

Art engagement and the college curriculum: factors and strategies for success in collection-based teaching

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Abstract

This article identifies and analyzes key factors that have contributed to the extensive integration of the Allen Memorial Art Museum's encyclopedic collection into Oberlin College's curriculum. These factors include support from the college administration; visionary museum leadership; funding to initiate and sustain inter-departmental programs and hire staff dedicated to academic outreach; structures to equip faculty with basic art historical knowledge and skills; customized art pedagogies to match teaching and learning needs, and making collections physically, intellectually, and digitally accessible to the academic community. The article further suggests strategies for initiating and building robust academic programs at other academic museums.

Introduction

The Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM), also known as ‘the Allen’, is part of Oberlin College, a small liberal arts institution with a renowned conservatory of music, located near Cleveland in north-east Ohio. The museum houses an extraordinary encyclopedic collection of over 15,000 objects and has served the academic community, always free of charge, across disciplines and programs since 1917 when the doors opened for the first time. Primarily a teaching institution, the AMAM ranks among the top campus art museums in the USA and its long history of collaborations between faculty and staff has generated innovative object-based pedagogies that enable interdisciplinary thinking and research throughout the liberal arts curriculum of the college.

An acknowledged leader in the field of academic curatorship, the Allen has been integrated effectively into every level of the college curriculum. The museum, as well as art in general, has assumed an important place in the development and implementation of new courses, research projects, and student assignments, and in the way faculty from non-art disciplines construe the investigation of their subjects and their scholarly methodologies. Courses use the AMAM holdings through carefully planned class visits conducted in the galleries and the Wolfgang Stechow Print Study Room, a private and secure space within the museum where faculty and students can encounter works of art in more intimate and immediate ways. A senior neurotoxicology seminar exemplifies the museum’s broad relevance: students in this class spend one of their weekly three-hour lab sessions in the galleries and print room to explore how and why lead, a dangerous neurotoxin, has been utilized extensively for centuries by artists working in oil paint, bronze, glass or ceramics, even though they were fully aware of its harmful effects. Students also engage in a series of close looking activities designed to improve their critical observation skills but also to discover how art can serve as a primary text, shedding light, or offering an alternative perspective, on course themes such as pollution, drug abuse, addiction, and radiation. Art helps students understand more deeply both the human and scientific discourses surrounding the impact of neurotoxins, but also the necessity of keeping an open mind and multiple possibilities in sight when conducting a scientific or scholarly inquiry.

Academic engagement occurs additionally through a rigorous program of teaching exhibitions, museum-based courses, art-based assignments, research and creative projects and student assistantships. Moreover, pedagogy workshops and curriculum development grants for faculty, joint publications with faculty and students, and training sessions for students preparing for careers in health further enrich the ways and venues through which the museum exercises its educational capacity.

The museum has always functioned as a training ground for undergraduates interested in pursuing advanced degrees or careers in art, art history, museum education, or museum studies. In the last ten years, however, the Allen has taken on a central role in helping students in the sciences and social sciences better prepare for their future professions. In essence, the museum has become the site—and the collection the tool—for meaningful, authentic, and collaborative learning experiences for students of any discipline. Though statistics cannot represent the full extent and vibrancy of academic encounters at the Allen, they provide a sense of the deep incorporation of the museum into the academic life of the college. Academic outreach data from the 2016-17 academic year furnish an eloquent example of museum utilization: more than 105 faculty members (out of approximately 280 total) scheduled 370 class visits to the museum representing 173 individual courses and 47 different departments and programs. Student attendance specifically in class visits surpassed 6,000 (the student body numbers approximately 2,800) and we can estimate that self-initiated return visits (of which we are unable to keep track) are in the hundreds given how many faculty members ask students to come back to the museum to complete art-centered papers, curatorial projects, or creative endeavors.

The dynamic and diverse educational role of the museum, the extent and depth of the academic community’s meaningful interactions with the collection, and the overall flourishing of the Allen as a locus for multimodal and interdisciplinary teaching and learning are predicated on certain institutional developments over the past 30 years. This article analyzes the key factors that have contributed to the AMAM’s effective incorporation into Oberlin’s academic life. It also suggests strategies for building robust academic programming and embedding object-based learning across fields of knowledge.

Based on the author’s comprehensive, decade-long experience in academic programming, archival research and interviews with curators and educators, the key factors for an integrated campus museum can be narrowed down to: support from the highest echelons of the college administra-

tion; vision and courage from museum leaders to expand collaborations with disciplines that have traditionally excluded the arts; substantial financial assistance to initiate and sustain inter-departmental programs, as well as to hire professionals dedicated to academic outreach; equipping faculty with basic art historical and visual analysis skills; developing customized, art-based strategies applicable to any academic subject or discipline; changing the very nature of student encounters with artworks, and making the collection physically, intellectually, and digitally available to academic constituencies. The discussion that follows elaborates on these factors, while highlighting important figures and their contributions to the growth of the museum's academic weight.

Academic Curatorship as Field and Pedagogic Practice

The emergence of academic curatorship as both a field and pedagogic practice dates to the early 1990s. After recognizing that campus museums in the United States were becoming divorced from the academic pursuits of their parent institutions and thus losing some of their educational value, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation initiated the College and University Art Museum Program (CUAM). The program aimed to identify and institutionalize effective means for campus art museums to strengthen their curricular role in the teaching and training of undergraduate and graduate students, and to establish productive collaborations with academic departments. CUAM catalyzed a series of changes in how museums conceive of their relationship with the curriculum and core populations on campus, and faculty members' and senior administrators' perceptions of the value of the arts to pedagogy and liberal education.

By CUAM's successful completion in 2005, after a fifteen-year run and the disbursement of millions of dollars, a number of academic museums across the U.S. had revitalized their pedagogic relevance and visibility. Key to this process was the inauguration of dedicated staff positions to liaise with the faculty and students in order to maximize the capacity of museums to serve their academic communities. These positions stand perhaps as the most significant outcome of the CUAM program, their timeliness and necessity made evident by the fact that institutions that did not participate in CUAM have since designated their own academic liaisons. To date, there are more than 70 academic coordinators, liaisons, or curators in the U.S.

Through the funding of academic museums, the Mellon Foundation resuscitated not only the educational function of the college or university art museum, incorporating object-based learning in disciplines as varied as chemistry, economics, philosophy, and music theory, but also advanced, if not accelerated, the interdisciplinary current that was beginning to gain momentum in academic instruction and inquiry. Moreover, participating museums designed curriculum-structured programs and collaborations that as Goethals and Fabing (2007, 19) note "positioned them as a nexus for cross-disciplinary and experiential learning".

Having tipped the scale toward collection-based learning in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences at many leading U.S. colleges and universities, in 2011 the Mellon Foundation extended funding to an overseas institution with similar goals in mind. The recipient of two consecutive grants from the Mellon Foundation, the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology launched in 2012 the University Engagement Programme (UEP) to further partnership with its parent institution, the University of Oxford. UEP and its staff enhance the impact of cross-disciplinary teaching and learning through objects across departments and all four of the university's academic divisions. They also work to embed the Ashmolean's collections into the academic curriculum and make them part of Oxford's overall pedagogical environment.

Academic Outreach at the Allen Memorial Art Museum

In 1962, AMAM director Charles Parkhurst (1962, 6-7) acknowledged that "it is the aim of the museum to serve the entire student body of the college, not just those in the art department." But it wasn't until the early 1990s that the museum began to serve more purposefully and increasingly as a vital educational and cultural resource. The Allen participated in the first round of three-year Mellon grants awarded to a total of fourteen college and university museums in 1992 and 1993¹, but

¹ These include the art museums at Bowdoin College, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Emory University, Kansas State University, Harvard University, Oberlin College, Princeton University, Smith College, University of Chicago, University of California - Berkeley, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Williams College, and Yale University.

the conception of a curator devoted to academic outreach preceded the receipt of Mellon funding by three years. In late 1990, Oberlin College President S. Frederick Starr endorsed the renaming of an existing education position to “curator for academic programs” with a focus more heavily on the college curriculum. Anne F. Moore, who had been hired in 1988 as the AMAM’s curator of education and who had already been conducting academic outreach to non-art departments, became the museum’s first curator for academic programs, serving in this capacity from January to July 1991 when she was appointed the museum’s acting director². Moore initiated the museum’s first systematic academic outreach to departments other than art history and studio art. Within a year, Moore had expanded and diversified curriculum-related programs: according to the AMAM’s 1990-91 annual report, class visits to the museum well exceeded one-hundred, with ten courses outside the Department of Art utilizing the collections. A firm believer in the museum’s extraordinary educational role across disciplines, Moore continued to broaden and deepen the pedagogic use and impact of the AMAM. When in 1992 she became museum director, she set out not only to make the collection an integral part of the curriculum, but also to change individual and institutional thinking about the place of the college museum. “Given the strength of our collection and the college’s history of innovation in education,” she explained to a journalist (MILLER 1992), “we have an important role to play within higher education and an opportunity to redefine the position of the college museum.” It was under Moore’s directorship that in 1993 the AMAM received from the Mellon Foundation a grant of \$193,000 to be used over three years for strengthening the educational role of the museum’s collection and programs. Over the course of the grant period, which in 1995 was extended by one year, Mellon funding supported four strategic areas: the conception, development, and production of an innovative, scholarly CD-ROM catalogue of the AMAM collection; faculty stipends for the development of course-related exhibitions and programs; funding for museum staff for curatorial research and development; and the coordination of interdisciplinary public forums. The scope and depth of the grant activities not only engaged a more diverse audience and allowed the museum to pursue more aggressively a number of scholarly collaborations with the faculty and students, but also, according to Moore (1995, 6), “sent a signal to administrators, faculty and trustees confirming the lasting value of a significant art collection to the teaching mission of the college”.

Moore’s unwavering pursuit of the collection’s meaningful curricular role in active learning at the end of the 20th century created a dynamic precedent for the focused integration of the AMAM across campus that her successors—both museum directors and academic curators—built upon and adapted to suit the teaching and learning needs of the 21st-century classroom. Under her leadership, the museum set new standards for exhibitions and acquisitions that reflect the interests and weight of the curriculum college-wide. Today, the AMAM works closely with faculty members when planning exhibitions and gallery displays, as well as when considering new acquisitions. In addition, through research, publications, public presentations, podcasts, and course assignments, faculty contribute to the interdisciplinary, scholarly understanding of the collection and its rich interpretive dimension.

In 1997, soon after Moore resigned from her position as AMAM director, the museum was awarded \$185,000 in the form of a second three-year Mellon grant to further solidify interdisciplinary connections to the curriculum by creating permanent and effective avenues of interaction with students and faculty in various departments. Like the first grant, the second was extended by a year in 1999. In addition to supporting the museum’s growing popularity as both an educational space and resource, as well as the increased number of class sessions taught by curators and faculty members in the galleries, the grant enabled the 1999 appointment of Stephan Jost as the first Mellon-funded curator of academic programs and exhibitions, a position dedicated to outreach to the faculty and students.

Jost had joined the Allen in 1997 as curatorial research assistant, subsequently serving as assistant curator of western art while the AMAM’s curator of western art before 1850, Marjorie “Betsy” Wieseman, was the museum’s acting director. In these two capacities he proved instrumental in encouraging use of the collection by a broad range of departments, engaging faculty and students with works in every area of the museum holdings. The grant further sponsored a series of interdisciplinary collaborations, such as the exhibition, symposium, and publication titled *Changing Visions of the North American Landscape (1999-2001)* and the introduction of new museum-heavy courses, such as the first-year colloquium “Poetry, Place and Landscape: Three Traditions,” taught

² In an email to the author ANNE F. MOORE (2016), who in 1992 became the AMAM’s first female director, noted that S. Frederick Starr was responsible for her appointment as the museum’s first curator for academic programs, and that both the idea for and the coinage of the title of the position were President Starr’s, to whom she had expressed her concern regarding the dearth of non-art students using the museum.

by Longman Professor of English and Creative Writing David Young. During the 1999-2000 academic year, Jost gave fifty-nine class lectures at the AMAM, some in collaboration with the collection curators and many for courses outside the art department. In an interview (MORGAN 2001), Jost explained: "My goal is to make the museum relevant to College classes outside the art history department. I give about fifty classes a year." For example, he continued, "a North American landscape exhibit was used by eight non-art classes ranging from geology to environmental studies." Regrettably, after Jost left the Allen in 2001 to become director of the Mills College Art Museum in Oakland, California, Oberlin experienced a campus-wide hiring freeze, preventing the AMAM from appointing a successor.

Jost's position remained unfilled for six years, a period during which the director, together with the curator of Western art and the registrar, made every effort to continue outreach to faculty and students. Inevitably, the number of curricular collaborations diminished. But in spring 2007, Oberlin College President Nancy Dye provided the museum, then led by Stephanie Wiles, with funding for two-and-a-half years to reinstate the Office of Academic Programs. After a national search, Colette Crossman joined the AMAM as the new curator of academic programs.

With Crossman's expert guidance, the Allen's curricular collaborations flourished again: class visits to the museum nearly doubled and more than twenty departments utilized the collection during her first semester at the museum. Although Crossman worked at the AMAM for just two years, her impact was significant: she strengthened and cultivated relationships with many academic departments. Crossman organized collaborative interdisciplinary teaching exhibitions and conducted individual class visits, as well as faculty pedagogy workshops, and museum residencies for faculty recipients of curriculum development grants. She also initiated the museum's participation in the training session for faculty members new to the First Year Seminar Program and hosted museum events as part of the college's weeklong New Faculty Orientation. Crossman (2016) recalls that, within her first year, "museum usage by Oberlin classes had grown exponentially," and that, "faculty were already predisposed to museum-based learning" due to "the foundation Stephan [Jost] laid and the culture of interdisciplinary study at Oberlin".

By the end of Crossman's tenure, two key developments had occurred. One was the receipt of a third Mellon grant. In 2008, the Mellon Foundation awarded the museum a challenge grant of \$1.25 million to permanently endow the infrastructure essential for curricular outreach and to encourage new directions in interdisciplinary learning. The Mellon grant was to be matched by \$750,000 raised by the museum over the course of the following several years. The second important occurrence was a change in how the faculty approached their engagement with the museum. The style and format of teaching in the museum, both by the curator of academic programs and by the faculty, began to shift toward true collaboration, in which each party shares the same goals and takes an active role in accomplishing them. To effectuate change, Crossman required more investment from faculty members in the process of planning and conducting their class visits to the museum. At the same time, through workshops and personal mentorship, she provided professors opportunities to acquire the tools and confidence needed to teach more independently in the museum (CROSSMAN 2016). Crossman also trained a core group of professors from nearly every department on campus, who have actively taught with the AMAM's collection, and served on various occasions as museum advisers, ambassadors, collaborators, co-curators, and co-authors.

Maximizing Art Engagement across the Oberlin College Curriculum

The author, Crossman's successor and current curator of academic programs, arrived at the Allen in 2009, and over the course of the following eight years academic programs began to reach their full potential, placing the museum on the campus map alongside other vital educational resources such as the library and the archives. Through the development of robust, diverse, and effective curricular programs, the Office of Academic Programs repositioned the museum as a fulcrum of learning for the entire college community, regardless of disciplinary focus or course level.

To meet the high demand for customized student encounters with original works of art, the Office of Academic Programs expanded in 2010 to include a second full-time staff member: a curatorial assistant who each academic year coordinates hundreds of class visits to the museum and organizes, with the museum preparators, more than 1,300 movements of art objects from storage to the print study room, where the works are exhibited by request for curricular purposes. This yearlong position, designed for a recent Oberlin graduate with an interdisciplinary academic background and paid for from the Mellon endowment fund, offers practical experience to those interested in

pursuing careers or advanced studies in a wide range of fields, from art, art history, archeology and curatorial work to cultural and area studies, library science, pedagogy, literature, and history, among many other possibilities.

The first curatorial assistant in the Office of Academic Programs, Anna-Claire Stinebring (Oberlin College class of 2009), sums up the importance and impact of such a position. A doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania, Stinebring (2016) describes her experience at the AMAM: "The position helped prepare me for the exciting ways art history has been changing as a discipline. Both in academia and in museums, scholars are thinking more globally and are calling into question traditional national and disciplinary borders. My time in the AMAM Office of Academic Programs encouraged me to continue to be inquisitive about what meaningful cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary connections can be made in my own study of art. It also inspired me to be more collaborative in my work, to reach out to students and scholars beyond my area of study." Stinebring (2016) zeroes in also on one of the challenges facing curatorial staff at academic museums, namely "adapting research on individual works of art to suit the unique needs of diverse courses." "These courses," she continues, "were often using works of art from the museum's collection in productive and surprising ways that were very different from how art history courses might approach the same works." The ability to adopt different perspectives or frameworks and use art historical knowledge to illuminate content in other disciplines constitutes an enormous asset, which if not readily available, should be intentionally fostered among collection and education curators.

With the growth of the Office of Academic Programs, the scope, depth, and innovation of curricular interactions in the museum also expanded. In close collaboration with Steven S. Volk, professor of history (now emeritus) and director of Oberlin's Center for Teaching Innovation and Excellence (CTIE), the author developed and published an art-centered pedagogy applicable to any course subject, based on her experience teaching with art across disciplines. Termed "Crossing the Street" (CTS), this pedagogy is informed by Oberlin's specific layout, where the buildings of the humanities, sciences, conservatory of music, and AMAM are all across the street from one another. Faculty, students, and museum staff must literally cross the street to reach the others. As argued by Milkova and Volk (2012), in the CTS pedagogy, art is employed to scaffold student learning and does not always need to be tied to course content. Rather, CTS emphasizes interactive encounters in the museum space to defamiliarize the site and manner of learning, as students leave the classroom and their entrenched—and seated—positions as passive recipients of information. CTS further insists on cultivating certain habits of mind such as deep attention, self-reflection, slowing down, and empathy, all of which can serve students in their academic, extracurricular, and professional pursuits.

While each CTS museum visit is shaped by course goals and involves conversations between the instructor and academic curator at every step of the planning process, it is rooted in learning theory to deepen student understanding and to heighten students' awareness as learners. Research has demonstrated that frequent productive disruptions spur student learning and the temporary relocation of the classroom to the museum offers such a possibility. In the museum, non-art faculty and their students meet more as novices than as experts, and because learning for novices is different from learning for experts, faculty can model how to engage constructively with unfamiliar contexts, material, and methodologies. Collaborative learning has been shown to benefit the development of critical thinking, and peer learning techniques are often employed in the gallery or print study room to offer a concrete context in which students working in small groups can explore, analyze, and then teach the rest of the class about an artwork selected carefully in advance. Recent scientific findings (IMMORDINO-YANG 2015) further suggest that emotions play a positive role in student interest, motivation, engagement, and knowledge retention: interactions with original art and its physical presence can trigger meaningful cognitive and affective experiences that anchor student learning and connect it to real-life situations. Milkova and Volk (2014) have similarly discussed the importance of engaging emotions, as well as other effective approaches to teaching and learning in the museum.

The AMAM's close partnership with CTIE has been formative in terms of cultivating a core group of faculty who utilize the museum in all of their courses, but also for reaching out widely across academic departments and divisions. The partnership extends beyond designing and implementing new art pedagogies specifically conducive to higher education. Collaborative endeavors include numerous thematic or general workshops for faculty to introduce object-based learning and train them in teaching with original works of art on their own. These workshops could be geared towards new hires, or science professors, language instructors, or faculty in the conservatory of music; they could also precede special exhibitions, equipping professors with the knowledge and conceptual

frameworks needed to approach an entire exhibition as an alternative modality through which to achieve certain course goals and/or learning objectives. Whatever the topic, however, all workshops aim to train faculty in non-art disciplines to understand art as primary text or cultural document, and to use inquiry-based techniques, coupled with close and slow looking exercises, to facilitate students' interactions with the art.

An important factor in the AMAM's expansive educational role on campus has been the concerted effort to adapt teaching methods to the learning needs of millennial students (those born between 1982 and 2002). There are distinct generational changes in the learning needs, styles, and environments of millennials, and research has shown that they learn most effectively in a diverse and active setting, by engaging in groups discussions and activities, by doing rather than reading, and when given a teaching role. To respond to these learning needs, AMAM educators have moved away from lecturing in the galleries towards deploying interactive, collaborative, and self-reflective activities, often coupled with mini interdisciplinary curatorial projects. Exercises in the museum engage students' intellects, emotions, and senses alike, and further task students with teaching their peers about a concrete issue as seen through, or elucidated by, the work of art. Moreover, gallery activities frequently focus on cultivating self-aware learners, who for example understand their own perceptual tendencies or biases and can differentiate between assumptions they make and facts supported by the visual data. In addition, with every class in the museum, staff strive to foster stronger observational skills and the ability to describe thoroughly and accurately what an image depicts and exactly how it does that. Such approaches to visual material are especially conducive to the so-called STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines where students must acquire both content knowledge and specific skillsets, such as the ability to analyze complex visual data and to visualize otherwise abstract results.

Today, the model of the museum as laboratory quite literally applies to the Allen's curricular collaborations with science courses. Science faculty utilize the collection for thematic explorations of art, for posing museum-based scientific problems, and for curatorial group projects, among others; they also focus on scientific content comprehension, skill building, and real-life applications. For instance, students in biology and neuroscience meet in the museum to put their theoretical knowledge to practical use, as well as to exercise close looking and the analysis of visual data. A course on human physiology studies artistic representations of love from lust to pair-bonding. The class considers how strong emotions are portrayed in Eastern and Western works of art and whether these depictions align with emerging scientific understanding of the biology of love³.

Lodewijck Kuijpers (Oberlin College class of 2015) notes that students in a perceptual neuroscience seminar, when viewing works by two leading proponents of the Op Art movement, Victor Vasarely and Bridget Riley, "are given the opportunity not only to feel the sensation they learn about, but also to put their knowledge to the test, working backwards from a felt sensation to the neural processes that might create it" (KUIJPERS 2016, 7). Kuijpers, who double-majored in neuroscience and studio art, explains: "Much like working in a lab, these museum visits are hands on, require active problem solving, and teamwork." The critical, tangible, and emotional aspects of the face-to-face encounter with art have the capacity to push students of any discipline as Kuijpers further observes, "to consider the importance of continually asking questions, of approaching questions from different angles, and understanding the interconnectivity of everything we do" (KUIJPERS 2016, 7).

In order for the museum to be thought of as a flexible, hands-on and accessible resource conducive to learning in any discipline, its collection must be fully digitized and made available online. When more than 10 years ago the AMAM provided online access to the entire collection (now fully digitized) it enabled faculty to learn about the collection by browsing thousands of objects and to conduct a variety of searches to locate relevant works and larger thematic threads. This unprecedented access spurred the imagination, as well as intellectual curiosity and creativity: faculty, much intrigued by their findings online, became keen to explore the collection in person, whether artworks on view in the galleries or brought out from storage; they were also eager to share their curiosity and enthusiasm with their students and together to explore the myriad ways in which objects connect us with distant moments and places. And since the academic community is the Allen's primary audience and at any given time less than 10% of the holdings are on display, museum staff extends faculty and their classes the courtesy of requesting works to be brought from storage for educational purposes.

³ For an extensive overview and qualitative assessment of a biology and art class project at Oberlin College, see Milkova et al. 2013.

In addition to digital and physical access to the collection, the introduction of policies and guidelines for faculty use of the AMAM holdings has proven essential. Online access allows faculty to conceptualize museum visits based on geographic, temporal, content-related or other connections to their courses even prior to meeting with curatorial staff to discuss the possibilities. The existence of rules regarding the preparation for, implementation, and following up on museum sessions, however, has enhanced the positive impact of art engagement for both faculty and students by offering concrete parameters and structures for collection use, but also for managing roles and expectations. Based on extensive faculty feedback (collected from surveys distributed over the course of two academic semesters), museum staff crafted a protocol for planning and executing effective class visits⁴. Professors are expected to work hand-in-hand with museum staff to determine the most appropriate terms for their class visit to the Allen. For example, faculty must share their learning goals for the museum visit and participate in selecting artworks and designing the specific lesson plan. Faculty are also expected to take an active role in introducing their students to the idea of thinking and learning with objects and how that relates to the course; assigning readings or other homework in advance of the visit prepares students further for their art encounters. Besides that, professors are required to be actively involved in leading the museum session, although often with assistance from curators or museum educators, and later to follow up on ideas or content examined in the museum through short readings or written assignments, class discussion, or simply referencing, whenever relevant, the museum experience. Additional rules govern how many and what kind of artworks faculty can request from storage to be viewed in the print study room during their class visits. Determined by the museum's registrarial and curatorial staff over the course of several years, these rules not only ensure the safe movement of art through the building, but also take into consideration students' capacity to engage actively and productively with art within the typical 50- or 75-minute class period without becoming visually or intellectually overwhelmed or fatigued. We create opportunities for slow and close looking at art, deep exploration of a small number of works rather than a broad swath of material, and for sharing individual responses to and insights gained from the artworks over (or in addition to) the standard scholarly narrative. It must be noted that the educational role of the AMAM often, indeed almost always, goes beyond traditional and strictly art historical framings. When teaching from original works of art in disciplines as varied as African-American studies, chemistry, English, mathematics, music history, neuroscience, theater, Russian, and politics, art historical knowledge is the means, not the goal – it supplies students with the foundation through which to generate new connections on the course subject and to become the producers, not just the consumers, of knowledge.

Suggested Strategies for Success

The final section of this article comprises a selection of strategies for building a successful outreach program at academic museums and galleries. Presented as a list, these recommendations stem from extensive practical experience, learning theory, and input from AMAM staff and Oberlin College faculty.

- Create a full-time position for a trained art historian, archeologist, anthropologist or another specialist with interdisciplinary background, deep knowledge of material culture, extensive teaching experience, and dynamic and engaging personal style to conduct outreach to the academic community.
- Work with your campus teaching and learning center to determine awareness of and interest in object-based pedagogies among the faculty, as well as the constituencies that would benefit the most from them.
- Secure the support of the museum/gallery director and the college/university's academic deans; be prepared to discuss the benefits of teaching with art and to present data from other institutions.
- Develop short informational sessions on teaching with collections and implement them within existing pedagogy workshops, departmental meetings, training sessions, academic gatherings, centers, etc.

⁴ AMAM and CTIE staff conducted detailed pre- and post-museum visit surveys among all non-art faculty utilizing the collection during fall semester 2012 and fall semester 2013. The data from these surveys and the conclusions drawn from them were published in Milkova and Volk 2014.

- Enlist faculty who already have taught with collections to share insights and conduct short teaching demonstrations for their colleagues who can see first-hand the kinds of learning experiences that can be orchestrated for their students. Allow time for discussion and collective brainstorming.
- Design museum/gallery workshops specifically geared towards all newly hired faculty and select new staff members. Include interactive components and presentations from current faculty. Conduct workshops before the start of the academic semester, so there is sufficient time for faculty to conceive of and add museum visits to their syllabi.
- Establish clear rules or expectations for individual roles when planning and implementing museum class sessions.
- Seek investment from the art history and studio art departments in making art accessible and relevant to all academic disciplines and in utilizing tools and methods from art history, an intrinsically interdisciplinary field. Typically the most frequent users of the museum, art history and studio art faculty may feel that expanding the museum's integration into the curriculum might limit their and their students' own access to the collection, so it will be helpful to secure their support and assistance early on.
- Consider offering social occasions (such as receptions) to bring faculty and senior administrators to the museum and/or financial support (grants, fellowships) to faculty interested in working with curators and the collection to develop museum components for their courses.
- Stress to all audiences that collections offer many possibilities beyond content-related connections. Also emphasize that works of art can be used as the vehicles for cultivating or enhancing a variety of skills and thinking dispositions.
- Educate key campus populations about your museum/gallery's operations, why museum rules exist and why they must be followed.
- Produce short informational brochures (with concrete examples and useful tips) to distribute to faculty and staff.
- Attend general faculty meetings and other events, where useful knowledge can be gained and the museum/gallery presence will be noted. Campus visibility for museum curators and educators is very important.
- Consult other academic museum/gallery staff about strategies that have worked for them.
- Identify courses with close ties to the collection and contact their instructors with concrete suggestions for artworks and ways to integrate them into the course syllabus.
- Create opportunities for faculty from many disciplines to meet and mingle with the curatorial staff – often new ideas and collaborative projects emerge from exactly such situations.
- Keep your museum/gallery staff informed about new pedagogies and what makes them effective for millennial learners.

Conclusion

The roots of the Allen's educational flourishing lie in the leadership of AMAM directors, the work of highly competent staff with extensive curatorial and teaching experience, substantial funding from the Mellon Foundation, as well as intellectual and administrative support from former presidents, provosts, and faculty members from across dozens of disciplines. The establishment of full-time positions and financial resources dedicated strictly to academic outreach and collection-based teaching was crucial to growing and sustaining the museum's meaningful place on campus, as was the faculty members' desire to adapt swiftly and effectively to a changing educational climate in order to become even better teachers. But what must be acknowledged perhaps above and beyond all other factors is the AMAM staff's intellectual and professional agility – their willingness to be challenged, to meet faculty in non-art disciplines halfway, to adopt other disciplinary vantage points, to see the museum through the eyes of the novice, to engage in open-ended dialogs and occasionally

to leave the comfort zone of their expertise and take a risk, just like the students who cross the street every day to come to the museum.

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