

Emerging Practices: Early Learning Experiences in Art Museums

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Abstract

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Museum professionals are calling on institutions to provide quality learning experiences for young children. However, research concerning how this can be accomplished in art museums is limited. This study sought to describe developing best practices of early childhood learning experiences in art museums. In particular, this research answered questions surrounding the reasons why art museums offer early learning experiences, what principles and practices guide their implementation, and what impacts they hope to achieve. This research used a descriptive case study design with five exemplary institutions. Methods included an online questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis. Using emergent coding, the researcher identified key themes.

The results of this study suggest some preliminary hypotheses concerning possible best practices for early learning in art museums. Case studies suggest that a combination of internal and external factors serve as an impetus. Analysis also revealed possible best practices, as all case studies designed their programs to be learner-centered and family-focused, and utilized similar program elements to encourage cognitive and socio-emotional development in early learners. These philosophies informed one of the most important areas of impact: making the art museum into an accessible, family-friendly environment. These results provide key insights into the developing trends in best practices for art museum early learning experiences, and create a baseline of data to inform further research around these programs and their impact.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Educators and policy-makers across the nation are bringing the issue of early childhood learning to the forefront of discussions about American education. Most recently, President Barack Obama and the U.S. Department of Education developed an initiative to address the problem that “millions of children in this country are cut off from quality early learning” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Within this context of increased national focus on early childhood education, many museum educators are beginning to conceptualize their role as partners in a broad, community-wide effort to create valuable early learning experiences. In 2012, an issue of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Museum Education* was devoted to the discussion of early learning in museums. Guest Editor Sharon Shaffer affirmed the recent increase in national attention on early learning, and argued, “As a society we have a responsibility to ensure that our youngest children are engaged in quality learning experiences; and museums, as important community institutions, will need to seek opportunities and contribute in new ways to this critical effort” (2012a, p. 11). As places of informal learning, museums have the potential to contribute to the nation-wide creation of quality learning experiences for young children.

Many museum professionals and funding agencies have begun to recognize the potential value of museums’ involvement in the nationwide effort for quality early learning, and have rallied a field-wide call to action. The Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) released a publication in the summer of 2013 that provided an overview of current work in this area, and pushed the field to do more. Citing developmental research and the unique value of museums and libraries, IMLS declares, “It is critical to act now to incorporate, and leverage, our well-established informal learning system as an essential component of our nation’s early learning network” (IMLS, 2013, p. 5). The federal funding agency IMLS and leading professionals are

placing a high priority on museums' participation in the learning of young children.

Creativity and arts education has also gained a prominent place in recent conversations about education and early childhood development. Broadly, there is a growing sense that the arts and creativity deserve a more prominent place in American education. Ken Robinson's TEDxTalk from 2006, titled "How School Kills Creativity," has been viewed over 20 million times on TED's website. And beyond this general trend, the research into early childhood development also supports the idea that creativity and the arts are invaluable in the early years of life. In 2004, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) released a publication encouraging parents across the nation to incorporate arts learning into their children's lives. While synthesizing research on arts education, the author notes, "What we have learned about arts education can be stated simply: the arts matter profoundly and should be introduced into the lives of children at the earliest possible age" (NEA, 2004, p. 3). The early years of life are critical to the development of lifelong learning capacity, and decades of research in this area have revealed "a clear correlation between early exposure to the arts and increased long-term critical reasoning, communication, and social skills" (NEA, 2004, p. 3). The museum field is increasingly aware of its role in early learning and encouraging both creativity and the arts across the national educational landscape.

These themes in the current conversation on early learning collide in the art museum. As collections-based institutions and hubs of informal learning, art museums are uniquely situated to contribute to community-wide early learning efforts and to provide quality arts-based learning experiences for young audiences. Munley (2012) observed that the UN Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC) specifically identified art museums as "ideal institutions for taking the lead to make the idea of child cultural citizens a reality" (p. 5). Art museums' ability to serve as

community spaces, in addition to the resource that exists in their collections of original artworks, provides a particularly strong case for their involvement in early learning. Henderson and Atencio (2007) note the very social nature of early learning, and also argue, “children’s gradual development of abilities also depends on their interactions with physical objects and symbols in their learning environments” (p. 246). Art museums can provide a social experiences for young learners, as well as create new opportunities for them to make art and interact with art objects. In a study of early learning conducted at the Denver Art Museum, the researcher noted, “All components of the setting – teachers, children, art, art materials – come together to create art experiences” (Eckhoff, 2007, p. 464). Art museums have the opportunity to provide unique art experiences for young learners that are both social and centered on interactions with objects.

Art museums are indeed beginning to understand their potential in this area, and many are beginning to participate in community-wide early learning efforts. While no detailed data is available as of yet, the museum field seems to generally agree that this trend exists. Shaffer (2011) notes, “Today, an increasing number of art museums are opening their doors to this growing audience and recognizing the possibilities for connecting children to paintings and sculpture” (p. 41). There is a general sense in the field that art museums across the country are beginning to participate in early arts education and are developing programs, spaces, and experiences for early learners.

However, aside from this general sense of growth, there is very little research or field-wide agreement on best practices concerning early learning in art museums. As Bowers (2012) acknowledges, “research and evaluation related to very young audiences in more traditional object-focused museums is hard to find” (p. 41). Without this critical foundation of disseminated evaluation and research, the field cannot assess the current state of this area or determine best

practices for the future development of early learning experiences in art museums. Shaffer (2012a) notes this lack of research, and states, “there is a need to bring our collective knowledge to bear on future practice” (p. 13). Art museums seeking to participate in this emerging trend will be in need of research into best practices to inform the development of effective learning experiences.

Further research into this growing area of museum practice is critical. The five exemplary art museums represented in this study have spent years developing early learning experiences that align with their institutional goals and audiences’ needs. While their offerings for early learners are quite diverse, they are all at the forefront of this emerging trend and can therefore create a foundation on which other museums can learn and build. By looking across these exemplary institutions, the field can begin to identify practices and approaches that are most effective in art museums early learning experiences.

The purpose of this research study is to describe developing best practices of early childhood learning experiences in art museums. The results of this research can create a foundation for understanding the approaches and practices of exemplary institutions, and also assist in the development of a research and evaluation agenda for art museums and early learning. This study is informed by the following key research questions:

1. Why do art museum choose to offer early learning experiences?
2. What principles and practices guide the development and delivery of early learning experiences in art museum?
3. What differences do art museums want to make through early learning experiences at the individual, family, and community level?

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Context & Scope

Young children are not a new audience for museums. Beginning with the foundation of the Brooklyn Children’s Museum in 1899, museums of various kinds have served young children and their caretakers for decades. Art museums were not historically among those institutions who reached out to young children, but this status quo began to change significantly in the 1990s (Shaffer, 2011). During that time, the museum field in general began to discuss the importance of audience diversity and informal learning, and art museums began to see their own audiences in a new way. As Shaffer (2011) observes, “This redefinition of audience led to new programs designed to welcome 3- to 6-year-olds into art galleries, and introduced an approach to interpretation that was distinctly different from the traditional tour or program” (p. 42). These programs have spread and developed over the last twenty years.

Due to increased national attention on quality early learning (US Department of Education, 2013), both art museums and funding agencies have renewed their focus on programming for young children (IMLS, 2013). This literature review seeks to describe how the field is currently thinking about early learners in art museums, and to identify emerging themes concerning what defines a quality early learning experience in an art museum. The literature falls into three main categories: 1) articles and research about young children in museums, 2) articles and research about young children and families in art museums more specifically, and 3) literature concerning the emerging “best practices” in serving the audience of young children.

The Basics of Early Childhood Development

The Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University is one of the leading institutions conducting research on early childhood development and education policy. Their

publication entitled “The Science of Early Childhood Development” synthesizes “the cumulative knowledge of decades of research” (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007, p.1). Authors explain that research over time has proven that early childhood experiences are crucial in lifelong brain development and learning abilities.

The authors use the analogy of building a house to explain how “Brains are built over time” (NSCDC, 2007, p.5). Basic skills and connections are established early in life, and these provide a “foundation,” or building blocks, for future development. The authors identify three areas of development – emotional, social, and cognitive – as the primary building blocks that define early childhood. They explain that, “Emotional well-being, social competence, and cognitive abilities together are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development” (p. 8). Years of research has revealed that learning experiences in early childhood are central to development of socio-emotional awareness and abilities, as well as creating important cognitive skills like language and problem-solving. These themes and terminologies are echoed consistently in the literature that examines early learning in the specific context of the museum environment.

Museums and the Early Learning Landscape

Professionals and researchers in the field do not view early learning in museums in isolation, but rather as part of a broader landscape of community-wide early learning efforts. Both Shaffer (2012a) and Semmel (2012) frame programs for young children in museums as part of an intricate system of formal education, community organizations, and policy makers. Shaffer (2012a) explains that museums should operate at the level of this bigger system, and notes, “As members of the museum community, we have an important role to play in shaping the learning of this young generation, joining forces with educators and policy makers from across the

community to meet early learning goals” (p. 11). Additionally, Semmel (2012) points to the overall trend of museum educators to view the “museum as one of many learning sites within a larger community learning landscape” (p. 18). In this context, early learning programming in museums of all kinds is viewed as part of a larger, community-wide learning ecosystem for young children.

While the literature generally takes this “systems” view of early learning in museums, many authors also point to greater potential for impact and public awareness in this area. There is a wide sense that early learning experiences in museums – especially in traditional, collections-based institutions – are just beginning. While setting the stage for the *Journal of Museum Education* issue on early learning, Shaffer (2012a) says, “Museums have the potential to make a significant contribution to the education of America’s children” (p. 14). Implicit in the word “potential” is considerable room for growth. Many authors go further to argue that museums must fulfill this potential in order to be recognized as community participants in the ecosystem of early learning. For example, Semmel (2012) brings attention to the general lack of recognition for museums’ role in early learning. She observes, “Rarely are museums recognized as organizations well-equipped to play a more significant and relevant role in promoting effective learning” (p. 19). Professionals express the view that museums are not realizing their full potential in the early learning landscape, and that the public has yet to see museums as an important player in this field.

The Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) echoes this view of the museum as an underestimated or “untapped” resource in its 2013 publication “Growing Young Minds.” IMLS argues, “Libraries and museums are well-positioned to be integral parts of coordinated efforts, but are too often untapped or disconnected resources in community efforts to support

more positive outcomes for families and children” (p. 12). Funders and professionals alike see room for growth in connecting with the community to increase the impact of early learning experiences.

The Call to Action

Museum professionals and funding agencies are presenting the field with a compelling “call to action” to realize the potential of their role as significant contributors to quality early learning efforts. Semmel (2012) asks the question: “How can museums leverage their expertise, their programs, their sites, and their pedagogical knowledge to become more visible and more ‘essential’ to this societal revolution in learning, especially in the area of early learning?” (p. 26). Semmel goes on to answer this question with five actionable suggestions for museums who want to be part of the future of early learning: 1) assess connections between the museum’s resources, mission, and vision and early learning; 2) identify immediate community needs in the area of early learning; 3) collaborate with other museums, local organizations, and civic entities; 4) define learning goals and setting an evaluation plan to assess them; and 5) become involved in community discussions of early learning at many levels.

The first chapter of the IMLS publication “Growing Young Minds” is quite literally entitled “A Call To Action.” While they acknowledge the many ways in which both libraries and museums are already serving young children, they push both institutional groups to do more. The chapter opens with the following: “Libraries and museums can play a stronger role in early learning for all children. As our nation commits to early learning as a national priority essential to our economic and civic future, it is time to become more intentional about deploying these vital community resources to this challenge” (IMLS, 2013, p. 4). Both professionals and funding agencies see a gap between the reality of early learning in museums and their potential. There is

a field-wide “call to action” to participate in community learning efforts, and for museums to create effective early learning experiences.

Status of the Field: Early Learners in Traditional Museums

Mary Ellen Munley’s (2012) “Early Learning in Museums: A Review of the Literature” provides an overview of current literature and research of young children in “traditional” museums. Munley (2012) acknowledges that, “There is far more attention to young learners in children’s museums than there is in traditional art, history, natural history, and science museums” (p. 3). While children’s museums overall pay more attention to younger audiences, she also argues that many traditional museums are offering early learning experiences and doing so in ways that support effective learning.

Munley (2012) analyzed research conducted in museum settings that focused on early learning, and limited the search to publications between 2000 and 2012. The abstract of the literature review summarizes the five main points of the author’s argument. First, traditional museums with real artifacts “provide a uniquely positive environment to foster learning by young children” (p. 2). Second, research shows that young children have interest in objects, artifacts, and exhibits in traditional museums. Third, young children demonstrate very idiosyncratic approaches to museums based on their personal interests and passions. Fourth, the research reveals that adult involvement can enhance early learning experiences in traditional museums. And lastly, “while researchers and museum professionals alike are convinced that young children are learning in traditional museums, research that details this learning is lacking” (p. 2). The overall arc reveals that traditional museums are excellent places for young children to learn and they have interests and passions that align with these institutions, but there needs to be more research looking at the nature of these learning experiences.

Possibilities for Young Children's Learning in Art Museums

Overall, the literature agrees that art museums are, or have the potential to be, effective places for young children to learn. Experts in the field have pointed out the alignment between the aesthetic and creative environment of the art museum and early childhood development. For example, Shaffer & Danko-McGhee (2004) point out that young children are highly capable of responding to art and having aesthetic preferences and experiences. They note, "Long before children can speak, their responses to shapes, sounds, and other necessary phenomena around them establish their personal personalities and their styles of interacting with the world" (Shaffer & Danko-McGhee, 2004, p. 1). They argue that children not only have aesthetic experiences, but that this area of development "can enhance cultural sensitivity, promote language development, and improve the quality of children's own artwork" (Shaffer & Danko-McGhee, 2004, p. 1). Additionally, they assert that carefully facilitated art museum experiences can provide an excellent environment for encouraging these areas of development in young children.

Beyond the specificity of aesthetic development, there is a vast body of literature concerning the lifelong influence of exposure to the arts in early childhood. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) released a publication for parents of young children to explain the benefits of the arts in early childhood development. NEA Chairman Dan Gioia explained, "A number of research studies over the past several decades have drawn a clear correlation between early exposure of children to the arts and increased long-term critical reasoning, communication, and social skills" (NEA, 2004, p. 3). He goes on to reiterate, "What we have learned about arts education can be stated simply: the arts matter profoundly and should be introduced into the lives of children at the earliest possible age" (NEA, 2004, p. 3). The NEA reinforces that early childhood art experiences and education will have long-term benefits.

Object-based Learning

The literature also points to the presence of collections in art museums as a highly important factor in support of their engagement with early learners. Some authors highlight the theme of “authenticity” and the potential for learning experiences to occur when young children interact with “real” works of art. Bowers (2012) opens her article saying, “Authentic objects have the potential to inspire awe, promote wonder and encourage curiosity” (p. 39). Munley (2012) also notes that the presence of these objects is a primary element that sets traditional museums apart from other informal learning opportunities in the community. She observes, “Traditional museums are distinguished from other learning and recreational setting by the presence of real objects” (Munley, 2012, p. 8). Art museums’ collections of authentic art objects provide unique opportunities for young children to learn that they may not be able to access elsewhere.

One of the strengths of object-based learning for this age group is the particular power of sensory experiences for young children. MacRae (2007) emphasizes the importance of objects and sensory learning in her article about a unique touch-based art gallery tour for young children and their parents. In the article, she highlights the children’s tactile experiences as being particularly effective, and explains, “Their response to the tactile was powerful and unpredictable, and it seemed to reside both in the objects themselves and through the objects as things-between-people” (MacRae, 2007, p. 164). She also observed that touching, sharing, and passing objects was effective in shifting from an adult-led experience to a “dialogue between children and adults” (p. 165). The tactile, object-based art gallery experience proved to be an excellent way of engaging young children and facilitating the development of communication skills.

Shaffer (2012b) also emphasizes the potential for the development of language and communication through object-based learning experiences. Much of her consulting guide, “From Peacocks to Picasso,” focuses on the unique power of objects to engage children and encourage cognitive development. Shaffer (2012b) explains, “By describing the object and sharing ideas, children are exposed to a new vocabulary of words. The sensory experience gives new meaning to words – rough, smooth, as children compare the descriptive words to the feeling or visual experience” (p. 26). In this instance, objects – or in the case of the art museum, works of art – can be powerful tools for helping children to look, observe, and interpret information. Shaffer (2012b) connects the process of looking at objects directly to early childhood development, and argues, “Visual literacy – the ability to decode or construct meaning about the visual world – is an important cognitive skill for young children” (p. 58). Researchers and practitioners alike argue that objects and art in the museum context are a developmentally appropriate way to approach early childhood learning and development.

Learning through Play

The literature reveals a theme of learning through play as an essential part of engaging young children in the art museum. In her guide to early learning in museums, Sharon Shaffer (2012b) devotes a section to the importance of play and offers suggestions for different ways museums could incorporate play into a young child’s learning experience. Shaffer (2012b) explains, “Play allows children to make sense of what they are learning through personal experience and social interaction...Play is the language of children and is a powerful tool for engaging children in the museum” (p. 35-36). Specifically for art museums, she recommends using the artwork as inspiration for imitation, dramatic play, and movement.

Krakowski (2012) also emphasizes the importance of play as a tool for engaging young children and reinforcing learning experiences. In the article “Museum Superheroes,” she describes a successful example of play integration into a kindergarten field trip program at the Warhol Museum. The program started with a museum educator-led experience in the classroom, and was followed by a three-hour program at the museum. At the museum, the kindergarteners silkscreened their own superhero capes, imagined super powers, and danced to Elvis music in the galleries. As the author notes, “For each activity the museum educators used a playful approach to engage children with the work of art” (p. 51). The author observed that the children stayed consistently engaged throughout the entire three-hour program, and they still remembered the experience when she interviewed them a year later. Krakowski (2012) explains, “Through play, we can support their intellectual, emotional, and social development, we can connect to what is important to them in their everyday lives, and we can help them better understand themselves, others, and their world – the real and the possible” (p. 57). This example suggests that a play-based approach is an effective way to engage young children and create a memorable learning experience in the art museum context.

Defining Museum Experiences for Young Children

The most extensive research project to date that concerns young children and museums is Anderson et al.’s (2003) Australian study, “Children’s Museum Experiences: Identifying Powerful Mediators of Learning.” The research initiative utilized an “interpretive case study approach” to investigate the ways in “which children become enculturated to the museum experience” (Anderson et al., 2003, p. 214). Four different museums served as research sites, and two of these were arts-based institutions. The museums included a natural and social history museum, an interactive science center, an art gallery, and an art and social history museum. Four

classes of 4-6 year old children (n=99) visited one of the museums three times, during which researchers observed and recorded interactions. After all three visits were complete, small groups of children were interviewed about their favorite experiences and other visit memories.

The results of this study reveal some of the key ways that children experience and learn in museum contexts. The overarching conclusion of the study is that children's recollections of their museum visits are varied, unique, idiosyncratic, and grounded in previous life experiences. Essentially, "The key message for program developers is that children will respond *cognitively, aesthetically, motivationally, and collaboratively* to a diversity of objects and exhibit elements incorporated into the museum experiences in different ways" (Anderson et al., 2003, p. 220).

Within this context however, a few themes did occur. First, researchers found that children often recalled large-scale exhibits with an emphasis on kinesthetic or tactile elements. For example, many children recalled climbing on a large-scale statue outside the art gallery. Additionally, researchers found that children remembered experiences grounded in the familiar medium of story and storytelling in the museum setting – especially in the two art-focused institutions. Also, children positively recalled and described, "live facilitated theatre-based experiences," (Anderson et al., 2003, p. 223) such as a show called "Unexpected Science" which incorporated dialogue and science demonstrations. Anderson et al. (2003) emphasize, "Experiences that are embedded in the medium of story, play, and objects that can be readily identified by children, are powerful mediators" (p. 229). Researchers in this landmark study found that children engage with and recall large-scale exhibits, tactile/kinesthetic experiences, storytelling, and play-based activities.

Beyond these key access points, or learning mediators, the researchers synthesized their data into one primary takeaway message. Anderson et al. (2003) conclude, "Perhaps the key

message for teachers and museum educators is that there is a need to be aware of ways and strategies for helping children to see connections with their life experiences when encountering galleries that appear, on the surface, to be devoid of readily accessible, culturally familiar links for children” (p. 229). These conclusions are connected by the theme that children learn most effectively and create lasting memories when they can make connections between museum experiences and their own lives.

Approaches: Family Learning

The theme of family learning, or incorporating adults and caregivers into the early learning experience, comes up consistently in the literature. Part of this developing approach is a direct response to the reality of the early learning audience, because as Munley (2012) points out, “Very young children do not visit museums alone” (p. 16). Early learners attend museum galleries and programs in the company of adults, and the literature indicates that acknowledging and supporting the adult will enhance the learning experience. Munley (2012) notes, “Adults play an undeniably important role in guiding young children’s learning” (p. 15). As museums begin to understand this, art museums seek “a more nuanced attention to the balancing act of the supporting adult in this process” (MacRae, 2007, p. 161). Art museums are beginning to realize that engaging with both the adults and children in a group can facilitate more impactful early learning experiences.

Wolf and Wood (2012) explain the importance of facilitating parent-child interactions in the context of their own research at The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis. They describe the process of changing from a child-centered approach to creating whole family experiences. Wood and Wolf (2012) note, “In using child-centered approaches museum professionals realized that they were overlooking adults as critical members of the learning cohort and that incorporating

them into learning events offered the potential to expand the experience beyond the museum” (p. 30). With this in mind, Wood and Wolf (2012) recommend the incorporation of “scaffolding” experiences – which they define as “simplification of ideas or tasks and encouraging the learner toward successful experiences with that idea or task” (p. 33). They argue that by designing exhibits, spaces, and programs with scaffolding in mind, almost any aspect of the museum is accessible to families with early learners. Supporting parents and caregivers can facilitate quality early learning experiences in art museums.

Best Practices Literature

Early learning in art museums is an emerging area of museum practice, so therefore the literature related to best practices is very limited. In fact, only two sources speak to this theme – and neither focus solely on early learners in the art museum context. The first is Sharon Shaffer’s (2012b) consulting workbook called, “Early Learning in Museums: From Peacocks to Picasso.” This book speaks more generally to what effective early learning programs should incorporate across all types of museums. The second is the Crocker Art Museum’s (2013) “Best Practices in Cultivating Family Audiences,” which incorporates early learners into the context of the family visitor group.

Shaffer (2012b) uses “From Peacocks to Picasso” guide to facilitate workshops and collaborate with clients for her consulting firm Early Learning in Museums. While it does not explicitly refer to “best practices,” Shaffer pulls out themes that are important to crafting early learning experiences. Shaffer (2012b) begins with goal-oriented framework that speaks to the needs and attributes of young children. She notes, “As educators, it is important that we are thoughtful in defining goals that benefit young museum-goers” (p. 11). Shaffer also references constructivist learning theories, which emphasize previous experience and personal discovery.

She also puts significant emphasis on the incorporation of objects and play into early learning experiences in all types of museums. In summary, Shaffer's workbook reveals the following best practices framework: 1) establish goals and outcomes, 2) draw on knowledge of early childhood, 3) engage with constructivist ideas of learning, 4) utilize museum objects, and 5) follow a play-based approach. Shaffer highlights the need to have a clear purpose and strategies that place early learners at the center.

As part of an IMLS grant project, staff and board members from the Crocker Art Museum visited other art museums serving family audiences during 2011 and 2012. Their research resulted in the 2013 publication "Best Practices in Cultivating Family Audiences." While young children are not specifically called out, they are implicitly included as part of the family group. The Crocker identifies eight best practices, or goals, in relation to serving families in art museums: 1) expand our definition of family, 2) provide engaging experiences for all ages, 3) inspire multi-generational collaboration, 4) serve parent needs and desires, 5) provide value through family betterment and transformation, 6) make connections between art and daily life, 7) create a culture of intentional experimentation, and 8) incorporate audience evaluation in our decision-making process. These best practices reflect the full process of thinking about, planning, executing, and evaluating family learning in art museums.

Conclusions

Museum professionals are sending out a "call to action" for art museums to participate in the conversation on early learning. The literature tells us that young children are learning in art museums, and that there is huge potential for them to use objects, play, and family-centered approaches to claim a space in the national early learning landscape. Research reveals that young

children are capable of connecting with the content in art museums, and that their experiences are often defined in terms of their own preferences and life experience.

However, this emerging area of practice is missing a significant amount of research into the art museums who are already doing this work – and doing it well. Aside from the Anderson et al. (2003) study, there are no disseminated research studies that describe early learning in art museums. Many of the sources in this review directly address this lack of research. For example, Shaffer (2012a) explains, “As our profession addresses this burgeoning audience of young children, our success will be tied to our ability to come together to understand the developmental capacity and learning style of this audience in the context of museum spaces, while also creating a vision that includes design of exhibits and a focus on families and programs for younger visitors” (p. 12). If art museums look to participate in this growing movement of early learning, there are very few sources for them to access.

One of the particular research areas that is lacking is that of best practices. Shaffer’s (2012b) guidebook speaks to early learning in all museum types, and the Crocker Art Museum’s (2013) publication addresses family learning. For museums looking to begin or refine existing early learning programs, there are no resources that discuss the prominent philosophies and strategies of current leaders in the field. Many seem to agree that a lot of art museums are offering effective and popular early learning programs, but their expertise in this area has thus far been untapped.

CHAPTER 3: Methods

The purpose of this research study was to describe the developing best practices of early childhood learning experiences in art museums. The methods were informed and guided by three research questions: 1) Why do art museums target early learners?; 2) What principles and practices guide the development and delivery of early learning experiences in art museums?; and 3) What differences do art museums want to make with their early learning experiences at an individual, family, and community level?

In order to address these questions, this study utilized a case study approach with multiple methods, including an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Additional contextual data was gathered from case study museums' websites and 990 forms.

Sampling

Case Study Art Museums

The researcher chose case study institutions through consultation with experts in the field. Three experts, known for their work in early childhood and museums, were asked to identify 3-5 art museums that they felt were offering particularly effective and innovative early learning experiences. These expert referrals resulted in a list of 13 potential case study sites, which was subsequently narrowed down by the researcher using the following criteria: 1) museum had been offering early learning experiences for more than 3 years, and 2) the museum had at least 3 different experiences targeting children age 2-6. This resulted in a list of 6 possible case studies, 5 of which agreed to participate in the research study. The 5 case study institutions included were the Columbus Museum of Art in Columbus, Ohio; the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California; the Dallas Museum of Art in Dallas, Texas; the Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland.

Professional Participants

All participants in this research study were drawn from the 5 case study museums. The researcher or committee chair sent an initial email to a professional contact at each institution. Those individuals either expressed interest in participating in the research themselves, or referred the researcher to another individual at their institution.

Individuals were eligible to participate if they were current employees at one of the institutions, and were connected to the development or delivery of the institution's early learning experiences. Each participant received an email with a description of the purpose, process of data collection, and an explanation of the voluntary nature of the study. After each agreed to participate, they filled out an online questionnaire and scheduled an interview in-person or over the phone with the researcher.

At the time of this research, each professional participant worked in the Education Department of their museum – which in one case was called the Learning and Experience Department. Three of the participants had job titles relating to family and/or community programming, one participant was more closely affiliated with school programs, and one participant's job was specifically to manage early learning programs. All of the participants were involved in planning early learning experiences, and four were directly implementing programs on a regular basis.

Data Collection

Two primary methods were used, including an online questionnaire and a telephone or in-person interview. Some contextual information was also provided by document analysis of museum websites and online 990 forms.

Online Questionnaire

The first phase of data collection was a brief pre-interview questionnaire. The pre-interview questionnaire gathered basic data about the case study museum and its early learning experiences. Each of the 5 case study participants received an email with a link to a Survey Monkey questionnaire. Taking about 15-20 minutes to complete, the questionnaire addressed basic information such as institutional size, budget, and descriptions of up to 3 of the early learning experiences offered. This logistical data about the museum and its programs was used to inform specific questions on the interview guide, such as questions about program types and use of evaluation. Many of these questions were close-ended multiple choice. Participants were also asked one open-ended question, in which they provided a brief description of the early learning experiences in their own words (See Appendix).

Semi-Structured Interview

The second phase of data collection consisted of a 30-60 minute interview with the professional from each case study institution. The interviews collected qualitative data about the purpose and philosophies of each art museum's early learning experiences, and information about their initial conception and continuing development. Since the basic data concerning the institution and its early learning experiences had already been collected, this phase focused more in depth on describing each institution's early learning experiences. The interviews lasted anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes – 2 interviews (Dallas Museum of Art and Walters Art Museum) occurred over the phone, and 3 interviews (Columbus Museum of Art, Crocker Art Museum, and Philadelphia Museum of Art) were conducted in person. Interview questions were informed by the descriptions provided in the survey, and interviewees were asked deeper

questions about goals and purpose (See Appendix). Interviews were recorded with the participants' permission.

Document Analysis

Data for document analysis were collected from case study museum websites and guidestar.org. Sources included the Crocker Art Museum's online "Tips for Tots" brochure, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art's strategic plan document. Budget information for the 2012 fiscal year was retrieved from guidestar.org. These documents served to provide basic context for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data from the online questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis were analyzed as a whole to answer each research question. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and put into a transcript format. Document analysis was primarily used to contextualize descriptive data, and to provide basic information about the case study institutions.

Robert Yin (2008) remarks that case study data analysis is distinctive, and can incorporate elements of pattern matching, explanation building, and cross-case synthesis. Data analysis for this research followed Yin's overall arc – first identifying patterns and themes within each case, then defining and explaining those themes, and finally looking across all five cases to look for areas of similarity and divergence.

The research used emergent coding methods to analyze the qualitative interview data. First, each case study was assessed in isolation and the researcher identified key themes and quotes according to each research question. After this was done for each case study, the researcher developed thematic groupings and created emergent codes. For example, the interviewees each discussed the importance of serving the whole family group, and this was

coded as “Family Approaches” (See Table 1). The researcher transferred these codes to post-it notes, and grouped them under each research question. (For photos of this process, see Appendix C.) This visual layout allowed the researcher to look across the 5 case studies and synthesize the answers to each research question. After key groups of codes and responses were created, the researcher created a spreadsheet with the themes, sub-themes, and examples for each research question (See Appendix D). The committee chair reviewed these themes and discussed evidence for each with the researcher to verify the validity of the findings.

Table 1: Coding Example, “Family Approaches”

Columbus Museum of Art	“Our outcomes are actually written with the family unit in mind.” (Speaking about specific program.)
Crocker Art Museum	“...we’re thinking about the family unit, and we try not to do things just for the children, but we always try to keep the adults in mind.”
Dallas Museum of Art	“...in all of our children’s programming, parents are involved. And we try to have a moment in the class where parents are actually being the teacher.”
Philadelphia Museum of Art	“I always say, ‘Three year-olds do not bring themselves to the museum.’ So everyone has to have a positive experience”
Walters Art Museum	“...we’re advocating for intergenerational learning...it’s a whole family experience.”

Limitations

This research took a case study approach, which inherently places limitations on the generalizability of the results. Field-wide conclusions may not be realistic given the scope and nature of this study. Data analysis describes these 5 particular institutions in great detail, but does not speak to a larger population of art museums across the country. The results can be used to begin crafting theory and hypotheses, and future research can build on these hypotheses to create generalizable, field-wide research.

These case studies were chosen because of their reputation in the field as innovative and effective providers of early learning experiences. Therefore, results can only provide information about these specific “best case scenarios.” This research may not represent art museums who have only one or two early learning experiences, or who only recently started programming for this audience.

Additionally, this study is limited in the fact that it only takes into account the perspective of one professional from each institution. Other professionals at these art museums who work with early learners in different capacities may emphasize other ideas or philosophies in their work. Future research may want to incorporate multiple staff perspectives on early learning at these institutions.

CHAPTER 4: Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter describes the results of this research study, which are organized according to the key research questions. It begins with descriptions of the case study sites to provide context for the results, including basic institutional data around size, mission, and educational goals. The bulk of the chapter is then dedicated to explaining the results of the study in detail, according to research question and theme. The themes identified in this chapter are sensitizing concepts (Patton, 2002). They are based in and informed by both the specific questions asked of participants, as well as by the language and themes in the literature.

Case Study Descriptions

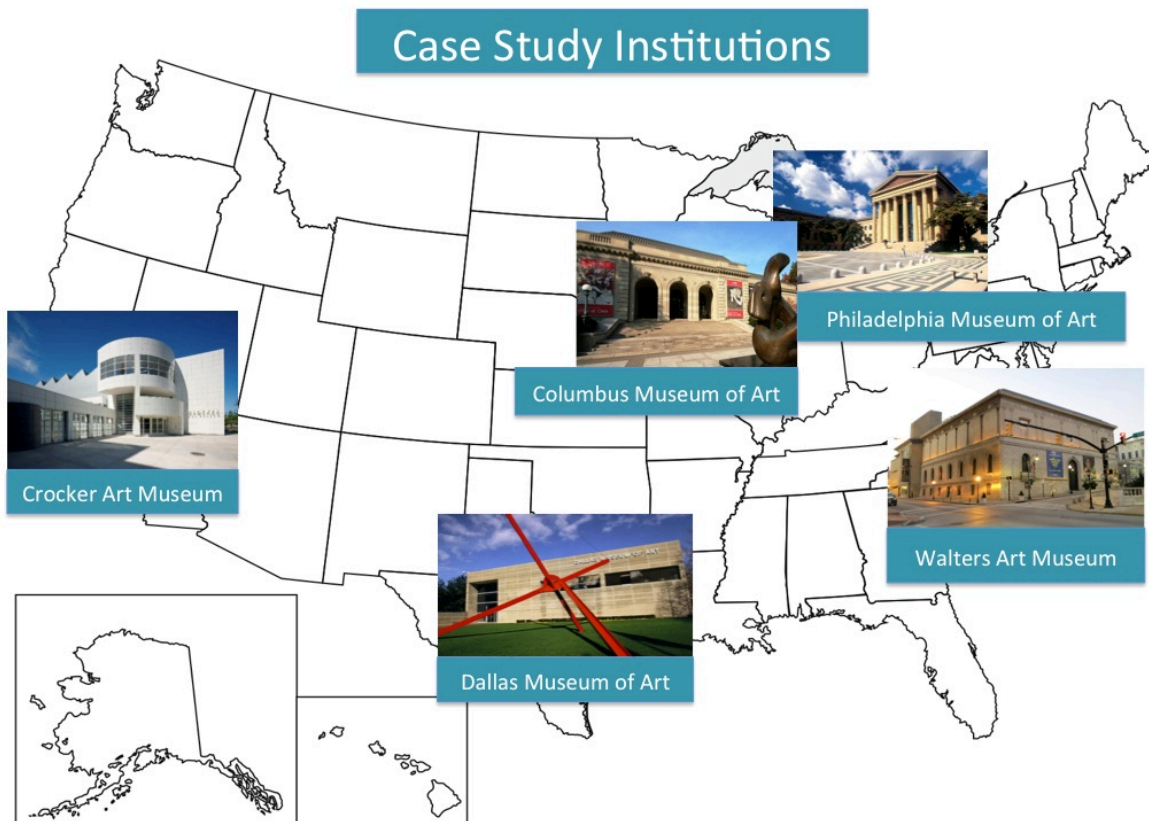


Figure 1: Map of Case Study Sites

The Columbus Museum of Art

The Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) is located in Columbus, Ohio. The museum's annual operating budget in 2012 was \$12.2 million. The CMA's mission statement is, "To create great experiences with great art for everyone." Emerging from this mission, the overall educational philosophy of the Columbus Museum of Art, as articulated by one of their Education staff interviewed for this study, is to "foster, champion, and celebrate creativity." Education staff view creativity as having the two main inputs of critical thinking and imagination, with the output of innovation.

The Columbus Museum of Art's early learning programs are informed by the Reggio Emilia philosophy – a unique preschool approach developed in Italy. According to the staff member interviewed, Reggio Emilia focuses on student-led learning, emergent curriculum, aesthetics, natural materials, and artists as teachers. The CMA offers three different experiences specifically for early learners. Two of the CMA's early learning programs, "Artful Adventures" and "Imagine That," are aimed at preschool classes and their teachers. "Artful Adventures" is a one-time museum tour experience that focuses on fostering imaginative play and creativity. "Imagine That" is a partnership program with local Head Start preschools, and museum educators take similar goals directly into the classroom space. A new program beginning this spring, "Young Child Studios," is a hands-on family experience for children 18 months to 5 years old and their caregivers. Overall, their early learning programs are inspired by imagination, play, and providing creative learning experiences for young children entering an increasingly test-driven school system.

The Crocker Art Museum

The Crocker Art Museum is located in Sacramento, California, and its annual budget in 2012 was 7.5 million dollars. According to their mission statement, “The Crocker Art Museum is dedicated to promoting an awareness of and enthusiasm for human experience through art.” The overall educational framework for the Education Department, as articulated by an Education staff member interviewed for this study, is as follows: “Education at the Crocker ignites thoughtful dialogue surrounding art and engages visitors in exploring their own creativity through observation, art-making, and critical thinking. Our education practices are ground in constructivist and transformative pedagogical principles, using inquiry, dialogue, and play to maximize opportunities for access and learning in the arts.”

The Crocker’s early learning experiences are heavily focused on the family and creating experiences for children and caregivers alike. They have at least four different types of learning experiences that target young children and their families. Inside the galleries they have a dedicated family and early learning space called “Tot Land,” as well as festivals for families with young children every Friday in the summer months. Additionally, they offer ongoing programs throughout the year. For example, “Wee Wednesday” is a gallery-based experience offered on a weekly basis, and “Artful Tot” is an immersive art-making experience that is offered monthly. They have also partnered with the local public library to offer a program called “Art Packs,” which provides backpacks with materials that make connections between books and museum collections. Overall, the Crocker’s early learning experiences are varied in structure, but all are focused on a learning environment for the parents and children together.

The Dallas Museum of Art

The Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is an encyclopedic art museum located in Dallas, Texas. This large institution had a budget of 32 million dollars in 2012. Recently, the museum shifted to a free admission model, with the goal of becoming more accessible to their diverse community. Their mission statement is: “The Dallas Museum of Art is both a responsible steward of cultural heritage and a trusted advocate for the essential place of art in the lives of people locally and around the globe. The DMA is transparent, ethical, and takes informed risks. It promotes research, dialogue, and public participation, helping to reveal the insights of artists from every continent over the last 5,000 years.” The Education Department at the DMA articulates specific philosophies around community participation, experiential learning, and appealing to many different learning styles.

The Dallas Museum of Art has three primary experiences available specifically for the early learner and caregiver crowd. They expanded their offerings for this audience as the demand grew quickly. Recently, they renovated their family learning space, which now has a special area called “Arturo’s Nest” – a bilingual area for children 4 and under with their adult companions. The museum also offers two similar programs called “Arturo’s Art and Me” for ages 3-5 plus caregiver, and “Toddler Art” for ages 2-3 plus caregiver. Both offer a gallery experience and an art-making activity, and both have a fun, playful approach. Overall, the early learning experiences at the DMA are targeted towards young children with their caregivers, strive to be accessible to different learning styles, and incorporate playful experiences for early learners.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art

The Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It is a very large institution, as evidenced by their 2012 annual budget of almost 80 million dollars. The institution is currently in the final phases of a long-term strategic planning process, which established the vision of the museum to be as follows: “Fulfilling our role as a great civic institution, the Philadelphia Museum of Art will be the cultural heart of our city, an inspiring place that is welcoming to all. Through creative use of our well-renowned collections, the Museum will bring the past into lively conversation with the present, spurring imagination and helping us see the world and ourselves anew through the beauty and power of art.” The collections are also at the forefront of the PMA’s educational philosophy. As expressed by an interviewee, “We have an overall goal of connecting visitors to the collection.” The PMA’s educational philosophy also incorporates a family-focused approach into its object-based learning strategies.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art has been offering some form of early learning experiences for decades; in fact, one of their programs, “Early Bird Read and Look,” celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2013. This program pairs a picture book experience with a gallery tour and targets age 3 to 5. PMA also offers a program called “Tours for Tots,” which reimagines the gallery tour with activities for young children and families. Another experience, “Family Studio,” offers a drop-in art-making experience for parents and preschool-age children. All these experiences are guided by a multimodal approach, and programs are structured to be accessible to children with different learning styles.

The Walters Art Museum

The Walters Art Museum is located in Baltimore, Maryland, and like the Dallas Museum of Art, is open to the public free of charge. Their budget in the fiscal year 2012 was 12 million dollars. The Walters was founded in the early 20th century from a private collection, and the institution's goal since that time has been to welcome the Baltimore community to view and learn from the collections. According to their mission statement, "The Walters Art Museum brings art and people together for enjoyment, discovery, and learning. We strive to create a place where people of every background can be touched by art. We are committed to exhibitions and programs that will strengthen and sustain our community." Their overall educational philosophy is in keeping with this commitment to collections accessibility. The Walters' interviewee explained, "The broadest, or biggest, objective is to share the collection with the public and use the collection to ignite curiosity, discovery, and always incorporating this element of fun."

The Walters offers a wide range of opportunities for early learners, and has had some form of early learning experiences available since the 1980s. They have three main programs that serve this audience, and their programs are connected by an overall goal to promote skills related to school-readiness. The Walters partners with the Maryland State Department of Education, and also participates in a city-wide effort in Baltimore called "Countdown to Kindergarten." Most of their programs follow a defined 90-minute workshop structure, which incorporates story time, a gallery tour, and a hands-on art making activity. The Walters' "ArtKids Preschool Program" and "ArtTots Program" are both constructed in this manner, and the overall teaching style also strives to include adults in the learning process. They also offer similar programs for preschool and daycare groups. The Walters early learning programs focus

on developing social, emotional, and cognitive skills that contribute to the larger overall goal of school-readiness.

Research Question 1: Reasons Art Museums Target Early Learners

Each case study museum mentioned different motivations, goals, and opportunities that led them to create their current program offerings for early learners. Despite the diversity of reasons for catering to this audience, a few key themes emerged – including institutional motivations, audience-specific motivations, and renewed attention on and resources for early learning on a national scale.

Institutional Motivations

In some cases, interviewees referred to building renovations or expansion as providing an opportunity for reaching this new audience. For example, the interviewee from the Crocker Art Museum mentioned that a recent building expansion in 2010 gave them the space to fulfill a growing goal to serve families with young children. She explained, “It was really after we tripled our space with the expansion that we tripled our programming spaces, so we could serve more families.” The Crocker was not able to program for families in their older facility, and the expansion gave them the space to serve this audience. The Dallas Museum of Art experienced a renovation of its intergenerational learning space that prompted a reassessment of the space’s possible uses. The Dallas interviewee noted, “So five and a half years ago the museum completely re-did the child/family space, and re-did our approach for what we were going to use the space for.” Dallas was already serving early learners in other capacities, but used the opportunity of renovation to change and add new experiences. The Crocker Art Museum and the Dallas Museum of Art both experienced changes in the physical landscape of their museums,

which in turn created opportunities for them to rethink their approaches and serve new audiences.

Similarly, other reasons given for serving early learners were directly related to the institution's goals and mission. The Philadelphia Museum of Art, for example, recently finished a 5-year strategic plan in which "families are implicated across the board." The PMA's interviewee explained that the strategic plan sets forth the goal of doubling the PMA's family audience in the next five years – an audience of which early learners and their caregivers play a key role. Two other case studies, the Dallas Museum of Art and the Walters Art Museum, both made connections between the early learner audience and their missions. An educator from the Walters Art Museum noted that the institution's mission to be accessible to the diverse spectrum of the Baltimore community includes targeting community members as early as possible. She said, "So, specifically with early learners, it's our division's philosophy and mission to really bring in the audience that we're trying to capture - so Baltimore community - as early as possible." Similarly, the interviewee from the Dallas Art Museum connected the mission of community accessibility to early learners. As she illustrated, "For me, it's a natural fit. Our goal to reach out to our entire community and make sure our entire community feels welcome includes people from difference neighborhoods, but also includes people of different ages. We want a two-year-old to feel just as welcome here as a dignified art-lover."

Audience-Specific Motivations

While some reasoning for offering early learning experiences was related to internal factors, there was also attention given to external factors that prompted museums to serve the audience of young children. Within this theme, there was a cluster of responses related to the specific characteristics of the early learner and family audience. For example, there seemed to be

agreement among most of the sites that there is positive impact in connecting with children at this formative developmental stage. However, the reasons behind “early intervention” seemed to vary based on institutional goals and assumptions.

The Crocker Art Museum referenced a desire to build their future audience, and highlighted the fact that, “Kids are the future visitors of the museum, and it's important to establish those relationships with them at an early stage.” Along similar lines, the interview participant from the Philadelphia Museum of Art mentioned a study which “showed that early exposure to culture was the biggest factor in lifelong participation” in cultural institutions. However, she also emphasized the potential for memory-making in this learning stage, and said, “And with early learners, the potential is there to cement deep memories at a very early stage.” The interviewee from the Columbus Museum of Art also discussed the importance of connecting with young children, and noted, “It’s essential to start with them early, and build those relationships and build those capacities.” The Walters Art Museum made connections between reaching very young children and their goal to develop school-readiness skills. The interviewee explained, “We’ve obviously found that the earlier we can bring children in, the stronger their connection not only to the works of art, but to being prepared for school.” The Dallas Museum of Art focused more of their discussion on the family audience, but expressed the desire to help “families really grow up here at the museum.” These five sites all seemed to agree that there is something inherently valuable and important in providing learning experiences for young children, and that early intervention is crucial.

Many of the case studies also referenced perceived needs and/or high demand for early learning and family programming. In the case of the Columbus Museum of Art, the interviewee discussed the fact that their programs fulfill a “creative need” in early learning opportunities. She

noted that their Director of Education was “just really seeing - I don't want to say seeing gaps - I would say, really areas of need.” Two interviewees also noted that the audience of parents and young children were already attending the museum, and so they developed programming for this pre-existing demand. For example, the interviewee from the Crocker Art Museum explained, “more and more parents are coming to programs - and they bring their kids anyway.” Similarly, the Dallas Museum of Art also discussed the “Family Day” program in particular that was created for the “stroller crowd,” because “they were already coming.” She went on to say, “So we thought, ‘Why not make it a special day for them?’” Also, museum interviewees referenced the concrete fact that their programs fill up consistently or have long waiting lists – which implies their awareness of a high audience demand. The Walters Art Museum interviewee recalled that when their programs first started, “they really took off and have grown tremendously.” The interviewee from Dallas also made mentions of long program waiting lists, and steady growth of programming options due to audience demand. Across the board, these case study sites reportedly saw early learners and their caregivers as creating demand for, and even needing, early learning experiences in art museums.

Renewed Attention and Resources for Early Learning

While not as prevalent as some other motivations, a distinct theme emerged concerning the connection between institutional early learning initiatives and increased focus on the importance of early learning nationwide. The Columbus Museum of Art interviewee noted, “Early learning has increasingly become a bigger focus for us. I think it's gotten a lot of national attention; as well as local, regional, and statewide attention. In part because a lot of research is coming out that shows... the impact you have on early learners makes a huge difference.” The Crocker Art Museum’s interviewee also referred to this area of research resulting in renewed

attention to the early learner audience. She explained, “I think part of the impetus is the brain research that's come out helping people understand the importance of what happens between birth and age five. So that's drawn a lot more attention to the importance of serving that audience.”

In two cases, interviewees made direct connections between this increased attention and the resources made available to them, specifically state and/or federal grants. The Crocker explained that their recently built space “Tot Land,” and public library partner program “Art Packs,” were both funded by the First 5 education initiative of the State of California. The interviewee from the Walters Art Museum referred to this trend more generally, and said, “It's just become more apparent that there's a need and that there are resources to support these kinds of programs.”

Research Question 2: Principles and Practices that Guide Early Learning Experiences

Data from case study museums suggests that these sites are approaching the development and delivery of early learning experiences in very different ways. However, there are clearly some overarching themes across the sites relative to their guiding principles and practices. This section describes these overarching themes as they relate to a) philosophies that inform practice; b) family-oriented approaches to serving early learners; c) program elements; and d) the role of evaluation in early learning experiences.

Philosophies that Inform Practice

Case study art museums articulated diverse philosophies that inform the development and delivery of their early learning experiences. The Columbus Museum of Art put a priority on creativity, imagination, and George Szekeley’s ideas about play; and recently adopted a Reggio Emilia approach towards early learning. The Crocker Art Museum uses a very family-centered

philosophy, and views hands-on art making as an important outlet for self-expression. The Dallas Museum of Art draws on many different theorists – including constructivists Piaget and Vygotsky, as well as Howard Gardner and Mihaly Csikszentimihalyi. Dallas also placed a high value on play in the learning process. The Philadelphia Museum of Art has adopted a multimodal approach, and their educators create curriculum that will be accessible to many different learning styles. The Walters Art Museum also reported using a multimodal approach, while emphasizing flexibility and following the lead and interests of the children. These diverse philosophies intersect in the way they all express a foundation of being learner-centered.

The case study art museums also seemed to agree that early learning experiences should be predominantly focused on the learners, their interests, and the many ways in which they learn. A couple of the case study museums articulated this philosophy directly, while in others it emerged in the discussion of how their programs are actually implemented. The Columbus Museum of Art applies some principles from the Reggio Emilia concept of “emergent curriculum,” and the interviewee remarked that too often adults “don’t trust children, we don’t let them drive the curriculum, we don’t let them act as artists so often.” This idea of being student-centered is also at the forefront of the Walters’ philosophical approach. They “focus on constructivist theories, and the idea that it should be student-centered.” The Walters’ staff member who was interviewed explained, “When I’m creating curriculum, what I’m really trying to keep in mind is the lead educator as facilitator for student-led learning.” These case studies directly highlight the learner-centered foundation of early learning experiences in art museums.

Another way in which these learner-centered philosophies are expressed is in the understanding that all learners are different, and the intentional creation of opportunities for early learners to access the experience in different ways. For example, the interviewee from the

Philadelphia Museum of Art explained in detail, “Our approach is multimodal, so we think about various points of entry... So if we're going to see 3 or 4 objects on a tour we make sure that each of those stops offers something a little bit different so that we can hope to connect with all the different learners in our group.” This idea was echoed in the Walters’ philosophy, as the interviewee highlighted the structure of their 90-minute workshop model, saying, “...in those 90 minutes there's an opportunity for all of our young learners to succeed using different, multimodal methods.” The Dallas Museum of Art also mentioned Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, and noted, “...we appeal to a variety of learning styles.” Columbus’s Reggio Emilia philosophy highlights children’s diverse ways of learning and communicating, which are called the “100 Languages of Learning.” In summary, while the case study sites subscribed to varying philosophies and theoretical frameworks, what they had in common was a central focus on the learner. Interviewees emphasized the importance of building on learner’s prior knowledge and interest, creating opportunities for learners to have some choice and control within the experience, and providing multiple access points for content and skills.

Early Learners in Context: Family Approaches

One theme that emerged consistently throughout the interviews was a family-oriented approach to serving early learners. Many professionals acknowledged that young children often visit art museums in the context of their families. Two of the case study museums, the Walters and Columbus Museum of Art, also see young children in context of preschool class and teacher experiences, but both of these sites also emphasized their family approaches as significant in their overall philosophy. So, while not every program at every site targeted the whole family, each site had at least one family-focused program and mentioned the importance of this

approach. As the interviewee from the Philadelphia Museum of Art observed, “Three-year-olds do not bring themselves to the museum.”

Family approaches seem to provide these case studies an overarching framework for approaching the audience of early learners, and family-focused programs were more numerous overall than the preschool class programs. For example, the interviewee from the Crocker Art Museum explained, “...we're thinking about the family unit, and we try not to do things just for the children, but we always try to keep the adults in mind.” This theme was also evidenced in the overarching approach of the Dallas Museum of Art, which views the family approach, and specifically parental involvement in the learning process, as something that sets it apart from other early learning experiences in its local community. The interviewee explained, “I think we try to involve parents so much in our classes. That they are an active part of the learning sets us apart from other organizations.” Similarly, the Walters Art Museum highlighted a family-centered framework, and explained, “We're advocating for intergenerational learning...it's a whole family experience.” Even the Columbus Museum of Art, which until this month focused their programming on preschool class fieldtrips, is starting a new program this month that targets the whole family, and in fact, “Our outcomes are actually written with the whole family unit in mind.” Overall, these art museums emphasized their approaches to early learners as visitors in the context of family groups, and this philosophy has framed the types of programs, curricula, and spaces they have created.

One of the ways in which this family-focused approach is most evident is in the clear emphasis placed by many interviewees on creating a logistically family-friendly experience. Many of the institutions have thought through the whole family experience from the time they walk in to the time they leave, and many have developed more family-friendly policies through

audience feedback. As the Crocker Art Museum's representative noted, "When you're offering programs for families with young kids, the details really matter." Another interviewee from the Philadelphia Museum of Art echoed this idea, and observed that parents often have logistical concerns because they do not know what to expect from the museum experience. Parents want to know basic things like, "Can I get the stroller in the door? Where is the bathroom? Can I bring a snack?" The Walters Art Museum takes this into consideration with their program model, which provides breaks and check-ins to allow families to leave and rejoin the group as needed. Both the Crocker Art Museum and Dallas Museum of Art emphasized the need to work with other departments – like security and visitor services – to make the museum a more welcoming space for families with young children. The interviewee from Dallas explained, "You need people like your visitor services staff to be on board, and you need security, and you need food services - all of those things play a part in whether or not a family with young children feels comfortable in our museum." Many of the case study museums are looking beyond the isolated program or learning experience, and seek to provide a comfortable, holistic experience for early learners and their families.

Another theme that emerged in the realm of family-focused experiences was the ways in which many museums see their programs as opportunities to model teaching strategies to the parents and caregivers. The Walters Art Museum's interviewee explained, "We keep in mind that when we're teaching, we're not just teaching the children, but that we're also modeling for the adults, how they can engage their child in questions, without us there." This focus on modeling for parents essentially gives them the tools to continue the learning process beyond the single program experience. Another interviewee from Dallas noted, "We think of ways to involve them (parents) in the process, and also try to have teaching moments with them."

Philadelphia tied this to their multimodal approach, and expressed the goal that their programs show parents many different ways their child could connect with art. For the Crocker, this practice served to make the museum a more accessible, welcoming place. The interviewee from this institution noted, “We also try in all of our early childhood programs, to use them as opportunities to model for the parents - how to talk to a child about art, how to visit the galleries with your child, because sometimes that's a real barrier.” Across these case studies, sites viewed early learning experiences not just as a way to reach the child, but as a way to model long-term teaching strategies to the adults who come with them.

Program Elements

In addition to themes that emerged in the overarching philosophies that guide the development of early learning experiences, a few themes emerged in the practical implementation of these experiences. Each case study had a different approach to creating curricula, but in the end, many program elements overlapped across the group.

On some level, each case study museum incorporated hands-on activities or art making as an element in their programs. While they each approached this element with a different level of focus or importance, the theme that young children “learn by doing” was consistent across the sites. The interviewee from the Philadelphia Museum of Art expressed, “I think to really cater to the needs of early learners, you need to integrate hands-on opportunities.” The respondent from Dallas emphasized the need for young children to be active in a hands-on way, and explained, “They have to have really concrete experiences.” These museums saw hands-on experiences as appealing to the unique learning style of young children, and as a tool for fostering active participation and meaning-making. For example, the Walters Art Museum wanted to provide early learners with “...as many opportunities for learning by doing and just really taking part –

whether it's hands-on materials in the galleries or activities that are open-ended.” The Columbus Museum of Art saw the hands-on art making element as a jumping off point for children making connections with creativity and the collections. Through evaluation, “We realized we need to start with children's making and thinking and their artwork first, and then have them reflect on artwork from the collection.” From the point of view of case study museums, hands-on activities and art-making are an important way to engage with the learning style of young children, and an effective way to make connections between their own creativity and works in the collection.

Another theme that emerged in the implementation and structure of early learning experiences was an emphasis on collections and spending time in the museum galleries. For some of the sites, this was mentioned offhand or simply visible in their program descriptions. The Crocker Art Museum uses the galleries consistently in their programs, and the Walters Art Museum always spends time with specific works in the gallery spaces. When the Columbus Museum of Art was developing their newest program, the interviewee remarked, “We knew that we wanted to incorporate a gallery experience.” Beyond this basic fact that art museums are utilizing the galleries to engage early learners, some of the case study sites explained the collections’ central role in making the experience unique to their institution. For example, when asked what sets their early learning experiences apart from others in their community, the Philadelphia Museum of Art answered, “We have a collection...our programs are in the galleries.” When asked the same question, the interviewee from the Dallas Museum of Art answered, “I think first and foremost, obviously, we have original works of art from around the world.” Case study sites reportedly use their collections and gallery spaces to engage with early learners. In fact, some saw this element as the defining characteristic of early learning in art museums specifically.

Another widely used program element in early learning experiences across the case studies was the incorporation of stories and picture books. Interestingly, this did not come up as a point of significance in the interview questions about program elements, but it was mentioned on the questionnaire program descriptions and was also referred to in verbal explanations of different program types. For example, the Philadelphia Museum of Art has a program called “Early Bird Read and Look,” which is a gallery tour that uses picture books and activities as a way to explore the galleries. The Walters Art Museum and the Crocker Art Museum both mentioned that they begin their programs with the reading of a story, before moving on to the galleries or activities. The Dallas Museum of Art listed the use of picture books in its description of the “Arturo’s Art and Me” program. So while interviewees did not discuss the particular significance of this program element, it was clearly incorporated into many of the programs.

In addition to the concrete elements of hands-on activities, being in the galleries, and using picture books, a few of the case study museums emphasized the inclusion of play-based experiences in their programs. For a couple of the case studies, the word play was expressly used in their program descriptions on the survey. The Philadelphia Museum of Art referred to “Movement, play, and hands-on activities,” and the Walters Art Museum listed “gallery play experiences” under one of their programs. For a couple of the other case studies, play experience was a guiding and defining element of their programs. At the Columbus Museum of Art, much of their program philosophy is informed by the work of George Szekely, who argued that for young children, “play is their art.” The interviewee went on to explain that using play is important because, “...that's how they live. They solve problems through play. They learn through play. That's how they role-play. They have incredible imaginative capacities.” This playful, experience-based approach was also a defining element for the Dallas Museum of Art. The

interviewee remarked, “I think it's important that museum educators don't think that play is a bad word. Often we're worried about kids touching art or kids being loud or rowdy, but I think harnessing their natural love of being playful is really such a powerful way to teach them.” Many of the early learning programs incorporated elements of play, and some even saw play experiences as the most important element of their programs.

The Role of Evaluation in Early Learning Experiences

All five case study museums reported using formal or informal evaluation mechanisms to maintain and understand their early learning experiences. While they described slightly different approaches to evaluation, they all incorporate it into their long-term practice. The Philadelphia Museum of Art indicated that it has conducted a combination of formal and informal evaluation of its early learning experiences. The interviewee described using evaluation to understand their audience better, and said, “I think it's a good way for us to keep in touch with the expectations that families are bringing into it. It doesn't necessarily change our teaching strategies. It can help change the way we talk about what we do. It helps us with the littler things too, like the time of day we offer things.” The Crocker Art Museum similarly indicated that they had changed the logistics – such as meeting place – in response to audience feedback. They also have evaluated their early learning experiences informally, and are currently undergoing a formal evaluation of one program. These institutions use evaluation as a way to get crucial feedback about the experience directly from the audience.

Some of the other museums are using evaluation to make changes to their programs and determine what kind of impact they are having on their audience. At the Dallas Museum of Art, one formal evaluation helped them to “...think more carefully about the parent-child activities we set up during class, and the kind of handouts we created that went home with them after

class.” In another informal evaluation for a grant funder, educators at DMA used a set of observational tools to track children’s learning. The interviewee explained, “We got a good sense of [how] what we’re doing is resulting in learning experiences for children.” The Walters Art Museum’s focus on school readiness led them to conduct extensive formal evaluations of their programs, and they also gather informal parent feedback after every program. A research fellow spent a year at the Walters evaluating their early learning experiences, and they have used her work to modify their programs. The research found that, “...there was retention from month to month, and the ability to build off of prior knowledge was pretty incredible.” In these cases, museums are using evaluation to change their programs and to illustrate learning impacts.

The Columbus Museum of Art has a unique evaluation structure that uses the Reggio Emilia model of continuous documentation. With this method, educators are “observing, recording, interpreting, and sharing” the process of young children’s learning in their programs. Since all of their programs are written with specific outcomes, they use this process to discover how they are meeting their goals and are continuously changing their approaches. For example, a partnership program with local Head Start preschools experiences initial challenges due to a disconnect between the distinct points of view of museum educators and preschool teachers. The evaluation allowed the museum to show the teachers how their program aligned with the school’s standards. The interviewee explained, “They did see that what we were doing for them was hitting their standards, and they could back map to that. We were getting at mastery, we were getting at imagination, we were getting at all the stuff they needed to – just in a very different way.” The Columbus Museum of Art consistently documents the ways that children are learning in their programs, and uses this information to grow and change their approaches over time.

Research Question 3: Impact Goals for Individuals, Families, and Community

The specific impacts that art museums are seeking to make with their early learning experiences are as different as the ways they approach them. Again, a few key themes emerged in the types of impacts that these case study art museums seek to make with their programs, including impacts on individual children, families, and communities.

Impact: Individual Early Learners

Many of the case study museums mentioned social and emotional building blocks as intended outcomes of their programs. For example, the interviewee from the Columbus Museum of Art expressed, “And so for them to value their imagination is a big part of it. I think developing a sense of self-confidence and awareness around that.” This idea of self-confidence and self-expression was echoed in other interviews as well. The interviewee from Dallas remarked, “Creativity and confidence are two really important things I would like them to walk away with.” The Dallas interviewee also connected this confidence to creative self-expression, and said, “Because we really want kids to walk away feeling that art is something that they can enjoy and can do, and that it's a way for them to express what they're feeling.” At the Crocker, the interviewee hoped that children would leave, “...being able to look at a work of art, and being able to share their ideas about it... it takes a lot of confidence for the child to be able to speak up and share his or her opinion.” In addition to the sense of confidence and expression, a couple of the sites mentioned that they emphasize collaboration in their programs. For example, the Columbus Museum of Art explained, “...we really encourage collaboration through learning.” While each of these had a different level of importance for each site, all are clearly related to impact areas of social and emotional development.

Many of the case study institutions also placed emphasis on young children's cognitive development, specifically in the areas of literacy, language, and visual interpretation skills. The interviewee from the Crocker noted that children will pick up language naturally from hearing adults use new words and discuss art. The Dallas Museum of Art also mentioned that they hope children develop a "good visual vocabulary." The Walters Art Museum went so far as to emphasize certain vocabulary words in every program, and hands out cards to parents to use at home. Tied closely to this idea of language is that of literacy, or setting the early foundations for reading. The interviewee from Dallas explained, "...learning to look at art is a really strong foundation for learning how to read. A lot of the things you do for both of those activities are so similar." At the Walters, "...literacy is something we work into every class." For the Crocker Art Museum, both socio-emotional and cognitive development are tied to the ability to observe and interpret visual information in art. The interviewee remarked, "To be able to interpret visual information, I think it's a skill all kids will need...we also hope that it translates into good critical thinking skills, problem solving, creativity, relationships, the ability to collaborate." Case study museums hope that teaching young children to look at art will contribute to crucial areas of cognition and developmental building blocks.

Interestingly, while case study museums emphasized these developmental building blocks and skills, they de-emphasized content-based learning. All of those who directly referred to areas of social, emotional, and cognitive skills also made some reference to the relative unimportance of the actual content. For the Walters Art Museum, the interviewee explained, "I would say that the content component is perhaps least important." The Dallas Museum of Art echoed a similar idea, and said, "It doesn't matter to me if they walk away knowing that this is a Monet or that's a Mondrian." The Columbus Museum of Art's interviewee went into the most

detail on this topic and explained that children are entirely capable of learning the content, but it simply isn't significant or important for this age group. She remarked, "And children at this age can recognize and memorize really quickly, so they can pick out what a Picasso is - but who cares?" She went on to sum up her advice to the rest of the field and said, "Art museums don't need to be imparting knowledge to preschoolers about art right now...I really believe that we don't need to teach children at this age how to hold a paintbrush or who Monet is." Collectively, the case studies seem to agree that it is more important to help children develop as lifelong learners than it is to teach them any specific content.

Impact: Families

Case study art museums also articulated intended impacts at the level of the whole family group. Some of these ideas were fairly diverse, with a couple museums bringing up ideas of families having fun together and making memories, and others discussing the value of creativity in family life. Across the board, however, case study data suggest that art museums are using early learning experiences as a vehicle to bring families into the museum and to help them feel more comfortable with it as a family space.

Two case study institutions mentioned fun or creating enjoyable memories as an intended impact of their early learning programs. At the Philadelphia Museum of Art, they see their programs as a critical part of family's leisure time activities. The interviewee said, "But our goal, our mantra, is spending creative, quality time as a family." The Dallas Museum of Art also mentioned this element of fun, and added, "And that it's fun, too!" The interviewee from the Walters Art Museum focused on the memory-making and shared experience, and she remarked, "It's a time they have to do something on their own and to connect with one another and to build memories and experiences." A few of the case study museums hope that families use the time

spent in the early learning programs to have fun and make memories together through shared experiences.

Another group of intended impacts revolved around the idea that early learning programs help families see the value of creative experiences as part of their family life. This impact area is at the forefront for the Columbus Museum of Art. When discussing their new “Young Child Studio” program, the interviewee explained, “Our outcomes are actually written with the family unit in mind. One of them specifically being that every member of the family values each other's creative pursuits, or that they all play an equal part in creative pursuits.” Along similar lines, the interviewee from the Dallas Museum of Art explained that a successful family experience is one that extends beyond the walls of the museum. She remarked, “To me, that's a really successful moment - when you can see that it's gone beyond what we've set up at the museum, that it's become part of their life.” For both Columbus and Dallas, the impact of families valuing art experiences, creativity, and integrating those things into their family's life is important; these themes were not evident in the interviews for the Crocker, Walters, or Philadelphia.

There was one impact area that was mentioned by every single case study institution. Each of the interviewees mentioned that they intend their programs to help families to feel welcome, comfortable, and confident in their ability to be together and learn in the museum. The interviewee from the Columbus Museum of Art explained the outcomes of their new family-focused program, and said, “...we want families to feel more comfortable exploring the museum together.” At the Crocker Art Museum, education staff have t-shirts with the phrase “Your Family is our Family,” and the interviewee remarked, “And so part of it is really trying to help families feel welcome.” The Dallas Museum of Art discussed this idea of welcoming families into the museum in relation to their early learner space “Arturo's Nest.” The interviewee noted,

“Our hope is always that as they come back to the nest over and over again, and just become really comfortable here and enjoy it - then from that good experience, they'll venture out into the galleries and look at art with their child.”

Some of the interviewees extended this conversation to discuss the perceived barriers many parents and families experience in bringing their child to an art museum. The interviewee from the Philadelphia Museum of Art explained, “Because there's a bigger barrier for entry, there's a big hurdle there... So even learning that the museum is an option - it's a big thing.” Similarly, the Crocker Art Museum's representative observed, “Sometimes parents feel intimidated, or they just don't know what to say.” Because of these perceived barriers, the case study museums want to change this perception and help families access the museum for fun and for learning. The interviewee from the Walters Art Museums summed up this theme, and said, “I think ultimately what we really want is for them not just for them to appreciate what the museums has, but to feel confident and comfortable that they can use that as an opportunity to connect with and educate their children.” These case study museums really want to get the message across to families that they are welcome in the museum and have the tools to have a fun learning experience there with their child.

Impact: Community

The intended community impacts of these early learning experiences was much more difficult for interviewees to articulate. In general, people expressed that they innately felt these programs had a positive, beneficial impact on their communities, but did not necessarily know how to describe or measure that impact. The answers that did come up revolved around the themes of outreach to underserved audiences, overall quality of life, and the importance of creativity in society more generally.

Both the Walters Art Museum and the Dallas Museum of Art discussed their community outreach efforts when asked about the specific benefit of these programs to their community. These two museums have free admission models that have brought the theme of accessibility for underserved audiences to the forefront of their thinking around community impact. When asked about the benefit of early learning experiences for the community, the interviewee from the Walters Art Museum responded, “I see it most in our community outreach component.” She went on to discuss some of their offsite festivals that take elements of the museum into neighborhoods that would not usually attend the museum itself. The Dallas Museum of Art also explained that their bilingual early learning space has enabled them to bring in Spanish-speaking, low income audiences. The interviewee highlighted this, and said, “So because we have this space just for early learners, we've been able to bring so many of those groups to the museum who probably would've never come before.” When thinking about community benefit, the Walters and Dallas museums both made connections to their outreach to underserved communities, and see an inherent benefit in reaching these audiences.

The Crocker Art Museum had a unique perspective on its community impact. The interviewee framed the larger benefit in terms of their role in actually creating a community and participating with parents in the journey of teaching children. The interviewee explained that in their programs they, “...really try to support and nurture the parents and help them build community among the parents.” In this way, they not only help parents, but are participating in the broader community landscape of raising children. They adhere to the philosophy that it “takes a village” to raise a child, and the Crocker’s interviewee explained, “Parents really need to network and have support. It’s like the whole ‘it takes a village’... we’re trying to be part of the

village.” Overall, they see this as contributing to the overall quality of life for families in their immediate community.

In addition to outreach and overall quality of life, some of the case study museums focused on the specific value of creativity for their communities. The interviewee from the Philadelphia Museum of Art noted, “I think that it's always good in a big, civic landscape to have creative opportunities.” The Columbus Museum of Art took this a step further and discussed the possible long-term benefits of instilling creativity in young children. The interviewee explained, “I have to imagine that if we are equipping students with these skills of imagination and play, and how important that is, then that's going to have an impact for them later in their own lives and in their own communities and schools.” Some of the case studies viewed creativity and imagination as important values and skills that they contribute to their broader communities.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

This research study sought to describe the current practices, philosophies, and purposes of early learning experiences in art museums. Using five exemplary institutions as case studies, these results suggest preliminary hypotheses about why art museums target the audience of early learners, how they plan and implement early learning experiences, and what impacts they are trying to have at the level of the individual, family, and community.

The existing literature suggests that art museums are well positioned to engage in nationwide early learning efforts (Shaffer, 2012a; Bowers, 2012; IMLS, 2013); however, there is little information available about the specific reasons and circumstances that have prompted individual art museums to create early learning programming. Some studies point to increased national attention and government resources (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) as a contributing factor, but the full picture appears more complicated. Findings from this research study suggest that there is no single defining reason that museums offer early learning experiences as part of their educational programming. Rather, there seemed to be multiple reasons for serving this audience, ranging from institutional motivations to field-wide motivations. Internally, some museums found alignment between their institution's growth, change, or purpose and the audience of young children. In addition, there was something inherently important about reaching children at a formative stage and responding to real and perceived needs of this audience. Externally, there was awareness of the growing national trend towards focusing on early learning – and seizing the opportunity of resources, in the form of federal- and state-funded grants, for example. These themes interweave to suggest that art museums may come to serve early learners through multiple motivators, some internal and some

external. These themes also suggest that reflective practice – in this case meaning a cycle of setting goals, listening to your audience, and responding accordingly – may provide opportunities for individual art museums create early learning experiences.

Case study findings indicate that while art museums may approach and construct their early learning experiences in different ways, there may be several commonalities in philosophy, implementation, and evaluation that work together to suggest potential best practices in early learning experiences. In their own ways, each case study institution adopted a learner-centered philosophy that catered to the diverse needs, interests, and learning styles of young children. This finding confirms existing literature (Munley, 2012; Anderson et. al., 2003) noting that children’s museum experiences are highly idiosyncratic – emerging from their personal interests and learning styles.

Case study museums also shared a family-oriented approach, in which they tend to situate early learners not just within a preschool learning context, but within a family learning context as well. This perspective led to an increased focus on meeting the specific logistical needs of the family audience throughout their museum experience. Interestingly, all of the case study museums emphasized the importance of programming not just to early learners, but to their parents/caregivers as well, giving them tools to extend the learning experience beyond the isolated program. This is a theme common to the literature on family learning in museums, suggesting some potentially useful overlap that might be further explored between these two audience groups (Adams, Luke & Ancelet, 2010; Wolf & Wood, 2012). There were also many specific program elements that emerged as effective across the cases, including hands-on activities, storytelling, play experiences, and spending time in the galleries with original works of art. It is also important to note that each case study uses evaluation in critical ways to inform

their approaches to early learning experiences, suggesting a cycle of feedback and reflective practice that may be another key component of best practices in this area, something advocated by Bowers (2012).

Reggio Emilia-inspired curriculum could serve as another jumping off point for new discussions about early learning in art museums. This educational philosophy has already found wide support in the children's museum community, as evidenced by in the strong presence of Reggio-inspired sessions at upcoming the Association of Children's Museums National Conference (Association of Children's Museums, 2014) and their majority presence on a 2013 research trip to the town of Reggio Emilia in Italy (Vergeront, 2013). Multiple mentions of Reggio Emilia ideology in this study suggest it may be coming to the attention of art museums as well, and it certainly has the potential to become a defining trend for early learning in museums nationwide.

Turning to impacts, the results of this study suggest that art museums want to make a difference in the lives of individual children, families, and their broader communities. For children, many of the hoped-for impacts revolve around the development of "building blocks" for lifelong learning. All of the case studies emphasized themes of cognitive and socio-emotional skills over content knowledge or memorization. By far, it was more important to these art museums for children to build skills for lifelong learning than it was for them to gain knowledge about artists or artistic terminology. For families, across the board case study art museums intend that their early learning experiences make the art museum a more accessible and family-friendly environment. And while it was more difficult for the interviewees to extend these impacts to the community level, a few themes emerged around audience outreach, family quality of life, and the power of creativity in their communities.

On an individual level, these case study's impact goals align well with the existing literature and current thinking about art museums and the potential impact of their early learning experiences. The NEA (2004) highlighted the long-term learning benefits of early exposure to the arts, and described the potential outcomes around "critical reasoning, communication, and social skills" (p. 3). This idea is significantly reflected in these results, in which case study museums prioritized cognitive and socio-emotional building blocks over content-based knowledge acquisition.

Interestingly, there seems to be an element of tension between these developmental impact goals and the existing structure of some programs. Many of the early learning experiences discussed still incorporate a lot of content based on art history and artistic skill-building elements – themes that did not seem directly connected to programs' impact goals for individual children. The role of collections came up consistently as something that sets art museums apart from other early learning opportunities, but most interviewees did not make explicit connections between collections and developmental building blocks. This may suggest that this theme is not well understood or articulated, or possibly that some programs are not well aligned with the impact goals of encouraging socio-emotional and cognitive development.

The case study museums' thinking around family and community-level impact was less aligned with the literature. While professionals like Shaffer (2012a) and Bowers (2012) emphasize the community-wide system of early learning, it was difficult for many of the interviewees to articulate those connections or benefits. (The Columbus Museum of Art was the exception in this case.) Instead of focusing on broader community benefits, interviewees focused on their intention to change the image and role of art museums in family life. All the case studies sought to help families feel comfortable in the museum and to give them tools to learn in the

galleries with their children. These impact goals interestingly speak to Shaffer's (2011) observation that art museums are rethinking their audiences, how they create learning environments, and how they serve and become more fully accessible to their local communities. These results suggest that case study museums may be more motivated by a new vision of the art museum as an accessible, family-friendly environment – rather than the goal of contributing to nationwide efforts towards quality early childhood education.

Implications

Research findings illuminate gaps in the existing body of literature concerning early learning in art museums and suggest potential implications for future practice and research. Early learning continues to garner national and field-wide attention (Shaffer, 2012a; Bowers, 2012), however, research that defines best practices and establishes the impacts of these various experiences is either lacking or not well disseminated.

This research suggests that art museums are motivated to offer early learning programming, and points to some potential, foundational best practices in this area. For practitioners, the results of this research suggest some possible approaches, practices, and questions to think about when considering the creation of early learning experiences. One of the things this research would suggest is that they consider the alignment of their institutional purpose and mission to the audience of early learners. This study also suggests that a curriculum with a distinctly learner-centered and intergenerational approach is most effective for this audience. Specifically, a few of the sites drew attention to the logistical difficulty of bringing families with young children into the museum and advised that museums new to this area should create museum-wide family-friendly policies. This research allows practitioners considering

developing early learning experiences to gain insight into the philosophies and implementation of these programs in leading art museums.

Researchers can look to this study to see evidence of art museums that are indeed offering early learning experiences – and doing it in ways that they believe have positive impacts on children, their families, and their communities. However, this descriptive case study only scratches the surface of this emerging practice, and provides almost endless avenues for further investigation. For example, researchers may consider the new trend of Reggio Emilia curriculum and discover the ways in which it may inherently represent many of the emerging “best practices” discussed in this study. This study may also provide a foundation for more in-depth case studies that could pull more data from curricula analysis, observations, and evaluation reports – and therefore make direct connections between practice and impact. And finally, the lack of field-wide knowledge and best practices literature calls for more research that looks at current early learning experiences on a broad, national level. Further research could assist in the creation of basic tools for establishing quality early learning experiences in art museums, and could also provide evidence of the positive impact of art museums’ early learning experiences bring to the broader educational landscape.

Final Thoughts

It is my hope that this study can serve as a foundation for new research, exploration, and dialogue about early learning experiences in art museums. Every indication from the literature and professionals interviewed points to a need and desire for research like this to be disseminated and shared throughout the field. There is huge untapped potential in conversations between individual institutions, between researchers and museums, and between art museums and their audiences. We know that art museums are serving early learners in diverse and inspiring ways,

and there is something significant in learning from those who have honed and refined these experiences over time. I hope the themes and questions that emerge from this research can help art museums begin to think about the significance of the early learning audience and spark learning conversations across the country.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pre-Interview Questionnaire Content

Page 1: Contact Information and Project Information

Lead Researcher: Julia Miller // Email: julia.miller36@gmail.com

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jessica Luke// Email: jjluke@uw.edu

I am asking you to participate in a research study that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to describe the developing best practices of early childhood learning experiences in art museums. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. As a reminder, the identity of your museum will be revealed in the final results of this study. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me or my advisor using the contact information I have provided above. If you consent to participate in this online questionnaire, please click "I agree" below to continue.

I agree

This survey is intended to collect basic data about your institution and the learning experiences it offers for early learners (children age 2-6). The information gained from this survey will be used to inform the interview, which will take place at a later date. This survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time!

Page 2: About Your Institution

1. What is the name of your institution?
2. What is your mission statement?
3. What is your institution's approximate annual budget?
 - a. \$350,000 and under
 - b. \$350,000 - \$499,999
 - c. \$500,000 - \$999,999
 - d. \$1 million - \$2.9 million
 - e. \$3 million - \$4.9 million
 - f. \$5 million - \$ 14.9 million
 - g. \$15 million and above
4. What department do you work in?
5. What is your name and title?

Page 3, 4, 5: Early Learning at Your Museum

In this section, please identify the early learning experiences available at your museum. "Early learners" is defined as children age 2-6. Please include any programs that target families with young children. This section will inform interview questions about specific experiences.

If your museum has offered more than three early learning experiences in the time frame given, please choose the three you deem most successful.

1. What is the name of one early learning experience at your museum?
2. How would you categorize this early learning experience?
 - a. Ongoing Program
 - b. Class or Camp
 - c. Activity
 - d. Dedicated Space
 - e. Special Event
 - f. Other (please specify)
3. How is this experience primarily funded?
 - a. Grants (Private Funder)
 - b. Grants (Public Funder)
 - c. General Operating Budget
 - d. Other (please specify)
4. In one or two sentences, please describe this early learning experience.
5. Has this early learning experience been evaluated?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. If you answered YES to the previous question, how would you categorize this evaluation?
 - a. Informal
 - b. Formal (within institution)
 - c. Formal (consultant)
 - d. Other (please specify)
7. Do you offer any other learning experiences at your museum?*

*This question appeared at the end of the first two pages titled "Early Learning Experiences at Your Museum." Respondents could fill out this information for up to three different early learning experiences.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire! I look forward to our interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at julia.miller36@gmail.com, or contact my advisor Jessica Luke at jjluke@uw.edu.

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Emerging Practices: Art Museums and Early Learning Experiences Interview Guide

Julia Miller // Email: julia.miller36@gmail.com

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jessica Luke, Museology Graduate Program, University of Washington

Phone: 206-685-3496 // Email: jjluke@uw.edu

I am asking you to participate in a research study that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to describe the developing best practices of early childhood learning experiences in art museums. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. As a reminder, the identity of your museum will be revealed in the final results of this study. This interview will be recorded, and I may quote you in my final paper. I will give you the opportunity to review any direct quotes before publication. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me or my advisor using the contact information I have provided above and will leave with you. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Interview Questions

The goal of this interview is to establish an understanding of the learning experiences your museum offers to early learners. We will talk in detail about the approaches your particular institution takes to addressing this audience, as well as discussing the value of these learning experiences.

For the purposes of this research, "early learner" is defined as a child age 2-6, and "experience" could mean anything from a regularly scheduled program to a special family event with early learners in mind.

Alright, let's begin!

Part 1: Institution and Values

First, we are going to discuss the broader values and philosophies of your institution – specifically as they relate to serving the audience of early learners.

Can you tell me briefly about the overall educational philosophy and goals of (Name of Museum)?

How do early learners fit into this bigger picture? Or in other words, why is the audience of early learners a good fit for your particular museum?

Part 2: Program Development and Approach

Now we're going to shift focus a bit, and talk about the actual process of developing the early learning experiences you offer. We will also discuss the frameworks and approaches that informed this development and your current practice.

First I'd like to talk about the initial planning and inspiration for the early learning experiences at your museum.

How was the initial idea to offer early childhood programming first raised at (Name of Museum)?

When developing your early learning experiences, what are the learning theories, frameworks, or significant literature that influence your work?

Your questionnaire highlighted [describe here – program, activities, gallery, other]. Why did you choose this approach/these approaches over others?

(Observations of evaluation based on survey) From these evaluations, what did you learn or change?

In what ways are staff members involved in the ongoing development and facilitation of these early learning experiences? Is there any special training for educators who work on and facilitate these programs?

Part 3: Strategies

What do you see as the defining characteristics of your museum's early learning experiences? (If needed, provide examples: some characteristics might be something along the lines of incorporating collections, sensory exploration, hands-on art making, use of movement, family engagement, or self-directed learning, etc.)

In what specific elements do you see these defining characteristics most visible?

Part 4: Understanding Outcomes and Goals

Now we will step back a little bit from the logistics and approach of the programs, and look more at the outcomes and goals you envision for them. If your museum offers many programs, try to envision the themes and threads that connect them.

In an ideal situation, what do you hope a child would gain from participating in your early learning programming?

Do you target the whole family with your programs? If yes, what do you hope families or caregivers would gain from participating in this experience?

To get even more specific, I'm going to list 5 potential areas of impact. I'd like you to identify what you see as the most important to your museum's early learning.

- 1) Cognitive Learning (Knowledge)
- 2) Emotional Growth
- 3) Social Development
- 4) Skill Development
- 5) Attitude Change

Which of those is least important?

Part 4: The Early Learning Landscape

What sets your early programs apart from other informal learning experiences in your community?

Do you think these learning experiences benefit your broader community? In what ways?

Part 5: Best Practices and the Future of the Field

Now, looking back at all these things put together, we will talk about the future of early learning in art museums.

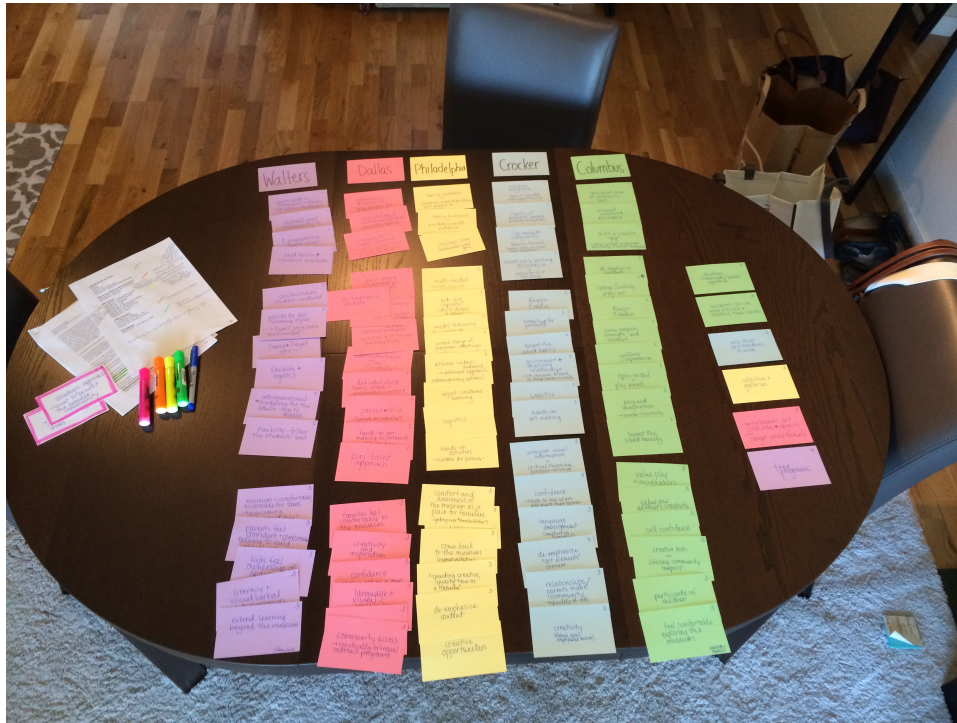
Has your staff discussed how your early learning experiences might change in the future?

In an ideal situation, what direction would your museum like to take it's early learning programming in the next 5 years?

What is the best piece of advice you would give to another art museum that is considering creating early learning experiences?

Appendix C: Data Analysis Process Photos

Themes Identified by Research Question and Case Study



Thematic Mapping and Coding by Research Question



Appendix D: Data Analysis Coding Matrix

Research Question	Theme	Sub-theme	Museum	Quote/Example		
QUESTION 1						
Why do art museums target early learners?	1. Internal/Institutional	A. Physical changes to museum space allow for new approaches	Crocker	2010 Building Expansion - "It was really after we tripled our space with the expansion that we tripled our programming spaces, so we could serve more families." (1)		
	1. Internal/Institutional	A. Physical changes to museum space allow for new approaches	Dallas	Remodel of intergenerational learning space - " So five and a half years ago the museum completely re-did the child/family space, and re-did our approach for what we were going to use the space for." (1)		
	1. Internal/Institutional	B. Aligns with the museum's overall mission and/or specific goals	Walters	"So, specifically with early learners, it's our division's philosophy and mission to really bring in the audience that we're trying to capture - so Baltimore community - as early as possible." (2)	"It's just really remarkable... just how much ownership they take over their own learning and the collection as a whole, which in itself is exactly what the mission of the museum is - to know that this collection belongs to each and every one of us in the city." (3)	

	1. Internal/Institutional	B. Aligns with the museum's overall mission and/or specific goals	Dallas	"For me, it's a natural fit. Our goal to reach out to our entire community and make sure our entire community feels welcome includes people from difference neighborhoods, but also includes people of different ages. We want a two-year-old to feel just as welcome here as a dignified art-lover." (2)	"We're very concerned with making sure that art here at the museum is accessible to our community and that our community feels welcome here... And part of that audience is the early learner crowd and their caregivers." (1)	
	1. Internal/Institutional	B. Aligns with the museum's overall mission and/or specific goals	Philadelphia	Strategic Plan - "Families are really implicated across the board." (1) Want to double the family audience in the next 5 years	"What we think of as a traditional museum-goer - that's a narrow thing, and museums are fighting for attendance. Families are one way to broaden that." (1)	
	2. Reality of Audience	A. Early intervention (influences lifelong learning and participation in the arts)	Crocker	"Kids are the future visitors of the museum, and it's important to establish those relationships with them at an early stage." (1)		
	2. Reality of Audience	A. Early intervention	Walters	"...we've obviously found that the earlier we can bring children in, the stronger their connection not only to the works of art, but to being prepared for school." (2)	Speaking about the level of comfort and self-guided learning, "...would not have existed had they not had the opportunity to come in early." (3)	
	2. Reality of Audience	A. Early intervention	Dallas	"What could we do so that families could really grow up at the museum?" (3)		

	2. Reality of Audience	A. Early intervention	Philadelphia	"And with early learners, the potential is there to cement deep memories at a very formative stage." (2)	"Early exposure is a big factor in receptiveness. So it's like an early and often kind of ballgame... (references specific study) showed that early exposure to culture was the biggest factor in lifelong participation." (8)	
	2. Reality of Audience	A. Early intervention	Columbus	"...so it's essential to start with them early, and those relationships and build those capacities." (1)		
	2. Reality of Audience	B. Audience Need/Demand	Crocker	"But it's also that more and more parents are coming to programs - and they bring their kids anyway." (1)		
	2. Reality of Audience	B. Audience Need/Demand	Dallas	First program opened, huge response and have been adding classes ever since (p. 2-3), Long waiting lists for their programs (11)	"And seeing that they were already coming we thought, Why not make it a special day for them?" In reference to the creation of Family Day for the "stroller crowd" (4)	
	2. Reality of Audience	B. Audience Need/Demand	Columbus	In reference to creative, play-based experiences: "And just really seeing - I don't want to say seeing gaps - I would say, really areas of need." (2)		
	2. Reality of Audience	B. Audience Need/Demand	Philadelphia	Main goal for the future: increase the level of programming (8)		
	2. Reality of Audience	B. Audience Need/Demand	Walters	When their first programs started, "they really took off and have grown tremendously." (2)		

	3. Research = Attention	A. Impact	Columbus	"Early learning has increasingly become a bigger focus for us. I think it's gotten a lot of national attention; as well as local, regional, and statewide attention. In part because a lot of research is coming out that shows early... the impact you have on early learners makes a huge difference." (1)		
	3. Research = Attention	A. Impact	Crocker	"I think part of the impetus is the brain research that's come out helping people understand the importance of what happens between birth and age five. So that's drawn a lot more attention to the importance of serving that audience." (1-2)		
	3. Research = Attention	B. Resources	Crocker	First 5 of California funded Tot Land and Art Pack Programs		
	3. Research = Attention	B. Resources	Walters	"It's just become more apparent that there's a need and that there are resources to support these kinds of programs." (4)		
QUESTION 2						
What principles and practices guide the development and delivery of early learning experiences?	1. Addressing the Whole Family	General	Dallas	"... in all of our children's programming, parents are involved. And we try to have a moment in the class where parents are actually being the teacher." (5)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	General	Walters	"...we're advocating for intergenerational learning...it's		

				a whole family experience." (14)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	General	Philadelphia	"I always say, 'Three year-olds do not bring themselves to the museum.' So everyone has to have a positive experience." (5-6)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	General	Columbus	For new program: "Our outcomes are actually written with the family unit in mind." (9)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	General	Crocker	"...we're thinking about the family unit, and we try not to do things just for the children, but we always try to keep the adults in mind." (3)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	A. Modeling teaching/talking about art for parents.	Philadelphia	"(Multimodal approach)...models different teaching methodologies for grown-ups that they might be able to do on their own." (3)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	A. Modeling teaching/talking about art for parents.	Dallas	"One aspect of our classes that I just feel is really important is the parent-child element. That it's not just us as museum educators teaching the kids, but we really try to think of the parents as our visitors too. And we think of ways to involve them in the process, but also have teaching moments with them." (6)		

	1. Addressing the Whole Family	A. Modeling teaching/talking about art for parents.	Walters	"We keep in mind that when we're teaching, we're not just teaching the children, but that we're also modeling for the adults, how they can engage their child in questions, without us there." (6)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	A. Modeling teaching/talking about art for parents.	Crocker	"We also try in all of our early childhood programs, to use them as opportunities to model for the parents - how to talk to a child about art, how to visit the galleries with your child, because sometimes that's a real barrier." (2-3)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	B. Whole experience - program and visit logistics matter	Philadelphia	"And prepping yourself is a big thing with little kids, you want to know - Can I get the stroller in the door? Where's the bathroom? Can I bring a snack?" (7)		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	B. Whole experience - program and visit logistics matter	Walters	On flexible program structure: "When we have that kind of open model, and we have families that are stepping out based on the morning or based on whatever's going on, that by having these distinct check-ins, it allows them to rejoin almost seamless."		
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	B. Whole experience - program and visit logistics matter	Dallas	"You need people like your visitor services staff to be on board, and you need security, and you need food services - all of those things play a part in whether or not a family with young children feels		

				comfortable in our museum." (12)	
	1. Addressing the Whole Family	B. Whole experience - program and visit logistics matter	Crocker	"When you're offering programs for families with young kids, the details really matter." (10)	"So having real family-centered policies that go beyond just the programs, but even like visitor services and registration, even policies about whether food is allowed in the museum... things like that." (11)
	2. Learner-centered	A. Accessible to different learning styles	Columbus	Reggio's 100 Languages of Learning: "...children communicate through multiple languages. That it's not just maybe writing or speaking... they call it the hundred languages of learning." (3)	
	2. Learner-centered	A. Accessible to different learning styles	Walters	"...wanting to make sure that in those 90 minutes there's an opportunity for all of our young learners to succeed using different, multimodal methods." (5)	"Whether it's something a little more physical, or something that's more language based, or verbal or auditory - that there's always an opportunity for learning in different ways." (5)

	2. Learner-centered	A. Accessible to different learning styles	Philadelphia	"Our approach is multimodal, so we think about various points of entry... So if we're going to see 3 or 4 objects on a tour we make sure that each of those stops offers something a little bit different so that we can hope to connect with all the different learners in our group." (2)	"We'll have some approaches that are more kinesthetic, that are more sensory, that are more facilitator-oriented, that are more family-oriented - we try to hit a lot of points." (3)	
	2. Learner-centered	A. Accessible to different learning styles	Dallas	Howard Gardner - "...we appeal to a variety of learning styles." (3)		
	2. Learner-centered	B. Learner-centered	Walters	"We really focus on constructivist theories, and the idea that it should be student-centered."(4)	"When I'm creating curriculum, what I'm really trying to keep in mind is the lead educator as facilitator for student-led learning." (4)	
	2. Learner-centered	B. Learner-centered	Walters	"We really advocate for the adult to follow the lead of the child." (5)	"Regardless of what the curriculum is or what the lesson is, in the moment if the conversation goes somewhere else or if you're walking through the gallery and the piece you had planned on talking about is not one that they're particularly interested in... we go with it!" (9)	
	2. Learner-centered	B. Learner-centered	Columbus	Reggio Emilia - emergent curriculum trusting students		
	3. Program Elements	A. Hands-on Experiences	Philadelphia	"I think to really cater to the needs of early learners, you need to integrate hands-on		

				opportunities." (4)	
	3. Program Elements	A. Hands-on Experiences	Crocker	Discussing Wee Wednesday program: "...we always use one work of art, and we always have one hands-on component to it."	
	3. Program Elements	A. Hands-on Experiences	Dallas	"I think, especially for this age, they learn by doing. They have to have really concrete experiences." (7)	"I just think that giving them the chance to try a technique or a material that they just learned about, because that's so much more of a meaningful experience." (7)
	3. Program Elements	A. Hands-on Experiences	Walters	Want to provide "as many opportunities for learning by doing and just really taking part - whether it's hands-on materials in the galleries or activities that are open-ended..." (4)	
	3. Program Elements	A. Hands-on Experiences	Columbus	Focus on open-ended activities, but described one example with Picasso related mirror activity (7), and also use this as a jumping off point to discuss the collection: "We realized we need to start with children's making and thinking and their artwork first, and then have them reflect on artwork from the collection." (6)	Not emphasized, but examples she gave of open-ended play were often related to a hands-on experience

	3. Program Elements	B. Gallery Space & Collections	Philadelphia	Asked what sets them apart: "We have a collection...our programs are in the galleries." (7)	
	3. Program Elements	B. Gallery Space & Collections	Columbus	"We knew that we wanted to incorporate a gallery experience." (5)	
	3. Program Elements	B. Gallery Space & Collections	Walters	"So we always start with a book related to the theme, and then about half an hour or so in the galleries looking at anywhere between two or three works of art related to the theme, and then the last half hour in the studios creating an art project, and tying our entire morning together." (4)	Workshop structure - always incorporates gallery time
	3. Program Elements	B. Gallery Space & Collections	Crocker	Programs incorporate gallery experiences	
	3. Program Elements	B. Gallery Space & Collections	Dallas	"...we have original works of art from around the world." (10)	Use collections to inspire curriculum
	3. Program Elements	C. Play experiences	Columbus	George Szekely's philosophy: for young children, "play is their art." (3)	Imagination is the big umbrella because "...that's how they live. They solve problems through play. They learn through play. That's how they role play. They have incredible imaginative capacities." (2)

	3. Program Elements	C. Play experiences	Dallas	"I think we have a very playful approach... I think it's important that museum educators don't think that play is a bad word. Often we're worried about kids touching art or kids being loud or rowdy, but I think harnessing their natural love of being playful is really such a powerful way to teach them." (7)	"It's not formalized, directed learning, but while kids are playing naturally and looking around their surroundings, they can often be influenced by the art that we have here." (4)	
	3. Program Elements	C. Play experiences	Philadelphia	"Movement, play, and hands-on activities make up this fun tour for young visitors and their families." (Survey)		
	4. Evaluation	A. Keep in Touch with Audience	Philadelphia	"I think it's a good way for us to keep in touch with the expectations that families are bringing into it. It doesn't necessarily change our teaching strategies. It can help change the way we talk about what we do. It helps us with the littler things too, like the time of day we offer things." (4)		
	4. Evaluation	A. Keep in Touch with Audience	Crocker	Changed their program logistics based on feedback		
	4. Evaluation	B. Change or Impact	Dallas	"...think more carefully about the parent-child activities we set up during class, and the kind of handouts we created that went home with them after class." (5)	Informal evaluation for a grant, used behavioral observations: "We got a good sense of what we're doing is resulting in learning experiences for children." (6)	

	4. Evaluation	B. Change or Impact	Walters	"...there was retention from month to month, and the ability to build off of prior knowledge was pretty incredible." (7)	Research fellow there for one year looking at all their programs.	
	4. Evaluation	B. Change or Impact	Columbus	"They did see that what we were doing for them was hitting their standards, and they could back map to that. We were getting at mastery, we were getting at imagination, we were getting at all the stuff they needed to – just in a very different way." (6)	Use of continuous "documentation" to assess their programs, Reggio Emilia approach that has educators "observing, recording, interpreting, and sharing" children's learning (5)	
QUESTION 3						
What difference do art museums want to make with early learning experiences at an individual, family, and community level?	1. Individual Child	A. Building Blocks - Socioemotional	Columbus	Value their own creativity and imagination: "And so for them to value their imagination is a big part of it. I think developing a sense of self-confidence and awareness around that." (9)	"...we really encourage collaboration through learning." (10)	
	1. Individual Child	A. Building Blocks - Socioemotional	Dallas	"So I really hope that, through our programs, we can build a really strong basis that every kid thinks that they're creative and they have great ideas - and they have tools for expressing them." (8)	"Creativity and confidence are two really important things that I would really like them to walk away with." (8)	"Because we really want kids to walk away feeling that art is something that they can enjoy and can do, and that it's a way for them to express what they're feeling." (9)

	1. Individual Child	A. Building Blocks - Socioemotional	Crocker	Confidence: "Being able to look at a work of art, and being about to share their ideas about it... it takes a lot of confidence for the child to be able to speak up and share his or her opinion." (7)		
	1. Individual Child	B. Building Blocks - Cognitive Skills	Crocker	"To be able to interpret visual information, I think it's a skill all kids will need. So hopefully... we also hope that it translates into good critical thinking skills, problem solving, creativity, relationships, the ability to collaborate." (7)	"They do pick up language from hearing a grown-up talk about art and having that shared learning experience." (7)	
	1. Individual Child	B. Building Blocks - Cognitive Skills	Dallas	"...learning to look at art is a really strong foundation for learning how to read. A lot of the things you do for both of those activities are so similar." (8)	Language: "a good visual vocabulary."	
	1. Individual Child	B. Building Blocks - Cognitive Skills	Walters	"...literacy is something that we work into every class, and do so naturally because of our integrated story time and our introduction to the theme, walking through book with pictures, walk strategies, and incorporating vocabulary in every lesson that is not only reiterated through the lesson and conversation, but also printed out on, essentially index cards that they have to have the visual-verbal connection." (11)		

	1. Individual Child	C. De-emphasize Content	Walters	"I would say that the content component is perhaps least important." (12)	
	1. Individual Child	C. De-emphasize Content	Philadelphia	"You know, you can learn about symmetry later." (6)	
	1. Individual Child	C. De-emphasize Content	Crocker	"There are the basic art elements, but that tends to be not what I focus on." (7)	
	1. Individual Child	C. De-emphasize Content	Dallas	"It doesn't matter to me if they walk away knowing that this is a Monet or that's a Mondrian..." (8)	
	1. Individual Child	C. De-emphasize Content	Columbus	"And children at this age can recognize and memorize really quickly, so they can pick out what a Picasso is - but who cares?" (11)	"Art museums don't need to be imparting knowledge to preschoolers about art right now. I really think... I really believe that we don't need to teach children at this age how to hold a paintbrush or who Monet is." (11)
	2. Family	A. Fun, Memories	Philadelphia	"But our goal, our mantra, is spending creative, quality time as a family." (5)	
	2. Family	A. Fun, Memories	Dallas	"And that it's fun, too" (8)	
	2. Family	A. Fun, Memories	Walters	"It's a time they have to something on their own and to connect with one another and to build memories and experiences." (11)	
	2. Family	B. Value Creativity	Walters	"To me, that's a really successful moment - when you can see that it's gone beyond what we've set up at the museum, that it's become part of their life." (12)	

	2. Family	B. Value Creativity	Columbus	"Our outcomes are actually written with the family unit in mind. One of them specifically being that every member of the family values each other's creative pursuits, or that they all play an equal part in creative pursuits." (9)	Message for parents: "And we want to kind of share with them that... allowing that sort of thinking that messy is necessary sometimes."(9)	
	2. Family	C. Museum is a place for families	Philadelphia	"...but that they feel more comfortable experience art with their children." (6)	"That it's engaging and their kids had a good time. Because there's a bigger barrier for entry, there's a big hurdle there... So even learning that the museum is an option - it's a big thing." (6)	
	2. Family	C. Museum is a place for families	Dallas	"But that all of our kids walk away from the museum knowing that they had fun and created a memory - and going to the museum is just as natural as going to the library. It's a fun place we go as a family." (8)	"Our hope is always that as they come back to the nest over and over again, and just become really comfortable here and enjoy it - then from that good experience, they'll venture out into the galleries and look at art with their child."(4)	Underserved minority families - "They wouldn't have thought 'This is a good place for us to go.'" (10)
	2. Family	C. Museum is a place for families	Crocker	"But they're really learning how to look at art with their child and how to talk about art with their child, how to use, introduce language - not by teaching the child vocabulary, but just by talking with the child." (8)	Slogan on shirt: "Your Family is our Family" - "And so part of it is really trying to help families feel welcome." (4)	"Sometimes parents feel intimidated, or they just don't know what to say." (3)

	2. Family	C. Museum is a place for families	Walters	"I think ultimately what we really want is for them not just for them to appreciate what the museums has, but to feel confident and comfortable that they can use that as an opportunity to connect with and educate their children." (11)		
	2. Family	C. Museum is a place for families	Columbus	"...we want families to feel more comfortable exploring the museum together." (9)		
	3. Community	A. Outreach	Dallas	"So because we have this space just for early learners, we've been able to bring so many of those groups to the museum who probably would've never come before." (10)		
	3. Community	A. Outreach	Walters	"I see it most in our community outreach component." (13)	"Offsite festivals: "...taking what we're able to do in the museum and take it into particular communities or neighborhoods that might not otherwise be able to travel to us." (13)	
	3. Community	B. Creativity	Philadelphia	"I think that it's always good in a big, civic landscape to have creative opportunities." (8)	Early exposure will create lifelong participation in arts and cultural organizations (8)	
	3. Community	B. Creativity	Columbus	"I have to imagine that if we are equipping students with these skills of imagination and play, and how important that is, then that's going to have an impact for them later in their own lives and in their own		

				communities and schools." (12)		
	3. Community	C. Parent Support/Quality of Life	Crocker	"...really trying to support and nurture the parents and help them build community among the parents." (9)	"We're really trying to promote the quality of life for Sacramento families, and we're definitely having that impact." (9)	Parents really need to network and have support. It's like the whole 'it takes a village'... we're trying to be part of the village." (8)