

Exploring the Connection between Secondary Social Studies Teachers

and Museum Educators

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Social studies education, particularly that of history, requires a constant connection to the world outside of the classroom. Events, people, places, eras, etc. do not typically occur within the confines of secondary (grades 7-12) educational classrooms. There is an ever-present need to link classroom instruction to social studies topics that almost exclusively exist outside of the classroom. Teachers aim for meaningful and engaging instruction, which leads to larger expectations for the social studies classroom than lecture notes and documentaries. Museums and historic sites provide a viable avenue for connecting classroom instruction to the outside world.

Museum education and classroom education, and the teachers/museum educators involved, largely promote similar goals. Both try to promote the use of history to cultivate educated minds. Both rely upon the public to fund and support their institutions. Both hold requirements for how this education is to be implemented. The link between museum education and classroom education is relatively obvious when considering the similarities and the fact that they share similar content knowledge. In an article titled “Why Study History”, Peter Stearns (1998) states that the study of history is important because it benefits both the individual and society as a whole. The current Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies (2010) emphasize the interaction between society and the individual (see www.ode.state.oh.us). Museums exist for the purpose of society as a whole and the individual as well. The American Association of Museums

(2005) places public service and education at the top of its accreditation standards (see www.aam-us.org). History education maintains the same importance, be it in a classroom setting or a museum setting.

The problem with the connection between museums and public education is that the two do not pragmatically work together. Educators within museums and public schooling come from different sources of training. A museum educator gains training and experience thinking of education in terms of “how do I translate history in a public museum setting?” Classroom educators come from an educational background that does not focus on how to translate educational practices and philosophies to a voluntary public audience – they learn how to teach in a certain school setting, generally with a captive audience. The two sides have similar goals but very different means of achieving such goals.

Museum and classroom education do not have to exist as mutually exclusive educational bodies. They should be able to merge their educational foci to create a better learning environment for the public. While the public may be able to benefit from such a merger, the benefits to social studies students is much more tangible. Classroom educators can use museums or historic sites to supplement traditional teaching techniques and curriculum more practically than museums might extend their educational reaches to the student population. This is not to devalue the role of museum education – quite the contrary – it is to acknowledge they have a larger population of fish to fry, so to speak. With that being said, though, museum education can certainly extend its reach into the classroom setting with the goal of promoting its historical content to a broader range of people. It is essentially a win-win situation for both institutions.

Research Focus

This study will focus on three main questions:

1. Why is there a disconnect between museum education and classroom education?
2. What are the benefits of a strong collaborative relationship between museum and classroom educators?
3. How can museum and classroom educators better work together to promote stronger social studies education?

Research Procedure

Based on the subjective tone of this study it is more appropriate to conduct qualitative research methods. Secondary public school social studies teachers and museum educational coordinators will be interviewed in order to answer the three research questions. The purpose of this study is to not only answer the research questions but also gather further information on the connections, attitudes and perceptions of both educational institutions – all of which speak to the qualitative emphasis of the study. The review of the literature will demonstrate the philosophical foundations of each educational body and provide foundation for exploring the opinions and ideas of the research participants. Said participants will come from a range of high schools within southeastern Ohio and museum educators will be interviewed from similar geographic

locations. Three secondary social studies teachers and three museum professionals will make up the sample size.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device and directed in a manner that attempted to keep all of the interviews as uniform as possible, although the nature of the questions challenges this goal. Interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format between the interviewer and the subject. The interviewer aimed to allow the subjects freedom to present their thoughts in an open conversation. Due to the nature of qualitative research, data analysis was open to researcher bias – a risk the researcher was willing to take in order to meet the purpose of the study.

Limitations

The following factors may have limited the study:

1. The study relies almost exclusively on the perspectives, experiences, and attitudes of the subjects. The problem in this reliance is the fact that the research is a reflection of the subjects and reflects any biases the subjects might hold.
2. The location of the study lies in an area that lacks a large number of historic museums/sites. Subject perspectives could be very different in different regions of the state, country, or world.
3. The sample size is relatively small when considering the vast amount of social studies teachers and museum professionals in the world.

Organization of Study

Chapter One of this study serves as an introduction to the problem and goals of the research. Chapter Two reviews research literature pertaining to the research questions. Chapter Three explains the research methodology in more detail. The findings collected during interviews with subjects are displayed and analyzed in Chapter Four and, finally, conclusions and suggestions for further review are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is an abundance of literature on both museum education and social studies education as individual entities. The problem with the research is that the link between the two educational bodies is relatively unexamined through a focus on secondary social studies. Numerous studies focus on elementary education, art education, or science education (Gomez, 2010, Mangiante, 2009, Martin & Yoder, 2009). However, by examining museum education and classroom education it becomes clear that they maintain several overarching goals, theories, and practices. Through understanding the connection between the two bodies on a theoretical level we can understand why and how the two can work together to produce educational benefits. The literature applicable to this study focuses on historical museums, which can include historic sites, parks, memorials, houses, or regions. It is necessary to highlight this definition, as I will just use the term “museum” throughout the study.

This literature review will first examine museum education – its theory, goals, practice, and training – in order to identify its place in the educational process. Secondly, the review will look at the identity of secondary social studies education. Next, this chapter moves into identifying the problem with field trips and the connection between secondary social studies educators and museum educators. Finally, the literature will demonstrate how and why these two educational bodies can work together to produce a better educational process for students.

Museum Education

Education continually lies at the heart of most explanations of what museums should be. A museum cannot effectively be a museum without holding a stake in the education of the public. Museums in their earliest forms typically consisted of private collections for the benefit and enjoyment of a small amount of people (Alexander, 1979). However, as museums evolved they began to serve the public. John Dana, the founder of the Newark Museum, said, in 1909, “A good museum attracts, entertains, and arouses curiosity, leads to questioning and thus promotes learning. It is an educational institution that is set up and kept in motion – that it may help the members of the community become happier, wiser, and more effective human beings”(Alexander, 1979).

Museum definitions today continue the sentiments of definitions of the past 200 years; namely the emphasis on public interpretation and education. The word “interpretation” is often used within the museum environment in place of “education” because it indicates a disassociation from more traditional educational practices like textbooks and tests (Alexander, 1979). In contrast to early museums around the world, American museums evolved in different ways. American museums emphasized collection as well as education and diversity (Skramstad, 1999). Museums existed and relied upon community organization and public support. Definitions of museums around the country today continue to focus on education in their missions. The American Association of Museums, International Council of Museums, and the Museum and Library Services Act all highlight the requirement that museums exist for the education and/or development of society (see <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/whatis.cfm>). Similarly, individual museums around the country stress the same focus in their missions,

including the Washington State Historical Society, North Carolina Museum of History, and the National Museum of American History (see <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/wshs/history-mission.aspx>, <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/aboutus/mission.html>, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/about/mission.cfm>). The Smithsonian National Museum of American History, in their mission, state, “We create opportunities for learning, stimulate imaginations, and present challenging ideas about our country’s past.” It is clear that museums, by definition, include a large element of education.

Museums’ means to promote and execute education is different than that of a classroom setting. Museums work to advance their educational purposes through more specific topics and histories. For instance, regional historical societies are restricted to the histories and cultures of that specific region (Athens County Historical Society and Museum website). This specificity also serves as a basis for this study and a potential problem of museum education as a whole. Moreover, museums must use their resources (artifacts, spaces, buildings, etc.) to provide opportunities for interpretation to the public.

In a more practical perspective, museum education must exist if the museum is going to continue to be an aspect of the society it serves. The necessities and benefits of a museum providing educational programs are many. Attracting new visitors, displaying positive gains within the museums to other institutions, enhanced funding, community support, and meeting accreditation purposes all fall under the practical reasons for museums to have educational programs in line (Talboys, 2000). Furthermore, museum education exists in order to keep the tradition of historical collection, inquiry, and interpretation alive. George Hein, in his explanation of why museum education exists,

states that museums "...have also become active preservers of cultures, not just passive collectors of cultural artifacts" (Hein, 1998). The literature shows an emphasis, necessity, and reason for museums to offer educational undertakings. Such elements have formed over time with the backing of theory and practicality.

Social Studies Education

Conceptions of social studies education share common educational characteristics with goals and practices of museum studies. Due to the nature of social studies – history, geography, culture, government, economics, etc. – it becomes important for students to have actual connections to the content they are studying. Educational theory and standards for the social studies demonstrate a need for out-of-classroom experiences.

The Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies includes the following passage in its introduction:

“Whenever possible, students should have opportunities to learn social studies in real-world contexts. They should be able to examine artifacts, read primary source materials, engage in authentic experiences and take field trips. Research shows that learning is enhanced when students make meaningful connections between new information that they are learning and their own experiences” (see <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1706&ContentID=852&Content=72502>, p. 2).

Teachers are expected to meet the standards for their state, grade level, and subject area. It is clear that teachers are in many ways required to take the appropriate measures to make learning more tangible and experiential for students.

Although an exhaustive amount of literature exists highlighting the theories and benefits of ideas like social learning, experiential learning, differentiated instruction, and service learning – and each of these play an important factor in the benefits of using museum education in a social studies classroom – these ideas are not the focus of this particular study. Rather, the focus of this study lies in the connection between such ideas as they apply to social studies instruction and museum education.

The purposes for social studies education revolve around a number of reasons that all work for the benefit of students and, consequently, society. In *Why Study History*, Peter Stearns states that people should study history because it helps us understand the world around us (Stearns, 1998). Education should work to connect content material to the real world for the advancement of society. Authors Brian Garvey and Mary Krug argue that the model for teaching history must take on a more practical approach. Students need to gain knowledge of historical facts but also gain an understanding of and appreciation for the past and people (Garvey & Krug, 1977). The National Council for the Social Studies also requires that the “significance and meaningfulness of the content is emphasized both in how it is presented to students and how it is developed through activities” (see <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/teacherstandards>, p. 12).

Literature shows the importance and necessity of connecting social studies content to the world outside of the classroom. Museums present an effective way to do so.

Problems In the Connection

Literature shows that museums and classrooms working together to better the educational benefits of their respective institutions are not executed flawlessly. The problems that exist between this ideal relationship are many. A majority of sources state the main difficulty in teachers working with museums is the lack of substantial dialogue between the two sides (Marcus, 2008, 2010). Teachers and museum staff are simply not working together to produce learning opportunities for students. Using previous studies and statistics on the teacher-museum relationship, Alan Marcus concludes, “Despite a number of successful and exemplary school-museum collaborations, most teachers, and thus students, are only informally connected to museums, missing out on the potential benefits to schools and museums” (Marcus, 2008). G. Ellis Burcaw attributes this lack of communication to an ambiguity of roles. Teachers know their students best and museum educators know their content best, and there is a disconnect between how to work off the strengths of the other (Burcaw, 1997). John Falk and Lynn Dierking write that museums fail to understand movements in effective pedagogy. Their lack of training in things like motivation, expectations, and teaching strategies hamper their ability to properly work with teachers (Falk & Dierking, 2000).

One explanation for the disconnect between teachers and museums rests upon museums’ negative attitude toward education. Many museums, sticking to a traditional understanding of themselves, see education as taking away from the “real” work of their institution (Skramstad, 1999). Skramstad states that the professionalism of museums and their focus on their collection can cause certain museums to lose sight of the need to reach out to the public.

Brenda Trofanenko (2006) produced a study analyzing the changing authority of museums in society. She concluded that museums often get away from educating about the specific goal of the museum and instead focus on educational needs of the community or public they are educating. She cites an example of a history museum in Canada that changed its content, and consequently its educational goals, to meet a growing sentiment to focus on indigenous populations of that region. Due to this change, Trofanenko holds that the museum lost its own identity and diminished its educational value.

Victoria Newhouse (1999), in her article *Is The Idea of a Museum Possible Today*, states that the problem with museum education is that it often leads to a museum more closely resembling a theme park. While she does not disvalue education's role in museums, she focuses on the possible downfalls that might prevent museums from staking too much in educational programs.

In *Museums as Institutions for Personal Learning*, author John Falk (1999) attributes the problem with classroom-museum collaboration to the lack of empirical documentation of the learning benefits. He uses studies from six different outside-the-classroom activities (including a regional history center, art museum, and science center) to demonstrate that learning can and does happen in such circumstances. He shows that most of the evidence is qualitative in nature, typically collected from interviews of personal experiences with subjects. However, one study pertaining to the art museum was able to quantitatively demonstrate the effectiveness of using the art program to better student learning.

Alan Marcus (2008), in *Rethinking Museums' Adult Education for K-12 Teachers*, also attributes a lack of empirical evidence as a problem for classroom-museum collaboration.

Many of the explanations for the problem in the connection also revolve around the teachers. Marcus, in *Rethinking Museums' Adult Education for K-12 Teachers*, attributes teachers' lack of training in how to incorporate museum visits into their planning and instruction as the major problem between the two educational entities. He believes that teachers are simply not trained in how to use museums as an educational tool. On the other hand, this may not be simply a lack of appropriate training. Graeme Talboys (2000) explains that this lack of training consciously exists because museums are typically too specialized in their content; teachers choose not to use them. Harold Skramstad (1999) states that teachers typically see museums as nothing more than informal and fun experiences for students, not as important educational means.

More practically, the lack of collaboration between social studies teachers and museums might exist simply as a result of logistical concerns. Things like a lack of administrative support, lack of finances, and pressure to meet curriculum demands/requirements can restrict teachers from using museums (Marcus, 2010).

Benefits of Outside-the-Classroom Experiences

Most of the sources cited throughout this review begin their analysis with a brief explanation of why classroom educators should utilize museum opportunities. Possibly the most encompassing is Falk's explanation. He states, "It has long been recognized, but rarely publicly acknowledged, that most people learn much if not most of what they know outside of the formal education system" (Falk, 1999). The benefits of effective outer-classroom experiences can revolve around several different learning opportunities for students. However, such benefits can certainly be specified further through a focus on

a particular discipline. Benefits for social studies students can include gaining new perspectives, opportunities for lifelong learning, practice in historical thought, active engagement and enjoyment, exposure to new resources, and practice in seeing how evidence is used by historians (Marcus, 2008).

From an ideological standpoint, evidence has shown that museums can also have an effect on the personal identity of visitors, particularly students. A study focused on the cultural bias of the Maryland Historical Society that shows how the ideological position of the institution can impact its product (Latchem, 2006). Although this highlights a negative impact of that particular museum, it demonstrates the potential for a museum to positively affect visitors' personal identity.

Continuing Falk's analysis of museums as teachers, he references a study completed through the Heinz Regional History Center in Pittsburgh, PA. After hundreds of personal interviews with attendees, he concluded, "Although the learning described was nearly always very personal, most visitors either mentioned empathizing with other's experiences or relayed some fact or detail about a specific topic of interest" (Falk, 1999).

There are more studies, however, that show more objective benefits of students attending museums. A study of a collaborative effort between the Ford Museum in Detroit, MI and a local high school demonstrated the effects of certain students being able to use the museum as "a giant learning classroom and laboratory" (Skramstad, 1999). Standardized test scores showed improvement after this method.

Although quantitative evidence of the learning benefits specific to secondary social studies museum experiences are lacking, it is clear that the benefits of outside-the-classroom experiences do prove beneficial to students.

How to Better the Connection

While there may not be much empirical evidence showing the benefits of a social studies teacher-museum connection, there is literature that discusses how to better such a connection. One of the major means to do this is to better the overall experience; a beneficial experience typically necessitates a strong collaboration between teacher and museum. Ellie Bourdon Caston (1987) suggests a model of teaching in a museum setting that relies on a connection between the classroom and the museum. She states that in order to have an effective model of teaching, a museum must “blend” the museum component, education component, and subject area component equally, much like a Venn diagram (p. 94).

Skramstad (1999) provides strategies to make a museum experience beneficial to a classroom while citing a trusting relationship between the teacher and the museum as a major means. He compares the relationship to that of a producer and a consumer. There must be “an attitude of mutual respect” between the two sides (p. 127).

More practical explanations of how to create a positive experience include measures that both the teacher/class and museum can take. Museum staff can work to make connections in the community around them, including the education system (Talboys, 2000). Similarly, Christine Green (1999) cites a strong teacher-museum relationship as key to a positive learning experience. Communication between the two

sides must occur at every stage of the experience – before, during, and after. Morris (2004) conducted a study dealing with a class leaving the school environment to examine and gain a better understanding of historic architecture. He concluded that the teacher visiting the sites first, deciding what students needed to know, working out activities, and reinforcing knowledge was key to the educational benefits. All of these activities speak to teachers' roles in making the experience more beneficial for students, as well as to the importance of collaborating with the museum site and staff throughout the process.

In perhaps the most comprehensive explanation on how teachers and museum staff can better work together, Alan Marcus states that both sides need to reach out to one another (Marcus, 2008). Potential problems like teachers planning learning objectives at a museum without the assistance of the museum or museums not taking class demographics into account are the main problem with teacher-museum collaboration. Teachers and museums simply need to reach out and confer with one another and trust each other's motives and intentions.

Summary

Due to the lack of literature dealing specifically with the connection between secondary social studies teachers and museum educators, it is appropriate to understand the two sides in the attempt to understand links between the two. The goals and practices of both institutions show connections on pedagogical, practical, and theoretical levels. Such connections demonstrate why it is important for the two sides to work together, as both hold a stake in beneficial education.

Admittedly, it is difficult to keep a narrow focus on this subject. The wealth of literature on subjects other than social studies and student groups other than grades 7-12 can distract from the point of this study. However, it is reassuring to discover that research on why teachers and museums fail to effectively work together is an area in need of further research. In order to properly understand this phenomenon, more research that focuses directly on the perspectives and attitudes of teachers and museum educators toward one another is necessary.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The relationship between social studies teachers and museum educational staff has not been explored in enough depth to truly understand the problems and possible solutions between the two bodies. While some evidence speaks to the educational benefits of school field trips or learning through a museum (most taking the form of qualitative evidence), there is not enough evidence focusing on why teachers and museum staff are not working together and how they can better do so. While several authors speculate on the answers to these questions, it is the goal of this study that the research findings will provide answers by talking directly with the parties involved in the relationship.

The research for this study revolved around one-on-one interviews between the researcher and both secondary social studies teachers and museum educational staff. Interview topics and questions aimed to tap into participants' experience, thoughts, and opinions. The goal of this study was to explore the ways in which social studies teachers and museum educators work together – or fail to work together – and identify reasons for the relationship. However, the findings should also provide insight as to how social studies education and museum education can work together to better their respective aspirations.

Participants

Study participants fit into one of two categories:

- Social studies teachers working in the grade range of 7-12
- Museum staff members involved in the educational aspects of the institution

The sample size consisted of three teachers and three museum professionals to assure a balance of perspectives. The participants worked within the general region of southeastern Ohio. The three teachers, Mr. Evans, Mr. Darrel, and Mr. Yearly (all pseudonyms to assure privacy), were all male high school teachers from three different schools with considerable teaching experience. Mr. Evans had eight years experience teaching social studies, all of which at the same high school. He primarily taught sophomore American History as well as Current Events. Mr. Darrel had 34 years experience teaching high school American History, Government, World History, Economics, and World Affairs. Mr. Darrel taught seven years at a school in Northeastern Ohio and 27 years at his current school. Mr. Yearly had taught for eleven years, all at the same school, instructing American History and AP Government.

The three museum professionals, or Ms. Ross, Mr. Thomas, and Ms. Golder, came from three different types of museum settings. Ms. Ross was the Curator and Educational Coordinator of a local county historical society and museum. The museum collects, organizes, and displays artifacts (everything from Native American arrowheads to Twentieth Century surgeon's tools) from the county it represents, while the historical society deals primarily with county citizens' genealogy. The curator holds a Master's

degree in Public History and a Bachelor's degree in History. She had been in her position for two years and previously worked at the Gettysburg Battlefield. Mr. Thomas was the Site Manager of a historical village that lies on a college campus. The village serves visitors through tours, reenactments, and events but also serves as a learning lab for college students studying historical reenactment programs. The Site Manager had been in his position for nine years but had volunteered at the site for eighteen. Ms. Golder held the title of Education Director of a historic house museum. The museum, a converted mansion, focuses on Victorian history and culture and provides tours and educational programs for children. The director earned a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education and had been in her position for three years.

Each of the participants was chosen by the researcher due to his or her position and inclusion in one of the two study categories. The researcher chose a diverse group of professionals based mainly on where they worked and their experience, but also with consideration for diversity of gender, age, and original location to avoid possible biases in perspective. Participants were notified by the researcher and asked to participate in this study. Agreement to participate rested solely on the volunteering of the participants.

Setting

Southeast Ohio was chosen due to its proximity to the researcher. The study included participants from four geographically connected counties. The region is composed primarily of rural communities and small towns. The sample size is only reflective of teachers and museum staff within this region and not necessarily indicative of the larger population of secondary social studies teachers or museum educational staff.

However, the researcher avoided direct questions pertaining to regional characteristics like ethnic makeup, economy, or political affiliations to avoid their impact on the study and focus on data most ubiquitous to the larger fields of social studies education.

This particular area of southeastern Ohio is almost entirely composed of White/non-Hispanic persons and, on average, families live on lower incomes than average families throughout Ohio (see <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states.html>). With that being said, of course, regional characteristics threatened to affect the research outcomes through any biases of the participants. The two main regional impacts that most directly related to the study topic were that schools are relatively isolated from major cities (Columbus, OH is the closest major city and between one and two hours away) and that schools operate in low socioeconomic communities. Area school districts often operate on state and federal funding and feel the constraints of existing in a low socioeconomic region. Schools are largely a reflection of the society and community of which they serve, and this region struggles greatly with poverty. Many of the schools in this region rely on state funding to operate due to their community economic situations. Similar to their communities, each of the schools have a predominantly White population with high percentages of students designated “Economically Disadvantaged”. The most homogenous and economically disadvantaged was Teacher B’s school, which had 99 percent White and 70 percent Economically Disadvantaged students (see <http://ilrc.ode.state.oh.us/Districts/Default.asp>).

This study defines a “historic museum/site” as any place or attraction that focuses primarily on translating its history to a wider public audience. Accordingly, there are roughly fifteen historic museums/sites in the region but clearly not as many as in a major

metropolitan area. Southeast Ohio has numerous county historical societies that double as museums, historic sites, historic homes, and specific history museums, many of which offer educational services. It is also notable that area museums and historic sites do not attract as many visitors and typically operate on lower budgets than larger museums like those found in major metropolitan cities. For example, the local county historical society where Ms. Ross works saw 2,121 visitors in 2010. In comparison, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA saw almost four million (see <http://www.nps.gov/inde/parkmgmt/statistics.htm>).

Procedure

Research was based solely on one-on-one interviews between the researcher and the participants. Participants were selected based on their inclusion in one of the two selection criteria and recruited through an email explaining the study, its goals, and their potential participation. Teachers and museum staff were identified using information from school district and museum websites. One of the obstacles facing the research was its implementation during summer months as school is not in session, teachers are on break, and there are no school classes for museums to work with. Research participants chose the time and place of the interview based on their availability and notified the researcher through email responses or phone calls. Interviews were completed within a one-month timeframe in the summer of 2010.

Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were guided by a set list of questions but sought to encourage an open dialogue between the participant and researcher. It was the

researcher's hope that an informal conversation would best elicit participants' perspectives and opinions. The conversations lasted between thirty and ninety minutes. Two of the teacher interviews took place in local restaurants at the selection of the participants and the third teacher interview was conducted in the teacher's classroom at school. All of the museum staff interviews took place at the museum or site, typically in the participant's office. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transitioned to data files on the researcher's personal computer

Two sets of questions – one for teachers and one for museum staff – guided the interviews (See Appendix A). Both question lists were organized based on similar themes developed slightly differently to gauge the two perspectives.

Interviews with teachers began with such questions as “Can you describe an instance when an activity outside the classroom went well and an instance when an activity went poorly?” These were intended to induce the participant to talk and think about the interview topic. Such prompts also set the tone for which the researcher aimed; namely a conversation-based, participant-focused setting. Next, the researcher moved to a set of questions intended to discover the participant's thoughts and opinions on how outside-the-classroom instruction can benefit secondary social studies instruction. While personal experience was a major theme, participants were encouraged to incorporate their thoughts on the larger theoretical elements of such instruction. Many of the teacher participants hesitated to discuss the benefits of museum trips simply because their experience was limited due to logistical complications (money, Board approval, time, etc.). To combat this, however, the researcher made clear the benefits of theoretical discussions to the study, as well as the experiential, by highlighting the value of their

opinion as an educator and the experience in the field of education. Further, the researcher asked questions pertaining to the perceived problems in taking a class to a museum site and gaining positive educational benefits. Questions like “What are the problems with taking a class to a museum/historic site?” remained dependent on the participant’s opinions and experiences through basic inquiry, but became more specific based on the responses. Although evidence led to certain assumptions that informed the basis of this study, findings were based on participant responses. The researcher could not assume that participants felt problems exist in the connection between social studies and museum education. Finally, the researcher transitioned to questions geared toward discussion of how the connection could be improved.

Questions with museum educators maintained a similar organization of themes in order to keep the two protocols as uniform as possible. Each interview began with the questions, “What kinds of educational services do you offer and how often do classes use such services?” Similar to the teacher interviews, discussions with museum educators depended on the thoughts and experiences of the participants. The next series of questions revolved around the goal of museums and how education fits into their overall mission. Interviews with museum educators focused on the positive elements of strong collaboration with school educators (based on participant experience) then moved into a discussion of whether or not problems exist in their connection to social studies educators and, if so, how to address these problems.

The researcher made a concerted effort to assure discussion about how to improve the connection between social studies and museum education as displayed in the perspectives of both sides. Both groups of participants were asked to express thoughts

on, expound upon their experiences and provide ideas of how they (i.e. teachers) could improve the connection but also their thoughts on how the other side (i.e. museum staff) could improve the connection. While the researcher aimed to draw out problems and solutions, it must be stated that every effort was taken to avoid pitting one group of professionals against the other – simply an atmosphere where participants could reflect on as many perspectives as possible.

Data Analysis

Upon the completion of the interviews, the digital recordings were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document to allow for better organization and more efficient review. Data was organized in a basic question and answer transcription format for each individual participant interview. The findings and analysis are organized into the following format; in relation to the research questions:

1. Are secondary social studies teachers and museum educators working together to enhance educational outcomes for students and what problems characterize the connection between the two educational bodies?
2. What are the perceived benefits of a strong collaborative relationship?
3. What possibilities and solutions can be offered to better the educational relationship?

Each of the three sections will include data from both teachers and museum educators. This format will hopefully allow the researcher to report the thoughts and attitudes of the participants while also analyzing how the data correlates to the larger goals of the study.

Chapter Four will present the findings of this study. It is the researcher's hope that the thoughts, attitudes, and opinions of the research subjects will shed light on the relationship between secondary social studies teachers and museum educational staff in order to better understand how the two professions can work together to enhance the overall education of the social studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Are teachers and museums working together?

Social Studies Teacher Perspective:

While it is of course impossible to deduce that there is no collaboration between social studies teachers and museum staff anywhere, the three teachers interviewed for this study indicated that they do not believe this collaboration exists on a regular basis. Mr. Darrel, the longest tenured of the three, said that his experiences pointed to a lack of collaboration. He used a conversation he had with a museum education staff member from a large aviation museum in Ohio to say, “According to the people at [said museum] the answer is no.” Mr. Evans indicated that while he acknowledged that some collaboration must be happening somewhere that his opinion indicated that collaboration is “under-utilized” and needs to be strengthened. The third teacher, Mr. Yearly, bluntly said that the connection between social studies teachers and museum staff “doesn’t exist right now.”

Teacher participants often hesitated to discuss the notion of collaboration and instead directed their words to why such collaboration does not happen. The most discussed reason for this lack of collaboration was the simplest answer – there is simply no working connection between social studies classes, or schools in general, and museum services. Two of the teachers stated that their school districts had placed a complete moratorium on any field trips in the past few years. The other teacher spoke often to the fact that anything outside of the classroom risked the high likelihood of it not being

approved. Field trips simply are not happening, which eliminates opportunities for working collaboratively with museums.

The reasons for why school districts hamper field trips are many. Each of the teachers discussed the effect of limited funds. Mr. Evans said he did not want to say his district “discourages field trips but anything that costs money, you’re really going to have to work to get that pulled off.” Mr. Darrel more candidly stated that money is the number one reason that field trips do not occur. He said, “I think it goes to money. It’s always money - I don’t care what anybody says. Teachers will take advantage of things if there’s funding available.” However, Mr. Evans added, “I think money is certainly a problem but it’s not the biggest problem. I think the biggest problem is liability.” Mr. Evans and Mr. Yearly both discussed the risk associated with transporting a number of students somewhere outside of school. Directly linked to concerns over liability is the issue of justification. Is the trip worth the associated risks, liabilities, and costs? Mr. Yearly said that his question when thinking of a potential field trip inevitably boils down to “Would the district be able to justify the cost?” According to Mr. Evans, “The question is – would the benefit be large enough to be worth the money, be worth the time, effort, extra liability, and things like that?” Furthermore in terms of justification is the concern over lost instruction time in the classroom. Mr. Evans stated,

“I think one of the primary concerns of every school is to get as many kids to pass the Ohio Graduation Test as possible because funding is linked to that and the state can really take a lot of control over a school board if a school district doesn’t perform adequately on those.”

Mr. Darrel explained how pressure on the school over OGT performance often translates to pressure on the teachers. “I think everybody’s so afraid of those tests, especially when you’re in a place with low socioeconomic... So any day that you take out of that is a day wasted.” Taking a day out of the normal educational routine is frowned upon.

The three teachers also discussed direct reasons (apart from ones that deter field trips in general) that account for the lack of collaboration between teachers and museum educators. Location was a major factor in each of the teacher responses. It is important to stress the geographical factors of the study – namely the distance from major metropolitan areas. The teachers presented themselves as willing to work with museums if more local options existed. Mr. Yearly said, “I guess nothing has struck me locally to say ‘Wow, I should pursue this’.” Mr. Evans and Mr. Darrel both indicated that they did not know of many relevant options to work with museums. The option of traveling two to three hours lands the teachers right back into the previous problems with taking a field trip – money, liability, etc. Another direct reason for a lack of collaboration, and possibly connected to the teachers not knowing of available museum options, is an absence of connections to museum staff. Mr. Yearly discussed how he did not think teachers or museum staff are reaching out to one another. Mr. Darrel accounted for this lack of connection by discussing the image and atmosphere of historical museums. He said that many museums are overly protective of their collections and would “freak out if a kid was touching whatever it was. “Because then what are you doing? You’re not showing kids something, you’re disciplining people.”

Museum Educational Staff Perspective:

The museum education participants offered a different perspective when discussing collaboration with social studies teachers. It is important to realize that the number of social studies teachers in any given area far outweighs the number of museum educational staff – more teachers will have never collaborated with a museum than museum educators will have collaborated with teachers by sheer proportion. The museum educators interviewed for this study stated that their experience points to the fact that collaboration is happening but not on a large enough scale. Each of the museum educators cited direct examples of measures they take to work with teachers – things like pre/post assignments, specific planning for different content, and teacher committees. Also, the different museum educators discussed a number of educational programs geared toward working with students or classes. Some examples of these programs included artifact identification, historic reenactment, tours, games, scavenger hunts, and research initiatives. When asked to reflect on the overall goals of museums the participants highlighted a focus on education. Mr. Thomas explained that education acts as a means to serve the community. Mr. Golder stated that it is important for the public to learn the history of their community. Ms. Ross summed it up by saying, “Because what’s the point of keeping all of this stuff if you’re not going to use it to educate?”

However, each of the participants indicated that collaboration with teachers could be improved. Ms. Ross, the curator and educational coordinator of a local historical society and museum, explained that the museum will have three to four groups per week during October, November, March, and April but visits decrease during the other months. “It’s not very consistent,” she added. Ms. Golder, the education director at a historic

house museum, discussed in-depth her experience with teachers not taking her up on the initiatives she uses to reach out to them. At several points in the interview she expressed doubt in being able to get teachers to work with her. Mr. Thomas, director of a historical village, said that his site receives a number of class visits but mainly from elementary grades. He explained that he works with a “few” eighth grade classes but typically nothing higher.

One of the common threads of explanations for the problems that restrict further collaboration between museums and teachers revolved around the logistical concerns of getting classes out of the school and into museums. Ms. Ross discussed that issues like funding, liability, and curriculum concerns keep classes from visiting museums. While she did not blame either schools or museums she said that, as things stand, there is a lack of incentive for classes to go. “Take away bus funding and making their standards so strict that they can’t leave,” she said. Ms. Golder discussed how funding is a problem both for schools and museums, which deters classes from utilizing museum services. She also included curriculum concerns and OGT pressure in her reasoning. She explained, “My opinion is that they can’t afford it for one, but the other is that they’re trying to teach to the test.” Mr. Thomas stated that the lack of collaboration often lags because teachers have limited time to take classes out of school – “That’s a time element thing,” he said.

The museum educators also indicated that popular conceptions of museums deter teachers from wanting to utilize services. Mr. Ross said,

“A lot of teachers are used to museums being little white-haired ladies who just ramble on and on about history, and history’s all about dead white guys and it’s

boring. Museums are dusty. There are ropes in front of the exhibits and you're not allowed to talk and you're not allowed to touch anything."

She also elaborated that the title "historical society" furthers this negative image of what historical museums are. Ms. Golder explained that her museum tries to combat this image but "when you go to some of these other places, other museums, they can't touch anything and there's nothing... you just kind of keep your hands to yourself."

Participants also cited a lack of connections to teachers as a problem that hampers collaboration. Ms. Golder discussed an initiative that her museum and other local historical museums used to create connections to area social studies teachers. The museum group offered a free dinner and a 'meet and greet' but not many teachers attended. She hypothesized that the reasons probably lied in a failure to properly advertise or that teachers "don't want to do any extra work" after a long workday. Mr. Ross rather adamantly claimed that blame for the lack of connections to teachers rests on museums. Her reasons relate back to her qualms with the title "historical society". She said, "I don't think historical societies are on peoples' radar anymore and I think a lot of it has to do with the name." She clarified that she did not necessarily assume *all* museums had similar problems reaching out, but highlighted that her historical society/museum struggled in that area.

Benefits of strong collaboration

Social Studies Teacher Perspective:

The benefits of a strong collaborative relationship between social studies teachers and museum educators rely upon the assumption that teachers and museums utilize one

another in their ultimate goals. According to the teacher participants, this is not happening enough to understand how field trips can be improved by working closer with museum staff, which left many of the teachers talking hypothetically about the benefits of such a collaborative connection. However, all three teachers provided responses on what they perceive as the benefits of working with museums.

A theme that each of the teachers highlighted was the benefit of curriculum inclusion. They spoke to the benefits of teachers working with museum staff to gear the content of the museum toward the curricular goals of the class. Mr. Darrel and Mr. Yearly both cited examples of how WWII instruction could be enhanced by, for example, working with an aviation museum to focus on the planes used in the war. Mr. Yearly said this kind of relationship would be “extremely beneficial”. Mr. Darrel stated that focusing on a specific curriculum would make things more “...focused instead of just gawking your way through it.” He elaborated by saying that increased preparation would result in students “having enough background that they would understand what each plane was used for. I think it would reinforce all of those things that you’re trying to teach and kind of link them together.” Mr. Evans discussed how collaboration specifically with local museums could enhance education. He highlighted his use of local history in his classroom because it encouraged student involvement. He said, “It’s kind of cool because the kids recognize certain parts of either where they live or [the main] street.”

Although the teachers do not have many opportunities to utilize field trips at the current time, they did not hesitate to explain their thoughts on the benefits of outside-the-classroom instruction in general. They often used the question about benefits of a strong

collaboration to segue into the benefits of field trips – which makes sense considering a strong collaboration requires the *opportunity* to work together. All three teachers spoke on the benefit of students actually seeing historical sites or items firsthand. Pertaining to learning in a classroom, Mr. Evans said, “I don’t think it’s ever a substitute for being on site...” He continued,

“I think museums go a long way to enhance education. They can really peek a student’s interest and motivate them to investigate and learn any given historical issue deeper – more than a superficial level; more than a level that will make them do well on a standardized test and really understand an issue.”

Similarly, Mr. Darrel drew contrasts between reading something in a book and actually experiencing it. “It makes an impact,” he said. He also stated that getting out of the classroom gives students unique chances to learn, especially when thinking about rural student populations.

“Better education. We’re so rural that just taking them into the city is incredible. Just to be some place and see people of different ethnic groups, people speaking another language on the streets. I mean, we’re awfully parochial so that’s really good for the kids,” he said.

Experience, memory, different routine, interaction, and curiosity are all benefits to a social studies class getting instruction outside of the classroom, and all of these benefits require the opportunity to actually go to a museum or historic site. These opportunities would give teachers and museum educators increased chances to work collaboratively with one another.

Museum Educational Staff Perspective:

The museum educators identified numerous benefits to a strong collaborative relationship between them and social studies teachers. They provided similar ideas as teachers on the benefits of field trips in general – actually seeing and experiencing history instead of simply reading about it in a textbook. However, the museum educators provided a wealth of perceived benefits specifically dealing with museum-teacher collaboration.

Ms. Ross and Mr. Thomas both suggested that museum-teacher collaboration provides mutual gain for both sides. Museums aim to interpret and present history to the public and teachers aim to translate history to students. If teachers can translate history by utilizing museums then both sides are succeeding in their goals. Ms. Ross explained, “They come in, you help them out, they help you out by boosting your numbers so that you can get grants. Everybody’s happy, they go off and tell more teachers and before you know it you’ve got hundreds of kids coming in.” She continued,

“I don’t think there’s any reason that they shouldn’t work together. I mean, they know what works for their class and I know what works for a museum. And we both have to work with each other because I can’t work without them and they can’t work without me.”

Mr. Thomas expressed similar thoughts. He said, “We always ask them [how we can adjust our programs to meet their needs]. And they can fine-tune their program to fit what we have. So it goes both ways.”

Participants also discussed how communication is a key benefit to collaboration with teachers. Increased communication often leads to improved services for museums and more productive visits for teachers. Examples given were better pre-visit planning, stronger curriculum inclusion, and more focused programs. Ms. Ross explained her use of a teacher open house where she introduced herself and the museum educational options and invited teachers to join a teacher's committee. She said that the committee typically had about five teachers and she used it to ask for their opinions and feedback. "I got a lot of good feedback on that," she said. Ms. Golder also described constructive feedback from teachers as a result of increased communication. She explained, "I think if a teacher is honest with me and tells me 'Well this area wasn't as good, you could change it' – I think that's important." Benefits of communicating with teachers are apparent even on a basic level. "Keeping in contact with them beforehand – I get to know that teacher and then when he/she shows up I can greet them like I know who they are; I know your name and I think that's a better relationship," Mr. Golder said.

Finally, another benefit described by the participants is an increased commitment to community. Teachers and museums working together not only benefits the individual parties included but the larger community as a whole. It is a bigger picture perspective when looking at museum-teacher collaboration. Mr. Thomas explained,

"People just can't afford not to [work together] anymore. If you run a business or a museum or run a historical village or run a bed and breakfast or whatever, you're much, much better off working with other members of the community to get people to come into your community or coordinate your efforts so that people

can have an experience of several different places and not just yours. That's community."

Solutions

Social Studies Teacher Perspective:

The most obvious solutions to how to better the connection between social studies and museums deal with large-scale changes. If schools cannot afford to send students on field trips then simply increase the funds to schools. If an area lacks an abundance of historical museums then create more museums. Such idealist endeavors would certainly increase the opportunities for teachers and museum staff to work together, but the focus of this study is to provide real possibilities to enhance that collaboration.

One set of possible solutions revolves around the problem of funding. Mr. Darrel explained that logistical problems "can be overcome with money but without money you can't overcome anything." Thankfully, he was able to suggest several ideas on how to combat that problem; short of changing the way districts receive state funds or altering state taxes. In the current relationship schools are shouldering the greatest portion of the financial burden in transporting and paying for students to visit museums. He cited possibilities of museums working with schools to lower the cost of visiting. One way he suggested doing so was through the use of grants. He explained, "If they said, 'We have a 500 dollar grant – we'll put 500 dollars in and if you pick up the rest of the tab then you can come here for the day.' You would have schools all over the place." He also proposed that museums could waive certain fees (admission, for example) if schools could provide the funds to transport students to the site. He explained that this would

probably require an increase in funds to museums but could also help alleviate their budget concerns by supplying eager customers. He stated that museums would “get all that money back and it would probably make them more effective.” His reasoning is that getting students to a museum produces exposure, curiosity, and the possibility of those students coming back in the future.

The teachers also discussed possible ways of creating more connections between social studies teachers and museum educators. One of the most commonly referred to problems in the connection was that teachers did not have enough options to work with museums. Mr. Yearly said that these connections could be cultivated through initiative from either side. “It would involve making contacts at that level – contacting them and having them want to reach out to the schools and maybe vice versa,” he explained. He provided ideas on how to do this...

“I would say that the way to facilitate this would be having the sympathetic ear of a curriculum director who might take some of those initiatives and say, introduce each other, instead of some of the lame activities we have on our in-service days. Take the social studies teacher and introduce them to this person and then say what resources are available locally. That would obviously be a help.”

Mr. Evans framed his ideas on enhancing potential collaboration with museum educators by describing a give and take type of relationship. Social studies teachers and museum educators both possess a unique set of skills and the two could work together to utilize those different skill sets to enhance the overall educational benefit to students. He explained,

“I think teachers could at least help a curator or someone who designs an exhibit think, ‘How can you get kids involved?’ and come up with ideas for that.

Teachers could really help them out with that. Somebody who has the skills not only to design an exhibit but that same person who it would really help if they could also work with kids or at least consult with someone who works with kids. I think that would help the museum – that would help any teacher teach a lesson using a museum.”

Mr. Evans also pointed out that teachers might be more likely to work with museums if they were more interactive for students. “They need something a little more hands-on, a little more interactive. I think that would be a great idea for history museums,” he said.

Mr. Darrel agreed with this possible solution, saying that museums could take ideas from highly interactive science museums. He also explained how museum staff could work to alter the image of historical museums that often deter teachers from seeking their collaboration. He cited personal experiences with museum staff where the staff members focused more on protecting the museum items than educating visitors. If museum educators worked to promote more interaction, he said, teachers would probably be more likely to utilize their services.

Museum Educational Staff Perspective:

The museum education participants provided several possible ways to enhance the collaboration with teachers. Museums, much like schools, can take measures to increase the opportunities where teachers and museums can work together. Participants suggested things like providing more funding to museums for free programming or bus funds,

relaxing curriculum standards to allow the freedom to take a field trip, and the education system placing more value in differentiated instruction instead of focusing on results-driven education. Still, these are ideas that may increase the likelihood of field trips, and not necessarily specific to enhancing teacher-museum collaboration. They did, however, provide more specific suggestions.

One possible solution revolved around the need for museum educators to reach out to area teachers. Each of the museum educators described measures they currently take to reach out to teachers but also explained that such measures could go farther and need to be continued. Ms. Ross said, “I feel like a lot of it is we just aren’t making [teachers] aware of their options. And maybe I need to go to a teachers’ meeting and introduce myself.” This is not to suggest an absence of effort, though, as Ms. Ross explained. She described an initiative she used that invited teachers into the museum where she provided a “behind the scenes tour” of the museum. Her goal was to expose them to “what we do at a museum – this is what we have, we try to figure out what these items are – this is what kids do.” There is also room for teachers to reach out to museum educators as well. Ms. Golder stressed that collaboration with teachers would certainly be increased if teachers that had worked with her would simply tell other teachers about their options. The initiative needs to come from both sides.

Another possible solution the museum educators discussed was promoting community. Much like Mr. Thomas described earlier, community is the act of members helping one another in the goal of enhancing all of their experiences. Teachers and museum educators are, quite simply, a part of that overall community and teacher-museum collaboration would be a product of that. He said,

“That’s community. That’s what it’s all about. That’s the answer to your question, really, is you promote community – how do people get along to form a community of businesses or people or organizations that work together for the betterment of all.”

This seems to be possible through focusing on local history. Ms. Ross explained that she wants teachers to understand that “...you’re a part of this. This is where you’re from whether you were born here or not this is where you are and what happened here directly affects what happens here today – and to be a part of it.” If teachers could work with museums to gear a lesson around local history then they could instill a value of local history in their students.

The final possible solution provided by the museum educators dealt with changing the image of what a museum is in the eye of the public. Teachers might be more inclined to work with museum educators if museums exuded a more inviting atmosphere. She explained,

“Teachers have to see that there’s a big change in what’s happening. And I think that museums have that problem too – they have to step out of their own stereotype and become more friendly and open. People are scared to come in here. They ask ‘Are we allowed to be in here?’ I’m like, ‘Yeah, come on in!’”

One way museums can do this is to make exhibits more hands-on. This also correlates to some of the suggestions of the teacher participants. Ms. Ross stated that teachers would be more willing to come into museums with more interaction. She said, “I always use the

example of... what's the difference between standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon and looking at it or walking down into it. There's a big difference.”

This study's findings should emphasize and help to understand the different perspectives that exist in the connection between social studies teachers and museum staff. It is clear from the data that while the teacher and museum participants reflected different sides of the relationship they still had numerous commonalities – like the need for enhanced personal connections, further reaching out, more creative funding strategies, and stronger curricular connections. It is the hope of this study that such commonalities can be cultivated to strengthen the connection between social studies teachers and museum educators.

Chapter Five of this study will move into a discussion on how the research findings relate to both the literature on the topic and the assumptions used as the basis for the research questions. It will also discuss recommendations for further inquiry and discussion on the subject. Lastly, Chapter Five will explore how these findings can affect the parties involved in the collaboration between secondary social studies teachers and museum staff.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Interpretations

This study set out to identify whether secondary social studies teachers and museum educational staff believe they collaborate with one another. It also aimed to explore why such collaboration might not be happening, and what possible solutions can be implemented to increase and enhance collaboration. This study found that, in the eyes of the social studies teachers and museum educators who participated in this study, collaboration is not happening in any substantial way. While problems certainly exist in this connection there are several solutions.

The findings both agreed and disagreed on certain points with the research literature. One of the underlying assumptions of this study was that museums often do not properly value the role of education in their mission. Museums may include education in their visions but educating does not play a role in their practical business. This study suggested the opposite. The participating museum educators could not stress enough their commitment to education. They described several programs they offer to the public, like tours, artifact identification activities, and programs including state curriculum standards. Each of them linked his or her survival to his or her ability to educate the public. Many of the questions directed at both teacher and museum participants, and intended to prompt criticisms of museums not valuing education, ended up affirming the importance of education.

The findings did agree with the literature on several issues as well. Possible explanations for the problems of teachers and museums not working together included a lack of “substantial dialogue” (Marcus, 2008, 2010), a lack of teacher training on implementing instruction in a museum (Talboys, 2000), and a suspect image of museums in the eyes of teachers (Skramstad, 1999). This study’s findings speak to the validity of each of those concerns. However, only Marcus’ research (2010) referred to the role that logistical problems (money, liability, time, etc.) play in the struggle to get classes out of the classroom. All of the participants, both teachers and museum educators, spent time explaining how logistical problems, like insufficient funding, proximity to metropolitan areas, and inflexibility in state curriculum, keep field trips from happening. Many of the participants cited these problems as the most important reason.

The findings suggest that the problems that keep social studies teachers and museums from working together are mostly practical, which contradicts the major findings in the literature and the assumptions of the researcher. The social studies teachers and museum educators emphasized both their desire to work with each other and the benefits that come from such a collaboration. Each of the participants provided some ideas similar to the literature on ways to increase collaboration. They described issues like increasing communication, implementing curriculum, and changing the image of historical museums. However, the participants were able to suggest further solutions, such as sharing costs, creating more interactive museums, promoting community, and cultivating greater value in local history. These ideas have the potential to inject new energy and hope into the issue of teacher-museum collaboration.

Recommendations and Implications

Social studies instruction is perfect for the use of historical museums because these sites can enhance the educational experience for students by creating experiential ways to connect to the content. This study's findings give evidence to the benefits that can come from strong teacher-museum collaboration. Nonetheless, there is a lack of research that explores the collaboration, or lack thereof, between secondary social studies teachers and museum educational staff. It is not immediately apparent why this is the case. However, one factor may be the focus on topics like why more field trips do not occur or what the benefits of such field trips are. One of the difficulties in this study was that many of the questions relied on social studies teachers and their students actually visiting museums. It is problematic to discuss how to enhance collaboration when there is none. The discussion very quickly becomes a question of how to effect collaboration in the first place.

One of this study's major findings is that collaboration can only be improved when teachers and museum staff have opportunities to do so, and one of the means to increase those opportunities is to do just that – collaborate. Accordingly, researchers need to conduct more studies that further examine the reasons why teachers or schools do not utilize museum education on a wider scale than merely analyzing the personal experiences and thoughts of social studies teachers and museum educators. Where does social studies fit into wider state or district budgetary decisions? How might funding be made more available to teachers willing to organize creative outside-the-classroom activities? Do the Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies provide enough

emphasis on local/community history? All of these questions must be explored in greater detail.

There is also a need for more quantitative data on the level of collaboration between teachers and museums. This study provides a qualitative overview of the problems and solutions from the perspectives of the participants involved, but performance data over time could quantitatively track the benefits of such collaboration as discussed in this study. It is necessary to focus quantitative research questions on particular topics discussed in this study as these topics can be tested in more detail through quantitative methods. For example, quantitative data could be gathered on the effects of enhanced teacher-museum collaboration on student achievement by focusing on increased teacher-museum dialogue or specified curriculum inclusion. There is much room for further inquiry.

Secondary social studies teachers, schools, districts, states, and museums all need to understand the mutual benefits that can be gained from effective collaboration, particularly when focused on student learning outcomes. Students learn in different ways and through different strategies. Museum education provides real-life, hands-on, experiential ways for students to connect with the history around them. In order for this type of learning to occur teachers and museum staff must work together to create optimal settings, activities, and techniques for students to learn. Without collaboration the possibilities of this type of learning dwindle as both teachers and museums fail to create these possibilities.

Age/grade level and geographic location both acted as limitations to this study. The lack of literature focusing on field trips for secondary students and the abundance of research on this topic for elementary students suggests an assumption that field trips are only for elementary or middle school classes. However, this study's participants expressed their belief that this does not need to be the case. Secondary students can benefit from museums as well but in different ways. The teacher and museum participants described how middle or high school students could benefit greatly from working hands-on with historical artifacts and primary sources, learning how to do historical research, and gaining exposure to the inner workings of a museum, which could lead to more personal engagement in the study of history. Museums must work to create learning activities that both appeal to secondary students and are worthwhile to secondary social studies teachers. It is true that games and crafts may not satisfy these needs but research initiatives and community-based projects, when more age/grade appropriate, may well do so. Geographic location is harder to account for as the number of historical museums will not just increase overnight. A region with a smaller number of historical museums than a major city is a problem that can be overcome, though, by teachers familiarizing themselves with local options and museums better advertising their services. Teachers must discover what educational programs museums have to offer and museum educators must actively seek out teachers to use and advise museum programs. It is a two-way road.

The findings in this study suggest that there is room to be optimistic about the possibilities to enhance collaboration between secondary social studies teachers and museum educators. Each of the participants in this study expressed a strong desire to

address the problems that deter them from working together. Secondary social studies teachers and museum educators working together will increase the educational benefits to students and help create communities that place more value in their history, but it takes just that – working together.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Secondary social studies classroom educators:

1. Describe a time when a field trip to a museum/historic site went well. Why, how?
2. Describe a time when a field trip to a museum/historic site went poorly. Why, how?
3. In your opinion, what are the benefits of taking students outside the classroom for a learning activity? Do you think these benefits are specific to the grade/s you teach?
4. Why do you think social studies education places emphasis on community history?
5. Do you ever aim to bring in different media to help your instruction (primary sources, video, audio, guest speakers, etc.)? What is your goal in doing/not doing so?
6. Do you think these goals could be enhanced/improved through the use of museums/historic sites?
7. What are the difficulties with taking a class to a museum/historic site, possibly ones that you have experienced first-hand?
8. Do you think state curriculum standards make outside of the classroom education more problematic/difficult?
9. Personally, how would you fuse curriculum standards and museum/historic sites?
10. How do you view the roles of museums in social studies education?
11. Do you think museums are effective educational tools for social studies students? Why, why not?
12. Do you think there is validity to claims that museums are too inward-thinking – that they essentially exist solely for their own benefit?
13. Are you familiar with any museums or historic sites within your community or part of the state?

14. Have you ever worked collaboratively with museum/historic site staff in your teaching?
15. Do you think that many teachers are working with museums to create learning opportunities for their students?
16. Are there problems in the connection between teachers and museums? Please explain.
17. How do you think teachers and museums can better work together to create more learning experiences for students?

Questions for Museum educators:

1. What kind of educational services do you offer?
2. How often do classes use your educational services?
3. What does your training prepare you for pertaining to education? How did you get to be in the position you are in today?
4. What do you think is the main goal of museums?
5. What do you think is the main goal of museum education?
6. Is the bigger focus of museum education on students or on furthering a specific history or cause of the museum/historic sites?
7. Please explain the focus.
8. How do you respond to literature that suggests that museums are often too inward-thinking or too focused on collection rather than interpretation?
9. Describe a program or service that has been received well with educators and/or students.

10. Have you ever worked collaboratively with a teacher or school to create learning activities for their students? Please explain.
11. What do you think are the benefits of working collaboratively with a teacher/school?
12. Do you think that working with teachers/schools/classes can enhance your educational goals?
13. Why do you think this is the case?
14. Do you think that teachers and museum education can better work together to create and enhance educational goals of both institutions?
15. What are some suggestions you might have to better the connection between your services and social studies teachers?
16. How might either side work to better this relationship?

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