

Chapter 63

Thoughts and Highlights Involving an Urban Museum Education Partnership and a University

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the partnership between an urban art museum and a university. It involves museum educators, art education faculty, and undergraduate students. It specifically explores the development of hands-on museum activities for elementary students created by the university participants. The chapter is written from a higher education perspective. It provides a description of all facets of the partnership from its planning to the completion of the museum activities. The partnership provided the university students authentic museum experiences and ways to make professional connections with museum professionals. Recommendations for those who wish to develop university/museum partnerships are shared.

INTRODUCTION

Art museums have undergone profound changes in an effort to attract visitors and engage their interests (Ebitz, 2005). Partnering relationships between museum educators and university art education departments can work effectively if the collaboration incorporates the aspects of the art education curricula. Partnerships among museums and schools are a common occurrence, since American art museums, of all of the arts organizations; have the longest history dedicated to education. They partner to offer creative and informal learning experiences and enrich social learning (Johnson & Huber, 2009).

It should be discussed; this chapter is written from the higher education perspective. Ferman & Hill (2004), write there are unanswered questions about how community partners view and evaluate partnerships, why they enter into them and about the issues that emerge in navigating the partnership. In terms

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of museums and community collaborations, the museum relinquishes some control over the programming and on the university side, the traditional undergraduate curriculum is altered. Prior to the museum partnership, university students did not have hands-on museum education experiences. The partnership can generate innovative ideas, such as specific ways to incorporate museum education programs into art education curricula and foster relationships between schools and museums. to the program that may not have been realized previously by the museum's staff or university faculty (Spainhour, 2019).

BACKGROUND

Researchers (Hamilton and Margot, 2019) discuss the value of field-based experiences and write they are a vital components of university teacher education programs. These experiences allow preservice teachers or teacher candidates to transition from theory to practice. They can be part of methods, educational foundation, or practicum courses. The teacher candidates learn directly through learning settings such as k-12 classrooms. Given the need for a wide-range of field-base experiences, community settings can be used. For example, partnering with a museum's education department for on-site field placements can broaden teacher candidates' educational experiences and strengthen student learning. It offered them opportunities to learn from the museum's staff, develop art education lessons based on the museum's collection and view works of art in person. Also, it allowed the teacher candidates a chance to see how art education fits into a community setting.

Zeichner (2010) points out community-based sites function as a "third space", a place outside the home (first space) and work (second space) for teaching and learning. According to Gutierrez (2008), this theoretical space allows for students to build upon not only what they learn formally in school, but also what they learn informally outside of school. It is important to mention, the traditional social roles and structures that situates students in a junior position in the classroom are replaced. The role of the students intersects with community members and creates authentic interactions (Bostock, 2012).

In terms of preservice teacher candidates, "third space", offers opportunities for them to learn ideas and concepts, not found in traditional k-12 placements. These placements can link theory to practice and promote community-based education. A museum is one example of a "third space" community-based site. The museum location will allow preservice teachers opportunities to learn additional skills needed to handle the public as educational professionals. It will allow the participants to develop their organizational skills and learn to collaborate with their classmates and museums professionals, skills needed with any job. Also, too often preservice teachers are guided by the styles and methods of their professors, this encourages new perspectives to introduced. Zinicola and Devin-Scherer (2001) write partnerships with community educational sites, such as museums and science centers, help teacher candidates embrace new teaching methods in a learn-by-doing atmosphere. These ideas can be applied to preserve art teachers and their field-based practices.

Stone (2013) writes preservice art educators will cross many boundaries in their careers. Learning how to work with museum educators can expand their educational experiences, beyond traditional classroom settings. In addition, they strengthen research skills in the areas of art history, studio art and museum education. When working with museum educators, the experiences can prepare and practice curricula development and fine tune teaching strategies.

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