Impact Planning, Evaluation & Audience Research

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Summary of Results
Survey of Single-visit K-12 Art Museum Programs

Prepared for the
National Art Education Association (NAEA) and Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD)

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TOPLINE SUMMARY

THE MAJORITY[1] OF ART MUSEUMS OFFERING SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAMS...

MUSEUM TYPE

- Are governed by private non-profits
- Have fewer than 4 full-time education staff

AUDIENCE

- Serve fewer than 5,000 students
- Serve K-4
- Reach out specifically to schools that serve disadvantaged students

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Median program length is 60 minutes
- Median time in the galleries is 55 minutes
- Include an orientation, a gallery experience, and a reflection or closing
- Provide pre- and post-visit materials
- Make 4 to 7 "stops" at works of art during the gallery experience

PROGRAM FEES

- Never charge program fees
- Sometimes provide free transportation

FACILITATORS

- Always or almost always use docents or volunteers to facilitate programs
- Have a facilitator-to-student ratio of 1:10-15

OVERSIGHT

- Train docents, gallery guides, and other facilitators (mostly in facilitation or questioning strategies and the collection)
- Train facilitators using outcomes
- Assess their programs by surveying classroom teachers and conducting peer review

ACTIVITIES

Include the following gallery activities:

- A facilitator-guided group dialogue
- A writing activity
- Making art or sketching in galleries
- Storytelling
- Handling materials
- Role-playing

FACILITATION METHOD

Are facilitated by:

- Asking students open-ended questions
- Providing students factual and contextual information
- Allowing group dialogue to evolve in response to students' comments or questions

OUTCOMES

Seek to achieve the following program outcomes:

- Hone observation skills
- Encourage questioning and investigation
- Elicit interpretation of visual images
- Achieve a personal connection to artworks/objects and/or their makers

[1] Majority means that at least 51 percent of the sample met these criteria.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Art Education Association (NAEA) and the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) contracted Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A) to plan for a rigorous multi-site research study investigating the question, *What are the benefits to students of engaging with original works of art within the context of object-based art museum programs that take place during the formal school day?* The planning year was devoted to gathering information toward the development of a plan for conducting a multi-site research study. As part of "information gathering," RK&A conducted a national survey of the field to identify the most representative[2] characteristics of single-visit K-12 field-trip practices in art museums across the United States. A total of 270 art museums responded to the survey, for a response rate of 49 percent.

The sample of respondent art museums is representative of art museums that have single-visit programs; the sample may not be representative of all art museums. Findings should not be extrapolated to any other type of museum program, such as a multi-visit program. Findings are about single-visit programs, exclusively.

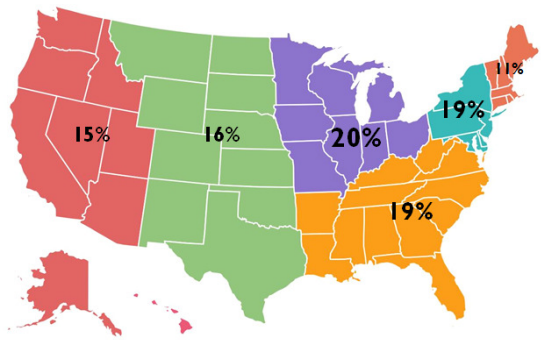
For this study, a single-visit program is defined as a one-time museum visit for K–12 school groups that:

- Includes a substantial amount of time in the museum galleries,
- Focuses on student experiences with original works of art, and
- Is facilitated by a museum representative who is a full-time or part-time staff member, contract gallery educator, or unpaid docent/volunteer.

The findings presented here are among the most salient. Please read the body of the report for a more comprehensive presentation of findings.

WHO ARE THE MUSEUM RESPONDENTS?

Respondents are divided approximately evenly across six regions in the United States, as designated by the American Alliance of Museums. The greatest percent of respondents are from the Midwest (20 percent), one of the largest geographic regions; the fewest respondents are from New England (11 percent), the smallest geographic region.



[2] Representative is defined as 51 percent or more or characteristics rated 6.0 or higher.

The greatest percent of respondent museums are private non-profits (62 percent), while the second largest group of respondents is governed by colleges or universities (27 percent). Education departments among the majority of respondents are small, consisting of one to three full-time educators (56 percent). Additionally, 96 percent of the art museums offer a K–12 single-visit program.

PRIVATE NON-PROFIT GOVERNANCE — **62%**

SMALL EDUCATION STAFF OF LESS THAN 4 — **56%**

SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAM OFFERED — **96%**

WHOM DO SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAMS SERVE?

Single-visit programs in art museums have a clear majority audience. 55 percent of art museums serve fewer than 5,000 students annually. The number of students served has a statistical relationship to the number of full-time educators on staff, as might be expected; the majority of art museums have small education departments of just three full-time educators or less (56 percent), which corresponds almost exactly to the percent of museums that serve fewer than 5,000 students annually. Kindergarten through 4th grade is the primary audience for single-visit programs, possibly because school curriculum is most flexible in these early grades, more easily allowing for art museum fieldtrips. High participation among these grades may also be due to museums' desire to establish relationships with students at an early formative stage. Museums indicated they serve grades 5–8 second-most frequently (32 percent).

Perhaps not surprising, the greatest percentage of art museums serve an urban community (45 percent), followed by suburban (30 percent), and lastly rural (14 percent). In addition, a majority of art museums, particularly those with a large education department of 11 or more staff, actively reach out to disadvantaged schools or students, such as Title 1 schools (57 percent).

< 5000 STUDENTS SERVED — **55%**

K - 4 — **53%**

URBAN — **45%**

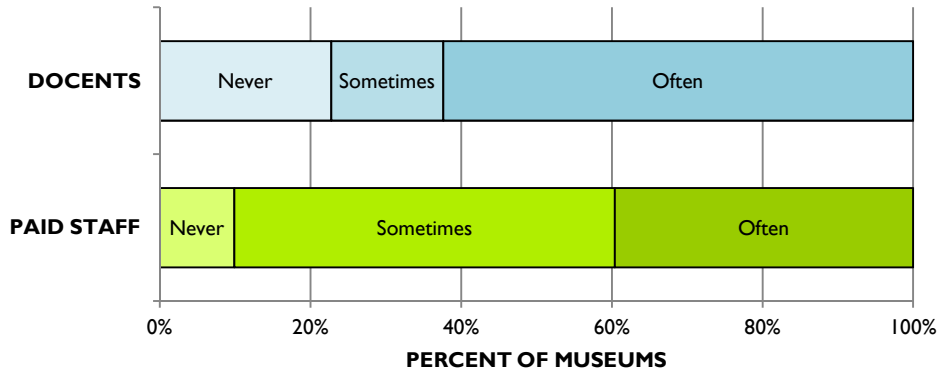
TITLE I AUDIENCE INTEREST — **57%**

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAMS?

FACILITATION

Across museums, unpaid docents or volunteers facilitate programs more often than full-time staff. As shown in the figure on the right, more than 60 percent of museums' respondents said that docents often lead programs, while not quite 40 percent of respondents said that paid staff facilitate programs. The most common ratio of facilitator to students is one facilitator to 10–15 students (57 percent). Docents are more likely to take the lead for museums that serve more than 5,000 students annually and target grades K–8. Interestingly, the size of the education staff does not factor into who leads the single-visit program.

DOCENTS LEAD PROGRAMS MORE OFTEN THAN PAID STAFF



PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Program elements are largely consistent—most of the programs consist of an orientation and gallery experience (98 percent each), and many include closing reflections (73 percent). The greatest variability relates to art-making elements; just 42 percent of museums offer art making in a space separate from the galleries and they tend to be museums that primarily serve K–4 audiences.

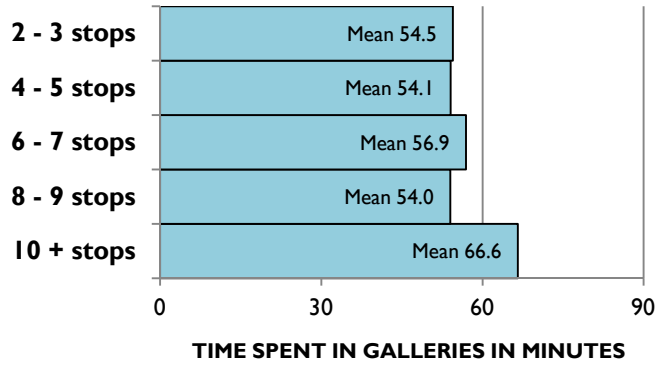
Additionally, there is some variability around the activities museums offer in the galleries. Most include facilitator-led dialogue (96 percent), but otherwise there is no other typical activity. However, more than half of museums report offering each of these activities: write, make art/sketch in galleries, tell stories, handle materials, and do role-play/movement.

PROGRAM LENGTH

In terms of program length, the majority of programs are 60–89 minutes in length, and most of the programming takes place in the galleries (just 7 percent spend less than half of their program time in the galleries). Notably, quite a few museums devote all of their program time to the galleries (31 percent). During their time in the galleries, the majority of museums make less than five stops with their students (55 percent). Generally the number of stops does not affect time in the galleries; the mean time in the galleries hovers around 55 minutes regardless of the number of stops until you reach 10 stops or more.

STOPS DO NOT AFFECT TIME SPENT IN GALLERIES

A "stop" takes place in front of a work of art or a grouping of works of art so students and the facilitator can respond to the works



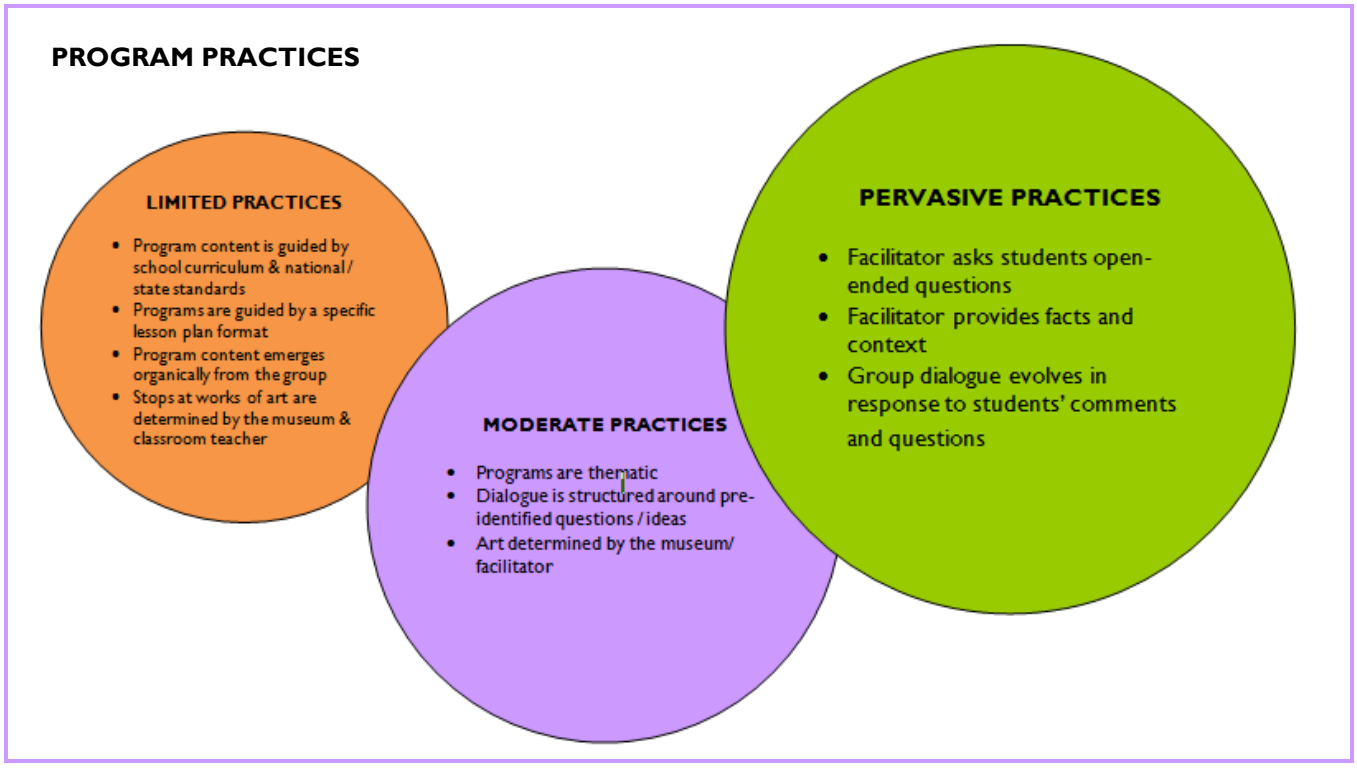
WHAT IS THE NATURE OF SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAMS?

We asked art museums to rate a series of 11 program practices on a 7-point scale from 1, "never happens in the majority of our single-visit program," to 7, "always happens in the majority of our single-visit programs."

Pervasive practices: Statements rated a 6.0 or higher are practices pervasive throughout the various programs. These practices include asking students open-ended questions (mean = 6.5), providing students factual and contextual information (mean = 6.2), and allowing group dialogue to evolve in response to students' comments or questions (mean = 6.0).

Moderate Practices: Statements rated between 5.0 and 5.9 are also popular. These practices include thematic programming (mean = 5.8), group dialogue structured around pre-identified questions or ideas (mean = 5.7), and stops determined by the facilitator (mean = 5.7).

Limited Practices: All statements that have a mean less than 5.0 indicate limited practices—those done by just some museums. These practices include three statements about how programming content is developed: guided by the school's curriculum (mean = 4.8), guided by specific lesson plan format (mean = 4.4), and emerges organically from the group (mean = 4.3). The lowest-rated statements are about the involvement of students and teachers in determining content: stops at works of art are determined through collaboration by museum/ facilitator and classroom teacher (mean = 4.1) and stops at works of art are determined by the students (mean = 3.4).



WHAT ARE THE INTENDED OUTCOMES OF SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAMS?

Critical thinking rises to the top as the outcome that museums most often aspire to achieve, while sensorial and affective responses fall to the bottom. We asked art museums to identify, from a list of 13 outcomes, up to four that best describe their intentions for single-visit programs. All of the outcomes can be categorized in five larger trends that appear from most frequently to least frequently as follows:

1. **Critical Thinking**
   Critical thinking outcomes, of which there were three, rise to the top. The critical thinking outcome observation skills was most selected—chosen by 64 percent of museums. Interpretation of visual images and appreciation of multiple interpretations complete the top-five outcomes.

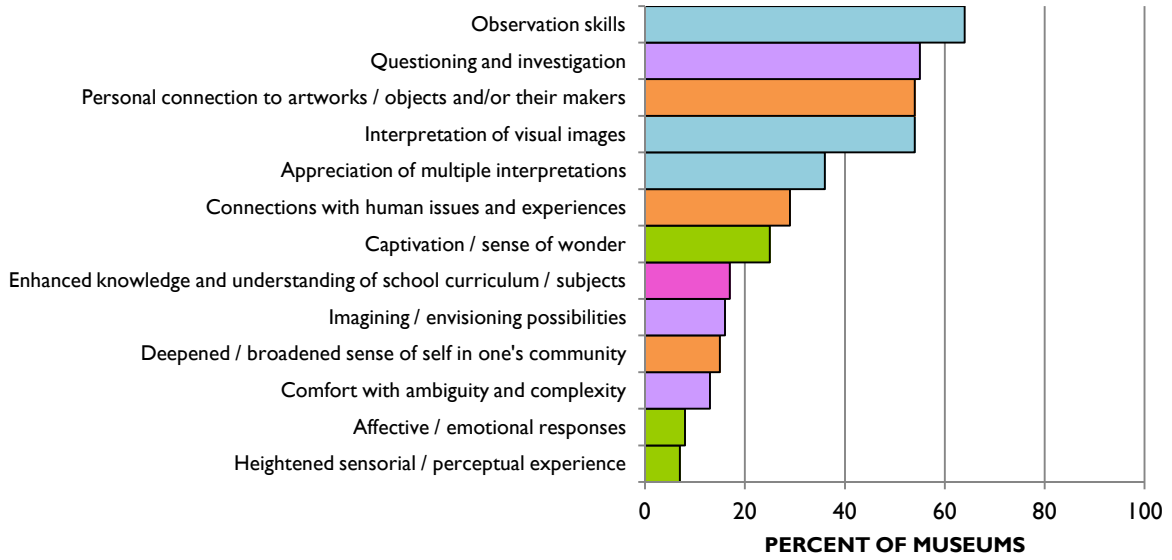
2. **Human Connections/Empathy**
   There are three outcomes related to human connections/empathy; they are the third, sixth, and tenth most-selected outcomes: personal connection to artworks/objects and/or their makers, connections with human issues and experiences, and deepened/broadened sense of self in one's community.

3. **Creative Thinking**
   The creative thinking outcome questioning and investigation ranks second. However, the other two creative-thinking outcomes, imagining/ envisioning possibilities and comfort with ambiguity and complexity, rank much lower in the ninth and eleventh slots.

4. **Academic Development**
   There was one outcome about academic development: enhanced knowledge and understanding of school curriculum/subjects. It appears towards the top of the bottom half of the outcomes.

5. **Sensorial and Affective Response**
   Sensorial outcomes fall toward the bottom. Captivation/sense of wonder is the most-selected outcome from this category but it ranks seventh overall. The other two outcomes, heightened sensorial/perceptual experience and affective/emotional responses, were selected by less than 10 percent of museums, placing them in the last two slots.

OCCURRENCE OF INTENDED OUTCOMES

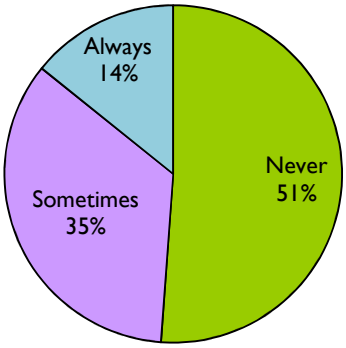


WHAT FEES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAMS?

Costs incurred by schools and students for single-visit programs, such as program fees and transportation costs, are highly situational. Overall, single-visit programs are mostly offered for free, with results showing that 51 percent of museums never charge program fees and 35 percent sometimes charge for programs based on whether the program is related to a special exhibition or includes an art-making activity. However, very few museums provide coverage for transportation, with just 12 percent of museums reporting that they always cover transportation costs and 51 percent saying they sometimes do depending on limited grant funding, scholarships, or subsidies that are available either to certain types of schools (e.g., Title 1) or on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A correlation exists between museums' treatment of program fees and transportation costs–notably, the museums that never charge program fees are the most likely to provide transportation coverage indicating they are probably well funded.

CHARGE PROGRAM FEES ***n*** **= 260**



HOW DO MUSEUMS OVERSEE THEIR SINGLE-VISIT PROGRAMS?

Training single-visit program facilitators is very common, with nearly all museums offering one form of training or another (96 percent). Most focus training on facilitation and questioning strategies and the museum's collection (96 and 90 percent respectively). There is variability in using intended outcomes when training facilitators, with only 61 percent doing so. Museums that use outcomes when training are more likely to serve 5000 students or more and are more likely to reach out to disadvantaged students.

Compared to the prevalence of facilitator training that takes place, fewer museums assess or monitor their single-visit programs. About two-thirds of museums survey classroom teachers; however, only one-third tally these surveys, indicating a large gap between collecting and analyzing teacher data. Half of museums use peer assessment and reviews, and very few conduct external evaluation (12 percent). As noted with facilitator training using outcomes, museums that assess their programs are more likely to serve 5000 students or more and are more likely to reach out to disadvantaged students.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study will be useful in numerous capacities, described below.

- Used to further develop and plan for a rigorous multi-site research study investigating the question, *What are the benefits to students of engaging with original works of art within the context of object-based art museum programs that take place during the formal school day?* In particular, results will help us determine criteria for selecting the museums that will participate in the research study.
- Help museum educators identify and understand trends and areas of opportunity for research and practice.
- Provide information to stakeholders outside museum education to better understand one of the most prevalent forms of museum education programs.