my other conversations, I started with a bit of catching-up. I asked Josie what had been on her mind in the time since we last spoke and two things came to mind. She was first very excited for the hiring of the Wexner Center's new Executive Director and for what that signaled related to the institution's dedication to its identity. She was also excited about beginning a new DEI certification program and using what she learns from it to improve her practice as a professional educator. By educating herself on anti-oppression and social justice frameworks, she hopes to become an even better ally and practitioner (Ng et al., 2017).

There's probably like two big points that I would maybe talk about. I'll start with the hiring of our new Executive Director at the Wexner…And I love that she's a woman and she's a woman of color. And these are some of the reasons like, I think I've stated to you before, why I'm at the Wexner is because of their, I think deep dedication to the DEI movement. That I believe if you're not focusing on in the museum…that you're going to be left out. Also, the second thing I was gonna say is…I have started my DEI certification for Ohio State. So that's been great and I'm just, I'm encouraged, and that's just sort of where my focus is. (Josie, personal communication, August 31st, 2022)

Additionally, Josie's commitment to the Wexner Center remains as strong as ever. Even when presented with an opportunity to pursue a position at another museum, she remained steadfast in her dedication to the mission and ideals of the Wex, confident and assured that she is where she belongs.

> So my commitment continues to be really strong at the Wexner, and I just think that's important to note. I will say it's funny in the job description of the other museum, there's like very little mention of, of any of the things that are important to me. And so you know, just personally and professionally, it does feel kind of good to sort of know my path. I think we're always sort of like re-defining ourselves throughout our lives and career and making choices, and I have to say just like personally, it feels really like reassuring to know that. Like, this is what I'm doing, like this is what I want to do, you know, in these are like the values and the, the, the ideals that I'm sort of working toward. And I think that's exciting. (Josie, personal communication, August 31st, 2022)

Josie's point, about choice and the conditions that affect it, is significant. Particularly when considering the topic of privilege that is threaded throughout our conversations together. How is our ability, as white museum educators, to choose when we do or do not enter into this field and what form that participation takes demonstrate a type of privilege that others still don't have? And how those are embodied in certain ways and for certain individuals, and the mindfulness that comes with making those choices. It is a recognition that Josie, as a white educator, is fully mindful of and committed to exploring.

> I mean, if it was 20 years ago, and I was, you know, right out of college, I'm sure I would have done it, right. I would have to do it and I would do it happily. But I don't know, now

> I'm at a point in my life where I can sort of choose some of those things…Yeah, and I am definitely like one of those white privileged females. And I am, fully recognize that. (Josie, personal communication, August 31st, 2022)

Tackling that first step of recognition and acceptance is critical for what Josie wants to do next, and that is to be a positive force for change and support. She wants to be a partner in the long-awaited but essential changes taking place at the Wex and in museums around the country. Her passion and drive echoes calls by museum and anti-oppression professionals and activists to take a critical look at museums and the ways they relate to visitors and staff through the practice of ally-ship, defined as a way to work together across identity in order to create spaces that embrace humanity from a social justice perspective (Ng et al., 2017).

> I keep seeing myself, I think Diana actually said this to me once but I do. I do see myself as an ally, which I think is you know, there's this like, ally-ship. I think that's what I am. And like, that's sort of what I want to be is an ally for these, these big changes that you know, are obviously long overdue in the museum world. And I feel like super passionate about it. (Josie, personal communication, August 31st, 2022)

Josie is driven by a personal mission to be a force for change that sees everyone invited into the conversation. But, she also knows that she cannot do it alone. Change of the kind that Josie works toward everyday, of truly transformative spaces and practices, is only possible when everyone takes responsibility for it. Across every department and every individual, true institutional change comes when passion and dedication meet hard work and persistence, to the betterment of everyone. In the end, Josie recognizes that diversity is not an outcome. It is a systemic practice that digs deeper than the mere tokenizing power dynamics of hiring a diverse

staff or expecting marginalized staff members to speak on behalf of their identity (Ng et al., 2017).

> Change comes from the bottom all the way to the top, right. If each department and each element of any industry, any institution doesn't get on board with this, it won't work. You know, so you can't just, you know, put a Black woman on the board and say, ‘Look, we're doing the work. We are doing the DEI work. We are diverse because we have one woman of color,’ right. It takes, takes a lot of, a lot of change in every department and every element, I think of a museum. And it’s, doesn’t, it's not like pain free. It's hard work, right? But I just believe, I mean, it’s, there's no other choice but to do the work and make the changes that need to be changed. To see difference. (Josie, personal communication, August 31st, 2022)

Part 4

The Case

Now the stage is set. The previous chapters have told first of how and why the stories were collected before setting the frame for why they are relevant. The remaining chapters will detail the story as the case. It is a story of great change, and a journey into the unknowable taken by a group of dedicated professionals who, for reasons you will see, saw no other way forward. In the first chapter, you will read about the process that the staff in the Learning and Public Practice Department undertook to change the existing educator program into what it is today. In the next, you will learn about the personal and professional beliefs held by the staff that informed their decisions. This is followed by a chapter detailing a particularly significant element essential to an understanding of how the LPP team approached this process: care. The final two chapters detail the challenges and future hopes that the staff are considering as they look to the future of the program and what it might hold.

Chapter 10

We Begin to Intervene

Change within an institution is possible, but it has to start somewhere, and more often than not it starts with individuals. Leveraging their collective agency, they identity an area of misalignment with the organization and begin the work of correcting it so that it more closely matches their assumed values and beliefs. For the staff in Learning and Public Practice involved in the decision to transition to a new model for museum educators, those values were tied inextricably to ensuring greater access and equity, and their target was clear. If they were going to live-up to the ideals and standards that they identified as pivotal to their practice, then the docent program, as the antithesis of those ideals, would need to change.

> And we had our own docent program, you know, probably 30 plus or so docents maybe a little more…Johanna Burton sort of invited me, gave me a challenge to build a new department. I think she was smart and wise in that and she said you know, let's, let's call it something else. Let's you know, essentially it will be education. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

With a vision for the new department in mind, conversations about the direction of the educator program began in earnest. Beginning in 2019 and continuing for the better part of the next year, the conversations among staff addressed all aspects of the new program, everything from which teaching methods would be used in the galleries to the ultimate question of paying educators to teach.

> Over time, over the course of a year or so plus developed and thought alongside —Jordan was in the department at the time, …to the, the sort of, how we were teaching in the galleries and what that looked like, I did a lot of thought partnership with Jordan. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

Jordan began working in the department just before the discussions around changing the docent program started saying, "I started full time at the Wex in December of 2019. And pretty much as soon as I started, you know, these conversations were already happening, about switching to a paid model" (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022).

From those early conversations, it became clear that more information and context was needed in order to better understand the problem and how other professionals in the field were addressing it. The team began an extensive research process in which they sought examples of other institutions who held similar views toward their programs as essential parts of the broader

institution, with the hope of learning as much as possible about the steps that were taken and those to be avoided saying, "Then research…looking across the country. What were docent programs doing? What were museums thinking about? There's obviously, some of this is changing across the country. I saw other colleagues across the country thinking in that direction, too" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022). Jordan added,

> We, you know, did a lot of research into other peer institutions about you know, how they handled their gallery education, you know, what kind of standards they had for, you know, activity, like how active somebody had to be to be considered a live docent. (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022)

There are of course many art museums across the country, and so in terms of where the team focused their research, the criteria was concerned less with museums who had also ended their docent programs and more with institutions who had similar beliefs about the value of their programs in the context of the institution's broader mission.

> As for what institutions we looked to for guidance, we started with institutions that were questioning the volunteer docent model and ending or discontinuing inequitable systems and programs. It was less about other institutions that were discontinuing their programs, but reflecting on all the institutions that touted their programs as essential to the museum, even as we were grappling with this model's glaring lack of diversity and inequities as it pertained to labor. (Diana, personal communication, February 14th, 2023)

Throughout this process, one institution, the Art Institute of Chicago, rose above the rest to become an object of focus in the team's process of research and learning. The high-profile nature of the AIC's decision made it a more accessible case relative to other institutions as well

as a key object of study for understanding where potential mistakes may appear and how to avoid them.

> The institution that first comes to mind is the Art Institute of Chicago. I think over the course of our research, thinking, and rebuilding, other institutions began rethinking their docent programs, but I remember the Art Institute of Chicago making lots of news in its dismantling of its docent program. We were interested in learning, and also we wanted to avoid unnecessary or careless missteps. (Diana, personal communication, February 14th, 2023)

It is also important to clarify that, although the process began with the staff in Learning and Public Practice, it was in fact a collective effort that brought together a diversity of voices from all corners of the institution. Through the collaboration and effort of this working group, small changes began to be made as the program continued to develop. This is often how change happens. It begins from a place of recognition, of seeing a problem, and then acknowledging where power exists to affect change and where it does not before leveraging our agency to act.

> We know what cohort of folks need to be involved in that decision making, and there was a working group around that that involved former docents, Diana herself, a few folks across the center. But it was a small, targeted, focused group of folks who sort of evaluated and made some small slow tweaks as the program kind of evolved and changed. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

> We've got, I do, I believe, a lot of equity work, institutional equity work at the institution and so really sort of thinking alongside our partners in the equity work…I've seen these inequities and I, you know, over time have spoken up about them. And, you know, here's

> the thing if there isn't, if it's not in my purview to change that program - that's, there's nothing I can do about that. I can sort of see the inequities, I can sort of speak to trying to kind of make a situation better. We do what we can and we begin to intervene. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

From there, it was off to the races. With a plan of action in place, the staff began tackling the smaller, individual tasks they would need to complete in order to realize the new program. The department got a new name, working groups were formed to manage the steps of the process, and discussions around the hiring of new staff began. When it came to identifying what changes would come with the new program, nothing was off the table. The only requirement was that the new program would be a complete departure from the previous one, as confirmed by Diana who said, " And so with this new beginning, everything was on the table to really sort of look at and examine. Otherwise you just fall into just doing the same old thing. And I wasn't interested in that" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022). Providing more detail, Jordan added,

> So that's when our department name changed to Learning and Public Practice. That's when, you know, Diana was really refiguring like how we worked in our department, you know, bringing up working groups and beginning the process of you know, getting our department fully staffed. (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022)

One of the first steps was to collect important data about the current docent corps so that the staff could be assured that their decisions were well-informed and supported by evidence. The surveys that staff conducted covered a wide range of data, from general demographic data,

to the frequency of tours facilitated, all the way to questions about motivation related to why each person became a docent and why they continued to participate.

> You know, we did some surveys to gather some, like demographic data so that we weren't like, you know, making educated guesses about what our cohort looked like. We wanted to have concrete evidence, data. We asked you know, why, why did you become a docent at the Wex? Like what, what appealed to you about this program? And similar questions just to get at that kind of, you know, understanding who they were…We also did kind of a little audit of how often people had toured on, you know, on average…to get a sense of like, how many truly active docents we had because when it's a volunteer program, you know, you have a lot of people kind of phase in and out. (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022)
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> So we surveyed, we looked at the demographics, we had really specific content in that, in that survey. Why are you doing this? What do you get out of this? And then after a few years of that, writing a letter….(Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

In the conversation around change and the processes that organizations use to conduct that change, documents are an important yet likely overlooked component. To do so is a mistake though because, "Documents are not simply objects; they are means of doing or not doing something" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 85). Letters, specifically, are a common tool used by organizations to express their intentions to a wider audience. In that way, a letter, "is about raising awareness" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 95). This was the goal behind the letter that the Wex staff wrote and sent to the

docents of the Wex when it was time to make them aware that change was coming. But, the process of writing that letter was far from simple or quick, with the final draft of the letter delivered to docents two years after the discussions around the new program began.

> How do we tell this very dedicated group of docents that we're changing their program? We were still working that out. We let people know as we began to sort of understand, understand kind of how this was going to develop, we would be in touch with them. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

> I guess ultimately, where we ended up was that we we had a letter that was sent out in the Fall, end of Summer, early Fall 2021…which had been co-written by a couple of us and sort of laid out all of this right…sort of laying out our reasoning behind the change and what the change would look like, in concrete terms going forward. (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022)

Part of why the letter writing process took so long is because it wasn't just LPP's letter to write. There were other stakeholders across the Wex who needed an opportunity to offer their input, illustrating an essential truth of writing that, "writing does not simply create documents — it also keeps them going" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 92). Across the institution, "Everybody had their hands on it. Everybody was like saying a thing and then wrote it again, wrote it. I mean, really, we worked on this letter for six months" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022). That point about the number of people involved in the letter writing process is an important one in the context of actions undertaken within an organization toward long-term change. Making the letter, and its consequences, the responsibility of multiple individuals ensures accountability because, "If the document becomes the responsibility of an individual within the organization,

then that organization can authorize the document, give it a signature, and refuse responsibility for it at the same time" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 91).

So, while it may delay the process, it can actually serve as an effective measure of accountability by ensuring that individuals at all levels of the organization have a stake in the outcome. In the case of the Wex, the letter was seen and revised by stakeholders reaching as high as the Executive Offices.

More important than the hands that wrote it was the content that was in it. As was true in the letters sent by other institutions, the letter that the staff sent to docents explained that the docent program would be ending before going into detail about the reasons why they felt the change was necessary, how it connected to contemporary ideas about museum education and labor, and what the new program would look like. In this way, the letter served as a, "paradigmatic artifact of modern knowledge practices" (Riles, 2006, p. 2).

> In the letter, they spelled it out in the terms of the museum world, right? We're looking to diversify our corps. We want to have greater inclusion, we want to have greater access. This is going to change the way that we have discussions in the galleries and we want folks that can have these sort of discussions from different perspectives and, you know, very contemporary perspectives and ways of talking and being in the world. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

The letter, then, is an essential character in the story of the new educator program. Years of research and consultation, writing and revision, all leading to an inevitable but no less seismic shift because, "basically that letter ended the docent program as we knew it" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022).

Timing is so important. While not true in every case, the decision by other institutions to change their docent educator programs coincided with the development of the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated impact on school and visitor programs like those offered by museum education departments. The same was true for the Wex and the staff in Learning and Public Practice, who were in the midst of developing their new program when the Center was forced to close and all tours were cancelled. What it allowed, however, was a chance to pause and take stock. With the regular activities of the department on hold, the staff was granted time to consider and think critically about the program.

> What was interesting about the timing of this is that they hadn't been touring anyway, right? We were closed as an institution, no one was doing anything. The public health crisis allowed for us to sit still inside of these spaces and to really think….(Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)
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> You know, is there an opportunity to address this right now? And the answer was yes. And so from my understanding, and the discussions that I've had with Diana and Jordan, who were really in the department at the time, that the decision was being made and this process was being started. It gave the ability to say, 'Okay, we're not doing trainings, tours, we have a moment to pause here and rethink our practices.' (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

The change that was taking place within the department wasn't restricted to just the docents. Such dramatic changes also required a significant injection of staff to help manage it.

> Throughout this whole time, you know, while we're engaging the group in this way, Diana and I had many, many, many long conversations about how to move forward with the program. Because also at this time…we were down to a department of three people. (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022)

The direction of the department was changing and with it came the need for new team members with the appropriate skills and qualifications to help lead it and develop it. This was important because, although the new program had been in development for over a year and the new staff positions were partly a consequence of that process, the process itself was not ending with the hiring of new staff. The expectation was that the new staff would be brought on to manage the new program as it had been conceived while also serving as new thought partners to help the veteran staff continue growing the program into the future.

> Yeah, so, as you know, most of us in the department came to the department like 10 or 11 months ago, and I was one of those people. So a lot of the foundational groundwork kind of grew and evolved before I got here. So my role has really just been stewarding the groundwork that has been laid, helping frame and articulate our intended impacts as this program rolls out; as you know, I really try, my primary practice is aligning impacts with actions. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

> Sophia is a new perspective. Remember I had been sitting with this for a few years now thinking through, researching it, and then Sophia then gets to come in and now build in the same way that I could build a department. Sophia now gets to build this program, and trusting a new person, but then being a thought partner alongside Sophia to sort of help now build this program….(Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

> I was brought into this program after that decision was already made. So it wasn't something that I made the choice to do, but something they had really been working towards, for a while…And so when Diana was restructuring the department, that was where my role came in. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

Since the new members of staff would be introduced to the process well-after it had begun, it was essential that they have the necessary qualifications to effectively manage their responsibilities and adjust to the new program quickly since they would in all likelihood have little context for what the program was or what their role in it would be.

> When I was applying for the position, I knew of the Wex but I wasn't super familiar with their docent program. I didn't realize at the time until I had the first discussion with Diana, how new the program was and how much work there was to do to build it…I talked to Diana about that in my first interview, and I think it was pretty clear to her that I was really comfortable managing a program like this, had experience doing it, and had some ideas about how we could do it at the Wex based on what I had seen. And that is actually shaping out to work pretty well I think. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

One of the first and most important responsibilities was to continue communicating with docents about the changes to the program and to assure them that there was a place for them in the program if that was of interest to them. Speed was also critical, as meetings and communications with docents began taking place almost immediately after the new staff started in their positions.

> One of my first meetings with them…I was in for just a couple of months before I started meeting with the docents and just informally introducing myself to them, talking to them about the changes with the program…sort of informal discussions of, you know, just trying to help them understand that we're not interested in kicking them out of the program. I'll say too that question of speed…I had all this experience with this kind of a program, right? Like I was ready to hit the ground running. It still took us almost, I mean easily six months, even, just to get the program off the ground. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

With this understanding came an equally important understanding that, despite being welcome to join in the new initiative, there would be changes from the nature and practice of the program they were familiar with. Habits are difficult to break, so it was important for both the staff and the docents who chose to continue in the new program that, while holding on to the old ways was understandable, it was also going to end. This was made clear through communication, but it was also codified in the department's new educator agreements and trainings which outlined the expectations for educators in their new role. By making these expectations clear in writing, it made the staff and the educators accountable to each other and to the university.

> Which is complicated, very complicated, because there are a lot of, you know, things from the old program that we're still working to shift and change that carried over with some of those folks, which we knew would happen…We're gonna go through our first real big tour cycle with what I would say is kind of our completed educator group in the Fall. So I think that after that, we'll really sort of start to feel it. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

> But you'll see that in that we've held the educators also accountable to some of these equity practices. In their agreement. There are stipulations about how they are expected to approach this work. And then there's also ongoing equity trainings and on learnings that have happened over the last year to kind of bring them up to what our expectation of the gallery educator should be. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)
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> Not only a philosophy of teaching. We implemented for the first time in this program an actual code of conduct that they are required to follow and it really breaks down some of these hard rules…the basic gist of it is you will not do harm to folks in, within our group, of the Wex visitors, any of that whether knowingly or unknowingly. And so what is it that we need to do as a department, as a team, to not do harm? Something that we talk about probably after every tour. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

One other major consideration that occupied much of the discussion and development process was what form the new educator program would take. Other institutions have implemented a variety of options ranging from a hybrid model of paid and volunteer to a fully-paid model with no volunteers. From their research, the staff in LPP were aware of these possibilities while at the same time considering models based on other factors including levels of participation and motivation.

> So in order to kind of like address this, we talked about possible different structures, having sort of like…I think we were calling it like a teaching-learning community where we could you know, engage folks who are interested in that aspect of the program, but maybe didn’t, necessarily weren't as invested in it — literally teaching in the gallery — as like ways to further people's education and educational practice…We also you know,

> toyed with the idea of uh not...I don't know how I want to phrase this...sort of, but like identifying the people who are most active and figuring out ways to engage them again, based on that data, not just trying to like assume, based on our own human perceptions, because of bias and all those things. (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022)

While the team was open to any number of possibilities, the model that was eventually chosen was a hybrid model of both paid and volunteer educators. It was chosen as a way to try to satisfy the needs of everyone by making space for former docents to continue volunteering, creating an opportunity for new educators to participate who would otherwise be excluded without compensation, and aligning with the staff's values and mission to make education as accessible as possible.

> Maybe we invite the most active folks to continue on in this new iteration of the program. Maybe we don't invite anybody to continue on in the next iteration of the program and we just start fresh, you know, these were all things that were on the table…we were also talking about having kind of a hybrid model where some people were paid and some people were volunteer, which is sort of where we ended up. (Jordan, personal communication, August 26th, 2022)

> The model was really I think…a half-volunteer model with those that were previously in the program and a half-paid educator model to you know, welcome in new folks who you know needed that sort of financial income in order to live as human beings in the world. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

In any conversation about pay is a discussion of where the money will come from which will undoubtedly lead to hard conversations about budgets. For the team in Learning and Public Practice, there was an acknowledgement that budgets are often obstacles that are difficult to overcome, but they also emphasize that it is a fight worth having. For the leadership in LPP, that fight comes in the form of advocacy.

> And so it was really rethinking that, coming up with a structure that, you know, was within the budget that we had, right? You can't really sort of change the budget so much, although you can advocate for why this might need to increase in certain amounts. So that's my job too, is going to the directors, advocating for that budget, and then really speaking to how this will provide more access and more equity. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

Which brings the story to the present and to an educator program that is finding its footing. Over the past year, the staff have worked through the administration of the program, creating new job descriptions, interviewing, and hiring new educators. While they admit that the program is still developing and far from complete, they believe strongly in the direction that it's heading saying, “I think that the ultimate result is turning out to be what we were looking for, you know, at least in its early stages. There’s always going to be room for growth” (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022).

Chapter 11

Practice Makes Process

To make the kind of dramatic and transformative change that the Learning and Public Practice team made to their long-standing docent program of course takes planning, conversation, coordination, administration, and oversight to ensure that the process runs effectively and as planned. As important, however, are the fundamental values and beliefs toward purpose and practice that inform that process such that the why is equal to the how.

For the staff in Learning and Public Practice, it begins with a foundational appreciation for the value of education in the museum space holding equal ground with any other essential function of the institution, and a shared belief that this view should be felt and reciprocated throughout the Center. It is a struggle that education departments in museums and in educational

fields across society have fought for generations but not one that the staff wanted to continue to carry in this new direction.

> But I think what we wanted to do was articulated a bit more specifically. We wanted to elevate this work into a, into an actual program area to be considered and taken seriously and, not just sort of quiet supportive work or out — just outreach work or just work on behalf of sort of other program areas. And that teaching and learning is an essential aspect of what institutions like this do. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

Beneath this drive to elevate the work of education in the museum space is an even deeper grappling with an understanding of what education is and means to the LPP team. Part of the process involved asking themselves complicated questions about what that word education truly meant and how their larger values inform their purpose as educators.

> But what is education? What are we doing? What do we mean specifically when we're talking about education? What might equity work look like? How do we think about inclusion and accessibility? How do we think about diversity? How do we think about availability? How do we think about public? What does it mean to really be public. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

Compounding these questions were the very real events unfolding throughout the Covid pandemic and the social ills they highlighted. Unlike in previous periods in history, the pandemic made it so that we all were forced to stop and look at the injustices that many throughout the country were already all too familiar with, and for the LPP team this truth served as a call to action. The program needed to change but more than that it needed to evolve and become something entirely new and unrecognizable.

> And during this time of public health crisis, as well as the awakening of many people to social injustice…Where were you going to look?…It was very visible to us all these different injustices. And what, what I began to grapple with…was I said, 'we cannot, when we come back on the other side of this, we can't keep operating in the same way that we are operating.' If we're going to be a new department, we really have to be new. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

To be something new takes work and determination because it is nothing if not challenging. It requires confrontation with hard truths and a willingness to stare directly into injustices that have always been there but have been left unattended. This is all before the work even begins because learning is only the first step. The work starts when you decide to take action.

> But doing that is what makes equity work difficult, is because you find out what you… think you already know — there's inequities…there's inaccessibility, there's exclusion. And the equity work starts not with just the finding out. The equity work starts with what are you going to do about it? (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

> This framework really prioritized conversation, working with community thought partners, and consulting the field…our institution from what I understand was really trying to examine not necessarily instances of individual racism…or individual inequities…but specifically trying to target some of those systemic inequities that we've been inherently upholding, because that's just what museums do. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

For the team in LPP, the actions taken needed to address long-standing issues of access and inequity that were inherent in the old program and in many other programs like it. From their work researching the program and the field, it was clear to them that the best and most obvious way to construct a program that aligned with their values was to build it on a foundation of labor compensation, a fair exchange guaranteeing that no one would be asked to work for free.

> And so now building a new education program meant dealing with the evidence we had in front of us and looking to create more space and more opportunities for inclusion, for accessibility, for diversity. We can no longer ask someone to do, to labor for free. That felt like a bottom line. It felt very clear to me. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

> …She was identifying this as like a major problem with the way that our department and our work was functioning and something that needed to be addressed…and the most obvious thing…if you want to pull a more diverse set of people, you need to be able to pay. (Jordan, personal communication, August, 26th, 2022)

To say that the solution is to pay educators for their work is perhaps a bit too straightforward. Particularly in the context of museum education, a field that developed out of a tradition of volunteerism and service and that still holds strong associations with those gendered professions that are presumed to be unworthy of pay or, at the very least, unworthy of a lot of pay. The element of service was a complicating factor in the decision making process for the staff, who understood the value of service in the field while acknowledging the added wrinkle it creates in the conversation around the topic of equity and pay.

> I understand that people want to be in service of a community. I see our work in public spaces as being in service…It is in service of something larger than yourself. Maybe that's conceptual for people. Maybe that's theoretical for people. I take it really literally. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

> And that was something that Diana and I really wrestled with for a long time. Coming into the program, the thought that some folks would be paid for the work and some wouldn't…I think if we hadn't made that choice, we would have been having a lot more struggles with the whole idea of equity in this role even today. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

Pay though, in the end, was the answer. If the goal in the end was to increase access to those who could not have afforded to do the work for free and to increase equity by inviting in those perspectives which had been excluded, then it was the only answer. Anything less would have resulted in continuing to uphold those very same barriers to access and those inequities which had defined the docent program in museums for generations, and it would have kept the Wex from living up to its mission as a space made for and by the public.

> And it also allowed for us to make this opportunity available to people who could never volunteer to do something like this because people have to work. What we realized was, we were never going to get a…different access point for people without considering that some people just can't do this…how do we call ourselves public and we're not available? So, you know, it meant making this a position, a paid position, a job in many ways, which it already was. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

The team in Learning and Public Practice know that change is difficult and that the position they have taken may not be the same, or approached the same, as others. They recognize that their values and how they have chosen to enact them may not be seen by others as the right decision or the right direction for the field at large. But, they also accept this possibility and find comfort in knowing that they have acted honestly and faithfully to those values which they believe make this work important and necessary.

> …people will have, I think, different stances on this. I think that's fine. I'm completely comfortable with the direction we're moving in. I think that people really struggle when things shift. Folks want to see things stay the same. But sometimes things need to shift and we have to allow that shift to to be possible. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

As we've seen, the title of docent has a long and storied history in the field of museum education, and for many former and current docents it represents so much more than a simple designation. For many, it encapsulates the values and motivations behind their decision to become a docent in the first place. For the staff in LPP, however, that title was no longer appropriate. Those same values and beliefs that the title of docent had represented for so long were now antithetical to the values of equity and access that were the foundation of the new educator program and to the image of the educator that they were working to change in the minds of the visitor and the educator alike.

> …it's not that docent's a bad word. I would say that it's a bit of an outdated word…we talked about the difference between a docent and an educator, not only from our

> perspective, at the Wex and in the field, but from the perspective of people coming in for a tour. If you're a docent and people picture a docent, right, they picture somebody, one person standing up in front of an artwork giving a lecture. And that's really not the kind of program that we are designing here. And to us, an educator does something different. And it's a sensitive thing. It's, they take great pride in their work. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

It is understandable that there would be some hesitancy among those for whom the title of docent held so much meaning and personal significance to let go of that title in the name of continuing to work in the gallery as an educator. As it happens, it was a difficult transition for everyone else, too, namely the other members of staff at the Wex who were having a hard time adjusting to the change. The team in LPP work hard to make sure that Wex staff understand why the educators have a new title and, importantly, why it is so essential to recognizing their new professional status.

> The thing that I've really enjoyed is that that term…docent is a hard word to get people to let, leave by the wayside including Wex staff. We are still working on them calling the former docents educators now…because as an educator, they are staff…I'm an educator, so is everybody in our department…It's a practice. It's a working practice. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

That emphasis on the person is critical to the way in which the LPP team's beliefs toward professional practice informed their process. In their illustration of the program and its representation to others, they always positioned the decision as a need to change the program, not the people. The focus was placed on structure so that docents could see how the new program

would be different from the old one and decide if they could adapt to the new design rather than being made to decide if they could become a different version of themselves.

> I think we framed it…as a change in the program, a change in the structure, not a change in the, directed at the people first…And that was where it left room for people that were in the previous program to say, 'Okay, these are the changes they're making. Can I get on board with this?' (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

> And you'll see that in the way that we didn't just kind of slash the entire program…For example…those former docents, now educators…were given an opportunity to be part of the solution and weren't just branded as the problem. Which I think is really important. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

> We want it to change. We want it to reflect the field at large…and the things that we value. And that is not compatible with free labor from people. So…on the one hand, we've got that kind of dynamic and then on the other hand, we have these like very real human beings who we have relationships with and we want to take that very seriously. (Jordan, personal communication, August, 26th, 2022)

The decision to make the new program as approachable as possible for docents, and to leave room open for them to decide if they would like to continue as educators, was done out of a concern for caring for them as individuals. But, there was also a practical reason for inviting veteran educators into a new educator program that would be relying, in part, on new and inexperienced facilitators. While starting fresh with brand new educators may have been more expedient for establishing a base of instruction and good practice, it would have denied the new

educators a valuable opportunity to benefit from the veteran educators' experience, something that the staff is grateful to have on their side.

> I think that that's some of the impetus for wanting to start with a fresh group of folks. That to make that change, you know…more immediately felt, is to start with a new group who doesn't have to be retrained, at least that is my assumption. I can see the pros of that…we wouldn't have had to have some of the really hard conversations or reframing some of the way things used to be done…But at the same time, we brought in some new educators, and they've learned a lot from the former educators. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

One of the most essential beliefs underpinning this transition is that the role of the educator in the museum deserves recognition as belonging to the world of the professional. The decision to institute a pay structure, the decision to change the title from docent to educator, and the recognition of the value of veteran-ship all inform this unequivocal belief because it is about, "Professionalization of this role too, and that's the way we're framing the new program…" (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022).

A level of professionalization has been lacking historically in the role of the volunteer museum educator. One of the clearest signs of this can be found in the absence of standard qualifications determining the requirements and responsibilities expected of someone wishing to serve in that capacity. This is a gap that the team intends to remedy through this process of professionalization by stating clearly how educators are expected to apply the new framework

centered on access and equity and how that framework will be used to keep everyone accountable to that purpose.

> And that is also part of an accountability piece…You know, you are working for the Wex in this role…And there are certain things that won't fly if you're representing the institution. So we do have new, sort of framing of the requirements of this position where diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and the ability to teach within that framework was fore-fronted. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

On that notion of accountability, everyone really does mean everyone. Leadership in Learning and Public Practice holds itself equally responsible to ensure that the new standards are understood and that everyone is working hard to make sure they are met. But, accountability is not the same as punishment. Their role in this is not to chastise but rather to educate, and to guide everyone through the process of adjustment and transformation no matter where they may be in that journey.

> And now it's my challenge as a manager to make sure that we are really doing that…a lot of the time honestly, it's, it's because people maybe don't even know that they're doing it…It's now my job to have the hard discussion and say, 'You know what, this is now not okay, and here's why. And here's a way to reframe this.' We're still having those discussions. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

As with other aspects of the process, this approach to leadership is informed by prior experience and how the positive aspects of practice demonstrated by others has informed the values and beliefs of LPP leadership regarding their position in relation to others.

> I've tried to frame it as myself being part of this group. You know, I am their manager, but…I'm also in this with them. And I think that comes from…having a better experience with a very collaborative managerial style in my previous jobs. And having taught that way and managed that way in a previous job and seeing that I liked that. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

This doesn't mean that the role of leader and everything that it signifies is abandoned. Leadership is still a critical component of guiding the new team and program as it continues to build and as it develops its identity. It is a delicate dance, a balance between standing among while leading from the front.

> There is this balance of like, you know, you are still the manager. You are still overseeing things like training sessions and things like that. So it's a constant like push of how to balance…the need to manage but the need to de-center. (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022)

The need to de-center was a theme of leadership throughout the transition. At every step of the process, there was a belief in stepping aside and allowing others to lead. There was a demonstrated faith on the part of leaders to make room for their fellow professionals and give them the trust they need to succeed in the work that needed to be done.

> Something that Diana has told me a lot is that her Executive Director took a step back, protected the work. When people began to question it, she said I trust Diana, and I trust that this is what we're doing, what we need to do, and I'm just going to take a step back and protect whatever she thinks is best. Which I think has been really critical to pushing this forward. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

> I'm not here exuding a kind of power. I am supporting Sophia…my role is…caretaker, support person, making sure Sophia has the resources but then trusting Sophia as a professional…and then being in constant dialogue with Sophia to kind of do this work….that in and of itself is a kind of disruption. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

Equity and access are the philosophical core at the center of the collection of values and beliefs that have informed and supported the Learning and Public Practice department's efforts to transition to its new employment model. It is intwined in every fiber of their practice. In adopting the new educator program, they have removed the risk of mistaking their work for anything else.

> I think too, you know, something that we're doing in the department is not thinking of equity work as this thing over here…these are the things that we do that are equity. These are the things that we do that are not equity. Everything that we do, everything that we touch, is equity work. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

Chapter 12

Why Ought We to Care?

"One of the things that, that I did in building this department was center care. And so we cannot disrupt, dismantle…have things come to an end without understanding the impact that that has. And so there's a kind of responsibility we have to have when we are intervening and disrupting, because those are sweeping actions. And we have to be responsible because humans are involved" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022).

Care is perhaps better understand as a theoretical stance on ethics more than a pure ethical theory in and of itself (Gastmans, 2006). Such a stance was initially conceived as offering an alternate frame to justice-oriented moral theories like utilitarianism, deontology, and rights theory that has largely dominated Western philosophy (Keller & Kittay, 2017; Paley, 2002). Under these prevailing philosophical perspectives, people are viewed as non-social thinking

units, relating to one another contingently and on the basis of reason rather than emotion or attachment (Paley, 2002). Thus, individuals make ethical decisions according to some association with a moral law that applies universally regardless of context and which is governed by acts of pure rationality (Paley, 2002). As new models of ethics centered on care emerged, care theory grew in its association with consequentialism, which asks after effects on recipients of care and demands to know whether relations of care have in fact been established, maintained, or enhanced (Noddings, 2002).

Centering women as the major ethical actors in their domains of life, early care theorists addressed topics such as mothering, abortion, caring for the sick, elderly, disabled, and caring in intimate relationships (Keller & Kittay, 2017). Women's position as the focus of early care ethics can be traced to the perpetuated understanding that women have a natural affinity to care due to their role as child-bearers and its association with social reproduction (James, 1992). The counter-argument made by feminist scholars is that such essentialized assumptions obscure and devalue the work of caring whether in the home or in institutional settings (James, 1992; Munro, 2013).

With the emersion of feminism came demands for the foundations of morality to be adjusted to accommodate notions of care, life experience, and a continued development in self-awareness of who we are and what we have the potential to become (Vandenburg, 2013). Referring to eliding ends and means, Virginia Held describes ethics of care as both a practice and a value (Held, 2006). Dewey, in agreement with feminist care ethics, refers to the concept of particularism in which moral deliberation grows from emergent situations leading to a discovery of what is good and right (Dewey, 1932, cited in Hamington, 2010). However, given that early

care theorists did not address inequalities of power, the question remains as to whether care is a feminine or feminist ethic (Keller & Kittay, 2017). In the 1990s, feminist scholars Tronto and Fisher moved to broaden the definition of care beyond relationships between intimates to one that encapsulated care as the ways in which we, "maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (Fisher & Tronto, 1991, p. 40). Alternatively understood as Tronto's universalist moral principle, the new definition calls for the care of those around us and in our society (Tronto, 1993; Vandenburg, 2013).

Pinpointing care

Caring can be understood to refer to more than direct affect; it can cover a wide range of subjects including care toward learning, living, and each other (Rogers & Webb, n.d.). It centers on context and relationships over pure moral judgements (Hamington, 2010; Rogers & Webb, n.d.). From this point of view, care can come to mean the expression of the ethically significant ways individuals matter to each other, pushing the understanding of relatedness past ontological necessity or brute survival (Bowden, 1997). Following this conceit, the morally ethical actor seeks to recognize sufficient reasons for action independent of their own needs, desires, or inclinations (Allison, 1996). This imperative, according to Kant, deems that, "the ends of a subject who is an end in himself must be also, as far as possible, my ends" (Kant, 1998, p. 430; Bubeck, 1995), or that the happiness and well-being of others must become our purpose (Paley, 2002). Happiness and well-being is of great import to leadership in Learning and Public Practice. Navigating the treacherous boundary between the work that must be done and the work that individuals would willingly do is a constant battle. In Sophia's view,

> So when I think about care for me, a lot of that has to do with just understanding capacity. I say this having worked in the museum and the arts field for a long time, about 10 years, and understanding that that is a constant issue. That there's always going to be more and more asked of you in this field because it's, you know, mission work and it's passion work and we do it because we love it. But there is that aspect of you know, how much more can you give right? (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

An ethic of care is, therefore, built on the foundation that moral understandings are framed by social practices (Walker, 2007). Such concerns for others should be nurtured and treated as the irreplaceable components of a meaningful and moral life (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012). Going deeper, declaring life meaningful is not enough, meaning that what is required is to care about things and to believe that those things are worthy of care (Mendus, 2008).

Notably, this concept of care, as defined, has a propensity to position care relationships as uni-directional but Wiles (2003) argues that care relationships are in fact co-produced (Munro, 2013). In this way, care is much more than a commodity or service but rather becomes an ethic of care, a way of relating to others (Dalli, 2006; Peeters, 2008; Moss & Cameron, 2011). It is a principle of equal consideration of interests where equal weight is given to our moral deliberations as to those of like interest affected by our actions (Singer, 1993b). To begin is to move toward rather than away (Edwards, 2009). Positioning ourselves in relation to others is a principle tenet of care for the educators and staff in Learning and Public Practice. Part of that practice is understanding the nature of relationships, "…that figuring out those sort of ways of people relating helps them, it's a care process for them" (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022).

Care, as such, is about concrete relationships with others and so care ethicists perceive the self as situated in relationship with others, as well as insist that the full range of human experience be considered when conceiving human agency and interactions (Keller & Kittay, 2017). Integrally, this underscores the importance of connection and attachment (Verkerk, 2001). It is the essence of human characteristics; sharing in the humanity of others grows our sense of our individual humanity (Vandenburg, 2013). A recognition of the humanity of others is essential to the way that the LPP staff operates from a position of care saying,

> I think it has to be. I think that care has to be mutual and respectful. That's the only word I can think of, but it can't be based on pity or shame or some like sense of duty…I think it has to be this like very human like, I see you, you see me….(Jordan, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

There are differences though between caring for and caring about. Caring for suggests a more functional or institutional care relationship while caring about implies an ontological ethic of care (Milligan & Wiles, 2010; Popke, 2006). In this ethic of care, of caring about rather than for, we focus on important contextual factors such as the nature of the relationship between those involved in the problem and we seek to preserve these relationships and their emotional registers (Edwards, 2009). Gilligan (1982) referred to this type of an ethic of caring as something that goes beyond an imperative not to cause harm to others into a call to act responsively toward ourselves and others until ultimately a consciousness of the dynamics of human relations is raised.

From this point of view, relations between ourselves and others constitute our own moral deliberations since we tend to form our thoughts around the ways in which we relate to and

deliberate with others (Keller, 1997). This idea is particularly salient in reference to the staff's deliberations related to the docents who belonged to the original program. It is one of the reasons why the team went so far out of their way to reduce the harm they may cause to those individuals saying, "We were willing to do that work at the expense of, you know, not, not hurting the people who were in the previous program if we could help it, right? So that's where the care comes in" (Sophia, personal communication, August 2nd, 2022).

Out of these relationships to others comes a more concrete knowledge of the other, transforming previous abstract understandings and serving as a critical link to an empathy that is necessary for embodying care (Hamington, 2010). Doing so implies a notion of care grounded in respect for the individual that recognizes them for the whole and unique person they are rather than as some generic abstract case of personhood (Dillon, 1992). This work is evident in the way that leadership relates to each individual educator, understanding them as unique people with their own preferences and styles of communication.

> I think a lot of it too, is just my willingness to really care for this group like, similar in the way that I have had good managers sort of support and care for me in the past, right? I do a lot of one-on-one email communication with them, sometimes phone, sometimes text. You also figure out that certain people relate to people and communicate with people in different ways. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Care in museums

An ethic of caring in the professional world that goes beyond personal regard must become indispensable to daily practice (Rogers & Webb, n.d.). The museum, naturally, is included in this obligation, but little attention has been paid historically to the ways in which

museums can function as places where people are cared for (Munro, 2013). In the past, museums would have given little thought to the idea of implementing a paid educator program, something that the staff in LPP were mindful of saying,

> I think that it's it's a bold move to say that you're going to pay people that were originally volunteers and that *would* volunteer, a lot of museums would say no, if you're gonna give your time for free, we're gonna take it right? (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

This is, I think, also reflected in the ways in which volunteers have been historically characterized in the literature and in the discourse within the field as individuals undeserving of care and absent individual humanity, the targets of, " an exploitation, quite frankly" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022). Such a traditional representation was rejected in the case of LPP's new educator program, replaced with one valuing cooperation and shared investment.

> I think what is really fantastic and important to note about what I've seen about the rollout of this program is that no one ever really was trying to point the fingers to say, 'you are a racist person,' or 'you, program manager who developed this program, are a bad person.' It was really trying to take this very unbiased approach to the program at, at large and say, 'How can we collaboratively [work] together knowing what we know to now address this issue?' (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

Beginning in the 1990s, museums tried new audience development strategies expressly aimed at opening-up their collections and cultivating new audiences (Hewison, 1995). Hooper-Greenhill (1994), writing in the early 1990s, argued that, ''the balance of power is shifting in

museums, from those who care for objects to include, and often prioritise, those who care for people'' (p. 1). Since then, museums have undergone significant reformulation, positioning themselves as agents of social change (Munro, 2013). Critical museum studies regarding museums' activities falling outside of the historical and traditional of collecting, preserving, and displaying, such as education and community outreach, highlight the contemporary view of museums as social sites of interaction (Crooke, 2006; Silverman, 2002).

Caring, then, is both a skill and a disposition as well as a moral ideal manifested through action (Hamington, 2010). Care is not necessarily a natural or easily adopted imperative. But, there are strategies, including moral imagination, that can be useful for improving the practice of care (Edwards, 2009). Dewey's strategy of dramatic rehearsal, as an example, offers a holistic method of moral reflection that incorporates numerous considerations for ultimately allowing us to imagine others as more than strangers (Hamington, 2010). So, at last, perhaps the essential question is, "Why ought we to care?" (Keller & Kittay, 2017, p. 545). For the staff in Learning and Public Practice, there is no alternative, given, "…It's an essential part of my practice and an essential part of the practice of Learning and Public Practice. Intervening inside of that disrupting" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022).

Chapter 13

Challenges

No change, no matter how important, significant, or very likely needed, is without its share of challenges. In fact, the process of enacting the change in and of itself inevitably creates new and unpredictable challenges that will need to be addressed. So then, the question becomes, what will those challenges be and what can be done about them?

In the most immediate future, one of the greatest challenges for the team in Learning and Public Practice will be negotiating the requirements and expectations of the new educator position. It has been difficult to balance the need to establish a baseline in terms of participation with the reality of the constantly shifting availability of work. So much so that even something more straightforward like the number of tours each educator will facilitate has been difficult to pin down.

> I can think of, there's a couple of challenges. One of them being just wanting to make sure that the current group has some sort of requirements that we're sort of working towards. It's been difficult this year as we get everyone started to really uphold some of those requirements. Like one of them I had said…everyone's going to be required to do five tours this year. But when we look at how many tours we actually had available, it really wasn't possible to do five tours for every single person…So managing the expectations of what is required and what is actually, what we're capable of doing as we build this program back up is definitely a challenge. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

One of the things that has been consistent in all of the conversations with staff and educators is the belief that, with the transition to the new program and what that would mean in terms of professionalization of the role would come an equal level of motivation and dedication on the part of the educators themselves. But, there are growing pains with any new endeavor, and for the staff in LPP that means having some fairly frank conversations from time to time about what will be expected of the team and how this work will be different.

> I want to make sure, too, that the group as we have it, since it is so much smaller in the role, really is much more dedicated, that everybody is dedicated to it. And so, you know, there are still some difficult discussions that are in the works to be had of like, you know, folks that maybe aren't engaging as much as I would like them to, or that I feel is necessary for this program…for them to be successful as educators in this program. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

An additional challenge involves an educator of a different sort, and it harkens back to an older version of the education program at the Wex and its connection to the university. Students were, at one time, offered the opportunity to teach in the galleries and, although they haven't been for some time, there are plans to bring them back. The challenge, though, is finding the best way to do so. Students have very different needs, requirements, and barriers to access versus the standard educator, as well as variable levels of experience with teaching, particularly in an informal setting. Before they can be re-introduced to the educator program, a lot of thought and planning will need to go into how it can be done successfully.

> The second challenge is there's kind of a level to this program that involves, or there used to be, that involves student engagement…I mean capacity was one but
>
> two, I think there's really an understanding that Diana and Jordan and I have all been working through this year that students have special, you know, requirements, time constraints. They have their own reasons for wanting to do this program, but they also have a very different set of things that we need to consider for how we make the program work for them and for us. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

For Sophia and the rest of the staff, re-introducing students into the educator program is about inviting more voices into the conversation, but its more than that. It's about solidifying the relationship between the Wexner Center and the rest of the campus and actualizing the mission of the department to provide young professionals with the opportunity to grow in their practice before they leave the university and begin their career in the field.

> It's really important, I think…because we are a campus art museum. We're a teaching institution. I see it as part of our mission and certainly part of our mission in our

> department, to you know, work with younger professionals and to give them an opportunity. The group that we have right now, myself, and figuring out how to do that in a way that makes sense for students, because their requirements are going to look different than the requirements of the current group. And that's not something that to my knowledge has been done before. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Change breeds challenge. It has in the case of the new educator program and it will again when students are invited to participate. More than establishing requirements and recruitment and training, and critical to the context of the new program, is the question of how students will be compensated. In the previous version of the student docent program, they were offered either a stipend or course credit and, at least for now, that is likely to be the way the new program will proceed. But, it is still an open question that leads to even more questions about standards, requirements, evaluation, and accountability.

> I think the way that we would do this, and now this isn't set in stone but this is the way of thinking about it that I think is working with our current student intern cohort which runs across the Wex, is the students have the option to choose if they're going to be paid for their work or if they're going to receive course credit for their work. So I think that that is certainly a way to go about it. But I don't know it does, I mean, of course adds some complexity. If they're getting course credit, then we have to be sure that they're fulfilling those credits right? So then I would be working with them individually to make sure that all was the way that it should be and they're getting what they need. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

The transition to an employment model for educators was intended to address and solve a variety of issues, but consideration must be given to the issues that it might create. Designating educators as part-time employees of course solves one problem in the form of financial compensation for labor, but that designation can also unintentionally initiate educators into a system that sees non-essential and contingent staff taken advantage of or dismissed while receiving few if any benefits, a potential issue that the staff is very much aware of.

> I think something that always sort of raises a red flag for me, or in this case may be more of like a pink flag…is the use of like part-time or freelance employees? As you know, I've seen like in my working life that sort of, you know, like designation as like a part-time worker can be a way to not pay benefits. I don't know, it's always situational, right? I don't know that that's like, what's happening here, but I do think it's something to keep an eye on…Our gallery educators, you know, are sort of contingent staff because what they do is dependent on sort of extenuating circumstance or, you know, not in constant need of the workplace, right? (Jordan, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

There are any number of possible answers to the problem, all with their own benefits and disadvantages, but for the staff in Learning and Public Practice the answer may have more to do with tackling the systemic issues at the center of the problem rather than addressing its symptoms. As they have been throughout every stage of the process, the staff are mindful of the ways in which their decisions designed to help some might hurt others, such that what might seem like a simple solution to one problem could result in creating a new problem for someone else. All of which could lead to the unacceptable outcome of creating more barriers to access.

> Maybe the answer is like, you know, fighting for better benefits and rights for contingent workers, or part-time workers. I think that that might be a better move, because…if we've moved the gallery educator position to full-time then that would make it inaccessible for people who have jobs, who have families who, you know, want to do this part-time and they, they just want to do it part-time. And we don't want to penalize them for that…But the same is also true for, you know, jobs without benefits with limited hours with you know, low hourly pay…you know, it's that same sort of, you know, barrier to who can participate. (Jordan, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Ultimately, the move to pay educators is just the beginning. There is a recognition on the part of the staff that, while it is a good first step, the decision to transition to an employment model only scratches the surface of the issues at the center of the discussion around labor in the art museum.

> I think that we need to be real about the fact that like, we've started to pull down these barriers by paying people but that's, that's really the first step of many…There's, there's you know, we're all workers, yes, but we're workers with very different circumstances in some ways, or access to different sort of futures that we have to consider. (Jordan, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Chapter 14

Back to the Future

What will the future look like for the team in Learning and Public Practice and for the new educator program? Based on what they are doing now, what do they imagine their work will look like then? What are their greatest hopes for the program as it continues to grow and evolve beyond expectation?

In the very immediate future, the program will continue to prioritize the training of the educators. The new cohort is a mixture of veteran and new educators with an equally eclectic variety of experience and knowledge related to museum education. The first task will be creating a baseline of knowledge on museum teaching strategies so that every educator is equipped to facilitate conversations in the galleries. Then, the task will be to introduce more advanced

teaching strategies like co-teaching, a strategy that is new for almost everyone and also the new standard in LPP for teaching in the gallery.

> I mean, you know, that we're in the process of building-out a training program…it fills out a fairly extensive sort of interpretive strategies, art teaching, gallery teaching, all these different themes — training program over the course of the next few months, just to keep people growing and learning. And for some this is going to be review and for others, it'll be the first time they've ever learned about gallery teaching strategies or talked about co-teaching. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Co-teaching is a rarely used teaching strategy in museum education for a number of reasons. The staff is encouraged, though, by the speed at which the educators have started to develop those essential skills of trust and cooperation with one another and apply them to their own practice. As they do, they become more independent and self-sufficient, relying less and less on leadership to guide them and more on their own aptitude and drive.

> This group is starting to come together as a group. And not necessarily just as individuals, which I think is really nice because they're building trust with one another. I think that in order to co-teach effectively…you know, you have to have some trust in the person that you're teaching with…and I think everyone's sort of starting to wrap their heads around how we are trying to function as a group and then looking at their own practices within those philosophies. So they're not just looking to me as a resource anymore. They're looking to each other. So I think that's really exciting. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

The team, as it stands, is working well, but it will eventually change as some educators leave and new educators are brought in. While this could easily be a source of tension and apprehension, for Sophia and the staff it is a source of optimism. Each new educator added has given the team a chance to learn something more about what makes them unique and how those qualities can be a benefit to the overall group.

> I am really hopeful about welcoming more new gallery educators into this. I know we have four new folks in this group right now. And I think that each one of them had their own very unique ways of operating in this role, right? But they've taught me a lot about you know, how I can support all of these different types of people. And they taught me a lot about how they can sort of bring themselves into this group…I think that the, the group has meshed well…better than I thought it would. So that's, that's been a very positive thing too. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Looking further into the future, and spurred by the enthusiasm of the group for the work that their doing, the staff see possibilities for even greater growth in the professionalism of the role both inside and outside the Wex. The team recognizes that there are opportunities for learning and expanding their practice everywhere, and they are highly motivated to seek those opportunities wherever they may be found.

> They want to go and see other practices at other institutions and maybe talk to some educators there or they want to visit another institution as a group and think about how that institution is using interpretive strategies in their exhibitions and all these different things. So I think there's a lot of possibility to expand our practices, too, in the next few

years as we you know, keep, keep working together. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

As the educators continue to professionalize and grow in their practice, there is the hope that they will continue to use those skills and experiences at the Wex. One of the issues that the new program hopes to resolve is the propensity for the amount of time that volunteers give to fluctuate, making their level of commitment difficult to predict and their valuable knowledge and skills hard to rely on. Vested in the new program is the belief that educators will now dedicate more time to the institution so that it can grow and change with them and create the possibility for newer, better versions moving forward.

> But, you know, I also think that we're gonna have some some, hopefully some longevity, longevity with like their, our corps that we haven't had in the past. You know, the volunteer model, you have people coming in, going out. I think that might still be the case with some of this part-time work, but I do think that, or I hope that, some people will be able to stay longer and really like develop over the years and change the program while they're in it. I think that, in that sense, like, the possibilities are kind of endless, which is cool and exciting. (Jordan, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

And as ever, there is a recognition that the work is not done, and that this transition is just one of many ways that the staff can continue to prioritize care in everything that they do. There are many possible paths into the future, but resting on laurels isn't one of them.

> I also think that you know…as we work with those, these folks, and as they settle into this paid structure, which is new for all of us here…then I think that it'll push us to just continue to care for each other and to see what else can be done and not get complacent

> and like, 'Okay, we did this one good thing now we can just sort of sit.' That makes me hopeful, actually…And so, I guess, like I'm hopeful for, I don't know, like a broader movement of part-time contingent/freelance staff, that, you know, I can support as somebody who is not in that, not currently in that position. (Jordan, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Proceeding from that position of care also entails an understanding that it is not at all times the place of full-time staff to dictate what is best for the part-time staff. It is a reflection of an ethic of care that focuses on caring about rather than caring for, and where the individual is understood as their whole and unique human self-imbued with agency.

> I don't know that like it would be my role or other full-time staff. I think in some ways, there will have to be like some self-organizing happening among contingent and part-time staff like I don't think that'll come from us. I just don't want it to come across like I want full-time staff to come in and like give all these things to part-time and contingent staff…first of all, I don't think that's realistic. And second of all, I don't think that's like, appropriate necessarily because again, that's like, guessing at what somebody needs. (Jordan, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

So then looking to the much more distant future, perhaps to a time beyond the tenure of those responsible for the creation of the new educator program, what might the program look like then? The answer speaks to the values that the team have used to inform every decision made at every stage of the process: to create a program that is diverse, accessible, and equitable, that welcomes a cacophony of voices from every corner of the community to join the conversation and know that they belong.

I've been thinking about, like, what the future of this program looks like. You know, what, however many years down the road it may be, or we have more new educators than the folks that have taught in the galleries for years and years. And at some point, we're gonna hit a place where all of the people in the program will have come in as newly employed educators, and I think it'll be interesting to see what the program looks like there… Because we do still have a, you know, the bulk of our group, our folks who were in the previous program. And so diversity was one thing that we were looking to add to the program. And I think that that is going to complicate things a lot as, as it should, as it's meant to be right? I think it's going to hopefully increase access in our galleries, in our programs as we continue to reach out to other parts of the Columbus community, or Central Ohio, even. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

Sam

Investing in future generations will become an important theme in Sam's story. To understand the importance of imparting the value of the university and of The Wexner Center on future generations of art patrons and makers is to understand Sam the educator. This drive is informed by Sam's history as a public school teacher who, unlike many of his public school colleagues, saw the value in the effort of bringing students to the university art museum.

> I was a teacher in Columbus public schools, which is now the Columbus City Schools. And I would bring kids to the Wexner Center, which was kind of unusual. You know, a lot of teachers didn't take kids on field trips. You know, the perception was they wouldn't know how to behave in an art museum, which is not true…So it's a great place, plus you get the kids on campus. A lot of these kids would never come here…You know, that's

what I'm looking at. You know, getting the kids who are in school today, ultimately to be the next generation of art patrons. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Sam's propensity for bringing students to the Wex made him well-known to the education staff. So when the time came to recruit new docents to the program, his name was on the list of potential recruits to the Wexner's docent program.

So you know, then I got an email from the Wexner Center. We're looking for ushers and docents. So I sent my application in and, it was pretty much, the interview with the woman who was in charge then, that it was a responsibility to become a docent. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Under the rules of the old docent program, though, it wasn't as simple as signing-up. Even with his background in education, Sam was still required to attend and pass the docent training program, a class offered by the Wex that both community and student docents needed in order to be certified to teach as docents in the gallery.

And we took the class on it. We basically took the class that some students were taking for credit. And then the process the second semester, the class was we would shadow then co-tour with people. And then you had to solo and then you became a docent. So that's sort of how I've ended up here. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

That was four years ago. The big question though is how did Sam end up "here," as a paid educator in the new educator program. From conversations he had with leadership in the department, it was clear to Sam that the staff saw a need and that the best way to address that need was through change, a change which Sam recognized and agreed with despite the impact it may have on the current docent corps.

> And I was talking to Diana you know, that they were reorganizing and the need to change the docent corps, to diversify it. You need younger people leading the tours that the kids can relate to. I fit into the retired old white person. So I think it's great. We're getting some diversity. I don't know whether we would have lost some of the more established docents who have just chosen not to continue. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

The diversifying of the corps, in Sam's view, was a net benefit for the department, but it wasn't the only benefit to being a member of the education program at the Wex. As a volunteer, Sam made an effort to attend every training, lecture, and presentation that he could and often did so alone.

> So for me, you know, part of it was I was pretty much, tried to attend anything that was available for training and a lot of things that were available to docents and Wexner staff. And I think I was the only docent there. So that's always interesting to look at. Not only the artists but some of the background discussions around it. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Sam's initiative set him apart as an educator invested in improving his practice toward becoming a more effective facilitator, giving him the necessary skills to interact with a wider range of audiences. Under the old docent program, there was a sense that some volunteers would not have been available or capable of a similar level of interaction or be as relatable to visitors, even though Sam believed this wasn't always the case saying, "And you know, are you, can you find people who can do that? And will the kids relate to them. Not saying that, that the docents who were here before aren't able to do that (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022).

The introduction of pay was also considered a benefit and, for Sam, one for doing what he was already doing adding, “So, as far as, you know, mine I was doing all the training that they asked you to do, why not get $20 for it? (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Found in almost every study of docents, including this one and all the ones it references, is a discussion about motivations. Why do docents do what they do? What do they get out of it when pay isn’t a factor? Some of the few examples of tangible benefits often listed in those studies are university administrative benefits like parking passes, something which I think most would agree is tantamount to a golden ticket for anyone who has ever suffered the injustice that is university parking fees.

In Sam’s case, this benefit was a significant motivator and front-of-mind when he was considering making the transition to a paid educator. As a volunteer, he was issued a campus parking pass, and his concern was that by becoming an employee of the university his pass would be revoked. Importantly, though, he was also concerned with campus accessibility in general. Recall that one of Sam’s motivations as a teacher was to find ways to bring students to the university because they might never go otherwise. He felt this concern for the general public, too.

> Interestingly, I was not the only person, the one key thing — do I keep my parking pass. So I mean, it’s just one of the big problems the Wexner Center faces is people coming to the Wexner Center, into campus. Just getting them on campus. You know, people just view coming to OSU as like, a nightmare. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Accessibility, then, was a concern but it was just the first. One of the other challenges affecting Sam's decision was one that hadn't been mentioned in any of my other conversations and that is the administrative hiring process. It can be a fairly lengthy and unapproachable process, particularly for those who are unfamiliar with it, but not, according to Sam, an insurmountable one. What was originally a somewhat opaque process was made much more palatable with the assurances of university administrators.

> But you know, kind of back to the making the transition, it wasn't anything. The biggest challenge was onboarding at OSU. You know, all the steps you have to take. Now, I'll give the university credit you know, I get this notice like, you have three days to complete your I-9 form to prove you're a citizen or legally allowed to work. Oh, my God, I gotta go do this. You get in there. 'Oh yeah, I'll help you get this. And by the way, we're not going to fill this out for three months.' (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Another wrinkle that Sam had to navigate was the online component. All of the hiring processes were restricted to the university's online employee management system, a complicating factor that Sam didn't initially consider when agreeing to stay-on and one that reminded him of similar experiences he had toward the end of his teaching career.

> And part of it is, it's all online.You know, I didn't even think about it when I said, 'Yeah, I'll do it.' It's not insurmountable. But, you know, a good example, as a teacher, you always take continuing ed to renew your licensure. The last classes I took, you know, nearing the end of my career you never even turned a paper in. It was all done online. And I had colleagues who just didn't use computers. You know, so you had to navigate the Carmen system. And which is no big deal for young people today. It's just, you know,

you know, there was a pretty dramatic computerization of education in like, the last 10 years of my career. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

It raised an important point about the accessibility of the profession in a contemporary work environment and how the prevalence of digital technology can work to bring more people in while keeping others out. In Sam's experience, the digital divide was overcome in the end with help from others, most of all from leaders in the department saying, "Sophia would sit down with anybody who's having trouble getting through workday" (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022). This demonstrates that obstacles will inevitably be created by any new system and that responsible leadership is that which acknowledges its role in creating those obstacles and takes steps to help others overcome them.

Ultimately, for Sam, the change to an employment model for educators wasn't very different than the job of volunteer. His career-long goal of encouraging younger generations to visit the museum was as strong as ever with the one true difference being that now when he leaves the house for work, he gets paid for it.

Kind of back to it didn't change much. But it's still something, you know. It's exciting, too, when kids come in here. And realizing these are the future. Yeah, you know, the thing is I'm a docent and now we're called educators. And I'm jokingly telling people, 'yeah, my wife's been so tired of me being around the house. I had to go get a job.' I tell people I'm an OSU employee, but it is not much change for me. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Sam also connected his reasons for being an educator within the broader context of art museum professions, commenting on the disconnect that often exists between the directives of

the art-centered divisions like curatorial and the people-centered field of Education. In keeping with his passion for exposing students to art and the art museum, Sam expressed awareness of and concern over the difficulty as an educator of having discussions with young learners in less accessible exhibitions and a desire to have conversations with other members of staff about their exhibition planning strategies.

> And you know, I would love to see and hopefully have an opportunity to talk to the people. You need to make your Fall exhibit accessible to younger kids…You know, can you find an exhibit that you could easily take a group of students to? So yeah, it's, you know, for me, it's an opportunity to present to students, you know, the art museum , not only for the art that's in it but for the experience of going there. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

More than just getting them in the building, Sam wants students to be able to see themselves in the space, too. There is an incredible art historical tradition in the city and the surrounding area that Sam feels is lost sometimes in the typical guided museum tour, where connections that could be made between that history, the artists, and the current generation are overshadowed or ignored in favor of a touring structure that inhibits flexibility and responsiveness to topics and issues most relevant to the learner.

> So when I was teaching, they would have tours…And they would have the docent come out and talk to kids. And they had their script. Here's what I want you to see. And I was teaching kids who lived in her [the artist], where she grew up. When she passed away her house became a residence for artists in Columbus. And that was the exhibit. But they wouldn't take kids to that, wasn't a part of the tour. That's, that shouldn't be. But I think

that's, you know, you have to kind of meet the kids where they're at. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

I asked Sam, thinking ahead and looking to the future, about the impact this change will have for himself and for the Wex and again Sam believed that it wouldn't change much. The new expectations for educators of attending trainings and presentations on new exhibitions and artists are things that he was already happily doing and plans to continue doing, building his repository of knowledge that he can use at the Wex and elsewhere.

For me I don't think it's going to change much at all. I'll do the preparation for the exhibit. And part of that is learning about artists. I go to other museums and I see that art in the collection. You walk through a gallery, 'Oh yeah. I'm learning about these artists.' So that's, that's not going to change as a motivation. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

Looking outside of himself, Sam also believed that change at the Wexner Center was necessary if it was going to survive and continue serving audiences well into the future. To him, the Wex is a special institution doing really interesting work, work that he can now continue contributing to through research and learning at a level that he might not have otherwise reached.

I think the Wexner Center needed to change just to remain contemporary. To remain relevant. You know, I think all museums need to change. And the fact that the Wexner is a very unique place. You know, it's exciting to be down here. And, you know, having an opportunity to help research that norm —, you know, you're doing research that is valid for the art museum, the art world. How do we contribute to that? I would have done this

anyway. And on the other hand, you know, this means I have, I set aside time to watch something or to come here, you know, which I may not normally do. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

In the same light, Sam was grateful for the impact the change would have on making space for a newer, younger, and more diverse corps of educators. It was important to Sam that students and audiences who visit the Wex will now have an opportunity to see themselves reflected not just in the art but in the people they interact with. The community inside and outside of Columbus will see this change and begin to see the Wex as a place that belongs to them, too.

But I definitely think it's good that we are bringing in younger artists, I mean, younger educators and more diversity. You know, we have someone who's a Muslim. And, you know, that's, I think it's good that when kids come here they see a woman in this role wearing a hijab. You know, it's exposing, kind of back to the people who visit here. They need to come here and see it's a very diverse community. And expanding visions. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

The one factor that Sam said would have no impact was, somewhat ironically, the pay. While it was nice to have it, and for what it represents in terms of value for labor, in the end it was never pride of place in Sam's mind.

Financial compensation you know, you know to me, doesn't matter. It was nice getting the check. You know, but you know, it's part of it, you know, just I think it's more X number of hours in the day. Well, I'm going to spend my hour watching this video that

was sent to me. So, I'm probably, you know, I would have continued to do it even if we hadn't gotten to volunteer. (Sam, personal communication, July 20th, 2022)

It's our second and final conversation. Our first conversation was held in the Wexner Center café, but for our second we've decided to head into the galleries. The Wexner Center galleries are positioned along a long corridor that stretches on an incline from the gallery entrance at the bottom to the final gallery at the top of the rise. It's the afternoon on a weekday and, although the galleries are normally empty, today they are filled with art students scattered throughout the space busy with a drawing assignment on easels twice their size. We manage to find a relatively quiet space all the way at the far end of the last gallery next to the wall.

I asked Sam about any changes or differences he's noticed since last we spoke which was a difficult question to answer because, as some of the others had mentioned, there hadn't been many opportunities to tour yet. Part of that was owed to the fact that it was early in the Fall semester, a normally slow time for museum tours anyway, and part of it was due to something Sam and I had discussed before about the effect that challenging exhibitions can have on school visitation. That being the case, the greatest difference Sam had noticed up to that point was in the leadership of the department, in particular the infusion of energy and enthusiasm brought by Sophia as one of the newest staff members.

Well, you know, I think part of it was I haven't toured with a group yet. So you know, a little bit difficult to see the effect now. I really haven't seen that much of a difference in, you know, paid docent versus not.You know, I think it's been more Diana and Sophia who have made the changes. You know, I think Sophia has brought a lot of new energy to the

group. So, I think that's a bigger difference than paid versus unpaid. (Sam, personal communication, September 30th, 2022)

Sam mentioned in our last conversation that the corps of educators was becoming more diverse and that was still true now, but he acknowledged that the team still maintained much of the identity it had before the transition began. Regardless, the new team, combining veteran educators with new hires, was primed to start the work of developing a more precise practice guided by a philosophy of experimentation and variability.

> We have gotten some diversity in our group. I've noticed that there's still the corps of docents that were there before. I think the big change has been co-teaching or co-touring. And I think, you know, last time we were just going through the motions of it. Now we'll be able to actually experiment a little bit with, you know, different strategies. I think there's the feeling that, okay, we're a little more, the educators are more important. (Sam, personal communication, September 30th, 2022)

So then thinking about the future somewhat, what this might look like moving forward, I asked Sam how he thought about his role in this new paradigm and what he was most looking forward to. Naturally, the first thing on his list was the chance to do more tours and to bring more students into the Wex. After that, he was excited about the opportunity to continue improving with co-teaching in the gallery, even if he wasn't completely sold on it.

> More tours. So you know, it's, they're gonna hopefully, we'll get more school groups in. Yes, and that's, you know, one thing I think getting a little more comfortable with co-teaching. I mean, co-touring, because, you know, I, you know, we're just pretty much breaking the group up or going, you know, one person does one gallery. So, we do more

and we'll have to meet like that half an hour before. I think that was kind of not necessary. Wasn't required. (Sam, personal communication, September 30th, 2022)

Turning over the coin, I then asked Sam about any concerns he might have about the program moving forward. Once again, first and foremost, was a concern about the accessibility of the exhibitions and the effect that has on schools bringing students to see the museum. Schools tend to follow a predictable schedule so that field trips tend to take place in the Fall when the calendar is more open than in the Spring when testing and other administrative constraints make leaving the school more difficult. In Sam's view, the Wex's exhibition schedule should be conceived to match so that the institution gives itself the best chance to bring in the highest number of students possible.

> You know, I'm thinking of it from the consumers point of view. You're going to take your field trip in the Fall. That's just the way the school schedule works. You know, that's the Winter, you're preparing for the test and then the Spring. So you know, are they going to get exhibits like that? They were very appropriate to schools, right. Obviously, some of the past two exhibits have been very difficult. (personal communication, September 30th, 2022)

What is needed is greater collaboration. Departments across the institution need to work together to organize exhibitions in a way that satisfies the institution's need to promote contemporary art and the Education side's need to attract learners of all ages to the Wex for conversations around those works of art. In Sam's opinion, this kind of cooperation has worked to great effect in the past, but there is still a lot of room to do even more. That includes the educators themselves, whom Sam believes have a lot of work to do, too, to get to the place they

need to be to facilitate the wide variety of experiences they will be asked to have in a space like the Wex.

> Yeah, I think *To Begin Again* was a great show. It was very accessible for all groups. That was last Spring. And I realized it's just, they have to take you know, they have to plan these exhibits several years out. So, yeah, I think that would be something to consider. Meanwhile, we can get our act together. (Sam, personal communication, September 30th, 2022)

Part 5

(Not) The End

Chapter 15

We Leave You With This

We live and tell stories according to those that we know, and the stories we know typically have a beginning, a middle, and an end. But, this story is different. The end to the story of the individuals in Learning and Public Practice who have been involved in making the transition to the new program possible is yet to be written. While the major decisions have been made and the biggest steps have been taken, there is still more work to be done, and it can be found in the little things. The small, everyday details are the focus moving forward as the team continues to learn and grow.

> I feel like we're in the midst of research…We've written together a logic model to be able to kind of understand the impact we want to be making. We're making decisions a step at

> a time. And we've actually have only done certain aspects of it. We are still doing it. Right? It's, it's a bit of a continuum. This equity work. (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022, 2022)

The work, in many ways, is never done. In truth, "…it's all developing still. And I think that's like an important thing to front in this is that it's not over. The transition is still happening now" (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022).

Still, in spite of knowing that the work continues, the team in Learning and Public Practice can see that the work that's been done so far has made a difference. By creating a system of pay where individuals are recognized for their labor and that opens access points for those who have been historically marginalized and excluded from the field, the LPP team have shown that reversing systemic inequities and increasing the professional profile of the educator in museum education is possible.

> I think it's really interesting that like that dynamic of paying people kind of has reversed some of the inequity that we've felt in this, this role, right?…It makes them more invested, more valued in the job that they're doing, because they're actually being paid for their work…I don't know at least that's, that's kind of what I've gotten from this. (Sophia, personal communication, October 10th, 2022)

The benefits that the team have observed since making the transition have not been restricted to the staff or the educators. In their view, the transition has been a universal good for all concerned — from the educators who are now compensated, to the staff of the Wex, to the community at large.

> I think in the example of the former docent program, I don't think that the result really took anything away from anybody. It was a universal benefit to everyone. The educators are compensated fairly for the work that they're doing. Our tours are more accessible for and collaborative for those who participate…In disrupting, we actually made things better for everybody, not just for traditionally disadvantaged folks in the community. (Emilia, personal communication, August 9th, 2022)

Impacts on the field

From the beginning of this process, I have held in the back of my mind the hope that this research would, in part, be of some use to the museum education field at large. Transitions away from the traditional model of education in museums are only becoming more and more frequent and, just as the education team in Learning and Public Practice used research to inform their process, this research could help inform and facilitate that movement moving forward. I imagine those in education departments across the country who have thought about this or are thinking about this are wondering, how in the world does this happen? Perhaps they will follow the same path and get to the same place on the map of planning and enacting and wonder what happens next. With any luck, learning more about how the LPP team has done it will be helpful to those who are considering it, or in the middle of it, providing much needed instruction and direction.

This hope is echoed by the staff in LPP, who hope that this research will provide some potentially needed guidance and understanding. While they are clear that they don't have all of the answers, they hope that the process they have used will still be useful for those professionals and departments for whom this model is wanted and appropriate.

> I think what people want is to understand this more, to understand the direction that we're going. And, you know, I think what I've been trying to explain to people is we don't have the answers…We're making decisions a step at a time. The decisions are always informed by data and informed by certain evidence that we may have. It may cause us to make different decisions, but we don't have the answers. We don't have this figured out. Do I hope this becomes a model that might be useful for other institutions, other departments in, in other institutions? Sure. You know if that works for others, too….
>
> (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022)

For myself, I hope that this research will also contribute to changing perspectives in the field toward docents and their role in the shifting landscape of museum education so that they cease to be viewed as relics or obstacles and begin to be seen as allies in the fight for progress.

Impacts on future research

There are a number of ways in which this research could be used to support future study in the field of museum education, informed partly by the assumptions and limitations of this project. For a start, there are a number of research projects still to pursue at the Wex that fell outside of the purview of this study. Future research could investigate the perspectives of the new educators hired into the program related to the impacts it has had on their perception of the institution, the broader field of museum education, and their place within it. An assumption of this research is that the new model was informed by professional values related to diversity and equity and that those values were shared by the staff and educators involved. Research focused on the perspectives of newly hired educators could investigate whether these same values played

a role in their decision to become a museum educator or whether additional factors carried greater consideration.

Other research projects could explore the pedagogical philosophy and strategies of the Learning and Public Practice Department including their choice of co-teaching as their primary facilitation method and how that choice was effected by the transition to the new program, if at all. Such a project relates to the assumption that paid educators are approached with a greater level of professionalization and expectation of adopting new practices, a presumption that was not thoroughly explored in this research.

To the broader field of museum education, this research has the potential to inform future studies of art museums who are making or have made transitions to employment models for museum educators. Within the scope of that subject, there is room for future research to continue investigating the roles of professionalization and feminization on the field of education in museums and its associated impact on the broader concepts of labor and value in institutions. The concept of feminization was thoroughly explored in this research, but the concept of professionalization was given relatively less attention, making it an excellent potential focus of future work. There is also ample opportunity to research related topics surrounding pay, labor, and equity such as the museum unionization movement and what impacts it may have, if any, on museum education departments' efforts to switch to payment models for educators. This is of particular relevance given that, like transitions to paid models for museum educators, museum unions are becoming more and more common and therefore deserving of future study.

The new employment model now in use by the Learning and Public Practice Department at the Wexner Center for the Arts is a work-in-progress. It's solid foundation allows space to build, "and we will be building it for years to come" (Diana, personal communication, July 10th, 2022).

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