

IMPACT STUDY

of FACILITATED SINGLE-VISIT ART MUSEUM PROGRAMS *on* STUDENTS GRADES 4-6

USER GUIDE



KRESS
Samuel H. Kress Foundation

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¹ The views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this *Impact Study of Facilitated Single-Visit Art Museum Programs on Students Grades 4–6 User Guide* do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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USER GUIDE | INTRODUCTION

What Are the Benefits of Art Museums to People?

This is perhaps one of the most vital questions art museums and art educators face. Depending on the lens through which you examine this question, responses may be that art museums drive economic development, contribute to cultural understanding, serve as community hubs, or support K–12 academic test scores. While important, none of these data points address the true value of art museums to individuals and communities. To better understand and demonstrate the difference art museums make in people’s lives, the field must advance research that can withstand intense analysis. Without research-based data, art museums may find it difficult to convince policy makers and civic leaders that they are vital to communities. As cultural institutions, art museums are more than nice—they are necessary.

Teacher feedback and the direct experiences of museum educators indicate that when students have exciting conversations while exploring works of art during their field trip to an art museum, they are having experiences that are different from those they may have in the classroom. Research related to inquiry-based teaching, engagement with original works of art, and aspects of learning in museum environments further supports that art museums can be places where rich and different learning and discovery happen. Yet, up until now, rigorous research on the effects of facilitated single-visit programs in an art museum was limited.

To answer the call for more formal research on the impact of art museum experiences on people, the Museum Education Division of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) forged a partnership in 2013. The result is the *Impact Study of Facilitated Single-Visit Art Museum Programs on Students Grades 4–6*, an intensive, four-year, nationwide initiative. Funding from a three-year National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and additional funding from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation supported research conducted by Randi Korn & Associates (RK&A).²

The NAEA and AAMD Core Team decided to focus this research on the facilitated single-visit art museum program because it is the most prevalent type of school-initiated experience that students have in art museums, according to a national survey of art museums that was carried out as part of this research.³ Ninety-six percent of the museums that responded to the study offer these programs, and they, along with family programs, often provide young people with their first opportunity to experience a museum as a learning environment and see objects they cannot see anywhere else. The research, conducted at six geographically- and collection-diverse museums in seven school districts across the United States, explored how facilitated inquiry-based, single-visit

² A detailed history of the *Impact Study of Facilitated Single-Visit Art Museum Programs on Students Grades 4–6* process can be found in our [White Paper](#).

³ *Summary of Results Survey of Single-visit K-12 Art Museum Programs*: [Executive Summary](#); [Full Report](#)

art museum programs may impact participants across five capacities: creative thinking, critical thinking, sensorial and affective responses, human connections, and academic connections.

The results of the research provide valuable evidence, insight, and language for talking concretely about the benefits of students' engagement with original works of art during a facilitated single-visit program. Our hope is that the study's results advance scholarship in both museum and art education and serve as a powerful tool to leverage support for student learning in art museums. This guide intends to help practitioners think about the findings in the context of their daily work, so they can more readily support the findings in museum galleries. It is also our hope that this work inspires others to pursue a research agenda in their museum and continue collecting evidence of the benefits that art museums afford the visiting public; the study and this *User Guide* are the beginning, and we look to our colleagues to continue learning from museum visitors about their experiences with works of art.

Emily Holtrop

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NAEA Director of the Museum Education Division (2015–2017)





NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
SHAPING HUMAN POTENTIAL

Deborah B. Reeve, EdD | Executive Director

August 13, 2018

The National Art Education Association (NAEA) enthusiastically announces the results of the NAEA/AAMD Impact of Art Museum Programs on Students Research Initiative after more than four years of dedicated work! Under the visionary leadership of the NAEA Museum Education Division, this large-scale research project directly supports the NAEA Research Agenda.

The project has involved energetic collaboration between NAEA and AAMD with generous funding and project support provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

NAEA expresses gratitude for the support and insight provided by all AAMD partners and greatly appreciates the critical early support provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, which provided \$85,000 in funding for comprehensive project planning and the study's literature review. The National Leadership Grant for Museums, awarded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), provided significant funding in the amount of \$523,505 to support the study throughout the three years of research, analysis, and reporting. NAEA is appreciative of the financial support and project guidance provided by IMLS partners.

Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association is the leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts educators. Guided by its mission, to advance visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding, members believe art museum learning is a fundamental component to a high quality, effective, and balanced education. "Art museums are valuable cultural resources that offer people a rich physical and social environment in which to experience and engage with original works of art from different time periods and cultures. The study of works of art promotes the development of creative and critical thinking skills that are important to success in life as well as in school. These include inquiry, analysis, and interpretation as well as flexibility, imagination, and reflection" (NAEA Position Statement on [Benefits of Art Museum Learning in Education](#)).

The data from this comprehensive study supports teachers and museum educators in their efforts to put forth stronger arguments for funding and allocation of resources by school and museum administrators, and by funding organizations. Teachers are encouraged to advocate the importance of museum field trips in developing well-rounded learners, recognizing that valuable learning takes place both in the classroom and beyond. The study's findings provide valuable tools for use in advocating the power of the visual arts to enrich human experience for the importance of art education in and out of the classroom.

Sincerely,

Deborah B. Reeve, EdD
Executive Director

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August 13, 2018

The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) is pleased to have contributed to the successful completion of the NAEA/AAMD Impact of Art Museum Programs on Students Research Initiative. We express our gratitude to the NAEA Museum Education Division for their leadership, as well as to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their generous and enthusiastic support.

We are also grateful to the directors and staff of the six museums that participated in the project: the Columbus Museum of Art, the Hammer Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Orlando Museum of Art, the RISD Museum, and the Walters Art Museum.

It was not coincidental that NAEA and AAMD came to put a priority on research. While we believed intuitively in the educational value for school children of museum visits designed and conducted by trained educators, it had become apparent that many outside our field - including policymakers at all levels, as well as administrators - had no such inherent belief. At a certain point, it became clear that we would need to offer evidence.

With the survey of museum practice undertaken in this project's planning year, the comprehensive literature review, and the project results, we can now present a much clearer picture of what happens on museum visits, as well as of their value. We hope that this picture reaches many audiences: classroom and art teachers; museum educators, directors, and staff; school administrators and leadership; policymakers; the media; and funders, both public and private.

Founded in 1916, AAMD advances the profession by cultivating leadership capabilities of directors, advocating for the field, and fostering excellence in art museums. AAMD has three desired outcomes: engagement, leadership, and shared learning - each of which has been accomplished through our partnership with NAEA on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Anagnos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Anagnos
Executive Director



