

WORK IDENTITIES AND THE MISSION OF ART EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE
INVESTIGATION OF ONE MUSEUM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AS
INTERPRETED THROUGH TWO DECADES OF ITS EDUCATORS

by

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(Under the Direction of Carole Henry)

ABSTRACT

This praxis-oriented study combines interviews with 11 museum educators and an ethnographic investigation of the midsize American Association of Museums (AAM)-accredited art museum in the Southeastern United States where the educators began their museum careers. With tenures that span more than 20 years from 1986 to 2007, the presentation of data begins with the voice of the first professional curator of education, a solo practitioner, and continues with the 10 educators who joined her. As the museum grew and professionalized, the position expanded into an enclave of consecutive, and sometimes concurrent, practitioners who were given various assistant and associate curator titles. The resulting case study, a history of one department over time, informs the understanding of the emerging field of art museum education by recording and considering the varying ways participants answer for themselves the

question of museum education's mission. Current museum education policy, or the museum educator's functional understanding of the purpose of their work, is referred to in the study as a "philosophy of work identity" or simply as "work identity." The study's conclusions address issues of feminization in museum education, perceptions of early childhood art exposure on future museum participation, cultural diversity and museum audience development, museum educator preparation and retention, and the role of instructional technology in museum education.

INDEX WORDS: art museum education, art education, museum education,
museum educator retention, museum educator training

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Dedication

The past, present, and future art educator at “The Museum” and at other museums like it, for their earnest dedication to such a meaningful pursuit.

And to my favorite museum visitors—my family: Richard, Ana, Carl, and Andy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
The Purpose of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Research Questions	6
Significance and Scope	6
2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	13
Early Studies of Museum Education	14
Recent Studies on Museum Learning	17
Journals and Conference Proceedings	18
Biography and Limited Literature	19
Theoretical Framework	29
Philosophical Models	33
The Absence of, and Need for, Educator-Focused Research	35
3 METHODOLOGY	43

Validity and Reliability	43
Emic Perspective	46
Purposeful Selection of Participants and Context	47
Research Instruments	47
Other Forms of Data	50
Data Analysis Strategy	50
4 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA	53
Participant-Observer	53
“The Museum” as Participant	61
Two-Decades of Educators, 1987–2007	64
Commonalities	89
5 CONCLUSION	187
Research Questions.....	188
REFERENCES	210
APPENDICES	220
A MUSEUM EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND INCENTIVES AS ANNOUNCED IN AVISO 1985–2002	220
B AVISO JOB LISTINGS FOR THE MUSEUM 1985–2004	223
C EDUCATION PORTION OF 1996 LONG RANGE PLAN	226

List of Tables

	Page
Table 1 Scope of Influence—Colleges & Universities Attended by the Museum Educators	11
Table 2 Scope of the Museum Educator’s Career Path by Museum and AAM Region.....	12
Table 3 Interview Guide.....	49
Table 4 Conference Presentation Topics by Theme 2003.....	138
Table 5 Museum Educator and Teacher Salary Comparison, Select Years 1990–2007.....	167
Table 6 Museum Educator Demand as Demonstrated by Position Announcements 1990, 1995, & 2000.....	179

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Purpose of the Study

Art museums are a \$5 billion industry in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), with more than \$450 million of their operating budgets coming from public funding (Iyengar, 2007). The consensus among both professionals and non-experts is that museums are institutions of learning, educational by their very nature (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Paris, 2002). Yet, how a museum teaches and what a museum teaches remains transmutable. The factors that guide and influence those who carry out this mission are the subject of this case study. In a climate of educational accountability and shrinking public funding, art museum educator-driven discussions of the fundamental objectives of the profession remain limited, and qualitative research on art museum education is more often done by those outside the field. In their review of the literature, Luke and Adams (2007) turned up only 15 qualitative studies of art museum learning in the 20-year period from 1984 to 2004, the majority of which were visitor studies conducted by researchers from outside the field of museum education. Among these non-museum educator researchers are experts on visitors studies and academics from the disciplines of education and art education. The value of this work is not at issue in this instance, but what is clear is that these studies do not chronicle the everyday

realities of museum education work. Action-based research with museum educators in the role of researcher are virtually absent from the scattered multi-disciplinary literature of museum education. As a result, the mission of art museum education, and often the effectiveness of efforts made in the name of that mission, at present remain largely obscured for the greater number of people working as art museum educators—namely, those in the small and mid-sized suburban and rural museums. The recent contribution of Villeneuve (2007) offers some promise of change. Of the 29 chapters on art museum education presented in the anthology, 17 are by art museum educators. Yet, Villeneuve's art museum education text deals largely with historical and descriptive research essays, with only seven qualitative selections and only five of those by museum educators.

The purpose of this dissertation is to present a history of art museum education focused primarily on its practitioners' experiences and beliefs and not on the museum as a whole or the resources it produces. In so doing, this work seeks to document the 20-year history of one museum's education department through the chronology of the 11 people who each, in turn, experienced it. This hidden history, one that might otherwise be lost, is an important account of museum education's philosophical perspective, or "mission"—a history from the point of view of the people it studies. The emic perspective of researcher-participant research, along with member checks, peer review, varied data sources, the increased length of time considered, and the thorough

reporting of the researcher's conceptual framework confirm the validity of this study despite the limited number of participants and the use of a single institution.

Beyond the credibility of the study, the work bolsters qualitative research methodologies as an alternative approach to quantitative methods of research currently favored in the museum setting. While Eisner and Dobb's (1987) assertion that art museum education was absent of "a clearly articulated, codified, and ratified philosophy" may or may not remain true (p. 80), yet there are at present substantially more people at work in this profession. In fact, according to the last published census reports on the matter, there are more than 70,000 American museum educators (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) striving to record and interpret the visual arts for the benefit of the museum-going public.

If the field is steeped in uncertainty, as Eisner and Dobbs (1987) described it, and still has "unarticulated basic aims" and "no system of establishing a measure of achievement" (p. 81), to find fixed or objective hypotheses to qualify or quantify may be a challenge. There is, however, evidence that things have improved since 1987. In Villeneuve's (2007) introduction, for example, the author points out the need for "an educational philosophy that gives coherence to the decisions we make" as well as the need to articulate that philosophy regularly (p. 1).

This is perhaps why more current research (Allen et al., 2007) suggests qualitative methods as an approach for coping with the complexity of researching

museums and other choice-based learning settings. Noting the heavy contribution of visitor studies—particularly cause and effect research through visitor interviews, surveys, and observations—*Research in the Museum: Coping with Complexity* pointed out the importance of stakeholders’ perceptions in achieving credibility. Allen et al. specifically stated that “often museum practitioners will expect a certain study design because it is simple or familiar to them, but they may quickly embrace a different approach if they understand its purpose and efficacy” (p. 245). Their ultimate solution to this stakeholder challenge was to combine familiar methods to strengthen and triangulate interpretations as demonstrated by an example study that combined statistical data on the length large numbers of visitors spent in an exhibit with qualitative interviews about the experience, conducted with a few randomly selected exhibit visitors.

The obvious advantage of the type of qualitative, or mixed-methods research, described in *Research in the Museum: Coping with Complexity*, in addition to being more easily accomplished on the small scale, is its ability to capture complex behaviors and beliefs while preserving the essence of the experiences in which they are rooted (LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993). When we recognize in the experience of another that which is authentic to our own experiences, we clarify perceptions, thus recognizing imperfections and implementing strategies to overcome limitations. Seen from a critical, ideological stance, the value of this and other qualitative research in the

museum setting is in the opportunity to contribute to practice and policy by revealing something new about the realities of museum work to its practitioners and policy-makers, while simultaneously bringing contradictory practices to light.

Statement of the Problem

This praxis-oriented study combines interviews with 11 museum educators and an ethnographic investigation of the midsize American Association of Museums (AAM)-accredited art museum in the Southeastern United States where the educators began their museum careers. With tenures that span more than 20 years from 1986 to 2007, the presentation of data begins with the voice of the first professional curator of education, a solo practitioner, and continues with the 10 educators who joined her. As the museum grew and professionalized, the education department expanded into an enclave of consecutive, and sometimes concurrent, practitioners who were given various assistant and associate curator titles. The resulting case study, a history of one department over time, informs the understanding of the emerging field of art museum education by recording and considering the varying ways participants answered for themselves the question of museum education's mission. Current museum education policy, or the museum educators' functional understanding of the purpose of their work, is referred to in the study as a "philosophy of work identity" or simply as "work identity." As a natural extension to the understanding of work identity, this dissertation

also records the varying ways art museum educators utilize and value their pre-service training and negotiate evolving educational philosophies and practices.

Research Questions

Put more specifically, the objectives of the study are to consider:

1. How do art museum educators construct a philosophy of work identity?
2. How do evolving trends and shifts in the disciplines of education, art, and museum studies influence work identity?
3. What, if any, similarities or patterns exist in the formation of a work identity when comparing the experiences of participants with shared work histories?
4. How do museum educators express work identity through programs they create?

Significance and Scope

This study is not a history of museum education as told by the educators of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery, or any other large or highly distinguished American museum. If it were, it would deal with the experience of a limited, elite, and unique set of participants. Instead, it is a study reflective of the more typical museum education experience at the small or midsize museum—the institutions from which the majority of practitioners working in the field come. It deals with a museum at the bottom of AAM’s midsize range. Located in a southern city with an annual visitorship of 100,000 people and a \$4 million operating budget, the location of

the museum is undeniably more remote than the Met. The salaries of the museum staff are in keeping with the average salaries reported in the American Association of Museums Salary Survey in *Museum Careers: A Variety of Vocations* (Canham, 1994), second to lowest among AAM's six regional museum divisions. But these facts, coupled with careful consideration of participant career paths, reveal that the choice of context has a far broader scope than a single institution.

The participants were trained at well-respected institutions of higher learning, including many research-one level institutions and one Ivy League school. Spanning 11 states and the District of Columbia, these institutions are located in five of the six AAM museum regions (Table 1, p 11). More importantly, the museum educators traveled with their ideas about the mission of art museum education, before and after their tenures at the museum setting that links them, to no less than 24 different museums representing all six of AAM's regional museum districts (Table 2, p. 12).

The decision not to name the museum, the defining thread that links the participants together, was a conscious one, elected for its potential to directly inform the scope and significance of the study. While designing this research project, I conducted a pilot study (2002) under the title, "The New Museum-School Philosophy: A Case Study." This pilot exercise afforded me the opportunity to field test and refine the interview guide. It also revealed potential access obstacles intrinsic to art museums and helped me to refine my research design to more effectively negotiate such obstacles.

Finally, presenting this pilot study at a national convention of art museum educators yielded questions and reactions that served both as a form of peer review and as a guide towards achieving authenticity, credibility, insightfulness, and clarity in the present work.

“The New Museum-School Philosophy” was a small scale study involving five participants, two 8-hour field experiences, and seven total hours of interviews. The study compared exhibition-based kindergarten through 12th grade teacher workshops at two museums. I attended the teacher workshops as a participant. I interviewed the event designers about the goals of the project and their educational and professional backgrounds. Finally, I waited six months, and then interviewed a “best case” participant from each location about their recollections of the workshop and if, or how, they had implemented the information that had been presented.

As questions from the interview guide were put to participants in the pilot study, responses and paraphrasing helped reveal examples of unintended biases. In a question about expectations and realities in both museum position held and projects undertaken, an unintentional negative prompt—“what fears did you have when you started...” —and the presumption that expectations and realities were different—“How did your perception change once you started...” —was revealed. In terms of access, the pilot study revealed what I now term the “positive public relations only” paradigm of the museum setting. More specifically, this is the idea that museum educators and

museums as a whole are reluctant to reflect negatively in any way for fear that acknowledgement of needed improvement might negatively impact funding. Thus, museums may operate in an environment that does not grant permission for authentic reflective practice or constructive criticism. This concept is briefly addressed in Villeneuve (2007) who records the perspectives of five leaders of museum education on the state and future of art museum education. In their comments, the leaders addressed the need for more authentic reflective practice and the opportunities to experiment or take risks to see what works without fear of failure. Finally, the conference presentation yielded numerous positive reactions and two categories of negative feedback. The positive reaction was associated with the fact that the study was a rare instance of museum education being studied by a museum educator as opposed to an outsider, such as an academic or audience studies expert. Among those in attendance, there were also several audience members with negative reactions that stemmed from the belief that the research only corroborated what was already well known in the museum community. Additionally, there were those who questioned the research because demographically the museum studied did not match exactly their setting—for example, the museum was smaller or larger, privately versus publicly funded, or it was in a different part of the country.

As a consequence of both the public relations mindset and the demography issue, I have elected to emphasize the educators' career paths as a scope of influence

and minimize identification of the specific institution through the use of pseudonyms. Studies using pseudonyms for the sake of confidentiality are common. In sociology, journalism, psychology, education, economics, medicine, other health-related professions, and in the law (particularly children and family law), for example, most qualitative studies focus on reporting people's actions and beliefs and not on the specific identity of the person or context, which is described in limited or general terms. There are many reasons for this. One of the most compelling is the idea that people are more open about the details of their experiences and their interpretation of the meaning of their experiences if they are free from any potential retribution from the peers who are also affiliated with the places described in the account (Kvale, 1996). In lay terms, participants become more willing to recount what they remember and believe, not what the museum or their peers would want or expect.

Perhaps if presented with generalized but authentic accounts that mirror aspects of their own experience, museum educators will find meaning in the knowledge gained from tracking the careers of others. Research on museum education by participant-observers being rare, it will require a fair amount of advocacy on the part of such researchers before a majority of educators can reap its benefit on practice. In the case of this study, which in its conclusion reveals patterns within art museum education that lead to museum educators' undervaluing of their effort and to educator burn-out, the potential to significantly impact those who do this work is realized and persuasive.

**Table 1. Scope of Influence —
Colleges & Universities Attended by the Museum Educators**

AAM Region	College or University	
Mid-Western	University of Maine Augusta	University of Minnesota
Mid-Atlantic	American University New York University Rutgers University University of New York Rochester University of Rochester	George Washington University Pratt Institute State University of New York Buffalo University of Pennsylvania
Mountain Plains	—	
New England	Boston University	University of Massachusetts Amherst
Southeastern	Emory University Millsaps College Tulane University University of Florida University of Mississippi	Gifford College Randolph Macon College University of Alabama University of Georgia Vanderbilt University
Western	University of California Santa Barbara	

Table 2 . Scope of the Museum Educator's Career Path by Museum and AAM Region

AAM Region	Museums	Museums
Mid-Western	Walker Arts Center	Minneapolis Institute of Art
Mid-Atlantic	Brooklyn Museum of Art National Portrait Gallery Reynolda House & Museum	Memorial Art Gallery (Rochester) The Octagon Zimmerli Art Museum
Mountain Plains	Museum of Fine Arts Houston	
New England	Portland Museum of Art (ME)	Smith College Museum of Art
Southeastern	Biltmore Estate Dixon Gallery and Gardens Hillwood Museum and Gardens Michael C. Carlos Museum of Art Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Museum of the New South Charlotte	Birmingham Museum of Art High Museum of Art J. Paul Getty Research Institute (TN) Mississippi Museum of Art Newcomb Art Gallery Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art
Western	San Jose Museum of Art	Triton Museum of Art

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

The need for and potential of museum education research is great. Research specific to museum education, called for in the Getty-funded assessment of museums conducted by Eisner and Dobbs (1986), was described as an essential for the evolution of the field of museum education into a discipline in its own right. More than two decades later, research has begun to answer the call of this report, but as Vallance (2007) aptly noted, it remains untidily scattered across multiple publications and disciplines. As a result, qualitative research remains somewhat distant from those it wishes to inform, art museum educators. Qualitative studies, for example, have only recently begun to appear in the forums most frequently used by art museum educators—among them AAM’s Education Committee (EdComm) and NAEA’s publications and annual conference. Generally, studies in these forums address basic questions. Two recent investigations, for example, address research questions, such as: “What is museum education?” and “What should museum educators know?” (Wetterlund & Sayer, 2003 Ebitz, 2003, 2005).

Early Studies of Museum Education

Of the published research on museum education, the Eisner and Dobbs (1987) study remains one of the most notable and comprehensive investigations that appears to address both what the discipline is and how one might prepare for it. The Eisner and Dobbs report entitled *The Uncertain Profession* was undertaken at the behest of the Getty Institute for Education in the Arts in 1986. Among the conclusions was the assertion that in 1984 there was “no widespread familiarity among museum educators with the literature or current ideas of the field of art education” (p. 276). Instead, Eisner and Dobbs found that museum educators viewed art history, or more specifically, the study of objects, in historical context as the intellectual core of their museum work and training.

The researchers stressed the potential for compatibility between the content and methodology of art education and museum education and stated:

The ground for such integration between museums and schools and the sympathy and interests in acquiring critical and historical knowledge about works of art in schools has been prepared by two decades of work in the field of art education. (Eisner & Dobbs, 1987, p. 67)

In *The Uncertain Profession*, researchers interviewed two staff members, the director and lead educator, at 20 mid- to large-sized museums to more fully understand who determined the educational policy of American art museums and who carried that

policy out (Eisner & Dobbs, 1987). Formally establishing the traditional educational background of art museum educators and what, if any, effect their training had on that person's theoretical and intellectual grounding and approach to museum programming, was a secondary concern of the work. They arrive at a number of generalizations, among them: the mission of museum education, the status of museum educators, the preparation of museum educators, program resources for museum educators, research and evaluation in museum education, and museum education and the community.

The resulting findings included a lack of agreement between the director's and educator's view of mission in museum education, a lack of consensus and an inability to articulate the basic mission of museum education, a preference for art history as the intellectual core of the field, the absence of opportunities to study art museum education as a field in its own right, the absence of foundational literature for the field, a divide in beliefs about the possible benefits of new technologies available for use in educational programming, and a lack of training in research and evaluation necessary to assess programs' effectiveness.

Revisiting the research questions and institutions of the Eisner and Dobbs report on the 10th anniversary of the initial study, another researcher, Williams (1996), concluded that by 1996 little had changed with regard to Eisner and Dobb's main conclusions. Williams revisited museum education's lack of a literature of its own at

length and once again issued the call from the original study, stating that the matter had now evolved to a “pressing need” (p. 276) to combine art education and museum education theory.

Anne El-Omani (1989) took up another of the findings as her subject, that of training. El-Omani addressed earlier criticisms of scope in *The Uncertain Profession* by expanding the interview to include not only directors and educators, but also curators, and asked each about the specific skill they thought best qualified someone for the museum education profession. El-Omani discovered that the actual skill sets of practicing museum educators since *The Uncertain Profession* remained predominately art historical and object based, but had been expanded to include museum studies, studio art, education, and finally, art education, in that respective order. The specific skills believed to be most valued had expanded and now included many of the skills introduced in *The Uncertain Profession's* conclusions. They were: art history, awareness of up-to-date museum practice, publications, research and evaluation, administration, management, educational theory, and experience of teaching in kindergarten through 12th-grade, in that order.

While the foundations of museum educator training, from the perspective of administrators and academics, are reflected in academic and mainstream literature, there appears to be little published information from the perspective of the museum educators themselves. Composed of theoretical texts derived from secondary sources,

the limited literature related specifically to philosophy of practice proposes new models of museum education. The most widely recognized among these is the model of John D. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking (1992, 2000, 2007).

Recent Studies on Museum Learning

Introduced in *The Museum Experience* (1992), and redefined and augmented in 2000 and again in 2007, the Falk and Dierking model, or “Interactive Experience Model” describes museum education in terms of three interrelated contexts—personal, social, and physical. The revision of the model in 2000 added to these contexts the element of time and somewhat redefined the original three contexts. Although widely circulated in art education and museum education programs, it is very likely unknown to the vast majority of museum educators who continue to be trained as art historians. The same is true for other texts and models, such as Ellie Caston’s Museum Component Model, explained in “A Model for Teaching in a Museum Setting” (1989), or Oberhardt’s deconstructed view of museum education product as artifact, described in *Frames Within Frames* (2000). With only a fraction of museum educators prepared in specific museum-centered course work, it well may be that these existing models have limited impact on current practice.

Villeneuve’s (2007) recent contribution shows promising indications of change in this problem of dissemination of theory and research to practicing museum educators. Sponsored by the National Art Education Association and presented at various stages

prior to publication at NAEA annual conferences over a five-year period, this text is perhaps known by museum educators trained as art historians. Additional promise towards change is found in Villeneuve's efforts towards stakeholder buy-in. In editing *From Periphery to Center*, Villeneuve incorporated online peer review of unedited chapters and themes and the *Many Voices Project*, which invited museum educators to respond and comment on chapters prior to the publication of the book. She then published select responses including examples from practice, alternative views, and ideas for further consideration in text boxes that were off-set through graphic design but imbedded within the original text-related topics within the chapters.

Journals and Conference Proceedings

Initial efforts to capture issues of practice and the voices of art museum educators were drawn from an in-depth consideration of presentation descriptions from a museum education conference—the Museum Division of the National Art Education Association. Consideration was given to the published articles of the highly academic *Journal of Museum Education* as well as the now discontinued *Docent Educator* (Fairclough & Littleton, 1988), a more introductory level journal for volunteer educators that provided further details on practice, despite both publications' rather limited circulation and the non-art-specific emphasis. The result was a short list of methodological trends, which included discipline-based art education, foundational art teaching (based on design principles), object-based learning, visual culture studies, and

visual thinking strategies. However, the ideas or teaching goals of these methodological trends did not surface in the interviews with museum educators in this study with any specificity, nor did they appear to spark any meaningful connection when mentioned to the participants.

Biography and Limited Literature

This brings the discussion back to the issue of museum education's lack of a literature of its own and the potential for museum education to borrow from art education's groundwork. However, this raises the question of what constitutes the groundwork of art education.

Arthur D. Efland's 1990 text, *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts* lists more than 150 art educators of note in its index. The first comprehensive recounting of the major events and philosophies that shaped art and teaching about art since that of Logan (1955), *A History of Art Education* offers numerous biographic sketches of men and women who forged the profession of art education. This biographical process of defining the field has been a common practice. The golden anniversary special issue of *Art Education* (Stankiewicz, 1997), for instance, invited leading scholars to reprint one of their articles along with a biographical sketch of the scholar. Similarly, the National Art Education Association has published a number of books that offer biographical information on art educators, most notably the *Autobiographical Lectures* (Raunft, 2000).

No such personal anthologies exist for art museum education. There are many possible reasons why. In part, the absence of biographic anthologies is due to what Ellie Bourdon Caston (1989) called a complete absence of philosophical frameworks for teaching in a museum setting. Without distinct models, there are no model makers and, thus, no need for model maker biography. Alternately, it may be that museum educators consider the historiography of education and art education to be their own. Numerous art educators—Howard Gardner (1983, 2003), Laura Chapman (1982), and Elliot Eisner and Stephen Dobbs (1986)—have made significant contributions to the field of art museum education. It may also be in part because of postmodern ideas that debunk the concept of the hero type personality, not just in museum education but in many disciplines. Museum educators, however, might have a more pragmatic explanation for the absence of inspiring museum educator stories. The museum profession does not encourage reflective work on practice; it has no venue for such works. Museum educators are rewarded for publishing on content, not practice. Museums as institutions need teacher resources and curriculum guides, gallery brochures, and short content pieces addressing the “what” and “where” of museum work, not only the “how” or the “why.” A glimmer of change in this respect is again found in Villeneuve (2007), who in the preface of her anthology recorded a conversation between key leaders of art museum education in an effort to reveal the current state of art museum education practice.

The Changing Academy

Considering the possible contributions of other disciplines, rather than the literature of art education alone, may also be productive. The emergent field of cultural studies, for instance, may have much to offer the emergent discipline of art museum education. One such study, *The Changing American Academy: Humanities, Culture, and Interdisciplinarity* (Kline, 2005), in its case study of the changing trajectory of postsecondary art history, seems particularly meaningful given Eisner and Dobbs (1986), Williams' (1996), and El-Omani's (1989) assertions of art history as the core belief set of most art museum educators. Kline used the conference proceedings and publications of the College Art Association to chronicle the debate over new approaches and interdisciplinary efforts. Here, too, Kline found disagreement as to whether art history was a "discipline" in its own right or a field. Art history's "discrete methods" (p. 114) and precise subject were offered in evidence of its status as a discipline, and its varied and unified interests spoke to art history's position as a field. Given that this tumultuous rethinking of the discipline of art history corresponds with both the timeframe since the publication of *The Uncertain Profession* and the frame of the present study makes further comparison of Kline's conclusions with the responses of the study's participants another important component.

The Alternate Literature

Presumably, the limited focus of art museum education remains “what” and not “who” creates. Revisiting now the recent studies mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, we find that investigations of the “who” in museum education do exist, but more often are found in the form of unpublished papers presented at professional meetings or discussed in online forums.

The study of Wetterlund and Sayer (2003), for example, profiled the activities currently being undertaken by 100 art museum educators. Wetterlund and Sayer explain that discovering the complete absence of this information in the literature of art education, art history, or museum education inspired the work. The preliminary findings of the Wetterlund and Sayer survey meet and exceed generally acceptable population sizes for this type of research, yet being among the first to catalog such information, the researchers continue to gather responses. They hope to generate enough data for a sizable statistical sampling before publishing the findings in an American Association of Museums EdComm publication.

Meanwhile, David Ebitz (2003, 2005) perused another of *The Uncertain Profession's* conclusions, the issue of museum educators' preparation. Ebitz, a former museum director and current professor of art education, approached the subject from the perspective of an administrator. A large part of his data was derived from a statistical analysis of the skill sets addressed in position announcements and other

employment-related publications, such as the American Association of Museums' *Aviso*.

This perspective, the point of view of museum directors or board members who write position announcements, and of university faculty members who plan the curriculum of future museum educators, reveals much about the current perception of the field.

Ebitz found that museum educator qualifications have shifted in recent years.

Previously, emphasis was placed on collection knowledge and technology expertise.

Presently, however, the language of announcements stresses knowledge of interdisciplinary approaches, constructivist models, visitor research, and marketing.

Perhaps the expansion of what is considered the literature of the field would help. Museum educators do actively participate in their professional organizations. Presently, these organizations do not aggressively archive their proceedings. The AAM makes audio recordings of its annual meeting and offers the recordings of the entire conference as well as individual sessions for sale following the meeting. However, these artifacts are not readily available in research libraries, nor are the tapes available in perpetuity; the availability is limited to one to two years following the event. As for the NAEA, the only artifacts of its museum division sessions are the session descriptions and abstracts, which again are not widely archived.

Models for the Study of "Museum Culture"

There is considerable precedent in the social science disciplines, particularly those of anthropology and sociology, for the investigation of commonplace settings as cultural environs. According to Wolcott (1999), the watershed event that made possible a consideration of local internal systems as source material for culture research was the publication of Spradley and McCurdy's, *The Cultural Experience* in 1972. This 77-page essay recounted the research projects of 12 undergraduate students under the authors' direction and sought to construct meaning, not only of the settings being studied, but also of the process. The students selected "near by" and "approachable" settings and attempted to apply the same methods used by more experienced researchers to investigate distant and foreign cultures. Immersing themselves in environments such as a bicycle repair shop, a Buddhist meditation center, and a trailer park, the students made observations, kept field notes, collected documents, and talked with the people who populated their setting. The lead investigators, Spradley and McCurdy, explained that the logical sequence of cultural scenes, cultural informants, and cultural meanings sought in the traditional, "exotic" settings of anthropological research was equally meaningful and perhaps more enlightened when applied to more familiar cultures and subcultures.

Operating under the assumption of culture as "the information shared by two or more people that defines some aspect of their experience" (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972,

p. 24), the researchers emphasized the specificity of culture, which is locked to a particular time, location, and set of participants. In defense of their revolutionary ideas, they cited Charles Frake's paper, *A Structural Description of Subanun "Religious Behavior"* (1964):

A description of culture is produced from an ethnographic record of the events of a society within a given period in time....To describe a culture...is not to record the events of a society but to specify what one must know to make those events maximally probable. The problem is not to state what someone did but to specify the conditions under which it is culturally appropriate to anticipate that he, or persons occupying his role, will render an equivalent performance. This concept of cultural description implies that ethnography should be a theory of cultural behavior in a particular society. (Frake, 1964, pp. 111–112)

The Cultural Experience (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972) opened the door for other researchers to turn inward and homeward, investigating familiar environments. One of the most fertile research areas opened by this was the investigation of schools. Student culture, teacher culture, and classroom culture became popular subjects for investigation.

Two examples that can easily be compared with a proposed "museum culture" project are Harry Wolcott's *The Man in the Principal's Office* (2003) and Denise Clark Pope's *Doing School* (2001). In *The Man in the Principal's Office*, Wolcott spent more than

two years shadowing an elementary school principal, gathering documents about his school and interviewing him, in an effort to record the essence of that lived experience, and subsequently in his conclusion, to advocate educational “change.” Similarly, Pope, in her research setting, shadowed five high school students identified as successful by their teachers. She also interviewed and collected documents. She offered a portrait of the experience of those perceived to be high achieving. In her reporting of the experience, she revealed that these informants were in actuality struggling to cope—some even resorting to cheating. Pope, too, offered a conclusion which expressed the need for change.

Both examples meet the Spradley and McCurdy (1972) definition of culture, namely a setting in which two or more individuals defined particular aspects of their experience or role and their understanding of their relationship to the cultural behavior of a particular group of which they are a part. For the principal, the interaction between he and Wolcott necessitated that he consider his role and how he would be perceived by outsiders. For the students in Pope’s work, it was the knowledge that they were considered “high achieving” by their peers—in addition to the prospect that they would be expected to discuss and demonstrate this before the researcher.

The investigation of “museum culture,” as described through museum educators, will function much the way *The Man in Principal’s Office* and *Doing School* have. In participants’ efforts to describe their role as museum educators, they will be

asked to discuss not only what they did as museum employees, but what they believe a museum educator's role should be and their understanding of their relationship to the cultural behavior of a museum world. Collaboratively, they helped me construct the history of the museum's education program over a 20-year period from 1987 through 2007— a time that corresponds with the professionalization of museum education.

Beyond exemplars from the educational setting, Howard Becker's *Art Worlds* (1982) offers further insight into the potential for such a study. Using experience as a sociologist familiar with the study of vocation and organizational change, Becker attempted to show how the activities of an art world fit together. He focused on the ways people cooperated to produce an art world's characteristic products. He also addressed the ability of the art world to repel change, forcing those with innovative ideas to adopt conventional practices. Becker relied heavily on the written words of others and his observations of participants' actions as well as the things the "art worlds" produce. Perhaps the element of *Art Worlds* that is most cogent to a study of museum culture as I have proposed it is found in Becker's explanation of the generalizability of *Art Worlds*. Becker asserted:

Good Social Science produces a deeper understanding of things that many people are already pretty much aware of...not from the discovery of a hereto unknown fact of relation. Instead, it comes from exploring systematically the

implications of the...concept. Though the basic idea is commonplace, many of its implications are not. (p. xi)

Becker continued this view in his closing assessment when he suggested that the world of art as a socially constructed world within a larger societal construct “mirrors society at large” (p. 371).

Wolcott (2003), Becker (1982), and Pope (2001) all sought to better understand an environment and a particular set of circumstances that were familiar and of specific interest to their identities. Wolcott and Pope, both educators, investigated schools. Becker, an artist and arts advocate, chose the art world. In each instance, the researchers brought deeper understanding to things that many people were familiar with, exploring the implications of the commonplace. However, it was not enough to interpret; the researchers were also seeking to effect change in the commonplace. This goal shifts the theoretical motivations of each study. Using Lather’s (1992) Paradigm for Post Positivist Inquiry, it becomes easier to define the intrinsic purpose of each study and to relate that purpose to this proposed “museum culture” investigation. Lather identified four primary motivations for inquiry on a progressive and sliding scale. These phases of motivation, in order, are: to predict, to understand, to emancipate, and to deconstruct. For all three researchers, efforts to predict and understand are motivations, but in their conclusions, they seek emancipation or reform. Like Wolcott, Pope, and Becker, I am interested in change, in offering something

towards the future development of best practices in museums. Through prior research in museum settings, I have adopted the lens of critical theory, an emancipator research purpose.

Theoretical Framework

I have described my research as both interpretive and critical. To some degree all qualitative research is interpretivist, seeking to know and to understand. I use the interpretivist label to inform the reader of my interest in inductive practice—in allowing my data to determine what receives emphasis. However, my use of the critical lens is more expansive.

The mere labeling of my work as critical reveals the first of three challenges to such a viewpoint, namely the fact that the term “critical” has a number of competing definitions. The other two concerns are the consequence of selecting a limited focus and the challenge inherent to any effort which attempts to represent the thoughts and ideas of others. The label “Critical Theory” encompasses multiple and conflicting views. Rather than the approaches to critical theory found on Marxist thought, including that of Habermas (1970) or Freire (1972), I view critical theory through more recent contributions, particularly that of Kincheloe and McLaren (1998). While I do aim to use my work as a form of social criticism, it is a constructive criticism. As Kincheloe and McLaren propose, critical theory offers the chance to uncover the way power operates to construct the everyday knowledge and to undermine workers’ autonomy as

professionals. Among the other elements of critical theory are concerns over museum culture's unwitting reproduction of an inequitable system and an understanding that the relationship between concepts and objects in museum education is not fixed and is often mediated by social relations of economics and consumption. By asserting an interest in contributing to "best" practice, I follow traditional outcome goals of critical theory: the production of useful research about work, the legitimizing of worker knowledge, and the promotion of an awareness of worker cognition.

Beyond the challenge of multiple and competing views of critical theory, other potential obstacles to inherent to adopting a critical lens are a concern that focusing on one element of change in the museum may be made at the expense of others, as well as a concern over the representation of others. The first—the issue of limited focus—is explained in Crotty (1998) as a basic assumption of the critical lens in that concern for only one form of inequity usually comes at the expense of others and can be counterproductive because of the interconnection between actions and ideas. An awareness of this threat is, in and of itself, a remedy, coupled with an understanding that critical theorists in general also believe that critical inquiry cannot be viewed as a discrete piece of action that achieves its objectives and comes to a close. Each action invites a new context, new assumptions, and the need for further stock-taking. Thus, as a spiraling process of reflection and action, concern over limiting foci becomes less

relevant. As Crotty stated in *Foundation of Social Research*, critical theory, despite all its diversities, is a form of praxis—a searching for knowledge—in the context of action.

The final issue—that of representation—refers to another of the basic assumptions of critical theorists, specifically that language is central to the formation of subjectivity, that is, both conscious and unconscious awareness. This fixation with language is part of a larger and historical tradition in critical thought. In this case, Habermas (1970) did draw on the tradition link of critical theory and Marxist perspectives. He explained the idea as an ideal speech situation or “A voice free from systematic distortion, allows unimpaired self-presentation by participants, and is characterized by mutuality of expectations rather than one-sided norms” (p. 143). Today, modern theorists, myself included, do not believe as Habermas or Marx did, that this unencumbered voice or “truth” can truly be achieved. However, in keeping with the spirit of critical ideas, we still find value in an effort to minimize and understand the “systematic distortions that impair self presentation” (Crotty, 1998, p. 143). Strategies for addressing voice in a critical inquiry include the use of informants as researchers, the use of mechanical recordings, and thus, verbatim transcription, and the reporting of low inference description, or verbatim quotes and detailed accounts (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). This realization that all interpretations are subject to distortion raises two fundamental issues of social science research, namely the issue of methodology (quantitative vs. qualitative) and the issue of generalizability (validity

and reliability). I pursue my own experience and the experience of the other museum educators from an interpretive stance seeking to understand more fully museum work. In the process, I adopted elements of other theories. In referring to the essence of experience and to participants' perceptions, I make linguistic delineation derived from phenomenological research. Additionally, there are elements of action research and other post-modern thought in my desire to help shape the practice of teaching art while simultaneously asserting that there is no single way to do this.

Howard Becker (1982) and Stephen Weil (2002) are among the scholars that capture what I seek as a researcher in both the subject and theoretical inclination. Each scholar has attempted to address unarticulated mission(s) of the art (museum) world and the theoretical inclination, or agreed-upon collective actions of those working in the art world, as well as the implications of these actions. Not easily labeled by conventional theoretical delineation—such as, constructivist or post-modernist—and coming from the perspectives of the decidedly different disciplines of sociology and museum management, what these scholars share is the desire to generate through their work, a more equitable view of the art world. Both have worked to record the functional realities of art systems, realities that bind the art world and are known by insiders but not articulated. In so doing, both question these conventional and operational theories and practices and thus suggest a recalibration of thinking with regard to the purpose of art: an adjustment that places people above art objects.

Philosophical Models

Howard S. Becker is an American social scientist of the Chicago School whose primary research interest is the sociology of work and professions. The label “Chicago School,” popularized by Gary Alan Fine (1995) and Martin Bulmer (1984), refers to the research of a number of faculty members and students at the University of Chicago between 1940 and 1960 who, regardless of topic, shared ideas of symbolic interaction involving race, status, and power in the urban environment. In keeping with this theme, Becker’s early independent research done at the urging of his mentor, Everett Hughes, was a study of jazz musicians as a professional group, later published under the title “Outsiders.” Later investigations were of Chicago school teachers and “Art Worlds,” the sociology of the visual arts. Although Becker is resistant to the labeling of a “Chicago School,” his work, regardless of venue, does seek to interpret the inarticulated but widely held patterns and beliefs of previously uninvestigated work environments.

Author and museum theorist Stephen E. Weil, the Smithsonian Institution's senior scholar emeritus and former deputy director of the Hirshhorn Museum, was a distinguished museum advocate. In the late 1970s, Weil was among the first to speak out and publish on the topic of needed changes in museum education. In an opinion piece entitled *Rethinking the Museum and Other Meditations* (1990), Weil took the argument further, refashioning the object as central philosophy in terms of the objects

or ideas. Weil stated, “Above all we must begin to shift our focus—and the focus of those who supervise and support us—from function to purpose” (p. 45). Weil urged museum professionals to start with the proposition that the museum’s *raison d’être* is to provide an important public benefit, to have an impact on the lives of others—not merely to provide a custodial or a scholarly service. As such, museums must proceed from inquiry into what the nature of that benefit and its impact might be.

In interviewing museum professionals, I have found that discussions of theoretical frameworks or philosophical viewpoints were rarely as overt as Weil’s *Rethinking the Museum* or his final book, *Making Museums Matter* (2002). The concept of object-as-central, which Weil’s work so often attempted to combat, however, surfaces as a commonality both in interviews and in written works. Museum professionals who speak reverently about the inherent value of a work of art and who seem to advocate for education as a means for growing visitorship, even when that visitorship merely looks at objects displayed in a museum without explanation or mediation, are still common examples of this object-as-central view. This persistent view runs counter to major policies on museum funding beginning in 1969 and continuing to the present (Williams, 2007) which stated that merely displaying objects, or holding performances as in the case of a symphony or theatre, was not enough to qualify as an educational mission. Despite this shift, the centrality-of-objects philosophy, or components of it, continue to persist in the museum world. In fact, this pattern of thought may be one of

the only ideas of relative consistency and might well pass as a theoretically motivated constant.

The Absence of, and Need for, Educator-Focused Research

Recently there has been a great deal of interest in recording museum education practice through qualitative research, including Luke and Adams (2007), Kletchka (2007), Allen (2007), and Vallance (2007b). The motivation for this new interest in qualitative research centers on a desire to improve day-to-day practice, and therefore, concentrates on what is made or done by museum educators, not on the educators themselves, what the educators believe, or how the educators negotiate the world of museum education. Understandably in an emerging profession struggling for legitimacy—and funding—practitioners focus on making the products of their labor worthy of support. Museum educators and their superiors may function from a public relations standpoint, emphasizing positives and avoiding reflective practice that may draw critical consideration. The opportunity for consistency of practice is lost with this limited focus on product. Although understandable, modern museum education should consider what it may be missing out on—the possibility of solidifying practice through an understanding of the realities of the contemporary system of museum education.

Solidified practice could mean the ability to predict and replicate “good practice” consistently. In some sense, museum education may be too busy to invest time in those

performing the role of museum education, and so, has little idea about who museum educators are, their motivations, what they believe, or whether these beliefs are lasting and transcendent.

Confirmation of this need for shift in focus—from the products produced to other factors—is found in the comments of Peggy Burchenal, Curator of Education and Public Programs at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Gail Davitt, Director of Education at the Dallas Museum of Art, who in explaining the need for reflective practice in terms of “experimentation,” was recorded as saying:

Peggy: I do think that the whole idea of experimentation is a really important concept. It’s harder to experiment when money is tighter, but it’s absolutely essential. Experimenting takes many forms; it might mean looking carefully at your current programming to identify audience needs that aren’t being met. You articulate what that need is—I want to connect with this audience in a more meaningful way—and then you think about the kinds of ways you can go about it, and then that’s your question, whether or not you have succeeded. Sometimes you succeed, and sometime you don’t, but it’s important to keep taking risks.

Gail: I agree it is necessary to be analytical and focused as we do that so that it is not just a scattershot. We need to be asking: Is it working? How do we know it is working? And then, Why is it working? Part of experimenting does involve

taking risks and having permission to fail. If you're not doing some of that, you probably aren't really pushing your profession forward. (Villeneuve, 2007, p. 5)

Theory and Art Museum Education

An earlier statement made by Burchenal in the same conversation is also related to this line of thinking. Burchenal said, "Identifying and understanding the theory behind your practice is a key element to growing individually as a professional and collectively as a field," (Villeneuve, 2007, p. 4). In *Transacting Theories for Art Museum Education*, Ebitz (2007) addressed theory in art museum education. Having asked attendees of an NAEA session on theory to rank theories that have informed their practice, Ebitz arrived at 11 theories utilized in museum education. From most to least frequently referenced, these were: Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, Housen and Yenawine's visual thinking strategies (VTS), discipline-based art education, Dewey's experience and education, Piaget's developmental theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning, Project Zero's teaching for understanding, Greene's re-imagination, Constructivism, Feldman's non-universal theory of cognitive development, and Csikszentmihalyi's psychology of optimal experiences. As Ebitz explained, the past 20 years of museum education theory has seen a broad shift in focus from the object and the discipline used to interpret it to the individual and the psychology of learning, and finally to the process of making meaning in context. Ebitz then proposed what he termed "transacting theory" (p. 21) as a means to encourage

reflection and critical understanding of current museum education practice. Deemed both a meta-theory of structure through which to view other theories and a model for direct attention and reflection, transacting theories allow museum educators to consider multiple theoretical approaches and the effect of these multiple approaches.

Ourselves: Art Museum Educators Investigate Their Work

With the transcribed conversation of five current leaders in art museum education and Ebitz's transacting theories among many other important contributions, the groundbreaking anthology *From Periphery to Center: Art Museum Education in the 21st Century* (Villeneuve, 2007) provides the first comprehensive text on art museum education suitable for use as a college textbook—a stated goal of its editor. The breadth of scholarship on museum education is categorized under six headings: History Research and Theoretical Framework, Ourselves, Audiences, Museum Experiences and Gallery Practices, Assessment, and Moving Forward.

Underscoring my assertion that practitioners are infrequently the focus of research in museum education, the 28-page section in Villeneuve's anthology that would seem to address the matter of the museum educators, entitled "Ourselves," is notably distant from the people the title seeks to evoke. The section begins with Cooper's (2007) exploration of qualifications and responsibilities of museum educators from a systematic analysis of position announcements posted with the American Association of Museums over the course of a year. This information previously

presented and published elsewhere has been juxtaposed with a survey of 28 museum educators on what skills they use most often in fulfilling their role.

While this analysis is useful to a prospective museum educator from the perspective of one who wishes to determine what skills or experiences may be valued by those hiring, or to the administrator attempting to incorporate accurate state-of-the-industry position descriptions in a call for applicants, it is hard to see the usefulness of this information to those working as museum educators. Further, it does little to reveal the “Day in the Life” its title promises.

The position announcements may stress expertise in art history, museum education, education or fine arts, as Cooper reported, but there is no way of knowing if the 28 educators surveyed, or museum educators collectively, fit this model. What the museum seeks when placing a position announcement and what is found when filling a position may or may not be the reality of the situation. Considering the functional realities of a given skill set when multiple, possible choices are offered complicates the matter. The conclusion that art history is the educational background most often sought in a museum educator speaks little to how much the art historian uses art history as a museum educator and even less to how those educated in the respective alternate choice disciplines of art education, museum studies, and studio art use art history.

Instead, Cooper avoided the issue of educational background and asked educators to rank a list of skills and a list of responsibilities, also drawn from employment ads, as they relate to their usefulness in performing their duties. Under this approach, communication and writing surfaced as the more valued skills and programming and outreach as the greater responsibilities.

The voices of the museum educators were conveyed in the analysis of “Challenges and Rewards.” The educators’ perspective on the purpose of their work, summed up in a bar graph labeled “The joys of museum work,” found, in order of importance, six motivations. The motivations were: interaction with people, being surrounded by art, benefiting the community, creative tasks, working with enlightened colleagues, and museum prestige. However, given the structure of previous findings based on position announcements, it becomes hard to tell if these categories were provided by the researcher for educators to rank or if the researcher broke from the previous pattern, developing these categories to apply to the educators’ spontaneous explanations. It would seem that the latter would more fully approach the lived realities of “A Day in the Life.”

From the consideration of employment ads, the topic “Ourselves” moves to gender equity and museum education in Dana Kletchka’s (2007) “Moralizing Influences: The Feminization of Art Museum Education.” A comprehensive and succinct overview of feminist theory as applied to the historical role of museum work,

Kletchka, like Cooper, philosophically distanced the subject from the experiences of actual museum educators with one brief exception. The opening paragraph begins with a brief anecdotal mention of her observations on just who attends the annual conference—women. The field of public education has exhaustively documented the disproportionate female-to-male ratio in the classroom as well as the statistical overrepresentation of male administrators in a largely female applicant pool. Yet, despite longstanding professional organizations, such as the AAM, that collect data on their membership, my research uncovered no published data on the demographics of museum educators. This point is seemingly underscored by Kletchka's forced reliance on personal anecdote in building a case for "The Feminization of Art Museum Education."

The third contribution, "Docents as Meaning Makers," presents a brief overview of docent contributions to museum education. Sweney (2007) first defended the need for volunteer docents, then established the need for further research on docent contributions to museum learning. Finally, suggestions were made for the appropriate training of docents. Again, this portion of the "Ourselves" chapter in *From Periphery to Center* deflects the issue of museum educators, instead talking about a segment of the population they serve: the docents or volunteer teachers. One wonders why the same research questions—Why are museum educators important? What can further research of museum educators tell us about learning in a museum? How does observation of

how museum educators teach in a museum inform the way these educators are trained?—are not first applied to the full-time museum staff members in a chapter intended to reveal “Ourselves.”

“The Emerging Role of the Educator in the Art Museum,” the final component of “Ourselves” gets much closer to the matter. Willumson (2007) offered a detailed history of the changing role of museum education from 1980 to the present from a socio-political standpoint. While drawn largely from scholarly interpretations of museum education in the broad sense made by museum administrators and experts from outside the museum, Willumson succeeded in capturing some of the immediate realities of museum education that affect the *Day-in-the-life of a museum educator* promised in earlier sections.

The lone jewel in “Ourselves,” Willumson’s “Emerging Role” raised with eloquence issues well known to museum professionals who live with the implications of these matters. They are rarely recorded in published works and thus never deconstructed or discussed in the published dialogue of museum education. Issues included the balance between traditional and modern paradigms of the museum’s role, the effects of donors and business models on what is taught, and the potential for discord between curatorial and educational goals, among other important subjects.

Chapter 3

Methodology

As both a researcher and a teacher, my research interest in museum practices and the philosophies of museum educators stemmed from a desire to improve the day-to-day practices of educators working in the art museum and to improve the experience of the museum-going community. To accomplish this, I explore two foundational aspects of museum education: museum educator training and on-the-job philosophies of work purpose, which I have labeled work identities. The interviews with 11 museum educators who all worked as assistant or associate curators of education in the same art museum form the core of the investigation. In each case, the interviews explored each of the participants' *entrée* into the museum field and their preparation for their position as well as their primary job goals. Adopting the label of "work identity," I hope to understand each participant's philosophical approach to museum education as well as the experiences that helped shape this approach.

Validity and Reliability

If, however, one accepts subjectivity as an invariable component of qualitative research, how then can the research be either valid or reliable? The terms reliability and validity have highly specific meanings in quantitative research. Validity has been

defined by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) as the “appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of inferences researchers make based on data they collect” (p. 169).

“Reliability refers to the consistency of information from one individual to another” (p. 117). In each case, the definitions refer to the goal of hypothesis-testing in quantitative research. The validity of an inference, or the appropriateness of inferences, is predicated on the reliability or ability to replicate the results. In qualitative or interpretive research, there is no effort to test a preconceived hypothesis. Qualitative researchers readily admit that due to the infinite diversities among human beings and human understanding, replication of findings is not a desired goal. Instead, qualitative researchers seek quality in place of validity and trustworthiness rather than reliability.

Quality as a qualitative version of validity is achieved, according to Merriam (1998), through the systematic application of internal and external considerations. If, for example, an idea can be supported by multiple researchers, from multiple data sources, or through multiple methods, it is of more substance than an inference that has not been systematically supported. In addition to multiplicity as a component of quality, qualitative researchers also rely on corroboration through member checks and peer examination.

Efforts to achieve truthfulness, the qualitative term for reliability, are defined in more varying ways by qualitative researchers. Researchers run the gamut from those more closely aligned with empirical thinking, such as Silverman (2000), to those like

Eisner (1998), who advocate a less structured guideline. Silverman, for example, conducted tests for reliability (he does not use the term truthfulness) by asking if independent researchers would discover the same phenomena or generate similar ideas if placed in the same or similar settings. His critics, Goetz and LeCompte (1984), used the term trustworthiness, asking only that if another researcher reviewed the same data would they find the conclusions logical. Eisner (1998) tackled the issue in a completely different way, relying on the audience of the research to decide. Using such terms as consensual validation and referential adequacy, Eisner asked if competent others—those familiar with the context—would agree that the description, interpretation, evaluation, and themes addressed by the research are authentic.

Semantic arguments aside, my ability to justify a single idiosyncratic case and its value to the practice of museum education will be ensured through just the type of standard advocated through Eisner's referential adequacy. I wish to speak on the matter of museum culture and to consider the words of museum educators on the subject in order to expand the perceptions of this idea and enlarge understanding of this setting. Eisner's (1998) explanation sums up my motivations well, for I too wish to "to speak so others can see and comprehend and to bring about more complex and sensitive human perceptions and understandings" (p. 113). Through such a process, the portrait provided through my study has the potential to inform best practices for future museum work.

Emic Perspective

The use of a highly defined structural model, such as that of Riessman (1993) and Labov (1982), is a key ingredient to trustworthiness. Additionally, my unique role as a researcher-participant, for I was one of the 11 educators that participated in shaping this particular 20-year history of art education, also contributed to the study's reliability and grounding in what Malinowski (1922) described as the "native" point of view (p. 23).

The benefit of this emic, or insider perspective, is furthered by Wolcott (1994, 1999):

When we set out to tell the story of others, we are trying to circumvent the ultimate calling and obligation of (ethnographic) fieldwork—to make sense of someone else's sense-making. What we hope to accomplish might be described as a "soft" eticism. We recognize that there are categories or topics that should be addressed, but we exercise discretion in playing these up or down, emphasizing the more relevant ones, looking for those sequences that make sense in both local and academic terms, perhaps making the categories implicit except for explanations offered in introductions or in an accompanying note. Today's ethnographers are inclined to put themselves squarely into the picture, substituting what Margaret Mead termed "disciplined subjectivity" in lieu of a pretense of scientific objectivity. (Wolcott, 1999, p. 139)

Purposeful Selection of Participants and Context

The decision to focus on a small pool of participants with prior experience at one museum is a unique element of the research design and offers many advantages. First and most importantly, the work becomes a type of ethnography of place, marrying interviews with rich descriptions of the museum and the community it serves. By limiting the area of consideration, I can incorporate other forms of data that will intersect in meaningful ways with the experiences reported in the interviews.

Research Instruments

The instrumentation for this study includes transcriptions of one or two open-ended interviews with each of the participants, an interview question guide, and textual data in the form of correspondence, personal journals, position announcements, museum resources created by the participants, a researcher's field journal, and conference programs. The bulk of the interviews were conducted in person, tape recorded, and then transcribed. Four of the interviews were conducted over the phone—also recorded and transcribed. Most participants were interviewed formally for one to two hours and then interviewed again in an informal member check. In total, the average amount of transcribed interview responses per participant was four hours.

The open-ended questions from the interview guide (see p. 51) were asked of each participant in the formal interview. Follow-up questions that varied from

interview to interview were utilized to delve deeper into the responses and clarify understanding. Designed to evoke detailed narrative, or story-form accounts of work experience and work purpose, the questions are not what Kvale (1996) described as grand tour questions derived from his “traveler” (p. 4) metaphor for understanding the role of the researcher. Instead, the conversation is treated as socially constructed reality offered by the participant to the researcher in order for the researcher to understand what the participant believes, values, and wishes to express about the museum. The object of knowledge is the participant’s understanding of their own story, in addition to the participant’s educational history or skill sets. In instances where the picture painted by the participant of what was done or why it was done may differ from reality, the way that person seeks to idealize accounts is as much an indication of their understanding of a philosophy of art museum education as any other account. The interview guide, crafted in the form of 12 short, open-ended, non-leading questions, was an effective tool in eliciting lengthy narrative responses and has been included as Table 3 (p. 49).

Table 3. Interview Guide

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1. Can you take me back to the moment that put you on the path to a museum job?
 2. What other steps led to your entry into museum education?
 3. In your preparation for this career, what influenced you most?
 4. Think back to right before you started your museum job.
 What did you think the goal of a museum educator was?
 What aspects of your training did you believe would be most useful?
 5. Did this perception change once you started the job?
 6. Are there things that you think could help you do your job better?
 [Probe] What gives you a sense of success?
 [Probe] When do you know a job is well done?
 7. Can you think of a particular instance, while working in the museum, that best demonstrated the “big goals” of museum education?
 8. Tell me about a dominant educational or artistic theories that you encountered in your work?
 [Probe] You mentioned _____. Tell me more about what that is (who he or she is). [Probe] Was this a philosophy you subscribed to? Why did you reach this conclusion? [Probe to repeat sequence] What other philosophies (trends) did you encounter?
 9. In preparation for this interview, I asked you to think about the projects you worked on that in your mind best exemplify the goals of museum education. Tell me more about what the _____ project entailed.
 [Probe] How did the _____ project come about?
 [Probe] Take me through the steps of this project.
 [Probe] Do you feel that the project was a success?
 [Probe] Tell me about the feedback that you received from co-workers? from the public?
 10. Your position at Museum X was your first museum job. Tell me about your career since then.
 [Probe] Looking back, how do you categorize that first experience?
 [Probe] What were the similarities between that job and your subsequent jobs?
 11. The title of “Art Museum Curator of Education” is not as common as say “teacher” or “lawyer.” Could you share with me the “quick answer” you give when someone asks you what you do.

Other Forms of Data

In addition to this core data derived through these questions, related textual data was also considered. The museum's formal mission statement as well as its informal reporting of mission and accomplishments, as reported each year in the annual reports, were compared with the educator's narratives. Position descriptions and job requirements of the museum educators' jobs over time were also considered and compared.

Data Analysis Strategy

My strategy for analyzing interview data is based upon approaches described in Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and Bogdan and Biklen (1982). After reading one or two of my interview transcripts repeatedly and highlighting key words and phrases, I generated an idea map of approximately 50 key concepts. Then, performing what Wolcott (1999) described as a literal sort, I recategorized the key concepts under five or six broad themes. For instance, the code-theme of "mission" emerged from efforts to combine statements about successful programs, explanations of activities that need to be done, and examples of particular events that were not successful. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) described this process as clustering and thematizing. One asset of this approach was that systematic data analysis began with just three completed interview transcripts.

After the clustering and themetizing, I invited two educational research colleagues to read smaller selections from the two representative transcripts I had considered in-depth and I asked these consultants to provide me with their own version of key concepts and themes. Once they had considered the data independently, I shared my themes and solicited feedback. This process of peer review increased the study's potential for "referential adequacy" (Eisner, 2005, p. 55). In other words, it addressed the ideas that other educators see and comprehend, and as such, it will have the greatest potential for expanding perceptions and enlarging understandings of this subject.

With the themes, or codes, established, I returned to the transcripts. Using specially designed computer software known as *Invivo*, I applied the codes to all parts of the transcripts. I then compared specific accounts between transcripts under specific codes. It is at this point that I applied the narrative analysis models of Riessman (1993) and Labov (1982) to the data. Following the Riessman narrative analysis models, the vignettes were broken into four components: abstract, orientation, complicating actions, and coda. In the abstract, the storyteller qualifies the story and its relevance to the topic at hand. The orientation provides information about the time and place where the recounted event occurred and the narrator's beliefs about how these elements shaped the outcome. The complicating actions are the reflective elements including issues of change, meaning making, and the analysis of typical or atypical qualities of the

situation and their bearing on the outcome. The final category, the coda, provides the outcome, the solutions, and the significance of the situation addressed to present action and beliefs. As a result of the approach, many of the educators' narratives are lengthy. However, these lengthy responses, while perhaps not typical of museum research, are beneficial on two counts. First, use of the participant's own, unabridged words keeps the explanations closer to museum educator's intent. Secondly, this form of narrative analysis offers greater potential for discovering patterns in the educators' formation of *work identity*.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the Data

Having established the potential of an investigation of the people that form the “Museum Education World,” I offer brief character profiles of each of the participants as an introduction prior to thematically categorizing the descriptions of their experiences. In conclusion, parallels are drawn between the accounts and competing and contradictory ideas are also recognized.

Participant-Observer

A study such as this is predicated on the observer’s account of events and interpretations of various contexts; therefore, background information regarding that observer is appropriate. I was born in the southeastern United States to middle class, college-educated parents. My father recently retired after 28 years as a landscape architect employed by the government. My mother was a homemaker who stayed home with each of her two children from birth through first grade. In between, she held five different entry-level management positions. Although largely clerical, these jobs utilized her international studies degree, if only by allowing her to make use of her multilingual skills.

Both my mother and father were artistic. My father, as an architect, studied design and draws very well; one of his college projects is still displayed at his alma mater some 40 years later. He had artist friends who were around as we were growing up. Most memorable among them was an art gallery owner in the historic French Quarter whose business and studio included an idyllic, historic courtyard and fountain, symbols of financial, if not artistic, success. Another artist among these friends went on to a professorship at a well-respected school of design. My mother, a self-proclaimed “Sunday Painter,” was well versed in art history; she also studied dance as well as other arts—although of the variety sometimes referred to as the “minor arts”—among them sewing, embroidery, and cooking. I have one sibling, a brother 10 years my junior. He is a college graduate and is both a scientist and a musician.

Art, history, and cultural studies were very much a part of my early life, and my brother and I grew up being tourists in our hometowns. We visited all the historical sites. We took educational vacations, and while art museums were included, history museums and historic sites were the primary focus. Before I completed junior high school, I had already visited many places in the southeastern United States and had traveled to Mexico and Guatemala. Together we visited Mayan ruins, Mississippian Indian mounds, the Appalachian Mountains, the Natchez Trace, Colonial Williamsburg, the wonders of our nation’s capital, Philadelphia’s liberty trail, and the numerous forts, historic homes, and even the cemeteries that lined the Gulf of Mexico from Florida to

Texas, all with an emphasis on learning. The seeds of my museum career were planted when my parents, my grandparents, and I visited America's first blockbuster museum exhibition at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 1976. My grandparents were members of the museum, and as their guests, we sailed past hundreds, possibly even a thousand people waiting along the oak-lined avenue for a chance to see "wonderful things" in the Tutankhamen exhibition. As members, or members' guests, we entered early for a less-crowded viewing. I remember the story of the boy king presented in a narrative framework. In a time before audio guides and children's guides, the story was given chronologically and intended to build toward a climactic end in a darkened room with a single concentrated beam of light illuminating the brilliant gold and cloisonné inner mask and mummy of King Tut. I enjoyed the exhibit, but I also remember being impressed by the crowds. For me, both elements were linked in my understanding of the value of museum education.

Following that experience, I fluctuated between two answers to the ubiquitous question: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I would either say "curator" or "artist." Both responses were problematic. Few knew what a curator was, so I would have to explain it as a librarian, but of art, in an art museum. And, the artist response always prompted well-meaning adults into discussions of more lucrative alternative career goals. In ninth grade, for career day I dressed as an artist with a Parisian beret, paint brush and palette set, and a blue artist smock. The stereotypical

artist was easier as I was unsure what a curator's costume would look like. In hindsight, I probably was a little unsure what a curator really did—Was it really like being an art librarian?

A small bit of clarity came on a college tour weekend in my senior year of high school. One prospective university's library subscribed to *Aviso*, the monthly newsletter of the American Association of Museums, composed predominantly of position announcements. The announcements were instructive. They defined various museum jobs in terms of what the employers were seeking. As a result of this find, I became a student member of AAM the summer before I started college. In the AAM bookstore brochure that came with my membership packet, I found *Museum Careers: A Variety of Vocations* (Canham, 1994), a publication that discussed different museum jobs, describing the typical duties, training, and average salaries by region of each museum position. I paid close attention to the discussion of the importance of interning.

My freshman year I went to the university museum to see how to become an intern. It being early in my academic career, the museum's one educator suggested I start as a volunteer rather than as a formal intern. I did so with pleasure. A few years later when I did formally intern, it was with the registrar-exhibit designer. I believe I received greater access to the actual curator, a distinguished professor of classical antiquities, because unlike the other semester-long interns, I already knew the museum and its staff, having been around as a volunteer for some time.

Fortuitously, my advisor went on sabbatical, and her students were temporarily divvied up among other faculty. I was assigned to a vice chancellor who had formerly been an art professor and a museum curator. I asked to repeat the museum internship for credit, but this time at a museum in a large city just an hour away. With the vice chancellor's distinguished help, as far as anyone in the art department could remember, I became the first person to have a museum internship outside the university museum system. The semester-long internship was with the curatorial department of a historic house museum with extensive collections in 18th and 19th century French and English paintings and decorative arts. One semester became two, as I filled Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with exhibit installation, research, archive organizations, restoration work, and attendance at the occasional special event.

With graduation approaching and two internships to my credit, I was thrilled when the vice chancellor, my now permanent advisor and mentor, called with a job possibility. The assistant curator of education at the state art museum had quit unexpectedly on the eve of a big exhibition—the largest effort this museum had ever undertaken. The museum needed an interim educator to take over tour scheduling, to train the docents, and to manage programs related to the exhibition. It would be a temporary position—but a real job, not an internship. For four months, I joyously worked 18-hour days writing a docent manual, planning activities for docent training, giving tours, and evaluating the tours of both paid and volunteer docents. I also

contracted lecturers and musicians for events. I even developed a specialized tour of the exhibition for the blind. Not knowing when my temporary job would end, I was thankful that I could arrange to live without a lease on the couch in a friend's one-room apartment.

Then, four months and three days later, I went back to the university, took two classes in the last summer session, graduated, and went to graduate school. In my master's program, I again majored in art history. With no university art museum, I had to continue my museum studies independently. I found museum work at a small institution in the neighboring town. This art center and museum—the first non-AAM-accredited institution I had been involved with, collected Southern folk art, which included outsider art. Howard Finster, Grandma Moses, and Moze Tolliver along with fine crafts including ceramics, basketry, metal work, turned wood, and fine furniture—these were the new subjects of my museum career. In addition to displaying folk art, the museum also ran an annual juried arts festival, an artist-in-residence program, and a year-round sales gallery featuring work of artists juried into the festival. In this position, I had my first opportunity to work directly with artists, both the artists-in-residence and the artists from the festival. I also had my first experience working closely with an arts organization's board of directors, requesting and managing grants, and managing memberships and corporate sponsorships. The bulk of my time, however, was spent installing exhibitions and supervising the gallery during visiting

hours. In addition to attending my graduate classes and working at the museum, I worked as a live-in residence hall director and taught introductory art history courses as my graduate assistantship.

During the seven years since I had first subscribed to *Aviso*, I had studied each issue, dissecting every entry under the headings "Curatorial" and "Education." By the time I reached graduate school, I was highlighting recurring paid internships for future reference and watching all entries for changes and patterns. I hoped to parlay the experiences of my multiple day jobs into the specifications of the job announcements and grew increasingly concerned over the appearance of a relatively new criteria, a degree in museum studies.

Then, in May of 1996, as I had just completed my course work and arrived at a suitable thesis topic, I saw the advertisement for "The Museum." I was familiar with the museum and liked its collection. I was also particularly impressed by the children's gallery which was, for its time, an innovative museum education approach. I did not know much about the city, but it was close to home. I also liked the fact that it was close to the university. Thinking it an ideal situation, I applied and to my amazement I was hired as the Curator of Education II in charge of adult programs. Later, I would learn that the title Curator of Education II was a classification used only by the city; my museum title was Assistant Curator of Education. I was referred to, for brevity sake and quite possibly for the amusement of the custodial and security staff, as "the A.C.E."

I was charged with training the docents, planning educational events in conjunction with the multiple bimonthly exhibitions, and reinstalling the permanent collection. I also planned and administered all teacher workshops and initiatives for high school students, college audiences, and young professional groups. My official position description ended with the omnipresent “other duties as assigned” — a phrase that would be utilized far more than I ever expected. Among the most unexpected “other duties,” three extreme examples were: to obtain a limited use commercial truck driver’s license, to take bartender safe-serve training (to avoid liability from over-serving alcohol or serving underage patrons), and to provide hair samples for city-wide drug screening four to six times per year.

In the beginning, however, I was blissfully unaware of my “other duties,” and my biggest concern was my limited knowledge of American art. I had seen an exhibition schedule that included the next two years, and the European and non-western exhibits that were planned were all subjects in which I felt well versed. In addition, I was familiar with the resources of the region; I had numerous creative ideas and contacts for planning exhibition-related activities. The prospect of teaching about the collection of American art to the active group of 70 volunteer docents, however, had me worried. The docent pool was made up predominately of mature, well-educated women, many of whom had been docents for more than 10 years. The fact that for the first year I was introduced as the “new Ally” only served to heighten my anxieties.

Allison, or Ally as the docents called her, was a former and favorite docent trainer—although not the most recent former docent trainer, a distinction I thankfully did not realize in my early, apprehensive days.

“The Museum” as Participant

Setting is of paramount importance to this story of museum education’s history, for it is in comparing the setting that many will make their determination of the validity of this work. “The Museum”—capital T, capital M—as I have chosen to call it for the purposes of this study, is offered limited anonymity and its educators are given pseudonyms in an effort to give emphasis, not to the particular place, but to the voices and experiences of the people who came through that place. The place was setting to my first full-time, non-temporary museum job, and as such, it is admittedly a place that holds strong personal meaning. It was also home to 11 other, likewise, dynamic museum education hopefuls. What is more important than any individual personal connection is the collective story of all the people whose career paths and experiences are linked by this single, common factor. Our account of “The Museum” is less about the single place and more about the version of museum education history we experienced.

Through the other institutions referenced in the accounts—universities and museums— and the descriptions of programs and events, it is possible to surmise which museum is “The Museum.” It is also quite likely that one could figure out the

names of the individual educators. Yet, to do so is to miss the main point of the work, for ultimately it is the hidden aspects of museum education and the implications of these factors for all current and future museum educators, not the particular place or people, that are important.

The Museum, like many in the Southeast, was founded by a group of citizens as a private endeavor. In this case, it was a group of artists and teachers in a state capital with a population of slightly less than 200,000 who on a strictly volunteer basis in 1930 opened the state's Society of Fine Arts in the heart of downtown in a building that was once a school. For the first 29 years, The Museum collected, through donations, an eclectic assortment of member-created and -collected art as well as historical and archeological objects. It was funded solely by private donations and membership. Museum education was a primary focus of the institution's activities. The museum school offered art lessons, primarily under the direction of one dedicated instructor. It also offered a small art and archeology library and the occasional public lecture for adults.

In 1950, The Museum became part of the city, with governance and funding shared equally between the volunteer board and the city. Then in 1960, the museum education department was founded. By 1971, prompted by efforts at professionalizing the museum field as evident in the groundbreaking AAM publication of that same year, *Museums for a New Century* (1971), The Museum wrote its first mission statement and

long-range plan. This plan adopted 18th, 19th, and 20th century American art as the focus of The Museum's collection and called for the transfer of objects from outside that focus to other, more suitable institutions. For the education department, this new professionalism meant more offerings including puppet shows, outreach to schools, lectures, films, festivals, and workshops.

In 1983, the county joined the city and the board in the funding and governance of The Museum, effectively doubling its operating budget and staff. With this influx of resources, plans began for a new, larger, state-of-the-industry, temperature-controlled museum building. A donor graciously offered 35 acres of land perched along a 3-acre lake in the suburbs along with a surveyesque, museum-quality, corporate collection of American art. The new Museum would be part of a cultural complex and be separated by the lake from a sister building on its own 35-acre plot that would house the performing arts including a regional theatre company and the city's symphony orchestra.

The new Museum opened in 1988, and AAM accreditation soon followed. It was at this time that the term "curator" was first applied to those working in the education department. And, as the new title may suggest, education was integral to the mission of the new Museum. In 1984, during the early planning stages for the new museum building, the Junior League approached the museum board about the possibility of including a 3,000 square-foot children's gallery in the new facility. With the help of

civic organizations like the Kiwanis club and corporate entities, including a national learning center and day care chain and a local bank, the money was raised for this special gallery, although it was scaled down to 1,000 square feet.

The children's gallery was a hands-on environment with 30 different interactive exhibits that used original art and creative reinterpretations of art from the main galleries to teach the elements and principles of design. Adjacent to the gallery was a classroom for use as an art-making studio. This new space dramatically changed the focus and visibility of The Museum's education department. Three-part school tours, which offered the chance to see the main galleries and the hands-on children's gallery as well as the opportunity to make art in the children's studio, became important offerings. And, as the volume of young visitors swelled to 60,000, the recruiting and training of docents became another key activity.

Two Decades of Educators, 1987–2007

The Museum's first official "educator" was a local artist and art teacher named Marie. Involved with The Museum as a frequent instructor of community classes, Marie very naturally moved into the role of museum educator when asked to coordinate the broad range of arts and crafts classes offered at The Museum. With no formal training in museum work, Marie did little that would be classified as interpreting the collection. Occasionally, if for example the exhibition were of

watercolor paintings, Marie might schedule a watercolor class, but for the most part that was the extent of The Museum's education program in the early 1980s.

When The Museum moved to its new facility and shortly thereafter, when plans were first drafted for a children's gallery, The Museum decided to create a new position and took a more formal approach to filling that post. Marie stayed with The Museum through 1987, and left only when her husband's work transferred him to another city. At this time, The Museum decided to professionalize the job and to formally announce the position for the first time in *Aviso*, the monthly newsletter of the American Association of Museums, a primary resource for museum jobs.

Marie is not one of the participants in this study. As she had no formal museum training, this is an acceptable delimitation. Her perspective on the move towards professionalizing of The Museum's education program may have added to the inquiry, but regrettably, Marie's perspective was not possible. Marie was reported to have moved to Atlanta and to have worked for the High Museum of Art in some capacity, but everyone at The Museum seems to have lost touch with her. Inquiries at the High Museum of Art were fruitless, and her rather common name with more than 350 matches in published American phone directories, 25 of them in Georgia alone, furthered the difficulty—although efforts were made with the Georgia listings. As a result, this history of The Museum's education department begins in 1986 with Teá, the first Curator of Education at The Museum.

Teá, 1985–1986 Children's Gallery Manager, 1986–2007 Curator of Education

Teá interviewed for a position as an exhibit designer in February of 1985 at the College Art Association (CAA) Annual Meeting in New York. At that time, she was a graduate student in Sculpture and Art Criticism at the Pratt Institute. A classmate who was actively interviewing at the conference saw the job post, which called for an accomplished artist with experience teaching children to help design an interactive gallery for children. Thinking it the ideal job for Teá, her classmate called her and offered to drop off a resume on her behalf. Teá drafted a resume specifically for the position, as she did not yet have one prepared because she was not actively job hunting. When she finished it, she went to the New York Hilton to drop it off in person at the conference's employment center. The Museum's director scheduled a meeting with her for the next day. At the brief meeting, he described in detail the plans for the interactive children's art gallery. Before the interview was over, he handed her a half-dozen images and asked her to return the next day with ideas about how the objects could be reinterpreted for a hands-on experience.

The next meeting went well, and she was invited to The Museum for an interview weekend. Ultimately, she was offered and took the job with the understanding that it is a temporary position. Teá would be with The Museum for two to three years—until the children's gallery was complete—and she would stay only briefly after its opening to manage the day-to-day running of the gallery for the first

couple of months, to train the staff on effective use of its exhibits, and to work out any unforeseen challenges to perfect this new space.

Teá was fairly happy with this arrangement, a temporary job. She had not really considered museum work before, but she knew she did not want to return to the elementary classroom. She had already had that experience starting first as an artist-in-residence while still an education student at the University of California, Santa Barbra. After graduation, she had spent a year teaching art as a floating teacher from a cart before another year in her own classroom. She enjoyed teaching. When she thought about it, she conceptualized it as an art form in-and-of-itself, with the children as the medium through which ideas were conveyed. As an elementary art teacher, despite this conceptualization, Teá missed making her own art on an adult level.

The Museum's job offer came at a time when she was uncertain about what direction to go in next. She was not particularly excited about the location. She had grown up in upstate New York and later in California, and the small, Southern town seemed provincial to her. But, she had become excited about seeing her ideas come to fruition, so the location was tolerable because it was temporary.

Ironically, the town grew on her, and she ended up forming lasting relationships in the community. She bought and restored a historic home with an outbuilding that she converted into a studio. Later, she even bought a second house in the neighborhood and made an even bigger studio. Even before the temporary job ended,

she was given the “Curator of Education” title and a permanent position. As previously stated, Teá was the first to hold this title. Teá stayed with The Museum for 21 years and became a highly successful educator with numerous awards, programs, publications, and exhibits to her credit.

Her tenure from 1986 to 2007 coincides with the professionalizing of the field of museum education as a whole and at this institution in particular. It overlaps with the careers of 10 other young museum educators who came to The Museum over the same 20 years. As key informant, Teá provided the background and contact information about all the educators who worked at The Museum. Teá was mentor and supervisor to all who worked in the education office in that 20-year period.

Teá herself had no previous museum experience, no degree in museum studies, and no museum internships. Her personal philosophy of museum education and view of what constitutes a successful museum education project are, however, at the heart of understanding the realities of museum education today.

Ally, Assistant Curator of Education 1991–1993

Allison, or Ally as she was called by the staff and volunteers, started at The Museum six months after graduating from the University of Florida with a bachelor’s degree in art history. After a successful experience in the university gallery, which was at the time in the process of becoming the Harn Museum of Art, Ally said she knew she wanted to work in museum education. For the last year of school, she had been

watching the position announcements. She had also been proactively interviewing people who had the type of job she was interested in, both to make contacts in the field and to gain insight into how to go about finding the right kind of job: a job that she would enjoy.

By graduation, Ally had decided she wanted to work in Atlanta, Georgia because it was a large metropolitan city in the South, and it seemed to have multiple, interesting opportunities. After the graduation ceremony, she took a circuitous route from Gainesville to her family's home in Charlotte, North Carolina, traveling by way of her roommate's hometown, which was three hours from Atlanta.

Allison, who was the first person in her family to attend college, graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in art history in 1993. The only child of a businessman father from North Carolina and a stay-at-home mom, she lived in various Southern states and reports having "no exposure to the arts growing up, not even a school field trip." While at college in Gainesville, Ally had worked as part of the initiative to found the Harn Museum of Art and also in the University Galleries. Her position as assistant curator at The Museum was her first professional experience in museum work and marked the expansion of The Museum's education department beyond a single "curator" and the occasional "intern." After three academic years at The Museum, Allison left to attend the master's program in museum studies at George Washington University (GW). Over the 12 years since her 1995 graduation from GW,

Allison's positions and job titles have grown exponentially. She went on to work as an educator at the Museum of the New South in North Carolina in addition to the Octagon (National Architectural Museum) and Hillwood, both in the Washington, DC.

Stephanie, Intern 1990, Assistant Curator 1993–1994

Stephanie first came to The Museum in the spring of 1990. After two years as a biology major at the University of California–Santa Barbara, she came to The Museum for a semester-long unpaid internship before entering the University of Maine for a bachelor's degree in art history. Stephanie returned to The Museum three years later for a paid semester-long internship. At the end of that second internship, the assistant curator position became vacant, and Stephanie remained as the interim assistant curator for six months while applying for that position formally and for other positions elsewhere. Stephanie was offered a paid internship at the historic Biltmore House in North Carolina and decided to accept, believing she needed to diversify her museum experience. After a year at Biltmore, she did a summer program in American Studies at Renaulda House and then went for a master's in art history at the University of Massachusetts.

As a graduate student, she landed a part-time job at the University Museum of nearby Smith College. After graduation, she had difficulty finding a job and eventually moved with her husband to California, where she spent a year working retail jobs and a year at the San Jose Museum gift shop, before landing an entry-level museum education

job at the Triton Museum. She stayed with the Triton for nearly three years and worked her way up to Education Director, until she applied and was selected for an upper-level education position at the Portland Museum of Art, the largest museum in her home state of Maine. Stephanie's spouse gladly followed her career to Maine, eager to leave California's high cost of living and low-paying humanities jobs. At the time she was interviewed for the study, she had been with PMA for five years.

Ruth, Assistant Curator of Education for Adult Programs 1993–1995

Ruth, a Minnesota native, received her bachelor's in art history from Boston University in 1988. She had begun college as a French major but came to art history her junior year after taking a class while studying in Europe. After Boston University, Ruth returned to Minnesota, where she worked for both a publishing house and in the gift shop of the Walker Art Center. Reflecting on that time, she laughs at the idea that she actually believed she might work her way up from the museum's gift shop. After two years in low-paying positions, she moved to Seattle to work for a publishing house for a year and then decided to go back to graduate school. After looking at several schools, she chose the University of Minnesota because of a new master's program that combined art education and museum studies. At the close of her course work, prior to writing her thesis, she began applying for paid internship positions. She came to The Museum in 1993 for a six-month paid internship. When she arrived, the Assistant Curator of Education for Adult Programs position was vacant. Three months into the

internship, she was hired full-time for that position. Ruth's plan had been to complete her thesis while gaining marketable job experience. Unfortunately, the demands of her job made doing academic work difficult, so after two years at The Museum she left, returning to Minnesota to complete her thesis. In 1998, after finishing her thesis, a historical look at education programs of the Walker Art Center, she took a position in the education department of the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA). Ruth showed great promise at MIA, spearheading a new family center and volunteer program. In fact, at the mid-point of her four years with MIA, she was promoted to another position. In 2000, Ruth moved to California with her husband, who was entering a graduate program at the University of Northern California. They were leaving two full-time professional jobs, but Ruth felt confident they had saved enough money for her to job hunt for six months. If worse came to worst, she was qualified to teach art in a public school. After six months and many interviews in which she was told she was over- or under-qualified, Ruth was beginning to worry. She had passed the state license exam for teaching, but even the back-up plan had not worked out. At an interview for a teaching position, which turned out to be a courtesy interview, someone suggested that with her teaching credentials she could make more than a museum educator or teacher by working as a nanny. This proved to be true. She quickly secured a nanny position that paid more than double her museum salary. After three years in California, Ruth's husband completed his degree and took a job in New York. Ruth had a child; after a

year at home in New York, she began looking for museum work. At the time of her interviews for this study she had accepted, but not yet started, a position as a museum educator in a small museum in Rochester.

Matt, Assistant Curator of Education for Youth Programs 1994–1995

Matt was the only male ever to work in the education department at The Museum. He was there briefly in the fall of 1994, only working there for six months. He came to The Museum immediately after completing his undergraduate degree in art and business management. This unique program at Gilford, a small private Quaker college in North Carolina, combined studio art classes with four year-long internships and business courses. Through his internships, Matt had worked at the historical society, the art gallery at the State Arts Council, a private commercial art gallery, and at the Greenhill Museum. Matt is proud of how well he did at these positions and cites his upbringing in a military family, which taught him how to adapt to new situations and the importance of making connections with the community for his success. Matt had been well liked at each of these internships. The State Arts Council and the Greenhill had even hired him back for paid work, and all four gave him glowing recommendations when he applied to be the Assistant Curator of Education for Family and Children's Programs. Following the six months in that post, Matt returned to North Carolina. He worked for a graphic design firm by day and spent weekends building his own ceramics studio in the warehouse district of downtown

Greensborough, which was being redeveloped as an arts district. Eventually, he moved up at the design firm, taking on the role of designer recruitment rather than actually designing himself. This new administrative role allowed him to teach ceramics classes at his warehouse studio in the evenings and on weekends and to work on his own ceramic artwork. Tragically, over the holiday break in December 1996, Matt's warehouse studio was broken into and burned. Matt lost all of his equipment. Disillusioned, he moved to New York City and entered a graduate program at New York University that focused on technology and design. Upon graduating NYU, Matt moved to San Francisco and has worked his way to an upper level management position with a Fortune 500 technology and design firm. He is married to a doctor.

Kimberly, Paid Intern 1994, Interim Assistant Curator of Education 1995

Kimberly was another paid intern in the education department at The Museum. She arrived in January of 1994. When Matt left in March, she became the interim Assistant Curator of Education for Family and Children's Programs until she left for a permanent position with the Getty Regional Institute in Tennessee in the fall. A native of Louisiana, Kimberly graduated from Millsaps College, a small, private liberal arts college in Jackson, Mississippi, with a bachelor's in photography. After graduating, she moved with her roommate to Nashville, where she worked as a commercial photographer's assistant. Unhappy with what she considered mundane photography work, she considered going to London to become a Montessori teacher with plans to

return home to Louisiana and open her own Montessori school. She took serious steps in that direction but later decided instead to seek a master's degree in art education at the University of Alabama. She took the paid internship with The Museum after graduating from Alabama and continued seeking other long-term opportunities. Kimberly interviewed for the Getty Institute job in California. She was offered the position in Tennessee, but the start date was many months off, so she was glad to have the chance to gain experience and the higher pay in the temporary-interim position at The Museum. Kimberly worked for the Getty Institute for three years, traveling to museums throughout the region making museum connections, writing a lesson plan book that utilized works from Southeastern museums, and then presenting the lessons to public school teachers at Getty Summer Institutes. After working for the Getty Institute, Kimberly spent a year as an educator for the Chattanooga Children's Museum before going to the University of Pennsylvania for a PhD in art education. While in school she married. Upon completing her PhD, she and her husband returned to his native state of Mississippi, where Kimberly worked as a high school art teacher for a year. Then, after taking a part-time job with the state arts council for a year and having a baby, Kimberly took a tenure-track teaching position in the Teacher Education Program at Delta State University, where she currently teaches education and art education classes to future teachers.

Terri, Assistant Curator of Education, Family & Children's Programs 1995–2003

Terri started at The Museum in December of 1995. As a recent graduate of the Vanderbilt University art history program, she registered for the AAM annual meeting held in Philadelphia in early May, with the express purpose of attending the job fair. For an entry-level person, Terri thought she had a fairly strong resume. She had received her bachelor's degree in art history from Randolph-Macon Women's College, even graduating with honors. She had completed a certificate program in museum studies at American University and had also done an internship at the National Portrait Gallery prior to completing her master's degree at Vanderbilt. She spoke with many museums at the annual meeting, including The Museum, but by early fall her job prospects looked dim. She had received no invitations for on-site interviews or follow-ups. Losing hope, she had decided to work as a receptionist in her father's medical practice and was reluctantly planning to move to Knoxville and attend paralegal school in the spring term. Then, over Thanksgiving break, she received a call offering her a position at The Museum which she accepted. Later, she learned that The Museum had hired someone who did not work out and had reopened the search, revisiting her application. Terri discounted the idea that she harbored strong feelings about not being in the first round of consideration. She explained that she came very close to abandoning the path of museum education at that early stage and insisted that she mentioned it only to convey how difficult it was to get her start, even with good credentials. She underscored this point by elaborating on the fact that at every meeting

she had with a prospective employer at the AAM annual meeting in Philadelphia, her resume was one of many in a huge stack of resumes. Ultimately, Terri would become the assistant curator with the longest tenure at The Museum—eight and a half years—second only to the head curator who semi-retired after 22 years.

It was clear that Terri was passionate about The Museum and her co-workers, describing them as “a family,” despite having left The Museum out of frustration over a glass ceiling that did not allow her to advance out of her original position after eight years of exemplary service. The family model was particularly important to her as she was unmarried and a home owner. She expressed her discontent at having built a life in the town, even buying and restoring a home she loved and having truly “put down roots.” She was reluctant to leave but as that was the only art museum in town, she was limited to leaving museum education or continuing in the same entry-level job in perpetuity. Ultimately, she opted to leave museum work and pursue another career in the same community, keeping in touch with her museum “family.”

In an effort to faithfully convey this family ideal, Terri shared a story that she said “accurately captured how unique and giving that place (The Museum) and those people were.” She went on to explain:

When I first moved here I accepted the job on really short notice, so I arrived pretty unprepared. Economically times were hard and The Museum wanted to hire me before the new year, afraid that if the position was left opened in that

key time between one year's budget and the next, the position might be eliminated. My new boss had planned to be out of town in California for two weeks. So, by phone we had arranged for me to housesit for her, so I could start work and would have somewhere to stay while finding a place to live. I arrived and went to work, but by the weekend, I had come down with a terrible flu. I remember vividly laying on my boss's couch in a semi-delirious state, with the TV tuned to a local station. Out of my haze, I thought, "gee, that woman being interviewed on the TV seems vaguely familiar." Then it hit me, that's my boss—the person whose house that I'm in right now. It had not seemed weird when I agreed to housesit; it was only then that it occurred to me that I had only met this person once for less than an hour, at a convention seven months ago. When she found out I was sick, she even went so far as to have the docents check in on me. She did this from California! What other kind of job would you find people who would do that? There were tons of other examples while I worked there, but that is one that particularly stands out for me.

Aimée, Assistant Curator of Education for Adult Programs 1996–2000

The year 1996 is the point at which I, as participant-observer, fit in the chronology of this history of museum education. Having already shared my biographical profile and background, I will only briefly address my start at The Museum and the specifics of my education and prior experience before continuing with

the other participants. I applied to The Museum in July of 1996, a month after completing my comprehensive exam for my Master of Art History at the University of Alabama. When The Museum's opportunity appeared in *Aviso*, I was juggling several part-time jobs. I was a hall director, managing an on-campus apartment complex for graduate students. I was teaching introductory art history classes at the university. And, I had a part-time position at a small, unaccredited museum. I still had a thesis to write, but I decided to apply for The Museum position believing, if nothing else, I would gain some experience job hunting and interviewing.

I remember that my early afternoon interview went very well, and I was invited to stay for dinner, but I had to decline. I had to teach at the university many hours away early the next morning. On the long drive home, I weighed my perceived success in the interview and my credentials against the *faux pas* of declining an extension of the interview into dinner. I had a bachelor's degree in art history from the University of Mississippi with minors in general art and arts administration. I had had unpaid internships at the university museum and at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, Tennessee. I had paid experience as well as the volunteer coordinator and docent trainer at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, Mississippi. I was close to finishing my master's degree, and in addition to augmenting my resume with undergraduate teaching, I had also gone to work as an associate of the Folk Art

Museum. I was thrilled and relieved when The Museum called to offer me the position and accepted it with no attempts at negotiation of the offered salary.

Reilly, Educational Fellow (intern) 1998–1999

A self-described “middle class” girl with a slightly Goth look, Reilly was an upstate New Yorker known for her avid devotion to drawing comics and zine art, a form of self-published comic books. She moved to Atlanta in 1994 with her high school and college sweetheart John, who had taken a job he found in *Opportunity Knocks*, a national publication for not-for-profit sector jobs. His cause-related job, which he interviewed for and took sight-unseen from New York, was demanding and paid a low wage. As a result, John was also forced to work nights for Delta Airlines, and Reilly worked a string of jobs obtained through a ‘temping’ agency. Both were highly educated. Reilly, who was classified as gifted, had begun taking college courses while a sophomore in high school through a special program her school offered in conjunction with a local community college. Mohawk Valley Community College was the first community college established in New York. Founded in 1946 as the New York State Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences at Utica, it still had a heavy art emphasis, which Reilly truly enjoyed. When she graduated, she transferred her credits to the University of New York at Buffalo and completed her double major in art and art history in less than three years. After graduating she applied and was accepted to the intern program at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice, Italy. She left three months early to

learn Italian, then spent a year giving tours in both English and Italian at the museum. She returned from Italy and reunited with John in New Jersey, where they attended Rutgers University. Reilly earned her Master of Art History with a certificate in museum education and worked at the Zimmerli Art Museum on the Rutgers campus. She also taught cartooning at the museum and at local community centers. Through Rutgers and one dedicated professor-mentor who had been a former museum curator, Reilly landed a competitive internship with the Brooklyn Museum of Art and later a paid position with the Hyde Collection in Glenn Falls.

However, when John graduated with his degree in social work and decided to move to Atlanta, Reilly decided to put her museum career on hold, and instead focus on studio art. With the money she earned doing what she called “day jobs,” Reilly bought into a collective studio with nine other artists in a warehouse in the up-and-coming Grant Park area of Atlanta. This group, composed of several faculty members from the Atlanta College of Art, pooled resources to print invitations and host studio openings four to five times per year. While Reilly was not as successful selling works through the studio collective as the others, she did make valuable contacts. These led to opportunities for teaching private art lessons, freelance contract work designing resources for the High Museum of Art, and ultimately to a full-time job producing educational programming for the local PBS affiliate.

When John lost his not-for-profit job and their health insurance, a friend told Reilly about a one-year position at The Museum, and Reilly applied. She was excited about the position, which encouraged emerging museum educators to design and implement their own projects and had the potential for renewal for an additional year. In her interview, she discussed the possibility of designing an educational website modeled on her comic. Although she did not know how to design web pages at the time, she was confident. "...after all I did not speak Italian before the Guggenheim and had to master that in three months," she explained. Her confidence was further bolstered by her experience with other types of technology in her work at PBS.

She was honest about her lack of direct experience but was also quick to point out her strengths. The Museum was convinced and offered her the position. John found work quickly, again in the not-for-profit sector. Reilly started on her website in late June and the couple made plans to get married the next summer. By December, however, Reilly was becoming increasingly disenchanted with The Museum. She had taught herself Dreamweaver, and had created a core section of the website, dedicated to art from 1800 to 1850, which was already being beta-tested. The Museum, however, was backing away from an intern-produced educational site to a more corporate approach, put together by the design department of a Fortune 500 company whose CEO was a museum benefactor. The Museum proposed that Reilly turn her work into a series of print pieces and offered to hire a graphic designer to reinterpret her ideas with

a “more consistent vision.” The project devolved into a series of heated meetings between Reilly and the Curator of Education, and meetings with Reilly and the graphic designer. In this climate of discord, the whole project was abandoned. The head curator went on maternity leave, and Reilly “served out” the remainder of her internship doing various odd jobs in the department, helping to cover in the absence of the department head. After what she termed a “negative experience,” she returned to Atlanta. Reilly took a paid internship with Nexxus Art Press while picking up where she left off with freelance work for the High Museum. After two years, the couple moved back to New York, deciding they would prefer to be closer to family. They settled in Rochester and after a rocky start, both found work. With a more secure future, they finally married. Reilly has been the managing director of education programs at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, New York for seven years. Occasionally, she considers leaving to pursue a PhD in art but is happy with her more creative museum job, her painting, and the hectic exhibition schedule of her own work. She, therefore, has no concrete plans to leave.

Megan, Assistant Curator of Education for Adult Programs 2001–2002

Megan is another museum employee who was not interviewed for this study. It was reported that Megan was a recent graduate of a Midwestern university and held a master’s degree in American studies or architectural history. She had prior experience working in historic preservation and at a historic house museum in the Northeast. Her

semi-retired father had moved to Atlanta to work for Emory University, and Megan interviewed for numerous jobs at the American Association of Museums annual meeting, focusing on positions at Southern institutions so she could be close to her family. She accepted the job as assistant curator of education for adult programs apprehensively, happy that The Museum's collection had a strong core in the period of American history in which she had expertise. However, she had begged out of the responsibility of teaching the advanced placement art history class, at least for the first year, as art history was not part of her educational background.

Despite a promising start researching and writing about pieces in the collection for the docent handbook and for gallery resources, within six months it was decided by mutual agreement that the position was not a good fit for Megan, and she resigned. Upon leaving The Museum, it is presumed that Megan moved to Atlanta with her family. However, one of the docents reported that she had taken a position with a history museum elsewhere. Megan never used The Museum as a job reference and attempts to find her were unsuccessful.

Melinda, Intern 1998, Assistant Curator of Education for Adult Programs 2002

After the departure of Megan in December, the Curator of Education for Adult Programs position remained vacant for the remainder of that academic year. The prospect of another year of farming-out docent training, the visiting lecturers, the art history lecture series, and the advanced placement high school class to the other

members of the department became out of the question. Yet, after three announcements of the position, the pool of applicants was, in the opinion of the head Curator of Education, “not very impressive.” The decision was made to hire a former intern and recent graduate of the University of Alabama’s Art History Master’s Degree Program. Two previously successful educators in the position had come from that program, and the hope was that “homegrown talent,” while less experienced, might again succeed with The Museum constituents in particular.

Melinda was originally from Niceville, Florida. Her father was a businessman and her mother was a stay-at-home mom. Melinda remembered being very involved with sports and other non-school activities but reported that the arts were not a part of her early education. “I don’t recall ever visiting a museum as a child,” Melinda said apologetically. “Really, my earliest experience with art was when my family moved to Alabama. I was in middle school.” Melinda explained that she formed a meaningful bond with the art teacher at her middle school, Ms. Terri. As a private school, the middle school art teacher remained her teacher through high school. Despite her positive art experience, when Melinda went to college, she majored in English. It was only after graduation, under pressure to decide on a career path, that she revisited art. She had taken a post-graduation trip to Europe and thought that art history or museum studies might be a good option. In an effort to make sure, she decided to intern at The Museum for the summer. She explained, “It was a really informal thing. My parents

had decided to leave Alabama and return to Florida, so it was not as if I had a home to go to. Thankfully, they supported me financially while I moved to this town and tried out the museum thing. I ended up working in the children's programs area—it was a lot of fun and I decided to go back to the University of Alabama for a master's degree in art history so I would be qualified to work in a museum." While a graduate student in art history, Melinda did another internship with the Birmingham Museum of Art for credit in her graduate program. At the Birmingham Museum of Art, she set her own hours, working for the curatorial department—specifically the decorative arts and the African art collection. She described this post as "a great experience. I mostly did research and helped with installation." When Melinda graduated, she applied for and got the position at The Museum. She started in the summer, but before school started she had already been let go. Melinda, considered this lucky in hindsight because only a few short months later she was hired at the Mobile Museum of Art. She described her position there as a promotion because, as the only full-time educator, she is the head of the education department. As it happened her then-boyfriend, now husband, was from Mobile. She shared her belief that her circuitous route to this position must have been some form of divine intervention that allowed her to have the career she wanted with the family she wanted—something many museum people cannot do because they have to move where the jobs are.

Melinda went on to explain that in her current position she set the agenda, creating and implementing programs at her own discretion. She believed this was key in preventing burnout and “feeling like there’s a glass ceiling” on your current position. Most of Melinda’s programs are grant-funded; as a result she not only must generate the ideas, but she must promote them to potential funders if they are to come to fruition. Overall, Melinda wanted to convey her belief that she was successful and fortunate to have a job and a family in a place that she really liked.

Susannah, Assistant Curator of Education for Adult Programs 2004–2007

After two rocky years with unsuccessful short-term people in the Adult Programs position, the 2004 re-announcement of the position brought a renaissance of qualified applicants. Susannah was ultimately selected after telephone interviews with a half-dozen promising candidates and on-site interviews of three perspective hires.

Susannah had a bachelor’s degree in art history with an extensive background in archeology from Emory University, and a Master’s Degree in Art History and Museum Studies from Tulane University. While at Emory, Susannah had successful unpaid internships with the Michael C. Carlos Museum, the High Museum of Art, and the Atlanta History Center. She had worked first in a formal, year-long, paid internship at the Fine Arts Museum in Houston, and later had been the full-time education assistant at the Hood Museum of Art prior to entering the graduate program at Tulane.

Although she reported her time at the Hood to have been a “negative experience,” she

believed she had been “too low on the totem pole and was made to do only grunt work.” As a result, she decided that the only way to get a position that would be intellectually fulfilling would be to get a master’s and then a PhD.

While in New Orleans at Tulane University, Susannah volunteered at the university museum, which was very small and employed only a director and an accountant. She was the first person to write educational material there. Although Susannah would be gone long before the ground breaking of the now impressive, five-story, state-of-the-art facility, upon completion of her master’s degree in art history, she was hired as that museum’s first educator under the title of “education coordinator.” She remained in this role for almost three years, happily writing educational materials for a traveling show that would help fund the future museum.

After three years, Susannah decided that she “could not live in books anymore...she needed human contact,” and so she abandoned ideas of a PhD in art history and turned to *Aviso* in search of a new opportunity. She was hired at The Museum and was a successful assistant curator for adult programs for five years. Her first year in her job was professionally rewarding but personally rocky. Her husband was still completing his degree, so they had to live apart temporarily. When he was able to move to the same city, he had difficulty finding a job. Eventually things worked out, and in her fourth year at the museum she even had a baby. Shortly after reaching the five-year mark at The Museum, with an infant at home, Susannah seized on an

opportunity to move up to the position of head curator and left The Museum for the Birmingham Museum of Art. Susannah expressed her belief that this opportunity was the product of “complete luck and possible divine intervention.” She had not actively been seeking a new position and had only applied for the one job. Her husband’s company had been able to transfer him, and both grandparents were in Birmingham, giving the couple a network of people to help out with their infant son. She felt very lucky to have been able to progress in her career and still have a personal life, stating her belief that so many people in museum education do not have that luxury. She went so far as to mention friends and mentors whose career paths had not been so “lucky.” Susannah is still doing well after three years at the Birmingham Museum.

Commonalities

Following careful analysis of the interviews with the 10 educators and reflection on my own career and experiences, five key commonalities were identified. The commonalities are: socio-economic status, core beliefs, pre-service training and affiliation with professional organizations, technology expertise, and employment continuity.

Socio-Economic Status

Feminization. The term *feminization* began appearing in the scholarship of education in the late 1970s. Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (1997) as the process by which an activity becomes especially or increasingly associated with women,

the word has antecedents in the terminology of science as early as 1920 and in literature as far back as 1840. Used in the work of Beechey (1988), Sugg (1978), and Douglas (1977), for example, the term feminization is intended to address a broad series of issues concerning the effects of women in the workforce and on jobs performed predominantly by women, including teaching.

In the educators' narrative accounts, the topic of feminization dealt with several aspects including: museum education's gender imbalance (the field is presumed to be predominately female), ideas of power and prestige associated with museum and museum educators, and the challenges of balancing work and family for those working as museum educators. Eight of the 11 educators referred to topics relating to feminization—with most commenting on what Ruth termed the “substantially less family-friendly” environment of museum education compared with other jobs in education.

Matt, the only male educator, offered several unique observations concerning power, both the imbalance of power, and power as it relates to prestige. He explained:

In terms of working with all women, it really never occurred to me in that first job [at The Museum]. I really never thought about it back then. But I tell you, my next job, they made me really painfully aware that I was the only guy. I was uncomfortable. I ended up leaving a year later because I was uncomfortable, and I really did not like that job. It took me a while to realize that this is a field

dominated by women. Actually, I thought about this before and then I decided it might not be the thing to mention. But, I think what contributes to that phenomenon is the fact that women, if they have a spouse, can afford to make less. National statistics show that women make less—what is it? Something like 75¢ to a man's \$1 for the same work. That is the only thing I can guess that would account for it. It is a Catch-22. These jobs have low salaries because women can afford to take less, and the jobs are dominated by women so it becomes okay to pay them less. It is not right, but it is just the reality of the situation.

While Matt worked at The Museum he also waited tables at night and lived in an inexpensive older apartment. Yet, he still struggled financially. Matt's comments came out of his explanation as to why he left. His original and central explanation was that he left for financial reasons, but as he explained, issues of feminization became a part of his response. It is also noteworthy that he was, at first, reluctant to share his ideas about why the pay was so low.

Ruth, another of the educators, offered more about gender imbalance and the challenge of balancing career and family in museum education. Her account began as a fairly representative assessment in keeping with most of the educators' comments on the subject. Then, she concluded her assessment with her highly personal struggles to

balance career and family. At the time of the interview, she was out of work and actively interviewing for a position in museum education. Ruth said:

With the exception of Matt, and a man who works at the museum I just interviewed at, everyone I have ever worked for, or with, in museum education has been a woman. What has struck me of late is how many museum educators shared stories of their struggle to balance this job and outside interests. These are people who have put off having kids or getting married for a job that pays very little. The prestige factor seems to be high. There is this perception that this is a better job than, say, a school art teacher, yet museum work pays half what a teacher makes and is substantially less family-friendly. The prestige thing is like what I told you about being a nanny. And, when I said that I had considered leaving the field, there was more going on there. Before I left, I had a miscarriage; I lost twins. I had all kinds of medical problems, and I was very depressed. I could not take the stress.

Ruth went on to explain that she had witnessed many co-workers struggle with the balance of museum educator jobs and family. She, herself, had gotten her promotion at the Minneapolis Institute of Art when her supervisor quit to stay home with her child. Ruth felt great sympathy for this supervisor whom she considered a friend but rationalized away any remorse over taking her friend's place with the knowledge that

there were 50 or more other applicants who would take the position if she did not—possibly for less money. She explained:

It is crazy how the system works. When I interviewed for a curator of education position last week, it was much sooner than I had planned. My son is just 3 months old. I was thinking I would start looking for a job in January, but there is just one art museum in town. When this job came open, I knew I had to jump at it or someone else would and it would be years before it came around again. My husband is an anchorman for the local news. It doesn't pay much; he's just starting out. I feel I have to work. In the interview, they apologetically asked if I could wait as long as late January to start, if selected. Inside I was saying "Hooray!" I was uncertain as to whether to mention why it would be fine—I have a new baby at home. Then, finally I just bit the bullet and told them. They were really nice and assured me that they are a family-friendly work place. But, almost instantly they also told me they were surprised to get so many highly qualified candidates for such a small museum in a rural place.

Stephanie addressed the issue of balancing museum education work and outside interests from the perspective of those who put off family in favor of career—a choice made by six of the participants. Stephanie's comments are representative but were selected for the highly personal detail. Stephanie said:

I remember vividly having this conversation with my mom. This was before I was married, before I was even dating my husband. I knew in the beginning that there was this understanding that if I wanted to work in a museum, I would have to be willing to go where ever the job was. So, I never really thought I would want to move back to Maine. Now that that I am back here, I never want to leave. In our original plan, the fact that my husband was a teacher helped — teachers are in demand everywhere, so we could move around. My husband has since left teaching and has gone back to school for a degree in pharmacy. Now we are experiencing a little more of the realities of museum jobs. He lives in Boston during the week and comes home to Maine on weekends — this makes things a little harder. We pretty much have put off having kids because of that. I think this is a big issue that working women face in a lot of careers. I have been sort of ambivalent. I have always been more interested in my job than in having a family, even when I was young. For me, being on a certain career track and taking different jobs to work my way up felt like the right way to go, and it was exciting.

Educator's background and status. In the interviews, all of the educators indirectly made reference to their socio-economic status by discussing their parents, upbringing, and the availability of experience in museums, whether they be art museum or other cultural settings. The group as a whole was overwhelmingly middle class. Four of the

11 were the first generation to be college-educated. Most, nine of the 11, attained higher levels of education than their parents. And most, seven of 10, reported having little or no museum experience and limited art experience in their early lives (prior to college). However, eight of 10 pointed to less traditional art forms—crafts and the so-called “minor arts”—as sources of early inspiration that helped to guide them to their career in museum education.

Susannah’s comments, which offer glimpses of these indirect socioeconomic references, are a good representative example of this. She said:

I don’t know that there was any kind of specific moment, turning moment; I just remember that I was always doing art projects casually when I was growing up. I can’t say that we went to museums when I was little. I grew up in a very small town, and the only museum was this historic house site. A famous general was from there, and all of these historic houses he had lived in had been brought to our town and put into a park. You could tour them and see the clothes and decorative objects in context in the houses. I would not call that an art experience. I have always been fascinated by creative things. My mom would always involve me, like when we were growing up, it seemed she was always redecorating—wall papering or painting. She would let me help pick out fabrics and that sort of thing. She sewed. I have actually spent a lot of time thinking about this because there was never any formal thing. They never said, “You’re

going to take art lessons.” And there were no artists in our family, and as I said we didn’t go to museums, but I think it was little things. There were other things early on. My parents got me a subscription to *National Geographic*. I loved archeological sites. I was clearing out all these old files the other day, and I found the essay from my college application, and I reread it and said, “Holy cow.” I was not even 18, and I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I did not even realize it at the time, yet all of the things I wrote indicated that I wanted a career in museum education. It would combine my interests of art, history, and archeology. When I went to college, I ended up studying art history. When I started, I did not even know art history was a field of study. I wanted to study archeology, and I got there, and then I realized that all of the archeology classes were in art history, so it was the archeology of Greece or Rome, or Ancient America. It was object-oriented studies as opposed to how to dig it up out of the ground. When I finally went on a dig, it was a watershed event of my college life. I realized I didn’t want to dig anything out of the ground, I wanted to study it already exhumed (*laughing*). I loved the art history classes immediately when I got in them. I said, this is it. This is what I want to do.

Stephanie spoke more about art, or the lack of art, saying:

My experience with art early on was almost nonexistent. I grew up in a small, rural community. We had art-on-the-cart once a week in elementary school.

That did not leave much of an impression on me. Then, after that, in middle school and high school, art was an elective. If you had not already chosen to go in that direction, then you didn't. Given this, it is kind of strange how I ended up in art museum education. I came to the conclusion that I didn't want to be a biology major anymore. I took all of the Myers-Briggs type indicator tests, the Strong-Campbell interest inventory, and all of those kinds of things. The results all pointed in the aesthetic direction, which I did not really even realize that I had.

Ally spoke in broader cultural terms, addressing history and material culture:

Museums were not really part of my life growing up. We would go to historic sites on family vacations, not because my parents had a strong intellectual sense. I do not mean this as a criticism of my parents at all. We were just doing the things that families do—you take the trip to Washington, DC because that was what people did. It was more like we are going to go on vacation with the Browns who live in Tennessee, so we will go to Nashville, and see the Grand Ole Opry and to the Hermitage because those are the sights everyone goes to see on that trip. I never went to the museum in my hometown as a kid, not even on a field trip.

Three of the 11 educators—Kimberly, Teá, and Terri—came from affluent backgrounds. Kimberly, for example, started her education as a 3-year-old at a private

Montessori school, then went to a private Catholic school, and later to a private parochial college. Yet, Kimberly holds fast to her claim that she had no exposure to the arts as a child. Teá, on the other hand, has always considered herself an artist. Her mother was a professional artist with enough success to maintain two homes, one in New York City and another in the country. As a result, Teá had a great many arts experiences as a child, even the chance to study art history using the Picture Study Method at boarding school. Although she insisted that this particular approach to art education was dreadful, Teá still had the scrapbooks she made more than 35 years earlier with copied images of famous art and her writings about the works—and she brought them to a follow-up interview to share with me. Terri's father was a doctor and her mother, a former nurse, quit work to raise their two children. Terri speaks of traveling in Europe with her mother and grandmother as part of her early art education.

As previously stated, Kimberly, one of the three educators classified as affluent, claimed little art or no museum experience prior to college. Yet, as she made her point, she, herself, discussed her private art lessons and the artistic elements of her Montessori schooling. Perhaps her insistence—to her students in particular—reveals something about what is commonly held among art museum educators: the idea that museum education is providing something they themselves did not receive. Kimberly explained her background:

When I started at college I thought I was going to be pre-med. I wanted to be a child psychiatrist. As a liberal arts college, they knew that someone who has just turned 17 probably cannot be completely sure of what they want to do with the rest of their lives. Therefore, the college does not let you declare a major until your junior year. I did all of my general education course work, and I decided I wanted to take some more art classes. So, when I had to decide what I wanted to do for the next two years, I decided I wanted to do more art. I remember thinking, "Oh gosh, what are my parents going to think when I tell them I want to be an art major." They were fine. They said, "Okay, yeah that makes sense, that is what we figured." It's funny to me now to think about how my parents reacted—to say that perfectly suits you. It is so not like anyone else in my family. Everyone else has really practical degrees. It is not like I grew up going to museums. Actually, I never had an art teacher. I always tell my students that. I went to Catholic school and never had an art teacher. We did have a small museum in Monroe, the Masters Museum. When I was small, I took art classes there, and I did take some after-school art lessons from a local artist for a couple of years. It was all just painting. We did not go to the museum that much. It was not a phenomenal museum; it was just a very cute little museum on the river. It all comes around full circle because when I was a teenager I had decided I was going to teach at a Montessori school. I baby-sat for a lady who ran a

Montessori school. I had this idea that I would go to London to learn the Montessori method, then open my own Montessori school. When it came time, I said, “No, that’s not really what I want to do.” But, when you think about the Montessori philosophy, people learning on their own and at their own pace, working with objects—that definitely plays into museum education. No, I have not strayed terribly far.

So, while the majority of educators indicated they had no early art or museum experience, other elements must be considered. Early experiences may not be as overt as artists in the family, art classes in school, or field trips to the museum. The educators’ responses may also have more to do with what they believe to be the more meaningful or persuasive answer—as if to say, “I give you this great opportunity because I did not have it growing up.”

Cultivating minority museum educators and museum audiences. Beyond feminization, the second of the socioeconomic concerns voiced by the educators concerned minority representation in both the field of museum education and in the audiences served by it. The first example of this I have selected comes from Matt. In addition to the financial and gender explanations for his lack of success in his first museum job, Matt brought up the issues of racial diversity and class in the museum and in the community.

What you are saying is correct. I am from the South, but I guess what I meant was it was difficult being in the Deep South. [speaker pauses, then continues] I experienced more racism, I'm not black or anything, but I saw racism in the community when working at The Museum. To some degree, there is the same thing where I'm from in North Carolina, but there it is sort of under the rug. Any Southern town has a railroad track running through the middle of it and, this side of the track is white, and that side is black. My hometown is definitely that way, but, it wasn't like that. When I came to work there, I was shocked. People I met casually in my apartment complex used expressions like [*racial slur*]. I was growing increasingly unhappy with that. The Museum itself was built outside the main bus line, so the inner city folks could never get there. No one ever told me that, but that was one dot I connected when I was there. I looked around me, and the people on the board were all rich, white people, and I did not see a whole lot of diversity going on. I saw a lot of segregation in the city itself—where people lived. I live in San Francisco now. I'm comfortable here. It is a different mind set. I live in a neighborhood that has incredible diversity. Before moving here, I lived in New York City. Again, it gave me the chance to be around different kinds of people. When I was just starting out at The Museum, the only people around were rich, white people, and I was working two jobs and barely getting by.

Matt was a unique case; he was the only male museum educator, and he stayed with The Museum only six months. Yet, many other educators mentioned issues of diversity, a subject that was not specifically part of the interview guide. They did so most often in talking about their beliefs for the purpose of art education and in addressing projects they viewed as most successful. Ruth shared several insights similar to Matt's comments. She said:

I am and have always been interested in social issues. Were I not being interviewed, I would probably not say it this way, but I guess I would say that I see my work as an educator as a type of cause. More than anything, I just wanted to make art and the museum a place for all kinds of people. To get away from the sort of idea that it is a place for just the elite. Let me first say that in hindsight The Museum did a very good job of actively seeking ways to reach new audiences and really appeared to want to develop audiences among its underserved communities. I was very surprised by the realities of the community. It seemed to me that the city at that time was evenly split, 50% African American, and 50% white. Growing up I had all the worst stereotypical preconceptions of what the South would be. It seems funny to say, but when I pictured it in my mind it was like a black and white movie or newsreel with discrimination and men in white robes. When I first arrived, my landlord, who was a racist, seemed to confirm my stereotyped vision. He actually used the "N-

word.” But after that, I realized how wrong my preconceptions were. It is easy for a white girl from Minnesota who had little to no interaction with African Americans to assume she knew better. What I learned was that people were much more open about race and difference because they could not spend one day without interacting with people who were different. At The Museum, I saw a much more progressive view of the South. The museum staff did a great job of pulling in people from all kinds of backgrounds—ethnic, economic, and religious. They also planned regional and local shows that reflected the community’s makeup. I have a huge amount of respect for the way that they actively worked at that. I also noted that at 5 p.m. the workers and volunteers went back to their side of town. So, I guess that it was not what I expected, and I learned from the experience. I just do not judge it like I used to. Minneapolis is much more diverse now than when I was a kid, and sometimes it seems to me that there is more intermingling of diverse people. Then again, there are areas in Minneapolis–St. Paul that are predominately black and areas that are predominately white. So how can I judge? Is it an economic issue? Maybe? In that community, it was the African Americans that were more often economically disadvantaged, but in Minnesota I feel like there is more social mobility for blacks. [long pause] No, now that I think about it the south side of Minneapolis is predominately black, and it is every bit as economically deprived

as the south side anywhere else. Maybe it's just that Minneapolis is a big city, maybe that's the only difference, and it has many more diversities than just black and white. I think you know that I am married to an African American man. Did you know that? We just had our first child, a son, Avery, and he is multiracial. So, this is something I think about sometimes. People like us are common here and accepted, but you do not find families like ours in the South, certainly not back then. Nevertheless, the people I met at (The Museum) and in that community, with the exception of my landlord, were much more open than my preconceived idea of what it would be like.

Ruth's observations came out of discussions of museum education philosophy. She wanted to convey the importance of social issues as a component of her philosophy of museum education. Later, she would speak to this "cause" in terms of its relationship to a successful program and an unsuccessful program. In doing so, she again was speaking of issues of cultural diversity and classism. Ruth described the successful museum program she developed, saying:

Another example that is a little bit better, because it involved more people and in a more interactive way, was this exhibition I did with Matt. He was the curator of the children's wing. Anyway, we collaborated on this exhibition called *Afrocentricity*. The corridor downstairs was always used for small exhibitions.

Until then, they used that space only for kids' shows. Matt and I decided to host this show for adults that addressed the theme, "What does it mean to be black and an artist?" Again, I don't want to take the credit; it was a collaboration and I'm not even sure where the idea came from, whether it was mine or whether it was from the curators or what. I do not think it was Matt's idea, it doesn't sound like him, but it could have been. Anyway, we went to historic black colleges throughout the state and encouraged them to submit works of art. Then we invited several of the more well-known artists—many were professors of art—to a panel discussion where they discussed what it means to be a black artist: Are you an artist who is black, or are you a black artist? As you can image it was a lively discussion, and it was well attended. I think that is the kind of program that gets to the heart of the museum's mission. This show went along with an African American show in the main galleries, but it took that and made it lively and relevant to the community, and it wasn't just attended by African Americans. I'd say that was a good example of what museum education is to me.

Ruth quickly followed that account with another "good example" that was completely unsuccessful from The Museum's point of view. She did so, she explained, to show how her view of museum education was at times in opposition to the goals of The Museum's administration. Ruth said:

A good example that was a flop as a program and was not supported by The Museum at all was a program I tried in the juvenile detention facility—a museum-on-wheels for the jail, you might say. Anyway, everyone looked at me funny when I first started it, but no one said “no,” so I went ahead with it. It was difficult, and as it went on, The Museum suggested I could invest my time better. I can remember the head curator of education becoming critical of it. At the time, I just couldn’t understand. These days I see it a little better. We had 50 or more things to do at any given time, and she saw that we had to pick and choose what we did. I gave it up because it was just too hard and too time-consuming negotiating with her about it. In my experience at The Museum, I remember a big mandate of all educational efforts was that it must boost attendance. With a great deal of distance between now and then, I now choose to believe that the administration saw no attendance possibility with the juvenile detainees and not that they were against reaching out to underserved audiences.

Core Beliefs

Ruth and Matt’s observations came out of the discussion of museum education’s core beliefs, and examples of quality programs the educators viewed as representative of their beliefs in action. These beliefs were, however, at odds with what all identified as the institution’s primary goal of museum education. Addressed in Ruth’s explanation of the “good program that failed,” The Museum’s goals for its education

program were intrinsically linked to building museum attendance. The consideration of core beliefs, then, begins with the educators' interpretation of The Museum's perspective followed by an exploration of each educator's point of view.

Audience-building as a core belief. In describing a program that best exemplifies her view of successful art museum education, Teá talked about a gallery guide that is still in use but was written more than 15 years earlier. Teá, the head curator for more than 20 years, pointed to the longevity of the piece and its attempts to make personal connections between visitors and the works in The Museum as testaments of its success. In so doing, she also asserted that the institutional goal was about visitors to The Museum. In explaining her own philosophy, she said:

I would point to the interactive guide to the art in The Museum that I wrote as a successful example of museum education. The idea is that you look at the art in The Museum and you see that it is just about the way that we live, it is about what we do all of the time. It is presented to us almost out of context. Museums are very odd institutions, they take life out of context and it becomes our job as museum educators to put it back in. The guide says, "This is not just a picture of something that never existed. It is real. It is something that someone experienced. You can experience the picture and understand, and we can also help you understand how that artist got to make that object through their life experience." Context and personal connection are the big goals—contextualizing the artist's

experience to visitor's experience, the things they make and the things they think. I would say that is a big part of it. Sixteen years later, that gallery guide is still in use. Its longevity has to do with its generic approach. Although we use objects from our collection, almost any object can be substituted for any other. Many of the words that were written for this book were very carefully edited to have a universal applicability. My goal for the visitor is that they have a meaningful personal experience. I don't really think the meaning can be meaningful unless it is personal. There has got to be some way to make a connection with people; be it through studio or some other things.

Terri, the assistant curator with eight years at The Museum, the longest tenure of any assistant, was much more concrete in her assertion that the goal of museum education is to build future audiences for museums. In her comments, she even adopted this goal as her own. Terri explained:

In my opinion the goal of a museum educator should be to create avenues, be they tours or hands-on activities, to make children want to come back to The Museum. People talk about creating life-long readers by reading to young children. I wanted to create life-long learners by generating an early relationship between these kids and The Museum—to make them want to know more. For me, art history was the coming together of a number of interests. For me, this

background rounded out the picture. I could see the history, the science, the literature, and the artwork was the picture book that illustrated these many different things. I wanted to provide a similar opportunity and experience to the visitor so that they could see a picture on the wall but also see the layers and layers of subtext within that picture. It is not just about a field trip, Hooray! We got to leave school today. It is about an education that is slipped in under the rug. Students, even very young ones, can feel good about their interpretations and feel good about being acknowledged for their observations and opinions. Most of all, they leave feeling good about being listened to. And that positive feeling results in return visits as adults, and with their own children.

Stephanie also touched on the importance of promoting The Museum and tying all museum education efforts to visitorship by describing a program she oversaw for the California public school system. At first Stephanie was fine with a grant that required no real link to The Museum or its collection, but as the project evolved she reconsidered this decision. She explained:

The mission of this work, for me at least, has been to establish successful relationships with schools—with teachers and with students—so that they will become museum visitors. This is the difference. When I was in California, the big project that I ran was called Art Reach. The museum hired 20 art teachers on

staff that were placed in the public schools. Proposition 13 in California effectively eliminated visual arts specialists in the public schools. What the museum did, what I did, was send teachers—and this was for two school districts. What we would do was send teachers into the classroom to do art-on-a-cart and circulate through the classrooms. The kids would get eight weeks of art a year, this is just K–5. It came through the museum and not only did the museum provide the teachers, but they also provided half of the cost of the program. So the school system got art education for all of their kids, granted, for only eight weeks a year, but they got all of their art education for just \$50,000. It was just ridiculous. That job was all about advocating for arts education in schools. The problem with the program was that it was operated through the museum, but it had nothing to do with the museum itself. There was no connection between the museum, its collection, its mission, and what was happening, other than its mission being about promoting arts in the community. It was one of those programs that started, and it just happened, and some form of it is still going on now. I am the school programs person so when asked about the mission of museum education and successful examples, of course I'm going to talk about these school projects and relationships with school. But, above all else it has to be about the museum and its collection—I think that is true also for the adult visitors and adult programs. My particular view of museum education

has that focus on the child. I think that if we start with children, we build the next generation museum audience. The Prop 13 program was good, but in the end it did little to support the mission of museum education.

Melinda, who left The Museum after only six months, went on to head the museum education program at another accredited AAM art museum in the Southeast. Like Stephanie, at her later post she headed a grant-funded program to restore art in schools when art specialists had been cut. However, unlike Stephanie, she viewed this program, not as a divergence from the mission of museum education, but as essential to it. Despite the lack of direct connection to the museum, Melinda defended this type of program citing research on museum visitorship that stated that today's museum audiences overwhelmingly came to the museum as children and had early childhood experiences in art. If the museum allows art to be taken from the curriculum of schools, she explained, then there will be no future museum audience. Melinda also believed that the fact that The Museum did not charge admission, and that her current museum did, directly reflected a difference in the two institutions' philosophies of audience development: namely, that the free museum worked harder at cultivating other audiences, not school tours, while her admission-charging museum's primary emphasis was school tours. Melinda explained the specifics of her school program:

Here, I have based a program on art history—a curriculum-based project with the local schools that do not have art. I basically said, I can fulfill your art

curriculum needs here at the museum. Initially, the president of the parent-teacher organization (PTO) came to me, asked for my help largely because she was an arts advocate with three kids at that school and was horrified by the loss of arts programs. We sat down for four hours with the new state curriculum guidelines and drafted a plan. We worked with four classes that first year, and this year we expanded to include the whole school and several other schools in the district. I use the state curriculum objectives for all of my school tours. The PTO paid the museum that first year and now we have written a grant through a private foundation. The students get art eight times per month. I act more as a manager for this project. The role of a manager is to know where your staff is strong and where it is not. I have a staff of two retired teachers who can do top-notch lesson plans. I use them constantly; that is their strength. My role is to come up with the ideas. I was not trained to do lesson plans. I think that also there is an insider issue in dealing with teachers. Having retired teachers write these makes the current teachers more receptive. Instead, I write the grants to fund it all.

Community or cultural "cause" as core belief. For Ally, the mission is not about art or audience-building but about the larger cultural "cause" of public institutions and public education. After talking about family trips to culturally significant sites as a

young person and her initial experience with museums brought about by the campaign to build a new museum at her university, she addressed the issue of her relationship with art and her ideas of this career as a “calling.” Ally said:

I do not know why art. Art meant something to me then, and it means something to me now, but I have never quite wrapped my head around it. My art classes at the University of Florida were my first and only art classes. I still do creative things. Occasionally, I will take a photograph and sell it, say at a charity auction, but it was just in college that I made art and exhibited art. I feel like that was my singular artful moment. The work is really interesting to me but also figuring out the field is important to me. I reached out for what is considered best practice immediately. It is funny because when people talk about their calling—forgive me, I don’t mean to go all religious on you—but I was just 21 years old when I first went to work in a museum, and it was just a clear voice that said that this is what is going on here, and I think I need to go and do something about it. So, although I happened on to the job later at (The Museum), I had a strong sense of what I wanted to do. I always considered myself very lucky, to have a clear sense of what I wanted to do. All of the people around me in school seemed to be flipping and flopping. “Do I want to go to law school? Do I want to go to grad school?” I knew what I wanted. I think it was my Dad’s influence on me, being decisive and goal oriented.

Unique quality of art object and art environments as core belief. Kimberly, who left the museum world to become a high school art teacher and later a tenure-track professor of art education, still considers herself a museum educator. While her view of museum education is centered on experiences with original works of art, it still supports the institutional goal of museum education as a bridge to museum audience development. Kimberly explained how her philosophy of teaching in each setting is guided by her experience as a museum educator, saying:

My dissertation project was to take a section of elementary education majors and teach a methods course in the museum. Many of the PhD candidates taught methods courses, but no one had proposed doing it from a museum. I taught my class in the university museum and that was my project. It was a museum education project. I just answered the e-mail of a researcher from Arizona who was asking about philosophies of professors who teach pre-service art teachers. She wanted to know if you were in education, art education, or a studio art faculty member. She was trying to find out who the people are who are preparing art teachers. I told her I was a museum educator. I said something in the piece about my approach to teaching, about using the museum as a site. The obvious layer of it is, if we are going to study art, we might as well be looking at the art. In my dissertation, I looked at museums as environments. I compared museums and schools as spaces for learning and I got into issues of critical

pedagogy. I did many observations in a particular second-grade classroom and talked about how you could transform that space to be more like a museum. The end-result of the project was to define a conceptual space for education that borrowed from both schools and museums. I talked about the limitations you are faced with in education. Especially things like not getting the same kids. Things like that, and issues of prior knowledge. When I got this job [teaching art education courses at the university] and I was shown where my classroom was going to be, I thought this is so perfect. You are literally in the art gallery when you open the door to my room. We are able to do so many things interacting with the art there. I thought, this totally fits into my dissertation project, to be able to be right here with the art and to have a broader scope than just the classroom and to work with original objects.

Representing The Museum's goal for art education. The commonalities among the 11 museum educators on this subject of core beliefs vary slightly from The Museum's goal of increasing attendance through educational programming. This belief, however, is captured in scholarship on the matter of museums and cultural centers. In Vallance (2007b), for example, the purpose of museum education is presented as a necessary extension of arts education. Vallance states:

The ultimate goal of arts education: we want our graduates to become lifelong participants in the arts resources available in their communities, long after they

have left our schools. We know we have taught our students well if they make lifelong habits of visiting museums, attending music and dance and theater performances, and continuing to learn in nonschool lessons, museum programs, and libraries. (p. 674)

Tapia and Barrett (2003) bring issues of formalism and the so-called “Hidden Curriculum” (Apple, 1996, p. 12) to the conversation of mission and core beliefs.

Pointing to a disconnect between the message of the mission statement of the Ringling Museum and the Education Department’s philosophy statement. The Ringling’s mission statement in 1993, as reported by Tapia and Barrett (2003) read:

The mission of the John and Mable Ringling Museum is to enable a large and diverse audience to see, understand and take delight in the best of the world’s visual arts, the traditions of the circus, and the historic buildings, gardens, and grounds of the Museum. To carry out the mission, we develop and preserve the collections and historic facilities of the Museum, support research and increase awareness of the Museum and its collections locally, nationally and internationally, and exhibit and interpret these treasures for the people of Florida and all visitors to the museum. (p. 201)

The Ringling’s education department’s philosophy statement in 1993, as reported by Tapia and Barrett (2003) was:

Education programs are developed and based on a process-oriented model that supports collaboration and community building. Teachers, students, parents, administrators, community members and others work with the Museum education staff to design and produce all programs and materials. These premises inform the process:

- (1) The work of art/exhibition is central. Original works are inherent storehouses of profound and life-changing experiences. The ideas and issues raised are born from them.
- (2) The learning process is equal in importance to the intended end product. Philosophical discussions, decision-making, and issues examination stimulate creativity and collective quality.
- (3) Others' voices are heard in the process. Education staff aim to empower others, not by acting as though they have a franchise on knowledge about art and its purpose, but by actively listening to the ideas that come forth.
- (4) Education beliefs create the foundation of the process. The beliefs are: (a) Education is about the practice of freedom; learning at its most powerful liberates. (b) Education is not about providing information only, it is about raising questions and fostering thinking about how one lives and behaves. (c) Education is active rather than passive. (d) Education is not about promoting individual values, interests or beliefs; educators encourage discussion about

multiple perspectives to increase understanding, knowledge and appreciation of art works. (pp. 201-201)

Of interest to this dissertation research is the reference in the philosophy statement of the Ringling Museum's education department to such things as: the centrality of objects, of equity—and diversity or pluralism—as a component of the learning process, and finally of education as a means of promoting values, beliefs, or interest, not for individuals, but presumably for the greater good—which I interpret as a reference to the community as a whole. Given these objectives, this philosophy statement is strikingly in-line with the statements made by The Museum's educators in the interviews.

Ultimately, Tapia and Barrett (2003) concluded that “the mission statement contains no overt reference to the Museum's education department or to the contribution toward the fulfillment of the Museum's mission that is made by its educational programs” (p. 201). They found formalism in the use of terms and phrases such as treasures, delight, and the best of the world's visual arts—likening these to Benjamin Ives Gilman's (1923) description of a museum as a venue for thoughtful pleasures, a paradise of fancy, and a temple.

By extension The Museum's mission statement is similar to that of the Ringling. Published in The Museum's 1996 Annual Report it reads, “The Purpose of (The Museum) is to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret art of the highest quality for the

enrichment, enlightenment and enjoyment of its public.” Like the Ringling, The Museum eludes to quality using the expression, “art of the highest quality,” where the Ringling used, “best of the world’s visual arts.” And, like the Ringling, no overt message is made to The Museum’s educational programs. Unfortunately, The Museum has not defined an education department philosophy statement. The nearest published document on the subject is the education portion of The Museum’s 1996 Long Range Plan (Appendix C). In its goals, objectives, and strategies, perhaps it is possible to draw parallels to the three aspects of the Ringling’s philosophy that I have already mentioned in connection with The Museum’s educators—namely object-centrality, diversity, and community. Object-centrality would seem to be represented by the new goal of extending hands-on activities into the galleries next to objects that inspired them and in the proposal to program group-learning experiences in the galleries. Diversity and pluralism might be reflected in the strategy of developing innovative programming to appeal to nontraditional users. Finally, the community aspect might be indicated by the strategy of recruiting professors for project management teams.

It is worth noting that of these three goals or philosophies for museum education, the educators at The Museum overwhelmingly saw the larger purpose of museum education as a mechanism for promoting art in the community, regardless of its association with The Museum. In returning to their accounts in the interviews, we see that the community aspect was often paired with other concerns. Ruth, for

example, had sought opportunities in the juvenile detention center—an audience that could not visit. Similarly, Terri discussed student art shows, addressing not just those who got into the juried shows and came to the exhibit, but all who participated, even those who did not get in the exhibit and those who never submitted their entries.

Before considering Terri's thoughts, it is worth revisiting the reason for the lengthy participant narratives—namely, the narrative analysis models of Riessman (1993) and Labov (1982). Deconstructing the story-like vignettes offered by Terri and the other educators in terms of narrative analysis—abstract, complicating action, resolution, and coda—provides an opportunity to consider how past events impact the educators' present day beliefs. In this case, the abstract and complicating action came as Terri explained the children's gallery exhibitions. The resolution brings past meaning to the event, while the coda relates that meaning to the present. Terri's comments on the larger purpose of museum education came after a recollection of dissatisfaction with her job responsibilities. Terri noticeably shifted to the present and restated the original question about the mission of museum education as she brought the conversation back to the present—a model example of the resolution and coda in narrative analysis. Terri said:

As painful as they were in the beginning, the student art shows ended up being the most meaningful thing I did at the museum. It was because the kids were invited to, and honored at, the opening receptions—the big receptions with the

artists or collectors in the main galleries. To see the look of excitement on their faces, to see their interaction with their parents and that they wanted to talk about their work. One family I remember brought in their video camera and interviewed their daughter about why she created the work of art. I stood and watched as they taped it, and for an inkling, it got through. That is what I remember, the students that participated in those shows and how excited they were that their work got accepted and was on display. How proud their parents were. There was always a student art space and there had been sporadic exhibits, but it really evolved under my leadership because it was a much more frequent occurrence and we began collecting student works. It was also a collaborative effort in that I worked with the curators to decide which shows to link to, which themes to do. I became much more responsible for it. And it gave me a sense of accomplishment that I was responsible for it and I was doing stuff that people wanted to be involved in. It is easy to say we are going to have children's shows. What it became was a schedule of events planned over time so that more people could participate. The elements of the project that demonstrates the mission of museum education are that it exposes students to different works of art that they would not ordinarily get to see via their teacher. Even if they did not get into the show or visit the museum, they participated in an artistic conversation—if you will. They responded to an aesthetic problem

we put out there. It is outside of the regular everyday curriculum, so it adds variety to their learning. It provides a broader experience, say, using a material or technique that they would not ordinarily get to experience. Even if they didn't enter but only used the resource packets I created for the teacher to teach about the theme. Providing that broader experience is what it is all about. In another way, I think it also gives both the students, and possibly adult visitors too, the chance to think about the theme of the main gallery exhibit in a less intimidating and more personalized way.

Interestingly, it appears that this community element, at least in the case of Ally's experiences, was also a part of a museum's education department. Ally expanded this concept of artistic collaboration and community to include methods for managing a successful education staff. Ally explained:

I would not characterize it as intellectual autonomy so much as opportunity. I do not have to do things on my own. I probably did when I worked at the campus museum just because it was small, and I did not happen to have people around me. But now, I have built this big museum education network around me and I never feel alone in what I am doing. I am speaking of the people at my museum, but also the people at other museums nearby. I feel very much a part of this whole. I felt that way when I worked at The Museum, too. There are three of us where I work now, in this education department, we collaborate on

everything that is going on. My ego does not manifest itself in the form of “this has to be mine, my name has to be on it, or I want star billing.” For me, this is one of the better things about this kind of work.

Reluctant to mention specific projects, Matt did cite the use of community as a positive element of his work at The Museum. He said:

I really don’t remember too many specific projects from back then. What stands out in my mind as significant is working with the community, particularly those exhibit-specific advisory boards they had that worked with The Museum on making decisions. I really liked those, not necessarily on a project-by-project basis, but the idea that the community was systematically invited in on the planning of exhibits and events. That was one aspect that I enjoyed most. I think that concept came out of the business world—the project management team idea. It really seemed to be a concrete way to make The Museum relevant to the audience by making them stakeholders in our programming.

Explaining museum education work. Each of the educators was asked for a quick, one-to-two sentence explanation of what they do. The responses varied, and often exceeded the one-to-two sentence limitation. The recurring theme, however, was “I am a teacher.” In this response, the educators overwhelmingly referenced school-age children—even educators who headed “adult programs” or taught at museums that did

not allow children. Clearly, making a connection with other forms of education was important in justifying their work.

Stephanie, for example, explained that she connects classrooms and the museum by developing lessons, but peppered her answer with what she does not do. She said her typical response was:

The core of what I do, my job, is to connect the classroom to the museum's collection. I do this by teaching classes for new museum tour guides and for teachers, but, what I do not do is schedule tours. Everyone jumps to that conclusion when they hear my title. The tour coordinator schedules tours and I work with teachers in developing curriculum and lessons.

Reilly met the two-sentence limitation, again linking children and the museum. She said, "I teach children about art in a museum." Teá, the department head, went beyond "teaching children" in her response. Teá said, "I help organize experiences for people to understand art in the museum." Ally, on the other hand, likened her job to being a classroom teacher. Oddly, Ally works at a museum that is geared to adults only, and in fact, does not allow anyone under 12 to visit. Nevertheless, Ally said:

I am a teacher. Instead of working in a school or with books, I work with the museum's collection—and I do not even get into the administrative part of the whole thing. Actually, before we even get to all that, I say "director of interpretation" and they say "sign language interpretation." And, I have to say

“No, no, no! It is sort of a newer way to say Curator of Education.” Which inevitably results in, “Oh, what’s that?” Well, then I launch into “I’m a teacher but in a museum instead of in a school.” If people still don’t get it, I go to the product line. “You know, I develop audio tours, teach the docents how to give tours, develop public programs—lectures, family days that sort of thing.” Then there is my sarcastic answer. “I am a museum educator, I educate museums.”

Museum Educator Training. Reliance on connections to classroom teachers in order to explain what a museum educator is, or does, provides an excellent point of departure from core beliefs to art museum educator training. Arguably, what the educators valued, either in projects or in their short answer interpretation of their work, is a reflection of beliefs instilled in their education. Of the 11 museum educators, 8 were trained as art historians, 2 as studio artists, and 1 as an art educator. All but one of the educators had formal museum internships prior to beginning work in museum education. Four of the 11 had interned with The Museum prior to working there formally as a museum educator. Five of the 11 were active members of the National Art Education Association at some point in their careers, and 8 were active in the American Association of Museums EdComm (stands for Education Committee). The sum of all of these elements, in terms of museum education training, is expressed in the museum educators’ responses to questions about the aspects of pre-service training that

were most useful to their work, and about things the educators believed they needed in order to do their jobs better.

Educational background. I begin my investigation of the educators' impressions of their training with Teá, the veteran department head, who described what she looked for when hiring museum educators.

As you have pointed out, the position announcements for the assistant positions ask for a minimum of a bachelor's degree in art history with a master's degree preferred. I think they also ask for museum education, which in a sense was an effort to save on words in the ad by combining degrees in museum studies and art education. On the surface, it may seem at odds with what I have said about the artistic process as central to my view of museum education. I guess it is my job as curator of education to liven up you art history types. I am kidding—but what I should tell you in all seriousness is, I do not write those position announcements. The director and the city write those. They base them on examples for museums all across the country. I get the impression they read the current calls for positions and model their announcements on that, in an effort to keep up with the industry. I am not that concerned about the announcements. I, after all, get to interview the people and ultimately to select the person for the job. I work to get my employees to connect back down to Earth. I do not come from an art history background. There is an interest in getting people with a

background in art history, but I feel like we have a lot of that here at the museum already. We haven't even gotten into the interdepartmental connections here, but our department relies on the curators. In my department I have one person who I rely on to be the central art historical resource and that is the adult programs person. I guess if I had my druthers I probably would not hire someone with an art history background for any position but the adult position. I followed up by asking, "Why don't you have your 'druthers', you are the department head, right?" Teá responded saying:

For the children's position, I think it is a combination of things. The salary was very low, and it was difficult to attract people from out of state. I think it is also a timing thing. When we last hired for that position, it seems like everyone that applied was from an art history background. As far as the announcement, as I have said, it was modeled on other announcements for similar positions and over time we, I, have tried to modify it to include art (studio) and art education. I think it reads something like ideal candidate holds a BA in art history, art, or art education, or similar field, with an MA preferred. It may even say something about museum studies. As much as I would like to think that the hiring revolves around my vision of The Museum, I think in practice it has more to do with the needs of The Museum. The way that these positions evolved, it seems to have turned into a balancing of the art history and studio. Depending on who

was here and who was available, it just sort of evolves. When I came here, I came to design the gallery. I didn't have a title. The only other person was the assistant educator, which was kind of a glorified secretarial role. When the gallery was done I stayed on and the curator of education position was created, and I was it. Later, as other positions were added, I think that art historians were chosen because I had such a strong studio bias, to balance what I was and what I did. When it was just two people, that made sense; when it became three, and four, and five, and six people it became more about balancing what was there at the time.

This concept of a balancing act and the fusion of current published position announcements from other museums prompted an investigation of The Museum's position announcements over time. Among the interesting components is the inclusion early on of salary ranges—a practice abandoned by 1989. Overall, there was a tradition of requiring greater levels of education and experience for the adult programs position than for the children and family programs position. Yet, in the organizational hierarchy, these posts were considered lateral. The Museum made efforts to keep salaries for these two positions the same, despite the individual credentials, performance, or length of time the people holding these positions had put in.

Also of interest were the listed responsibilities that did not correspond to the realities of the job. Among them were youth volunteers, non-docent volunteers, and

programs for senior citizens. The Museum never had a youth volunteer program, and although there were other types of volunteers in the building, only the docents were involved with the education department. Additionally, there were no overtly “senior” programs, although arguably most of the docents qualify for this category. These responsibilities, along with two other elements—travel, or training benefits as it is alternately called in 1995, and exhibition interpretation opportunities—would appear to be the terms borrowed from other institutions’ position announcements. In the case of travel, which was included from 1990 through 1995, with the exception of the head curator of education who attended NAEA each year, the other educators did not travel or have such training opportunities. Terri and I appeared to be the two exceptions to that rule. In her eight years at the museum, she attended NAEA courtesy of The Museum only one time. In my five years, I attended AAM courtesy of The Museum only once. These two instances, over more than 20 years and 12 employees, hardly warranted the inclusion of travel as an employment benefit.

The opportunity to interpret exhibits, which appeared in the position descriptions placed in 2000 and again in 2002, were also of interest. While The Museum did have a long history of contributing educational installations related to current exhibitions, this was most often done in the education wing, apart from the main gallery exhibition. Educators were rarely invited into the exhibition to write labels or place exhibits directly next to works of art. This carefully maintained

separation, in my opinion, was part of why the education and curatorial departments collaborated so well at this museum. The historically troubled relationship of curators and museum educators within the profession and in the experiences of the educators interviewed is something to be addressed in greater detail later. However, as it pertains to the position announcements, it is sufficient to say that the inclusion of “exhibition interpretation opportunities” is perhaps either borrowed from other examples or an effort to attract potential employees on a curatorial track by generating the appearance of an entry-level position with more than the traditional educational opportunities.

As Teá shared in her discussion of hiring museum educators, The Museum did experience times when there seemed to be a surplus of qualified applicants and times when there were few qualified candidates, or simply none at all. Attracting people with creative incentives would have been of particular concern in years when shortages of qualified applicants were either felt or expected. Namely, these instances were in 1994, 1995, 2000, and 2002—what Teá described as the “lean years.” With this in mind, it is interesting to note that despite these lean years, the museum never advertised a position more than once—with the exception of 1994, when both assistant positions became vacant at the same time. In this instance, they did a brief combined announcement for both positions followed by separate, detailed, individual announcements for each in the following month. In any case, The Museum was in the habit of making a single call for applications and using only that applicant pool—

returning to it even after someone was hired and did not work out. Another of The Museum's persistent practices was to require "excellent writing and (public) speaking abilities" of all its educators. These were the only consistently recurring requests. Yet, in "lean" years, the request for writing samples was dropped. Instead, in these years, the announcements included information about The Museum's collections and information about the facility that was clearly intended to be impressive.

Technology, either in terms of available technologies or applicant's technology skills, was never mentioned with the exception of the call to "maintain audio visual equipment" made only in 2000 and 2002, and the invitation to learn more about the museum at its website in 2002. (See Appendix A for the complete findings of my analysis of all of The Museum's education position announcements from 1985 through 2002 and Appendix B for the original listings.)

In mentioning that the position announcements for her department were not initially generated by her but rather by the director in collaboration with the curatorial department and the city, Teá introduced the lack of interdepartmental communication. Teá and others discuss this issue at length, addressing what they described as a widely held view in the field of museum education that museum educators and curators rarely collaborate with success. Many of the educators described the relationship as a rivalry, casting the educators as runners-up to the more institutionally powerful curatorial staff. It is worth mention, however, that almost unanimously, the educators spoke of The

Museum's curator-educator relationship in ideal terms. They claimed unequivocally that no such rivalry existed in their time at The Museum, even to the point of describing instances seemingly part of this rivalry and then rationalizing them away. Many also described being painfully aware of the rivalry happening elsewhere—several through firsthand experience.

I probed further following one of Ally's responses about success and a feelings of accomplishment, by asking, "You mention that 'they were not territorial back then.'

Are you alluding to something?" Ally responded:

You know I am. Clearly you want me to say that for the record. That rivalries between education and curatorial continue to persist in this field, and it is shocking and disappointing. It was very lucky that I had that job as my first job, because I came to find out that it was more open than the field really is. The Museum was an idyllic place. I now have firsthand knowledge of what this curatorial-education conflict is. The way we worked with the curatorial staff, it was very open. We all understood that we were in it for the greater good, not for our own interests. Here, sometimes we have moments where I feel I am communing with the curators. Then, there are times where I feel they have taken a right turn somewhere leaving me totally lost. I hardly know where, or what, or why. Thankfully when that happens we have enough of an open culture that I can say to them directly, "I don't know what you're doing and I

don't know why you're doing it. I don't think this it was part of our strategic plan or what we agreed on." I can say this to them without it being a combative conversation. I am not a combative person. My colleagues rarely have disagreements with me. That is not to say that there are not other personalities around here who suffer under the curator-educator conflict. Sometimes I wonder if it is truly a conflict as much as an issue of old school verses new school thinking. This is a museum that is very early in its evolution. There are old school remnants and there are new ideas. I and we are in the middle of a transformation.

I responded, "Through our conversation you have established the curator-educator conflict as a theme and then re-labeled it as an old school philosophy that people are often faced with. How are you so sure that many museums have this problem? Could it be just a myth?" Ally replied:

I live in a city that has more than 100 museums. I went to grad school here. I have a pretty big network of colleagues working here, or at least in the field, and these friends in various contexts have described to me what their working relationships are like with their curators. More often than not, they describe a situation where we are not singing from the same page of the hymnal.

Stephanie, the lone dissenter, suggested that the education-curatorial rivalry exists, even at The (idyllic) Museum. Stephanie explained:

Part of it, I think, and it is the same situation here, is that most of the management has been here for 10 years or more. There's continuity, a core of people who have been together for a really long time and know how to work together very well. Sometimes, that backfires. Sometimes it allows dysfunction to fester. That is one reason why this is my dream job. The staff here gets along. Many crazy battles that happen elsewhere do not happen here because people understand and respect each other. At other museums, the departments have territorial issues, curatorial verses education. That just does not happen here.

I responded saying, "You know this exists, yet you never experienced it firsthand. How do you know it exists?" She explained:

Well, I did see it at (The Museum). As a student, being new to this whole thing I was not clued in. But I remember this one fight between Teá and the head curator. I was surprised... It was this window into this tension between the goals of education and the goals of curatorial. It was totally work related. I wish I could remember the context, because that is why it was so weird to me, they ended up calling each other names but it started off about work. It was about the gallery guide. Teá wanted to put these little Plexiglas labels for the *See-For-Yourself Guide* on the wall next to the work of the art so that when you got the book you knew you were looking at the right work. She was working with a

graphic designer to put the logo together. The final design was not fleshed out, but she was showing it to the head curator, because she had to approve it. They were going to go on the walls in the gallery next to the art. The curator was very critical of the designs and of the idea in general. Teá clearly resented the fact that she had to have it “approved” by someone she considered her lateral, not her superior. The whole thing escalated, and I was told that this was a common occurrence. In fact, I was told that it was not about an education-curatorial rivalry at all, but about these two people being control freaks. Now that I have been working in museum education for a while, I see that that was not the case. It really was about the nature of their work.

Continuing education. Another aspect of pre-service training, which in some cases may also constitute continuing education, is the educators’ involvement with professional organizations. Most of the educators found their position at The Museum in the American Association of Museum’s (AAM) publication *Aviso*. Of the eight who were AAM members, six described their membership as a component of their job search. Five of the eight had attended the annual meeting, a conference with more than 6,000 museum professionals, claiming to have participated in more than the placement services of the meeting. By contrast, only 6 of the 11 educators were members of the National Art Education Association (NAEA). Yet all six had attended the NAEA

convention and participated in museum education-specific programming offered there, at least once. Furthermore, four of the six were frequent attendees, having participated in two or more of the annual meetings, and three had even made presentations at these events. Despite all this, the educators' comments with regards to these organizations were more negative than positive.

Ruth, a regular NAEA attendee, classified AAM as strictly for job hunting. However, when her interest for more training in early childhood museum education was not satisfied by NAEA, she turned to the less well-known Museum Education Roundtable (MER). Ruth explained:

When I was active in the profession I went the NAEA stuff, particularly the museum pre-conference. As far as other organizations, I once went to a thing in Washington, with the Museum Education Roundtable, you know the Smithsonian Museum thing. It was on early childhood education. I remember that once I took the second job at MIA I decided early childhood museum education was one of the things I wanted to concentrate on. No one was really doing anything with early elementary-age kids in the museum. Anyway I remember going to Washington and being disappointed in the conference.

Pretty much after that, I was only ever interested in NAEA.

Ally, who is no longer in touch with NAEA, was one of the few educators who saw AAM as more than a place to job hunt. She described NAEA as a conference overly

weighted to the concerns of school programs and technology. In 2003, when she made this assertion, these themes were among the more prevalent themes—although not the most prevalent (Table 4, p. 138).

A coding and categorization of all presentations made that year showed that 11 of the 43 presentations at NAEA were in fact on the subject of school programs. The theme of museums as a learning environment was addressed by 10 presentations, and professional development and technology was the stated theme of six presentations each. A review of AAM programs had similar results. Therefore, Ally's assertion that—as a museum educator in a museum that does not have visitors under 12 or school programs—she was not the best audience for these conferences appears amply supported by the analysis of the conference's sessions.

Table 4. Conference Presentation Topics by Theme 2003

	NAEA 2003
School Programs	11
Museum as Learning Environments	10
Professional Development	6
Technology	6
Other	4
Specific Museum Programs	3
Adult Learners	1
Art Criticism	1
Research	1

Ally found more meaningful professional development at the Learning in Museums Conference (LIM), which is sponsored by AAM. Ally explained:

The last professional development opportunity that really impressed me was the Learning in Museums conference. It was my first LIM and it was by far the smartest and most useful thing I have ever attended. It was on a small scale, with a focused topic, but it is not for the entry-level educator. It is for the person who has some experience and is consciously looking to evolve. It's an AAM-sponsored event. They are just little weekends that are offered once or twice per year. AAM has come to have more meaning for me. I used to not be a huge fan. As my responsibilities and involvement change and as I am able to be more philosophical about what I do, it is coming to have more meaning for me. Anyway, as I was explaining, LIM was on a small scale, and it was focused on the way adults learn in museums, which is not something you see on too many conference itineraries. There I see all the information focused on technology and children. So, the topic was unique and the topic was much needed information for this institution in particular. It was a small group of people who were all at a common point in their career, so it was an opportunity for advanced bonding. What really made it good was how extraordinarily thoughtful the program developer had been. She really understood her topic. She had searched high and low to bring the presentation together. She had a true command of her

human and other resources and was magically able to bring all of the right people together. She had people who were the top of their field, like a scholar from Harvard, that could come in and talk about brand new research on adult learning and adult learning theory. She didn't just get generalists—she had both generalists and people who had approached the impact of adult learning in informal situations like museums, then she brought in people with model programs that supported the ideas discussed. These speakers were humble enough to say both what was good and bad about their program and how it came about. Another thing that made this meeting engaging was that they made you do an evaluation at the end of the day, and then, damned if those people did not stay up all night in their hotel rooms and completely revamp their presentation for day two to make it be even better for us. They rearranged the format and order of presentations and they got speakers to reconfigure their talks—and as I am sure you know, not every speaker in the world is willing or even has the ability to respond like that. It was just stunning. We have not only used the content of that meeting but also their approach to that meeting, their flexibility, even their responsiveness, as a model for our public programs. I cannot say that we fully realized that here. It has definitely become part of the constellation of ideals for the proper characteristic of a really effective learning opportunity.

While the conference program that Ally described is impressive, it is also exclusive. She pointed out that it is not for the entry-level educator but for those with experience. And, later she added, people at the same point in their experience. Both of these seem to suggest that there is some selection process involved. Another factor in this event's exclusivity may be the expense of the opportunity. Ally made a point of mentioning the caliber of speakers, after all. This issue of exclusivity arises in Terri's discussion of professional development as well. Terri, who viewed AAM as a source for job seeking only, also felt that NAEA was ineffective as a source for continuing education. Her answer also touched on the curatorial-education rivalry. Terri described NAEA saying:

Yes, I went once in New Orleans and I mostly attended the museum pre-conference. My first response then, when I was at the conference was, "God, this is boring as hell." But now, upon further reflection, it is a little more meaningful. There was a workshop on writing labels. They used *National Geographic* as the example for succinctly explaining what is going on in a work of art. To this day I cannot look at *National Geographic* without thinking about that seminar and how wonderful it was. It gave me a chance to concentrate on what I was working on. In a museum the opportunity to sit and contemplate was not an option. To focus on something long enough to have a complete thought about it was something that did not often happen. However, other than that one workshop, I don't think I got much out of it. I guess my expectation of what it was going to be like was

that it would be a little more like AAM, where there was a broader selection of topics based on museums. At NAEA the museum division was one small part so you attended the one museum session offered in each time slot. In that sense there was no variety. The pre-conference was for museums only, but in reality I thought they should have incorporated it into the main conference because we all did everything together all the time anyway. Something different should happen if we are going to make a distinction between a conference and a pre-conference, so I was disappointed about that. I also felt like an outsider—both with art teachers and to some extent in the museum division, with all of it. I think it was because I was still so new to the field and I did not know what to expect. I got the feeling that most of the people in the museum division were from different backgrounds. It was not that it was cliquish, but most of these people already had established relationships and I did not feel like I was in on that. There were other things about it, too. People were sharing their museum programs that had no applicability to our audience. The only one session I clearly remember was the label writing one, and as much as I liked it, I never got to write labels in my job, the curators did that. I sort of remember the essence of not getting anywhere. Looking back on it, I remember it as a gripe and moan session, “We don’t get along with the curatorial department, we hate each other,

we don't get along." That I remember vividly, and thinking, "Geez, I didn't come here for this!"

Tea, who served on the advisory board for NAEA's museum division, was reluctant to agree when I prefaced a question about NAEA by stating that she was active in the organization. Although she attended regularly, even presenting, she seemed to view her participation in the museum education division as more of an obligation than something she herself benefited from. She explained:

When I signed up to be on the panel for *Balancing Act: Being an Artist and a Museum Educator*, I thought it would be for other people who were grappling with reigning in their artistic side and tackling administrative stuff, which I enjoy less. I don't really think of myself as one or the other. Both elements merge and cross over into each other's area a little more freely in my mind. Since I co-presented with other people it was not just about me. You know the thing about these conferences, many times people, including myself, are working in relative isolation. We wonder is there somebody else out there who has my problem, who is in my boat? In order to find that out, people go to these conferences and they start describing their boat to everybody else. Everybody else goes, "Ah, I don't want to hear about your boat, it just sounds like my boat." Those sessions get dominated by people and their boats. I like to ask questions and listen to people when I am there. I do not really describe my boat. I absorb more than to

spew. In my art teaching, I was more involved with NAEA and with the state art conferences, but that is what all of those things—the magazines and conferences—are supposed to be geared for: the classroom teacher. There were many more hands-on things, experiential things back then. I guess I am an experimental learner. Not that I do not ever read. You know, I think that computers have really changed that. You know me, I love my computer and technology. I would say that these days I get a lot of that kind of interaction from the Internet. I recently did a presentation for the docents based solely on something I saw on the Internet, and it worked great.

In another interview, over lunch at an NAEA convention, Teá shared her belief that she became involved in NAEA as a museum educator too late in her career to make a name for herself in the organization. She advised me, “These things take time to cultivate; I waited too late to be involved.” In a subsequent interview Teá, a frequent contributor to several art education magazines, who by 2005 had been contracted to write a bi-monthly article for *Arts and Activities Magazine* for more than four years, commented on NAEA’s publications, *Art Education* and *Studies in Art Education*. She said:

As for the magazine, well, I hate to say this but the NAEA magazine we have now is one of the most boring, dry, and horrible things I have ever seen in my whole life. It is so pedantic. It is scholars writing for scholars and that is all. *Studies*, is even worse; I don’t look at that either. Every once in a while I find

something that is interesting that someone has written in plain English, but mostly it is academics needing to get published. It really is bad. I learn a lot more from seeing and doing than from that kind of stuff. That magazine, as I understand it, is supposed to be for teachers. I will bet you any day of the week that less than 5% of the teacher readership actually reads that magazine. They may look at it for pictures. I would be really interested in seeing a survey of who actually reads that thing.

Internships. From formal education, described by the educators and expressed by the position announcements, and informal preparation, discussed in terms of conferences, I turn now to museum internships and the apprenticeship model of museum education. Internships were an important component of all of the educators' museum education experience. All but Teá had served as interns at one or more museums before taking their first museum job. From as early as 1990, Teá had worked to fund interns to help broaden the education department's staff. Prior to that, there had been volunteer interns. Nearly half of the educators—Ally, Kimberly, Melinda, Ruth, and Stephanie—had been interns at The Museum before taking more permanent jobs.

From the educators' comments, the internship surfaces as a fundamental source for job training, both at The Museum and in the profession as a whole. Yet, with little

published or presented on museum internships and no guidelines or recommendations established by any professional organization on what a museum internships should include, the title “intern” is largely unstandardized and can stand for many things. As a result, the museum educators’ experiences as interns varied widely. Consider the difference in Susannah and Melinda’s intern experiences.

Susannah described her internship with the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, explaining:

I was in Texas for less than a year. It was a paid internship program, and it was as much about me and my experience as it was for what I did for the museum. It was a total dream job. They took us to lunch and to conferences. It was ridiculous how much they did for us. I did not get a real sense of all the intricacies of how that museum works. It is a huge museum. The curatorial offices were not even in the same building as the education offices. Beth was my mentor. She’s a firecracker and with her in charge, you just know that they were not going to have the interns do just any old thing. I know the educators sat down with the curators and talked about layout of the intern program. I did not work directly with Beth Snyder, but we did a lot of education stuff because of the nature of the internship, and I became very close with her. She was the curator of education, so officially she was over all interns, but interns were divided up into all the departments. So I was not an Education Department intern. The way

the program worked, every Friday she would gather all the interns and give a presentation on something about the field. It was very career oriented. There was a whole day on how to apply for jobs in the arts, for example. She was really sort of our mom. She and I are still very close. She was a great mentor to have. She is well known, and she is an amazing educator.

Melinda's experience was considerably less structured, and although The Museum was small, she did not form the strong mentoring bond Susannah managed at the large museum. Melinda described her internship saying:

Well, actually I did the internship at (The Museum) between undergraduate and graduate school. I was not sure what I wanted to do career-wise and it was my mother's idea for me to call the local museum and volunteer to get an idea if that would be a good career. It was not for credit. I just came up there and I think my mother, or her friends who were involved with The Museum's board, had arranged something ahead of time. I was an intern for the children's wing. I remember that I did do one small research project for the AP class or docents, I do not remember which, but other than that I really did not work with adult programs all that much. I did not have anything to do with Teá, the curator of education. It was summer and she was traveling or was away for most of the time. I really worked only with Terri, the assistant for youth programs, and we did not form a particularly close bond. I got the general impression that she did

not have much pull around the museum. At the time I had no idea that I would end up back at The Museum later as an employee. My recollection is just that it seemed like a lot of fun. So the second year of grad school I called the head curator at the Birmingham Museum and told him I had previous internship experience, I was interested in the museum world, and wanted to see how other institutions and departments worked.

Melinda's experience was less formal. She approached The Museum at a time when she was unsure of her career path, looking only for a glimpse at what museum careers entailed. She clearly saw enough to warrant further study and investigation in the form of a degree and a more formal internship. Reilly, on the other hand, had interviewed for the more formal paid internship with The Museum. She, too, reported having only a limited exposure to the scope of museum education activities, thus limiting her opportunity to learn from the experience. For Reilly, the experience was decidedly negative and when compared with other internships she had, Reilly viewed the problem as an imbalance of needs. In her view, The Museum was more interested in the work it got out of interns, despite assurances to the contrary in the interview. Reilly categorized her experience saying:

This was not my first museum internship, or my first experience as a museum educator. As I look back on it now, I see that my reaction—the severity of it—had more to do with the fact that I had tied my artistic work to this project. It

was, after all, based on my comic designs, my characters. In hindsight, I see that when given a choice between a big-time donor and some intern, The Museum had to go with the donor. But, I also see that The Museum really did not have a vision or a direction for its educational technologies. At first, I thought that it was me. I came into this interview for an internship where you got to invent your own special project. Or at least that is how it was described to me. I remembered it as me getting carried away in a conversation with Teá and this idea for the website coming out of that. In fact, the interview which had a panel of people in it, spilled into just me and Teá having lunch together. After it all went south I saw the “Fellowship” announcement again and realized I remembered it wrong. The announcement talked about the website specifically. This whole business about designing your own special project was just a way to avoid having to decide how to get into education technology. In terms of the internship itself, I truly believed The Museum never had any interest in my professional development. Again, the design-your-own-project was a ruse to prevent them from having to give you other opportunities. That job was completely one-sided.

The fellowship announcement Reilly spoke of is included in Appendix B, under the heading April 1998.

Other essential pre-service components. A final aspect with regard to training comes from the educators' response to the interview question, "In your preparation for this career, what influenced you most?" Those with art history degrees overwhelmingly responded without hesitation with two words—art history. However, when asked for elaboration on how it influenced them, the resolve faded somewhat. In my discussion with Ruth, she began with art history and later shifted, even making an intriguing and bold claim. "I learned more about being a museum educator from being a live-in nanny than from any classroom." I pressed her to explain what it was she learned and what she thought museum educators needed to know. Ruth said:

Art history. I know it seems off point given my assertions about kids but I think my art history training taught me many fundamental skills. Not so much the content, but how to go about content, how to learn it, and how to write. You can train on an exhibition, even if it is not a subject you have experienced before, but you need to practice this kind of research. I also think that you should have some studio background. This I feel is my area of weakness. It's not that you have to be an artist, but the ability to pitch in when one of your artists does not show up for a program, or to trouble-shoot a kid's activity for an event. The studio background really helps with that. As to the education classes, I think you should have at least one survey-like course on the history of education and the philosophies of art education in particular. If it were just one course, the

emphasis might make more of an impression. Finally and perhaps most importantly, I think that the practical or project-centered experience, like those I got from the museum studies class and the internship—is the most essential component. When I was at the Minneapolis Institute of Art I served on a number of search committees. It was great because you got to see all the different routes people take to this profession. It was also disheartening because for every job there were 50 to 100 qualified applicants. More often it was the 100 applicants. In a stack of 100, you could dismiss maybe half, not because they were not qualified but because their experience was not tailored to the job—say, they had tons of adult program expertise, but the job was to work with youth. Anyway, even after you trimmed away half there were still 50 or so who looked like they would fit. So many people competing for the same job.

Stephanie similarly defended art history as the essential component, offering a similar explanation to that given by Ruth. Stephanie said:

This field is an incredible grab bag of stuff. I think you have to have the art history background because that is your content. You need to know what you are looking at. Okay, so my content in school was American art and I went on to interpret an exhibit of Haitian flags, which I had no frame of reference for. But I think that I approached those Haitian flags a lot better because of an art historical background. You know what I mean? Having prior experience looking at art

made looking at that those things easier. Art history teaches you a methodology for looking at all art, whether it is Western art or non-western art. I think it is that level of studying it, of looking at it. When I was taking my art history classes the kids in my class were like, “Oh my gosh, all these Madonnas look the same.” I was not, they are not similar—you really have to look at them to see the difference. I think that is what museums do, they teach you how to look carefully. If you study art history you are not only memorizing names and dates and all that stuff, but you are learning how to look. I think that some art historians teach that better than others. They could teach the way museums do, try to get people more interested, more engaged in that way. Sometimes the emphasis on memorization of names and dates gets in the way of looking or learning to look. Art history is important, and it should be a big chunk. To that I would add education, mostly theory. Not necessarily art-specific stuff, more about how people learn. Multiple intelligences, learning styles, those kinds of things. I don’t consider the art teacher alone to be my audience. I need to be able to reach other teachers, too. There is this whole other piece of it also. The part that deals with having any kind of job—managing people, public speaking, institutional politics, all of that kind of stuff.

Technology as the Exception

In addition to the recurrent example of art history as something that “influenced you most,” one discrepant element warrants further consideration. Many of the educators mentioned the use and application of technology in their description of successful programs. Teá cited her love of technology when she spoke of filling the void in her continuing education not satisfied by NAEA and AAM. Teá even reported recent success with a docent program she developed from online sources. In discussing what conferences typically offer a museum educator, Ally likewise described technology and school programs as the major content. Reilly, the intern hired expressly to develop museum education technology, an effort that later proved to be an abysmal failure according to her, similarly discussed the importance and role of technology in art museum education.

Yet, despite the ubiquity of technology discussion, whether as a successful or failed effort, none of the educators included technology training as a component of the ideal pre-service program. When questioned on the matter, they offered elaboration on the theme of technology in museum education.

Ally responded to my questioning on the issue, saying she did not think technology training was a necessity. Specifically, she said:

IT (instructional technology) is a bit of an un-figured-out thing in museum education. We recently hired our first IT director. He is in his first year of any career with us. He is responsible for the infrastructure and the public face of the

museum. That is a bit much for one human when you are dealing with an institution of 100 plus employees. That is not an industry standard proportion, one IT per 100 employees, plus all the website and PR—that is a bit of a stretch. The education department has a strategic plan for technology. It has fallen a bit to the wayside lately. We are a landlocked institution because we are in a residential area and are only allowed to have 250 visitors per day. We have always seen our website as an extension of our service, either through distance learning or virtual exhibitions. We imagine people in Russia who may never have a chance to come here using our website. Either that or doing collaborative things with Russia online that could never happen in real time. I have no background or training in technology or instructional technology. I started working with technology when I came to work here. It is rather unusual to find an educator that is versed in the latest technology, but that was a very big moment in the history of technology. I did not have a PC in college. I remember when I worked at that gallery and we got an Apple II. I typed my very last college paper on that and I thought it was incredible. Then, to go to The Museum and have a brand new Apple desktop plopped down on my desk on day one. To have Teá networking things together and setting up internal e-mail. I remember that she had something called e-mail right before I went to grad school and that she helped me go online to look for an apartment. That was not

work-related, but it was like “Wow.” Now I am sitting here with this \$5,000 laptop on my desk talking to you about distance learning. If I had not had those experiences, I would not have had the faculty to envision a strategic plan that included distance learning. In the art history program, no one was talking technology. What I know of technology and museums I learned from the workplace. I also think that part of it is by virtue of my age. I graduated from college in 1990. That is not true for anyone else here. We have this league of employees in their mid-to-late 20s. I frequently marvel at how extraordinarily different their middle-, high-, and college-level experiences differ from mine. They are tech savvy. I feel like a “Moe.” More and more the position announcements for these jobs include technological know-how. Although tech studies are not part of an art history degree, I know 9-year olds that have a tremendous capacity for these things. These people are not dorks—when I was in college for a math class, I took a class learning how to use Microsoft software from Word to databases, and that was considered a math credit. You are expected to have mastered that stuff by the time you get to college these days. I am not even sure that it is person-specific anymore—I just think that people her age are that way. I have a person working for me in this department who really is not interested in technology and she is also 25 years old, but I recognize her as an anomaly of her generation. These newer educators know HTML, and they

can design websites and blogs and all kinds of things; they do that for fun. We used to know how to type; they know how to do all this other stuff.

Stephanie, on the other hand, added technology training when specifically asked about it not being included in her original assessment of essential pre-service training. However, as she explained her own experience with technology, her assessment was strikingly similar to that of Ally. By the end of her response she had almost completely negated the need for specific training in instructional technology. Stephanie said:

No, if I were building the perfect program, there would definitely be technology.

The hard thing with technology is that there are so many different ways to use technology in a museum and you cannot be an expert at all of them—not to mention the fact that it is always changing. At this very moment we are in the process of building an interactive website for kids. I don't know anything about the technology used to do that. We have hired people to work with us on that, which is really fun because you get this opportunity to meet and work with new people while learning this new thing. Part of what makes that difficult is that it is hard to conceptualize the program when I don't understand what the potentials are. I guess the best bet for the perfect museum education program is just basic computer skills with an understanding of other technology in order to be receptive to future technology. For me, in my first job interview, technology

was, “Can you change the light bulb in the slide projector?” Those kinds of things are important, but I think you pick them up along the way. As to a technological ability of talent—the technology gene, if you will—there may be something to that. Kids today seem to really get this stuff. As we are sitting there designing this website, I often think as we are designing this, thinking it is going to be so cutting-edge and the kids are going to look at it and think it is totally lame. You can master content and you can master theory, but there is still day-to-day business that you can really only learn by having the job and working with other people; working within the structure of an institution.

Ruth, who also did not include technology in her pre-service training ideal, had a far more pragmatic perspective on the issue of technology and museum education.

Ruth said:

Many people were shocked last year when they toured MIA with the curator of technology as part of the NAEA conference. Shocked that there was a curator of technology, shocked at how many different types of technologies MIA had, and shocked by the \$100,000 price tag on some of the computer-based learning projects. MIA was always very interested in technology; I remember that most about the time when I worked there. They were among the first to establish an independent department for technology development. I am certain that

audience development is at the heart of this movement. If the museum can show that they can reach more people through technology than say through a family day type event, the museum will go for that. The question is, are museum technologies part of its educational mission or a separate entity?

Absent from the educators' views of technology is the awareness that most instructional technology models promote technology integration where educational goals guide the use and development of technology (Gustafson & Branch, 1997). Instead, in the experiences of these educators, technology was something that most often occurred apart or outside of their department and its goals for the museum's educational mission.

Retention of Museum Educators

Moving beyond training, the next category of commonality is employment continuity. Although none of the educators spoke directly to the issue of employee retention in museum education, several recurring themes in their life history narratives and biographical reflection interviews speak to the issue of museum educator retention. Specifically these themes were: high levels of job stress, breaks in employment, an awareness of educator supply and demand, opportunities for career change, and negative experiences.

Job stress. All 11 educators made reference to the stress of the job or discussed the hectic nature of museum education work. Though the examples of this varied

widely, all the educators' comments could be classified in one of two ways. First, museum educators make this work demanding out of a passion for the work and a tireless devotion to creative and new programming ideas. Second, a lack of funds and other resources have fewer educators doing more with less.

Ally's comments on internal motivation and self-sacrifice, for example, are reflective of almost all of the educators who spoke of the frenetic pace of museum education work in highly metaphoric terms—one calling it organ transplant surgery, another likening it to firefighting, and a third describing it as splitting atoms. Although each had valid ideas about why they were so overwhelmingly busy, Ally was the clearer voice, citing both personality and economics. Ally said:

Yes, it was stressful working at (The Museum). It is stressful working here, and at every other museum I have ever worked at. Part of that was the tornado that was Teá. Another big part was the fact that I am a workaholic. I put too much of myself into that job; it was too much the center of my life, and that is something that is Ally-specific. It was also a pretty dynamic situation, that fed me and I fed it. All of my museum jobs have been stressful because consciously or not, I tend to seek that out and then I perpetuate it. In my network of colleagues in museum education, it is clear to see that these are high-stress jobs. It is definitely consistent with the experience most people are having, especially those in non-government institutions. It is true of government institutions like the

Smithsonian, but there it is much more a matter of bureaucracy and the paperwork of bureaucracy. For those of us in medium and small institutions, there is a huge burden placed on us in these jobs. It is the nature of the job; there is always going to be a great deal to do all the time. It is pretty relentless—which is crazy considering that we are not in the business of organ transplants. I do not know why it is so true in our field that we all work ourselves to the bone. It is a funny thing, but I think that it just gets back to our passion and our drive for doing this and that we are motivated by the help we can bring people and not by the size of our paychecks. Beyond that, I think it is that museums are not business savvy. They are not run like well-oiled machines the way for-profits are. Museums suffer from poor management. I was trying to allude to the economic concerns, but I did not really spell it out well. Basically, I think we try to offer the same things all the time despite the fact that we suffer when the economy suffers. I do not mean this in any demeaning way: I have devoted 15 years of my life to this work. If I did not think it was important, I would not be doing it. It is a funny thing; we are a passionate pack of people. I think we are lucky in our profession that there are so many people who have a deep commitment to this work: people see it as a cause even. Not to be overly flip, but it is not like we are doing this for the money. There is a great deal of intrinsic

motivation. We are all deeply motivated to do what we do and it is not for some external reward.

Stephanie also shared the refrain that it is the personality of the art museum educator that leads to the demanding pace of the work. Stephanie said:

Having worked in different sized museums, I think I see the reasons for the amount of job stress more clearly than most. When you are one of two people in a museum and you are responsible for everything, stress is a necessity. Take the Triton for example, not only was I managing this whole program but there was this really bizarre thing where the education department was also in charge of finding their own funding. They had a grant writer for the museum but education somehow had to write our own grants. We were busy in terms of general everyday programs, but we were also busy in terms of big picture thinking. That is often a hard thing to balance. Here I am still busy too, but it is different. We are bigger and we can do more projects. At this very moment, for example, I have two really big, long-term projects going on at the same time and I still have the normal day-to-day things, too. I have more support in terms of – well, I have a grant writer and other resources. I guess what it is, that when you have the opportunity to focus in on just a few things, you can dream big and these big ideas make it very hectic and time consuming. OK, so I cannot help myself. I am part of the problem, but it is not just me. It is my boss, too. She is a

really big thinker and she has really great ideas. This is what I like about my job. We sit down together and we come up with the structure of a project or program. There is back and forth and you have more people, more input, more excitement, more support, and as a result, more ideas.

Terri started with her conclusion that juggling multiple responsibilities was the reason museum educators were overwhelmed. Having changed careers, she stated that “having been gone for a while, I now sees that as the problem.” I pointed out that to me, being gone two months is not “such a long while.” Terri responded:

It feels like a lifetime. The multi layers of my museum job, I think I took on equally. It had multiple layers, multiple responsibilities, and I had the feeling that I had to be a perfectionist at everything. I have been thinking about that lately in terms of thinking about why I left. It was my own personality, at some point I decided to shoot for some unattainable perfection. Everything seemed urgent, everything seemed important, everything seemed to need to be taken care of at that moment. I felt like I was always in crisis management. Putting out fires. Yes, I was putting on my hat and pulling out my little hose. I think I wanted to do it well, but I don’t believe I had the educational resources that some of the other people who worked there did, to do it better and to do it with less stress. I think I lacked the educational background. I think a background in art education would have added to my understanding and my ability to cope.

Some might say that it's my perfectionism that makes me say that—after all I was in that job for eight years—much longer than any of the other assistants. I think over time it was just a routine, in this month this happens, and in this month this happens. It became the situation where I knew what to expect and I knew what needed to be done to accomplish the task. However, I still feel like if I had a greater understanding of education processes and writing lesson plans and that kind of thing, I would not have freaked out so badly every time I had to put together the new tour plan for the third or seventh grade, or something similar. My art history background was perfect, but in terms of implementing that in a meaningful way, I felt like I was lacking. Yes, I was probably better suited for the adult programs position, but if I could have done a little of that with children's programs and given up some of my responsibilities, it would have been a better use of my talents and skills.

Even Kimberly, who left museums to teach art education in the university setting, pointed out her belief that her schedule remains more hectic than that of other faculty members because she approaches her teaching from the mindset of museum education.

Kimberly said:

I just found out about the MAT, and I was actually furious when I first found out. At first the education department came up with this as an alternative route certification, which truly irritates me. I try to tell people that if I have a PhD in

art education, there is obviously enough there as a content area for someone to really study it. So, how can they tell me that they are going to certify people to be art educators and they are never going to take a single art ed course? The alternate route business—they take art classes and a couple of education classes and somehow by osmosis they are going to learn about art education, too. We are working it out now. It is a constant battle since art ed is not an area they are familiar with. Somehow I keep getting myself into these things. I feel like, unlike my other colleagues in art and in the other fine arts education areas [music and theater education], I am still operating in the museum education mindset. I feel so strongly about everything that I cannot just sit by and not get involved. I end up being on every committee working myself to death, just like at the museum.

The department head and 20-year veteran of The Museum, Teá, began by comparing the demands and rewards of teaching art in a classroom verses teaching in a museum, for both herself and her employees. Then, Teá arrived at the issue of personality's role in the busy pace of museum education. Teá said:

Well, the only reason that people would choose to enter a field that required you to move to where the jobs are—that limited your choices in terms of where you were going to live—is because they love this type of work. The positions at this museum (The Museum), the assistant curator positions in particular, are great

stepping stones for new professionals to get another position somewhere else if they are on that ladder, the career ladder. Incidentally, I was never on that ladder. If I could have my choice, I would have the children's education job, but I don't want to give up my administrator salary or my flexible schedule.

Otherwise I would do that in a heartbeat. I make more as the department head because of the seniority. I think I make more than classroom teachers with the same amount of experience and time in, but I am not sure, I never looked it up or anything. The entry-level museum educators certainly make more than I made when I started 18 years ago. Not all of them are certified to teach in the classroom like I was, but again, I have the general impression that their salaries are comparable with what an entry-level classroom teacher's pay, at least in this state. But, museum education has a different kind of scale; it does not advance as quickly. I think teaching is the best racket in the world. I loved teaching because you get long vacations, your day could be shorter, although mine never was. When I first started here it just about killed me. I was ready to leave at 3:30. I was like "yawn, it's time for my nap; I have to stay 'til 5, what is this!" In museum education there is a large volume of work, especially at this museum. There is as much work to do as I could or would choose to do. There is probably more work than I could or would choose to do. But then again I am the kind of person who makes work into more work because one thing leads to another.

This becomes more interesting and becomes part of the next thing, which is even more engaging. I probably learn to edit out many things. My natural curiosity makes me want to go for more rather than less. I am more of a yes person than a no person when it comes to projects. I probably take on more than I need to or should. Then, I also think that because I am able to do so much, people see that and they ask me to do even more. Then, I am called on to do more things because of that.

It is interesting to note that Teá's perceptions of salaries are incorrect. Even in her state, where teacher salaries were among the lowest in the nation in 2007, when she made this statement, entry-level teachers with a master's degree had starting salaries that were 30% higher than the starting salary of an entry-level museum educator who was required to have a master's degree. Among entry-level teachers with a bachelor's degree only, the salaries are still 15% higher than that of museum educators. This percentage of difference held true over time when compared with salary averages in 1999, 1997, and 1990 (Table 5, 167).

Teá's indirect reference to money matters in museum education provides a good transition to the other educators' views on the connection of finance to the frenetic pace of museum education.

**Table 5. Museum Educator and Teacher Salary Comparison,
Select Years 1990-2007**

	2007 - 2008	1999 - 2000	1997 - 1998	1990 - 1991
Museum Educator <3 years experience M.A. or equivalent ¹	\$30,000	\$28,000	\$22,000	\$15,000
Teacher (in the community) <3 years experience M.A. or equivalent ²	\$39,000	\$36,930	n/a	n/a
Teacher (in the community) <3 years experience B.A. or equivalent ³	\$36,000	\$31,300	n/a	n/a
National Average for all US Teachers <3 years experience M.A. or equivalent	\$50,758 ⁴	\$44,700 ⁵	\$34,346 ⁶	\$21,740 ⁷
National Average for all US Teachers <3 years experience B.A. or equivalent	\$46,733 ⁸	\$35,310 ⁹	\$25,735 ¹⁰	\$19,860 ¹¹

¹ Source [this row]: Published salaries and salary ranges in *Aviso* position announcements and the museum educators reports of actual salaries.

² [this row] Includes state mandated base salary for teachers with masters level education or equivalent plus local school system supplement. Source: Published state and system salary scales.

³ [this row] Includes state mandated base salary for teachers with masters level education or equivalent plus local school system supplement. Source: Published state and system salary scales.

⁴ Source National Center for educational statistics report "Projections on educational statistics to 2015."

⁵ Source: National Center for educational statistics Education digest 2007. Table 74. "Average base salary for full-time public elementary and secondary school teachers with a master's degree as their highest degree, by years of full-time teaching experience and state: 1993-94, 1999-2000, and 2003-04."

⁶ Source: National Center for educational statistics Education digest 2007. Table 75. "Estimated average annual salary of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools."

⁷ Source: National Center for educational statistics Education digest 1999. Table 80. "Average base salary for full-time public elementary and secondary school teachers with a master's degree as their highest degree, by years of full-time teaching experience and state: 1990-91, 1996-97, and 1997-98."

⁸ Source National Center for educational statistics report "Projections on educational statistics to 2015."

⁹ Source: National Center for educational statistics Education digest 2007. Table 73. "Average base salary for full-time public elementary and secondary school teachers with a bachelor's degree as their highest degree, by years of full-time teaching experience and state: 1993-94, 1999-2000, and 2003-04."

¹⁰ Source: American Federation of Teachers "Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends, 1998"

¹¹ Source: National Center for educational statistics Education digest 1999. Table 80. "Average base salary for full-time public elementary and secondary school teachers with a bachelor's degree as their highest degree, by years of full-time teaching experience and state: 1990-91, 1996-97, and 1997-98."

Melinda, like Ally, spoke of funding as the reason for the demanding pace. In response to the question, “Why was your job hectic?” Melinda replied:

Money. You try to get educated people to come to a museum. I get paid less here as the head curator of education than I did there as an assistant. It is hectic because I need two assistant curators. My teachers I mentioned are part-time people for a specific purpose. I have a 95,000 square foot building and I am trying to do programming, classes, trips, tours. I am trying to do the whole gamut; that is what I believe is arts education. I cannot just do a little. In (The Museum) what they were doing was not arts education. I am still very unclear on what their goal was. My goal here is to be that hand in the schools and in the colleges to work in art education where there is none. My goal is also to do meaningful programming, things that people come to. It is also to build an audience of future art appreciators. When I got here a little more than a year ago, I hit the ground running. I had to completely revamp the summer art camp, come up with the classes, and find the teachers. In a few weeks I had organized 36 art classes as part of the camp and had touched 580 kids. That was much more meaningful than my first few weeks in that other job. It was hectic because I don't have enough hours of the day. I have two retired teachers who do not want to work full time—as I told you—and a volunteer coordinator who is a lovely and talented person, but she is a clerk who has never gone to college.

I also have a part-time helper, more for activities, who comes in for special events and classes. For docent training, I have a professor from the local university who does 13 hours of lecture for each of the training sessions in exchange for a small honorarium. When we did an armor exhibition, I had an armor expert come in and talk. So, there is so much to do, no one person can do it or come up with the right people and the right time for all the things you need. It is the definition of demanding.

Ruth gave almost the same response as to why museum education is demanding with slightly different supporting details. Ruth said:

Money. These organizations are all non-profits. In addition to doing all the heady planning and creative program design, my day was bogged down with mundane administrative tasks, really stupid things like hand sticking 300 labels on a flyer for the family day event every month. We did this obsessively to save money. Targeting 300 known participants of family events and key members of the press was better and cheaper than a mass mailing to the entire membership, who would get the information in the calendar anyway. There was also so much of this little non-educational stuff, making nametags, maintaining computer databases, that kind of stuff. I know the jobs I mentioned doing when I considered leaving museum education are all with educational non-profits, but somehow museums are different. I guess you cannot get away from your

passion. I am sure I would have to stick labels there too, but there are other things about the museum that made it hectic. One thing that I particularly detested was the — what shall I call it? — well, the kind of education verses the curator thing. I didn't experience it so much at The Museum, maybe because it was a small place, or maybe just because of the people there. But at other places it seemed that the different components of the museum were on different teams, and that contributes to this hecticness issue. My first real experience with this was with the Family Center. On one of the three-year installations, the curators acted as if the project were distracting them from their "real" work. I would say that it's office politics, something I don't like and am not good at, and that made the work more stressful. Recently, I went back to the Family Center for a visit. It has been, what, five years since I was there. It was disheartening to see how scaled back the center's efforts were. The team meets once a month now rather than weekly. I am not sure if the pendulum has swung back and education is less a priority or what. I would like to think the kind of old-school view of museum education, the one where curators believe they are educating simply by sticking the stuff out there with nothing more than the title and date on a little card, is not coming back. I know a lot of museums are feeling the economic crunch. Public funding is not what it used to be. Maybe they are not changing philosophies, just cutting back on everything across the board.

Breaks in employment and self-sacrifice. It was enlightening to hear educators describe how universally demanding all of their museum jobs were, whether at The Museum or at other museums. The educators were keenly aware that the frenetic pace was an industry standard. Yet, what was more striking, in terms of their dedication to the profession, was the personal sacrifices they endured to remain in museum education. A great many of the educators spoke of long breaks between museum jobs, of taking pay cuts or demotions, of spouses leaving higher paying jobs so the museum educator could pursue the ladder of advancement, or of putting off marriage and family in order to maintain flexibility to move to new places for advancement opportunities. To me, these personal sacrifices spoke even more about the demands of this work than the frenetic pace. Yet, to the educators, these were isolated incidents specific to them. The educators seemed to view these as “their bad luck” or “bad timing” and were painfully unaware that others— almost all of the other educators— shared similar experiences of self-sacrifice.

In our discussion of demands of the job, Ally shared her mother’s disappointment over the fact that she had entered her forties and had remained single. Ally said:

No, I think I am the reason I am not married. I think I would do this no matter what my job was. I would let it monopolize my life. I do not do as much now as I used to at (The Museum). It was my life then. Here I have a much bigger

life. I will tell you, I probably have been able to accomplish all that I have because I have all the liberties of a single person. I would give it all back if I could find that person I wanted to be with, and I really do believe that that is more important than any of this so called organ transplant work we are doing here in museum education. So many of my girlfriends who have had babies in the last five years, especially as their children have gotten older, have had to ditch their museum careers. We work non-traditional hours and that just does not work with having a family. They have tried a dozen ways around the moon to make it work, and they cannot make it work. The other side of that equation is that I work in a consultant-rich atmosphere. Many of these women are able to re-invent themselves as contractors and take on projects that they can feel good about and also feel good about the time they are able to put into their families. Of course, we are dealing with all female educators, and consultants do not make much money, have benefits, or job security.

Ruth talked about why she left museum education for four years:

At (The Museum) the job was my whole life. Nights, weekends, you name it. As I said, at MIA I had taken my friend's job. She left because it was impossible to juggle the job and her family. I was single then, too, so I worked as much as I had at (The Museum): many long hours. The Art Team was on Thursday nights, docents on Mondays and Wednesdays, and the family days were on Saturdays—

and that was on top of a regular 40-hour workweek. When I left MIA, I had just gotten married and I was moving out to California so my husband could go to grad school. I was pretty disillusioned. I considered leaving the museum field entirely. I decided to put myself in the hands of fate. I was either going to teach in the public schools, or I was going to work in a museum, whichever happened first. I took the California basic education license test and passed it. I also interviewed for what few museum jobs were open. The museum people either said I was over-qualified or under-qualified, and no teaching job ever came through. I began to panic because we had given up two full-time jobs in Minneapolis and now my husband was in school and I was unemployed. Money was very tight. Anyway, a friend told me that I could make a lot of money as a nanny in LA. So I went on a few interviews and she was right. It sounds funny, but working as a nanny I made more than double what I made at the museum. People back home did not get it, and I must say that it did hurt my pride a little to say I was a nanny with a master's degree and all this museum experience. But, I really enjoyed the job. It was less of the constant stress I was under at the museum, and in terms of my own development, I learned more about childhood development from the two kids than in any of my museum jobs or in my education classes.

Matt's response had similar qualities but from the perspective of one who left museum education for these reasons. Matt said:

It is a very narrow focus and there are only so many museums and only so many jobs, and people get into these jobs and they stay there for a very long time.

Take Teá, she is still there, right. There you go, she has been there for a billion years. There was no way to move up at The Museum. That was the job. You did the job. To move up you had to move to another museum if you had the opportunity. I did not get paid very much, but I don't think it's really about the pay exactly. I did not have a family then. I didn't have wife to support or children to support. I did not even have a dog back then. Now I have all those things. Where I was in my life, the money was not really that big of a deal. I think if I was 40 and still trying to do that job, it would not be happening; the financial burdens of being 40 just would not make being a museum educator possible for me.

Stephanie, who is in her early 40s, is continuing with museum education despite struggles and almost answered Matt's observations directly. She and her husband always said they wanted a family but put it off until they were more established. They now say they may adopt children at some point in the future. Stephanie's accounts of

an unwelcome three-year break in her museum career seemed to speak directly to Matt's observations. Stephanie explained:

Yes. It was part-time. For six months I was part-time. I left Redevelopment and went six months, no benefits. Then after six months, it became a full-time education curator position, Assistant Curator. A year after that the Director of Education left because she was having a baby, and I became Director of Education. It all happened pretty quickly once it finally happened. When I started working for the Redevelopment Agency—I left the museum gift shop job, the only museum job I could find after almost a year's searching—I felt like I was making a million dollars a year at Redevelopment. I was sad to completely leave art and museums behind, but it was comforting to know that I was going to another nonprofit. I was redeveloping the downtown area. Having a salary and having benefits helped soften the blow. This was, after all, my first "real" job since (The Museum). When I left redevelopment to go part-time at the Triton Museum, the salary was really, really low. It was not really a salary. It was an hourly wage. I figured I had to pay my dues to get back into the museum world, so I did it. My husband was a high school science teacher. Certainly, being with someone and living in a situation where I had some personal support made it easier. I did not have health insurance through my husband's work since it was a private school, but living with someone and

sharing expenses made it possible for me to go part-time. These are the kinds of jobs where you move to the place where the job is. Take my situation with the job I have now, here in Maine. My husband had to quit his job to come here with me. Since he is a science teacher, and teachers, particularly science teachers, are in demand everywhere, we were not too worried about him finding a job. I have been here almost four years and we are happy with our choice. But it is a gamble, you never know how it is going to turn out.

Supply and demand. In addition to their comments on periods of unemployment and underemployment in their career path as museum educators, many of the educators made reference to times when they witnessed museums struggle in a cycle of surpluses and shortages to find qualified museum educators. Stephanie spoke about the huge number of qualified applicants she competed against to get her current position as well as her sense of job security and a general lack of mobility once a museum educator gets past the first two or three entry-level experiences. Stephanie explained:

I know the competition was steep because my boss waved it at me one day—the big stack of resumes. I do not know exactly how many, but she came in one day after I had been here about a month or so and said, “Okay, I am going to get rid of these now, you seem to be working out.” I really do not know and I did not see any of them because that would be unprofessional. It was just a little joke, to

let me know things were working out. Looking back now, I feel like working my way up the career ladder was great. I had the opportunity to travel around the country and do all kinds of interesting things while meeting many engaging people. You can do that when you're in your twenties. Now, that I am getting older and I am in a museum that I love, in a city that I love and I have friends and family nearby—I have all these positive benefits—it is only now that I start to consider these things. I also think about the fact that things could change here at the museum and it could suddenly not be my dream job anymore. If one person leaves for instance and a new person comes in and they are horrible. So much of this work is about personality. To a certain degree, however, I have never felt like my job was threatened. We had some downsizing at the museum a couple of years ago, and that was a time of anxiety for everyone, not just education. But even in the worst of times no educators were let go. Instead they found ways to handle it, early retirements and such. I have never been in a situation where I felt my job was threatened because of who I was or something I did. In general I always felt that there was a lot of job security out there in the museum education world. I have heard tons of stories about how people stay in a job for life. I have never heard of someone being fired other than for economic reasons, and even then that is rare. I have even seen some pretty incompetent people in positions where they seemed in no danger of being ousted despite their

foibles. Part of that, I think, and it is the same situation here, most of the management has been here for 10 years or more. So there is that continuity, a core of people who have been together for a really long time and they know how to work together very well. Sometimes that backfires because it allows dysfunction to fester. That's one reason why this is my dream job, because the staff here gets along really well.

Teá spoke of several instances when no qualified applicants could be found. Specifically, Teá spoke of shortages in filling vacant positions in 1993 and 2000, and surpluses of qualified applicants for vacancies in 1995–96 and in 2002. These comments prompted me to review overall demand for art museum educators in these periods, as demonstrated by employment ads placed in *Aviso*, for comparative purposes. This review corroborated Teá's account—specifically, in 1995 when the total number of art museum education positions was up considerably from just five years earlier. However in 2000, when The Museum was experiencing a dearth of qualified applicants, the number of jobs available was also high. These figures, of course, say nothing of the number of applicants, only of the number of available positions. Yet, the idea of tracing supply and demand through position announcements and applicants seems an interesting concept for future exploration in research on museum education and the history of museum education (Table 6, p. 179).

Table 6. Museum Educator supply and demand as demonstrated by position announcements 1990, 1995, & 2000.

YEAR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Total
1990													
Art Museum Ed.	5	3	8	9	7	5	5	2	8	2	2	2	58
Museum Education Other	3	9	9	6	4	3	4	2	4	2	2	5	
1995													
Art Museum Ed.	6	4	4	2	5	6	5	6	2	5	2	4	51
Museum Education Other	6	9	4	5	9	7	8	7	6	3	7	8	
2000													
Art Museum Ed.	6	8	4	-	-	11	19	18	12	10	12	10	110
Museum Education Other	13	13	10	-	-	14	15	13	15	14	12	14	

Negative experiences. Also of interest was the number of educators at The Museum who had problematic employment experiences. Matt, Reilly, Megan, and Melinda experienced what I have decided to call “short-term negative experiences.” All four left The Museum after a brief trial period and reported their overall experience as negative. In a pool of only 12, these short-term negative experiences represents one-third of the educators. And in this group, only Reilly and Melinda continued their art museum education careers following the short-term negative experience.

However, the topic of negative employment experience naturally leads to issues beyond the scope of this dissertation’s exploration of museum educator work identities. In doing so, this topic brings to light one of the more challenging aspects of the research study’s design: namely that this is not a study of 11 independent museum educators. It is a study of 10 museum educators who worked for the same supervisor, Teá, the head curator of education for more than 20 years. This realization raises the idea that this version of museum education is skewed to the vision of museum education set forth by this key informant and carried out by those she supervised. One possible flaw in the research design might be its inability to capture Teá’s impact on negative experiences. However, using Riessman (1993) and Labov’s (1982) narrative analysis model helps to mediate this issue by deconstructing the educators’ own words to demonstrate that when placing meaning on these events, the educators’ comments had little to do with Teá. I argue, through direct narrative analysis, that the things the educators designated

as the resolution or the problem had more to do with the larger issues of museum education than with individual personalities. Therefore, I conclude that Teá, as the educators' immediate supervisor, quite naturally became the face of the museum and possibly of the negative experience.

Consider the implications of the narrative analysis model—abstract, complicating action, resolution, and coda—on Matt's account of his decision to leave museum work for business technology. Remembering that: the abstract is a summary or orientation of the account; the complicating action provides the sequence of events; the resolution reveals the point at which meaning is placed on the action and the narrator's attitude is revealed; and the Coda relates and returns the meaning to the present, we find that my question concerning Matt's new job provided the Abstract.

I asked, "So you're saying that after leaving The Museum you went to work for another arts organization in Greensboro. Was this job why you decided to leave?"

Matt replied with the Complicating Action:

No, I just resigned. I sent an e-mail to the director. No, actually I had a sit down with Teá first, over lunch. I love Teá as a person. She is incredibly engaging, intelligent, articulate, passionate, and committed to what she does; but we just did not get along well. We went to lunch one day and she said, you are unmanageable. And I said, well, you are a pain in the ass. And that was that. I

don't think she wanted to fire me. I never asked her about it—but I just did not give her the opportunity. She had no grounds to fire me. I was successful.

The Resolution, or the point at which Matt placed his own meaning on what went wrong, began when Matt said, “I just think that she wanted an automaton—someone she could say do this and that and they would do it. I came back all the time with, ‘What if we did it this way?’” The Coda is found as Matt ended the story and returned to the present to say from the perspective of the future that, “I think I could have stayed and we could have worked through it. But I just thought, I am not happy here, she is not happy. I am going to move on. So I just e-mailed my resignation to the director and left.”

Melinda, likewise, spoke of her negative experience and her choice to leave her position, but in a manner that lends itself well to the narrative analysis model. In Melinda's case, the Abstract was again my question, but this time it was put more directly. I asked, “Why did you decide to leave the museum?” Melinda supplied the Complicating Action by describing the working environment. She said:

To be honest with you, my stint at (The Museum) was short and difficult. I do not know what happened. It was the most unpleasant experience of my life. That being said, it opened my eyes to see many things in the museum field that I needed to improve on or that I needed to approach differently. It was a horrible work environment because you had three or four people put in one room, having to listen to everything you do.

Her efforts to express the larger meaning and implications of the environment are found in the Resolution, which in this case is an abstract concept. She said, “You had no privacy, no sense of thought.” She then returned to the Complicating Action, giving specific examples:

You had the fear of the director walking in and yelling at you for no apparent reason at any time. The lack of communication was horrible. I think it was just a personality issue. My personality did not mesh with Teá’s. It did not mesh with the director’s either. I was only in there for six months.

The Coda came when Melinda brought the narrative back to the present by characterizing her decision to leave as something she thinks of now, in the present, as a vivid moment.

She said:

I can remember the moment I decided to leave: it was at about the four-month mark. The director was yelling at Terri. I really respected Terri; she had been my advisor when I interned at The Museum before I went to graduate school. She had been there a really long time, and in my opinion she was great at her job. If they would treat her with so little respect, I had no chance as a new employee just starting out. It was at that moment that I knew for sure this job was not going to work out.

The second category of negative experience, what I classify as the “burn-out negative experience,” touched even more of the educators. The burn-out experience is a negative experience that prompts the educator to leave their position and to abandon, whether temporarily or permanently, their museum education career. Of the pool of 12, five of the educators experienced this type of negative experience: Teá, Stephanie, Ruth, Terri, and me.

Among these, Teá’s burn-out experience is representative of those who leave temporarily. Teá surprised everyone when she decided to retire early (on her first day of eligibility) and with very little notice. Over dinner with a half-dozen close friends following her retirement party, Teá explained that her decision was prompted by her family. Both of her middle-school-aged daughters were struggling academically and interpersonally. Teá felt that her long hours at work and limited time at home were largely to blame for her kids’ problems. She had tried to use her flex time to temporarily limit her work hours, but this quickly devolved into a series of heated negotiations with The Museum’s director about her hours and project responsibilities. She became disillusioned. She was disappointed, particularly given the fact that throughout her tenure as curator of education she had taken so few personal and sick days that each year in December she would lose days of earned-leave because she had no time to use them. She decided that the constant negotiation was more than she was willing to do. She retired at just 20 years, despite a substantial loss of potential

retirement benefits if she had been able to stay longer. She wanted to make up for lost time with her kids before they left for college. She said flippantly, “If I don’t do this now my girls may not make it to college.” Yet, within a year Teá was back at The Museum as a part-time curator of technology.

Terri, on the other hand, was among those who left the profession and the art world permanently. She spoke at length about her decision to leave museum education after eight successful years and to, instead, start a completely unrelated career in the health services industry. Again applying the narrative analysis model, we begin to see how Terri characterized her choice to leave. The Abstract was again supplied by me as the interviewer when I said, “So If I am understanding you correctly, you’re saying you left your job without plans for another job, either in museum education or in another field? What made you do that?” The Complicating Action, or the decision to leave, came when she said:

It was frustrating to me. I wanted to work with children and use my art history, but by the time I finally decided to quit, I had come to the conclusion that I wanted to be a paid docent—that would have been my dream job. I was frustrated that so much of my time was spent writing contract letters and ordering materials and returning unrelated phone calls. I was doing just administrative stuff without getting the opportunity to experience the pay off. I was teaching the docents to teach the kids, and I was instilling in them the

importance of making it their own, not to read from a script. They were, for the most part, getting it, but that happened somewhere else and so I wasn't really a part of it. I was not connected with the kids really. Even when I was planning. Terri expressed a degree of Resolution or a rationale for why she was unhappy when she said:

I was disconnected from the kids because I had to spend so much time focusing on how it would be interpreted by the docents, the parents, how we could get the parents to come with the kids, or how were we going to encourage the kids to come back. There were many times when I was running my own independent museum down at the end of the children's wing. I was the curator, the operations department, even security...oh yeah and the educator—I had a little personality disorder.

The Coda in this case was a hasty conclusion to the discussion, when she said, "So I left" prior to steering the discussion in a new direction.

Terri and the other educators in the group with a negative experience based on burn-out represent 40% of The Museum's educator pool. When both negative experience groups, "short-term" and "burn-out," are combined, we find that the careers of 75% of The Museum's educators—a substantial and significant amount—were influenced by negative experiences. Given this, perhaps negative experiences are the most significant component of The Museum's rate of educator retention.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In concluding this work, I return to the original objectives and research questions. The purpose of this dissertation was to present a history of art museum education focused primarily on its practitioners' experiences and beliefs and not on The Museum as a whole or the resources it produces. In applying the narrative analysis model to the educators' accounts of work experiences both at The Museum and in their subsequent career paths, I have sought to accomplish this goal. I believe by including additional data from position announcements, annual reports, mission statements, and conference proceedings, I have made meaningful connections to the educators' perspectives and the larger context of museum educator work identity. I set out to record a 20-year history of one museum's education department through the chronology of the 11 people who worked there. Inherent to this goal is the reality that no one can truly have direct access to another's experiences. There is choice in what I have noticed and in the way the educators chose to tell their stories. As Riessman (1993) explained, "It is precisely because of these subjectivities—their rootedness in time, place, and personal experience, in their perspective-ridden character—that we value them" (p. 5). This hidden history, one that might otherwise be lost, is an important account of one museum's educational philosophy, or "mission"—a history

from the point of view of the people it studies. I sought to record my experience as a museum educator and, at least in some aspect, the experiences of my colleagues. It seems odd to think that the meaning I have for so long ascribed to these people and their work—people who sat at the same desk, whose handwriting I knew well from tattered files of past programs and still current museum resources—might have gone unrecorded. Inevitable gaps and shifts in meaning inherent to the telling of our story seem a small price when weighed against the prospect of disregarding the authentic realities of art museum education. This study captures a perspective of museum education absent in the “Ourselves” portion of the museum education anthology (Villeneuve, 2007)—namely, first-person accounts of the day-to-day lived reality of this type of work and the implications of these realities on the workers’ careers.

Research Questions

The research questions on work identity help to ground the work. The original research goals were to consider:

1. how art museum educators construct a philosophy of work identity;
2. how evolving trends and shifts in the disciplines of education, art, and museum studies influence work identity;
3. what, if any, similarities or patterns exist in the formation of a work identity when comparing the experiences of participants with shared work histories; and
4. how museum educators express work identity through programs they create.

Question 1: Constructing a Philosophy of Work Identity

Museum educators' work identity formation, or the construction of a philosophy of work identity as it is called in research question 1, is revealed in the educators' efforts to explain themselves and their working environment in socio-economic terms. Their perception of the field as predominately female and the implications of this feminization, their concerns over diverse representation in their projects and in the audiences they served, and their strong collective belief in the importance of early childhood museum experience were three important factors influencing the construction of work identity. However, in answering research question 1, we will focus on implications of this feminization, leaving the issues of diverse representation within museum audiences and the importance of early childhood museum experience for further discussion in answering research questions 2 and 3.

The participants' inferences to issues of gender, ethnicity, and class in relation to their job at The Museum or their career in general were unique considerations. While such issues have been addressed in terms of museum audience and artist representation in museum collections (Patterson, 2004; Said & Suau, 2002; Sandell, 2000), little consideration has been given to the issues of gender, race, and class in relation to educators in the museum.

Eisner and Dobbs (1987) stated that museum education has much to learn from three decades of education scholarship, and they are correct. The subject of art museum

education's relationship to the scholarship of education in general continues to be explored. The topics of concern from mainstream primary, secondary and post-secondary educational research may hold many significant implications for both the educator and student.

Feminization. In *Feminization of Art Museum Education* (2007), for example, Kletchka specifically built a case for exploration of gender equity and its implication for the profession of museum education. In her conclusion, Kletchka stated:

Art Museum educators rarely have time to examine their professional status; however, developing a critical consciousness is an important step in provoking reconsideration of the prospects and possibilities for the profession...Actively engaging in activities that are outside the normal parameters of the profession many challenge prevailing conceptions for the field, reveal new possibilities for the profession, and create additional opportunities for art museum educators including feminist research to further the body of knowledge about the field of art museum education or your institution in particular. (p. 78)

On the matter of gender and museum education, for example, there appears to be a belief that museum education mirrors other educational settings with a substantial majority of female practitioners. In the present study, 10 of the 11 educators are female, and the sole

male educator remained in the position only six months. At present, museum education has no readily available statistics on gender or ethnicity within the profession, much less what Sabbe and Aelterman (2007) have termed “gender dynamics research.” This branch of research could explore the role that gender plays in the choice to become a museum educator. Additionally, it could examine the professional experience and opinions, past and present professional identities, reform efforts, salaries, and perception and the behavior of those involved in museum education, whether it be the educators, the audience, or the administration.

The teaching of young children in traditional educational settings, on the other hand, has copious amounts of scholarship documenting the fact that education has long been dominated by women and the implications of this fact (Benton Decorse & Vogtle 1997; Biklen, 1995; Cammack & Phillips, 2002; Grumet, 1988; Ropers-Huilman, 1997; Sumsion, 1999, 2000; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). From this scholarship, we begin to see that this global phenomenon is firmly rooted in issues relating to economic development, urbanization, the position of women in society, cultural definitions of masculinity, and the value of children and childcare. Questions raised on this issue for the primary and secondary classroom setting include: Does gender or gender identification affect student achievement? Does feminization result in a reduction in the professional status of teaching? These questions may be just as easily brought to the realm of museums and repositioned as: Does gender identification result in a reduction

of museum educator effectiveness? Does feminization result in a reduction in the professional status of museum educators?

Concerns from post-secondary education may also be relevant to museum educators. Research on inequitable salaries, advancement opportunities, and achievement as professionals would be of particular interest. The investigation by Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2008) of the role of feminization among post-secondary academics reported in *The Journal of Higher Education*, for instance, found that women have traditionally fared far worse than men in their professional development. This study reported:

In 2003, women received 47% of PhDs awarded but comprised only 35% of tenured or tenure-track faculty. The gender gap widens incrementally higher up on the academic career ladder: among full-time faculty members, 48% of women are tenured compared to 68% of men. Perhaps more striking, just 26% of full professors are women. In light of these imbalances, concerns regarding Title IX, which prohibits sex-based exclusion from educational programs receiving federal funds, have prompted congressional calls for inquiry. (p. 388)

While post-secondary education has greater gender diversity than is perceived to be the case in museum education, the conclusion that women's work is less valued economically by society may have implications for the current study. The need and benefit of documenting perceived realities in museum education is also made more

apparent. To borrow Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden's (2008) metaphor of employment supply and demand as a pipeline, in this case comprised predominantly of women, there is in the present study a perception among The Museum's educators that there are far more people (women) in the pipe seeking museum education positions than there are available outlets. Therefore, a great many people leak out of the system before ever attaining their first museum job. Fewer still can stay in the museum education pipeline through the early "career ladder" with its pattern of migration. There is also the recurring theme of women exiting the system at far greater rates when they are married or have families. The implications of this view of gender's relationship to supply and demand may have numerous implications on current and future practitioners in this museum and other settings.

Question 2: The Effect of Trends and Shifts on Work Identity

The influence of evolving trends and shifts in the discipline of education, art, and museum studies on art museum educators' work identity, or research question 2, is addressed by the interpretation of the educators' core beliefs and the educators' reporting and valuation of their professional training. Specific implications of this are found in the educators' comments on needed changes in museum educator training and in my concern over evolving instructional technologies and the potential economic impact of such programs on museum education.

Needed changes in museum educator preparation. The issue of museum educator training was among the most fruitful topics discussed by the museum educators. Among these conclusions was the idea that educator training, as represented by position announcements, was not an accurate representation of the field. The position announcements in this study, after all, did not correspond with realities of the job, were not written by the education department, and replicated the announcements of other institutions.

Another implication was found in the investigation of the disproportionate relationship between the high level of required education and prior experience asked of potential museum educators and the relatively low salary offered to art museum educators. This implication was rendered clearer when compared with other art educators of equivalent levels of education and experience. Yet, the museum educators were either completely unaware of this salary discrepancy or had erroneously perceived the realities to be different. They believed museum education to be more prestigious than teaching art in a school and, thus, assumed that their salaries were higher. Although Teá was the only museum educator quoted specifically on the matter of educator salaries, the majority of the educators addressed the matter by subscribing to the widely held societal belief that school teachers are underpaid. While this may or may not be true, the educators apparently had no realization that their own salaries were decidedly below that of school teachers.

The museum educators' acceptance of the central role of art history in museum education training was another interesting conclusion. Along with this idea, it was the view of the museum educators who had been trained as art historians that training in education and art education primarily offered the opportunity to learn how to write lesson plans and form more meaningful connections with classroom teachers.

Another important conclusion with regard to training dealt with professional organizations. A significant observation of Eisner and Dobbs (1987) was that museum education was lacking an appropriate professional outlet, either in the form of a scholarly journal or a professional organization. Comparisons were drawn to the National Art Education Association's journal *Studies in Art Education*, the annual conferences of both NAEA and AAM, and with the publications and conferences of the National Education Association. Central to Eisner and Dobbs concerns was the absence of a single museum-specific venue for critical or reflective practice and documentation of that practice.

Largely, this issue continues to remain unresolved. Although publication venues have improved, I found that the museum educators' perceptions of continuing education offered by AAM and NAEA seemed to correspond with classroom teachers' perceptions and valuation of continuing education on theory verses practice; both appear to prefer practical training.

The final conclusion regarding educator training came from the discussion of internships. On this matter, I again found corroboration in the preface to *From Periphery to Center* (2007) in the observations of Peggy Burchenal of the Gardner Museum. Burchenal said:

Museum education has always prided itself on using an apprenticeship model of learning, which is partly why museum education departments provide so many internships. And while some academics may have thought, “Oh, how old fashioned,” I think learning by doing has a lot of validity. The trick is to leave time for reflection on what has been learned—and that is often hard to do.

Identifying and understanding the theory behind your practice is a key element to growing individually as a professional and collectively as a field. (p. 4)

Clearly, given the experiences of the museum educators interviewed for this study, the comments of Burchenal support my assertion for the need to standardize the museum internship. Doing so will benefit interns and museums by more consistently and efficiently training the next generation of museum educators.

Technology avoidance. The second aspect of research question 2, the effects of evolving trends on work identity, deals with the issue of educational technology. The exploration of conference presentations did prove Ally’s perception correct; technology was among the most prevalent themes addressed by the museum education division of the two main conferences (Table 4, p. 138). Yet, most of the educators had little to no

technology training and reported reliance on outside contractors or young people within their department for their educational technology. Stephanie even described it, saying the interns “just know these things, not from their education, but from their leisure-time pursuits.”

Of concern to me on this issue of technology was the emergence of educational technology in the museum as a separate entity outside of the education department and disconnected from the museum educators. Ruth first raised the issue when she discussed MIA’s curator of technology. A second instance was Teá, who retired from The Museum as curator of education, and then returned as the curator of technology. In her new role, as at MIA, the technology person worked outside and apart from the education department—although in this instance not because of technology. Nevertheless, both technology departments represent entities with big budget projects—in the case of MIA a \$100,000 project. This financial element is at the heart of my concern, given the multiple descriptions of challenging funding for museum education shared by so many of the educators. I fear that if museum educators continue avoiding technology, allowing it to be some other department’s concern—as participants in this study seemed to—they may soon suffer the financial effects of this decision. Ruth rather prophetically said it herself, “...if the museum can reach more people with a website than with a family day event, they will definitely go for that instead.”

Question 3: Patterns Work Identity Formation

Similarities that exist in the formation of work identity when comparing the experiences of participants with shared work histories, research question 3, is attended to in three aspects: academic background, early training, and career path. In this case, academic background refers to the fact that most of the participants were trained as art historians, as well as the implications of that fact. Beyond this similarity, there is the issue of training, particularly the apprenticeship model of learning involving internships and the itinerant early career ladder. As both a result of, and in addition to, academic background and early training—similarities in “career path” are discussed as “issues of retention” and deal directly with employment patterns and their effect on how the educators view themselves and their jobs. The conclusion section ends with possibilities for future research made apparent by the voices of this particular set of educators.

The importance of educator retention. At present, museums have no real sense of how many potential museum educators there are or of how many will be needed. In traditional education, issues of teacher retention, shortages, or surpluses are of great importance. Rinke (2008) explained the ramifications of educator retention by referencing leading scholars on the subject in the problem statement of her most recent research, reported in *Understanding Teachers’ Careers: Linking Professional Life to Professional Path*. Rinke reported:

In the United States, there is a “revolving door” for new teachers, particularly this current generation of teachers who have numerous job opportunities available to them (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Almost 40% of new teachers leave the field within their first five years in the classroom (Ingersoll, 2003), posing a significant burden to schools and students. Teacher turnover brings significant financial costs, up to US\$ 8000 for each teacher who leaves the profession (Ingersoll, 2003) and as much as 329 million to 2.9 billion dollars annually for just one U.S. state (Texas State Board for Educator Certification, 2000). Further, others suggest that teacher turnover impacts the effectiveness of the school overall (Bridge, Cunningham, & Forsbach, 1978), student development and attainment, and the morale of those who stay (Macdonald, 1999). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, teacher effectiveness grows over the first few years of teaching (Ferguson, 1991; Murnane & Phillips, 1981). Thus, teacher turnover that results in an inexperienced teaching force reduces educational quality for students. (p. 2)

Perhaps traditional education’s interest in the matter, due to the higher demand for teachers and higher rate of teacher shortages, does not translate to museum education. Nevertheless, as it appears that museum education is, for the first time, experiencing its own shortage of qualified educators as evidenced by both the reported experiences of educators in this small study, and the analysis of announced museum education

positions over time, the field may be persuaded to investigate educator supply and demand.

Unlike traditional education, however, the shortages of museum educators may not be from a dramatic increase in audience size. Instead, they may be generated by the museums' own practices. The stress of this work, the difficulty of a migratory early career ladder, and the relatively low salaries may be chief among the causes. However, with many museums embracing business models at present, perhaps it will be the economic realities of employee retention that will guide changes in museum education. After all, conventional business wisdom holds that it costs more to train new employees than to retain those who are already trained. In Rinke's (2008) report, these details were given persuasive empirical value—\$8,000 per educator to be exact.

Question 4: Expressing work identity through programs

The programs the educators created revealed a great deal about their concept of the mission of museum education. Many of the projects they spearheaded were direct reflections of their views on early childhood art experiences and on diversity in both content offering and audience development. In discussing their most successful and unsuccessful programming efforts, the educators illustrate their perceptions of museum education and in so doing answer research question 4, which asks: how museum educators express work identity through programs they create

Museum attendance and early childhood experiences. There were few beliefs consistently and universally held by the museum educators in this interview study. Perhaps the single constant was the belief that children must be introduced to the art museum, or at the very least have early childhood experiences in the arts, if they are to visit museums or actively participate in museum events as adults. Surprisingly, however, this belief did not prove true in the experiences of the museum educators who were interviewed. Quite the contrary, the vast majority of museum educators reported that their first experiences in an art museum were as college students and that they had very little involvement with art as children. This represents a notable disconnection between the educators' personal experiences and their attempts to promote the importance of museum and early childhood arts experiences.

This theme speaks directly to ideas of class and socio-economic status with regard to museum education on two important levels. First, it reveals the educators' core beliefs about the mission of their work. This is quite possibly predicated on the faulty assumption that early childhood experiences are the key factor in building museum audiences. The main idea, however, is to build new audiences. In particular, it is to build audiences among groups that have not traditionally participated; those who are not among the privileged set—defined by most as those with higher levels of education and economic advantages as well as an established history of museum participation. Secondly, this theme speaks to the fundamental mission of this work in

terms of the educators' ability or inability to see themselves as successful examples of the fulfillment of this desire for new audience development.

I, therefore, began searching for the source of the museum educators' claims. I found two possibilities for their belief that providing early childhood experiences through educational programming influenced adult museum participation, and a dozen or so secondary sources that reiterated the claims (Chambers, 1984; Griggs & Alt, 1980, 1982; Hood, 1983). The source appears to have been the 1972 study of adult art museum participation conducted by the National Research Center for the Arts and work conducted in 1980 by the National Endowment for the Arts under the auspices of the Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA).

The 1972 study concluded that, among other things, 60% of adult art museum visitors attribute their interest in art to the fact that someone in their families took them to museums when they were children. This finding was often repeated in museum education publications throughout the 1980s and 90s, albeit without citation. (See Grinder and McCoy, *The Good Guide* (1985, p. 91), including its subsequent edition through 1990, and also Bettelheim (1984), for two examples of this.)

In the SPPA work, which was a study of both visual and performing arts, early childhood experiences were but one of 10 research aims. The specific research questions relevant to our museum educators' perceptions were: What is the relationship between an individual's social, economic and demographic characteristics

and the individual's participation in the arts? What effect does family background have on participation in the arts? How does formal instruction and training in the arts and early exposure while growing up affect later participation? (AMS, 1995, p. 21).

Somehow in the understanding of The Museum's art educators, the concepts of socio-economic status have fused with beliefs about the impact of early exposure to the arts—a combination not set forth in the original studies. Moreover, the element of “family” as facilitator of early participation was not mentioned: many of the educators discussed early participation in terms of school field trips.

Cultivating diversity. Finally, under the heading of socio-economic status and museum education, there is the issue of diversity, both in the make-up of practitioners of museum education and in the audience, or students, of the museum's educational programs. There was in reality no substantial racial or ethnic diversity among the 11 museum educators. They were all Caucasian, of European descent. Ruth is married to an African American and has two multiracial children. My own mother is a naturalized American, native to Guatemala, making me some small percent Hispanic. However, this diversity is indirect.

Despite the lack of diversity in The Museum's education staff, cultivating diverse audiences—particularly African Americans—was a primary goal and concern for many of the educators and The Museum throughout this 20-year history. In the comments of “distinguished museum educators” (p. 3) offered in the preface of the groundbreaking

From Periphery to Center: Art Museum Education in the 21st Century (Villeneuve, 2007), we find corroboration of the claim that museum education lacks educator diversity.

Specifically, this is found in the comments of Marla Shoemaker, Beth Schneider, Peggy Burchenal, and Kim Kanatani. Shoemaker introduced the issue of diversity saying:

Could we talk about diversity of staff? In terms of the future of museums, this is a place we need to go. We need people on staff. We have a Korean heritage advisory group (at the Philadelphia Museum of Art) that is celebrating its 10th anniversary. It began because, among other things, we had a Korean person on staff in the curatorial role who wanted to start it. She was a junior person, she was actually only there for two years, but once it got started, it continued. We have hired Korean people because of it; we've tripled our collection of Korean art because of it. It really does make a difference who is on staff. Would we have started it without that person? I'm not sure we would have made the effort in this particular direction—or had the contacts. (p. 4)

Beth Schneider—who is the same Beth referenced as mentor to Susannah in the interview study—responded to Shoemaker's observations on diversity, saying:

Our summer internship program has been instrumental in identifying and hiring a more diverse staff. And this program is especially important in a city like Houston that does not have graduate programs in art-museum-related areas. Recruiting and hiring museum educators in an ongoing challenge here.

I do think one of the major issues is the level of pay in art museums. If museums are really committed to diversity, then they have to raise salaries for entry- and mid-level professionals as a way to encourage people to build careers. (p. 4)

Burchenal of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum then added:

I guess I'm a little cynical, but museums have always found it easy to find plenty of people to fill their positions, until they are looking for a community outreach person or someone to lead a diversity initiative. Then it's a different kettle of fish, a museum usually ends up paying more in order to attract qualified candidates, often, of necessity, from outside the museum field. (p. 4)

Finally, Kanatani of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum concluded the diversity discussion saying:

My feeling, though, is that, of any department, it is usually the museum education departments that are most ethnically diverse, both internally and externally, with the audiences we serve. I like to think that we have been proactive in setting positive examples and reminders to the institution that we continue to seek it at all levels. (p. 4)

This last response brought an assertion made in Matt's interview immediately to mind. When, after saying that art museums were particularly well versed in paying lip service to need for diversity, Matt emphatically stated that "the only truly diverse departments

at (The Museum) or any other appeared to me to be in the department of maintenance and security.”

There was also no mention, in either the literature of museum education or the educators’ interviews, of a popular and prevalent diversity theme in art history—that of inherent risk of marginalizing the art of non-European artists as primitive and the resulting need for particular sensitivities when juxtaposing works across cultures or time. This fact struck me as particularly unusual, given the emphasis on the role of art history as a core belief in both the limited scholarly literature of museum education and the educational background of the majority of The Museum’s educators.

In fact, the subject of art history’s approach to diversity was not even addressed when discussing programs based on traditional arts from the Amazon, Haiti, Africa, the Americas (Native American and Native North American), and the so-called “folk arts” of the American South. All of these were programs the educators discussed at length when asked to describe efforts that best exemplified their idea of successful museum education. Not all of the educators used examples linked to specific exhibitions in describing successful examples of museum education, but for those that did, the examples were overwhelmingly based on non-European art: a point that perhaps indicated the educators’ awareness of what Henry (2007) described as the embodiment of the changed mission of art museum education over the last 30 years. Henry explained:

While there are still holdovers of the philosophy that a museum is a sanctuary for a few, today more and more museums are reaching out to an increasingly diverse public. Exhibitions are booked that have the potential to interest broad sections of the population, and blockbuster exhibitions designed to attract large crowds are commonplace. (p. 159)

Promising Directions for Future Study

As set forth in the purpose statement of this study, one intended outcome beyond conclusions drawn from the educators' reported experiences was to advocate for qualitative research methodologies over exclusively quantitative methods. With this goal in mind, I end my study by suggesting three possible avenues for future qualitative research.

The first recommendation would be a more comprehensive investigation of the range and types of subjects addressed by museum education conference presentations such as NAEA and AAM over time. I propose that Eisner and Dobbs' (1987) assertion that the grounds for museum education research have been laid by two decades of art education research could be expanded to include observations of trends and prevailing ideas as reflected in these forums. Similar work has been done with representations of diversity in *Art Education* (Henry & Nyman, 1997); with museum family program descriptions (Burchenal & Lasser, 2007); with books from the AAM bookstore; and with abstracts of the *Journal of Education in Museums*, *Journal of Museum Education*, and

Museum News (Vallance, 2007b), with success. This point is underscored by the Institute for Museum and Library Services in its report on the research potential of the museum setting, which called for the more systematic archiving of this data (Wharton & DeBruin, 2005). The second recommendation would be to study position announcements over time paired with an investigation into applicants for positions, particularly in terms of applicant volume and candidate credentials. This type of study would allow us to gain a greater understanding of museum educator supply and demand and a fuller understanding of actual, rather than perceived, educator qualifications.

Finally, I would urge further study on the issues of gender and cultural diversity among practitioners of art museum education. A statistical analysis confirming that male and minority art museum educators are indeed rare, paired with case studies about the professional life and professional paths of representatives of these marginalized groups, might be one approach and may lead to greater understanding of how to successfully recruit and retain greater diversity in museum education. These three examples are but a few that were made apparent by the voices of this particular set of educators. Many more possibilities for qualitative research are undoubtedly available. With such a short history, less than 30 years as an independent profession, above all else the field of art museum education is ripe with research possibilities.

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Appendices

Appendix A Museum Educator Qualifications, Responsibilities, and Incentives as Announced in *Aviso* 1985–2002

Museum Educator Qualifications as Announced in *Aviso* 1985–2002

Qualifications	Position									
	(H) 1985	(G) 1988	(A) 1990	(A&C) 1994 ¹	(A) 1994 ²	(C) 1994 ³	(C) 1995	(A) 1996	(A) 2000	(A) 2002
B.A. Art Education						X			X	X
B.A. Art History				X	X	X			X	X
B.A. Museum Studies (Ed.)				X	X	X			X	X
B.F.A. Studio Arts (Fine Arts)						X			X	X
M.A. Art Education				X			X		X	X
M.A. Art History	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
M.A. Museum Studies(Ed.)	X	X	X				X	X	X	X
M.F.A. Studio Arts(Fine Arts)							X		X	X
Public Speaking Skills	X	X	X		X			X		
Writing Skills	X	X	X		X			X		
Experience Writing for the Public		X	X		X			X		
Knowledge of American Art	X									
Previous Museum Experience				X	X				X	X
Writing Samples		X	X	X	X					

Note. Does not include internship or fellowship announcements.

(H) = Head Curator Education, (G) = General Education Assistant, (A) = Adult Programs, (C) = Children's Programs.

Museum Educator Responsibilities as Announced in *Ariso* 1985-2002

Responsibilities	Position									
	(H) 1985	(G) 1988	(A) 1990	(A&C) 1994 ¹	(A) 1994 ²	(C) 1994 ³	(C) 1995	(A) 1996	(A) 2000	(A) 2002
A.P. Art History									X	X
Adult Programs			X	X				X	X	X
Art Classes (Studio Program)				X		X	X			
Children's Programs	X			X			X			
Day Trips					X					
Develop Changing Exhibits						X	X			
Docent Training	X			X				X	X	X
Exhibition Interpretation									X	X
Family Programs				X			X			
Film Series		X	X		X			X		
High School Student Programs			X					X	X	X
Lectures (Present/Coordinate)	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Maintain Exhibits						X	X			
Maintaining AV Equipment									X	X
Outreach			X		X	X	X		X	X
Participatory Gallery	X			X			X			
School Programs	X					X	X			
Senior Citizens Programs			X					X	X	X
Special Events		X			X			X		X
Studio Materials & Equipment						X	X			
Teacher Programs (In-Services)				X	X	X		X		X
Tours		X			X	X		X		
Volunteer Training (Non-Docent)						X	X			
Youth Volunteers						X	X			

Note. Does not include internship or fellowship announcements.

Museum Educator Incentives as Announced in *Aviso* 1985-2002

Incentives	Position									
	(H) 1985	(G) 1988	(A) 1990	(A&C) 1994 ¹	(A) 1994 ²	(C) 1994 ³	(C) 1995	(A) 1996	(A) 2000	(A) 2002
Health/Retirement Benefits	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Information About Collection									X	X
Information About Facility	X	X				X			X	X
Training Opportunities				X						
Travel										
Web Address for Further Information			X		X	X	X			X

Note. Does not include internship or fellowship announcements.

(H)=Head Curator Education, (G) =General Education Assistant, (A) =Adult Programs, (C) =Children's Programs.

Appendix B *Aviso* Job listings for The Museum's Education Department 1985-2004.*Aviso* Position Announcements 1985-2004

<p>November 1985</p> <p>□ Curator of Education. Experienced individual needed to lead department of rapidly expanding fine arts museum. Sensitive formulation and administration of educational programs such as docent training, film series, art classes, lectures and special programs for school children a must. Will be staff representative assigned to aid in design of a children's "hands-on" gallery to be completed in conjunction with an entirely new museum facility scheduled to open in 1987. Should also be able to interpret for audiences of all ages a strong permanent collection of American art as well as temporary exhibitions. Strong writing and speaking skills essential. Salary is \$15,643-\$20,328 with excellent benefits. Applicants should send a letter of interest and a detailed resume to Room 300, 1000 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704-0320.</p>	<p>March 1988</p> <p>▽ Assistant Curator of Education. Moving to new facility with participatory gallery. Responsible for adult programs including films, lectures, tours, and outreach, write didactic material for docents and public; coordinate educational special events. Prefer MA in art history or art education; must have excellent writing and speaking skills. Salary \$14,045-\$17,260 plus benefits. Send resume, writing samples, and references to Curator of Education, Room 300, 1000 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704-0320.</p>	<p>September 1990</p> <p>◆ ASSISTANT CURATOR OF EDUCATION/ADULT PROGRAMS. Room 300, 1000 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704-0320. Needs experience professional to oversee programming high school through senior citizen. Includes docent program; films; lectures; outreach; teacher inservice; written material for public; special events. Prefer MA in art history or museum education. Must have excellent writing and speaking skills. Salary range: \$15,189-\$18,666. Excellent benefits and travel. Send resume, writing samples, list of references to: Education Curator, Room 300, 1000 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704-0320.</p>	<p>May 1993</p> <p>◆ Art Museum Internship. Internship available in education department for M.A. candidates or graduates with stipend of \$3,200.00. Recipient works full-time for 15 weeks on programming or research. Contact Curator of Education, Room 300, 1000 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704-0320.</p>
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<p>December 1993</p> <p>▽ Assistant Curator of Education for Adult Programs. [redacted] seeks an experienced professional to oversee programming, high school through senior citizen. Includes docent program, gallery tours, films, lectures, outreach, teacher inservices, day trips preparation of material for docents and public, coordination of educational special events. Prefer MA in art history or Museums Education. Must have excellent writing and speaking skills. Salary range: \$15,189-18,666, excellent benefits and travel. Send resume, writing samples and list of references to: Museum Education Curator I, Adult Programs, [redacted]</p>	<p>February 1994</p> <p>Museum Education Curator I: Two openings beginning in late April 1994. 1) Family, children, participatory gallery, studio programs; 2) Adult, docent, lecture, teacher programs. Bachelor's degree and related experience required. Prefer master's in art history or museum education. Excellent benefits and training opportunities. For job announcement and application contact Personnel Dept., City Hall, [redacted]</p>	<p>July 1995</p> <p>◆ Assistant Curator of Education for Youth. [redacted] Responsibilities: oversee 3,000-sq.-ft. participatory gallery and studio, [redacted] develop and implement school, family and children's programs; train and schedule adult and youth volunteers; coordinate outreach programs; coordinate and lead studio programs; maintain exhibits, studio materials, and equipment; develop changing exhibits. Master's degree in art education, art history, studio art or art museum studies preferred, but bachelor's acceptable. Excellent benefits and travel. Send letter, resume, references: [redacted]</p>	<p>May 1996</p> <p>◆ Associate Curator of Education. [redacted] seeks an experienced professional to oversee programming, from high school through senior citizen. Includes docent program, gallery tours, films, lectures, outreach, teacher inservices, preparation of material for docents and public, and coordination of educational special events. Prefer M.A. in art history or museum education. Must have excellent writing and speaking skills. Salary commensurate with education and experience. Send resume, writing samples, and list of references to: Museum Education, Curator II, Personnel Department, [redacted]</p>
<p>▽ Assistant Curator of Education for [redacted] seeks an experienced professional to oversee all aspects of our 3,000 sq. ft. participatory gallery and studio, ARTWORKS. Responsibilities include: develop and implement school programs, train and schedule adult and youth volunteers; give tours; coordinate outreach programs; coordinate and/or lead studio programs; provide teacher inservices; maintain exhibits, studio materials & equipment; Develop changing exhibits. Degree/experience in art education, art history & studio art essential. Salary range: \$15,189-18,666, excellent benefits and travel. Send resume with references and letter or introduction to: Museum Education Curator I, [redacted]</p>			

Appendix C Education Portion of The Museum's 1996 Long Range Plan

EDUCATION

GOAL 1

REVITALIZE ARTWORKS.

Objective 1

Develop a plan to revitalize ARTWORKS.

Strategies:

1. Form committee to create blueprint for the future of ARTWORKS.
2. Travel to see other installations; get ideas and learn from successes and/or failures.
3. Research learning styles and their effectiveness in interactive learning environments.
4. Develop budget and timeline for cosmetic changes, new exhibits, and facility expansion.
5. Identify financial resources.

Objective 2

Implement ARTWORKS revitalization plan.

Strategies:

1. Secure financial resources.
2. Hire designer and fabricator.
3. Implement construction and installation.

GOAL 2

PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT EFFECTIVELY INTERPRET THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS.

Objective 1

Strengthen current educational programs by challenging traditional approaches to program development.

Strategies:

1. Consider reassessment and restructuring of department administration.
2. Develop innovative programming to appeal to non-traditional users.
3. Give "second-life" to programs. (Second-life is the continued utilization of a program, exhibition, or other museum materials beyond the initial use for which it was intended.)
4. Extend ARTWORKS concepts to main galleries.
5. Program group learning experiences in galleries.

Objective 2

Evaluate educational outreach programs and create plan for future outreach.

Strategies:

1. Prepare report of current outreach programs with statements of purpose, audience, cost, and attendance for each.
2. Analyze value of outreach programs by assessing results in light of pre-stated goals.
3. Recommend changes and/or new programs.
4. Formally implement outreach based on a realistic budget.

Objective 3

Cultivate Montgomery City and County residents for educational opportunities.

Strategies:

1. Give first priority in programming to City and County residents.
2. Place an insert in newspaper to inform public of Museum programs.
3. Offer discount incentives for programs.
4. Cultivate principals and schools based on systematic plan.
5. Use schools as meeting and presentation sites.
6. Evaluate fee structure.

GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN THE MUSEUM'S ROLE AS AN ART EDUCATION RESOURCE.

Objective 1

Increase use of the Museum as a resource for art education.

Strategies:

1. Offer two to four teacher in-services per year.
2. Continue Museology course.
3. Offer Advanced Placement Art History for students at the high school level.
4. Assess availability of library holdings to public and determine feasible plan for sharing printed resources.
5. Explore Internet possibilities, such as providing research material on Museum's collections and programs.

Objective 2

Continue to develop mutually enriching relationships among museums, schools, and universities.

Strategies:

1. Maintain current database of professors and update annually.
2. Involve professors by offering to work with them in teaching their curricula using specific Museum exhibitions.
3. Recruit professors to assist with museum projects and to serve on Project Management Teams.
4. Link schools with a computer art class.