

Co-Curation and Collaboration: A Case Study on the Effects of Co-Curation on Staff

Emma Reilly

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Washington

2019

Committee:

Wilson O'Donnell

Regan Pro

Michael Johnson

Authorized to Offer Degree:

Museology

@Copyright 2019
Emma Reilly

University of Washington

Abstract

Co-Curation and Collaboration: A Case Study on the Effects of Co-Curation on Staff

Emma Reilly

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Associate Director Wilson O'Donnell
Museology

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions, strategies, and behaviors of staff who engage with co-curation. The research focused on how staff described their experiences with co-curation, their strategies related to co-curation, any changes in their thinking that they had noticed and whether or not they exhibited behavioral indicators of teamwork during their discussion.

Literature on co-curation, collaboration, and participation was used to inform this research. Data was collected through three focus groups at three museum sites and through observation of these focus groups. The results of this study suggested that staff perceived challenges and benefits related to co-curation. This study also suggested that staff did have methods and strategies for engaging in co-curation, such as setting expectations, practicing patience, and varying their approach. In addition, this study suggested that staff perceived the effects that co-curatorial practices had on their perspectives and work, such as improved communication skills, questioning assumptions, and job enjoyment. Finally, this study suggested that staff displayed behaviors that indicated collaboration and teamwork, such as consensus seeking, during their discussions on co-curation. The limitations of this study included the small sample size, the geographic location of the sample museums, and that this study only focused on contemporary art museums.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Acknowledgments.....	2
Dedication.....	3
Chapter 1: Intro.....	4
Chapter 2: Literature.....	12
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	23
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion.....	29
Chapter 5: Conclusions.....	43
References:.....	45
Appendices.....	
Appendix A: Focus Group Meeting Agenda.....	50
Appendix B: Observational Framework.....	52
Appendix C: Observational Instrument/Coding Matrix.....	55
Appendix D: Recruitment Materials.....	57
Appendix E: Empathetic Behavioral Observation Tool.....	58

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound gratitude for my thesis chair, Wilson O'Donnell, for his tremendous patience and support throughout my thesis development. Our discussions provided me with a better understanding of what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it and his tolerance and encouragement kept me moving forward during this difficult time. The amount of work he put in to help me achieve my goals in the time frame that I needed was incredible. Additionally, I would like to thank my committee for their patience, interest, and contributions.

I would also like to recognize my remarkable cohort and friends whose kindness, intelligence, and openness both inspired and humbled me. I would like to explicitly thank my roommate who offered me validation, reassurance, and help. I would also like to acknowledge the mental and physical health professionals who provided me with the capacity to undertake and complete this process. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge my expansive network of friends, current and former coworkers, mentors, and family for their unwavering belief in me. Thank you.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all future Museology students. I wish you luck and the knowledge that your value is inherent and distinct from any of your accomplishments.

Chapter 1: Intro

Problem

Over the past decade museums have heightened their focus on encouraging increased participation with their communities.¹ During this time museums have increased the number of opportunities for community members to play an active role in decision-making and mission realization.² In *The Participatory Museum*, written by Nina Simon, the participatory museum was described as “inviting people to be active participants in your mission—whatever it might be.”³ This field wide trend lead to new practices and techniques focused on collaboration and power sharing between museological institutions and the public.⁴ As these new practices emerged, museum staff not only had to continue to work with each other cross-departmentally to implement these new strategies, but had to learn how to work with non-museum professionals in the context of museological work. One process that involved collaboration between museum staff and non-museum staff was co-curation.

Historically, curation and other museological practices were based on the idea that the public benefits from exposure to cultural and historical knowledge through the exhibition of significant items.⁵ Traditionally, exhibits and the programs surrounding them were formed by

¹ Deborah L. Mack, Nancy Rogers, and Susanna Seidl-Fox, *Libraries and Museums in an Era of Participatory Culture: A Partnership Project of the Salzburg Global Seminar and the Institute of Museum and Library Services: October 19-23, 2011: Session 482 Report* (Washington DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2012).

² "Museums 2020," Museums Association, July 2013, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=806530>.

³ Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Santa Cruz, CA: Published by Museum 2.0, 2017).

⁴ Tim Boon, "Co-Curation and the Public History of Science and Technology," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 54, no. 4 (2011): , doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2011.00102.x.

⁵ Mark Walhimer, *Museums 101* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

content experts who acted as curator for a particular set of items.⁶ However, the field shifted away from a linear understanding of exhibit development and public consumption of information and towards facilitating participatory experiences with their communities.⁷ Co-curation with non-museum staff was a way to include community members in decision-making surrounding exhibits, programs, and projects.⁸ For the purpose of this study, co-curation was defined as whenever museum collaborated with an entity or individual outside of immediate staff in the creation and implementation of an exhibit, program, or project.

While there was research in the field on co-curation through the lenses of visitor participation and community building, there was little research on co-curation through the lens of the staff. Co-curation required staff members to collaborate and communicate effectively not only with each other, but also with a third party. This study was interested in staff experiences and attitudes surrounding co-curation.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe how staff perceived and comprehended the effects of co-curation on their work and their experiences as well as observe the collaborative behavior of staff members who engage in co-curation. There were four core research questions.

1. How do staff members describe their experiences with co-curation?

⁶ C. Borrellio, "What Is Curation Now?" Chicago Tribune, October 4, 2013. accessed June 6, 2019. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/ct-xpm-2013-10-04-ct-ae-1006-block-museum-lisa-corrin-20131004-story.html>.

⁷ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*.

⁸ Lynda Kelly, "Co-design, Co-curation, Participation, Crowdsourcing, Etc – Working with Our Audiences," Museums | Digital | Research | Learning, February 16, 2018, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://musdigi.wordpress.com/2018/02/16/co-design-co-curation-participation-crowdsourcing-etc-working-with-our-audiences/>

2. Do staff have any methods or strategies for engaging in co-curation?
3. Is staff aware of any changes in their perspectives and practices due to co-curation? If so, what are the changes?
4. Do staff demonstrate collaboration through their verbal and non-verbal actions?

Significance

Art Fund's *Art Insight* reported that "co-curation with local or hard-to-reach communities is increasingly commonplace."⁹ If the trend continued in the museum field to create more exhibits through a co-curating approach, then a deeper understanding of co-curation from an institutional perspective might be necessary for success. Co-curation was shown to be a highly collaborative process that often invited individuals or groups, who had little or no experience working in museums, to help make decisions traditionally made by museum professionals.¹⁰ The decisions influenced by those outside of the institution were then implemented by staff.¹¹ In *The Case for Holistic Intentionality*, Randi Korn wrote "Ideally, [staff's] work is connected to a museum's purpose; therefore everyone is involved in planning and delivering programs that support a museum's intentions..."¹² It followed that it would be useful to examine these practices through the lens of the people who implemented them, i.e.: the staff. This study would benefit museum professionals who engage with co-curation. Additionally, this study would motivate professionals to reflect on the internally facing side of co-curation. Finally, this research would

⁹ Art Fund, "What Does the Future Hold for Curators?" Art Fund, November 17, 2019. accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.artfund.org/news/2017/11/17/what-does-the-future-hold-for-curators>.

¹⁰ Lynda Kelly, "Co-design, Co-curation, Participation, Crowdsourcing, Etc – Working with Our Audiences."

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Randi Korn, "The Case for Holistic Intentionality," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): , doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2007.tb00269.x.

add to a gap in research on staff experiences surrounding co-curation and would act as a platform for further museological research.

Literature

Literature reviewed for this study was drawn from three connected areas. The three areas included participation, collaboration, and co-curation. Co-curation was the primary area of literature examined.

Methodology

The research design used for this study was a phenomenological qualitative case study approach. The definition of case study followed was “the analysis of persons, groups, events, decisions, periods, policies, institutions or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods.”¹³ The two methods used for this study were semi-structured interviews in focus groups and observation of the behaviors of staff during focus groups interviews. Individual participants in the focus groups were chosen based on their involvement with a co-curated exhibit and their availability.

Sites selected for this study were contemporary art museums that had co-curated multiple exhibits within the past year whilst practiced traditional forms of curation. All sites practiced co-curation with both individuals and groups in the past year. The institutions who participated in the study were the Portland Art Museum, Museum of Glass, and Henry Art Gallery. The museums varied in institutional size in terms of budget, physical size, and collection. The Portland Art Museum being the largest, the Henry Art Gallery being smaller, and

¹³ "Definition of Case Study," PressAcademia, July 09, 2018, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.pressacademia.org/definition-of-case-study/>.

the Museum of Glass being the smallest. The museums each came from a large metropolitan area in the Pacific Northwest.

The individuals who attended the focus group came from multiple departments so as to provide a variety of staff experiences associated with the collaborative and cross departmental nature of co-curation.

Background on Study Sites

The Portland Art Museum, the oldest art museum in the Pacific Northwest, was founded in 1892. The museum's mission is:

To engage and enrich diverse communities through the presentation, interpretation, and conservation of art and film of enduring quality, and to collect, preserve, and educate for the enrichment of present and future generations.¹⁴

The vision of the museum is to be “the leading cultural institution in the state and region. Its hallmarks are innovation, excellence and community partnerships.”¹⁵ The museum has a collection of 42,000 objects and has the largest exhibition space for modern and contemporary art in Oregon.¹⁶ The Portland Art Museum has a budget of approximately \$14 million dollars and 150 full time staff members.¹⁷

In 2018, the Portland Art Museum undertook a yearlong collaborative project with multiple community partners titled, *We. Construct. Marvels. Between. Monuments*. The project was described as “a series of five exhibitions developed in partnership with artists and art collectives that will activate the gallery with visual art, performance, screenings, and

¹⁴ "Portland, Oregon," Portland Art Museum, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://portlandartmuseum.org/>.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ "Portland Art Museum 2018 Annual Report," Portland Art Museum, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://portlandartmuseum.org/about/museum-facts/>.

discussions.”¹⁸ During the collaboration, the top level of the museum was used for whatever the collaborators chose with exhibits ranging from traditional displays to workshops and performances. This was the first time that the museum had undertaken co-curation and community collaboration on a significant scale with staff acting as facilitators rather than creators. During the project, staff worked with a community consultant who assisted in the management of the series.¹⁹

The Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington opened in 2002 and was intended to be exclusively focused on the works of international glass artist, Dale Chihuly, who is from Tacoma. Chihuly insisted that the museum expand its scope to include glasswork from artists worldwide. The mission of the Museum of Glass is “to ignite creativity, fuel discovery, and enrich lives through glass and glassmaking.”²⁰ The Museum of Glass has the West Coast’s largest and most active museum glass studio and offers a variety of opportunities for the public to engage with glassmaking.²¹ The museum has a collection of under a thousand items, an annual budget of around \$5 million and under 50 full time staff members.²²

The co-curated exhibit, *Preston Singletary: Raven And The Box Of Daylight*, on display from October 3, 2018 and September 2, 2019, was organized by Museum of Glass and Preston Singletary and guest curated by Miranda Belarde-Lewis, PhD.²³ Preston Singletary and Miranda Belarde-Lewis are members of the Tlingit/Zuni tribe and asked the Museum of Glass to act as

¹⁸ "We. Construct. Marvels. Between. Monuments." Portland Art Museum, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://portlandartmuseum.org/exhibitions/we-construct-marvels-between-monuments>.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ "About," Museum of Glass, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.museumofglass.org/about>.

²¹ Ibid

²² "Museum of Glass," Guidestar.org, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/91-1669422>.

²³ "Raven and the Box of Daylight," Museum of Glass, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.museumofglass.org/raven-box-of-daylight>.

facilitator for the show.²⁴ Miranda Belarde-Lewis is an assistant Professor of North American Indigenous Knowledge at the University of Washington Information School and Preston Singletary is a glass artist whose work is based in traditional Tlingit themes.²⁵

The Henry Art Gallery (Henry) is the oldest art museum in the state of Washington and was opened in 1927.²⁶ The mission of the Henry is “to advance contemporary art, artists, and ideas.”²⁷ The Henry listed its values as “centering the artist” and regularly works in collaboration with artists to shape the exhibitions, programs, projects, and visitor service dialogue surrounding a particular artist or group of artists’ work.²⁸

The Henry is owned and managed by the University of Washington and thus, beholden to the Board of Regents of the University of Washington, but maintains its own 501(c)3 nonprofit Board of Trustees.²⁹ The Henry collaborates with the source artist or artists on most of their exhibits.³⁰ In 2019, the museum exhibited *Between Bodies*, a co-curated multi-artist show, and several one artist shows.³¹ In addition to co-curating with artists, the Henry also facilitated the Master of Fine Arts students’ annual show and had an exhibit series called *Viewpoints*, which offered various professors the opportunity to share their responses on work from the collection.³² The Henry has a collection of around 27,000 objects, a budget of around \$5 million dollars and

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ "About the Henry," About the Henry - Henry Art Gallery, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://henryart.org/about/about-the-henry>.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ "Henry Gallery Association," Guidestar.org, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/23-7052537>.

³⁰ "Between Bodies," Henry Art Gallery, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://henryart.org/on-view/exhibitions#page-navigation-past>.

³¹ Ibid

³² Henry Art Gallery, "2019 University of Washington MFA+ MDes Thesis Exhibition," Henry Art Gallery, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://henryart.org/exhibitions/2019-university-of-washington-mfa-mdes-thesis-exhibition>. ; "Viewpoints," Henry Art Gallery, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://henryart.org/on-view/viewpoints>.

under 50 full time staff members.³³ For full disclosure; the researcher of this study worked at the Henry Art Gallery and though the focus group at the Henry did not include any staff from the same department as the researcher, the interpersonal relationship between researcher and participants could have affected findings.

³³ "Henry Gallery Association," Guidestar.org.

Chapter 2: Literature

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions, strategies, and behaviors of staff who engage with co-curation. To inform this research, three areas of literature were examined. The main areas of literature were participation, collaboration, and co-curation. The first review section provided context to participation as museological trend. The second review section explored frameworks for understanding collaboration. The final review section examined different topics surrounding co-curation and co-curation as a participatory technique.

Participation

In the last decade, museums began to move “from being about something to being for somebody.”³⁴ In the pursuit of deepening community engagement and relevance, researchers and practitioners focused on increasing participation in all aspects of museums.³⁵

In her book *The Participatory Museum*, Nina Simon, a prominent museum consultant and practitioner, wrote:

I define a participatory cultural institution as a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content. *Create* means that visitors contribute their own ideas, objects, and creative expression to the institution and to each other. *Share* means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their visit. *Connect* means that visitors socialize with other people—staff and visitors—who share their particular interests. *Around content* means that visitors’ conversations and creations focus on the

³⁴ Weil, Stephen E. "From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum." 1999.

³⁵ Mack, Deborah L., Institute of Museum Library Services, and Salzburg Global Seminar. *Libraries and Museums in an Era of Participatory Culture : A Partnership Project of the Salzburg Global Seminar and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, October 19 -23, 2011 : Session 482 Report*. Washington, DC]: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2011.

evidence, objects, and ideas most important to the institution in question.³⁶

Nina Simon's description of a participatory cultural institutions was widely adopted across the field.³⁷ In 2010, researchers of participation in museums expanded the scope of the participatory museum to not only talk about participatory experiences for visitors in the context of in-gallery interaction, but also community participation in institutional decision-making.³⁸ In the Museums Association's "Museum 2020 Consultation", an entire section was dedicated to participation and stated "At its most developed level, the museum is an integral part of its communities, with a range of people participating in making decisions about every aspect of its work and activities."³⁹ Similarly, in "Prescriptions for Art Museums in the Decade Ahead" Maxwell Anderson expressed the need for strategy: "we have to be diligent and unrelenting in welcoming the public's participation in our mission."⁴⁰ Researcher Beverly Sheppard wrote in "Meaningful Collaboration. In Principle In Practice" that involving community members in institutional decision-making "opens the door to expanding the role of museums as community leaders, catalysts for change, and responsive educators."⁴¹

Overall researchers found that implementing a philosophy of community participation increased engagement with visitors.⁴² Additionally, researchers in adjacent fields applied the idea of the participatory museum to their work; cemeteries, libraries, and other public cultural

³⁶ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*

³⁷ Nina Simon, "The Participatory Museum, Five Years Later," Museum 2.0, accessed July 20, 2019, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/03/the-participatory-museum-five-years.html>.

³⁸ Jacob Mhando Nyangila, "Museums and community involvement: A case study of community collaborative initiatives-National Museums of Kenya." In *ICOM Intercom 2006 Symposium*. 2006.

³⁹ "Museums 2020," Museums Association

⁴⁰ Maxwell Anderson, "Prescriptions for Art Museums in the Decade Ahead," *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 17th ser., 50, no. 9 (2007): accessed July 20, 2019, doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2007.tb00245.x.

⁴¹ John Falk, Susan Foutz, and Beverly Sheppard, *In Principle, In Practice: Museums as Learning Institutions* (Rowman Altamira, 2007).

⁴² Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education. *Public Participation in Scientific Research: Defining the Field and Assessing Its Potential for Informal Science Education*. Washington D.C.: Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education, 2009.

institutions adopted a focus on participation with success.⁴³ In conjunction with cultural institutions focus on increasing community participation, the National Endowments for the Arts found that public participation in the arts to be on the rise.⁴⁴

Research on participation tended to focus on direct visitor engagement, as visitor engagement was at the heart of the participatory theory.⁴⁵ While there was growing research on the impact that participatory practice and ideology had on visitor and community engagement, there was significantly less research on the effects of participatory techniques on staff and pre-existing community partnerships.⁴⁶

Collaboration

Extensive research was done on collaboration from the perspective of a variety of disciplines and sectors, such as technology and business communications, in multiple contexts, such as individual and institutional. “Collaboration is generally used to refer to the act of working together by two or more persons to accomplish something.”⁴⁷

In regards to effective collaboration, research showed that if participants engage in joint action with the psychological motive of working toward a common goal, they would act cooperatively.⁴⁸ In “Collaboration For A Change” Arthur Himmelman wrote, “collaborating

⁴³Sarah E. Miller, "Cemeteries as Participatory Museums," *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 3, no. 3 (2015), doi:10.7183/2326-3768.3.3.275.

⁴⁴ **U.S. Trends in Arts Attendance and Literary Reading: 2002-2017**

⁴⁵ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*

⁴⁶ "Museums 2020," Museums Association

⁴⁷ Carlo Salvato, Jeffrey J. Reuer, and Pierpaolo Battigalli, "Cooperation across Disciplines: A Multilevel Perspective on Cooperative Behavior in Governing Interfirm Relations," *Academy of Management Annals* 11, no. 2 (2017): doi:10.5465/annals.2014.0001.

⁴⁸ B. Beersma et al., "Cooperation, Competition, And Team Performance: Toward A Contingency Approach.," *Academy of Management Journal* 46, no. 5 (2003): doi:10.2307/30040650.

partners willingly share the risks, responsibilities, resources, and rewards of the work.”⁴⁹ In “Cooperative and Competitive Dynamics Within and Between Organizational Units,” Dean Tjosvold identified “exchanging and combining information, ideas, and other resources; giving assistance to other team members; discussing problems and conflicts constructively; supporting and encouraging each other” as four dimensions of interpersonal interaction for greater cooperation.⁵⁰ Himmelman wrote his framework for effective collaboration as a continuum from networking, coordinating, cooperating, and collaborating.⁵¹ In “Cooperation across Disciplines: A Multilevel Perspective on Cooperative Behavior in Governing Interfirm Relations,” Pierpaolo Battigalli wrote that behavioral economics “tends to define cooperation as an act that, within an interaction, maximizes the interest of the other.”⁵²

Research found that high-quality connections “defined as short-term, dyadic, positive interactions between people in a work setting” might have surprisingly salient and enduring organizational effects.⁵³ In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman identified some observable behavioral mechanisms related to interpersonal connection as, “respectful engagement showing esteem, dignity, and care for another person); task enabling (interpersonal actions that help someone start, perform, or complete a task); and play (playful activities that provide skills and pleasures in the interaction).”⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Arthur T. Himmelman, *Collaboration for a Change: Definitions, Decision-making Models, Roles, and Collaboration Process Guide*. January 2002, Himmelman Consulting, Minneapolis, MN.

⁵⁰ Dean Tjosvold, "Cooperative and Competitive Dynamics Within and Between Organizational Units," *Human Relations* 41, no. 6 (1988): doi:10.1177/001872678804100601.

⁵¹ Deborah Mashek and Harvey Mudd, "People, Tools, and Processes That Build Collaborative Capacity," *Human Relations* 41, no. 6 (November 2015): College & Michael Nanfito and Associates.

⁵² Carlo Salvato, Jeffrey J. Reuer, and Pierpaolo Battigalli, "Cooperation across Disciplines: A Multilevel Perspective on Cooperative Behavior in Governing Interfirm Relations," *Academy of Management Annals* 11, no. 2 (2017): doi:10.5465/annals.2014.0001.

⁵³ John Paul Stephens, Emily Heaphy, and Jane E. Dutton, "High-quality Connections," *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2011, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199734610.013.0029.

⁵⁴ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books/Random House, 2008).

Multiple researchers found that the effectiveness of a collaboration was tied to interpersonal relationships and trust.⁵⁵ In *Between Trust and Control*, T. K. Das and Bing-Shen Teng found that interpersonal trust was an essential element of organizational life and, potentially, inter-organizational arrangements.⁵⁶ Newly formed teams, “particularly those with a high proportion of members who were strangers at the time of formation, find it more difficult to collaborate than those with established relationships.”⁵⁷

In “Crossing the great divide: Coproduction, Synergy, and Development,” Elinor Ostrom described co-production as “the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not “in” the same organization.”⁵⁸ When collaboration happened between multiple entities who were not part of the same organization, then it became an alliance.⁵⁹ In “The Group Dynamics of Interorganizational Relationships: Collaborating with Multiple Partners in Innovation Ecosystems,” Jason Davis in found that groups who did not use dynamic collaboration exhibited “mistrust and conflict that stemmed from expectations about third-party participation and overlapping roles and thus had low innovation performance and weaker ties.”⁶⁰ Davis also demonstrated that “nonparticipating third-party group members may be reluctant to share their resources when they have no influence in a project.”⁶¹

Co-Curation

⁵⁵ Erickson, Lynda, Gratton, Tamara J. "Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams." *Harvard Business Review*. November 15, 2016. Accessed March 3, 2019. <https://hbr.org/2007/11/eight-ways-to-build-collaborative-teams>.

⁵⁶ T. K. Das and Bing-Sheng Teng, "Between Trust and Control: Developing Confidence in Partner Cooperation in Alliances," *Academy of Management Review* 23, no. 3 (1998): doi:10.5465/amr.1998.926623.

⁵⁷ Erickson, Lynda Gratton, Tamara J. "Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams." *Harvard Business Review*. November 15, 2016. Accessed March 3, 2019. <https://hbr.org/2007/11/eight-ways-to-build-collaborative-teams>.

⁵⁸ Elinor Ostrom, "Crossing the Great Divide: Coproduction, Synergy, and Development," *World Development* 24, no. 6 (1996): doi:10.1016/0305-750x(96)00023-x.

⁵⁹ Carlo Salvato, Jeffrey J. Reuer, and Pierpaolo Battigalli, "Cooperation across Disciplines: A Multilevel Perspective on Cooperative Behavior in Governing Interfirm Relations."

⁶⁰ Jason P. Davis, "The Group Dynamics of Interorganizational Relationships," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (2016): doi:10.1177/0001839216649350.

⁶¹ Ibid

As the field shifted towards heightened community engagement, traditional museological models were adapted to encourage community engagement.

In the last decade, increasing numbers of museums and galleries worldwide have developed an array of working practices that might be termed 'participatory' or 'co-creative', which seek to involve visitors, non-visitors, community and interest groups with diverse forms of expertise and perspective in their activities.⁶²

One widely adopted participatory technique, which incorporated community members' insights, was the inclusion of community members as co-curators.⁶³ The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defined a co-curator as "one who shares the duties of curating something (such as an exhibit) with one or more others."⁶⁴ Researchers and practitioners used a variety of language to describe the process of involving outside input in curation. Co-production, co-creation, crowd sourcing, co-design, co-curation, consultation, collaboration, sharing authority, and community engagement were all found nomenclature used to describe the involvement of an individual from outside of the institution in museum curation.⁶⁵ Additionally, co-curation was used to refer to collaboration with any partner outside of the museum in the development of an exhibit, project, program, and collection.⁶⁶ While many researchers agreed overall on the subtle variations of

⁶² Katy Bunning et al., "Embedding Plurality: Exploring Participatory Practice in the Development of a New Permanent Gallery," *Science Museum Group Journal* 3, no. 3 (2019): , doi:10.15180/150305.

⁶³ Porchia Moore, "Shifting Paradigms: The Case for Co-Creation and New Discourses of Participation," *The Inclusion*, May 03, 2016, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://inclusion.com/2014/02/26/shifting-paradigms-the-case-for-co-creation-and-new-discourses-of-participation/>.

⁶⁴ "Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-trusted Online Dictionary," Merriam-Webster, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

⁶⁵ **Sheila Watson, Amy Barnes, and Katy Bunning, *A Museum Studies Approach to Heritage* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019).**

⁶⁶ Greg, "Collections & Communities: Co-curation, Consultation and Collaborative Working - Museum-ID," *Museum*, April 03, 2019, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://museum-id.com/collections-communities-co-curation-consultation-and-collaborative-working/>.

meaning in the nomenclature, there was a range of focus and beliefs surrounding community collaboration with most research being focused on community-committee led co-curation.⁶⁷

Though the field seemed to agree that collaborating with community partners to create content was an effective participatory technique, there was variation in the language used to describe preferred community partners and the models of co-curation.⁶⁸ Many researchers, such as Porchia Moore, in “Shifting Paradigms: The Case for Co-Creation and New Discourses of Participation” focused on community committee led co-curation, often referred to as co-creation.⁶⁹ This denoted a specific curatorial practice where a committee of community members acted as primary leader and decision-maker for an exhibit and staff acted as facilitators.⁷⁰ Nina Simon described an example: “staff members lead design and fabrication, with [community-committee] members offering input and curatorial direction over artifact selection, multi-media story creation, and general design to ensure it remains in line with exhibition goals.”⁷¹ In “Working on the Community Models of Participatory Practice” Christian Karavagna reiterated this understanding of participatory co-curation when she stated that in order for co-curation to be participatory, the process must be led by the audience.⁷² Karavagna then took this understanding a step further by stating that involving artists in co-curation is not enough to be participatory.⁷³ However, in “Community Collaboration in Exhibitions: Toward a Dialogic Paradigm: Introduction in Museums and Source Communities,” Ruth Phillips described two models for collaborative exhibitions, one where curatorial staff acted as facilitator for community members

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Deborah L. Mack, Nancy Rogers, and Susanna Seidl-Fox, *Libraries and Museums in an Era of Participatory Culture: A Partnership Project of the Salzburg Global Seminar and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.*

⁶⁹ Moore, Porchia “Shifting Paradigms: The Case for Co-Creation and New Discourses of Participation | the Inluseum,”

⁷⁰ Moore, “Shifting Paradigms: The Case for Co-Creation and New Discourses of Participation | the Inluseum,”

⁷¹ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*

⁷² Christian Karavagna, "Working on the Community Models of Participatory Practice," Republic Art, 1988.

⁷³ Ibid

who decided the content and other aspects of the exhibit, and one she called the polyvocal approach where "museum staff and community consultants worked to find a space of coexistence for multiple perspectives."⁷⁴

Other researchers did not make as explicit distinctions between community-committee led co-curation and other models of curation involving a third party. Researchers have examined curatorial collaboration with artists, private collectors, source communities, content experts, students, youth groups, and other parties separate from the specific museum's practitioners all under the guise of co-curation.⁷⁵ Researcher Theopisti Stylianou-Lamber described the required partner in co-curation as being "simultaneously members of an audience (cultural consumers) and performers (cultural producers)" in *Re-conceptualizing Museum Audiences: Power, Activity, Responsibility, Visitor Studies*.⁷⁶ In "Co-Curation and the Public History of Science and Technology," Tim Boon wrote, "co-curation and similar techniques gathered together under the umbrella of 'participation' describe a range of practices in which lay people work to develop displays and programs within museums."⁷⁷ This was alluded to by Simon who wrote that co-curation "showcases the diverse creations and opinions of non-experts."⁷⁸ In seeming contradiction but actual complementation, Jim Richardson said in "Reaching Out To Younger

⁷⁴ Ruth Phillips, *Community Collaboration in Exhibitions: Toward a Dialogic Paradigm*: In Introduction in *Museums and Source Communities*, 2003.

⁷⁵ Alison K. Brown and Laura Peers, "Museums and Source Communities," 2005, doi:10.4324/9780203987834.; Deborah Mack, Institute of Museum Library Services, and Salzburg Global Seminar. *Libraries and Museums in an Era of Participatory Culture*:

⁷⁶ Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert, "Re-conceptualizing Museum Audiences: Power, Activity, Responsibility," *Visitor Studies* 13, no. 2 (2010): , doi:10.1080/10645578.2010.509693.

⁷⁷ Tim Boon, "Co-Curation and the Public History of Science and Technology," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 54, no. 4 (2011): , doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2011.00102.x.

⁷⁸ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*

Museum Audiences”, “It is perhaps naïve to think that the best expertise always exists within a museum.”⁷⁹

The root of variation in researcher opinion seemed to lie in how they categorized and defined community members. Experts, lay persons, audience members, community members, and source communities each had their own meaning, which not all researchers seemed to agree upon. What seemed consistent across researchers was the fact that participatory co-curation involved collaboration with individuals outside of an individual museum’s staff.

Practitioners have expressed enthusiasm and perceived the benefits of co-curation. In the Museums Association’s report, *Museums 2020*, a practitioner wrote that

The use of people from other professions as curators or exhibition designers means we are given a fresh spin on an otherwise tired collection, exhibitions will attract different types of visitors, and artists can also use their position to help to create new learning strategies and can involve the public in the development of the exhibition through workshops and events.⁸⁰

In the context of the development of exhibits and related materials, projects, and programs, Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown described collaborations between museums and source communities as “one of the most important developments in modern museum practice” in “Museums and Source Communities”⁸¹ In conjunction with the importance of alliances with source communities, Deborah Mack in “Libraries and Museums in an Era of Participatory Culture” stated that collaboration between cultural institutions and linkages with both cultural and civic partners remained a strong model for enhanced effectiveness in collaborative exhibit

⁷⁹ “Reaching out to Younger Museum Audiences,” MuseumNext, June 19, 2019, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.museumnext.com/article/reaching-out-to-younger-museum-audiences/>.

⁸⁰ “Museums 2020,” Museums Association

⁸¹ Brown and Laura Peers, “Source Communities”

design.⁸² Phillips cited examples of community collaborations in presenting multivocal exhibits in which both the museum staff and the community “work to find a space of coexistence for multiple perspectives.”⁸³

Tom Boden, head of the Bath Preservation Trust, shared his opinion in response to the Museums Association 2020 Report, which focused on participation and co-curation:

We need to work with our communities to shape what we collect and what we interpret and to reach new audiences. We also need to work more with each other, forming partnerships between museums and other institutions, to share collections, expertise and resources. Collectively we can achieve far more than we can as individual museums.⁸⁴

While researchers have demonstrated the positive benefits of effective co-curation with community members, the field was not free of concern. Theopisti “Re-conceptualizing Museum Audiences: Power, Activity, Responsibility. Visitor Studies.” Stylianou-Lambert stated, “certain challenges loom over this new audience conceptualization. It is argued that such visualization underestimates power issues while romanticizing the power of audience activity, thereby ignoring issues of responsibility.”⁸⁵ In a call for case-studies on co-curation, the Museums Association wrote that “Co-curation has huge potential for creating engaging and representative collections and the exhibitions, but only if they use an effective approach.”⁸⁶ Similarly, the Arts Council of England funded eight museums to experiment with co-curation and found that while co-curation has the potential for positive impact, poor governance and the resulting staff turnover

⁸² Mack, Deborah L., Institute of Museum Library Services, and Salzburg Global Seminar. *Libraries and Museums in an Era of Participatory Culture: A Partnership Project of the Salzburg Global Seminar and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, October 19 -23, 2011: Session 482 Report*. Washington, DC]: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2011.

⁸³ Phillips, “Community Collaboration in Exhibitions: Toward a Dialogic Paradigm: Introduction in Museums and Source Communities”

⁸⁴ Museums 2020," Museums Association

⁸⁵ Theopisti, “Re-conceptualizing Museum Audiences: Power, Activity, Responsibility. Visitor Studies.”

⁸⁶ "Call for Cast Studies on Co-Curation," Call for Case Studies: Co-curation | Museums Association, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/09042019-case-studies-call-co-curation>.

damaged projects' effectiveness.⁸⁷ In her research, Nina Simon found that one of the primary characteristics of success in partnership was that "staff members and participants respected each other's goals and interests in pursuing the project."⁸⁸

While research on co-curation was growing, there seemed to be a literature gap in regards to the language used to categorize co-curatorial partnerships, especially those outside of the existing visitors. Specifically, additional research seemed to be needed on placing third party content experts or members of other institutions into the framework of community participation and describing artist involvement in participatory practices.

⁸⁷ "Submission to the Museum Review," Arts Council of England. November 2016.

⁸⁸ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions, strategies, and behaviors of staff who engage with co-curation. Due to the purpose guiding this research, the design for this study was a phenomenological case study. A case study was defined as an “analysis of persons, groups, events, decisions, periods, policies, institutions or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods.”⁸⁹ The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defined phenomenology as “the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view.”⁹⁰ The two methods used in this case study were semi-structured interview and observation of focus groups.

Four core research questions guided the data collection and analysis:

1. How do staff members describe their experiences with co-curation?
2. Do staff have any methods or strategies for engaging in co-curation?
3. Is staff aware of any changes in their perspectives and practices due to co-curation? If so, what are the changes?
4. Do staff demonstrate collaboration through their verbal and non-verbal actions?

Data Collection

⁸⁹ "Definition of Case Study," PressAcademia, July 09, 2018, , accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.pressacademia.org/definition-of-case-study/>.

⁹⁰ David Woodruff Smith "Phenomenology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/phenomenology/>>.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with focus groups of museum staff at each study site. The focus group meetings were recorded visually and aurally. Focus groups consisted of a minimum of five and a maximum of eight participants. Participants were invited to participate based on availability and their interaction with co-curated exhibits, programs, and projects. Staff across departments who interacted with co-curated exhibits, programs, and projects within the context of their professional role were invited to participate in the focus groups. The focus group discussions were structured as a casual meeting. The semi-structured questions were presented to staff as a meeting agenda and covered questions relating to the experiences and perspectives of staff related to co-curation (Please refer to the Interview Instrument in appendix A). The length of the focus group conversations ranged from 45 to 75 minutes long. Staff were informed that they would remain anonymous and provided with consent forms. Additionally, staff quotes were anonymized along with community partners and exhibit titles. After the focus group meetings, the visual recordings of the meetings were observed and analyzed. Analysis of verbal and non-verbal actions demonstrating collaboration were recorded with the corresponding observational instrument (Please refer to the Observational Instrument in appendix C).

Instruments

Two instruments, one per method, were developed based on the research questions. The first instrument was a meeting agenda created to facilitate and guide the focus group and consisted of several questions relating to the first three core research questions. The second instrument was an observational recording tool and coding matrix developed to address the fourth research question and specifically for verbal and non-verbal actions.

The Focus Group Interview Instrument

The Interview Instrument was created as a meeting agenda to guide the focus-group interviews at each site and allow for unforeseen conversations to emerge. Questions were asked together, expanded or skipped depending upon the natural flow and responses during the conversations. The research questions and related sub-questions covered in this instrument were:

1. How do staff members describe their experiences with co-curation?
 - a. Why did this institution choose to co-curate?
 - b. How did you pick your community partners?
 - c. What were the challenges of co-curating this exhibit?
 - d. What were the benefits of co-curating?

2. Do staff have any methods or strategies for engaging in co-curation?
 - a. How did you manage the Museum needs with the desires of the third party?
 - b. How did you decide to divvy up the work interdepartmentally and decide who was working on this project?
 - c. Did you have a strategy for communication and cohesion? How was it formed?
 - d. How are decisions made? Who has final decision-making power when there are disagreements between staff members or staff and co-curators?

3. Is staff aware of any changes in their perspectives and practices due to co-curation? If so, what are the changes?
 - a. Can you site a specific example of how your work changed due to the co-curating process?
 - b. What have you learned from the process that you might apply to other areas of your work?
 - c. Are there things that you learned from this or that changed your perspective?
 - i. What was useful and why?
 - d. What would you do differently if you could go back?

The Observational Instrument

For the second method, an observational framework and corresponding instrument/coding matrix was developed and pertained to the fourth research question. The instrument was used to track specific verbal and non-verbal actions, which were established by the observational framework. The instrument and framework were developed from three sources. The observational framework of collaborative behavior was informed by the book, *How to Make*

Collaboration Work: Powerful Ways to Build Consensus, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions by David Straus.⁹¹ In this work, Straus discussed tactics and questions pertaining to effective collaboration including descriptions of healthy collaboration.

Second, the formation of the framework and instrument followed the basic best practices of museum evaluation as defined by the *Family Learning in Interactive Galleries: Observational toolkit*, which was developed by the Institute of Learning Innovation and Audience Focus in order to provide museological practitioners with a process for developing observational evaluative materials.⁹²

The third model used was an observational framework of empathetic behavior used as a programmatic visitor evaluation tool (Refer to Appendix E). This framework and instrument was adapted to observe museum staff rather than visitors. The observational instrument was developed to act as both a data recording tool and data analysis tool with themes decided upon prior to the focus group interviews. The framework allowed for multiple observations of the same behavior within a focus group. After the framework was filled out for each focus group, the results were combined and entered back into a single document in order to display results from multiple sites (Refer to Observational Instrument/Coding Matrix in Appendix C).

Below is the fourth core research question and the related behavior categories identified in the framework.

4. Do staff demonstrate collaboration through their verbal and non-verbal actions?
 - a. Values Team insights

⁹¹ Straus, David. *How to Make Collaboration Work: Powerful Ways to Build Consensus, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2002.

⁹² Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2010. *Family Learning in Interactive Galleries: Observational toolkit*. Institute of Learning Innovation and Audience Focus.
<http://www.familiesinartmuseums.org/research.observational.toolkit.html>

- b. Views work through lens of team collaboration
- c. Demonstrates Healthy Team Discussions
- d. Understands Team Members
- e. Recognizes partner group as having own agency
- f. Has interest or curiosity towards each other's experience
- g. Has appreciation/respect for work accomplished together

Research Sites

As noted earlier, this study focused on mid-size to large contemporary art museums that implemented co-curation as a part of their programming and exhibits, but also used traditional models for exhibits and curation. These site parameters narrowed the scope of this study and provided comparable findings between institutions. Data was collected at three sites that met research criteria. The Portland Art Museum, the Museum of Glass, and the Henry Art Gallery had multiple co-curated exhibits in the past year in addition to singular curator led exhibitions. All three sites were located in the Pacific Northwest in three significant urban areas, Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland.⁹³

Data Analysis

For the first instrument, the focus group discussion transcripts were analyzed through emergent coding. Emergent coding was rooted in a dialogue-based discursive approach. Data was transcribed and organized by emergent themes and word count through NVivo software. Quotes were coded in relation to the core research questions, corresponding sub-questions and emerging themes. Due to the conversational nature of the focus group interviews, certain sub-questions and responses were sometimes mixed together rather than discrete. Coding focused on

⁹³ "U.S. Census Bureau Delivers Washington's 2010 Census Population Totals". United States Census Bureau. February 23, 2011. Archived from the original on 21 July 2011. Retrieved 11 Aug 1 2019.

the language used by participants and followed the research questions to identify emerging themes.

For the second instrument, the visual recordings of the focus groups were watched separately and the observation framework was used to record the frequency of demonstrated behaviors (Refer to the Observational Instrument in Appendix B).

Chapter 4: Results and Discussions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe how staff perceived and understood the effects of co-curation on their work and their experiences. Data from each method and instrument were analyzed in relation to the corresponding research questions and related sub-questions resulting in findings.

Focus Group Meeting Agenda

Findings were categorized by linked research questions and by sub-questions, which were either grouped or separated. The decision to separate or group sub-questions was based on the conversational nature of the semi-structured focus group interview process; some questions were discussed simultaneously based on staff response. Topic headers have been added above each sub-question section for comprehensibility. Some quotes have been edited for clarity.

Core Question #1: How do staff members describe their experiences with co-curation?

Q: Why did this institution choose to co-curate?

Q: How did you pick your community partners?

In each focus group, multiple staff members reflected upon their decision to co-curate in relation to the opportunities available to work with living artists. One staff member from Group 2 noted, “the really unique position we're in as an art museum is that most of artists are not only alive but local.” An educator from the focus group at Group 3 said “we're in a unique position ...in contemporary art museum or modern art museum to be able to work with artist living artists.” Another in Group 2 stated that “...as a contemporary art museum. We have the benefit of working with a lot of living artists so we will always want to have their vision. Their input on

their vision.” In a step further, a participant at Site 1 stated, “collaborating with artists to realize their vision on exhibitions and commissions and projects is what we've chosen to do. Because we orient ourselves around being able to advance artists work and to do that one has to account for what their visions are and to work with them collaboratively.”

Q: What were the challenges of co-curating this exhibit?

One visitor engagement participant from Group 3 stated a primary part of co-curation was “to think about how one party's vision, the artist’s, can meet with the visitors’ kind of expectations and needs.” In Group 2 participants emphasized the importance of “trying to be true to the artist's vision and really honor that vision, that aesthetic. It’s been challenging in the past because of course we want to uphold that and help visitors navigate that vision.” Staff at Group 1 also discussed wanting visitors “to have a happy safe experience, to have an accessible experience, while still being able to translate the artist's vision.”

Another participant from Group 2 stated, “we organize, but only bring in that [museum] voice when it is a museum kind of thing. We start by thinking about bringing in voices that wouldn’t usually be in an exhibit and asking where does the source idea come from in order look outside and work outside of the museum.” In that same group it was also stated, “we have no business curating [a communities] voice especially, when you're talking about, you know, making an artistic statement. It’s about our statement to make.” A participant at Group 3 said “we want to show sort of interesting good things we're doing without taking away from the actual atmosphere of the event.” A participant from Group 1 stated, “It's always a challenge. I say that we try really hard to at least maintain the voice of that organization or individual to the extent that it's communicating their most important points and topics related to their work or the show. But it's also finding a way that it puts it into kind of the tone and voice of the museum that

our members or partners are used to hearing from us.” Staff members across departments and focus groups expressed concern with balancing institutional voice and the voice of the external collaborator.

Mismatched expectations were repeatedly stated in all focus groups to be primary sources of tension between staff and external collaborators. In one focus group, staff described a community partner as having been provided with freedom and power, but then causing confusion and complications through their lack of communication and acceptance surrounding the museum’s practical operations. A staff member at Group 3 described, “having to balance or even backtrack on decisions that had been made and then balancing that freedom that was given with the things that we do as based in best practices and that we still need to uphold.” In Group 2, stories of collaborators not understanding basic museum structures, such as finances, caused disagreements;

We've realized that sometimes you butt heads with an artist over like you know you ask them to do things related to funding of the show and then we realize somewhere in the process years ago that there's this misconception that the museum is sitting on a giant bank account of money for which we should we're just ready to go even various sophisticated artists who have worked in the industry for years.

Similarly, other participants in Group 2 said, “I think a lot of people don't understand the layers” and in Group 3 “we realized is that that community we were partnering with had different expectations.”

In regards to false expectations, each focus group had at least one participant say something along the lines of communication being the obviously hardest challenge of co-curation, which was then immediately agreed upon by participants.

Q: What were the benefits of co-curating?

Increased participation from diverse communities was a commonly stated benefit in all focus groups. One focus group member from Group 3 said, “The people came in it were outside of our norm...I think it was great” and another from Group 1 said that “[bringing in] different voices. But it's also allowing our audience to have exposure to new and different topics and people and situations that we might not be able to bring in on our own. It also builds communities that have a greater stake in who we are and what we do because they're actively participating instead of just showing up, they bring in different voices and diversity.” Another focus group member at Group 3 said, “it's really nice to pull these other communities and people so that's really, really great.” In Group 2 a staff person said “working with external organizations or working with artists or just folks in the community it offers new audiences that we can be engaging with and working with and maybe can get the work that we're presenting out to folks that would normally not see it for whatever reason.” In Group 1 a participant said “The different ways that the world will inhabit the gallery to create different kinds of experiences for the visitor both physically and visually, but also conceptually.” Staff described the organizational benefits of co-curation as involving an increase in variety of opinions and expertise as well as the variety of communities that co-curation attracted.

According to one participant in Group 1, “sometimes co-curation is about creating dynamic conversation through what we're doing by working with other people. But also sometimes it's about bringing in different skill that we don't have internally.” Similarly, another participant from the same focus group noted, “brainstorming together as a curatorial team [...] and exploring the possibilities with folks from the community who are interested in what's going on.”

In Group 2 a participant said “Co-curation brings more perspectives and more expertise to what we accomplish, different perspectives, which makes everything different and it's fun to work on stuff that's not the same” according to one participant. Another in Group 1 explained, “the exhibition team really appreciates working with people who like to solve puzzles and create new ideas and sometimes we can kind of reach back to past ideas and the solutions for past problems. So I mean there's never a moment here where you're bored”

Findings and Discussion

Participants described co-curation in relation to the opportunities available to work with living artists. Participants from each focus group seemed to agree that art museums were in a unique position to co-curate exhibits because the art they chose to exhibit was created by living artists, many of whom were local. Furthermore, the choice to co-curate was intentional and seemed to be mission-related. Challenges surrounding co-curation were related to balancing the artistic vision of the external co-curator. Mismatched expectations were a primary source of tension between staff and external collaborators and communication was agreed to be the hardest challenge of co-curation. Benefits ranged from institutional to individual. Organizational benefits of co-curation were listed as involving an increase in variety of opinions and expertise, the variety of communities that co-curation brought in to their museums, and staff growth through the development of new expertise. Staff enjoyment was also found to be a benefit of the co-curatorial process.

When staff members described their experiences with co-curation, they tended to describe them as challenging, but positive overall for the community. They also seemed appreciative of the unique position contemporary art museums are in to work with current artists, which affected their institutions' choice on whether to co-curate and with whom.

#2 Do staff have any methods or strategies for engaging in co-curation?

Q: How did you manage the Museum needs with the desires of the third party?

Q: How did you decide to divvy up the work interdepartmentally and decide who was working on this project?

Q: Did you have a strategy for communication and cohesion? How was it formed?

Q: How are decisions made? Who has final decision-making power when there are disagreements between staff members or staff and co-curators?

Q: What would you do differently if you could go back?

One Group 2 participant said that the success of co-curation “always comes back to did we manage expectations up front.” Another Group 2 member stated, “we need to make a Frequently Asked Questions document to give them in the beginning that says, here you're working with a museum, first of all, and we are going to ask you these kinds of questions. And this is why.” Similarly, in Group 3, individuals said that they “try and be as open about my process coming in and after all the logistics are done just so people know” and “I'm trying to be clear with expectations and commitments. It's pretty important, Also timeframes. Which I would bump into expectations.”

Other participants focused on managing expectations by educating the external collaborator on the role of staff members. Participants in Group 2 said that their strategy was to “get people to understand what our goals really are” and in Group 1 to have collaborators understand “the expertise that we're bringing to the conversation with the third party, to help them understand that we're trying to help them facilitate a meaningful and effective presentation of their vision and sometimes that means modifying it for the conditions. But that's part of it. That's part of it.”

Setting boundaries was also stated as a way to set expectations. In Group 1 a staff member said “Boundaries! We’re giving ourselves up to people either to be used like there is mutual respect that is built into our relationships with other people. We build ourselves a platform for people to explore their ideas whether that be through projects or collaboration and programs or through artists that we’re exhibiting, but there’s a built in understanding that there is a respect for us as museum professionals and we’ve had situations where we’ve had to reaffirm those boundaries.”

One participant in Group 2 stated, “You know when you invite somebody in to partner with you, you have to be patient and understanding. You don't invite them in because they work the same way you do, which is the most challenging part about it.” another in Group 1 said, “a lot of it's based on just connecting with others and meeting people halfway.” When faced with a conflict or misunderstanding “not getting angered by it and trying to find a pathway forward and being open to things” was a comment by one participant from Group 3. In Group 2 participants also said “Patience, patience. We're also trying and I am trying to be more intentional about the why, when we ask for things [from partners]” and “Treat everyone like a professional regardless of where you come from. Or what your spirit is.”

Variations in approach were described as depending upon pre-existing interpersonal relationships between staff and collaborator as they fluctuate over time. In Group 1 a staff member said “there are people that will work with and just respond better to a particular person here. So that sort of naturally becomes your communication head and there's other times that every person at this table will email and it just sort of depends on their personality and what they have going on and how it fits.” In Group 3 a participant said “these various relationships kind of fluctuate depending on where [departmentally] you're working.” In Group 2 someone said “I

think the nature of co-curating, the nature of inviting other people to your team, is that the way something worked for one project absolutely doesn't work for the next project.” Another focus group member said, “our circumstances are never like repeating. They're always unique I think. So it does require like talking with each other to come up with a solution.”

Findings and Discussion

From the strategies listed by staff, four emerged. The four strategies were management of expectations, setting boundaries, practicing compassion, and developing and identifying interpersonal relationships between staff. Members of the focus groups stated that in co-curation, it was important to extend understanding and patience to community partners. The two patterns surrounding these strategies were improving communication from the beginning and forming healthy considerate relationships with partners.

#3 Has co-curation affected the perspectives and practices of staff? If so, how?

Q: Can you cite a specific example of how your work changed due to the co-curating process?

Q: What have you learned from the process that you might apply to other areas of your work?

Q: Are there things that you learned from this or that changed your perspective? What was useful and why?

Members from all of the focus groups noted that their perceptions and practices had changed due to co-curation. Comments from participants regarding changes in perspective included the following:

- “I am not the isolated scholar genius sitting on information doling it out in bits and chunks which museums have historically done. So all the work that I am proud of that

I've done here has mostly been in the spirit of co-curating and I just see that as a natural part of how we should, we are, working.”

- “Bringing those ideas to bear in a group and the museum is a public space where we want to share and connect people to these ideas that we all benefit when we work together.”
- “I feel like every exhibition I can learn something new... Always, always learning always changing. Always growing. So. Yeah the ability to work with so many different types of people.”
- “It increased my curiosity.”
- “I'm constantly learning.”
- “I think for me it's come like not feeling comfortable with like assuming an audience looks this way or assuming a community is this. But I think just to be more open about it and also to know that I don't know. I think that's something that this project has kind of made me sort of more sensitive to.”
- “Question our identity as a museum and what that means to the community.”
- “To help people, and myself, [in contemporary art] feel comfortable in not knowing.”
- “I'm always learning new things and the people that we work with. But I think it's also indicative of local acknowledgement of like how much you can learn from the people that you are co-workers with that are third party. I mean at least that's I think I've grown in that way or tried to incorporate that into my work outside of working with Third party people.”
- “I think I've learned to it with empathy and just like listening.”

- “I have made really good relationships we've had have come from putting in work building built like incorporating yourself into their community or them into your community.”
- “It's made me a better communicator in my own personal life.”
- “I feel like it's been me a little bit more like hyper aware to other people and what they might have going on or why they're reacting to something potentially in a way that I might not have originally thought”
- “It makes it easy to say maybe you can speak to this better than I can.”
- “I feel like it's been me a little bit more like hyper aware to other people and what they might have going on or why they're reacting to something potentially in a way that I might not have originally thought.”
- “I think the general setting of the necessity of setting expectations and being honest about your limitations. That's something that is necessary in planning when yes with somebody outside of the organization and I think that bleeds into your internal work day to day with your colleagues.”

Comments from participants regarding changes in practice included the following:

- “From cooperating, now I know how living artists like to talk about themselves how to be authentic in the story that you're telling. Also increased communication skills.”
- “Now it's not just your co-workers to support other departments and the work that they do. It's really, I feel really fortunate as somebody who's relatively emerging because I get to see so many different ways of working on exhibition.”
- “Co-curating it brings in this fresh voice that wants to shake things up and maybe force you to try new things and you might learn something in the process.”

- “It really ask you to listen in ways that I hadn't really thought about in my own curatorial practice.”

Findings and Discussion

Staff described multiple ways that co-curation affected their perspectives and practices. Participants described increased awareness, curiosity, and comfort in expressing their lack of knowledge on a particular area, increased communication skills in and out of work, increased pride in their work, consistent learning and growth through exposure to new ideas and people, deeper reflection on both the role of museums and their roles in them, and increased empathy.

Discussion on Overall Interview Findings

The findings seemed to confirm that co-curating was an intensive undertaking because the parties involved did not share the same basic knowledge and understanding of museum work. The study suggested that when an institution did engage in this type of collaborative work, proper boundaries and expectations should be communicated clearly from the beginning. Additionally, museum staff would in part have their perspectives and practices shaped by their co-curatorial partners. The implication was that as museums continue to pursue co-curation, museum staff and their practices would be shaped by the communities that they collaborated with and thus, might have significant implications for the training of future museum professionals.

Observational Instrument

The observational instrument was used to analyze the video of each focus group. The frequency of times any staff member demonstrated a behavior that was listed on the framework

and instrument was recorded. The findings were arranged from most to least frequent. (Please refer to Appendix C for the coding matrix and full list of results)

#4 Do staff use verbal and non-verbal behavioral indicators of collaboration when discussing co-curation?

Q: Do staff demonstrate healthy team discussions?

The most frequent behavior exhibited by staff was demonstrating healthy team discussion. This behavior was demonstrated 212 times. Staff did this primarily through consensus seeking.

Q: Do staff value team insights?

The second most frequent behavior observed in focus groups was taking an interest or curiosity in each other's experiences. This behavior was demonstrated 155 times. The most common way that staff demonstrated this was by specifically asking other co-workers if they agreed with what they were saying.

Q: Do staff view work through a lens of team collaboration?

The third most frequent behavior observed in focus groups was staff referring to their work as being collaborative and shared. This behavior was demonstrated 144 times. The most common way that staff demonstrated this was by referring to their work in a group context, i.e.: using we, our, the team, etc.

Q: Do staff have appreciation/respect for the work accomplished together?

The fourth most frequent behavior observed in focus groups was staff having appreciation or respect for the work that they accomplished through co-curation. This behavior was demonstrated 142 times.

Q: Do staff have interest or curiosity towards each other's experiences?

The fifth most frequent behavior observed in focus groups was taking an interest or curiosity in each other's experiences. This behavior was demonstrated 126 times and primarily demonstrated through co-workers paying close attention to one another.

Q: Do staff recognize partners as having their own agency?

The sixth most frequent behavior demonstrated by staff was staff recognizing the partner as having their own agency. This was observed 112 times. This suggested that staff talked less about the community partner than the other topics.

Q: Do staff understand team members?

The least observed behavior was staff demonstrating that they understood their team members. This behavior only happened 36 times. This seemed to indicate that staff members talked the least about other people's roles.

Findings

Through the observational portion of the study, staff in all focus groups demonstrated collaborative behavior in every area of the observational framework and instrument. The second lowest observation was *Recognizes Partner Group as Having Own Agency*. The lowest frequency of observable behavior was in the *Understands Team Members* category, which was characterized by acknowledging or explaining part of another team member's process, and explaining attitudes of other members. These two behaviors were reliant upon staff talking about something other than their own experience. The fact that they were the lowest might indicate that staff did not frequently speculate or talk about experiences outside of their own. While these two behaviors occurred at the lowest frequencies, they did occur at least once in every focus group.

The most frequent behavior was related to *Demonstrating Healthy Team Discussions*. This might indicate that staff members had the skills for a successful conversation with a group of people from multiple departments in the museum. The other behaviors that were on the higher end in frequency were *Values Team Insight*, *Views Work Through Lens of Team Collaboration*, and *Has Appreciation/Respect for Work Accomplished Together*. This suggested that staff recognized teamwork as an important part of the co-curation process.

Connection Between Interview and Observation Findings

The results from the observation methodology generally supported the interview finding that staff found value in the practice of co-curation. The observational data detected signs of appreciation of co-curation in the focus groups by noting multiple benefits. Additionally, consensus between staff was observed as the most frequent behavior. This suggested that the observed behaviors agreed with interview findings on challenges, benefits, strategies, and co-curation. However, the low frequency of observed behaviors relating to understanding and recognition of partner agency seemed to be less supportive of the interview statements staff made in regards to empathy, practicing compassion, and valuing co-curator partner voices. Nevertheless, staff did recommend strategies focused on relationship building and communication in interviews, which were reinforced by observations of staff in consensus. This implied that despite staff's co-curatorial strategies, which were aimed at increasing communication and building healthy relationships, staff still struggled with understating their co-curator partners and teammates. Additionally, it was possible that staff struggled with the shift from traditional models of co-curation and institutional power to a participatory understanding of cultural institutions.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions, strategies, and behaviors of staff who engage with co-curation. The guiding questions focused on how staff described their experiences and communicated with one another. Four conclusions were drawn from the results of this study. The first conclusion was that co-curation could be a challenging process for staff, but that staff did recognize the benefits of including community partners in decisions about exhibits, programs, and projects. The second conclusion was that the strategies used by staff to combat the challenges of co-curation were setting expectations, practicing patience, and maintaining a flexible approach to prepare for variations in each unique partnerships. The third conclusion was that staff were aware of changes in their perspectives and practices due to co-curation. Those changes ranged from incorporating new information into practices to questioning previous perceptions to increasing communication skills, which increased work comfort. The final conclusion was that staff demonstrated behavior indicative of not only effective teamwork and collaboration, but also appreciation for teammates. Staff perceptions, strategies, and behaviors were connected to building knowledge of both co-curatorial partners, practices, and trust between formal members of the institution and participating community partners.

The implications of this study related back to the institutional perspective. Staff struggles would likely have been alleviated if more systems were in place to connect co-curatorial partners with staff in regards to communication and relationship building. Additionally, it may have been useful if partners were provided with an understanding of the goals, mission, and strategies of the

institution. Ultimately this study suggested that staff found co-curating challenging but rewarding and that institutional perspective might be necessary for success.

Limitations

This study had three significant limitations. The first was the limited number of sites included in the study. The second limitation was staff availability and focus group size. There was variation on which departments were represented in each focus group and the number of participants fluctuated depending on institutional size. The third limitation was that this study only focused on art museums. The fourth limitation was that the geographic selection was limited to the Pacific Northwest.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study produced four recommendations for future research. The first recommendation is that large-scale studies of the effects of co-curation and other collaborative and participatory practices on museum staff should be undertaken. The second is that research should pursue this topic on a broader scale, including different types of museums and more participating sites. The third suggestion is that more research on the models and behaviors related to collaboration in museums and across disciplines should be undertaken. The last suggestion is that research should be undertaken on the intersection between museum co-curation practices and collaboration in the general arts.

References

- "2019 University of Washington MFA MDes Thesis Exhibition." Henry Art Gallery. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://henryart.org/exhibitions/2019-university-of-washington-mfa-mdes-thesis-exhibition>.
- "About." Museum of Glass. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.museumofglass.org/about>.
- "About the Henry." About the Henry - Henry Art Gallery. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://henryart.org/about/about-the-henry>.
- Anderson, Maxwell. "Prescriptions for Art Museums in the Decade Ahead." *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 17th ser., 50, no. 9 (2007). Accessed July 20, 2019. doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2007.tb00245.x.
- Art Fund. "What Does the Future Hold for Curators?" Art Fund. November 17, 2019. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.artfund.org/news/2017/11/17/what-does-the-future-hold-for-curators>.
- Beersma, B., J. R. Hollenbeck, S. E. Humphrey, H. Moon, D. E. Conlon, and D. R. Ilgen. "Cooperation, Competition, And Team Performance: Toward A Contingency Approach." *Academy of Management Journal* 46, no. 5 (2003): 572-90. doi:10.2307/30040650.
- "Between Bodies." Henry Art Gallery. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://henryart.org/on-view/exhibitions#page-navigation-past>.
- Boon, Tim. "Co-Curation and the Public History of Science and Technology." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 54, no. 4 (2011): 383-87. doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2011.00102.x.
- Borrellio, C. "What Is Curation Now?" Chicago Tribune, October 4, 2013. Accessed June 6, 2019. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/ct-xpm-2013-10-04-ct-ae-1006-block-museum-lisa-corrin-20131004-story.html>
- Brown, Alison K., and Laura Peers. "Museums and Source Communities." 2005. doi:10.4324/9780203987834.

- Bunning, Katy, Jen Kavanagh, Kayte Mcsweeney, and Richard Sandell. "Embedding Plurality: Exploring Participatory Practice in the Development of a New Permanent Gallery." *Science Museum Group Journal*3, no. 3 (2019). doi:10.15180/150305.
- "Call for Cast Studies on Co-Curation." Call for Case Studies: Co-curation | Museums Association. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/09042019-case-studies-call-co-curation>.
- Das, T. K., and Bing-Sheng Teng. "Between Trust and Control: Developing Confidence in Partner Cooperation in Alliances." *Academy of Management Review*23, no. 3 (1998): 491-512. doi:10.5465/amr.1998.926623.
- Davis, Jason P. "The Group Dynamics of Interorganizational Relationships." *Administrative Science Quarterly*61, no. 4 (2016): 621-61. doi:10.1177/0001839216649350.
- "Definition of Case Study." PressAcademia. July 09, 2018. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.pressacademia.org/definition-of-case-study/>.
- "Definition of Case Study." PressAcademia. July 09, 2018. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.pressacademia.org/definition-of-case-study/>.
- "Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-trusted Online Dictionary." Merriam-Webster. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.
- Falk, John, Susan Foutz, and Beverly Sheppard. *N Principle, In Practice: Museums as Learning Institutions*. Rowman Altamira, 2007.
- Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books/Random House, 2008.
- Greg. "Collections & Communities: Co-curation, Consultation and Collaborative Working - Museum-iD." Museum. April 03, 2019. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://museum-id.com/collections-communities-co-curation-consultation-and-collaborative-working/>.
- Karavagna, Christian. "Working on the Community Models of Participatory Practice." *Republic Art*, 1988.
- Kelly, Lynda. "Co-design, Co-curation, Participation, Crowdsourcing, Etc – Working with Our Audiences." Museums | Digital | Research | Learning. February 16, 2018. Accessed July 20,

2019. <https://musdigi.wordpress.com/2018/02/16/co-design-co-curation-participation-crowdsourcing-etc-working-with-our-audiences/>.

Korn, Randi. "The Case for Holistic Intentionality." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 255-64. doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2007.tb00269.x.

Mack, Deborah L., Institute of Museum Library Services, and Salzburg Global Seminar. *Libraries and Museums in an Era of Participatory Culture: A Partnership Project of the Salzburg Global Seminar and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, October 19 -23, 2011: Session 482 Report*. Washington, DC]: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2011.

Mashek, Deborah, and Harvey Mudd. "People, Tools, and Processes That Build Collaborative Capacity." *Human Relations* 41, no. 6 (November 2015). College & Michael Nanfito and Associates.

Miller, Sarah E. "Cemeteries as Participatory Museums." *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 3, no. 3 (2015): 275-90. doi:10.7183/2326-3768.3.3.275.

Moore, Porchia. "Shifting Paradigms: The Case for Co-Creation and New Discourses of Participation." *The Inclusion*. May 03, 2016. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://inclusion.com/2014/02/26/shifting-paradigms-the-case-for-co-creation-and-new-discourses-of-participation/>.

"Museum of Glass." *Guidestar.org*. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/91-1669422>.

"Museums 2020." *Museums Association*, July 2013. <https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=806530>.

Nyangila, Jacob Mhando. "Museums and community involvement: A case study of community collaborative initiatives-National Museums of Kenya." In *ICOM Intercom 2006 Symposium*. 2006.

Ostrom, Elinor. "Crossing the Great Divide: Coproduction, Synergy, and Development." *World Development* 24, no. 6 (1996): 1073-087. doi:10.1016/0305-750x(96)00023-x.

"Portland Art Museum 2018 Annual Report." *Portland Art Museum*. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://portlandartmuseum.org/about/museum-facts/>.

"Portland, Oregon." Portland Art Museum. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://portlandartmuseum.org/>.

"Raven and the Box of Daylight." Museum of Glass. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.museumofglass.org/raven-box-of-daylight>.

"Reaching out to Younger Museum Audiences." MuseumNext. June 19, 2019. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://www.museumnext.com/article/reaching-out-to-younger-museum-audiences/>.

Salvato, Carlo, Jeffrey J. Reuer, and Pierpaolo Battigalli. "Cooperation across Disciplines: A Multilevel Perspective on Cooperative Behavior in Governing Interfirm Relations." *Academy of Management Annals* 11, no. 2 (2017): 960-1004. doi:10.5465/annals.2014.0001.

Salvato, Carlo, Jeffrey J. Reuer, and Pierpaolo Battigalli. "Cooperation across Disciplines: A Multilevel Perspective on Cooperative Behavior in Governing Interfirm Relations." *Academy of Management Annals* 11, no. 2 (2017): 960-1004. doi:10.5465/annals.2014.0001.

Simon, Nina. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz, CA: Published by Museum 2.0, 2017.

Simon, Nina. "The Participatory Museum, Five Years Later." Museum 2.0. Accessed July 20, 2019. <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2015/03/the-participatory-museum-five-years.html>.

Stephens, John Paul, Emily Heaphy, and Jane E. Dutton. "High-quality Connections." *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2011. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199734610.013.0029.

"Submission to the Museum Review". Arts Council of England. November 2016.

Stylianou-Lambert, Theopisti. "Re-conceptualizing Museum Audiences: Power, Activity, Responsibility." *Visitor Studies* 13, no. 2 (2010): 130-44. doi:10.1080/10645578.2010.509693.

Tjosvold, Dean. "Cooperative and Competitive Dynamics Within and Between Organizational Units." *Human Relations* 41, no. 6 (1988): 425-36. doi:10.1177/001872678804100601.

"Viewpoints." Henry Art Gallery. Accessed July 20, 2019. <https://henryart.org/on-view/viewpoints>.

Walhimer, Mark. *Museums 101*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Watson, Sheila, Amy Barnes, and Katy Bunning. *A Museum Studies Approach to Heritage*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019.

"We. Construct. Marvels. Between. Monuments." Portland Art Museum. Accessed July 20, 2019.
<https://portlandartmuseum.org/exhibitions/we-construct-marvels-between-monuments>

Weil, Stephen E. "From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum." *Daedalus* 128, no. 3 (1999): 229-58.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027573>.

Appendix A: Focus Group Meeting Agenda

Co-Curation Post Mortem Reflection Meeting Agenda

Researchers Statement:

I am asking you to participate in a focus group interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to examine staff experiences, attitudes, and reflections on co-curation of exhibits and how co-curation shapes their practice and ability to collaborate internally. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This interview will be taped for observational analysis purposes. Individual names of participants involved in this study will be kept confidential. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me through the information on this [card or document]. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Focus Group Procedures:

[Approximate length of interview, purpose of research questions, etc.]

45-60minutes The focus group is broken into two sections, the project formation and the project reflection. Each participant will receive a copy of the agenda. As facilitator I will provide a brief introduction and welcome. I will encourage each staff member to share and then begin the interview process. Then I will read each question and provide time for response.

Project Formation (20-30 minutes)

- Initial Approach
 - Why did this institution choose to co-curate?
 - How did you pick your community partners?
- Third Party Balance
 - How did you manage the Museum needs with the desires of the third party?
- Power Sharing Process
 - How did you decide to divvy up the work interdepartmentally and decide who was working on this project?
- Communication
 - Did you have a strategy for communication and cohesion? How was it formed?
 - How are decisions made? Who has final decision-making power when there are disagreements between staff members or staff and co-curators?

Project Reflection (20-30 minutes)

- What were the challenges of co-curating this exhibit?
 - How did you handle these challenges?
- What would you do differently if you could go back?
- What were the benefits of co-curating? Can you cite a specific example of how your work changed due to the co-curating process?
- What have you learned from this process that you might apply to other areas of your work?
- Are there things that you learned from this or that changed your perspective?
 - What was useful and why?

Closing: Thanks, Confidentiality Reminder, and Research Information:

I want to thank you for taking the time to have this conversation with me. Do you have any questions? If you have any questions, please contact me through the information on this **[card or document]**. Thank you very much for your time. If you would like a copy of my final research paper, please contact me at reilly.s.emma@gmail.com.

Appendix B: Observational Framework

Observational Framework and Instrument: Protocol

Name of instrument	Observational framework of collaborative behavior
Program Target	All programs, all audiences
Scheduled implementation	Flexible; can be pre-post with extended programs (e.g., camp, classes) or used as stand-alone with comparison to other participant groups
Evaluation questions addressed with assessment	Do staff demonstrate collaborative behavior while discussing co-curation
Outcomes being measured	(see list below)
Materials needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observational checklist ● Writing implement ● (May also develop for iPad use)
Staffing requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 staff member required to conduct observation

Activity implementation:

The staff member conducting the observations should begin by familiarizing himself/herself with the list of outcomes, indicators & examples of each demonstration of collaboration and healthy team behavior, (see below). When completing the actual checklist (see last page) the observer should note the program & audience being observed as well as noting presence of behavioral indicators that are elicited, indicated with an “x” in the appropriate box.

Observable Behavior or Engagement	Description of what to look for (<i>example quotes</i>)
1) Values Team insights	
A) Talks about and gives credit for the contribution of another co-worker	References past contributions <i>“Sheila had a great idea that...” “Sheila fixed this so well”</i> acknowledges or amplifies current contributions <i>“As Sheila said” “Sheila that’s a great idea”]</i>
B) Team members check in with each other	Makes sure that what they are saying is alright with other members of the team through verbal or nonverbal cues . <i>“Do I have that right?.” or eye contact, nodding,</i>

	<i>statements of agreement</i>
2) Views work through lens of team collaboration	
A) Refers to work in a group context	<i>“We decided....our work we put our heads together“</i>
B) Recognizes shared decisions/duties	<i>“We had to figure out x”</i>
3) Demonstrates Healthy Team Discussions	
A) Consensus Seeking	<p>Verbal or nonverbal agreement of teammates and teammates</p> <p><i>“Yes.” “Mhmm ”</i></p> <p><i>“That’s right”</i></p> <p><i>nods head</i></p> <p><i>thumbs up</i></p> <p><i>adds onto statement “and also... ”</i></p>
B) Ability to Compromise	<p><i>“You’re right, I hadn’t thought of it that way, I could see that.”</i></p> <p><i>[apologize]</i></p>
C) Encouragement of different opinions/openness to conflict	<p>Making Space for further discussion and potential disagreements</p> <p><i>“Do you agree with that?”</i></p> <p><i>“Does that make sense”</i></p> <p><i>“Does anyone have something to add”</i></p> <p><i>Team members actually take up this offer “I disagree with that” or “I felt a little differently”</i></p> <p><i>“We are tabling this for now, let’s talk about this later”</i></p>
4) Understands Team Members	
A) Acknowledges or explains part of	<i>“Holly handles, xyz” “Stefan is really good at that”</i>

another team members process	
B) Leverages each others skillset	“Because Holly handles this I can handle that” [since you’re good at that task, would you work on it while I do x?]
C) Explains attitudes of other members	“You didn’t like that part did you?” “Sam always prioritized the....”
5) Recognizes partner group as having own agency	
A) Refers to other party’s wants and needs	<i>“The [third party organization] needed this from us</i>
B) Uses pronouns/personal name of non-team members from third party	Refers to person as a “he” or “she” or by name, such as Barney

6) Has interest or curiosity towards each others experience	
A) Observes co-workers closely	Watches co-workers with expressed interest; focused attention.
B) Verbalizes observations	Comments on their own observations. <i>“I can see that you enjoyed that.”</i>
7) Has appreciation/respect for work accomplished together	
A) Verbalizes appreciation, gratitude or love for exhibit	<i>“I love this exhibit. It’s one of my favorites”</i>
C) Verbalizes other positive feelings about exhibits	<i>“This show feels so meaningful.” “I feel happy or grateful that we did this.”</i>
D) Recognizes positive about the work	“ I learned x” “the museum benefit from x”

Appendix C: Observational Instrument/Coding Matrix

Observable Behavior or Engagement	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total	Notes
1) Values Team insights					TOTAL 155
A) Talks about and gives credit for the contribution of another co-worker	12	15	21	48	
B) Team members check in with each other	33	26	48	107	
2) Views work through lens of team collaboration					TOTAL 144
A) Refers to work in a group context	18	27	32	77	
B) Recognizes shared decisions/duties	14	25	28	67	
3) Demonstrates Healthy Team Discussions					TOTAL 212
A) Consensus Seeking/Giving	35	41	58	134	Yes, yeah, definitely, right
B) Ability to Compromise	9	2	25	36	
C) Encouragement of different opinions/openness to conflict	10	8	24	42	
4) Understands Team Members					TOTAL 36
A) Acknowledges or explains part of another team members process	5	4	8	17	
B) Leverages each others skillset	1	3	5	8	
C) Explains attitudes of other members	1	2	7	10	
5) Recognizes partner group as having own agency					TOTAL 112
A) Refers to other party's wants and needs	15	19	53	87	
B) Uses pronouns/personal name of non-team members from third party	4	6	15	25	

6) Has interest or curiosity towards each others experience					TOTAL 126
A) Observes co-workers closely	30	36	42	108	
B) Verbalizes observations	2	6	10	18	“Like X was saying”
7) Has appreciation/respect for work accomplished together					TOTAL 43
A) Verbalizes appreciation, gratitude or love for exhibit	5	12	7	24	
C) Verbalizes other positive feelings about exhibit/project/program	3	4	12	19	
D) Recognizes positive about the work	26	42	31	99	

Appendix D: Recruitment Materials

I will contact sites through email and phone call. Below is the script I will use for both interactions.

Recruitment Script

Hello X

My name is Emma Reilly and I am a Museology MA student conducting research on co-curation. I would like to use X Site Name as an example of how museums use co-curation to develop exhibits. Would some of your staff be willing to meet with me for an hour focus group/meeting on the process? In addition to participating in research in the field of museum studies I believe that this would be a great opportunity for staff to review and analyze their internal practices. All staff names and will be kept anonymous in the study and I am happy to provide you with more information.

Please let me know if you are interested.

Have a great day,

-Emma Reilly

Appendix E: Empathetic Behavioral Observational Tool

Observational Framework and Instrument: Protocol

Name of instrument	Observational framework of empathic behavior
Program Target	All programs, all audiences
Scheduled implementation	Flexible; can be pre-post with extended programs (e.g., camp, classes) or used as stand-alone with comparison to other participant groups
Evaluation questions addressed with assessment	Does program participation elicit audience expression of empathic behaviors? Does it encourage expression of related positive emotions (e.g., respect, appreciation, curiosity, etc.)?
Outcomes being measured	(list below)
Materials needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observational checklist ● Writing implement ● (May also develop for iPad use)
Staffing requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 staff member required to conduct observation

How to use this Observational Framework with your program:

This observational framework is designed to be customizable to your specific program needs as some may not include every outcome. After identifying the empathy-based outcomes for your program you can remove those from the checklist that are not the intended goal. This tool can be used to either record observed behavioral indicators of individuals or of a program as a whole.

Activity implementation:

The staff member conducting the observations should begin by familiarizing himself/herself with the list of outcomes, indicators & examples of each, below. When completing the actual checklist (see last page) the observer should note the program & audience being observed as well as noting presence of behavioral indicators that are elicited, indicated with an “x” in the appropriate box.

Observable Behavior or Engagement	Description of what to look for (example quotes)
1) Understands needs of an animal	
A) Talks about animal’s basic needs of food and water	Recognizes our common needs of food and water <i>“He needs his breakfast”</i>
B) Talks about additional animal needs	Recognizes additional animal needs, such as social, environmental, reproductive, or activity. <i>“My dog needs to get exercise and go for a walk every day.”</i>
C) Compares self to animal (similarities)	<i>“I like playing with my brother too, just like the gorilla”.</i> <i>“She likes to swim too!”</i> <i>“Both you and the tortoise eat apples”</i>
D) Contrasts self to animal (differences)	<i>“The lizard likes bugs for breakfast, but I like waffles.”</i>
2) Able to take perspective of animals	
A) Predicts or speaks to animal’s state or emotion	<i>“I think he’s mad”</i> <i>“Maybe it’s hungry”</i>
B) Provides reasonable explanation for prediction of emotion	<i>“It’s so hot outside. I think that tiger is happy to be swimming right now.”</i> <i>“That octopus seems really relaxed. They’re a paler color when they’re relaxed.”</i>
C1) Mimics the behavior of an animal – prompted or cued by presenter	Cued or prompted by presenter to pretend to act like an animal or make animal vocalizations.